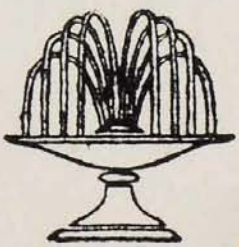
# BURMA

*by*

JOHN L. CHRISTIAN





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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

The publishers regret to announce that news has been received as this book goes to press of the author's death in action, in his beloved Burma. John L. Christian contributed much to modern knowledge of Burma and his loss will be severely felt in this and other spheres.



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# PREFACE.

THIS book was begun and completed in troublous times. The first draft was finished in the United States, and the remaining work was done in odd evenings and week-ends in India and Ceylon.

An attempt has been made to provide the general reader with something less ponderous than my *Modern Burma*. Several notable books on the Burma campaign have appeared. These are, without exception, journalistic and popular. True, the reporter speeding up the Burma road with the hot breath of the dragon on the back of his neck may have more vivid memories of the Japanese triumphal entry into Burma than will the sober research scholar working through the documents, but he is likely also to overestimate the number and power of the Japanese and to see hostile Burmans behind every toddy palm from Moulmein and Pegu to the Chindwin. Curiously, no reporter has written a book on the Japanese invasion the equal in depth of feeling and true perspective to Gratan Geary's *Burma After the Conquest* or of Major Edmund Charles Browne's *The Coming of the Great Queen*. These volumes, written after the Anglo-Burmese War of 1885, give unusual insight into the Burman's character and his attitude toward the white man. These attitudes have changed surprisingly little in fifty years.

Prior to the arrival of the Japanese, who blended well with its leeches and reptiles, Burma was commonly regarded as a blessed land of warmth and free living and beautiful indolence. Actually, Burma has never been as arcadian and exotic as it was pictured popularly in the first lush days of the present century. I knew Burma intimately from 1927 to 1935, and I have been back into it and have flown over it by bomber during the present war.

Because so few examples of Burmese literature are readily available a few selections of Burmese prose and poetry have been included in an appendix. Most of these

gleanings from Burmese literature were suggested by Maung Thein Tin, himself no mean writer in English and in his mother-tongue. Thein Tin (better known in Burma under his pen name Nyo Mya) was thrown up on American shores by the torrents of war, together with about a half dozen other Burmese. He was a Burma State Scholar in England and later received the M.S. degree in journalism in America. I am indebted to my son, Winslow, for first suggesting that Nyo Mya should be cultivated as a potential Burmese Lin Yutang.

George E. Taylor, of the United States Office of War Information, suggested the writing of this book and prodded me gently until it got under way. Various Britons, Burmans, and others connected with the Government of Burma read the manuscript in New Delhi and Simla and made helpful suggestions.

The photographs were provided through the courtesy of Air Marshal Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferte, Lieut.-Colonel Irving Asher, and George Appleton, Public Relations Officer of the Government of Burma. Most of them were taken by the film unit of the South East Asia Command. Sergeant William E. Ward did the jacket, the endpapers, and three of the maps. Finally, I am indebted to the Army's Bureau of Public Relations for giving the necessary clearance to the book while assuming no responsibility for its contents.

KANDY, CEYLON
1945.

J. L. C.

TO

Bernice MacLafferty Christian

"... the country that well thou knowest."

*The seal on the half title and back of the jacket is the recognised and official seal of Burma.*

*The seal on page 129 is that of Dr. Ba Maw, the puppet dictator of Burma under the Japanese. The Burmese characters round the Ba Maw seal mean :* "ONE VOICE, ONE BLOOD, ONE COMMAND"

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# CHAPTER ONE.

## Burma : Where India and China Meet.

*" Burma—the Irrawaddy valley from Bhamo to the sea, the nearer Shans on both sides, north Arakan, and north Tenasserim."* *G. E. Harvey.*

For more than a century after the first annexation of Burmese territory by Britain in 1826, the " land of pagodas " was regarded as the Cinderella of the Indian Empire, useful principally as a supplier of rice, oil, teak, and lucrative appointments in the various Imperial Services. Burma vegetated under the mellow glow of the *Pax Britannica* in her quiet backwater on the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal, a sort of Arcadian land, well removed from the alarms and excursions of war. Protected in her coastal districts by Britain's undisputed supremacy in the Indian Ocean and on her northern and eastern land frontiers by malarious and inaccessible hill tracts, the country was described by Sir George White as " . . . one vast military obstacle."

When the Burmese speak of their delightful corner of the Silken East they usually call it Shwey Pyee Daw, the Golden Country. In November when the rice fields, a pleasing green from May until October, turn a golden brown over the great delta of the Irrawaddy the countryside is truly golden. In every Burmese village from Bhamo near the Chinese frontier to Victoria Point within four hundred miles of Penang are found quaint golden-spired pagodas and monasteries from which go forth each sunrise saffron-robed priests of Buddha on their rounds of the villages.

Among the experiences which can come to a person only once in a lifetime is the pleasure of approaching Rangoon by sea for the first time. After taking on the pilot from the brig anchored off Elephant Point, the traveller got his first

glimpse of the flat shores of Burma. Farther along fishermen returned home with the night's catch and stolid buffaloes wallowed in the muddy reaches of the Rangoon River. As the ship neared Rangoon came the first breathtaking view of the magnificent 368-foot gold and jewel covered spire of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Holy of Holies to the Buddhist world. Upon its position on the highest point of land in Rangoon, the Shwe Dagon was visible for a distance of twenty miles or more, luminous with floodlights by night, dazzling in the sun by day.

To those who know and love her, Burma will always be the land of the lotus and the rainbow, now deeply tarnished by the invading hordes of Nippon. Treitschke's beautiful words "Man can understand only what he loves" may contain the germ reason for much occidental misunderstanding of the Orient. Residents of Burma learned to appreciate the many excellent qualities of the Burmese people, as the result of friendly chats with Burmese elders, pleasant visits in Burmese homes, a love of the Burmese language and literature, and the discovery that there was really no such thing as the "unfathomable Oriental mind." There is also the pleasure of comradeships at work and at play, journeys afoot and afloat, by train and by steamer, from Cape Negrais and Moulmein to the borders of Yunnan and French Indo-china, and tonic vacations among the hospitable people and rulers of the blue Shan hills.

Due to long association (1826-1937) with India as a province in the old British Indian Empire, Burma was regarded erroneously by the Western world as a part of India. Spiritually, the Burmese cling to Buddhism, the Indian religion that has almost disappeared from the land of its birth. Ethnologically, they are the first Mongolians encountered in an eastward journey along Asia's southern coast. Politically, the country knew nothing but a succession of monarchies for over a thousand years prior to its incorporation with the British Empire, in 1885 after three wars. It was joined to India by historical accident. In April 1937 Burma divorced India, and subsequently has enjoyed economic development and a political status described by Sir Arthur Page, former

Chief Justice of Burma, as having "all the powers of self-government except the title."

While the Burmese are Mongolians akin to the peoples of Tibet and western China rather than to the Aryans of India, they are greatly indebted to India for gifts of philosophy, religion, and government. Yet the very name of the country is derived from the Chinese "Mien" rather than from the Indian "Brahma." Absorption of the Burmese individuality by the more virile civilizations of India and China has been prevented only by the Bay of Bengal on the west and the mountain fastnesses on the north. On the east the Burmese have always cared for themselves by force of arms.

The Burmese, Buddhists almost to a man, are lovers of beauty and pleasure for their own sakes, and they are undisturbed by excessive ambition. There was little ill feeling for aliens in Burma, at least before Burma felt the economic pinch sharpened by competition of foreigners (principally Indian and Chinese) resulting from the great depression of the early 1930's. Until that time the casual foreign visitor, the ruling British, and the million and a half Chinese and Indian immigrants who thrive at the expense of the more gentle Burman, were usually all assured of a welcome, or at least a tolerance, in pagoda land. The entire social structure is democratic; there is no caste, and little of the grinding poverty which is so distressing among her neighbors in India and China.

Women in Burma have long enjoyed full property rights and independent careers. Their uncanny sense of loveliness and propriety in the choice of pastel shades and colors for their clothing of sheer silk is the result of many centuries of beauty worship. If Burma is not the Promised Land of the Orient it is at least Jericho. In short, there is an absence of convention that is really charming and nothing done that is really vulgar. Anyone who has learned to know, and hence to love, this Arcadian land and its people is certain to find that his mind often turns tropicward and the palm trees have the upper hand. In common with all things Asian, his interests turn slowly but surely to Cathay.

There are really two Burmas. First, there is what is known as "lower Burma." This corresponds roughly to those parts of Burma brought under British control by the Anglo-Burmese wars of 1824 and 1852, and includes the great plains and deltas of the Irrawaddy, the Sittang, and the Salween rivers, the latter being as yet unexplored from its mouth to its source. Here is centered the great agricultural wealth of Burma—the rice fields which brought Rangoon's annual rice exports to some 3,000,000 tons and made it the world's greatest rice exporting city. It includes also the arm of Tenasserim, with its wealth of tin and timber—a thousand miles of shore line and a thousand islands, reaching down the Malay Peninsula toward Singapore.

The other Burma is quite a different country. It consists, in the main, of parallel ridges and valleys extending southward from the great mountainous mass of interior Asia. In this section of Burma bordering Assam, Tibet, and Yunnan Province of China, live the peaceful Shans, the warlike Kachins, the headhunting Nagas, and the wild Was. There are a multitude of obscure tribal divisions in the Arakan hills, while in the protected Karenni States of the Siamese border are found small groups of Padaungs. These are the people who boast the famous "brass necked ladies," women wearing coils of heavy brass wire which make their necks resemble champagne bottles. In the Unadministered Triangle joining Tibet, British expeditions liberated more than 9,000 slaves since 1930. Nearby is the great Hukawng Valley game preserve, which before the war was perhaps the finest shooting ground in all Asia and through which a new Burma Road is being built toward China.

Northern Burma contains most of the mineral wealth of the country aside from the oil fields in the central dry zone. In the malarious district north of the ancient city of Mogaung is mined the choice mottled, emerald green Imperial jade which is loved by the Chinese as life itself. Until recently there was in the Chinese temple at Amarapura, an old capital of Burma, a long list of more than 6,000 prominent Chinese traders who lost their lives in Burma during the nineteenth century alone in the search for jade. In the Hukawng Valley

are the amber mines. At Mogok, one hundred miles north of Mandalay, centuries of mining have not exhausted Burma's store of the world's finest rubies. It is believed that the Black Prince's ruby among the British crown jewels came from Burma in medieval times. One of Mogok's most famous gems is the "Peace Ruby" found on Armistice Day, 1918, and sold for £800 per carat in the rough; its weight was forty-two carats when mined. Within a few miles from the Chinese frontier are the huge silver-lead properties of the Burma Corporation, first developed by Mr. Herbert Hoover just before the first Great War.

The most attractive parts of upper Burma are the Shan Hills which weave a circle of enchantment about all who visit them. Passing up by railway from the heat and haze of the plains, one passes through such towns as Thazi (Pleasantly Populated), Payangazu (Five Pagodas), Sintaung (Elephant Mountain), Myindaik (Watering of the Horses), Aungban (Garland of Victory—some long forgotten victory), and Taunggyi (Great Mountain). From the neat Gurkha gardens of Taunggyi, one could motor in the dry season (Burma should be visited between November and February) over hundreds of miles of good roads to Bhamo and Namkham on the Chinese border, and to Lampang, Chiengmai, and other cities of Siam. An equally pleasant way of seeing old King Theebaw's Burma was to travel by comfortable river steamers which used to run nearly a thousand miles up the Irrawaddy to Bhamo, the gateway to China. These are the steamers whose "chunkin' paddles" have been immortalized by Kipling's poem.

One could visit Shan land by railway to Lashio where, on rolling downs remarkably like the red hills of old Virginia, lived a small colony of British officials, their houses surrounded by the gardens of England planted with poinsettias, wistiria and bouganvilleas. In the town bazaar orchids were four annas a bunch. Between Lashio and the Chinese frontier, only recently demarcated, lived hundreds of Chinese immigrants, their women with bound feet, who have been attracted into British territory by the then sheltering calm of the *Pax Britannica* or who have lived for centuries on the wild borderlands separating the two countries.

The Shan States are nominally under the rule of their hereditary Chiefs or *Sawbwas*, the most important of whom enjoy salutes of nine guns. They were really picturesque links between the old and the new in Burma. The last ruling chief from the days of King Theebaw, the *Myosa* of Mong Sit, died in April 1935, while there is a sprinkling of Oxford and Cambridge graduates among the younger *Sawbwas*. Late in 1943 Japan announced the incorporation of the Shan States (excluding Kengtung and Mongpan), the Karenni States, and the Wa States into Burma. The Sawbwas won't like that.

Of Mandalay, the golden city founded by the good Mindon and lost by the notorious Theebaw in 1885, much has been written. For the present the best that can be said is Ichabod —the glory has departed. Thanks to Lord Curzon who ordered the English club out of the throne room, an attempt was being made to preserve something of the old palace. The king's audience hall, 260 feet long, and formerly known as the center of the universe, miraculously survived the burning of Mandalay during the Japanese campaign and is still surrounded by its magnificent teakwood pillars covered with lacquer and gold. Since 1930 permission has no longer been given to climb the famous round tower under the shadow of which Theebaw disposed of eighty-six troublesome relatives one morning and from whose top Queen Supayalat watched the advance of the British in 1885. While it was the goal of all foreign visitors to Mandalay, relatively few Burmans troubled to visit the old palace. Perhaps they realised life and property was more secure, and only slightly more drab, under British administration.

Prior to the Japanese occupation Burma was unique as a place where there was still a certain amount of beautiful indolence and pleasant living. The modern world has intruded only in its more comfortable aspects. Electric fans and lights and long afternoons are found in the same streets where craftsmen made alabaster images of Gautama Buddha —he who told others that he had found the Great Peace.

## CHAPTER TWO.

### Burma: The Country.

*"Snow-field and paddy-field and Burma slowly sprawling out to sea."*
*G. H. Luce.*

A lofty bird's-eye view of Burma shows the country wedged between India on the west and Thailand and China on the east. It is almost as large as England and France combined and has a population exceeding by a million that of New York State. The southernmost tip of Burma, Victoria Point, is within 600 air miles of Singapore. Its northern limits, at the latitude of New Orleans, include peaks reaching 20,000 feet and glistening with eternal snow. The land of pagodas had approximately 1,000 miles of frontier with India, 1,000 with China, 150 with French Indochina, and 1,000 with Thailand. If the Japanese can make good their gift of Kengtung and Mongpan states to Siam, Burma will no longer touch French Indochina, but, what is more important with possibilities of danger, Siam's frontier will march with that of China for 150 miles. The total area of Burma is some 260,000 square miles and the extreme length, north to south, is nearly 1,200 miles. At its widest point, the Mekong (where it borders on Kengtung State) is nearly 600 miles distant from the Bengal frontier near Cox's Bazar.

With the exception of the high peaks and passes north of Myitkyina, all of Burma is distinctly tropical in character. Geographically the country is separated from India and China by high mountain barriers. These barriers are offshoots of the mountainous mass of interior Asia which, after forming the Himalayan bulwark across northern India, turns south along western Yunnan and forms a tumbled mass of parallel ridges and valleys running south east through Indochina into the Malay Peninsula and re-emerging as Sumatra and Java. The westernmost of these barrier ranges, known in northern Burma as the Patkai Range and farther south as

the Arakan Yomas, ends at Cape Negrais and reappears in a great arc as the Andaman and Nicobar islands, terminating finally within 90 miles of Sumatra. Burma has been likened to a great hand with the Tenasserim Peninsula as a forefinger pointing toward Singapore.

Although the country was known to early British explorers by various names, it is geographically a part of Indochina, and is, in fact, known to the French as *Indo-Chine anglaise*. Indians who have, or wish to establish, claims to Burma point out also that the area has been known for centuries as Further India in recognition of the fact that for 1000 years India and Southeast Asia have been closely allied by connections of culture, religion, trade, and by other ties resulting from long political association. The Chinese, on the other hand, will say that Burma long has been known as Chin-India, *i.e.* Chinese India. Despite China's ancient claim to suzerainty over Burma, your true Burman insists that the missions which were habitually sent to the Middle Kingdom were only of a friendly nature and carried nothing more than ceremonial presents. They brought back probably more than they took over the pass from Bhamo. Burma proper consists of the valleys of the Irrawaddy, the Sittang, and the lower Salween together with their deltas and coastal plains. The Irrawaddy and Sittang are separated by the low range of hills known as the Pegu Yomas. Their slopes luxuriate with the finest teak in the world. The great horse-shoe of hills that surrounds the Burmese heartland is a sparsely settled buffer region which has shielded the Burmese from absorption by their more virile neighbours in India and China.

In addition to Burma proper there are three other great natural regions : Arakan, the Tenasserim coast of the Malay Peninsula, and the Shan Plateau. Mount Victoria, reaching an altitude over 10,000 feet, is the highest point in the Arakan Yomas. The Arakan coastal plain is narrow and generally fringed with mangrove swamps, while in other places rocks sweep down to the Bay of Bengal. Numerous offshore islands guard the Arakan shore, the largest being Ramree and Cheduba. Some of these islands have oil wells, gas springs, and mud volcanoes. Others have a disconcerting habit of

appearing and vanishing in response to subterranean impulses understood only by the gods and the dragons.

Tenasserim is a region quite distinct from the remainder of Burma. Like Arakan, this rain-sodden, malaria-infested peninsula was regarded as the " Siberia " of political Burma, and an officer of the Burma Civil Service (Burman or British) assigned to Kyaukpyu or Mergui would understand that he was expected to mend his ways. Large parts of Tenasserim are covered with dark evergreen forests of the equatorial type. The average annual rainfall is more than 200 inches. Rice and rubber, neither of which is inspiring in cultivation, are the most important crops.

Moulmein is a delightful sleepy old town with a harbour fast silting up with mud brought down from China and Shan land by the mighty Salween. The Shan Plateau is not really a plateau at all. The average elevation is some 3,000 feet, but there is little level land and the entire region is deeply incised by the tributaries of the Irrawaddy and Salween. There is considerable grass land, but the area is sparsely settled and large sections are almost deserted. Two decades ago an Australian company attempted wheat cultivation on the rolling downs south east of Taunggyi, but left their tractors and combines to rust after two seasons. Cotton had no better luck. Certain regions in the Shan States are, however, entirely suitable for European residence. Oranges and western vegetables flourish. The climate is much like that of the South Atlantic States. The great Bawdwin and Mawchi mines add to the economic value of the Shan States and Karenni. Silver, lead, zinc, tin, and tungsten are known to exist elsewhere in the region and await development.

Burma's great deltas, although part of the lower Irrawaddy—Sittang region, deserve a story all their own. The lower Irrawaddy region, a great alluvial triangle with Prome as the apex and Bassein and Rangoon on its legs reaching to the Andaman sea, exports more rice than any other area in the world. Communications depend heavily on the Irrawaddy, and everyone eats, sleeps, dreams, and breathes rice, or lives a lush life on its profits. Before the British arrived the area was a vast wilderness of swamps and tidal

streams, only sparsely settled along the banks. During the present century it was the most prosperous part of Burma and contained nearly half the population of the entire country.

Eastward from Rangoon, coastal Burma extends across the Sittang through Thaton to Martaban on the Salween opposite Moulmein. The region is the traditional home of the Talaings and contains the ancient city of Pegu, by which name the entire country was once known. Thaton, formerly on the seacoast but now far inland, was the centre through which Hinayana Buddhism was brought to Burma by Indian immigrants about the time of William the Conqueror. This Sittang delta area produces one-fifth of all the rice of Burma.

Burma has two other areas which, although part of the Irrawaddy drainage basin, are quite unlike the rest of the country. Of these the "dry zone," enclosing a great ellipse along both banks of the Irrawaddy from Prome to Mandalay, is famous for the derrick-dotted oil-fields near Yenangyaung and Chauk. The dry zone also produced the cotton, tobacco, peanuts, sesamum seed, corn, palm sugar and other miscellaneous crops which, with his rice, once made the Burman almost entirely self-sufficient in all the things which composed the contented little world of the Burmese villager. The region extends as far as Shwebo, the home of Alaungpaya who founded the last dynasty of Burmese kings. Far to the north, in the narrowing triangle above Myitkyina between India and China, extend the wild Kachin hills. Burmans rarely ventured into this area before the British occupation of upper Burma in 1885. It is a stern and forbidding land, and even the Japanese did not venture above Sumprabum, in the Kachin hills 145 miles beyond the end of the Burma railways.

Any description of Burma usually includes facetious mention—good or bad—of its climate. This is usually mud or dust. The monsoon, with copious rains and high winds boiling up from the Bay of Bengal from May to October, floods the rice-fields, soaks the roads, mildews your shoes, and ruins your disposition. To the Burman, however, this is a happy time of year. It does for him what spring time does to lovers and poets in other lands. The hot season is at an

end, the dust settled, the farmer ploughs his rice-fields and the mothers and daughters help transplant the young paddy in thousands of acres.

Perhaps there is good reason for the Buddhists' prohibition of courting and marriages during the Buddhist lent which coincides with the rainy season. Otherwise, who knows if there would be any planting in Burma? The rainfall varies from about thirty inches in the dry zone to more than 250 inches in parts of Arakan, Tenasserim, and the northern hills. During this season the roads are frequently flooded, the railway may be put out of operation for two weeks at a time, and the "jungle wallahs" come in from the teak forests as it is the quiet season in Burma.

By telegraphic reports from Colombo and Madras, the Rangoon weather people could predict the day and almost the hour when the rains would break. The dhobis may dry their clothes outside on the 10th of May, but they know that by the 15th they must be dried inside or watch for a break in the squally rains. By the middle of October the rains are over and the rice-fields begin to dry and turn a golden brown. This is the season of harvest festivals. The rice crop was harvested and carted or floated to market. Everybody had a few annas to jingle, and life was very pleasant.

The cool season lasts until about the middle of March when the searing winds from central Asia sweep down over Burma to dry the ground as hard as pavement. All Europeans who could get away left for Maymyo, Taunggyi, or Kalaw. The more fortunate departed for a holiday in England. Temperatures seldom get above a hundred, but on the plains they have an annoying habit of staying almost the same day and night. It is worth noting that the Japanese planned the invasion of Burma to take place during the hot season. British troops retreated northward through the Irrawaddy Valley and the driest section of Burma amid the severest hardships. But after all, the Jap knew that the best season for campaigning in Burma is from October to May.

## CHAPTER THREE.

### The Irrawaddy : River of Gems.

Travellers arriving in Rangoon during the peaceful years before the Japanese ravaged the land could pause in modern hotel lobbies in the capital city, and, wondering how best to "see" the country, might have been told "the Irrawaddy's your best opportunity—travel by boat up its defiles for nearly a thousand miles and most of ancient and modern Burma will drift by." This casual advice or the languorous advertising blurb : "See Burma by the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co., Ltd.," and enjoy "one of the pleasantest experiences imaginable," gives no idea whatever of the wild, roaring exploit it really is to do the job through the defiles from Bhamo to Mandalay in the monsoon season when the river is churning at its banks and violent eddies and whirlpools nearly run flush with the boat's gunwale. The strongest swimmer would vanish like a bamboo chip on the tormented waters ; so it's more pleasant to wait until these portions of the Irrawaddy shake off their summer session of temper.

A few facts of history and of the scenery along its borders are easily recorded : it was navigable to within forty miles of China by the largest river craft in the world (they're comfortable enough, 326 feet long, had large cabins, cozy berths and "good catering"). Not one of these river liners has survived the war. The Irrawaddy is the lifeline of Burma and the cradle of its fantastic civilization. It's the river of rich oil fields, the route of gory invasions, and the path to crumbled ruins of Pagan which was a teeming capital of Burma a thousand years ago but now a cemetery of pagodas. Its birth is in the towering misty horizons bordering the mountains of Tibet and Western China only partly explored. From close to the Chinese frontier, it rides in regal dignity past Myitkyina, Bhamo, Mandalay, Amarapura, Ava, Sagaing, Pagan, Yenangyaung and Prome, all historic cities and witnesses to Burma's imperial past and progressive present,

until joining the Rangoon River's fat and fertile rice country, it gradually widens and is broken up by numerous streams and creeks. Here it decants into the Andaman Sea through nine large deltaic mouths. Curiously, the Bassein and Rangoon rivers, the only tributaries capable of receiving ocean-going vessels, carry off very little water from the Irrawaddy and are scarcely part of the Irrawaddy system. Some 22 per cent of the mighty river's total outflow of water reaches the sea in one month—rainy August. Although its drainage area is much smaller, the Irrawaddy delivers almost as much water to the Indian Ocean in a year as the Mississippi pours into the Gulf of Mexico.

When there was a "golden-footed" Majesty on the Burmese throne at Ava in the mauve seventies of the last century, one could join the "upper deck" passengers at Rangoon and set out on one of the monthly trips up to Bhamo. The sights along its banks were full of weird glory and charm. No roaring United Nations bombers, swooping low on Japanese supply boats, cast their vengeful shadows on its waters or broke its quiet with fiery explosions. Tall elephant grass (high enough to conceal an elephant) hid its banks for miles and miles. Villagers in garish-coloured garments would emerge from their bamboo and thatch huts and squat at the water's edge, gazing at the strange "fireboat" and its myriad passengers. Cultivated fields have replaced the elephant grass, but otherwise its aspect has not greatly changed—save for a host of new savages usurping its quiet.

The Irrawaddy—deriving its name from a Pali word meaning "big place"—is famed for its three defiles. Heading up the river, the first is 60 miles north of Mandalay; the second between Shwegu and Bhamo; and the third about sixty miles below Myitkyina. In the first ravine-like pass the lordly river merely appears annoyed at its limitations, but in the upper defiles in the monsoon it surges like a giant mill race. This is the far north of Burma where great teak trees jut up through scrub jungle; beyond the teak forests impenetrable bush, ropes of creepers and innumerable bamboos line the banks. There are high hills clothed with forest to the very summit. Near the entrance of the middle

defile rich lush growth glows with a green-gold tinge, then the hills grow higher and close in on each side ; a woody damp smell hangs over the water. As the gorge becomes steeper, towering cliffs slide sheer down to the river. From the steamer deck one can gaze up at a mighty rock on which a pagoda is perched like a crow's nest ; it looks like a toy, but actually it is sixty feet high. Wilatha's Cliff, in the middle defile, is the traditional " lover's leap " of Burma.

By the time the river has foamed through the upper reaches, struggled past rocky jaws that narrow on either side, the waters gain confidence and leap out into the sun-bathed plains, becoming radiant in expectation as the mountains retire. At Mandalay the Irrawaddy's bout with the elements is over ; fields and bamboo tufts spread far on either bank and the hills glower from afar, chiding at the escape of their erstwhile captive. Amarapura, Ava and Sagaing pass by. Here at Ava was built in 1934 (blown up during the British withdrawal) the only bridge across the Irrawaddy. These cities are dun and withered outcasts ; many of their sacred shrines are cracked by greedy time. But the Irrawaddy remembers their kings and regal splendour.

Southwest of Ava the Irrawaddy is joined by its chief tributary, the island-studded Chindwin which is navigable for most of its 500 miles. The route to India, it, too, rises in the far north where it rambles for great stretches among strange tribesmen who believe that hidden somewhere in its far reaches is the abode of the dead.

The shimmer of Pagan's unforgetable Ananda Pagoda is reflected in a burning sunset on the Irrawaddy's waters. Past the oilfields of Chauk, downstream looms the port of Yenangyaung, memorable for its huge tanks, costly drilling machinery and the great power plant which the British were forced to blow up, throwing searing flame almost into the faces of the advancing Japanese. From here on villages grow in number, and 140 miles to the south, cradled in the soft upholstery of fertile land, lies Prome. Here the steamer docks and one awaits the train for Rangoon, for the remainder of the river offers nothing but small streams and extensive paddy-growing areas. However, if one has the leisure, the

Twante Canal carries the largest river steamers from Prome to Rangoon. The Irrawaddy, an " old " river at this stage, like the Mississippi, tends to silt up its banks and if it spills over, villagers who watch it like a cat face the string of tragedy. During the monsoon those who live near its banks have been isolated on the roofs of half-submerged houses. Animals drown and frail villages are washed away ; but the Burman is a true Buddhist and earthly loss is heavenly gain.

Up the primitive moody Sittang large steamers do not venture. A river of fitful habits, she knows both polished waters disturbed alone by sleepy canoes and brown-sailed sampans and a turbulent tidal bore at its mouth. She shares not the thriving enterprise of the Irrawaddy : most of her glory has been in the past when Toungoo, Shwegyin, and ancient Pegu and Thaton stirred with deeds near her banks. A mercurial course, the Sittang provides the daily spectacle of a tidal bore riding up its mouth. But this huge wave, caused by the union of two portions of the great tidal wave of the Indian Ocean, only cuts its monstrous capers between September and May when it oftentimes leaves a swath of destruction in its wake. The bore, ascending at a speed of twelve miles an hour, balloons at the mouth of the Sittang to a height of twenty feet. When at full tide, and gliding along like a great carpet being unrolled, " it maketh such a noise and so great that you would think it an earthquake," observed a Venetian who visited Burma in 1567.

The river has been a witness to rare heights of courage and carnage. When the Japanese in the spring of 1942 had penetrated the lower Sittang and were within Tommy-gun range of fagged British forces, a confused retreating mass of Imperial soldiers including a number of Gurkhas were hemmed in by enemy infiltration parties on the wrong side of the river when panic-stricken sappers " gallantly and efficiently " blew up the railroad bridge at exactly the wrong moment. The quotes are official. But no other course was open ; to have delayed the demolition would have permitted Japanese troops to move directly through to Pegu and Rangoon. Picked men of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and the Duke of Wellington's Regiment were forced to swim the river,

some 800 yards wide at this point. Hundreds of these soldiers, their heads bobbing in the water, floundered about hopelessly in a struggle to reach the far shore. Bombs, shells, and machine-gun bullets pocked the waters. One man who escaped described it as a show that "made Dunkirk look like a picnic." A veteran officer who swam with his men told later of gallantry that paled anything he witnessed in the World War; a situation more discouraging than anything he had ever known. The wounded, ferried across on rafts of any kind, felt the hot breath of the Burmese sun and enemy bullets. Thus, one of the most gallant retreats of the campaign, enabled some of these men to re-form, re-equip, to fight again. But the experience had a profound psychological effect; the survivors for months to come were to awake at night with the screams of young English soldiers in their ears.

Rubber estates grew in rank richness on the Sittang's bordering lands; the finest of Burma's rice was cultivated along its shores and the wrecks of an epoch are strewn in her memory—of wars and sacked towns, of ancient embassies from Ceylon, of Pegu and its golden-spired pagoda. Pensive now more than ever, she muses in bitterness, powerless while a new cynical invader controls the valley of the Sittang.

The Salween, one of the longest rivers in the whole of Asia and never fully explored, is as untamed as the Shan jungles through which it sprints. When the tracts near the Salween were first penetrated by British officials, there was more than enough of the unexpected. Concealed in this tangled ambush, then as now, were pythons, tigers and panthers; and there are deep caverns into which tributaries of the fugitive river run and hide.

Persons who have tried to penetrate these caves, tenanted by enormous evil-looking stalactites, met fetid air, grisly looking rocks and their torches got damp. There were crevasses, too, but when a stone was dropped into them it jingled against the sides and was never heard to reach the bottom. On the Shan Plateau natives say they have heard weird rumblings and sounds beneath the earth's core. The Shans and hill Karens, timid peoples, believe the place is

haunted and give it a wide berth ; it is related that several Englishmen attempted to sleep there, but they lay restive all night and decamped in the morning oppressed by an eerie feeling which could not be explained. Such is the spectral and gamey region through which the Salween dashes. Here and on the high Red Karen country, where a robust independence rules and a Puritan sun broods over the shaggy uplands, the Salween is happy.

A foresaken region east of Tibet guards the secret of the Salween's origin. Even at birth she was a wrinkled Mongolian. Flowing almost parallel with the Irrawaddy and for some distance within fifty miles of the Mekong and Yangtze in a succession of abysmal gorges many thousands of feet deep, the river, because of its confined course, has tremendous differences of high and low water—in some places as much as ninety feet. Here the Chinese call it " the mad river." The Salween enters Burma from the Yunnan Province of China, at the northeast corner of the Northern Shan States. Impetuously darting right and left, winding through steep passes, some of them only eighty yards wide, she eventually enters the Karen country and then forms a sinuous boundary between Burma and Thailand for a short distance. Curiously, the Salween is ignored by the states through which it flows. Except for some eighty miles where it divides Burma and Siam, it nowhere serves as an international frontier ; even the petty Shan States disregard the mighty stream and bestride it rather than use it as a barrier against their neighbours. Swift, tortuous and restless, there are no towns on her banks until she reaches Martaban and Moulmein, ten miles from the sea. During this 2,500 miles of vagabonding her whole being is defiant ; few boats can ride her, and rapids effervesce and boil throughout most of her length. Steamers could ascend the Salween only to Shwegun, 64 miles from Moulmein while a few hardy little motorboats managed, with good luck, to get up another twenty miles to Kamamaung.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### The Burmese : Irish of the East.

*"The Burman is a religious animal, both terms emphasized."* —*The Reverend Doctor Cochran.*

Sir Clement Hindley, in an address before the East India Association in London, described the Burmese as perhaps the most charming people in the whole of the British Empire. This statement, which seems at first sight a trifle extravagant, is perhaps not far from true. The Burman is a likeable fellow in the same way that genial old gentlemen who have lost their fortunes are frequently charming company. It must be admitted, however, that the Burman is improvident, and, in many respects, quite like a Cherokee Indian who has discovered a new oil well on his Oklahoma farm. This did very well in Burma until the well ran dry.

Several things should be said about the Burman. First, he is an Oriental, racially akin to the Tibetans, the Siamese, and the Chinese. He is of medium height and in the rural districts, at least, is strong and well muscled. The Burman of Rangoon is likely to show the effects of too great fondness for European sweets and other pleasures of the table. He is quite conscious of his glorious past when Burmese armies marched from Bangkok to the Brahmaputra, and he seems to have difficulty adjusting himself to the needs of the immediate present. He has little experience with the outside world for the simple reason that he is so proud of, and satisfied with, Burma that he seldom bothers to travel.

No one knows much about the mental furnishings of the Burman's mind. He has an exaggerated idea of the wealth and importance of Burma, and altogether is little disposed to pay much attention to the realities of life. He is, however, capable of strong independent action and great physical exertion when he considers it to his advantage to work.

The Burmese gentleman of the towns is fond of bright

clothes, European shoes, and all the conveniences and pleasures of Western civilization, without always troubling his carefree mind with such questions as " how are these things produced?" and " who pays for them ? "

Much of the Burman's vanity finds expression in his physical beauty and adornment, above all in a smooth and delicate skin. An imperfection in the skin, particularly leprosy, is a major catastrophe, and the one afflicted is a social and religious outcast. The same thing is true of mutilations. A cripple can't hope for official position. During the attempt to stem the Japanese invasion it was reported that " wounded men brought into the field hospitals refused to have arms or legs amputated to save their lives," fearing both the operation and the mutilation. It was a matter of frequent occurrence, even in the hospitals, for a man to tear off the bandages wrapped around the stump so that he would not survive his misfortune and become a shame to his family.

Many Burmans indulge in another kind of personal adornment. The Venetian, Nicolo di Conti, said of the Burmese tattooing before 1500, " Both men and women paint or embroider their skinnes with iron pennes, putting indelible tinctures thereinto". To this day, outside the big towns, some Burmese men have themselves tattooed with ornate designs from their navels to their knees in vivid indigo. But the custom is dying out. These painfully acquired embellishments are sought on the initiative and at the expense of the young men who think tattooing is a sign of virility. Acquiring such beauty is no lark ; artists usually apply the designs a little at a time with the subject under opium. Many young men, in addition to sporting these blue decorations, have magical charms in vermilion pricked into their arms, chests, or thighs. Specialists, usually Shans, are adept at this job and the charms are fervently believed in and supposed to render the possessor proof against all human ills and accidents. One rebel leader (in 1931) had all of his followers tattooed with charms which were supposed to turn enemy bullets into water.

The population of Burma is about seventeen million, and

of these, more than ten million are of the Burmese race. They occupy the valleys of the Irrawaddy, the lower Chindwin, the Sittang and the vicinity of Moulmein. The Arakan coast is home to the Arakanese, some of whom have an Indian admixture. Down the Tenasserim coast live the people of Tavoy and Mergui who speak a dialect somewhat different from Burmese and who show traces of Siamese and Malayan mixtures. They are a pretty aggressive lot; for confirmation please witness the experiences of the British and Burmese Deputy Commissioners, who were " slippered " by Burmese women, when they unwisely mixed with a large and somewhat hostile crowd that was watching a prisoner being taken to the local jail.

Tenasserim produces most of the tin and rubber of Burma. It has a good many Chinese, Siamese and Indian immigrants, and altogether the people of this area are a motley crew. In the northern part of Tenasserim and near Thaton are found several thousand Talaings, descendants of the old rulers of Pegu. They are an exceedingly charming people, taller and more tolerant than the average Burman and noted for their intelligence and good manners.

The census report for 1901 said : " The Burman as we know him is essentially a non-migratory, unbusinesslike, irresponsible creature, perfectly incapable of systematic effort, content with what can be gained by a minimum of toil." This description is actually no longer true. The Burman is beginning to realize that he cannot expect foreigners to plant and reap his crops, run his railways and post offices, do the importing and exporting, work the mines, tap his rubber trees, mill his cotton and vegetable oil, market his peanuts and yet have anything left over for his own profit.

More and more the Burman is willing to shovel coal in locomotives, work in the rice mills, and perform many of the lowly tasks once considered suitable only for the immigrant Indian, and the Japanese have " encouraged " the Burman to do many things he never did before. He very readily discerns a sham in his fellows or in foreigners. No one can pretend to be anything that he isn't and fool the Burman for any great length of time. Somehow he was never much influenced by

the propaganda of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. The Burman knows perfectly well that it will be some time before the maharajahs and the Indian and Parsee millionaires and industrialists who back Gandhi will be found running spinning wheels and drinking goat's milk, each under his own fig-tree, while fraternizing with the depressed classes and peasants of India.

A refreshing thing about the Burman is his excellent sense of humour, or perhaps it is more correct to say that his sense of humour coincides with ours. Things that are funny to us will be funny to Maung Tin. His light-hearted ways have caused him to be criticized by some as being incorrigibly idle, and by others as being incurably indolent. Actually he is neither. He is quite capable of exerting himself, but he has no intention of bowing his shoulders or furrowing his brow prematurely by undue care for the things of this life. Let him grow old gracefully. His motto might well be, " Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be." Nothing suits him better than to be known as a Payataga or a Kyaungtaga (the endower of a pagoda or a monastery). His wife, usually winsome and charming in her old age, will then be known as Gadaw, the wife of a great man. He considers that money spent building a new monastery for a venerated pongyi is well spent.

There are literally dozens of opinions about this delightful person, and it is most difficult either to praise or blame him in generalities. Like the " common man " of Thomas Paine and Henry Wallace they are charming in the mass. Individually, they are usually charming.

Burmese manners are what one would expect normally to find in the Orient. There is a generally friendly but careless and casual politeness. The upper classes are unfailingly courteous, and the chance traveller may expect to meet quiet dignity and serene good manners rarely excelled in the most refined countries of the Occident. The manners of the peasantry are generally superior to those of the industrial and agricultural classes of Europe, and would not suffer by comparison with factory, coal mine, or farm manners in the Middle West. The appraisal by de La Loubere, who was sent by

Louis XIV as his Ambassador to the King of Siam in 1685 is of interest : " I have heard it generally said throughout the East Indies that the closer a people lives to Burma the more lively and intelligent it is." Always Burmese conduct is tinctured considerably by subservience toward superiors and indifference toward inferiors, characteristics that are not unknown to Hollywood. The Burman is hardly a glutton for work, but he seldom comes to grief through sheer idleness. The rural Burman is ingenuous, adaptable and would scarcely be a suitable model for mountaineer cartoons in *Esquire.*

Various writers have called the Burmese " clean and fastidious " ; " intensely individualistic " ; " hot tempered " ; " cowardly " ; " brave " ; " childlike " ; " keen sportsman " ; " spontaneous " ; " well mannered " ; buoyant " ; " light-hearted " ; " irresponsible " ; " vain and pompous " ; " having perpetual care and tenderness for all living creatures " ; " cruel and vindictive " ; " temperate " ; " abstemious " ; " not a fawning race " ; " charming and kind " ; and " excessively credulous." The Burman is, in short, subject to all sorts of contradictory judgments.

He may be all these, but so are most of the rest of us. The Burman is nobody's fool. He has come to realize that " Burma for the Burmese " is a dream under the Japanese. Despite certain Nazi ideas which have much attraction for the Burman, he was somewhat disillusioned when he discovered that the few Burmese in Germany were ousted under the Hitler regime because they were not Aryans. Inconsistencies of this sort are not lost on the Burmese.

Burmese life presents many apparent contradictions. While pets are comparatively rare, and Buddhism makes killing animals a crime, the condition in which they are allowed to live is unimportant, provided they are kept alive. Oftentimes the child has a monkey or a parrot, more rarely a puppy, which it is allowed to treat as capriciously as his mother treats him. Most Burmans in the country areas kept dogs as general scavengers, and a popular way of getting even with a neighbour who became annoying was to pour scalding water on his dog. In their resourcefulness at arranging marionette shows the

Burman is almost as skillful as Walt Disney in doing caricatures and models of animals.

While a Burmese girl is learning to be a capable household manager and practical woman like her mother, her brother usually patterns himself on his father who, despite many good qualities, is at times inclined to be vain, indolent, irresponsible, pampered, and garrulous while the women get down to business. The Burmese boy approaches manhood under petticoat rule. He has the consolation which he learns from Buddhism that men are really more important. There are many traces of matriarchy in Burma, remnants perhaps of the long-distant home of the race in the highlands of Tibet and western China. This situation creates the most characteristic Burmese paradox ; the women in effect manage their households but act as though they were subservient, symbolically lingering a few steps behind their husbands, except at night, when they walk in front with a lantern. By contrast the passive men talk and act as though they really ran the show, but they usually consult their wives surreptiously and then palm off the decisions as their own. The Burmese character is thus doubly warped ; the erratic male behaves like a master ; the superior women smiles and gives way to him. As evidence of the superior training given to girls, in a gaol population of 20,000 in Burma, fewer than 200 were women.

The Burmese have a curious disregard for the actions of others. " It is his way," they will say with a laugh when a person does something strange. " It is his way, what does it matter to us." Or putting it another way, one writer reports. "You might commit suicide in Burma and no one would stop you. 'It is your own outlook,' they would say 'if you want to die, why should we prevent you, what business is it of ours?'" Buddhism is however strongly against suicide, and an attempt at suicide is an offence punishable by the civil courts.

Most Burmese do not use liquor. Opium and hashish is sold in government controlled shops to customers with a license, and there is also a considerable illicit trade in narcotics. Nearly all of the customers are immigrants: the opium habit

is regarded as obnoxious and a Burmese opium smoker is an outcast from society. When a Burmese does take to imported liquor or his own toddy, he frequently goes to excess and continues until he becomes a public liability.

Burma has long been noted for its high crime rate. Crimes of violence are distressingly common. The Burman is seldom lukewarm ; he is either passive or he is deadly, ever ready to sink his dah (the sword which is used to chop wood) into firewood or his neighbour.

This attitude often leads to crime, usually the result of a sudden desire to commit an unlawful deed. The temptation is irresistible. One eye-witness actually tells of returning from a pagoda fair when one Burmese was heard to say to another : " See that fat trader over there, wouldn't it be fun to knife him in the belly where it is soft ?" " Yes, wouldn't it ? " replied his companion, who then took out his long knife, stabbed the unknown fat trader and disappeared into the crowd. On the other hand life is generally serene and calm in a Burmese village. Europeans were seldom molested, and anyone who had a smattering of Burmese could travel with considerable comfort and safety the length and breadth of Burma. There is no one more delightful than the quiet, friendly, self-respecting villager of Upper Burma.

The Burmese make but one moral judgment and it is revealed in the meaning of a single word : "The term for a hasty-tempered violent man is the same as that for a fool." The Burmese feel little responsibility for catching criminals. Their attitude toward their own misdeeds and those of others has nothing to do with their ideas of civic morality. This attitude, which is universally shared, has extremely important political implications. The sort of democratic government which the British attempted to install in Burma may be partially successful, after the war, if there is a sufficient supply of "honourable, consistent, unvenal and upright men" to hold office. In view of the keen good sense and good humour of Burmese women it would be to the advantage of their country if they could be persuaded to take a greater interest in politics and the welfare of the nation. In fact the Burmese woman hitherto has been the backbone of the Burmese nation,

which by now would have ceased to be a people but for what she is.

In discussing the young troublemakers apprehended in the disorders following the fall of the Burmese monarchy in 1885, Hall said : " They would be boys or young men led away by the idea of a frolic, allured by the romance of being a free lance for a night." He added : " The Burmese often act as children do, their crimes are the violent, thoughtless crimes of children ; they are as little depraved by crime as children are." The same " romance of being free for a night " no doubt motivated many during the chaos which came with the Japanese invasion. The Burmese brand of violence need not be, though it sometimes is, criminal. Private or village quarrels are likely to flare up at *pwes*, which themselves frequently depict themes of most excessive violence and horror—" cannibalism, fighting, treachery, childbirth, tortures and executions, cruel and unusual punishment, fathers forced to beat their daughters to death in a sack, heroines trampled by elephants."

Because violence is frequently an ideal, the greatest heroes are usually the local outlaws. Again, this is what happened during the pacification following the overthrow of Theebaw in 1885. Its leaders " were frequently men who had been outlaws—who by their very profession had to be men of a certain courage and influence " for it was felt that if they successfully combatted their own government they would be able to help against a foreign one. Often the local officials had no stomach for fighting and had little influence, so the people turned to the outlaw. " Always a friend of the countryside as Robin Hood in England, he became a national hero and men flocked to him." Plays and popular stories had as their heroes the famous *dacoits* ; the Burmese " turned Al Capone into Robin Hood." They voiced no pretence that such a hero robbed the rich to help the poor : he was a man, actively and estatically a man. This odd turn to violence partially explains the almost unbelievable orgy of loot, murder and arson which occurred in large cities during the Japanese invasion. Mandalay was kept artificially burning for three weeks after the first air raid, and foreign bungalows in Rangoon were well looted before the Japanese got inside the city limits.

## CHAPTER FIVE.

### Burma's History: Pageantry of the Past.

*When the floods come up the fish eat ants;*
*When the floods go down the ants eat fish.*
*Siamese Proverb.*

In his *Jesting Pilate*, Aldous Huxley characterized the *Glass Palace Chronicles* of the Kings of Burma as " . . . .the most learned edition of a fairy tale that has ever been published." In point of fact, the *Hmannan Yazawin* compiled by a committee of Burmese scholars appointed by King Bagyidaw in 1829, is not quite as fanciful as Huxley would have us believe. There is a certain residium of fact among the fables. True, the death of a king would cause the planets to pass between the earth and the moon, or the Irrawaddy might go into reverse and flow up hill from Henzada to Bhamo. However, it must be remembered that the bloody Bagyidaw had means of insuring that his illustrious predecessors on the lily throne were written up properly for posterity.

No one knows just who the Burmese are or when they reached Burma, but it appears probably that their ancestors came from the Tibetan-Chinese borderlands. By saying nothing more definite than that the Burmese came down from the northern hills to the plains of Burma about 850 A.D. one would be reasonably safe from critical professors. No inscriptions antedating 500 A.D. have been found, and the Pyu urn inscriptions of the seventh century are the only important examples of pre-Burman epigraphs thus far discovered. Burmese inscriptions begin with the Myazedi stone of 1100 A.D. It is believed that the first overseas visitors to Burma came by way of the Coromandel Coast of India. By the ninth century Arab traders had reached the mouths of the Irrawaddy.

Following Anawrahta's conquest of Thaton, then the leading city of lower Burma, in 1057 Hinayana Buddhism became the religion of Burma. This event is without doubt the most important happening in Burma's long history. Anawrahta was the unifier of Burma and the populariser of Buddhism. He conquered Arakan and parts of Yunnan. He built Pagan, in the inhospitable dry zone along the middle Irrawaddy, and it remained one of the great royal cities of Asia until it was reduced by the armies of Kublai Khan in 1287. The Mongol conquest was followed by 300 years of Shan, Talaing, and Burmese rivalry during which Burma was the spoil of any chieftain who could assert himself above his fellows.

Pegu was the greatest city state of this period before 1500, when Toungoo became the premier kingdom for a brief interlude. During these troublous times foreigners from Europe first visited Burma. Portuguese *feringhi* (*i.e.*, the Franks) came first, and the impression of Europeans gained from them was none too favourable.

In 1550, Tabinshweyti, the young King of Toungoo, became corrupted by his association with the *feringhi* and his throne was seized by Byinnaung, the "Napoleon of Burma." In a burst of glory this contemporary of Queen Elizabeth and the Emperor Akbar extended his conquests to Manipur and Yunnan on the north and to the Mekong, Chiengmai, and Ayuthia on the east.

During the century of chaos and exhaustion following the death of Byinnaung in 1581, the British, French, and Dutch East India companies became interested in the teak, rubies, and silver of Burma. An interesting interlude of the times was provided by the Portuguese adventurer, Philip de Brito y Nicote, who married the Viceroy's daughter and attempted to carve out a principality for himself in Pegu about 1600. It is said that he seized Syriam because he was intrigued by the excellent marionette shows of the town.

Among the most famous of these harrying Portuguese pirates was one Sebastian Gonsalves Tibao, a renegade who had turned against both his King and his religion and set up for himself. Letters that passed between the King and the

Viceroy at Goa concerning Tibao offer so delicate an example of State cynicism that they are worth relating. The King, after recounting all that his Viceroy had told him, directed that "...so infamous a scoundrel should be hanged the instant possession could be got of his person; but in the meanwhile, since he was a man of authority and influence in those parts, he was to be informed that His Majesty had been graciously pleased to bestow upon him the Order of the Habit of Christ, Third Class."

These Portuguese freebooters, with their merry men, roamed over the East. Thousands of their half-caste descendants took service under the Kings of Burma and were absorbed, with hardly a trace remaining, in the coastal population.

Among the early travellers to Burma was the Venetian, Nicolo di Conti, who returned to his native city in 1444. He wrote of Burma, after coming overland from India, "... after seventeen days passing through desert hills we came to a champaign country." He was the first adventurer from the West to write of the rubies of Burma and the first to mention the famous white elephants. In 1492 Stephano of Genoa landed in Pegu and wrote home of "... another great lord who possesses more than 10,000 elephants. This land is fifteen days journey from another land called Ava in which grow great rubies and many other precious stones." By 1505 the fame and wealth of the King of Pegu was commented upon by another Italian merchant, di Varthema, who sold the King some coral. His Burmese Majesty was described in these words :

> "... He wears more rubies on him than the value of a very great city, and he wears them on all his toes. And on his legs he wears certain great rings of gold, all full of the most beautiful rubies; also his arms and fingers are full. His ears hang down half a palm, through the weight of the many jewels he wears there, so that seeing the person of the King by a light at night he shines so much that he appears to be a sun."

Alaungpaya, the hereditary *thugyi* of Shwebo, overthrew the last of the gilded Talaings who ruled upper Burma in 1754.

Having secured the loyalty of northern Burma, this son of Shwebo turned the tide of conquest to the South. In February, 1755, he was before the gates of Prome. By mid-summer he took the Shwe Dagon Pagoda from the Kings of Pegu and named the surrounding village Rangoon, "the end of the war." Alaungpaya, having established a bloody sort of unity from Yunnan to the Gulf of Martaban became the national hero of Burma and the founder of its last dynasty of kings that ruled until Theebaw and Supayalat were exiled in 1886.

The modern world came to Burma under the successive rule of three sons of Alaungpaya. They ruled in Ava and Amarapura (the City without Death) from 1760 to 1819, except for a brief interlude when the peacock throne was occupied in Ava by Singu Min, a grandson. During this period Burmese armies twice invaded Siam, repelled border raids by the Chinese, conquered Arakan and in 1784 removed its great image to Mandalay (where it may be seen to-day in the Arakan Pagoda), raided Manipur, and established a murderous control over parts of Assam. A British historian has characterized the Burmese conquerors correctly : "They fought and died by hundreds and thousands leaving their bones to bleach from Junkceylon to the banks of the Brahmaputra." The Burmese victors were not constructive ; the capture of slaves and booty and the complete devastation of enemy territory were their objects, and desolation the result.

Alaungpaya's descendants on the throne (all of whom, reminiscent of the Pharaohs, were married to their sisters or half-sisters) were cursed with a streak of brilliance mixed with madness. Some of the Burmese monarchs were men of genuine ability, but most of them were mannerless megalomaniacs, cruel, vindicative, and utterly ruthless and unpredictable. Under Bodawpaya (1782–1819) the Burmese Empire reached its greatest limits, extending from Tenasserim to Assam. Under Theebaw, Burmese independence was finally extinguished. In the interim the throne was held in the past century by such as the mad Tharawaddy (1837–46) and Pagan Min (1846–53) who rode pick-a-back on their courtiers from garden to palace. The story is that

Tharawaddy once used his sword to cut a chessboard on the back of an unlucky attendant. Best of all the Alaungpaya line was the good Mindon Min who ruled from 1853 to 1878. He was definitely a cut above his predecessors, but like them considered it advisable to bury a pregnant woman alive under the gate when a new palace was under construction. Such princes of the blood as incurred the royal disfavour were placed in a velvet bag and drowned in the Irrawaddy ; the blood of royalty must not be spilled by the usual forms of execution. Being beheaded, impaled, or trampled underfoot by the palace elephants was reserved for people of the baser sort.

One of the earlier kings of the Alaungpaya dynasty kept a white elephant whose dilettante taste required that he have the privilege of sucking the milk from the breasts of nursing women with his trunk. The fact that the excruciating pain caused many of the women to faint made no difference to His Majesty. The sacred beast must have his favourite breakfast.

Britain acquired Burma in three stages : As a result of the first Anglo-Burmese war (1824–26) Burma ceded the provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim and renounced all claim to Assam, Cachar, and Manipur. After a rendezvous in Port Cornwallis, in the Andamans, the British seized Rangoon and advanced up country. The first serious opposition was encountered at Danubyu, where on April 2, 1825, Maha Bandula, Burma's greatest general, met death from a British rocket. With him perished the Burmese hopes for victory. With the aid of two American missionaries, Adoniram Judson and Dr. Price, peace was concluded at Yandabo, forty miles from Ava, in February, 1826. The terms differed markedly from those stated in the official Burmese account. The King's chroniclers wrote :

> "In the years 1186 and 1187 (Buddhist era) white strangers from the west fastened a quarrel upon the Lord of the Golden Palace. They landed at Rangoon, took that place and Prome, and were permitted to advance as far as Yandabo ; for the King, from motives of piety and regard to life, made no preparations whatever to oppose them.

> The strangers had spent vast sums of money in their enterprise, so that by the time they reached Yandabo their resources were exhausted and they were in great distress. They then petitioned the King, who in his clemency and generosity sent them large sums of money [the indemnity] to pay their expenses back and ordered them out of the country."

Actually, the war had been expensive in men and money. Of 3,586 British troops who landed in Rangoon on the first expedition, 3,115 died in Burma of wounds or disease, only 150 being killed in action.

Relations between Britain and Burma following the first war were vexed with such questions as : Should foreign envoys sit on chairs in the presence of His Burmese Majesty ? Should they wear shoes in the palace ? Should they be compelled to live on the island cemetery in the Irrawaddy while awaiting an audience ? Should they be required to *shiko* (worship) the palace while on their way to the Golden Presence ? Was it not proper for the King to keep them waiting at a distance for as long as he wished while gazing at them through opera glasses ?

War between Britain and Burma broke out again in 1852, principally over questions of treatment of British subjects and shipping in Rangoon. The second war ended without formal treaty, the British having annexed Pegu by proclamation on December 20, 1852. Thus Burma lost its only remaining maritime province. Lord Dalhousie's proclamation of annexation warned that further difficulties " . . . if they be persisted in must of necessity lead to the total subversion of the Burmese state and to the ruin and exile of the King and his race."

A palace revolution placed the good Mindon on the throne in 1853. Mindon, last but one of the Alaungpaya dynasty, was undoubtedly the most astute of his line. He was careful to maintain correct relations with the Powers, particularly with Great Britain, although he did not love the British. During England's trial of strength in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, Mindon refused to throw his arms to the side of the mutineers, despite the attractive prospect of recovering

lower Burma. He even made a donation of £10,000 to aid British sufferers of the Mutiny.

Mindon died on October 1, 1878, and as a result of palace intrigues which laid the foundations for later atrocities, was succeeded by the weak Theebaw. Internal conditions went from bad to worse to impossible. Even the American Minister to Peking observed that the absorption of Burma by Britain seemed to be " . . . . devoutly wished for by nearly all the foreign residents of China," and also by those in lower Burma.

French intrigue in Mandalay precipitated the third Anglo-Burmese war, and in 1885 led to the British decision to take over the remaining segment of independent Burma. By Franco-Burmese agreement, France was to extend the railway from Toungoo to Mandalay, to control steamers on the upper Irrawaddy, to establish a Bank of Burma (which would loan money to the King at a mere twelve per cent.) and manage the Burmese postal system. The excessive fine which Burma attempted to levy upon the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, a British firm, for alleged violations of its contract to work teak in the King's forests was only a contributing factor.

" Please instruct General Prendergast to advance on Mandalay at once," the Secretary of State for India telegraphed the Viceroy on November 11, 1885. The order was carried out vigorously. After brushes at Minhla and Myingyan, General Prendergast's command reached Mandalay on the morning of November 28, and by nightfall Theebaw, Supayalat, and a small retinue were safely aboard the *Thooreah* in the Irrawaddy and four days later were en route to Rangoon and exile at Ratnagiri, on the Bombay coast of India, where the King died in 1916. Supayalat returned to Rangoon where she lived quietly on a generous pension until 1925.

Lord Dufferin, known thereafter as the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, issued a Proclamation of Annexation on January 1, 1886, and the last segment of independent Burma was incorporated into the Indian Empire. The Proclamation, a one-sentence example of unusual official brevity, reads simply :

> "By command of the Queen-Empress it is hereby notified that the territories formerly governed by King Theebaw will no longer be under his rule, but have become part of Her Majesty's dominions, and will, during Her Majesty's pleasure, be administered by such officers as the Viceroy and Governor-General of India may from time to time appoint." ... *Dufferin.*

The new French consul travelled up to Mandalay on the return trip of the steamer that had brought Theebaw down, but when he arrived there was no one in the Glass Palace to whom he might present his credentials.

After the fall of Theebaw, marauding bands of ex-soldiers from the Burmese army took their arms and set up in business as *dacoits* (bandits). Five troublesome years passed before upper Burma was "pacified." Certain areas in the Chin Hills, near the Indian frontier, were in active revolt until 1896, while some more remote parts of Burma were not administered at all prior to the Japanese occupation.

Burma entered the twentieth century as a province, and unwilling partner, of the Indian Empire. At first a Chief Commissionership, Burma became a Lieutenant-Governorship in 1897, and a Governor's Province in 1923. Burma remained a part of India until April 1, 1937, when she divorced India and went her own way as a separate unit of the British Empire.

During the first decades of the present century Burma remained a sort of story-book country where nature was profuse, the soil apparently inexhaustible, the people reasonably contented. The period before 1930 was a time of adjustment between Burmese and British cultures. The town Burmans took to the conveniences of Western life like ducks to water. But their intensive racial pride led them to cling to the finest elements of their own civilization. Unlike the Japanese and the Turks at opposite ends of Asia, the Burmese did not adopt European dress but wisely prefer to retain the more suitable and picturesque national garb.

Under British occupation, Western civilization profoundly affected Burmese life. Native education, drama, and arts and crafts lost their popularity. The old court of Mandalay, formerly the market for the finest silk and lacquer, was no more.

Burma flourished outwardly. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, rice cultivation expanded enormously in response to demands from the European market. More than 2000 miles of metre gauge railways were built and operated by foreigners. During the present century rice exports averaged more than 3,000,000 tons per year. Teak exports increased, the oil fields were developed, and the abandoned Bawdwin Mines, north of Mandalay, became one of the world's largest producers of silver, lead, and zinc. Tin and tungsten mines were developed in the Karenni States and down the arm of Tenasserim. But the Burman wasn't happy. Progress and the new economic life had left him pretty much of a bystander in his own country.

In all of this development the Burman had little share. Some call it development; others prefer the word "exploitation." The fact remains that the Burman showed little interest in extending his rice fields; this was done principally by Indian labour and capital. The Burmese had neither experience, interest, nor inclination for working the mines, which never would have been reclaimed from the engulfing jungle except for British capital. Burmese labour could not be found for the rice mills, the rubber plantations, the river steamers, the mines, and the railways.

In consequence, the Burman has observed himself gradually being displaced in his ancestral acres by immigrant Europeans, Indians, and Chinese. In defence of the more enterprising Indian and Chinese immigrants it must be said that the Burman was relatively content to let matters drift along, that is he was until the "great depression" of the 1930's came to Pagoda Land. Once caught in economic doldrums, the Burmese became acutely and violently aware of the fact that unless he acted immediately he would become a landless stranger in his own land. Resentment and economic stresses followed inevitably. It is not so much that the foreigner has deprived the Burman of anything; he had little industry or commerce before the arrival of the European. Nor is he likely to have much success with these enterprises under expropriation and his own management in an independent Burma. But he will gain self-respect in the

attempt. The Burman did have grievances, and he was determined to proceed along lines of his own choosing to redress them. Big business in the post-war Burma will be wise if it decides to take the Burman in as a partner both in management and labour. Only in this way can he gain the experience necessary to manage his own economic household.

## CHAPTER SIX.

### BUDDHISM : THE GREAT PEACE.

*" The goal of the Buddhist is that he shall not want anything."*
*Lin Yutang.*

Buddha, the founder of Burma's religion, was a robust, vigorous person. The tradition goes that as a young man he was a mighty bowman and a warrior. It is said that he took part in army training, hunted, wrestled, played chess, dice, and various ball games, and found time to attend the theatre. He lived to be eighty. Born a prince in India in the middle of the 5th century, B.C., he was twenty-nine when he came to his great decision, gave away his jewelled raiment, cut off his long hair and vowed that he would not return to his father's court until he had conquered " old age, disease and death." He sought and found enlightenment after only the most rigorous of physical disciplines, such as attaining a trance-like state of restraint of breath, going without food until his stomach touched his spine, and attempting to " burn out his mind with his mind." But keen-minded as he was, he eventually decided that enlightenment might just as well be achieved neither by torturing the body nor by pampering it. Disciples abandoned him and he went the way alone, spending a period of quiet meditation until he felt he was ready to impart to his fellows the insight he had gained.

Buddha preached his first sermon at Benares and spent the remaining forty-five years of his life in spreading his

doctrines: which he called the Aryan Path, or the Middle Way, and eight steps to a more expansive life—right faith, right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right thought and right self-concentration. Obviously it was not an easy diet and Buddha may have been surprised that he found thousands ready to listen, for he said of his Path, " it is hard to perceive (which is putting it lightly), tranquil, transcendent, beyond the sphere of reasoning (you will be likely to agree), to be known only by the wise."

Westerners, who may suppose that Buddhism as a religion is not " human " enough and who protest that its moral precepts are too pure and exalted, in fact, quite unobtainable, sometimes imagine that it is a way of negation or " a stately flight of stairs that leads nowhere." It might be said that man cannot attain its aspiring elevation and still remain a man ; indeed, Buddhism's rarified aura reduces life, as one savant puts it, to " an echo of silence." But this is all wrong. Buddhism is scarcely a religion, in its initial stages at any rate, but a buoyant, practical, realistic way of looking at life. This, eminently, is what endears it to Burmans : people, who by contrast with the fevered West, worry little, fret less and strive seldom. The Burmese simply don't concentrate on achievement ; they refuse to load life with things that don't belong to it. Rather, their philosophy consists in a refusal to worry ; life is just a bowl of cherries, laugh while you may and it'll keep you happy for days.

Is it any wonder that Buddhism remains the inspiration and the support of more souls than any other faith ? And far from ending up nowhere, it has created great schools of art, built thousands of monasteries, and profoundly affected civilisation—ancient and modern.

There is probably no harder task than explaining Buddhism ; like any religion it is a spiritual thing, elusive, subtle. Before wayfarers in the West can even approach this Peacock Throne of faiths, it is necessary to enter into the spirit of Eastern thought and consider the alleged contradictions of the " Oriental mind." Drifting in this pungent state of mind we learn that Buddhism first and fundamentally is the doctrine of " asking why with the soul." All Eastern

philosophies assert that man has no other reliable means of inquiry. If he asks with the mind he must rely on mere appearances. To the East science is a gross deception, an arch betrayer.

Buddha was no extremist. That was why he broke away from the Brahmanism of his time. He was born five hundred years before Christ. Before his death his birthplace had been sacked in the upheavals which followed one of India's periodic invasions from the Northwest Frontier. In China Confucius had died a few years previously and in Palestine the Jews had returned from Egyptian slavery. Soon after Buddha's death Pericles started to rebuild the Parthenon, and Herodotus was born. And while his message of good will had spread to the East and West, it had not been able to avert men from war.

Buddha, or Siddharta Gautama as he was born, simply started a new and more humane way of life than any which had yet been known in the East. His followers were bound by no caste restrictions or difficult sacrifices; he offered a sane and compassionate teaching: "not by hatred are hatreds calmed," he said, "but by non-hatred." Before Buddha, men had had lofty ideals and voiced them in stately language, but he was the first, as far as is known, to found an Order of monks whose original aim was service rather than speculation.

After his enlightenment and probably through the usual boredom which he found in public life, he realized the superficiality of words and boundless stupidity of which men are capable, for he reminded his monks later of "the thicket of theorising." When an old man he said to his cousin: "There is nothing strange in human beings dying; it is wearisome that you should enquire about their future life." He must have known how necessary it was for his followers to keep their feet on the ground when he told his monks: "Be ye lamps unto yourselves," and warned them to lean on no god, but the God Within.

Most religions to gain allegiance and arouse the enthusiasm of men have resorted to poetry of the senses as expressed in ceremonial and architectural beauty. That is why Buddhism has such a popular response in Burma.

Modern Buddhism has its ceremony and above all, its pagodas. One has only to travel the length of Burma and visit its remote villages to see electrically lighted pagodas, frequently the only modern lighting in the village, as evidence of Buddhism's influence over the people.

To the Burman, "Buddhist" and "Burmese" are almost interchangeable terms. Buddhism has come into the life of these people as religion has rarely affected the life of any other nation. Indeed, if a Burman becomes a Christian, in the eyes of his fellows he is a "kala", or foreigner. Buddhism reached Burma in force from India, where it is now almost a forgotten religion, about 1057 A.D. Even before this time Ari Buddhist colonies existed in upper Burma. To-day Burma is virtually a one-religion country; Buddhism is the professed faith of five-sixths of the total population. Its popularity with the Burmese lies, among other things, in its festive and social features (the Burmese as good Buddhists find joy in the pleasures of the immediate present); in its antiquity and prestige; in the system of gaining merit by pious works; and in the fact that every Burmese lad spends a period of his boyhood observing its vows while wearing the yellow robe as a novice.

Burmese Buddhism has no formal head, no organization of the type usually associated with denominations elsewhere, but every village has a monastery, or *pongyi kyaung*, presided over by a monk, also called a *pongyi* (great glory). The smaller villages usually have but one monk; in large cities such as Mandalay with nearly 20,000 monks, there may be scores of them in a single group of monasteries.

In the schools of the West you learned how to make money; in the Burmese monastery school a youth learns to be happy and contented. As soon as the boy dons the saffron robe and enters the monastery, he is seated in a big schoolroom with the other boys. Each newcomer gets a rudely-made black wooden slate with letters and perhaps the whole of the alphabet written on it. The letters are explained and this touches off pure pandemonium; for the next few days he shouts out their sounds at the top of his lungs. Nobody minds. The other scholars are likewise busied in such

hallooing, and the monks derive a virtuous feeling of comfort from the din. It is as soothing as the clatter of a newspaper office to a reporter, or the roar of traffic to a city urchin. If a boy stops shouting, it means he's stopped working. Thus the Burmese lad slowly learns and meanwhile absorbs Buddhist teachings.

There has been much dissatisfaction with the monastic schools. Many of the monks have quit the contemplative quiet of their *Kyaungs* for the lure of the political arena. The monastic schools for children still limit their curriculum to the *Thin-bon-gyi* (great basket of learning) alphabet, the Buddhist Beatitudes, the Nine Excellences of the Buddha, the Six Excellences of the Law, the Nine Excellences of the Assembly, and similar homilies.

Every Burmese boy, according to the tenets of his religion, must spend some time in a monastery with his head shaven and wearing a yellow robe. Some remain for only ten days ; others observe the oath of poverty, chastity and obedience for a lifetime. No one is compelled to remain ; a *pongyi* may leave his *Kyaung* when he feels like it and " become a man again " at will. In rare instances Europeans have become Buddhists and worn the yellow robe in Burma ; but their influence was not great.

Considering the fact that there are 120,000 members of the Buddhist order in Burma, it is understandable that an errant monk may occasionally run afoul of the law. At one time, ten *pongyis* cooled their heels in the Insein prison. On several occasions Buddhist monks have protested against what they deemed evil in the popular Burmese novel and moving pictures. Likewise, when the modern Burmese young lady wore *kitawut aingyees*, fashionable jackets of too thin material, *pongyis* crusaded against the innovation and led boycotts against Indian shops which sold the materials. Monks, too, have exhorted the Burman to observe the Buddhist commandant against too ardent a wooing of the bottle ; and their influence is invariably directed against the opium traffic, vice, and other evils.

Among Burmese monks there are many who appeal to the best in Burmese character. One of the most famous

*pongyis* was the Mohnyin Sayadaw who has conducted preaching missions in Rangoon, addressing crowds as large as 10,000 by means of public-address systems.

Burmese miscellany offers much that is picturesque. Although religion as such has little part at Burmese weddings or funerals, the influence of Buddhism remains with the Burman from the cradle to the grave. After a Burman dies, an image of Buddha precedes the hearse. Important events in the life of Burmese boys and girls are the ear-boring festivals to which *pongyis* are always invited. The educated Burman may smile at the stories of the prowess of the *thagyamin* (king of the spirits) and may have difficulty in reconciling scientific principles with orthodox Buddhism, but he will very likely remain deferential to Buddhist traditions. Burmese profanity, vitriolic and lurid, avoids any mention of the divinity, but ignorant and irreverent *pongyis* are not spared; they are often the butt of profanity or ridicule.

Near the monastery is found the village pagoda, built of solid masonry; there is no "temple." The gleaming, gilded Shwe Dagon pagoda at Rangoon, 368 feet high, can be seen for miles. To-day its towering spire is a guidepost to Japanese warplanes. Like most pagodas, its form is in concentric circles of masonry, topped by an ornament and vane called a *hti*. The upper part is covered by thin gold plate presented by King Mindon and the lower part by gold leaf brought from China. The larger pagodas, like the Shwe Dagon, have a cluster of lavishly decorated monasteries and shrines about the central spire, while many a village pagoda is cared for only by its rustic admirers. John Crawfurd, the British orientalist who visited Ava to arrange a commercial treaty after the first War with Burma, described the typical pagoda as "something between a bell and a beehive."

It is astonishing how many pagodas jut out of every part of the Burmese countryside, far surpassing the number erected by the faithful in the sacred island of Ceylon, or by the Tibetans and the Chinese. A Burman doesn't notice the profusion of these religious edifices in his country until he travels afar and finds how sparing other nations are in their places of worship. There is a neatly kept shrine in the humb-

lest Burmese village. No hill is too steep or rocky, or so dense with jungle, as to prevent a glistening gold or white spire from rising up to remind those beneath of the Saviour Lord Buddha. Merit is acquired by building new pagodas, not by repairing old ones, except for the great pagodas such as the Shwe Dagon.

There are numerous pagoda curiosities—at least one is precariously built upon a balancing rock at Kyaiktyo, between Pegu and Moulmein.

The Burman also venerate many thousands of other golden piles of masonry, most of them reputedly raised over some of the true remains of the Buddha, such as pieces of Gautama's flesh, his teeth, bits of his hair, the frontal bone and the jaw-bone. The Shwe Hmaw Daw at Pegu, erected by the Talaings, claims a sacred tooth ; the Shwe San Daw (Golden Hair Pagoda) was built at Prome in honour of Tabinshweyti, a Burmese prince who was born with one long red hair sprouting from the top of his head, a sure sign of an embryonic Buddha ; the Maha Myat Muni, the most exalted shrine at Mandalay, is second only to the Shwe Dagon in the esteem of Upper Burmans. There is Anawrahta's Shwe Zigon at Pagan and a few miles north of Mandalay lies what is said to be the largest pile of brick and mortar in the world—the Mingon Pagoda, begun in 1790, never finished and shattered by an earthquake in 1839.

Burmans know no such word as "pagoda," either in its English or Cinghalese form, any more than the word Mandarin is used in China. The Burmese place of worship is called a *Zedi*, meaning the offering-place or place of prayer, but the expression *Paya*, applying equally to the image or to the shrine, is most often used in referring to pagodas.

A Burman's attitude toward his religion and its holy places is at first somewhat puzzling to a foreigner. There is no congregational worship at pagodas, no mass singing or chanting, no real Sabbath Day although there are "duty days." Seldom is there a sermon, although a dozen people may be observed in respectful silence seated about a venerated *pongyi* (also seated) who may expound the law or the beatitudes to his devout listeners. Above all there is no sadness,

little inhibition, few suggestions of repression or notions that this or that is " wicked " and must not be done on religious days or near the pagodas. There is no misericordia, no thought of anyone having suffered and died to provide an escape from this present evil world. Practically, there are only three restrictions that come prominently to the attention of foreigners in the country : there must be no shooting or taking of life in the vicinity of pagodas and *kyaungs* ; monks may not look at women (they carry fans to shield the eyes lest the temptation become too strong) and women may not speak at length to monks, and, third, no one may enter a *pongyi kyaung* or the precincts of a pagoda with his shoes on. This " footwearing prohibited " rule is the stricture most annoying to European visitors to Rangoon. But it is a rule of long standing in Burma and not, as commonly believed, something imposed by Burmese nationalists to embarrass the foreigner. Back in 1796 Cox, an astute British observer of things Burmese, wrote of the Shwe Dagon, " By orders of the government no person is allowed to go up to the pagoda with their shoes on, but I have seen many Europeans and native Christians break through the order with impunity." However, the rule had lapsed generally before 1900. It was revived about 1920 by renascent Burmese nationalism as a political measure. It was applied frequently against westernised Burmese, and one of the Ministers (himself a Buddhist) was taken to task by his rival at the elections for having worn shoes while visiting the ancient Ananda pagoda at Pagan.

Curiously (or perhaps naturally) it is the white foreigner and not the Indian or the Chinese who most frequently offends the Burman's sense of what is proper in religion. The notice " Footwearing Prohibited " seems never to be necessary in Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, or Chinese, but only in English. And there is no Indian or Chinese notice comparable to the vivid warning in English on a pagoda bell in Moulmein : " No one body design to destroy this Bell. Maulmein March 30, 1855, He who destroyed to this Bell, they must be in the great Heell, and unable to coming out."

Greatest of pagodas, the superbly beautiful Shwe Dagon, could still tell the world of all that is best in Burmese life if

all else in Burma were destroyed. There is no other aspect of Burma that can compare with it in display of colour, for spiritual expression, or in the physical pageantry of life. It is loftier than St. Paul's in London and its effect is greatly enhanced by the fact that it stands on an eminence which is 163 feet above the level of Rangoon. This gives it an air of presiding majesty and makes it visible over a wide horizon. Its spire, covered with pure gold and made iridescent by the brazen sun, is the first thing a traveller sees when approaching Rangoon ; once seen it never fades from the memory. Once in each generation its gold integument is renewed by public subscription ; but actually its regilding goes on perpetually. Almost daily the devout who seek this means of expressing their adoration, climb up its sides with little handfuls of gold leaf which they fasten on some part of its vast surface, adding their mite to its grandeur.

At each of the four approaches to the shrine, standing open for meditations, are *tazoungs*, or chapels, with roofs supported by pillars of mosaic and gold. Here the voices of worshippers mingle in loud unison, countless tapers light up the brass, marble and gold of the seated images of Buddha within. From pediment to pillar and highest pinnacle of the roofs, everything is lavishly bathed in gold. Having prayed within one of these chapels the Burman entertains no idea of ceremonial restraint or inhibition. On his way out, after he has given alms, he strikes a note on one of the bells on the platform to proclaim that he has visited the chapel. But it is difficult to ascend or descend the steps leading to these chapels with unseemly haste. Made of broad stone flags, worn almost into a slope by centuries of use, they are too broad to mount two at a time and too low to be taken singly. Thus, characteristically, Burma obliges respect for its religion.

The origins of the Shwe Dagon are obscured in legend, but most pagoda fanciers ascribe its foundation to the dawn of Buddhism some centuries before the Christian era. It is related that 585 years before Christ two devout merchants from Pegu who journeyed to Gaya to sell rice chanced to meet Gautama in meditation under the trees. Asked what their

mission was, they replied with proper reverence that they sought " heavenly treasure ". Bowing before the Buddha, they were given four hairs from his head which they were instructed to bury in a hill where three of Buddha's predecessors had left a staff, a water-filter and a robe. They were to know the spot from a *takoon*, or wood-oil tree, which had been felled in a curious manner. The merchants on their return found the spot and placing the hairs in a golden casket, buried it. Over these relics the first stones of the Shwe Dagon were erected.

While there is no reliable history of this sacred place before the fifteenth century, it is known that the Talaing Queen Shin Saw Bu erected a new pagoda over the old stupa in the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is probable that the Shwe Dagon hasn't changed its general appearances since that time.

Almost without exception early European wanderers in Burma described in some detail the Shwe Dagon and its setting. Thus Balbi, the Venetian merchant adventurer who visited Burma about the time Virginia was being settled, wrote of the Shwe Dagon, " It is Gilded in a round forme made of stone [actually made of brick] and as much in compasse as the streets before the Venetian Palace, if it were round." Fitch, the first Britisher to see Burma, was even more enthusiastic : " It is of a wonderful bignesse and all gilded from the foot to the toppe. It is the fairest place, I suppose, that is in the World."

Many strange things, some of them reflecting the old nature religion of the country (which ante-dated Buddhism) and others suggesting pure Coney Island commercialism, are to be found scattered at random on the platform of Shwe Dagon : some sacred trees with offerings, and a shrine erected to the spirits of nature ; and slim gilded poles topped with garlands, golden cranes and *shwey hinthas* (mythical ducks). There is a cluttered profusion of shops, bazaars and hawkers' pavement stands on the platform as well as on the stairways leading to the great shrine. Nuns, lepers and cripples line the steps crying insistently for alms. Meanwhile, sellers of candles, incense sticks and prayer-flags ; young girls offering

flowers, toys, slippers, bells and gongs, sweets, and articles for household use, ply their trade with good-natured persistence.

But lingering long in the memory is the chiming, echoing magic of Shwe Dagon's bells, particularly the " great, sweet voice " of the giant Maha Ganda which is second in size in Burma to the famous Mingun bell (this one, excepting the monster at Moscow, is the largest in the world). Hanging from a stout crossbar supported by two uprights with its mouth a foot or so from the ground in the traditional way of suspending Burmese bells, this benign Magog of the East weighs 94,682 pounds and is 14 feet high. Like all pagoda bells in Burma, it has no tongue : its deep metallic tone must be awakened with a billet of wood and a lusty blow which takes " all that you've got " before the behemoth's full euphony, a profound resonance mingled with glowing overtones, is evoked.

As part of the indemnity exacted from the country after the second Burmese war of 1852, the British took the bell, but in attempting to carry it off to Calcutta the Maha Ganda by some mischance slid off the lighter which held it and sank to the muddy bottom of the Rangoon River. English engineers made several attempts but failed to raise it. The Burmans, after some years, begged that the sacred bell might be restored to them ; if they could recover it. The petition was granted and they set to work, got it out, and carried it in triumph to the place where it now hangs. This success was ascribed by the thoughtful to supernatual aid, but the common people chuckled with pleasure over the victory, and not without very fair reason, for their equipment was of the most primitive kind.

No other architecture parallels that of the Shwe Dagon with its boldly-coloured glass mosaics, its vast outer circle of lesser pagodas and shrines, its golden pillars, its screens of delicately wrought wood carving and the bizarre variety of strange creatures alive with action that ornament it. Phantasmagorial colour—vermilion, green, gold and purple—weaves within and without with vibrant effect. Tufted palms rise with stately dignity, filtering sunlight on to the worshippers kneeling on the outer platforms beneath. The Shwe Dagon

is never deserted. Long after midnight voices of pilgrims rise in solemn chant into the night air, while on feast days, a laughing, joyous gathering of youths, maidens and elders in their national dress, creates one of the most memorable scenes in the East. Inspiring as it is, the shrine is surpassed in interest by the followers of Buddha who animate it.

Whenever one looks upon this great drama of worship, whether in the early unfolding of the dawn, or in the solitude of the night while the clear music of the shrine's bells tinkle overhead, Shwe Dagon seems to revive a new mood of comfort and beauty. It is the greatest expression of Burmese faith.

If a Burman keeps the great Precepts of his religion, in the next existence he may enter into a blissfull *Arabian Night's* heaven, intoxicating beyond the most fervid imagination. But if he fails to observe them, hideous States of Punishment, each more terrible than the last, surely await him in an exquisitely catalogued hell of gruesome tortures. The miserable wretch who backslides must pass millions of agonizing years working out the evil of his sins. And his repentance has just begun. A further stage of torment, outdoing the awful imaginings of Dante's poem, must be endured for a period of time so vast that the mind cannot grasp it.

As if these punishments were not enough to frighten the weak and ignorant from sin, other torments that await the damned have been revealed. It is told in one of the Great Sacred Mystery Plays how a pious noble was shown the terrors of hell. He saw loathsome crows, famished vultures and five-headed dogs tearing at the flesh of men, the flesh being renewed as fast as the creatures tore it away. He saw other sinners weighted down by huge white-hot mountains, stretched on fiery bars and being sliced with burning knives and flaming saws, their hearts slowly pierced with white-hot needles—with fiends all about, hacking, stabbing and lacerating the body. There is a lowest hell for those who scoff at Buddha and scorn the law and twenty-one kinds of people who will fall into it. Nineteen, however, if they see the error of their ways and attend the pagodas with offerings, may be redeemed. But enough for the horrors of hell. Who would not choose righteousness when he sees what the alternative is?

A word about the Buddhist heaven. There are six worlds of bliss and twenty superior seats. Recall any dream when you thought you had attained the most exquisite fulfilment —and you have a picture of them. A fanciful realm of eternal song, dancing, rich raiment, fragrant flowers and intoxicating music, but passion still prevails, it becomes less sensual the higher one rises. In one superior heaven a touch of the hand satisfies love ; in another lovers simply gaze at each other, and in the ultimate aura, presence in the same place is enough. To the Burman, ignorance is the sole barrier to rising in the scale of heavens. The higher existences can only be reached by performance of good works, not only outwardly, but also inwardly with the soul. The last dizzy height of attainment is Neikban—a calm and never-ending cessation of existence. Here when a man dies and goes to Neikban he knows, feels nothing ; he is not absorbed into the supreme Buddha, as Brahmins assert, but he dwells forever in an ineffable calm—in a lifeless, timeless bliss.

All these realms of phantasy—there is a bliss at various stages suited to every vision of delight—have nothing to do with the state of Neikban. It is not a " nothingness." For a " nothingness " that can be imagined is something. The Buddhist religion is much too practical, in its earthly precepts, to become entangled in the incomprehensible. In order that there be no mistaken impression, Buddhism surrounds the last mystery with the utmost possible uncertainty. The Buddhist seeks to escape from the confusion and ceaseless turmoil of living to the tranquillity of the first beginning.

## CHAPTER SEVEN.

### Burmese Women: Daughters of Dreamers.

*"The daughters of dreamers are always pretty and always do just as they please."*

Ralph Fitch, who passed through Burma in 1586, as the first Englishman to reach its shores, wrote of his landfall:

> "Three days after we came to Cosmin [Bassein ?] which is a very pretty town, and standeth very pleasantly, very well furnished with all things. The people being very tall and well-disposed: the women white, round-faced, with little eyes."

Almost without exception early European travellers to Burma commented upon the charm and cleverness of the daughters of Burma. These ladies of the silken east escaped the *purdah* of Indian women and the footbinding of the Chinese, as well as the subordination to the dowager of the household common with both of her great neighbours.

In short, the status of women in Burma more nearly resembles that of their occidental sisters than is the case in any other oriental land. Marriage is considered the proper role for women, as witness the Burmese proverb: "Monks and hermits are beautiful when they are lean; four-footed animals when they are fat; men when they are learned; and women when they are married." Long before the British took over the country the Burmese woman enjoyed equal rights, by law and by custom, in property ownership, divorce, business, and inheritance. She does not change her name at marriage, nor is there any marked change in coiffure or costume to indicate her marriage. Ma Hla Shwe (beautiful gold) remains Ma Hla Shwe after marriage.

Curiously, Burmese women appear quite content to retain their traditional place in the home and in the bazaar trade. Although all women who can read and write in any language have the franchise, few of them bothered to go to

the polls. The constitution of 1937 proposed reservation of certain seats in the House of Representatives for Burmese women, but the ladies declined, preferring to take their chances in open elections. On more than one occasion they have defeated male candidates.

Perhaps their favourable condition accounts for the fact that there has been no feminist movement in Burma. Women do not consider their interests as distinct from those of men. There is in Burma no modern equivalent of China's Madame Chiang Kai-shek or India's Sarojini Naidu. The nearest approach is perhaps Daw Mya Sein, at present in India.

Ear piercing is for the girl what initiation into the monasteries is to the boy. The ceremony takes place in the midst of a *pwe* at her father's house, usually between the age of six and sixteen. While the process is mildly painful, as opposed to tattooing of the boys, the girls are not given any narcotics but are expected to squirm during the operation. The lobe is gradually enlarged until it can hold big jewelled ear pendants or even cheroots. Ear piercing is meant to transform the girl's character and from then on until she is married she acts well the part of the demure young lady, which she is. After the ear boring, the girls engage in a period of determined, stylized, artful flirtation, usually conducted at the bazaar stall and on the verandah in the evenings. There is also plenty of chance for flirting at plays, feasts, and at pagoda festivals. These flirtations are completely artificial, terminating in nothing, and the girls' virtue is further hedged around with legal and social protections. The mothers are always carefully in sight, and attempted abduction of a young girl means a severe penalty by native law. As Fielding Hall says, " A man who even touched the hand of an unwilling girl suffered severely. That she tempted him is nothing. The girl might tell her lover to meet her in the forest, and if he but kissed her and she unwilling, he could be severely punished. Men learned sometimes to fear women as one fears a nettle that has a deadly sting."

The marriage age is approximately the same as that in western lands, although marriage of girls of fourteen is not unknown, and there is reasonable freedom of choice in mates.

Marriages with first cousins are permitted, but regarded with disfavour. The girl calls her lover " brother." In theory, the women are not supposed to take the initiative. As Hall was told by a Burmese woman, " No good, quiet girl would tell a man she loved him first. It may be so ; if this be true, I fear there are many girls here who are not good and quiet."

When Burmese women fall in love they frequently do so with extreme ardour, like an old barn burns in August. There are scenes in the plays when women even threaten to throttle the men who will not accept their favours, and Hall reported that as a magistrate he had frequently held inquests over girls who drowned themselves from love. A common term of endearment used by a Burmese woman in speaking to her lover is to call him " flower that I wear in my hair," with the suggestion that he is a mere decorative appurtenance. This idea is phrased explicitly in certain Burmese plays and stories, adopted in part from Indian models. In the play *Paduma*, where the heroine falls in love with a man who has had his arms, legs and nose cut off as a punishment for robbery, " the princess at once makes love to the limbless man, who at first refuses her advance. He has agreed to love her when she threatens him with immediate death. She arranges to kill her husband and carries around the loved stumpy in a basket on her head."

In the story, *The Man With Three Wives*, the hero is transformed into a parrot by a magic string around his neck, and as such is given to the princess as a pet ; one evening she removes the string, and the bird becomes a handsome young man ; he spends the night with the princess, and then in the morning she turns him back into a parrot, and this continues for several months, without any protest on the part of the prince.

The opposite of his attitude is also shown in the plays. Men refer to women as " purest gold," as " precious jewels " ; an elderly man has been duped by a young girl to help her find her real lover by pretending to love him and says to the girl : " Oh, little mistress, I love you so much that I could happily spend my days washing your underclothes. O Saw-

may, I love you so much that I want to kneel down and kiss your little toes, tickling them with my lips."

In nearly all the plays, the women take the initiative, and in three of them they as nearly ravish the man as is physiologically possible. The play, Paduma, with the limbless paramour, has the princess saying finally to the reluctant stumpy: "I will seize you by the throat as a tiger seizes his prey, if you do not hasten to 'unite us'". In the *Baboon Brother and Sister* the hero is escaping enemies in the forest. "When darkness came he climbed a tree for shelter and found himself in the nest of a baboon who gave fruit to eat but forced him to mate with her. He was kept a prisoner for a year, during which time a son and a daughter were born to the baboon. Both the children had the appearance of human beings."

Burma has no *mui tsai* problem, little concubinage, little polygamy, and no *congai* system as was once common in French Indochina. Burmese Buddhists do not have the Hindu's objection to remarriage of widows. Burmese women are the masters of their own destiny. The Japanese suggestion that Burmese girls serve as waitresses in Japanese officers' clubs, or that they become equivalents of the geisha, was repellant to the Burmese.

It has been said that the women make most important family decisions and leave the frivolous pursuits to the men. When he is not idling, or gossiping about who is going to get what political honour or position, the Burman who is not regularly employed usually looks after the children while his wife is busy at the Bazaar. Although Burmese parents are fond of children to the point of being exceedingly indulgent, large families are the exception rather than the rule. The reason for this is somewhat obscure, and there is no evidence suggesting that the Burmese have discovered any artificial contraceptives although knowledge of western methods has become rather widespread. The low birth-rate has been blamed on the woman's dominance, but this is unlikely. The fact that many Burmese women have independent businesses and separate interests no doubt makes them reluctant to accept large family responsibilities. There may

be another reason for the Burmese woman's reluctance to bear children. Until recently the newly delivered mother and child were subjected to a long and painful smoking over a smudge fire which, to say the least, probably spoiled the beauty of the woman. Further, the high death-rate of mothers in childbirth is partly responsible. One school reported that only 30 per cent of its students had both parents living.

In Burma, as elsewhere, the course of true love does not always run smoothly. In that event divorce, fairly common and reasonably respectable, is the proper remedy. Once the decree has been given by the local elders or by the law courts, if large properties are involved, the divorcee retains the property which she had upon marriage. She usually receives half of that acquired jointly. Buddhism holds up a most exalted ideal of domestic happiness. Women should be submissive, quiet, always attentive to the needs and wishes of their husbands. The model for married happiness is the idealistic relations between Wethandaya and his queen Mahdi, as pictured in Wethandaya, the most winsome of the traditional birth stories of the Buddha.

Chinese husbands are considered quite desirable by Burmese women. They usually acquire wealth, they are good providers, and they are fond of children. The Chinese are respected and are considered cousins. The Burmese despise and dislike the Indian, partly because of the differences in race and religion although the founder of Buddhism was himself an Indian. Marriages between Europeans or Americans and Burmese women were not common during the past two or three decades, but were fairly common and quite successful immediately following the Annexation of 1885, when there were very few white women in the province. Two British Justices of the High Court had Burmese wives, as did a recent President of the Legislative Council. Marriages between European women and men of the country are rare. Certainly not over two dozen Burmese had " pukka " English or American wives. One or two of the Shan Sawbwas have married English girls and have brought them to Burma. During the past decade a number of Anglo-Burmese girls

have married Burmans, perhaps wisely deciding that their futures are best secured by being thus linked with men of the country. The Premier of Burma during the Japanese invasion, who has since headed the government in exile in India, has a capable American wife.

Relatively few Burmese women have taken to the professions or to business other than petty bazaar trade. Only a few have qualified as doctors or lawyers. A good many have become teachers, nurses, secretaries, or salesgirls. Because of their resourcefulness and sprightly good nature Burmese, Karen, and Shan girls excel in the classroom or as nurses.

Although tidiness is one of the last gifts of civilization, Burmese of the upper and middle classes are scrupulously clean in their homes and persons. Burmese women bathe every day beside the village well or at wayside hydrants in the cities. They modestly tuck their *longyis* under their armpits, and change from wet to dry with amazing diplomacy and speed. They have developed ingenious techniques for bathing under their *longyis*, holding them a little away from the body and pouring water down, and then changing their clothes without undressing, putting the fresh garment on top and removing the soiled one underneath.

Burmese family life moves along with a delightfully irregular tempo. The lady of the house is in many respects the more ambitious and able half of the household; she wastes few words when she does not wish to be coy and maidenly. When she shouts at her children (the Burmese believe women have no patience) her voice is full of strident authority which cannot be resisted and must not be questioned. In the words of one observer " a Burmese mother will yell at her child one minute and love it violently the next and give it a spank the third."

The man of the house seldom misses his siesta. Yet he is recognized as the undoubted head of the house.

Cooking is done over a wood or charcoal fire, usually in a kitchen behind the house. In country villages, the family eats at a low round table seated on the floor or on low stools. Usually the father and sons eat first, the wife and daughters

later. But these customs are changing rapidly and in cities and larger towns the families of officials and people of importance eat together at ordinary tables and chairs. Many people eat with their fingers or use a Chinese-style spoon. The typical family sleeps on rush or cane mats that are rolled up in the daytime. The use of western beds was becoming common. Windows open at floor level for coolness.

Burmese, and particularly the women, smoke almost from weaning. Young and old, male and female, all puff away at pungent cheroots—too pungent, in fact; the fermented tobacco that is rolled into some of these smokes makes the world go around. Others are so mild that they contain just a trace of tobacco.

Imported cosmetics and dentifrices were in common use by Burmese women, but many of them continue to smear their faces with *thanaka* (a milky liquid made with ground up aromatic wood) to make the skin white and smooth. Their bountiful black hair is coiled around on top of the head and resembles a section of a shiny stovepipe hat about six inches high, but this style was changing in favour of coiffures which show the influence of Hollywood.

Jewellery, worn with consumate grace and good taste, is dear to the feminine heart. With her slender figure tightly wrapped in her rainbow-tinted silk *tamein*, her spotlessly clean jacket covering her breast and with her glistening tresses brightened by flowers, the Burmese lady knows she is an object to be admired.

To be pretty, to be religious, to be amiable and gay-hearted, to be submissive at home, and to have a good business instinct, are all that is demanded of a Burmese woman. She fulfils all expectations.

Utterly pleased with herself and satisfied with life as it is, she laughs and "chats with her companions while puffing from time to time at an immense green cheroot."

"Soft is her cheek as down on insect's wing;
Her mouth breathes incense, and her flowing hair,
Is dark as night. How musical her voice!
How graceful every movement!"

A VIEW OF THE SHWE DAGON PAGODA

FROM THE CANTONMENT GARDENS.


BURMA
ASSAM

The following poem was written by U Hsaung, and was translated and arranged by Dr. J. A. Stewart and published in the *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, in December, 1937. Glorifying the cultivator's life, it gives an excellent portrayal of existence among the simple farmer village folk of Upper Burma, perhaps in the Mandalay, Magwe, or Sagaing division.

### Roselle Buds

My lady wife she skilleth well
To give her man good cheer.
She gathers buds of brown roselle
When buds do first appear.

She gets what puny fish she can,
Too thin belike for scaling ;
Puts bud and fish in earthen pan
To cook for my regaling.

And with no oil or condiment
But water from the spring
She'll dish a curry would content
The palate of a king.

As I came weary from the plough
And cast my goad aside,
Sweet wifely bustle greets me now
Sharp-set at eventide.

Her misty hair is falling free,
Her little curls awry,
But she has millet-rice for me
And piles my platter high.

When I have emptied plate and pot
And bulge about the girth,
I would not change a farmer's lot
For any lot on earth.

## CHAPTER EIGHT.

### Immigrants: Strangers in the Land.

*Chinamen, those antidotes to morality and improvement, are the best fed, best clothed, best lodged, and most impudent of people in Burma.*

—*Dr. Bayfield* (1837).

The Burman seldom or never travelled abroad, but people from nearly every land under heaven went to Burma. Along Phayre Street there was a Filipino barber who set up in business, so he said, "to escape American oppression in Manila." A Jamaica negro who had been left stranded when the sugar mill in which he was employed folded up, was "doing right well, thank you," as a shoemaker. Out on the far end of Merchant Street a Greek from San Francisco was selling "Amerikan" ice cream in lily cups. Up in the Shan States a Texas cowboy, washed up at Kalaw when his rodeo was unable to compete with the Burmese *pwe* (play), was selling Shan beef in the local bazaar. In Namtu a choroid Japanese was prospering as a labour contractor. In Moulmein a distant relative of the Emperor Haile Selassie practised medicine. A motley collection of Persians, Yunnanese, Moslems from many lands, Arabs, Turks, Baghdad Jews, refugees from Hitler Germany, ladies of fortune from Egypt, Roumania, Poland (and others of unknown ancestry), the ever-present Goanese, Chinese from Shanghai, Swatow, Canton, and others equally diverse, all found a ready home in Burma.

Actually, the Indian formed the most numerous group. More than a million of them found an uneasy domicile in Burma. A more varied crew can scarcely be imagined. They ranged all the overtones and half steps from the lowliest coolie to the richest man in Burma. Nearly 600,000 of them were Hindus; about 400,000 were Moslems, principally in the Arakan coast; the remainder were Sikhs, Indian

Christians, and others. Parsees from the Bombay coast, originally Persians but now at home in India, were prominent in business and the professions. Sleek Chettyars from south India, a hereditary banking caste who flourished at twenty-four per cent per annum, were strongly entrenched in the money lending business ; Kakkas from the Malayalam coast of the Madras Presidency operated restaurants and were the principal makers and sellers of carbonated waters of doubtful purity. The Memans, Khojas and Borahs were Gujarat Moslem merchants ; the Chulias, Tamil Moslems from Madras, controlled the cheaper hardware and iron trade. Hindus from the upper Ganges were the leading jewellers and goldsmiths. Hindus and Moslems were rivals for the cotton piece-goods trade. Most of the common labour was performed by Indian Telegus and Tamils. To the democratic Burman, who is all things to all men, the division of Indians into separate groups along strict lines of caste, religion, or occupation, was most objectionable. It meant that the Indian was largely incapable of being assimilated into the life of Burma. Although the Indian was generally looked upon as an enterprising money-grasping foreigner who enriched himself at Burma's expense, there were numerous examples of cordial relations between the two groups. Raja Reddiar presented a library building to Rangoon University, and the Chettiars endowed a chair of banking. Inter-marriage was common, that is, Indian immigrants of all classes would marry Burmese wives. During my residence in Burma I have never known of a Burmese gentleman having an Indian wife. It simply wasn't done.

Beginning in 1931, when the depression really struck Burma, the Indian became unpopular. The Burman regarded him as a despoiler. In several bloody riots, which started over the question of Indian versus Burman stevedores for the Rangoon docks, the Burman took out his spite on his more prosperous neighbour. After that blood letting the Indian was a bit subdued, and the Burman went about with the attitude, " we have done it before, and we can do it again."

Chinese visitors have been coming to Burma for hundreds of years, but not until after 1800 did they come in large

numbers. Symes, Crawfurd, and other servants of the East India Company, reported the existence of Chinese colonies in upper Burma. Sir Archibald Campbell had as his personal translator during the War of 1824, a Chinese boy, the only person that could be found in the country with a knowledge of English and Burmese. A British explorer, Dr. Bayfield, found in the upper Burma town of Katha in 1837 a Chinese carpenter who had twice been to England and who had lived for a time on St. Helena while Napoleon was there as a guest of the British government. The real magnet which first attracted the Chinaman to Burma was the rich jade deposit of the Hukuawng valley.

The first Cantonese merchants in Mandalay arrived in 1861. Thereafter hundreds of immigrants from Kwangtung and Fukien began to arrive by sailing ship and steamer. Usually these pioneers spent some time in Singapore where the fame of Burma as a land of promise was growing. The Burma Chinese, except for a small number who have come overland to the northern Shan States, do not settle on the land. Your Chinese gentleman, always genial and always respected, and invariably astute, is most likely to be a merchant, a contractor, the owner of a liquor shop, the controller of a ferry, the local broker for rice, peanuts, sesamum oil and cotton, the useful but unpopular operator of the town pawnshop, or the enterprising promoter of some other device for accumulating a fortune at the expense of the Burman. The Chinese generally live pretty much to themselves, although there is extensive inter-marriage with Burmese women. The children of Sino-Burmese marriages generally acquire the best qualities of both races. The boys frequently wear Chinese clothes and have both a Burmese and a Chinese name. The girls almost invariably wear the Burmese *longyi* (sarong) and take a Burmese name.

Burmese women have no objection to marriage with the Chinese since they are always good providers, are fond of children, and are kind to their families. They generally become property owners and end up rich. Several Chinese gentlemen have held high office under the Government of Burma. Taw Sein Ko, a Sino-Burman of Fukienese descent,

was a most distinguished member of the Archæological Survey of India, and author of numerous monographs on Burma. Sir Lee Ah Yain became Minister of Forests during the Governorships of Sir Harcourt Butler and Sir Charles Innes.

Many a Chinese carpenter who came to Burma as a deck passenger would live in the country long enough to acquire a considerable fortune. One Chan Chor Khine contributed a lakh of rupees for the erection of a gymnasium and open-air theatre at the University of Rangoon. Although the common Burmese name for Chinese is *paukpaw*, which means cousin, these two races have had their troubles in Burma. The Chinese are feared for their good business sense and their acquisitiveness which enables them to obtain property and wealth. The Burmese have not forgotten that China makes some claim of overlordship in Burma. They know full well that Dr. Sun Yat-Sen on more than one occasions referred to Burma as a part of China's legitimate overseas possessions, and their fears of eventual absorption by the Chinese have not been entirely quieted by the soothing messages of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The plain fact is that in Burma as in Thailand, Malaya, and Indochina, the Chinese immigrant is not loved. For this reason Burmese politicians opposed construction of the Burma Road and discouraged collection of funds in Rangoon for Chinese relief. During the present war there has grown up considerable distrust of the Chinese and fear of their territorial and economic ambitions in Burma. This fear is common among the Burmese, Shans, and Kachins, and was helped along by Japanese propaganda.

In addition to Oriental immigrants, Burma had an odd assortment of Americans and Europeans. The Dutch had a bank and large trading company in Rangoon. The enterprising Danish East Asiatic Company was interested in the rice trade. The Germans returned after the first great war to the insurance and machinery trade, but never in such numbers as to re-establish their own club which they had before the war. Although the French cast a covetous eye on Burma for more than a century, only a few Frenchmen

were to be found anywhere in the country. Italian priests and nuns opened up missions in remote parts of Burma and there were two or three Italians in the motor car business. The Swedish Match Company had a factory near Rangoon and other Europeans were found in smaller numbers. I saw only two Russians in Burma, and these two came in the brig of a B.I. ship from Calcutta under deportation to Vladivostok for having entered India without the proper passports. Some 570 Japanese flashed their toothy smiles in the various cities of Burma, usually as photographers, dentists, together with a few merchants. One " Dr." Suzuki (whose Burmese wife broadcast propaganda—her voice was soothing—from Bangkok after the outbreak of the war), was the centre of Japanese agitation in Burma. For several years Suzuki had been negotiating with some of the Shan Sawbwas for mining concessions and he was a boon companion of Dr. Ba Maw.

## CHAPTER NINE

### Rangoon : City of Restless Peace

*" Rangoon, indeed, has a coat of many colours ; she is a Joseph in the land of Egypt. A very charming and go-ahead Joseph, I grant you, but still a Joseph."*

*—W. J. Grant.*

Alaungpaya, the village headman of Shwebo across the Irrawaddy from Mandalay, swept down through the plains of central Burma and overthrew the last feeble rulers of the Talaing Kingdom of lower Burma. He found the last remnant of resistance centered about the golden Shwe Dagon and, having smothered the Talaings, determined that lower Burma should start life anew. He began in 1755 by renaming the village of bamboo matting huts that he found clustered about the base of the golden pagoda, Rangoon, which means literally " end of the war " or " city of peace." But Rangoon has been a city of restless peace.

Never truly a Burmese city, from at least the year 1825 it has had more foreigners than Burmese residents. Ann Haseltine Judson, sainted wife of the first permanent American resident of Rangoon, has left vivid letters telling of the city and of her life there. The Burmese Viceroy dominated the scene and threw terror into the hearts of anyone bold enough to thwart his whims. Rangoon in 1813 had a number of Armenian, Indian, Portuguese, and a few British residents. Most of them were across the river in Syriam or in Dalla.

Mangrove swamps and slimy tidal reaches bordered both banks of the Rangoon River. Despite the ruling that no one was allowed to have a brick and mortar house for fear it might be used as a fort by enemies of the King, a few foreign residents had "pukka" houses. The Judsons were required to live some little distance from the centre of the town at the edge of a cemetery, near the execution ground. Their residence is supposed to have been near the present house of the Anglican Bishop of Rangoon.

Shipbuilding from Burma's excellent teak, a small trade in rice, jade, and rubies were the principal means of livelihood in early Rangoon. It did not become a city in the modern sense until after the Anglo-Burmese War of 1852, when it passed into British hands. A number of almost forgotten British engineer officers who laid out the town under the direction of Lord Dalhousie have their names perpetuated in Fraser Street, Voyle Road (changed under nationalist pressure to U Wisara Road), Dalhousie Street, Godwin Road, but such local names as Tiger Alley, Pagoda Road, Tseikai Maung Taulay Street indicate that the town was in Burma rather than in Britain, India or the Straits Settlements.

Modern Rangoon is the commercial, cultural, and political capital of Burma. At the time of the Japanese invasion it was a flourishing city of nearly 500,000 people. More than half of these were Indian, Chinese, Eurasian and European immigrants. The Burmese themselves took only a minor part in the commercial life of the busy port. Except for the Burmese officials, most Burmans were crowded out

of the centre of the town and lived in the areas where the sprawling city merged into garden land and rice fields. There was not a single manufacturing plant, wholesale or retail establishment, or commercial enterprise of any size owned or managed by the Burmese. Some were getting a start in the motion picture industry, in newspaper publishing, and in the printing and stationery trade. The sons of Burma simply were not interested in Business.

Moghul Street, Rangoon's Wall Street and the centre of the Indian Rice Merchants' Association, presented a striking scene during business hours. Thousands of prosperous merchants and their clerks, principally Hindus, dressed in Gandhi caps and homespun, thronged through the streets, conducting a great deal of their brokerage business in the open air. At the head of Moghul Street were the quarters of the Moghul Guard, the only European police force in Burma.

The larger European department stores, banks, and shipping companies had their offices on Strand Road, Merchant Street, Phayre Street, or Dalhousie Street. The Chinese lived to themselves near Canal Street ; Chinese shopkeepers, Straits rice merchants, and wholesale and retail dealers enjoyed a very chummy life, apparently making most of their money by dealing with each other. Many of them acted as Rangoon agents for the Chinese shops that are found in nearly every town in Burma. Leading Straits merchants (including the prosperous firm which produced Tiger Balm for all the ills of man) had branches in Rangoon. And Rangoon, unlike Bangkok, had Chinese consular offices.

The lower parts of Rangoon contain the tenement districts, crowded with the sweating coolies from India who pull the rickshaws, sail the paddy barges, work the railroads, and perform most of the menial labour in Burma. Twenty or thirty Indian men live in one room for the three or four years of their stay in Burma, pinching every anna, saving for the day when they can return to India and buy a few acres for their old age, somewhere in the Madras Presidency.

Once lordly Europeans, who in recent years really were not lordly at all but harassed administrators or business-

men, lived in the bungalows and estates of Windermere Park or farther out along the roads leading toward Mingaladon. For the past decade or two the European in business or official position was quite definitely playing second fiddle to the Indian, Chinese, and Burman, perhaps more sinned against than sinning.

In the harbour, which is merely a length of the turbulent Rangoon River, as many as twenty or thirty ocean-going vessels would be loading rice during the height of the milling season. But few Burmans sailed from Burma or returned to their mother country. They are not sailors and looked on disinterestedly at the five million tons of cargo which entered and cleared the port each year. Occasionally a Burmese sailing ship from Tavoy or the Arakan would come up during the dry season, but Rangoon's ships were manned and owned by foreigners.

Across the Syriam River were located the great refineries of the Burma Oil Company and the Indo-Burma Petroleum Company. These installations went up in a Roman holiday of explosion, fire and smoke as the Japanese neared the city of Alaungpaya.

Rangoon was a city of electric lights, paved streets, cinemas, night spots, garish neon signs and all the comforts of home with the temperature in the hot season between ninety and a hundred. It was, withal, a curious blend of the Occident and the Orient. Its city hall, known as the Rangoon Corporation Building, a mixture of Western and Burmese architecture, is an index to the prevailing culture in Rangoon. Some irreverent observers characterized the architecture of Government House, the Secretariat and even the new municipal building as " beaurocratic Byzantine." Some of its buildings, such as the Port Commissioners, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company's headquarters, the Imperial Bank of India, the National Bank of India, were as modern as any to be found in an American or European city of the same size.

Rangoon University, five miles from the centre of the city, had buildings that would do credit to any American college. Three principals of the constituent colleges were

Burmese, as were more than 55 per cent of the University students in 1941. But somehow the net impression was that the Burman was being left out, that he lived in a house by the side of the road, and no one was sure that he was a friend to any man.

## CHAPTER TEN

### The Shan States : Back of Beyond.

*" My son, never build in Principalities."—Greek.*

When the British took over Theebaw's ramshackle empire of upper Burma, they hardly knew what they were getting. Early European travellers to Burma returned vague reports of a semicircle of feudatory chiefs whose territories formed a buffer between Burma and China. But no one knew just where the states were, nor how many, nor by whom they were ruled. During the Anglo-Burmese wars sturdy Shan Chiefs[1] were seen in the Burmese armies, leading their levies in aid of their liege lord, the King of Ava.

As Maurice Collis reminds us in his *Lords of the Sunset*, the Kings of Burma knew the Shan Sawbwas as *Ne-Win-Bayin*, Sun-set-Lords, whereas the Kings of Ava were known as *Ne-Twet-Bayin*, Lords of the Sunrise. No more apt illustration of the relations between independent Burma and the princelings of the Shan States comes to mind.

Altogether the Shans are grouped into thirty-two federated states. These states have an area of some 60,000 square miles—about half the size of the British Isles—and a population of about 2,000,000. They range in size from Kyong, with an area of 24 square miles to Kentung, which has 12,000 square miles. They occupy the bewitchingly beautiful plateau country, mostly between 2,000 and 3,000 feet in elevation,

[1] One Shan Chief who held absolute sway in earlier days had the resounding title " the absolute Lord of the indomitable force of the Elephants of the Earth."

between Burma proper and China, French Indochina and Thailand. Some of the peaks which erupt from this plateau rise to 10,000 feet. Many thousand of square miles of this region, scattered with a tumult of range and tranquil downs, are but lightly populated ; the valleys are sparsely wooded, but many of the mountainsides are heavily forested. The flat lands and valleys are rice areas ; fine specimens of the much prized teak tree abound in the forests.

An astute people of gentle charm, the Shans are not as backward as is popularly believed. The Shan States, united into the Federated Shan States in 1922, were excluded from control of the Burmese legislature for two reasons : with a long tradition of quasi-independence they correspond roughly to the native states of India, and the Shans are racially quite distinct from the Burmese. These states were, however, British territory and their people and rulers were British subjects, in contrast with the quasi-independent status of the ruling princes of India.

In appearance Mongolian and resembling the Burmese, the Shans speak a totally distinct language. Slight but sturdy, the Shans are mountaineers and people of real backbone. There is however, something delicate and almost effiminate about the Shans of the ruling classes. They are fairer than the Burmese, almost ruddy of face. Their women were famous in Burma for their beauty. Many of them have a trace of roses in their cheeks ; all of them are demure and winsome. Old Shan gentlemen are most invariably simple and charming in their dark blue jackets, wide baggy trousers, and giant floppy hats. Although he may be a bit rustic your true Shan is nobody's fool. He is the keenest trader in all Burma. The Shans are Buddhists almost to a man, although pagodas and pongyis are not shown the same deference as in Burma proper. Their script is a variant of the Burmese circles and this was used by a few other racial groups, including the Taungthos. They are peaceful and law abiding, without the martial qualities found in other hill tribes such as the Kachins and the Chins.

A host of uncivilized tribes are hidden away in the more mountainous areas, none of which had a written language

until missionaries reduced a few of their languages (Lahu, Wa, Kaw, Kachin) to writing in order that Bibles might be presented to the numerous converts. The most widely advertised of these tribes (residing not in the Shan States but in adjacent Karenni) are the Padaungs, who have made the eyes of more than one small boy gape when he saw them in circus side-shows. " These, ladies and gentlemen, are the brass-necked ladies from Burma ! Observe their necks. The brass rings—weighing thirty pounds or more—are added to continually from youth on, until the wearer resembles a champagne bottle." Also worn on the arms and legs, are unwieldy rings of brass or lacquered rattan which are accepted as a matter of course by the ladies.

The most feared of the hill tribes are the head-hunting Was, whose animistic beliefs teach them that evil spirits will destroy their rice crops unless a few fresh heads are impaled on bamboo poles and set up in the village as a token of respect to the spirits. Before the Japanese invasion the British were beginning to have some success in checking this form of agricultural pursuit.

One of the more warlike races, thousands of whom live in the Northern Shan States and along the headwaters of the Irrawaddy and the Chindwin, are the Kachins. In the words of Doctor Seagrave, the Kachins were " fast chopping themselves southward through the Shans and Burmese, and, if the British had not taken over Burma, they would have by this time been unquestioned masters of the country." Actually, of course, this is just a witticism as the Kachins were never numerous or strong enough to advance far into Burma proper. In one of the northern Shan States the Kachins inhabit a mountain area which its Shan ruler finds it unwise either to visit or to attempt to rule. Many Kachins, however, proved to be good soldiers under the British when the latter were attempting to hold back the Japanese. They have been for decades strongly pro-British and the Kachin Levies did valiant service in expelling the Japs from northern Burma.

Historically, and proudly, the Shans know they are part of the great Thai race which once occupied most of northern Burma, much of Assam, large parts of Yunnan and Sikang

provinces of China, where Shan States still exist. In southern Yunnan, in the Lao States of French Indochina, and along the Assam border of Burma and across the hills in upper Assam these isolated groups of Thai survive as cast up by the receding waves from the days of their greatness. They have inhabited the Burma Shan States since 1000 A.D. Now the Shans, always plagued by lack of cohesion, are a recognised racial unit only in Thailand and in the Shan States.

In 1922, Sir Reginald Craddock decided that it was time to do something about the conglomerate system of the Shan States. On October 1, this Governor's scheme for uniting the Northern and Southern Shan States into the Federated Shan States went into effect, although part of the old system of dividing Shanland into Southern and Northern states remained. The purpose of this was not, as some have supposed, to restrict the majesty of the Sawbwas, but rather an appreciation of the fact that much benefit would acrue from organisation of the territory along modern administrative lines and so Taunggyi, " Great Mountain ", was chosen as the capital.

Taunggyi was a delightful place at an elevation of more than four thousand feet, some ten miles beyond the end of the railway. No Burmese lived there in King Theebaw's time. During his day the Burmese king maintained a Viceroy at Mong Nai, and appointment there was considered a sort of Siberian exile which would cause the unhappy official to look into his past to discover wherein he had offended the Lord of the White Elephants or one of his numerous ladies.

Prior to the Japanese inroad, Taunggyi was in many respects the finest hill station in Burma. There in the dry season shone a brilliant sun in the bluest sky on earth. Little boys and girls with honey-coloured hair and complexions like strawberries and cream flourished in a way that was impossible down on the steaming plains. It was the centre of the Shan chiefs school where sons of the Shan Sawbwas received an English education and a good one.

The Shan States were really a delightful Arcadia where life slumbered along most pleasantly in a sort of medieval manner. There were only a few first-class states. Of these

Kengtung was the largest and Hsipaw the richest (King Theebaw got his name from the fact that his mother was a princess of Theebaw, *i.e.* Hsipaw). In addition, other states entitled to a salute of nine guns were Mong Nai,[1] Yawnghwe, Hsenwi and Mong Mit.

Other important states were Lawksawk, whose venerable chief, much respected in all parts of Burma, won fame for his pious pilgrimage to Ceylon and his support of Buddhist good works. He died during the Japanese occupation of Burma. The chief of the important state of North Hsenwi acquired considerable wealth in recent years because of the proximity of his state to the Namtu-Bawdwin mines. The chief of North Hsenwi was educated in England and had most charming manners. He lived apparently in perfect harmony with five wives in a palace modelled after an English country home. His mahadevi (queen) was a sister of the late Sawbwa of Kengtung. When the Japanese approached his state the Sawbwa retired to a country village and is believed to be living there now.

I twice attended the delightful annual Kadaw or homage ceremony at which village headmen paid their respects to the Sawbwa and his court. Chinese concessionaires ran a very profitable gambling business ; the whole town was lit up in a festive manner, and everyone, including the European visitor, had a wonderful time. I saw the Sawbwa's treasurer weigh the take in silver rupees on a scale ; the results seemed quite satisfactory.

Tawng Peng State is famous for the quality of its tea and for the fact that the Bawdwin silver mines, near Lashio, are actually in Tawng Peng. The people of this state are not Shans but Palaungs. The Sawbwa has a beautiful *haw* (palace) which, with those of Hsipaw and Yawnghwe, is more like the old Mandalay residence of Theebaw than any other in Burma. It cost three lakhs of rupees (£22,500) and is complete with modern plumbing, electric lights, billiard room, and pony stables attached. His throne of solid silver

[1] The title given to the Sawbwa of Mong Nai was Kambawazarahtnahawunthapawar-athirithunamaraja, which designated him as a subordinate King.

is well worth seeing. The Sawbwa did me the honour of sitting on his chair, as he called it, while I took a photograph.

Mawkmai State, malarious and low-lying on a tributary of the Salween, had a chief who was obviously the master of all he surveyed. In addition to having a partial monopoly on tobacco and rice, he seemed to be the largest owner of trucks and the principal merchant in his state, perhaps copying his technique from King Mindon and Theebaw who were firm believers in state monopolies. The old *Myosa* of Mong Sit, by name Khun Pawng, died in February 1935. He is remembered because of the fact that he had ruled his state from 1883, and was, therefore, the last surviving link with the old Burmese monarchy. I visited his state three days after the old gentleman's death and photographed his coffin covered with gold leaf and the magnificent funeral wagon on which he was later cremated. On his death, Mong Sit State was joined to Mawkmai, inasmuch as the Myosa's son was the ruler of Mawkmai.

The larger states are ruled by Sawbwas, and the smaller states by Myosas. "Myosa" is a Burmese term, meaning "eater of a city", and is both an example of dry Burmese humour and of the type of rule formerly dispensed by the chieftains. These chiefs enjoyed a pleasant life, respected by their subjects and chafing only slightly over the fact that they were counted as British subjects and were thus a cut below the Ruling Princes of India.

Prior to the Japanese incursion the tendency in the Shan States was to replace elephants with Buicks and Packards; to consolidate the smaller states by joining them to their larger neighbours on the death of the old rulers, and to streamline the administration, improve the forests, roads, schools, and medical services, and generally modernize the area. Much that is picturesque is lost in the process, but trade has expanded, health has improved, while the old is dying out.

Shan States along the Thailand border have been much influenced by Thailand. One daughter of the Kengtung Sawbwa, for example, was married to the son of the hereditary Sawbwa of Chiengmai, the principal city of Northern Thailand, while his own chief wife was sister of the chief of Muong Hsing

in Indochina, and his sister married the chief of Keng Hung, the principal Shan State in China. It was useful to have friends in all courts. It was, therefore, almost natural for the eastern states to look with interest upon Thailand. When the Japanese acquired Burma they used certain units of the Siamese army for police duties in Kengtung State, and eventually the States of Kengtung and Mong Pan were "ceded" to Thailand in July, 1943. There is some reason for the Japanese action, however unpopular it was in Burma. The Shans are of the same Thai race as the Laos of northern Thailand and French Indochina. However, the Burma Shan States were never at any time ruled by the Kings of Bangkok, and even the Shan States of northern Thailand itself have accepted the rule of Bangkok only in recent years.

There is much doubt as to just what areas of the Shan States were "given" to Thailand. A Thai announcement mentioned incorporation of the Shan States into "the United States of the Original Thai." This would have placed the Thai border within a few miles of Mandalay and the Irrawaddy, and for nearly 200 miles the border would be within a short distance of the main line of the Burma Railways. But a subsequent Japanese announcement mentioned only Kengtung and Mong Pan as being ceded to Thailand. Moreover, Premier Tojo, in promising "independence" to Burma, specifically stated that the Shan States and Karenni were not to be included in independent Burma. The outside world was left to guess the disposition of the major portion of the Shan States, although more recent reports indicate the Shan States have been merged with Burma proper.

The area of the two Shan States presumably acquired by Thailand is about 15,388 square miles, with a population of 250,000. Thailand thereby obtained two bridgeheads west of the Salween. It appears from the Japanese action in ceding the two states that her intention was to pay off the puppets. However, the two states were under Burmese rule at the time of the British conquest and have always been a part of British Burma. There is perhaps more support for the Japanese in the Shan States than in Burma proper.

Mong Pan and Kengtung have no railways and poor

British Isles with Burma superimposed . . . . . .


The northernmost tip of Burma lies at the latitude of Daytona Beach, Florida. If Burma were transposed on North Africa in its proper latitude, its most northerly frontier would be 700 miles south of Gibraltar.

United States of America with Burma superimposed.

A VIEW OF THE BURMA ROAD BETWEEN KUNMING AND KWEIYANG, CHINA.

motor roads, and there is no extensive crop cultivation. But whatever else the dutiful Thai puppets got from their Japanese overlords, at least one rich haul was included in the booty. Vast teak forests, which now may be supplying stout timber for Japanese wooden ships, have been exploited in these two areas for centuries. Before the Japanese got there approximately 12,000 trees a year were extracted and floated down to Moulmein for export.

The vast, complicated job of wresting teak logs from these forests is worth a word. The British and Indian companies had large investments in the trade—a long term investment—for it takes a log an average of four years to reach the mill. Green teak will not float—and floating is the only practicable means of transport from the remote forests to the mills, hundreds of miles to the south. The trees are first killed by being ringed to the heartwood and then left standing for three years while the timber dries. The girth of a marketable tree varies from six to seven feet, six inches—which means an age of about 150 years.

After the trees are felled, the logs are dragged by elephants to streams that can float them out to the Salween. Once in the stream, the logs must wait for a floating rise ; they must be fire-protected, and when the river rises, frequent " jams " pile up hundreds of logs in bends ; others are left stranded when the stream falls. It is not unusual to see logs balanced in the crowns of trees when the river falls. After reaching the Salween the logs have a 500 mile journey to Moulmein and the uncontrolled passage takes from two months to several years ; many logs never arrive at all. To deal with the log jams, elephants (each valued at about Rs. 5,000) are necessary. They can only work in the " cold " season from June to mid-February as the big beasts require a long annual rest. Burma sent most of her teak to India, England, and the continent, very little to the United States whose hardwood needs were met by duty-free Philippine mahogany.

There is another picturesque area to the south known as the Karenni States. These states are rather curious inasmuch as they are not British territory, but are native states and the people are , therefore, not British subjects. In theory, the

people of Karenni are a cut above the residents of the Shan States. Actually, the entire area is very backward. Karenni's economic importance is due solely to the discovery of a rich tungsten and tin deposit in the hills near Mawchi. The Mawchi mine became the world's most important single source of wolfram, the ore of tungsten, following development of a leased area of 10 square miles by an English company after 1911. Before the war this one mine produced ten per cent of the world's requirements of this strategic metal and thirty-five per cent of the total tungsten demands of the British Empire. The revenues of the area made the Myosa the richest man in Karenni. The teak forests of Karenni were once the finest in all Burma, but since their chiefs have a larger degree of independence than the Shan Sawbwas they have felled teak at their pleasure, and there is now scarcely a marketable teak tree left standing in all Karenni.

Kantarrawaddy, Bawlake, and Kyebogyi, the three Karenni States (once there were five), have a total area of 4,519 square miles, and a population of about 60,000. They paid a nominal revenue to the Government of Burma of 5,350 rupees, considerably less than half the salary of the British resident. Something of the arcadian nature of Karenni can be learned from a statement in the official report which says, "The state police are inexperienced and not very bright; they have, however, little to do."

In April, 1942 Japanese troops moved up through the Karenni States over a new road which had been built to the Mawchi Mines. Thus they were able to outflank the Chinese army defending central Burma and move on Mandalay in a skilful enveloping attack which resulted in the capture of Lashio and the isolation of British and Chinese troops in central Burma.

There are sundry other isolated tribal areas in Burma under the rule of their own chiefs. Along the Upper Chindwin there are the Naga Hill tracts and the isolated Shan States of Singkaling Hkmati, and Hsawngsup. These isolated Shan States are peopled by scattered remnants of Shan migrations who are separated from their brothers in eastern Burma by the corridor of the Irrawaddy. These Shans are rather

indolent and unprogressive, much ridden with malaria and opium.

The Naga Hills are peopled by head hunters and, believe it or not, the custom is still in fashion. In his official report for 1942 the British administrator in charge of the Naga Hills said quaintly : " I was able to fine several villages for having carried out human sacrifices ; and much regarding of roads was done." Later in the same report, this officer explained the minor lapses of the Nagas by saying " Aside from several big head-hunting raids, the villagers were friendly."

Bizarre contrasts, the dreamy old Sittang and the sinewy Salween, are typical of the Shan States. Life in the plateau is bare and hard, but the Shan cares not ; he laughs in the breeze. " He is the essence of good humour—he envies none and trusts all."

" To him," writes one who loved these people well, " the crushed and folded hills of the plateau are dear and beautiful. He will snuggle in their brackened woods for hours crooning a pagoda song or watching the sleepy nods of a wild strawberry. Riches lie around him "——but " his frugal meal and his pagoda song ; the wild violets sweetening his woods and the silver stars gemming his skies ; the wind growling in the savannah forest and the sun pouring its white milk down the Yawnghwe Valley ; these are his riches, his holy joys."

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Betes Noir: The Imperialists

*" Let me, however, make this clear, in case there should be any mistake about it in any quarter; we mean to hold our own. I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. For that task, if ever it were prescribed, someone else would have to be found, and under a democracy I suppose the nation would have to be consulted.*

*I am proud to be a member of that vast commonwealth and society of nations and communities gathered in and around the ancient British monarchy, without which the good cause might well have perished from the face of the earth."*

*The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill.*

Somehow the impression got around that the unhappy state of Burma during the Japanese invasion was an inevitable result of long administration by that popular *bête noir*, the Imperialist. Historically, much of the prejudice against " imperialism " stems from liberals at the end of the past century, who first made the unhappy word synonymous with predatory attacks upon weak peoples. We are also indebted to them for the idea that imperialism is synonymous with capitalist and monopolist, and, therefore, something to be abhorred. About the same era arose the idea that all wars are imperialistic; as a result, honest but puzzled pacifists are usually found in the anti-imperialist camp.

We are inclined to confuse cause and effect and believe that all empires cause wars and therefore all empires are wrong. This delusion is related to the current and popular conception that there is something inherently wrong with making a profit. What we need to realize is that a system of Government or an association of nations is not good or

bad simply because it is an empire. Nor is it correct to believe, as was also popular in America prior to Pearl Harbor, that " this is just another imperialistic war fought to protect the Standard Oil Company." This delusion gained amazing acceptance in a wide variety of circles from ladies' clubs to college liberals, both on the platform and in the dormitories. Let us not fall into the Alice-in-Wonderland technique—" first the sentence and then the trial."

Imperialism has been a good two-dollar word during the current decade and many are the ills charged to it. In fact, most Americans have decided definitely, without knowing too much about it and without defining their terms too precisely, that " imperialism " must be abolished. Curiously, imperialism in its more wicked forms is invariably charged to the British, seldom to the Russians in Central Asia, the Baltic or Siberia, to the Portuguese or the French in Africa and Asia, to the Dutch in the Indies, or to Americans in Puerto Rico, Guam or Samoa.

Ardent liberals who show only moderate revulsion over what Hitler did in Holland, France, Poland, Greece and Norway, seethe in denunciation of what England is alleged to be doing in India or failed to do in Burma and Malaya. These denunciations are particularly virulent with respect to Burma. During the Japanese invasion of the land of pagodas the American press never grew tired of repeating that had the Malayans, the Burmese, the Javanese, and even the Papuans had a greater stake in the government of their respective homelands, they would have risen en masse, proclaimed a " peoples' war " and stopped the Japanese advance.

Certain objections to this theory at once suggest themselves. First, Thailand, the only independent country in Southeast Asia, offered less opposition to the Japanese forces than did any other region. Second, no conceivable measure of self-government would have brought the defensive power of Malaya and Burma to the point where successful resistance to the Japanese advance could have been achieved under the strategic situation which did in fact obtain immediately after Pearl Harbor. Third, Burma in reality did

hold out longer than the Philippines, and the native peoples of both countries actually played only minor roles in the military campaigns of Bataan and the Sittang and Irrawaddy valleys. Nor is there any sober evidence that the part played by the Burma Rifles or the Indian Seventeenth Division was in any degree less heroic than that of the Philippine Army under comparable conditions.

The unpleasant fact is that within six months the forces of Japan liquidated the British, American, French, and Dutch "empires" in the Far East. We all went down in the same dismal collapse. The Japanese advance was a most remarkable military achievement, in some respects without a parallel in history, and no useful purpose is served by mutual recriminations. General Stilwell well summarized the proper attitude, "I claim we got a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back and retake it."

The bald truth is that the Japanese campaigns throughout south eastern Asia were military, not political, accomplishments which could have been prevented only by military, not political means. At all points of contact from Hongkong to Indochina, to Thailand, to Malaya, to Burma, Japanese victories were won by application of the sound military doctrine of superiority of force at the point of impact. British defenders of Burma were outnumbered always by at least three to one. The Japanese military never send out a boy to do a man's work. The United Nations were either unwilling or unable to provide Burma with the necessary military force to stop the Japanese; all other explanations are secondary.

Theorists continually tell us that had the nationalists of Burma been in command the story would have been different. But I doubt it. I would as soon accept the suggestion that the really effective way to have destroyed Rommel's tanks was to have turned North Africa over to the Bedouins. It is not quite as simple as that. In point of fact, Britain, then deeply involved in North Africa and having stood off the German and Italian hordes virtually

alone during two years of war, was in no position to supply Burma and Malaya with the men and equipment necessary to hold off the Japanese as well. Once Singapore was turned there was no security for Burma and the fall of Rangoon became almost inevitable. Moreover, the simple truth is that time was the secret enemy. Men and equipment from Britain could hardly have been collected, loaded, taken around the Cape, and landed in Rangoon between Pearl Harbor and the fall of Burma, even had shipping been available.

It is currently fashionable to trace American, British, and Dutch reverses in the Orient to "imperialism." As a matter of fact, imperialism had been pretty well liquidated in Burma by separation from India and by the assumption of power by the Burmese Ministers on April 1, 1937. Actually, there was little left of imperialism except the Kiplingesque panorama of sepoys being blown from the mouths of cannon and a Conradian mirage of the sweating rickshaw coolie—most probably pulling a fat merchant of his own race, who will pay him half the fare given by the vile foreigner. But the fiction of the "whiskey swilling planter" persists. Likewise, the old fable that Orientals must never enter the Englishman's club.

Currently there is in the United States a tendency to demand, as a condition of wartime co-operation, that imperialism be renounced. But we are reluctant to give a specific guarantee that nations making such renunciation will be offered any alternate means of security. To ask the British to surrender empire, which alone has enabled them to survive, without offering an alternate means of survival is to invite futile suicide. Can we blame the imperialist wickedness of Great Britain for having control of Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Ceylon, and rights in Egypt for defence of the Suez Canal, without which the British Commonwealth might well have been overcome ? Benign imperialism insured early co-operation of Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, India, Burma, and the African colonies in the war—and thereby perhaps saved half the earth from the grasp of Hitler and Tojo. In short, modern British

imperialism (the British Commonwealth of Nations with their Dependencies, Colonies and Mandates) is a form of interdependence, the first step in a community of nations without which civilization must perish.

Those who pluck the strings of anti-imperialism make a number of facile assumptions. One of these is that imperialism enriched exclusively the imperialists and made martyrs of the natives. Another, equally erroneous, is that upon the departure of Colonel Blimp from the verandah the Indians, Burmese, Filipinos, Malayans, Javanese and Cambodians will establish a democracy so pure that no taint of fascism, nepotism, or appeasement will survive. Upon establishment of self-government in these areas native fascist dictatorships will most probably develop within a very few years.

Burma provides an excellent case history of British Imperialism. Even cursory examination of the British record in Burma is most illuminating. Surely progress from the absolute and despotic monarchy of Mandalay in 1885 to the very considerable degree of popular government inaugurated in 1937 (Burma had control of its own tariff, which the Philippines did not) is remarkable growth when measured by constitutional progress in other lands. Since the time of Benjamin Franklin, who offered to supply Gibbon with data on the Decline and Fall of the British Empire, many Americans have seen nothing but guile in every British move and only disaster for old Britain whatever her strength or whoever her antagonists. It is much too early to condemn Britain for everything she has done in Burma or to relegate her to the position of a second-class power. A distinguished American naval historian wrote, less than twenty years ago, " It is doubtful if even Great Britain could survive another World War and another Churchill."[1] But present indications point confidently to the survival and growth of Great Britain through a second World War under the same Churchill.

Critics of British policy in India and Burma are fond of saying that this same Churchill is a " Tory " who " hates

[1] W. D. Puleston, *The Dardanelles Expedition.* (Annapolis, 1926), 154.

India and Burma." The fact is that Mr. Churchill spent most of his career as an active statesman in extreme radical governments under Asquith and Lloyd George.

The government which he currently heads and which will probably decide on the future of Burma is a national government and not " conservative," as is frequently alleged.

Nor is it accurate to say that Mr. Churchill characterized the Atlantic Charter as not applicable (because it was too liberal) to India and Burma. This is such a prejudiced distortion, repeated so frequently with stubborn disregard of what he actually said, that his remarks on the subject before the House of Commons on September 9, 1941, are quoted below :

> " The joint declaration [The Atlantic Charter] does not qualify in any way the various statements of policy which have been made from time to time about the development of constitutional government in India, Burma, or other parts of the British Empire. We are pledged by the declaration of August, 1940, to help India to obtain free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth with ourselves, subject, of course, to the fulfilment of obligations arising from our long connection with India and our responsibilities to its many free races and interests.....
>
> " At the Atlantic meeting we had in mind primarily restoration of the sovereignty, self-government, and national life of States and Nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke and the principles which would govern any alterations in the territorial boundaries of the countries which might have to be made. So that is quite a separate problem from the progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in the regions and Peoples which owe allegiance to the British Crown. We have made declarations on these matters which are complete in themselves, free from ambiguity, and related, to the conditions and circumstances of the territories and peoples affected. They will be found to be entirely in harmony with the high conception of freedom and justice which inspired the joint declaration."

Just what sort of government did Burma have at the time of the Japanese conquest ? First, it was distinctly civilian. In the golden days of peace the traveller could go to and fro in Burma and see very little evidence of the military. The number of European troops in Burma was seldom more than 2,000 during the present century, and frequently was as low as one battalion. India had never been invaded, or even threatened (except by the Burmese) along its eastern frontier, and the Government of India gave most of its attention to the North West Frontier. British pre-eminence along the southern coast of Asia from the Persian Gulf of Bangkok and the generally impassable nature of the country appeared to make unnecessary any considerable force in Burma.

Second, the government was more under control of the Burmese themselves than is generally realized. The country was well described as a " self-governing unit of the British Empire that has not achieved dominion status." Burma's constitution was one step more advanced toward complete home rule than was that granted to India. A brief summary of the various steps by which Burma became, first, a province of the Empire of India and then separated from her larger sister is given in the chapter on politics.

Let us give brief attention to the various proposals for post-war Burma, always remembering that the paramount problem is that of expelling the Japanese invader.

Proposals for post-war government in Burma are almost as numerous as the shrines about the base of the Shwe Dagon. Ardent internationalists are quite certain that a Burmese state in an international republic of Southeast Asia, with Singapore Island as the District of Columbia, offers the best solution of the question : What shall be done with Burma after the war ? Certain British sources have proposed a new Dominion of the British Commonwealth of Nations to include, as separate and internally sovereign states, Malaya, Thailand, Burma and the British holdings on Borneo. The Governor of Burma has made no public pronouncement beyond stating his desire to " make a better Burma than has ever existed before."

Some few advanced thinkers and dreamers envisage a completely independent and sovereign Burma, having cut all her ties with Great Britain and with her independence guaranteed by such possibly covetous neighbours as India, China, and Thailand together with Great Britain and the more remote, and therefore presumably altruistic, Soviet Union and the United States. In short, a sort of Iran, Iraq, or Thailand, but not, let us hope, a Belgium or a Czecho-Slovakia. In the post-war world perhaps the greatest threat to Burmese freedom will be from India and China. Numerous Indian leaders, political and industrial, have bemoaned the loss of Burma from the Indian Empire and have made repeated proposals for its reincorporation, a step which assuredly would be disastrous for the Burmese people. It would open Burma to exploitation in its worst form. Even the Chinese have published maps which show parts of Burma as far south as Myitkyina as Chinese territory.

A special committee of the Burma Government, in exile in the Olympian heights of Simla, has been appointed to study problems of reconstruction in post-war Burma. A spokesman of the group, U Tin Tut, has assured Burmans that in a new and self-governing Burma " there will be the four freedoms of the Atlantic Charter, a Burma of peace and plenty, with a peasantry free from debt, an incorruptible executive, a patriotic legislature, an enlightened and educated electorate and a reformed Buddhist church."

An increasing number of the younger British officials in Burma were growing weary of any British control, however, slight, over the Burmese Government, and many of them openly declared for " Burma for the Burmese, not for alien stockholders." Perhaps this ideal may be realized through wise co-operation between Burma and Britain. It cannot be done by force, and it will not be possible unless there is a marked improvement in standards of political morality among the Burmese themselves. But the Burmese may well say with Tagore, " ....with your administrative machinery send, I pray you, a little humanity."

## CHAPTER TWELVE.

### Politics : As Usual.

*"Burmese politicians become understandable if they are thought of as actors trying to spellbind an audience instead of as politicians trying to win converts."*

*Geoffrey Gorer.*

There is nothing of the beautiful unanimity of orthodoxy about Burmese politics. Burmese politicians, like so many of their fellows in other lands, may be visionary and opportunistic, but this much must be said for them : they have never tried to whine and wheedle their way to liberty. In this they have differed markedly from Gandhi and the more litigious Congress leaders of India.

As rambling as the meandering streets of a Burmese town, there has been a certain consistent inconsistency in Burmese politics, particularly since about 1920. The Burman has been at times genuinely patriotic, but more frequently he is unbelievably provincial, selfish, vain and venal. He is not above confusing plain dacoity with patriotism.

By way of summarizing political progress in Burma—because the Anglo-Burmese wars were conducted from India it was only natural that Burma was administered from India. But the two countries were always unhappy yoke-fellows. The union of India and Burma was really an historical accident and was never justified by any similarity between the two. Until 1862 British Burma, then restricted to the three maritime provinces of Tenasserim, Pegu, and Arakan, was governed by three commissioners who were severally responsible to the Governor-General of India quite independently of each other.

In 1862 the Province of Burma was formed with Sir Arthur Phayre, a distinguished Orientalist, as first Chief Commissioner. By 1897, Upper Burma having been

incorporated in the British holdings, Burma was created a Lieutenant-Governor's province and was given a Governor's Council.

Under the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909, the Council in Burma was increased to thirty members in 1915, and nationalism began to stir, aided by the Russo-Japanese War. In 1917 the magic words " responsible self-government " were first used in an official statement of Britain's aim for India, of which Burma was then a part. Sir Reginald Craddock who was Governor of Burma when the reforms of 1919 were adopted, later said of the framing of this historic statement by Lord Curzon, " . . . the insertion of these words by him is explicable only as an extraordinary temporary lapse of an otherwise brilliant brain."

But progress for Burma was in the cards. In 1922, the country became a Governor's Province under Sir Harcourt Butler. A regular Legislative Council was created, eighty per cent of its members being elected. Certain important branches of government including forests, agriculture, education and health, were handed over to Burmese Ministers who were answerable to the elected Legislative Council. Finance, however, and certain other departments were reserved to the Governor under the division of powers known as " dyarchy."

By terms of the Government of India Act, 1935, and the Government of Burma Act of the same date (both became operative on April 1, 1937) Burma was separated from India and allowed to embark on her own blissful way.

India's new constitution awarded practical autonomy to the Provinces, but retained, for a transitional period, the central government substantially as constituted under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1918 until such time as the provinces and the Indian States should agree upon a federal government. Burma, on the other hand, received at once the powers which Indian provincial and federal governments were to receive upon inauguration of a federal government.

Thus Burma's elected Legislature controlled such matters as customs, finance, income and other taxation, and trade pacts within the British Empire. In India, pending

agreement, (not yet achieved) on the federal structure, these powers are retained by the central government. In short, the elected government of Burma, operating through its Premier, who must, in the British manner, maintain confidence of a majority of the House of Representatives, controlled all the administration of Burma except defence, foreign affairs, ecclesiastical affairs (relating solely to the maintenance of fewer than a dozen Anglican chaplains), the excluded areas, and monetary policy. The last related entirely to actual coinage and the external debt, and not to the budget of Burma proper. Prior to the beginning of the current Great War, the Burma government operated within its budget. The country was somewhat old fashioned in that it had no national debt.

Burma's Governor had an extensive array of emergency powers—but they were not intended to be used unless the administration of law and order got out of hand. A casual reading of the new constitution might give the impression that the Governor's powers were excessive, but the apparent severity of the act was softened in practice by British traditions.

The powers of the Governor were so limited by his Instrument of Instructions that actually the ministers had pretty much their own way with the internal administration of Burma. But they insisted upon complete and immediate grant of Dominion powers. All orders were issued in the form "the Governor is pleased to direct . . ." but this was a matter of form only, as the ministers issued the orders, and the Governor was usually quite unaware of the context in ordinary matters. The liberal and progressive Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, who became Governor six months before the Japanese invasion, began the practice of taking Burmese Ministers with him on tour so that communities requesting new schools, hospitals, roads, the removal of objectionable officials, or the correction of sundry malpractices, could present their petitions directly to the responsible Ministers.

All Burmese politicians, and some of the other parties in the Burma legislature, feared that Britain might some day send out a Governor of intelligence and curiosity. They much favoured a gallant clothes horse, one not too curious

about the devious ways by which the Burmans ran their own internal affairs. By contrast, in the days before the Burmese took over the ministerial posts, the Governor was everything, " In him we lived and moved and had our being." Although nepotism, corruption, favouritism, and broken election promises are not unknown in other countries, the inexperience, naivety, and limited education of the electorate in Burma favoured a rank growth of these abuses in pagoda land. In common with their brethren in certain other countries, the Burma legislators did not want a strong and vigorous executive responsible only to God or the people.

An example of the extensive powers possessed by the Burmese Government was provided by the much-advertised matter of customs dues collected in Rangoon on Lend-Lease supplies destined for China over the Burma Road. Under the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1894, all goods entering Burma for transit to China were entitled to a rebate of seven-eighths of the duty paid at Rangoon, on evidence that the goods had passed into China. This was intended to stimulate trans-frontier trade, and the arrangement was satisfactory to both parties until the opening of the Burma Road brought vast quantities of goods to Rangoon. Under strong advice from the Governor, in response to Chinese requests, the Burmese Legislature in 1940 reduced the duty to one per cent. ad valorem. This didn't look so good to the American press which promptly accused the British of taking a rake-off on the Burma Road traffic.

But the Burmese ministers and Legislature declined to abolish the tax, despite the fact that it gave Burma a bad name in the eyes of the world. The Burmese point of view was that the road might get Burma involved in the War, and so it was natural that traffic should be taxed towards the defence of Burma. Events have shown that, had the money been spent on building up Burma's defences, the Burmese Ministers had an argument of some force. Finally, all transit dues on goods for the Chinese Government, were remitted, but the British home government paid the tax to the revenues of Burma rather than arouse prejudice against the Burmese element in the government.

Burma's pre-war Government included a legislature, consisting of two houses—a Senate of thirty-six members and a House of Representatives of 132 members. The House was elected by men and women voters over eighteen years of age, the qualification being literacy or payment of nominal taxes. The Senate was half elected by the House and half nominated by the Governor. The constitution permitted ten ministerial posts in the Cabinet elected by and formed of members of the Legislature. This system functioned with reasonable efficiency after 1937. More than 3,000,000 people in Burma qualified for the franchise.

Law and order, the police, and the military police were under control of the Burmese ministers, and during Dr. Ba Maw's term as Prime Minister, U Saw, his bitter rival, was imprisoned for leading forbidden processions in Rangoon. Getting rid of the opposition by silencing its leaders for "sedition" was a fairly common practice.

Very large areas, including the Shan States, in the hill tracts surrounding Burma were excluded from control of the Burmese Legislature for the simple reason that their inhabitants were not Burmese. These "excluded areas" were on quite a different level of culture, literacy, and commercial development, and were in most instances opposed to any form of government by the Burmese majority.

Membership in the House of Representatives was apportioned in part upon a communal basis in order to protect certain minorities which otherwise would have had slight opportunity for representation in the Legislature. The 132 seats were allotted as follows :—

| | |
|---|---|
| Open to all candidates .. .. | 92 |
| Reserved for | |
| Karens .. .. .. | 12 |
| Indians .. .. .. | 8 |
| Anglo-Burmans .. .. | 2 |
| Europeans .. .. .. | 3 |
| Commerce and Industry .. | 11 |
| Rangoon University .. | 1 |
| Indian Labour .. .. | 2 |
| Non-Indian Labour .. .. | 1 |

Burma was carrying on, after a fashion, with this somewhat cumbersome and creaking governmental structure when the peace of the white man's Far East was shattered by the bombs of Pearl Harbor.

Meantime, it is of interest to observe how the machinery worked, what manner of men worked it, and something of the practical effects for Burma. Frankly, it would not do to say, of the Burmese Government of Burma, that it was controlled under a set of faintly comic regulations, by a number of ambitious, prominent, and unscrupulous men who managed to get away with an unusually blatant amount of roguery. But the fact is that no Burmese Premier, with almost complete power, managed to produce a programme for his country that appeared rational in detail. Almost without exception they had qualities that are discernable in shallow demagogues in other lands.

Burma was regarded by the outside world as a poor sweet country yearning for no one knows what. While some Burmese extremists showed signs of a Nazi complex or admiration for the Irish Nationalists or the Soviets, they had only the vaguest notion of the aims and methods of totalitarianism or communism. One Premier, Ba Maw, when asked at a public meeting in Rangoon what should be done in case of a Nazi break-through in the Caucasus across India to Burma, replied that the Germans would be requested to give "home rule" to Burma. If Hitler refused, Burmans were told that they should "demand that the Germans return home." This proposal won wide acceptance as an alternative to Nazi domination. Apparently the lessons of Manchuria, Korea, Norway, and Holland, had not been learned in Rangoon.

An extremely provincial and naive people, the Burmese have little of the political sophistication characteristic of the residents of Indian cities. Multiplicity of parties has been the rule, and every Burmese cabinet formed under the constitution since 1937 has been a coalition. All Burmese politicians claimed to be nationalists, but there was no uniformity of programme or method. When the first Legislature of 132 members was elected it was said to contain 132 parties!

Programmes, platforms, party names and bosses have changed with kaleidoscopic frequency.

It is impossible to discover any clear political differences between the Myochit (patriotic), *Sinyetha* (poor man's) and Thakin (Prince), parties since the issue of separation from India was settled in 1935. Parties in the legislature consisted of the minority members mentioned above or of the personal followers of the several Burmese leaders. A well-defined party system, essential to true representative government, did not develop. Parties merely divided, coalesced, changed names and leaders with devastating rapidity and without calling upon the country for a verdict in an election, in the British manner. Consequently ministries were overthrown in rapid succession without members of the legislature risking loss of seat by calling an election.

Burmese nationalism has asserted itself in many curious ways. For reasons of religion or nationalism—it is frequently difficult to tell one from the other—many Burmans objected to pictures of pagodas on new Burma stamps. Students from primary schools, through the university, formed the All Burma Students Union, went on strike, made fiery political speeches and told the Ministers what must be done. Likewise, the Buddhist priests who were, despite the many excellent men wearing the yellow robe, as a general rule abysmally ignorant, began dictating to the rulers of the country to a degree perhaps unknown in any other country in the world. But to the credit of Burmese nationalists it must be noted that there have been no political assassinations in the country and few attempts at violence such as India suffers because of her extremist movement. Despite the visits of Gandhi, Nehru, and other Indian nationalists to Burma, it was only shortly before the Japanese invasion that Burmese politicians began to adopt the ideas and methods of the Congress Party. Burma's internal problems—due to a century of Indian government—were for the most part the same as the problems of India.

The Burmans were touchy and quite sensitive to criticism of their politics or government by the English press in Rangoon. An editorial which derisively mentioned "the

odd couple of ten rupee notes that sometimes turn the scale of a man's opinions in this country" was resented as a reflection on Burmese voters and politicians.

U Saw, who visited America in 1941, and who was later detained by the British for having communicated with the Japanese after the outbreak of war in the Pacific, is fairly typical of the men produced by the political system. About forty years of age, of limited education, with a flair for oratory, U Saw visited Japan in 1935 and thereafter it was commonly believed in Burma that his newspaper, the *Thooreah* (Sun), was financed by the Japanese, whose protègé he was. When asked what his attitude was toward Japan, U Saw once said evasively that "the Burmese are not vigorously anti-Nazi since, as Buddhists, they were not given to enmities." Like most Burmese politicians, he was an opportunist and essentially pro-Saw. He was always attracted by the superior violence of the Japanese.

When billikin-faced U Saw, accompanied by U Tin Tut, a former Chancellor of Rangoon University and the first Burmese member of the Indian Civil Service, came to Washington on his 1941 tour of America, he faced the usual battery of newspapermen. Among the reporters who talked with him was Henry Gemmill, whose impressions of U Saw are so apt and vividly put that, with the permission of the Washington *Star*, the interview is quoted in its entirety :

"A little man sat in the British Embassy yesterday and told a press conference how 'very much dissatisfied and disappointed' he was after talking with British Prime Minister Churchill.

"U Saw, Prime Minister of Burma, explained how he flew from Rangoon to India, to Palestine, to Egypt, to West Africa, to Lisbon, to London—so that he could ask Mr. Churchill that Burma be made a completely self-governing dominion.

"Mr. Churchill politely turned him down—but did promise a conference after the war. Prime Minister U Saw said yesterday he is 'hopeful' dominion status may come then.

"U Saw flew back to New York last night—he travels

everywhere by air. Back in Rangoon he has been learning to pilot, and has bought an American amphibian plane. As soon as he returns home he will apply for a flying licence, and hopes his officials will grant him one.

"From New York he will go to Canada, New Zealand, Australia—'to see how these dominions work.' As he talked to reporters it was plain that U Saw has no inferiority complex about the big British dominions.

"'We are 17,000,000 people—more than Canada and Australia together,' he said. 'Our territory is four times the size of England and Scotland.'

"And his country is of vast strategic importance—'remember the Burma road, China's lifeline,' he pointed out.

"U Saw did not care to explain his unusual name.

"The 'U' is a native term for 'uncle' research here divulged, it may be more properly explained as an honorary title corresponding to the British word 'esquire'. It is employed in speaking to some one of mature age and responsible position. If the Prime Minister were thought to be a bit of a rascal, he would be addressed as 'Nga Saw'. For plain 'Mr.,' people in Burma would say 'Maung Saw.'

"Saw is the statesman's only real name. In Burma each individual has one name for himself—he does not take his father's surname.

"U Saw is a Burma landowner with a flashing smile. Yesterday he wore a light gray suit above a blue shirt and a multicoloured necktie. A green handkerchief was in his breast pocket. Before entering the Burma cabinet in 1939 he was editor in chief of the *Sun*, Burma's oldest daily newspaper, started in 1906. He began as a free-lance writer.

"Since the war started Burma has been co-operating with England, and U Saw says he sees no reason why it shouldn't continue to do so. He is proud that an army is being formed, that Rangoon has 'the biggest airport in the East,' that a 'little navy has been started.'

"He did not mention that the first warship of the little navy was launched in April by Lady Cochrane, wife of the British Governor of Burma.

"That is a sore point with U Saw—the fact that defence

and foreign relations are the two matters in which Burma is governed by Britain. Apart from that, he says his country needs only a small jump to achieve dominion status.

" U Saw contends that self-government for Burma must have been logically included in the joint Roosevelt-Churchill 'Atlantic Charter' issued after their meeting at sea. But he would not reveal whether he talked about this on Friday when he saw Mr. Roosevelt at the White House.

" When asked about his Roosevelt talk, U Saw's face spread into a grin, his thumbs twiddled. He said: 'We discussed important national issues.'

" U Saw also was asked about Japan. The smile disappeared. U Saw said he never said anything at all about Japan."

It is a great mistake to compare in ability, culture, and intellect such Burmans as U Saw with Indian thinkers and leaders such as Nehru. In short, there is at present no ground for disagreement with the opinion expressed in the August 1942 issue of *Fortune*, in discussion of post-war plans for the Pacific area : " There is no reason to suppose that the Burmese politicians . . . could form any stable and competent government " without some measure of outside assistance during a period of transition.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN.

### Burma Road : Graveyard of Trucks.

*Men of China, Proud and free*
*Let the stars your garment b·*
*Let the shovel smooth the road*
*Labour, lighten mankind's load.*
*Tai Chi-Jao.*

Before the locust tide of sneaker-clad Japanese penetrated western Burma and captured Lashio on April 28, 1942, the legendary Burma Road was at once the most dangerous, the

most confused and the most important highway in the world. Plunging and diving through jagged mountain ranges over perilously twisting crags for 726 miles, it was Free China's lifeline until December 7, 1941, when it became also the American Road. One transportation expert, wise in the way of trucks and taxis, said after surviving its jolts and blinding dust that it " would make the toughest U.S. truck driver turn green."

Hardened Chinese who piloted thousands of American Lend-Lease trucks over its course from Lashio, the terminus of the Rangoon railway, to Kunming in Yunnan Province and back, found the experience a week and a half of nightmare, of nerve-sapping concentration. In summer during the rains, trucks slid along the brink of 1,000-foot precipices—inches from eternity. Some 1,300 trucks did careen off into the gorges below, and before the road finally fell to the Japs more than 15,000 wrecks were cluttered along the route—bombed to bits, burned out from lack of servicing—or smashed after sliding off.

The trucks would strike east across the Salween River, cautiously descending from 7,200 to 2,500 feet and climbing again to 7,500 feet, all within the space of forty miles—enduring some of the foulest driving and the most malarious country in the world. But from December, 1938, when the first wheeled vehicle left Lashio for Kunming until shortly before the Japanese began their conquest of Burma, the road brought a vital trickle of supplies to the armies of Chiang Kai-shek. The tonnage of every essential of war that got through meant as much to blockaded China as the figures on shipping losses and plane production and food supply meant to Britain when that nation was at bay.

For the defence of this road a hundred American planes were poised on southwest China airfields; hundreds of American pilots and mechanics were sent out to fly and service them, and thousands of trucks left the production lines of Detroit. The Lend-Lease laden tankers and freighters battered their way through the Pacific seas or around Africa to pile up supplies on Rangoon's docks.

There is nothing like the Burma Road anywhere else in

the world. When you see it you are convinced that the Chinese are the most doggedly determined people alive and you can understand the American engineer who exclaimed, "My God, they scratched these roads out of the mountains with their fingernails." A crow with a yen for high altitudes could make of it 360 miles—Douglas transports of the China National Aviation Corporation could fly it in two hours—a mere start in the long leap across the face of China from Rangoon to Hongkong.

Work on the road began in October, 1937, using the same techniques known 2,000 years ago when the Great Wall of China began to crawl over the ranges of Inner Mongolia. Each village and hamlet along the route sent workers whose patriotism for China overcame their reluctance to die of fever. During the early stages of the work 200 out of every 250 coolies died from exposure to this most malarious road in the world. But they came, bringing their own food, picks and baskets. It was Chinese construction of the epic sort: unstinted toil of human beings. The stone rollers which smoothed out the road were chipped out of the rock by hand and drawn by men or bullocks. The grades were filled with earth dug from the hill-sides and carried in baskets. The drills used to plant dynamite that blasted the shoulders of the mountains were the only modern machines used on the entire task. The noise-loving Yunnanese loved the showers of rocks. They toiled hard, and so did ten-year-old children under conditions no other workers would endure. There were landslides, gaping precipices and great bomb holes. But the bombs didn't bother the Chinese. One of them told an American cheerfully: "It cost Japanese $1,000 gold for bomb to make hole, and it cost us only a few cents. to fill it up."

The building of such a road would have challenged the ingenuity of any nation; with China's lack of equipment it seemed impossible. Yunnan Province, over which the route was to be cut, lies on an inclined plane ranging from Tibet to Indochina. From the north, like the fingers of a Gargantuan hand, a number of ranges slice the province on north-south lines. Between these prowl some of the deepest

canyons in the world—the vast gorges of the jungle-fringed Mekong and the verdant Salween.

Within sixteen months some 200,000 men built and graded a relatively smooth strip over this rugged, pocked plateau. Some 2,000 culverts, were installed; almost 300 bridges were built, including two suspension spans that swayed dizzily hundreds of feet above the gorges.

During this period possibly thousands of Chinese were lost to malaria, blasting powder, bombs and truck wheels. But for 726 miles from Kunming to Lashio (the British worked too at this end) a road from nine to sixteen feet wide was carved on the face of mountains and notched into ridges. By October, 1938, the road was a fact and a legend ready for journalists' adjectives.

The Burma Road was in reality a rebuilding of the ancient "Ambassadors' Trail" which as early as the T'ang Dynasty (about 800 A.D.) felt the tread of elephants bearing gifts from the Kings of Burma to the Emperor on the Dragon Throne. As the "Silk Road" it saw long lines of coolies carrying this prized burden from the hand-looms of Szechwan to the palaces of Pagan. Sometimes, too, it has been called the "Marco Polo Road," because along its route in the 13th Century journeyed the famous European adventurer who became an official at the Mongol court of Kublai Khan. Later it became the trans-Burma trade route with Chian, bringing a myriad of riches—jade, rubies, gold leaf, amber, ivory, silver and sundry luxuries—to the marts of the Middle Kingdom. Then, as now, it was one of the most difficult roads in the world. Through the lush green fields of Burma, over gnarled and austere mountains, over the gorges of great rivers, it twisted like a silken band. Parts of the old highway, on the China side, had once been paved with heavy stone slabs, but the surface reminded travellers of the old Chinese description of their highways, "Good for ten years and bad for ten thousand."

It was flattering to the Chinese to have the world acclaim the Burma Road. Despite rain, bombs and avalanches, trucks driven by Shanghai taxi men or volunteer Overseas Chinese from Malayasia, Thailand or Burma, did haul quite

a sizeable amount of munitions into China. But during 1939 and early 1940 the bulk of China's imports still arrived via the Pacific coast. Hongkong was still open to air transport, and the amazingly effective coastal smuggling darted silently past the money-blinded eyes of the Japanese. Then the most important route for gasoline imports was cut when Nanking fell late in 1939. When France buckled in June, 1940, French Indochina, deprived of its motherland's help and with scarcely a protest, closed her land to the passage of Chinese supplies.

Almost overnight, then, the Burma Road was left as virtually the sole artery into China from the outside world. The Chinese, stunned for the moment, quickly prepared to expand their trucking activities on the road. But then Prime Minister Winston Churchill, with Dunkirk stinging in his memory, was forced to a bitter decision : feeling Britain to be in mortal peril, he yielded to the Japanese and closed the Burma Road for a period of three months. But this was done with a touch of irony, for traffic was stopped only during the heavy monsoon rains when it could support only a little traffic in its first year. This time was well used to construct culverts, retaining walls and bridges.

Sorely needed shipments were suspended from mid-July to mid-October. For the first time the complacent Occident realized that the war in the East and that in the West were indissolubly one. During three months while Britain withstood the blitzkrieg over London, American policy had stiffened, and the highway was reopened in October, 1940. The Burma route then quickly assumed international importance. Britain began extension of the Burma railways to the Chinese frontier (a few miles of rails were laid between Lashio and the Salween) and Chiang Kai-shek ordered a line started west from Kunming toward a junction which it was hoped would be accomplished by the close of 1942. The road bed of this line was eighty per cent completed when the Japanese invasion forced its abandonment in the spring of 1942.

Meanwhile, 2,000 trucks went into operation. An estimated 100,000 tons of goods were piled on Burma docks

waiting to join the trek to Lashio and Kunming. After a midnight feast, the drivers lurched off into the dawn of the northern hills. Every government agency in Chungking, after a summer of famished despair, wanted vital items immediately over the Burma Road. But only a few weeks' tonnage figures were enough to disclose the disappointing story. From November through January an average monthly tonnage of only 4,000 to 6,000 was recorded as reaching the China terminus, and this was intended to supply an army of three million, not to mention 300 million civilians. All the while Japanese bombers were blasting away at the Salween and Mekong bridges, and the outlook became black even to the bomb-wise Chinese.

There were other reasons—obvious to a Westerner—why the road at this stage was headed for serious trouble. The highway was organized and directed as a peacetime commercial road when it was essentially military. Private interests operated trucks fancy free. The Chinese equipment was unwisely chosen—American light trucks intended for American pavements. Under the circumstances, only heavy-duty haulers could be expected to get through unscathed. Also there was administrative confusion: no less than sixteen Chinese government agencies operated trucks over the road—everybody from the Bank of China to the Salt Gabelle. It was impossible to pin down responsibility.

Then new sinkholes were developed in the morass by the action of the drivers themselves who originally volunteered as patriots, but soon found themselves succumbing to the lure of graft or "squeeze." Petrol was siphoned off to sell to private truckers. The drivers also saved gas for bootlegging by whizzing down the inclines with motor cut, one foot on the clutch, another on the brake, and a finger on the switch. Most drivers received $80 (China) a month, (about $4 U.S.) but they usually picked up at least $1,500 (China) on the side by carrying passengers and cargo on their own. The money slipped easily into wayside taverns where the drivers would sit up half the night nodding over fiery grog, and then skid their machines down the road next morning with bleary eyes and unsteady hands.

As 1941 opened, trucking over the road was expensive and haphazard. It cost approximately 500 rupees (£40) to move a ton of supplies from Lashio to Kunming. To this was added red tape—the road was punctuated with customs houses; drivers had to pass exactly eight desks at Kunming before being allowed to proceed to the next stop—and the customs closed promptly at 6 P.M., and the war halted until eight o'clock the next morning. And almost unbelievably, the Chinese seemed never to have heard of grease; hundreds of burned-out vehicles piled up in the few flat spaces along the road.

Drastic action was inevitable. This came about in February, 1941, through the visit of Lauchlin Currie, of President Roosevelt's Staff, to Chungking, and brought a turning point in the road's history. Out of a maze of tangled circumstances, one fact emerged—the road must be directed by one agency or individual. The Chinese suggested that Dr. John Earl Baker, an official of the American Red Cross in China with considerable transportation experience, be appointed. Currie agreed; and Dr. Baker was made Inspector-General. His efforts came virtually to naught; he claimed he was hamstrung by officialdom, but actually the Chinese resent a foreigner as "director" of any of their enterprises, preferring "advisers" instead.

Other experts joined the clan at Chungking almost at once. Most dynamic of all was the mission headed by Daniel Arnstein, the muscular six-footer and energetic owner of a fleet of 7,000 taxi-cabs in New York.

When asked if he would attempt to solve the muddle, Arnstein replied, "Okay, when do I start?" Arriving in Chungking with two associates—Harold S. Davis and Marco Hellman—he soon sped to Lashio, saw the Burma Road from end to end and pronounced the situation "appalling." Arnstein ("I talked plain") immediately got to the core of things, although he was baffled by chopsticks, and arriving back at Rangoon had knocked out a bracing report for the Generalissimo within a week or two. He pointed out delays of entire convoys while a clerk fumbled with papers and the general habit of a column of trucks halting out of sheer

neighbourliness. These chummy practices must be stopped. Urging these and other reforms, the driving time was soon halved and the flow of freight was doubled in a week. Chiang immediately got a copy of the report (" it was like being hit over the head with a baseball bat," said Arnstein) and he was pleased as punch ; he carried it until it became dog-eared and called it " my Bible of the Burma Road."

The Americans were dined at the Chiang home and Arnstein and his colleagues were asked if they " would like to take on the Burma Road as a private concession." It was a characteristically Chinese offer, and, of course, was declined. Before the fete was over Madame Chiang turned to Arnstein and said she felt apologetic for the way in which she " squawks at America," but that she would continue to appeal vociferously for China's needs. " Don't worry, Madame," was the ex-cabbie's reply, " we have a saying in the trucking business that ' the squeaking wheel gets the grease ! ' This conversation was translated for " the Gissimo," and he smilingly acceded with " Good ! Good ! "

Before Arnstein left he saw the first of 4,500 new trucks come rolling up from Lashio and, what was more important, a new system of traffic control and maintenance which opened the way to vastly increased shipments, a reform which continued with more or less success until the Japanese columns stamped up dust on the road in late May, 1942. The Burma Road, meantime, had become a sort of world classic, a measuring stick for other great road building jobs. Thus the Alcan Highway connecting the United States with Alaska through Canada was known popularly as Alaska's Burma Road.

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN.

## The Campaign for Burma.

*"Slash at the strong and hack at the weak.*
*From the Salween scrub to the Chindwin teak."*

Japan's campaign for Burma was part of her grand plan for expelling the British, Americans, the Dutch, and the French from Southeast Asia and the peripheral islands. And the plan succeeded with success perhaps far beyond the rosiest dreams in Tokyo. The drive for Burma was well co-ordinated with those for the Philippines, Java, New Guinea and Malaya. Burma was added as the final strand in Japan's web of conquest.

On December 25, 1941 Hong Kong surrendered, followed in 1942 by Singapore on February 15, Bandung (Java) on March 7, Rangoon on March 8, Bataan on April 9, Lashio on April 30, and the final withdrawal of the British and Chinese troops from the Chindwin and Upper Irrawaddy during the second week of May.

Much has been written about the Burma campaign of 1942. For the Japanese, it could hardly have been more successful. In five months they overran a country larger than France and nearly as populous as Australia and Canada combined. From the Allied point of view the campaign was a grim record of continued withdrawal toward Upper Burma, the most primitive part of the country and a veritable cul de sac for a modern army, away from their bases and the best lines of communication. For the British the principal problems arose from inadequate air support, difficulties of supply and administration, and lack of complete understanding and co-operation between the Allies. These difficulties were largely the result of the speed of the campaign coupled with the fact that no country is ever ready for an invasion.

For the Burman, it was his first experience of the devastating speed and destruction of a mechanized war

combined with air power. Thousands of Burmese and hillmen saw their first airplanes, tanks and artillery during those turbulent five months. Politically the attitude of the Burman was one of amazement and resentment mixed with indifference. They saw the British, who had been considered all-powerful, pushed out of the country by the Japanese. But not more than four or five thousand Burmese co-operated voluntarily with the invader. This represented about 3 per 10,000 of the Burmese race, perhaps no larger a percentage than the Nazi-collaborators in the occupied countries of Europe. Other Burmese, motivated by the old lust for loot which has accompanied armies since the beginning of time, joined in the show.

Burma's civil government, especially the Civil Service and the Governor, came in for a good deal of criticism, much of it hurled from the safe distance of Calcutta hotels. But the great cause of the Allied defeat in Burma was military, not political. Britain, the United States, and China were unable or unwilling to supply the necessary men and arms to stop the Japanese forces. All other explanations are secondary. The simple fact is that the troops, tanks, transport, planes and crews, and a thousand and one other requirements of a modern war could not have been collected and transported by sea around Africa from England and the United States to reach Rangoon in time to stop the Japanese. That is, three months after Pearl Harbor the Japanese seized Rangoon, and with the occupation of Rangoon the game was up.

Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, the Governor, was criticized for not having declared martial law. But the sudden overthrow of representative government by martial law was not the key to successful defence of Burma. The Governor was not an autocrat. Burma was governed in large part by Ministers responsible to an elected legislature. The Governor has praised the loyalty of the Burmese Ministers and has given them credit for the fact that there was no organized revolt in the Tharrawaddy District (the centre of Saya San's rebellion in 1931) or in the Shwebo District, the home of the last dynasty of Burmese Kings.

During the invasion Burma was fortunate in having a Governor with great human qualities; he was liberal, progressive, friendly and most sympathetic toward Burmese interests and aspirations. In addition, he is a graduate of Sandhurst and has a sound military background including service in the field with the Indian army. He is familiar with military problems and there is no record of serious differences between him and Generals Hutton or Alexander. More tanks, troops, planes and supplies could have defended Burma: not more speeches, committees, debates, polling booths, political parties, or what have you. Nor were the "burra sahibs" obstructive. Hundreds of them carried on in positions of great danger in the face of the enemy. There was no real instance of commercial interests failing to rally to the support of the civil and military authorities, or of their objecting to demolitions which sent their property up in billows of smoke and explosions higher than those seen by the Japanese anywhere else in Southeast Asia. The haughty "burra sahib" of one popular book on the Burma campaign turned out to be a bewildered American dentist who had taken refuge in the club as the only place where he could get food and shelter. In short, there is no reason for believing that the civil, commercial, and military authorities in Burma put up a show in any respect less creditable than that of any other area between Manila and Calcutta.

As for the events of the war itself, they can be told briefly. The British defenders had the 17th Indian Division and the First Burma Division. These amounted to no more than 25,000 effectives, and many of the units in the Burma Division were only partly trained and equipped. There were only about 4,000 European British troops and 7,000 Indians. All of the units were weak in armour and equipment. Anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons were inadequate and the R.A.F. was busily engaged on other fronts. The Burma Rifles, the Frontier Force, and the Military Police units varied greatly in quality and composition. They included relatively few of the Burmese race, being made up principally of Indians, Gurkhas, Kachins, Karens, Chins, and a few Shans and Burmese.

The Auxiliary and Territorial Forces were formed principally of Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and Anglo-Burmese, although many Burmese had come into these forces through enlistment and by way of the Rangoon University Cadet Corps. The Burma Royal Naval Reserve included representatives from all the races common in Burma proper. Throughout the campaign Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmans continued loyally at their posts in the armed forces, the post and telegraphs, the railways, and the river steamers. The fact that the telegraph, telephone, and railway systems functioned at all in the closing stages of the campaign is largely to their credit.

The Japanese invaders brought in their 55th, 33rd, 18th, and 56th Divisions with two tank regiments. Not all of these divisions were complete, but between 50,000 and 75,000 Japanese troops were in Burma by May, 1942. These veterans of fighting in China, Indochina, Thailand, and Malaya were perhaps superior in training and equipment to the Allied forces, except for the British home battalions and one Indian battalion which was reported to be the best in the Indian Army.

Various imperial and international problems with respect to the defence of Burma arose immediately before and after Pearl Harbor. Command of the Army in Burma was shunted about with Singapore, New Delhi, the ABDA Command, and the independent Burma Command all having had responsibility for Burma at one time or another during the year. One of the most thorny questions was that of the employment of Chinese troops in Burma, and the impression that the British rejected Chinese aid in defence of Burma gained wide currency in the world press. In actual fact, General Wavell flew to Chungking shortly after Pearl Harbor to see Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek who offered the 5th and 6th Chinese armies for use in Burma. Despite the allegation that the offer was declined, the Chinese 93rd Division was accepted at once and *en toto*. Its 227th regiment moved into the Shan States immediately and took up headquarters at Mongyawn, near Kengtung, on January 1, 1942. The remainder of the Division arrived in Burma before the end of the month.

At the same time the 49th Division moved to Wanting, on the Burma Road near the frontier, pending arrangements for supply of arms, ammunition, and hospital services. The Chinese 5th Army and their 55th Division were scattered throughout Yunnan only partially trained and equipped; it was agreed that they were to concentrate and train in readiness to move into Burma. By the end of January the Chinese 49th and 55th Divisions were moved forward as transport became available.

In February, Lieutenant General Hutton met the Generalissimo in Lashio and it was decided to move the Chinese 5th Army, which consisted of three divisions, into the defence of Toungoo. The 200th Division was reputed to be one of the best trained and equipped in the Chinese army and it gave valiant service in Burma. The Chinese units in the Shan States found themselves cut off by the speed of the Japanese advance and retired to China as best they could, virtually without getting into the fight. There was nothing sinister in the delay or ineffectiveness of Chinese troops in Burma. The British had to consult Burmese opinion which objected to the employment of the Chinese in Burma. Burmese political leaders feared and resented the presence of the Chinese and they had reason to suspect that China may have had designs on parts of northern Burma. But the big problem in the use of Chinese troops was administrative, not political. The British were required to find arms, ammunition, food, medical services, engineer and signal stores, motor vehicles, artillery, and railway stock for the Chinese and for their movement 825 miles by mountain road from Kunming to Lashio.

This could not be done overnight or with mirrors, particularly since the Burma Road was overcrowded with supplies being moved to China under pressure of the Japanese advance ever nearer to the Rangoon docks which, were piled high with goods for Chungking. Although the Burma Army was itself critically short of many items of equipment it was expected to provide these for the Chinese armies. On the other hand, considerable Lend-Lease equipment in Rangoon was diverted to British use directly and for the Chinese in Burma. Much

of this would otherwise have fallen into Japanese hands.

Meantime, it was decided that an American officer might serve usefully in a liaison capacity with the Chinese armies in Burma. As a result, Major General Joseph W. Stilwell arrived in Chungking in the first week of March, 1942 and shortly thereafter became Chief of Staff of Allied Forces under the Generalissimo. On March 14 he arrived in Burma and assumed virtual command of the Chinese armies in the country. Lieut. General Hutton was in command of the British forces until arrival of General Sir Harold Alexander on March 5th. General Hutton remained for a time as Chief of Staff to General Alexander, who was in supreme command of all Allied forces during the rest of the Burma campaign.

Japan opened the war by seizure of several spring-boards in Thailand from which attacks could be launched against Tenasserim. Victoria Point, Mergui, and Tavoy were seized in separate attacks across the Siamese frontier. A British raiding party which aimed at cutting the Bangkok-Singapore railway failed through lack of local knowledge.

As a result of heavy bombing on December 23 and 25, 1941 some 2,500 people were killed and a similar number wounded in Rangoon. About 100,000 people, mostly Indian workmen, left town and the docks, railways, and other facilities almost ceased operation. However, much of the labour returned as the attacks were not continued, and British ships continued to use Rangoon port until the first week in March.

Japanese attacks on the heart of Burma did not begin in earnest until the end of January, 1942. With forces inadequate for defence of Moulmein, the British withdrew west of the mighty Salween to Martaban on January 30. Meantime the A.V.G. and the R.A.F. maintained a local air superiority over Rangoon and carried out occasional raids on Japanese bases in Thailand. Japanese planes raided Mingaladon and Rangoon thirty-one times before the end of February and lost 233 planes in their attempt to break the Allied air strength. Fewer than fifty Allied planes were lost in beating off these attacks. But Japanese planes moved into combat in ever-increasing numbers, and on March 21 and 22 at Magwe they destroyed nearly all the R.A.F. planes

in Burma. The A.V.G. lost heavily at Toungoo as well and withdrew to Yunnan.

On the Moulmein front, Martaban was occupied and the Salween crossed at Paan by the 10th February. On the 17th some of the fiercest fighting of the campaign took place at the Bilin river crossing. During the last week of February the British forces suffered disaster at the Sittang bridge. The only bright spot in this part of the stubborn withdrawal was the arrival of the 7th Armoured Brigade and a battalion of the Cameronians. Without the tanks and stout hearts of these men the battle for Burma might not have lasted beyond Pegu and Rangoon. Most of the tanks were taken north to the Chindwin where they were destroyed on May 9 after having broken road blocks, prevented encirclement, and held the Japanese at bay up the length of the mid-Irrawaddy valley through the stifling heat of a Burmese summer in the dry zone. The Japanese managed to salvage a few of them for use in their drive into Manipur. But before they reached Imphal they were captured by the British Indian forces.

Rangoon was lost on March 8 after heavy demolition blackened the skies with smoke from the waterfront and the Syriam oil refineries. Thereafter the 17th Indian Division retired from Pegu up the Rangoon-Prome road, while the 1st Burma Division withdrew up the Pegu-Toungoo railway until they met the Chinese below Toungoo. By the middle of March the Chinese attempted to form a defence line near Pyu, but the speed and force of the Japanese push made formation of a defensive perimeter impossible. To the east, the Japanese pressed hard up the Irrawaddy reinforced by fresh armour and troops after the fall of Singapore. The Japanese advance now averaged seven miles per day. By the middle of April the Yenangyaung oilfields were destroyed in one of history's biggest Roman holidays of fire and explosion. Some British units were surrounded near Yenangyaung, and Chinese troops from Pyinmana assisted in breaking the road block. The British later repaid the debt with interest by relieving the hard-pressed Chinese near Meiktila and Kyaukse, where in two successful actions they killed 650 Japanese for a loss of three tanks and ten men killed or wounded.

Meantime, Japanese motorized troops made a swift flanking attack on the Chinese by advancing up the Toungoo-Karenni-Loilem road to Taunggyi and Lashio. Strategically, this daring envelopment finished the Burma campaign for the Japanese. On April 20 they were in Taunggyi, capital of the Federated Shan States, and on the 20th they were firmly astride the Burma Road at Lashio. The enemy then drove north into Yunnan, northwest to Bhamo, and on to Myitkyina which was captured on May 7th, three days after the Governor of Burma left town for India by plane. The Chinese forces were split and the Burma Road was cut in several places. The British 7th Armoured Brigade was moved up to cover the crossings of the Myitnge and the Irrawaddy. After the last British and Chinese units crossed the great Ava bridge on April 30, two of its spans were dropped into the Irrawaddy.

From this time on the Burma campaign was a race to India just one jump ahead of the advancing Japanese and the monsoon. Some 2,300 British, Indian, and Gurkha sick and wounded were evacuated up the rough track from Ye-u to Shwegyin, where they were ferried across the Chindwin. Generals Alexander and Stilwell met for the last time in Burma at Ye-u on the afternoon of May 1st. General Alexander made his way to Imphal by way of Kalewa, while General Stilwell went out through Indaw and Homalin. The Japanese sat out the 1942 monsoon along the perimeter of Burma and made no serious attempt to follow up their victories by a march into India or China.

During the latter part of the Burma campaign the pressure of hordes of refugees became a serious military problem. Eventually about 400,000 people, principally Indians, were evacuated under direction of the Civil Government. They came out of Burma over almost unknown routes across the passes; the sick, aged, children, women, afoot, by bullock cart, by plane, by elephant. But in all cases except those who came by plane there was a hard trek over the mountains on the Burma-Assam frontier. The loss in dead was not more than 2½ per cent., no mean achievement.

Once the Japanese became established in Burma the job

of rooting them out became the Number One problem in Southeast Asia. They were well dug in on all fronts and held the entire country except for a bit of Arakan, the Chin Hills, part of the upper Chindwin country and the Naga Hills, and the Nmai Hka and Mali Hka valleys north of Sumprabum. Fort Hertz, in an idyllic situation surrounded by snow-capped peaks, was the only place of importance in Burma that was not occupied by the Japanese. They spread out in western Yunnan to the Salween and held the Sima-Hpimaw passes leading from Myitkyina to Tengyueh, ancient Momein.

By mid-December of 1942 British forces based on India attempted a drive toward Akyab. But the Japanese turned it back at Indin and Donbaik, and at the latter point captured a Brigade Commander. The Japanese outflanking movement up the Mayu and Kaladan valleys proved too much for the available forces and by the end of May the British force was back to its monsoon position approximately where it started. There were still lessons to learn in jungle fighting, and these were undertaken in earnest in all training camps in India.

Southeast Asia was not really organized for war before the Quebec Conference of August, 1943. The Indian Army was being trained, recruited, and equipped (some of its best units were still in the Middle East), and General Stilwell was training a Chinese army in India. Field Marshall Wavell was announced as Viceroy-designate in June, 1943, and was succeeded by General Sir Claude Auchinleck as Commander-in-Chief, India. At the same time London announced that when the time came to utilize fully the Indian Army and Indian bases for the war against Japan a separate Supreme Allied Commander would be appointed for the theatre as a whole. At the Quebec Conference the appointment of Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten to this post was announced. Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pownall and Major-General Albert C. Wedemeyer, United States Army, were selected as his principal assistants. General Stilwell became Deputy Supreme Allied Commander.

These command assignments remained essentially unchanged (General Sir George Gifford arrived from Africa to take command of Army Group) until the end of October, 1944

when General Stilwell was recalled to the United States, reportedly as a result of differences with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek. By the end of November a number of other changes were announced in Admiral Mountbatten's Southeast Asia Command. On 12 November the old Army Group was reorganized as a charge of the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, Southeast Asia and Lieut.-General Sir Oliver Leese came out from command of the Eighth Army on the Italian front to replace General Sir George Gifford.

American forces in the former China-Burma-India Command were divided in late October into two theatres: Burma-India under Lieut.-General Daniel I. Sultan and the China theatre under Major General Albert C. Wedemeyer, who was transferred from Kandy, Ceylon, to Chungking where he arrived on October 31 to assume his new command. On November 17 announcement was made of the designation of Lieut.-General Raymond A. Wheeler, U.S. Army, as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia Command a post previously held by General Stilwell. Major-General Horace H. Fuller succeeded General Wedemeyer as Deputy Chief of Staff.

Other changes were announced in the British services. Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, the victor over the *Scharnhorst* and former Commander of the British Home Fleet, arrived to replace Admiral Sir James Somerville as C-in-C of the Eastern Fleet, important units of which moved into the South Pacific. Air Marshall Sir Richard Pierse, who had been in the Far East almost continually since Pearl Harbor, relinquished his charge of Air Command, Southeast Asia, in favour of Air Marshall Sir Stafford Leigh-Mallory, who was lost enroute to India. Major-General George Stratemeyer, Commanding General of Eastern Air Command, arrived as the senior U.S. Army air officer in the India-Burma theatre, while Major-General Claire Chennault remained in charge of the China-based U.S. Fourteenth Air Force. Meantime the autonomous U.S. Twentieth Bomber Command arrived in China with the new Superfortress B-29 for a direct air assault on Japan's home islands, as well as targets in Southeast Asia as far afield as Bangkok and southern Sumatra. Lieut.-General F. A. M.

Browning, Deputy Commander of Airborne Forces in the European theatre, was appointed to succeed Lieut.-General Sir Henry Pownall, who retired for reasons of health.

Meantime, General Stilwell shifted his Chinese troops from their training base in central India to northern Assam. In November, 1943 they began moving down the road under construction from Ledo to the Myitkyina railway across the malarious Hukawng valley. The Japanese took alarm from these Allied moves and expected attacks along the Burma coast. They increased their Burma garrison from five to six, then seven, later eight, and finally nine divisions with additional special brigades and battalions. This was done by bringing in troops that were badly needed elsewhere along their outer defence ring, which was now under heavy attack by the forces of General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz. To strengthen their Burma perimeter and to prepare for an attempted invasion of India, the Japanese seized the Haka-Tiddim area of the Chin Hills in November, 1943.

A second British drive on Arakan got under way in the dry season of 1944. On February 4, the Japanese made a bold attempt to encircle and destroy the British forces east of Maungdaw. They succeeded in cutting the line of communication south from Chittagong and for seventeen days had the British and Indian forces isolated. But these troops stood their ground and were supplied by air. Tanks were used to break the Japanese ring, and in the end the Imperial forces gave the Japanese a good beating. During February, March, and April some 5,000 Japanese were killed in Arakan by the ground forces alone. In addition many others were destroyed by air attacks.

In northern Burma, General Stilwell's Chinese forces continued their movement down the Ledo road at the same time. These troops were joined by a column of American infantry operating under Brigadier General Frank Merrill as a part of the Stilwell command. This "Galahad Force" left Ledo in February and marched some 700 miles in wide encircling movements in the Hukawng valley and finally to Myitkyina. They had mules for transport and were generally air supplied. In a series of short hooks along the

Shingbwiyang-Mogaung road they cut through Japanese supply lines and acted as an anvil on which Chinese blows hammered the Japanese. Thus Shaduzup, a village at the southern end of the Hukawng valley, was occupied by the Chinese on March 24th. At the same time the Wingate forces were cutting the Mogaung-Mandalay railway behind the Japanese 18th Division in Kamaing.

Merrill's Marauders gained their greatest fame in their long march over a 6,000 foot pass, in the Kumon Range, and their sudden appearance on the Myitkyina airfield on May 17, unobserved by the Japanese. In the town of Myitkyina, however, the Japanese put up a stubborn resistance until the first week of August when they were overwhelmed.

Japan's advance into Manipur in March, 1944 was aimed at the Assam railways and the Brahmaputra. It was accompanied by the greatest propaganda barrage since Pearl Harbor. The March on Delhi had begun. But it didn't get beyond Kohima. Their offensive was pushed vigorously; for eighty-five days they were astride the Kohima-Imphal road, thus isolating the Imphal plain and the principal British bases along the Burma frontier. But this time the new element in warfare was fully vindicated; Anglo-American air supply enabled the British to stay put and to fight in Imphal for three months. The Japanese, despite their lack of air support, managed to move tanks and artillery into the Imphal plain by way of the Tiddim road. But they were unable to get tanks up to oppose the British armour at Kohima.

Generals Monsoon, Mud, and Malaria were fighting on the British side this time, and by the end of June the Japanese were in full retreat from Manipur. The ability of the Japanese forces to move lightly and live off the country with an improvised supply system has often been held up for praise, but this time they overreached themselves and their administrative machinery broke down completely. Japanese starving and dead littered the road back to Burma. Their field hospitals were found with skeletons on nearly every stretcher. As July and August wore along their positions in the malarious, rain-soaked no man's land between India and Burma became

desperate. Their 15th and 31st Divisions ceased to exist as fighting forces, while their 33rd Division retired on the Chin Hills at the end of August in only slightly better form. By the first of September, 1944 their losses in dead on all Burma fronts, including Arakan, Manipur, the Hukawng-Myitkyina area, and western Yunnan, amounted to not less than 50,000 since the first of the year. British, Indian and African troops moved rapidly against road blocks and great difficulties of terrain and weather pushing the Japanese back along the Tiddim and Tamu roads. On 13 November troops of a Rajput regiment met patrols of the King's African Rifles near Kalemyo as the first British forces to enter Kalemyo since General Alexander's retreat of May, 1942. The key road and river centres of Kalemyo and Kalewa were freed of Japanese forces before the end of the year while troops of the Lushai Brigade and the Chin Levies cut the Kalemyo-Pakokku road near Gangaw; other British forces crossed the Chindwin farther north.

It is of interest to note what the enemy himself thought about these exploits in Southeast Asia. At the beginning of the campaign one Japanese soldier put his vision of the future into a poem which he entitled:

THE UNITY OF THE WORLD.

With the Rising Sun dyed in the flood of red blood,
Would that I could unite the world.
In the Ganges River flowing from the Himalayas
The sons of Japan are fishing for Crocodiles.
In London Town swept clear of fog
The carp * are flying high.
The Tower of London and the Eiffel Tower,
Are look-out towers for the Japanese police.
Berlin to-day, and Moscow to-morrow,
Then snowy Siberia in the Emperor's hands.
In the city of Chicago, free from gangs,
Our grandsons raise monuments to the loyal dead.
When making water from the Great Wall of China,

* Symbol of Japanese festival.

A rainbow appears on the Gobi Desert.
If I should die, I shall gather the devils
At the River Styx and have a wrestling match.

But the fancy of Nipponese soldier did not always run along such expansive lines. There follows a translation of the somewhat less hopeful meditations of one who failed to reach the frontiers of India :

> " Why are men made to be so lonely. There is no one with whom I can share my loneliness. There is no one here who could possibly understand my feelings. All I think of is whether I shall survive the next action. If only I could tread on Japanese soil once more ! Oh, why did I volunteer for the Army ! That is a question I shall never be able to answer."

June 10, 1944 saw the high tide in the Japanese flood in Southeast Asia. On that date they began their retreat from Kohima, and it is unlikely that the little men will see India again as invaders or ever again venture to fight so far away from their little islands.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### BURMA UNDER THE JAPANESE : CO-PROSPERITY.

> *" The entire people of Burma have now come to realise that they are liberated from the British yoke, and have achieved complete independence through the assistance of their Asiatic neighbour, Japan.*
> *" Anglo-American forces may meet in the near future some surprising reception committees . . . on the borderline of India and Burma."——Yasua Yamada, speaking from Tokyo in " News on Parade," September* 9, 1943.

The above quotations are typical of the sort of ingratiating propaganda put out by the Tokyo radio. They are worth a good look. The first paragraph, with its bland euphemistic

claim that Burma has been "liberated" and is enjoying "complete independence" just because Japan felt neighbourly, is, of course, pure fiction and exquisitely Japanese at the same time. It doesn't seem possible that Japan believes such propaganda will be swallowed. Possibly she doesn't, and the whole thing is just a reflection of Tojo's bravado, a sort of saki-inspired spree of self delusion. Yet Japan's propaganda artists continue to drone merrily on like a perpetual gramophone. The formula is familiar. And preposterous as most of these broadcasts are, they often contain a sly suspicion of truth—if you can decode it.

In Burma, as elsewhere, Japanese propaganda attempts to score by cleverly including many known facts in the same breath with obvious distortions. Few statements concocted by the Japanese can stand on their own merits—as the United Nations learned two years ago. We are hardened and will never be so gullible again.

Economically the Burman has several charges against the Japanese. There is an almost complete absence of consumer goods in the bazaars of Rangoon, and the district towns. Alarm clocks, watches, salt, clothing, soap, kerosene, cheap hardware, cosmetics and drugs, thermos flasks (no respectable Burman would think of being without a thermos bottle), flashlights, and even cheap textiles from Japan are almost nonexistent. Likewise, the absence of a cash market for his rice, cotton, beans, tobacco, and other crops, the breakdown of railway, steamer, post and telegraph, and electric light services and the reduced comforts and small luxuries of town and city life under the Japanese are all counted against them.

Nor has the recruitment of forced labour, the requisition of food supplies, the looting of medical stocks from Government hospitals, and the occupation of the best residences and offices helped to improve Japanese reputations in the land of pagodas. Wanton killing and expropriation of cattle, the only means the Burmese farmer has for tilling his fields, the issue of "rice bonds" in lieu of cash for the rice crops, the existence of a paddy deficit of 500,000 tons in upper Burma and a surplus of 1,500,000 tons in lower Burma have all conspired to bring Burma to the verge of chaos and want for

the first time in two centuries. By 1944 the rice surplus of lower Burma had disappeared. There is yet, however, a low, but tolerable, standard of living under which daily life in the towns and villages has returned to the standards of fifty years ago, with the Japanese now holding extra-territorial immunity and the favourable economic and political positions then enjoyed by the European.

Politically, the Japanese propagandists have held the trump card. Burma has received a sort of bogus independence, and for the first time her political leaders can say they have received complete Home Rule, without yet fully understanding its implications. But even on the propaganda front the situation is far from irretrievable. There is nothing wrong with Allied psychological warfare in Burma that can't be cured by a few good victories, sound and progressive economic plans, a supply of consumer goods, and an enlightened political gesture from high places. Clumsy and bungling attempts at fraternization with the Burman have been made. As always, the Japanese soldier has been curiously inconsistent. He worships at the pagodas, but will then compel a pongyi to climb a tree to fetch a coconut; he told the Burmans they were fellow Asiatics, but then bathed naked in public (a thing most repulsive to the Burman); he enlisted the Burman and provided him with weapons, but then slaps and beats Burmese recruits in public. He tells the Burman he is a Buddhist, but then desecrates the monasteries, and forces thousands of priests to take up manual labour. Likewise, Emperor Hirohito's expansive gesture in contributing ten thousand paper rupees to the endowment of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda was nullified by the Japanese military who literally trampled over the holy places of Buddhism throughout the length of Burma. On the other hand, the Japanese assisted the Burman in building a hero shrine in Rangoon, on the Japanese model. And Japan is to have a replica of the Botataung pagoda erected somewhere in Nippon. Japanese painters and sculptors have done Ba Maw, "with his gaungbaung beautifully tied", and other leaders of the new Burma. And Japan has presented Ba Maw with a personal airplane, which may have its uses.

Meantime, the poor Burman is having a rough time. He and his country are being alternately courted, fought over, bombed, invaded, marched across, and devastated. What he really wants is to be left alone. Actually, he does not desire the British, the Japanese, the Indian, or the Chinese to control his country, either economically or politically. But if a choice is compulsory, he would probably prefer the British.

Despite his tribulations, the Burman has not lost his sense of humour. A recent issue of a Rangoon newspaper said, in reporting the Japanese forward moves in Arakan tl at the march on Delhi had begun. It may take a year " or perhaps a little longer " for the Japanese to reach Delhi. The inference, in Burmese, was that they will never get there. In the same issue the Burmese editor put a second one over on the Japanese censors by saying that the Indian National Army of Subhas Chandra Bose was marching with the Japanese. " Our duty is to help them on their way." In other words, here is another opportunity to get the Indian out of Burma.

Dr. Ba Maw, Burma's dainty Premier, is sufficiently hard-headed and schooled in practical politics not to be taken in entirely by Japan's more specious propaganda. Early in November, 1943, together with the puppet leaders of four other occupied countries in the " Co-prosperity Sphere ", he attended a " pep talk " session in Tokyo, called by Premier Tojo for " frank discussions " on greater co-operation with Japan. It is possible that Ba Maw squirmed slightly when he heard Tojo warn the Japanese against " a superior and haughty attitude " toward the peoples of Burma and other occupied regions. For—said Tojo—" the prime objective in our aim must be to win their hearts." Otherwise, the conferees were told, it would be difficult " to develop various resources in those nations." Tojo then warmed up to his subject. He told the delegates from Occupied China, Thailand, Burma, the Philippines and Manchukuo : " Of course we intuitively feel that we Japanese are superior. However, just because we are superior we are inviting eventual troubles if we should hold the attitude of looking down on others.

Even if they are inferior to us, we must treat them with love and understanding."

But the Burmese know these are weasel words. Let us see how Japan awarded " complete independence " to Burma, apparently " love and understanding " was tried as a last resort.

When the Japs entered Burma, five weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the following proclamation was issued to the Burmese by the Japanese Commander : " To the dear 15 million people of Burma :

" Nippon troops have entered Burma to eliminate the influence of Britain, which has been exploiting and oppressing the people of Burma for 100 years . . . .

" The Burmese are an Oriental race like the Japanese and are ardent Buddhist devotees. Inasmuch as Nippon troops advanced to Burma for liberating the people in Burma, they should co-operate sincerely with Nippon regardless of their status or profession.

" The Japanese Army will regard whosoever co-operates with Nippon as Nippon's friends . . .

" On the contrary, those who resist the Nippon troops or those who interfere with their military movements shall be regarded as the enemies of East Asia and shall be subjected to severe punishment . . . ."

Even before the British military resistance collapsed and while refugees by the thousands were struggling to escape into India and China, the Japanese appointed their own administrators as " governors of districts " (there are thirty-two districts in Burma). At the same time Japanese Army officers were set up in various parts of the country as Peace Commissioners. Their function, however, was to spread propaganda, calm the Burmese, maintain law and order and gather intelligence. Meanwhile, a Japanese general explained to a meeting of Burmese leaders that any Burmese Government would have to be subordinated to the Japanese military authorities and that it was impossible to grant independence during the war. However, on August 1, 1942, the Tokyo radio announced that a Central Executive Committee had been set up with Ba Maw as Chief Administrator. Tokyo

further explained that "the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Army in Burma will be the Supreme Head of Burma's defence, reconstruction, etc., while not interfering with the Executive Administration." Members of the latter were told they "must accept orders from the Commander-in-Chief and be under his supervision."

Early in the campaign, the Japanese were reported to have issued a proclamation detailing the terms of their conquest in Burma. Among impositions placed on the Burmese were : (1) Burma is to pay an indemnity of Rs. 3,000 for every Japanese killed in Burma. (2) For ten years Japan will take all royalties on the natural resources of Burma. (3) For fifteen years Japanese and Siamese goods will enter Burma duty-free. (4) All property left by Indians and other foreigners is expropriated to the State. (5) No Indian or other foreigner may enter Burma by sea or land. Other provisions stated that 1,000 Burmans were to be sent each year to Japan for education ; Burma was prohibited from signing a trade agreement with any other country ; Burmans were to feed Japanese soldiers free until the end of the war ; and Japan was to supply all arms.

Despite the initial sting of these terms and the natural misery following the wake of war, the Tokyo radio blithely reported the "spontaneous" joy and contentment of the Burmese under their new masters. During the summer a Tokyo newscaster said that the Burmese crowded around the men of the Imperial Army to sell food. An old lady selling tobacco was quoted as saying, "I like the Japanese very much." This was because "the British soldiers always threaten us with their pistols when bargaining, but the Japanese soldiers only smile like children."

But sensitive Burmese feelings sustained many shocks before the end of 1942. During the early months of the occupation reliable observers reported that Japanese soldiers raped Burmese and Kachin women ; villagers were forced into labour at the expense of their own cultivation ; sacred Buddhist temples were violated (thousands of Burmese were reported to have sought shelter in the temples of the Shwe Dagon during Allied bombings of Rangoon) ; Burmans were

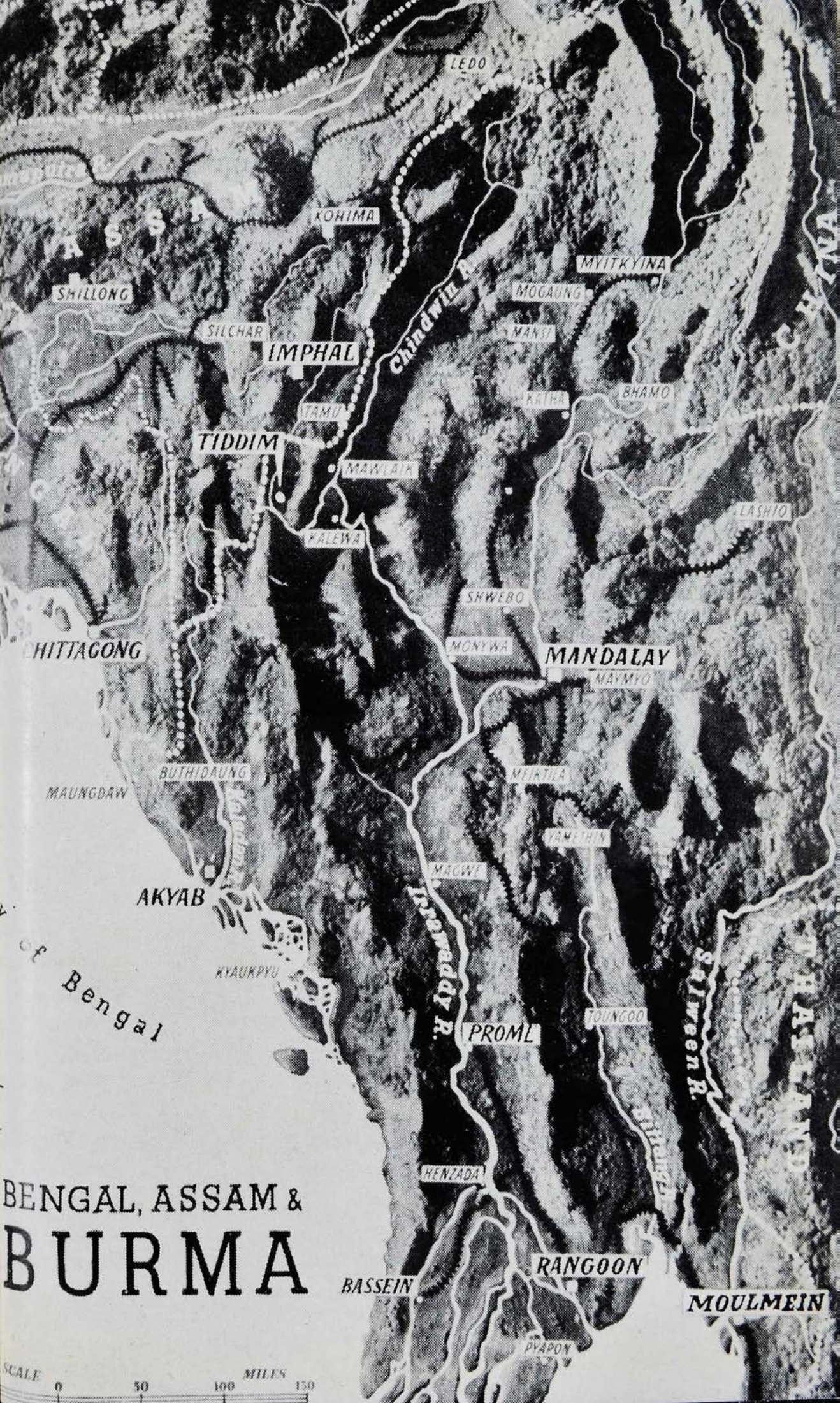
forced to salute Japanese sentries and if they refused they were either beaten or shot.

While Nippon's new friends were being treated with contempt by the Japanese soldiery, Tokyo broadcasts began to tell the world about the new order in Burma. Ba Maw was pictured as applauding Japan's policy of " Asia for the Asiatics " and as insisting that the determination of the Burmese to co-operate with Japan grew stronger every day—and as for Allied chances of attacking Burma—" impossible," said Ba Maw, echoing Japan's " naval spokesman," who at that time was crowing over the great " victory of the Japanese Navy in the Southern Pacific Sea Battle."

Meanwhile, in the villages a Japanese Commission on tour of the country to enlighten the people on the significance of " co-prosperity " was telling the Burmese that Colonel Minami, a leading Jap officer in the occupation forces, was a grandson of the Myingun Prince who rebelled against their good King Mindon and then fled to Indo-china.

Burma's geographical position as a buffer between Greater East Asia and India conditioned the whole pattern of Japan's military, economic and political plans for her new neighbour. Reconstruction, cultural benefits and industrial improvements all were subordinated to military and political expediency. While sponsoring a " co-operative puppet government, Japan renovated Burma's economy just enough to fill in deficiencies in strategic materials and make the country really useful to Japan.

The job of educating the Burmese to an appreciation of Japanese culture and military grandeur was entrusted to various agencies trained for this purpose under the guidance of the Greater East Asia Bureau of Southern Regions and the Burma Association in Tokyo. With usual efficiency and thoroughness the Japanese established schools to train Burmese teachers, schools to teach the Japanese language and still other schools to develop skills in specific fields such as railways, shipbuilding, and banking. Students, tourists, teachers, artists and authors were sent to Japan on the exchange system. Political goodwill missions, sport improvement associations and lecturers on Japanese invincibility and racial greatness jostled each other like travellers by




# BENGAL, ASSAM & BURMA

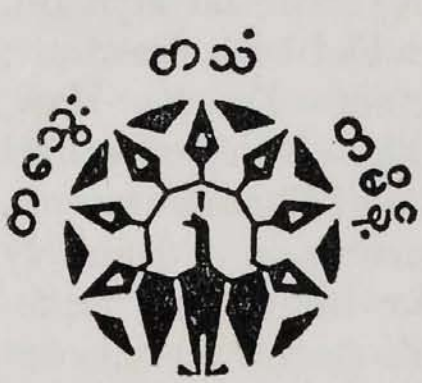
SCALE
0 50 100 150 MILES

*Dr. Ba Maw, puppet dictator of Burma, wearing the Order of the Rising Sun with Grand Cordon*

crowded trains. A Servant of Burma Society started encouraging monthly clean-up days and calesthenics.

With equal industry and a lavish set up of Leagues, Associations and Committees a joint Japanese and Burmese administration was created to run the country. While the invasion campaign was still underway the Burma Independence Army (its officers used red ink in their orders to show their bravery) handled the beginnings of civil government with committees in each district. After Ba Maw and his Central Executive Committee took over, a "Burma Independence Preparatory Committee" was established. But the Japanese handled all matters pertaining to finance, foreign policy, trade, communications, defence, public health and expropriated property. The rest was left to the Burmese ; British law and language were continued temporarily in the courts and extraterritoriality was claim for the Japanese. It was a "joint" setup, but the Japs gave the orders, right down to the village headmen. These latter, incidentally, were forced without payment to act as Jap agents and report the passage of British troops.

By August, 1943, the Burmese were judged worthy of full membership in the Co-prosperity Sphere. They were granted "independence" ; the Japanese army chief "abolished" the Japanese military administration and turned civil affairs over to Ba Maw. The Tokyo radio, reporting the investiture of the new "State" said a State Foundation Assembly was called, which heard the reading of a Declaration of Independence and "unanimously" selected Ba Maw as chief executive. Ba Maw is called the Adipadi by his followers, a Pali term roughly equivalent to Fuerher. Ba Maw as Prime Minister announced the appointment of ministers and privy councillors. Axis and neutral countries were informed of Burmese independence ; war was declared against the United States and Britain ; and a treaty of alliance was signed with Japan. Ranzo Sawada became Ambassador



*Dr. Ba Maw's Seal.*

from Japan, and Major-General Buryo Isomura was made Military Attache. This elaborate hocus-pocus changed nothing but the outward forms. The familiar pattern was faithfully affixed. Ba Maw became a more vociferous "tub-thumper" for Japan; a Central Bank of Burma began to issue currency; the early transfer of "enemy assets" to Burma was promised; and the new government was recognized by Japan, Nanking, Thailand, Manchukuo and Germany. Domei, the Japanese news agency, quoted Ba Maw as saying: "The people of Burma have now joined hands with the people of other East Asia countries. We, the people of Burma, will advance together with Manchukuo, the New China, led by Mr. Wang Ching Wei, and other East Asia countries. I request that we co-operate and work happily. Japan helped us with her blood and sweat for the consolidation of Burma, and we must also assist Japan with our blood and sweat."

Among the members of the Cabinet Privy Council, and High Court of the Japanese-sponsored government of independent Burma, inaugurated in August, 1943, there are several officials of the former government. Included are four who had been made Knights of the British Empire, Sir San C Po (the Karen Christian leader), Sir U Thwin, Sir Mya Bu, and Sir Maung Maung Gyi. Four others had been Senators; four others were former cabinet ministers—Dr. Ba Maw, Dr. Thein Maung, U Aye, and U Ba Thi. Thirteen others were former members of the Burma House of Representatives. The entire machinery of the new government is quite definitely Fascist in organization. In fact, so far from being representative of the people of Burma, conditions are reminiscent of Burma in 1581 when Balbi, the Venetian merchant, visited Pegu. Balbi told the King [Bayinnaung] that Venice—

> "... Was a Republic or Free State, not governed by any king. When the king heard this he greatly wondered; so that he began to laugh so exceedingly that he was overcome of the cough, which made him that he could hardly speak to his great men."

The aims of the new government, other than support the New World Order, were phrased by Domei as principles of

Ba Maw's " front line " policy. These were given as increasing the strength of the Burmese armed forces at the front; maintenance of order, thereby assuring work for the Burmese under war conditions, and the establishment of an administrative system competent to deal with all external and internal affairs. Domei reported that Ba Maw was drawing up a One-Year Plan for achievement of these aims which also were to include closer co-operation with the Japanese Army in " military construction ", or, as another message put it, " military counter-action ". Late in 1943, Domei dispatches also credited the Burmese Government with establishing a single-party system which merged the Dobama (Thakin) party and Ba Maw's Socialist Sinyetha group; achievement of racial consciousness; solution of the problem of Indians of British nationality; establishment of diplomatic relations with friendly nations; and support for the Indian Independence movement.

Japan also tried its hand at resolving the problem of ethnic and socially distinct minorities. Kengtung and Mong Pan in the Southern Shan States were " annexed " to Thailand in July 1943. The Karens, Kachins, Was and other groups all had different claims. Japan tried to link them with the Burmese. Ba Maw conferred with Karen leaders and announced that he had made progress toward ending a century-old feud by telling them that Burma's independence was meant for all races in the nation.

A Japanese-Burmese treaty signed on September 25, 1943, incorporated the Shan States (except Kengtung and Mong Pan), Karenni and the Wa regions into Burma—thus integrating the nation (the Japanese hope) into a harmonious whole.

Any look at economic Burma at this stage must be appraised in light of Japanese, not Burmese, benefit. Every Japanese-sponsored scheme and gesture of co-operation puts the war-effort first. There is a scarcity of labour everywhere due to flight of the Indians who used to cultivate many of the rice-fields, work the mills and docks. Colossal transportation difficulties added to by continual and effective Allied bombings have caused the Japanese to pounce on the naturally leisurely

Burmese, inexperienced and little trained, for forced labour. They have been persuaded to join the following organizations:

(1) The Sweat Army, a labour corps enlisted "to reconstruct Burma from the ruins of war devastation." Its principal sweating is done on roads. Many thousands were used on the Burma-Thailand Railway.

(2) The Leadership Army or Guidance Corps, created to "perfect the structure for collaborating with Nippon to enable Burma to work side by side with Nippon on an ethical and friendly basis." Its job is largely carried out by those former government servants who are going down the line for Ba Maw and co-operation with the Japs.

(3) The Circle Army, which is endeavouring to "lay the foundation for Burma's prosperity so that she may become a cornerstone of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere." One of its duties is air raid precautions, and it is variously stated to incorporate the "National Service Corps and the Civil Defence Army."

(4) The Blood Army, which is attempting "to fight the Greater East Asia War to a victorious finish." This Army, wearing the same uniform as the Japanese but distinguished by a peacock insignia, is the present Burma Defence Army. It is said by some to number about 5,000 ; by others as many as 30,000.

The Burmese Army started with a nucleus of thirty Burmese Thakins who are fast becoming legend as the "thirty brave patriots." Provided with Japanese passports when once over the Thailand frontier, these men were trained by the Japanese on Hainan Island or Formosa and sent with 1,000 rifles into the Tenasserim area at the beginning of the 1942 invasion. They recruited Burmese and expanded behind and with the advancing Japanese army. In fact the new Burmese Army reached Akyab before the Japanese did, and seized a large sum in rupees from the treasury. The Burma Independence Army, as these first recruits were called, reached an estimated strength of 30,000 but they were disbanded in August, 1942, by the Japanese. The Burma Defence Army, consisting of hand-picked ex-Sepoys of the Burma Rifles and Burma Military Police, in addition to a few reckless

enthusiasts from town and country, was set up in its place. Its recent strength was reported as one division. Japanese advisors were attached to each unit. Burmese dislike military routine and the poor pay, lack of training and equipment, harsh discipline and lack of fraternization by Japanese officers with the Burmese have made the Burma Defence Army ineffectual. It is probably used principally in border patrol activity. In September, 1943, the Burma Defence Army became the Burmese National Army by order of the Supreme Defence Council of " Independent Burma ". Ba Maw is the Commander-in-Chief. His Defence Liaison Committee also controls the activities of the four " Armies " described above. National conscription was in prospect late in 1943.

Because the military have stopped all trade, Burma is in the midst of a serious food dislocation. Upper Burma has a paddy deficit of 500,000 tons, while lower Burma had a surplus of 1,500,000 tons, in 1943. In 1944 there was probably a net deficit. Rice and salt are the only foods generally available, other items bring three to four times their former price. Imported food luxuries are ten to twenty times higher than normal. The Japanese have tried various control and quota measures on the cultivation of specific crops and a rationing system on sugar, salt, tobacco, matches, edible oil and kerosene. But mal-distribution disrupts everything, and the Japs, scarcely able (shipping is the most serious problem) to supply their own military needs, are not looking out for the Burmese. The only imports recorded are some trout eggs and extra spinning machinery.

In the financial sphere the Southern Development, Chosen, and Yokohama Specie Banks have replaced all former banking in Burma. A People's Bank, subscribed to by the Burma Government and Japanese interests, was set up in 1943. Also land mortgage and co-operative associations have been organized. Military scrip was used extensively by the Japanese. But the Burmese objected on religious grounds to the Pagoda printed on one side and also disliked the small denominations. The Japanese fixed the Burmese rupee, the Malay dollar, and the Java guilder at the same value and made Thai notes interchangeable with Burmese.

What do the Japanese get out of Burma ? The answer is : " Not much ". Very little is obtained from oil or mineral resources. The silver, lead and zinc mines at Bawdwin have not been put into large scale production, if at all. The refineries along the Irrawaddy have been rebuilt, in part, and a small refinery has been built on the Arakan coast, but these are doing only the crudest kind of cracking. Transportation of tungsten and tin is difficult. Timber extraction has been stressed for wooden shipbuilding, but emphasis has been placed on reducing the rice surplus (produced by lack of export) and on encouraging other crops needed by the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Cotton cultivation in place of rice was encouraged by the Japanese from the beginning of the invasion. They hoped to promote a large textile industry and brought much equipment from Japan. Weavers guilds were organized—but clothing and cotton products remain scarce. They have even had to shorten their longyis.

United Nations' bombers, roaring over Burma's mountains, railway lines, bridges, oil fields and airfields from Akyab to Myitkyina and from Rangoon to Lashio, have been making life in Burma one 500-pound bomb after another placed with precision accuracy, with an occasional blockbuster just for luck. The fierce, scowling little men—the " enemy in the jungle where he is almost at one with the leeches and the reptiles "—are not so confident these days, surely not so cocky as Yasua Yamada, who opened this chapter, was in September, 1943, when he said in a broadcast to the United States :

" Ladies and gentlemen of America, how do you do. The month of September usually marks the end of the rainy season in Burma, the country which has been talked about so much these days as a potential battle front of the first degree.

" Burma means to Japan a stone wall of defence against the Allies, as much as it means to the Allies a gateway of offence against the Japanese forces. The Allies must recover Burma and its appendage known as the Burma Road before they attempt to deliver a fatal blow against Japan now firmly established in that part of East Asia.

" The appointment of Vice-Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten as the Commander of the Anti-Axis forces in Southeast Asia had two-fold meaning : One is that the Anglo-American leaders put unprecedented importance on the coming battle of Burma, and the other is they intend to bribe off Chiang Kai-shek as usual with empty offers of a high-sounding appointment instead of supplying war materials, needed more than anything else at this time.

" The appointment of Lord Mountbatten may mean that the Allied forces in East Asia at last are mustering their strength to start something. Japan knows that very well. Japan is carefully watching all these United Nations air raids and the increased reinforcement of Chinese troops and she is preparing to meet any eventuality with perfect confidence. She is more firmly entrenched in Burma now than she ever was. Her new ally, Burma, can furnish large numbers of fighting men with amazing zeal of Oriental patriotism. Such being the spontaneous national psychology of the people, it is no exaggeration to say that every Burmese is now ready to fight against any and all invaders who might attempt to cross his national boundary.

" Japan is fully prepared to meet the Anglo-American counter-offensive for the recapture of Burma, and she has a definite plan drawn up to let the enemy repeat the tragedy of Arakan of 1943, just as many times as occasion may require.

" No matter who may take command of the Allied forces, Lord Louis Mountbatten or anyone else, it is a foregone conclusion that he is to suffer the same fate as General Wavell, General Stilwell, and General Auchinleck. If such be the case, the gateway to Burma, including the Burma Road, the only passage to the back door of China, shall remain closed indefinitely against the aggression of the Anglo-American forces.

" Thank you for your attention, you have been listening to Yasua Yamada, speaking from Tokyo, in *NEWS ON PARADE*. Goodbye and good luck."

Good luck, Yasua Yamada. You will need plenty of it.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### WINGATE'S EXPEDITION: VANGUARD OF VICTORY.

*"The boldest measures are the safest."—William Pitt.*

Tough, bearded, talkative Major General Orde Charles Wingate, a 38-year-old man of action, had become one of the legends of this war before his death in an air crash on March 24, 1944. A brilliant innovator scorning orthodox methods, his military beliefs and conception of warfare are tersely summed up in the above quotation. And he proved his point, first in 1943 dramatically and daringly, by leading several thousand men 300 miles through Burma's mountains and jungles on an expedition which blew up railroad bridges, destroyed enemy transport and left the Japs gibbering in confusion and panic. Operating hundreds of miles from a friendly base and in the thick of occupied territory heavily patrolled by the Japs, his men, organized in eight columns, fought skirmishes and battles practically every day for three months—and they never lost a battle. Wingate was a military genius but he was no Superman. He had meticulously planned every detail of his campaign. The principal factor that made it possible—in which he confounded the brass hats and made a drastic departure from recognized methods of warfare—was the use of aircraft to drop supplies and portable wireless to keep in touch with his base and with his detached columns. He called his mission Long Range Penetration and employed it as an offensive weapon.

His achievement was all the more remarkable in that his men, aged twenty-eight to thirty-five, were not chosen for their fitness for this type of warfare, but were composed of city-bred Englishmen who normally are drafted into the infantry during war, plus a number of loyal Burmese, Kachins, Karens and tough little Gurkhas.[1]

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[1]See Appendix I for Wingate's Order of the Day issued to his columns as they crossed into Burma.

At the root of Wingate's theory of penetration was his contention that one fighting man in the heart of the enemy's military fortress is worth many hundreds in the forward battle area. And he argued (and largely proved) that the only limit to the number of such forces and the length of their operations is the air supply factor. Wingate's men—he called them Chindits after the fabulous griffins which guard Burmese temples—succeeded more spectacularly than anyone would have dared to predict and demonstrated, most of all, that the Japs are not masters at jungle warfare.

Wingate was a careful student, a philosopher, perhaps a dreamer, but as a man of imagination and initiative he had few peers. His profession was war, but he was interested in everything. When in the mood he would talk for hours. Then he would be silent and meditative. His soldiers outside his tent in the morning have heard him chant to himself in Arabic, which he spoke fluently. His talk often ran to music, literature, art, politics and to make a point he used vigorous turns of phrase, sometimes quoting from Greek classics. He had very definite opinions on diet and often startled a visitor by reaching in his pocket and thrusting out a handful of raw onions, inviting him to have one because of his faith in their vitamin content.

Wingate also had pungent ideas about the Japanese. They thought, he said, that they had found a technique of jungle warfare to which the United Nations had no answer. " They boasted, " he added, " that the self-indulgent and ignorant troops of the United Nations would never equal them in skill or endurance in the conditions of warfare that prevail and must continue to prevail throughout their ' co-prosperity ' sphere. From Japan to India, from Manchuria to Australia, jungle and mountain predominate and make penetration, the premier weapon in modern warfare, everywhere possible."

" But they were mistaken. The British soldier has shown that he can not only equal the Japanese but surpass him in this very war of penetration in jungle. And the reason is to be found in the qualities that he shares with his ancestors—imagination ; the power to give of his best when the audience

is smallest ; self-reliance and power of individual action."

The General was full of maxims, some of them learned from jungle warfare. " When in doubt don't fire," he said. This advice grew out of the fact that during the Burma mission Japanese troops, confused by the jungle and the ever-present Chindits, were frequently seen to fire at their own men. " The answer to noise is silence," is another of his sayings. At night in order to trick his men into giving away their position, the Japs would shout : " Sergeant Major, come over here."

The Chindits, in the course of their operations, came to know the Japanese intimately. Towards the end of the campaign, Wingate's column commanders learned to predict with great accuracy the enemy's reaction to any given action on their part. " Our side generally outwitted the enemy, who could not make out what our force was trying to do and failed to take the right measures and act quickly. The result was that the Japs had to dispose of ten times the force at our command," Wingate remarked.

" The Japs give me the impression," he continued, " of being noisy, nervous and inaccurate. On the defensive they are formidable indeed. They hate not knowing exactly what they are attempting and consequently hate trying to find columns in the jungle. Above all they hate being ambushed while on the move, and seem to have little power to reply to sudden surprise attacks.

" To descend to greater detail, the Japanese mind is slow but methodical. He is a reasoned, if humourless, student of war in all its phases. He has carefully thought out the answer to all ordinary problems. He has principles which he applies, not over imaginatively, and he hates a leap in the dark to such an extent that he will do anything rather than face it. When faced with a situation which he does not fully comprehend he will withdraw rather than chance his hand. On the other hand, when he feels he knows the intention and strength of his enemy he will fight with the greatest courage and determination to the last round and drop of his blood.

" His operational schemes are the product of a third-rate brain. But the individual soldiers are fanatics. Put one of them in a hole with 100 rounds of ammunition, and tell

him to die for the Emperor—and he will do it. The way to deal with him is to leave him in his hole and go behind him.

" The answer is never to let him know the intentions or strength of his enemy but always to present him with a situation which he does not thoroughly understand. The momentum of surprise, in other words, must be maintained against him. Now it happens that owing to our national characteristics we are capable of doing this while our modern education and Western outlook renders us incapable of his sombre and humourless self-immolation."

Wingate's shrewd, analytical comments on the Japs, his thoroughness, his almost passionate attention to detail and his quick grasp of essentials are characteristic of everything he did. He had gained an envied reputation for his exploits in organizing the patriots of Abyssinia against the Italians. This undertaking—the assault of strongly defended Italian positions with but a handful of British, a few Ethiopians and several trench mortars—was a bold example of the Wingate manner. In Palestine in 1937, he turned the Arab weapons of surprise, ambush and sniping against the Arab rebels themselves. A fearless guerilla fighter, always alert for the unexpected, Wingate believed that " nothing is so devastating as to pounce upon the enemy in the dark, smite him hip and thigh, and vanish silently into the night." This is exactly what he and his men did in the jungles of Burma.

Immediately after the British withdrawal from Burma in April 1942, Field Marshall Wavell wanted a man who could head a re-entry into the country. Wingate, who had been Intelligence Officer under Wavell in Palestine, was selected for the job. He flew to India, was given a free hand and began training his men at once. He put them through six months of gruelling preparation, marching them with heavy packs through steaming Indian jungles, training them to swim rivers with equipment and animals, until they were hardened. They were taught to infiltrate and employ other tactics they would have to use in Burma. " The whole job was a piece of cake compared with the training," said one British private who was in one of the first columns to come out afterwards.

Among the men were British Commandos who had survived the raids on Norway and other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe. Each column had Burmese troops and a few Burmese officers. With them on mules were carried loud-speakers through which they could address Burmese villagers and tell them of the certainty of their deliverance from the Japs. Afterwards they were given leaflets which were run off on special duplicating machines carried by the mules. Wingate wrote the main manifesto. It appealed to the Burmese to help the force and explained that " the mysterious men who have come among you—can summon great air power and rid you of the fierce, scowling Japanese." One of the Burmese speakers with the expedition was the heir-apparent to one of the Shan States. Wingate gave great credit to these Burmese who guided his men. Many of them had done the trek from Assam to Burma before and knew secret jungle trails. Without them " these operations would have been impossible," he said. Often, dressed in Burmese clothes, they went into villages to see if there were any Japs.

Prime factors also in the success of Wingate's raid were the courage and endurance of his men, their faith in their leader and the efficient co-operation of the R.A.F. They looked smart in new khaki battle-dress when they started out. When two-thirds of the original force finally reached India in June they were a dishevelled gang of long-haired, bearded men in torn, tattered uniforms. Wingate, himself, never a stickler for sartorial grace, returned with his baggy corduroy trousers abbreviated to ragged shorts, his bush shirt torn and still wearing his battered solar topee. But while most were thin, near starvation and on the verge of dropping from exhaustion, their spirits were high. Just as high as three months before when starting to wade into the Chindwin River one of the British sergeants said, grinning : " This is all very well, but it will be a long time before we get the football results again. That's one of the horrors of war, that is."

Often while sweating and toiling through the elephant grass or the jungle some soldier would remark, " Oh for a pint of nice cool beer," but when they came straggling back

and the dream tankards were placed before them, their shrunken stomachs, deprived continually of energizing sugar, balked at the bitter taste of the beer and after a sip they left it untouched. Nor could they eat the peaches and cream they had dreamed of when it was brought in. Weeks of starvation diet—rations of chocolate and rice, dates, nuts, cheese and tough mule meat and vulture curry—had deadened their palates and tortured their digestive systems accustomed to hearty English bully beef and Lancashire hotpot. Elephant and python steaks, buffalo meat and mule tongue were other items. One private from Manchester said after they were taken to hospitals : " Mule soup is better than horse soup. It tastes better. But horse liver is very fine when fried. That's really champion. On the other side of the Irrawaddy, the aircraft that was supposed to drop us food didn't show up. It wasn't his fault, we had had to move and our radio battery had run down so we could not give our new position. We had radio sets with us on mules and we signalled for supplies that way. Within a few hours a plane was across dropping everything we asked for. But this time the rations didn't arrive and we slaughtered a mule a day.

" We also ate snakes. Pythons are best. You cut them into steaks and they taste like fish. Banana leaves make a good desert. Some of the boys ate vulture, but I didn't, because I heard it didn't taste good."

Courage of the highest order is revealed in the stories of the men who returned—yet when they spoke of courage it was always the other fellow's as if in hearing them talk individually you might think the whole expedition had been a failure, because each in telling his own story invariably mentioned how far short he had fallen from the standard set by himself.

One lieutenant, aged 29, a former wine merchant from Liverpool, but now a demolition expert, told how his party divided into two groups when it reached the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway, one moving up the line and the other down, blowing up the track as they went. He wore the kilt of his Scottish regiment throughout the whole mission. " Our best effort ", he said, " was blowing up a steel girder bridge

with a span of 140 feet across a chasm with a drop of fifty feet below. There was a hell of an explosion that must have given our position away to every Jap for miles around, and, after the clouds, dirt and debris had settled we saw the bridge had crashed down into the gorge below."

This worthy Scot was a snuff-taker and he had the R.A.F. drop a supply by parachute to him in the jungle. But the man who opened the packet was unaware of the former wine merchant's colonial habit and told the cook it was curry powder. Not long after the whole detachment reported a mysterious stomach ache.

The R.A.F.'s part in dropping food and supplies—a " game of aerial darts ", one member of the crew called it—was carried out without fighter escort. More than 50,000 miles of day and night flying over enemy-occupied territory and the delivery of well over 500,000 pounds of supplies was accomplished—all without a single casualty to aircraft or personnel. Some fantastic " extras " were among the stores dropped. One major, who gave up a lieutenant colonel's rank in Delhi to join the Chindits, wore a monocle to aid defective eyesight. The R.A.F. dropped him spare monocles from time to time. Bottles of rum, carefully packed, came raining down from the skies, and of 140 dropped, only one was broken. Letters, new boats, radio batteries, outboard motors and even two radio operators were dropped—the latter landing in the middle of a battle on the east side of the Irrawaddy. One officer received his will for signature, but he never solved the problem of how to get it out again until he walked out with it. Another officer asked for a copy of Hesketh Pearson's biography of Bernard Shaw and got it.

Sites where supplies could be dropped—level tracts, clearings and dry river beds—were selected by R.A.F. officers marching with each column. The air base in Assam received code radio messages stating the exact place and time of each delivery. Smoke and ground signals made with parachute cloth directed the planes during the day and flare paths and Very lights at night. Often the supply planes would come down within a few hundred feet of the ground, drop parachute parcels of arms and rations, and zoom up again before Jap

planes could take off from nearby fields only a few minutes' flight away.

One of the widely spread parties radioed a " request aircraft to land " message one day, directing the big transport to an 800-yard long clearing which the Chindits found in the jungle. When the transport arrived, hoping to evacuate sick and wounded, it was found that because of trees at both ends of the field only about half of it could be used for landing. The pilot, a former Calcutta businessman, put his plane into a steep angle, clipped the tree-tops with his landing gear and made it—just. Seventeen wounded and sick were carried aboard and then came the take-off—facing a run of 100 yards less than usually required by this type of plane. The remaining soldiers watched anxiously. At one moment it looked as if the transport wouldn't clear the trees at the end of the strip—then the weary men on the ground cheered.

Often Wingate's men lay in the jungle at the side of a road watching lorry-load after lorry-load of Japs tearing up and down looking for them. Often, too, they peered through the undergrowth and saw Japs scouring jungle trails for their footprints. Many of the Japs never got back to report. Sometimes the Chindits popped on to Japs face to face. One British muleteer, wandering along a jungle path, abruptly met a Jap officer, a red band on his cap, sitting beside the trail. They saw each other at the same moment. The Englishman reached for his revolver but the Jap, surprised like a frog on a log, vaulted into the jungle screaming : " Whee ! Whee ! British ! "

Another British officer, reconnoitering a village, saw a group of men sitting around a campfire. " Are there any Japs here ? " he asked in his best Burmese. They returned stolid stares and then he realized they were Japs. He tossed a grenade into the middle of the group and fled back to report there were Japs there. Then there was the time when a raiding patrol stumbled on a Jap headquarters, apparently abandoned. But there were Burmese about getting dinner for their Jap masters. The Chindits sat down and the grinning Burmese fed them in banquet style.

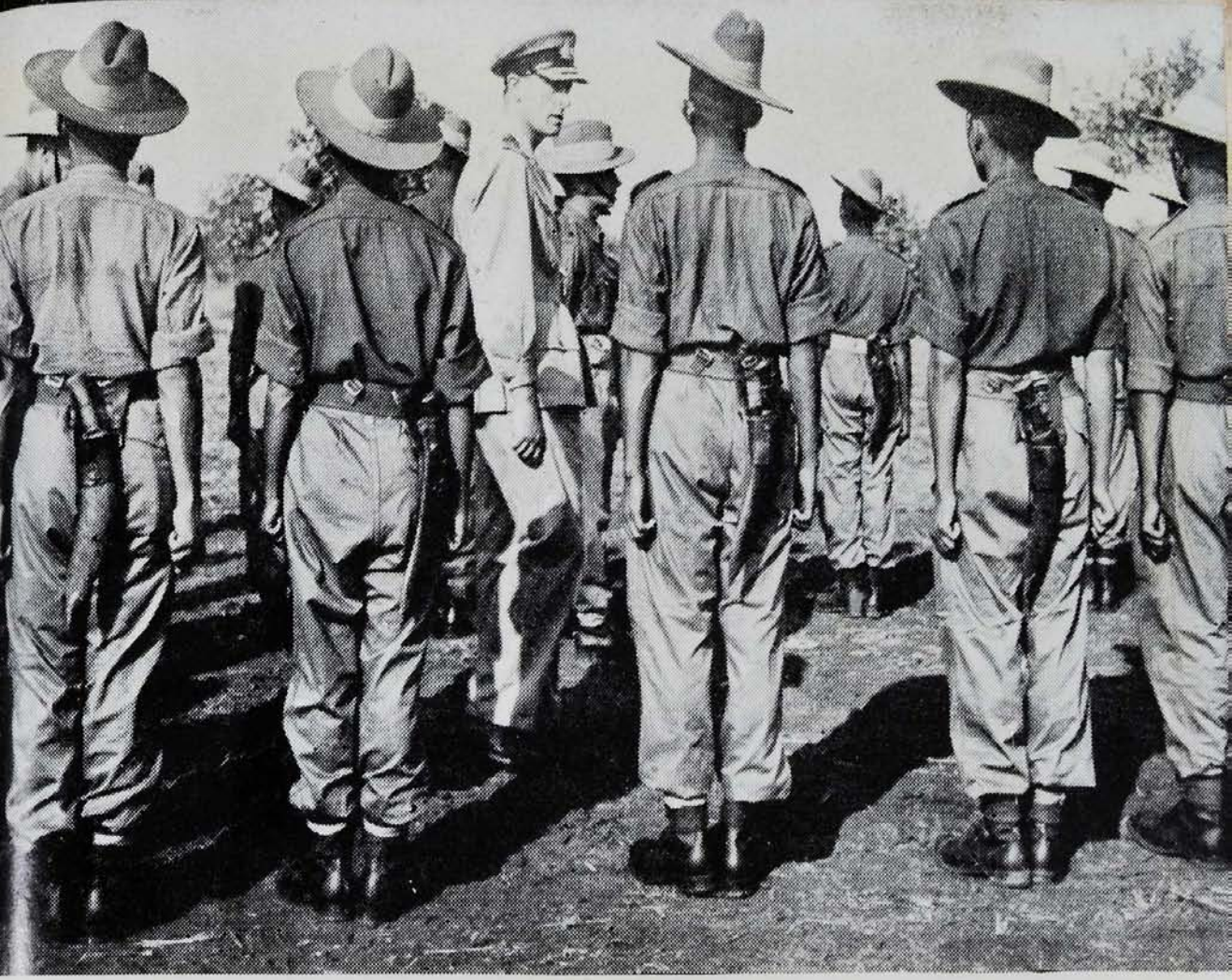
Indian troops with the expedition also demonstrated

courage. One of them sat for five days in a corner of a Burmese hut with Jap soldiers living in the other part of the hut to make sure that no one told the Japs that the Chindits were crossing the river nearby. As soon as he knew his comrades were safe, he slipped quietly away.

Wingate relates that he came across no instance himself when British or Indian troops were betrayed by the Burmese. Nearly always they were found to be friendly. Some admitted working for the Japs but said they were paid for it and had to live. The British always paid them in silver rupees for the food they bought. Wingate's men found the Burmese disillusioned. The average villager, deprived of sugar, food and luxuries since the entry of the invader, saw the difference between the English and the Jap. Under the former he lived as he liked—peacefully. He found the Jap a fierce and greedy monster. This was indicated by the fact that whenever the British approached a village, none ran away, but when the Jap arrived the Burmese took to the jungle for safety. Wingate noted that " the Japanese have been at pains to ingratiate themselves with the Burmese, but the common man in Burma judges by facts, not by professions, and he sees in the small, scowling, ruthless greedy Japanese something of what the Chinese used to describe as the ' foreign devil '. Soon the British found that nearly all the Burmans referred to them as " The Government " but when they spoke of the enemy it was always " the Japs ".

The men who followed Wingate never flinched at the ordeal they experienced—perhaps because they knew that he never asked his soldiers to do anything that he wouldn't endure himself. They were the essence of England, these men. Chaps with names like Suddery, Tates, Lambert, Blain, Berry, Horton, Edge, Lockett, White, destroyed the myth that the Jap is a superman. They found that the stony-eyed little men did wild and stupid things when rattled.

One sergeant major took a " poor view " of his adversaries. " We were being attacked one day," he said, " and I popped up my head to have a look. There were two Japs ten yards away. They opened fire on me with tommy guns. All their bullets hit the ground at least five yards in

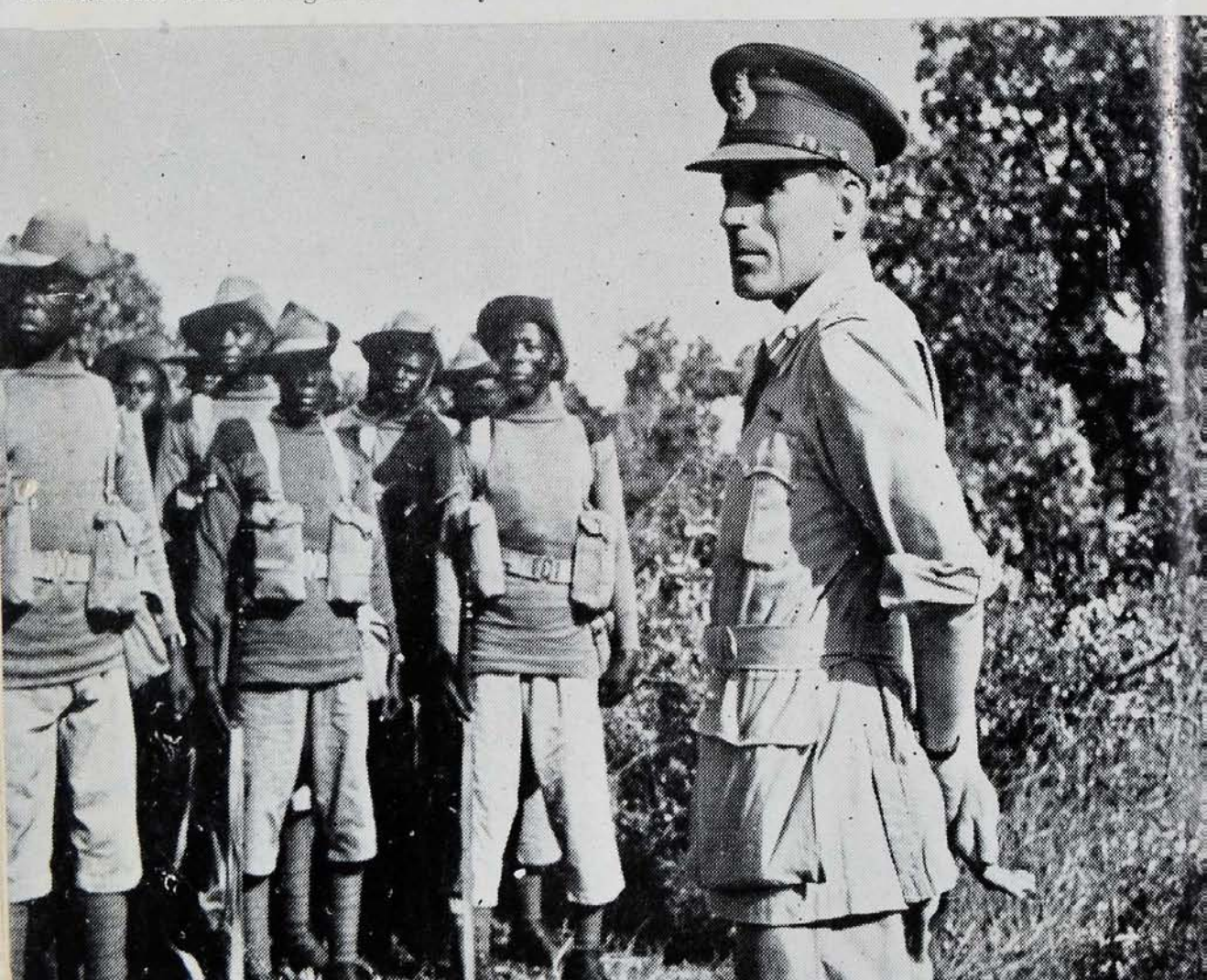


*Lord Louis Mountbatten inspecting a Gurkha Regiment*

*Chins from the hills of the Indo-Burma frontier South of Manipur*

*Typical Arakan Country*

*The late Gen. O. C. Wingate & West Africans*



front of me. It was the most terrible display of shooting I ever saw."

"Some of the Japs have a great deal of guts though", he admitted. "On one occasion a Jap crawled hundreds of yards along a river bank until he got within fifteen yards of us. Then he chucked a grenade. It went off more like a Chinese cracker than anything. We got him all right." He said the Chindits could tell when the Japs were close on their trail because there would be a series of explosions. The Japs were among the booby traps set by the British.

Most of the men found that the most trying part of the expedition was the constant strain of knowing that there was no rear position to which they could fall back and that the enemy might fall upon them on any side at any time. To counteract this, the men didn't talk of the Japs as a body but referred to definite persons like Captain Nakajima or Colonel Watanabe who they knew were somewhere nearby fighting against them. "It made it much easier to think of a worried little Colonel Watanabe who was probably getting it hot because he could not catch us," said one officer.

In many stages of the operation Wingate was able to deploy his columns, carry out rapid marches to new positions and outwit the enemy completely through the skilful use of deception. Wingate was a genius at and a stickler for details and thoroughness as usual. When it seemed expedient, Wingate employed the trick of bogus supply droppings to give the enemy the impression that the British had many more columns in Burma than their actual eight. At the outset of his operation—the crossing of the Chindwin—he worked out a plan to mislead the Japs into thinking that his main force was heading in a certain direction, whereas actually it took quite a different route. Among other things, he convinced the Japs by detailing one of his officers, uniformed like himself and wearing a Brigadier's insignia, to head the decoy group.

Wingate saw to it, personally, that this plan went off without the enemy observing the main force. "In the parlous business of telling lies the greatest and most thorough attention to detail is necessary," he once remarked. "No

sooner does one get down to the actual business of deception than one wonders how the enemy is ever deceived. The fact is that the average officer, having been bred up in an atmosphere of safety first, is still unable to take total war seriously except in short spells and honestly expects to be excused while he lights a pipe and goes off duty from time to time. 'After all, it's only a game', one can hear him saying, and the dotting of i's and crossing of t's is an intolerable nuisance."

When Wingate's force was assembled, facing the half-mile width of the Chindwin and its first move into enemy country, it was one of the strangest armies ever gathered. Dogs, who had been taught to detect the smell of the Japanese, sniffed the ground in the vanguard of each column. Shan and Kachin mahouts jabbered at ex-clerks from the North of England on how to handle the mortar-carrying elephants. Horses, mules and men sweating in 100-degree heat, edged up to the river bank. Bullocks dragging machine-gun laden carts, lurched slowly forward. Suddenly in the gathering twilight a column commander whistled a low, clear bird call. Its answering call was heard softly a few hundred yards away. Except for the braying of the mules there was silence. Jungle trees partly hid the moon as the troops moved down to the watre. Rubber boats, dugouts, sampans, were loaded with heavy equipment and a major gave the signal to advance. Faintly in the distance came the drone of a plane approaching. The major raised his arm and the men huddled motionless in the paddy fields, shapeless dark shadows. Mules pricked their ears. Then a light winked from the plane. It was the R.A.F.—speeding the first food and supplies.

The major stripped off his clothes, plunged into the river, and with long, easy strokes swam toward a lamp signal on the opposite bank—this was the crossing place. Several times that night he swam back and forth to direct the boats ferried by friendly Burmese. Sampans, canoes dug from tree trunks and rubber boats crept across far into the night. Then the elephants began their clumsy journey. With dawn scouts reported no sign of the enemy, so the operation proceeded quickly in daylight.

The Chief Chindit, beardless, his African sun helmet tilted back and his sharp eyes watching everything, rode up and down on the beach. The men saw confidence in his lean face, deep-set blue eyes, and granite-like jaw. As night came, the Brigadier handed his mount to a soldier, flung his topee into a canoe, peeled off all his clothes and dived into the muddy river. His bobbing head soon disappeared in the blackness of the water. On the opposite bank the signal light blinked for the last time and went ou'.

Proceeding east after crossing the Chindwin, Wingate's main objective was to cut the Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad, the main Jap line of communications against the Kachin irregulars still holding out in the north. Early in March the force blew up a bridge between Shwebo and Wuntho and later cut the railroad in more than seventy-five places so that it ceased to function efficiently for the rest of the campaign, thus forcing the Japs to use the longer route via Bhamo. In many instances the Chindits faced forces ten times their number. None marched less than 750 miles ; a majority of the men walked over a thousand, carrying on the average a 60-pound pack on their backs.

The Japs, muddled and confused, were forced to divert nearly eight battalions from other operations and finally sent a force chasing hither and thither all over Burma prying out non-existent Chindit lines of communication. When they sensed that Wingate was on the point of dispersal, they spread out large forces all along the Chindwin hoping to trap the Chindits on their return to India. But by this time Wingate had become so expert at evasion that he had little difficulty in slipping through Jap patrols.

One section of the force, acting as a decoy column to draw upon itself the brunt of enemy opposition while enabling the main group to spread uninterrupted havoc further north, marched 600 miles—and for six weeks it was able to retrieve only one R.A.F. dropping of food. When this force, weakened by beri-beri and existing on rice bought from villagers and water drained from sections of bamboo, reached the Mandalay railway, it found the enemy waiting. The Japs were entrenched behind a half-mile long stretch of the rail embank-

ment. The Chindits fought an all-night battle with the width of the tracks separating them from the Japs. Firing at point-blank range and lobbing grenades as they went, they swept back four Jap bayonet charges and the Gurkhas counter-attacked with kukris which the enemy did not like.

Certain forces of the mission had penetrated to within fifty miles of the Burma road ; another column came within seventy-five miles of Mandalay when Wingate received instructions from Corps Headquarters to withdraw. He was anxious to go on ; one of his columns was on the march to blow up the strategic Gokteik viaduct above Mandalay on the railroad to Lashio. But the major portion of his mission had been accomplished. He had seriously disrupted the enemy's interior economy, proved the ability of the British to re-enter Burma and the inability of the Japs to stop them. A good morale effect was achieved on the Burmese, an effect which was to extend to the public generally, both in India and abroad and most of all, he had forced the enemy to change his plans, forestalling Japanese penetration both west of the Chindwin and north of Myitkyina. So Wingate, realizing the inevitable loss of more material and men, contacted his columns and set his face for the hazardous recrossing of the Irrawaddy. When that objective was reached, concealed enemy snipers, mortars, and machine gun-units opened up on his strung-out columns. Many of his men were asleep and exhausted with fatigue. It seemed impossible to get boats across even in the absence of the Japs. Only one course was open. He ordered his men to break up into dispersal groups, fan out and scatter. The men took to the jungle while bogus supply droppings went on for a while to throw the Japs off the scent.

Now the Chindits showed their fearless, resourceful courage and fulfilled Wingate's boast that they could cope with any jungle trick known to the Japs. Realizing that speed alone could save them, they wrecked their heavy equipment, buried their radio sets (thereby cutting off R.A.F. supplies) and started for the border 300 miles away.

It was during this last ordeal that the men lived on python steak and mule soup. Parties stealthily crossed the

Chindwin at night and although pursued nearly every inch of the way, Wingate guided his columns to safety.

Of the several thousand Chindits who had entered Burma in February 1943, the majority reached Assam by early June. Of about a thousand missing, half were battle casualties and a number were captured. With Wingate's permission several detachments of Kachins and Shans remained behind in their native areas. One group that got out into China was greeted on arrival with banners and a Chinese brass band. The Chinese guerilla officer who met them remarked that he was delighted to see British officers with uncreased trousers and who made no inquiries for beds on which to sleep.

General Wingate's exploits in the Burma jungle early in 1943 fired the imagination and praise of the Allies while the war was still hard going. He had little difficulty in selling the idea of another long penetration into Japanese-held Burma at the beginning of 1944. By this time Wingate had the enthusiastic support of everybody who mattered, and the 1944 show was on a much larger scale than the raid of the previous year.

All flown in by hundreds of plane and glider sorties, the second expedition was complete with gliders, fighter planes, bulldozers, newspapermen, jeeps, mules, artillery, anti-aircraft guns, and some 15,000 men including combat aviation engineers who constructed four airfields in about as many days. One brigade marched in the hard way over Pangsau Pass just to show that it could still be done. Altogether, it was the largest operation of this type executed thus far in the far eastern war.

On March 10–11 Wingate's gliders and planes, many of which were American, completed concentration of the Chindits (this time officially known as the Third Indian Division) along the great bend of the Irrawaddy between Katha and Bhamo and near the Burma railways between Indaw and Mawlu.

Allied aircraft had prepared the way for the landings by successful attacks on the Japanese air force. Japanese fighters had been concentrated in upper Burma in support of their own drive on Manipur which started at the same time. On the 4th of March, 46 enemy planes were destroyed on the

Shwebo fields. In March alone some 130 Nipponese planes were destroyed in northern Burma, most of them on the ground at Shwebo, Meiktila, and Anisakan. Colonel Philip Cochrane's U. S. Air Commandos worked most of the destruction.

Enemy reaction to these attacks on their positions in Burma was severe and immediate, although the Japanese continued their drive toward Imphal while Wingate's forces were cutting their lines of communication in the rear and moving toward the 18th Division in the Mogaung area. It was almost a case of the gingham dog and the calico cat trying to eat each other up. The gingham dog had greater staying powers and eventually he won.

General Wingate was killed in an air crash in the mountains near the Indo-Burma frontier on March 24th, but his columns carried on under Major General Lentaigne. One column established a road block on the Myitkyina-Bhamo road. Others set up road and rail blocks near Mawlu and Hopin on the railway between Indaw and Mogaung. One brigade pushed on to Mogaung where it took the rear headquarters of the Japanese 18th Division by surprise and on June 9 captured huge quantities of stores and ammunition. It blocked the escape of that division, which was then being hammered by General Stilwell's Chinese troops in the Kamaing area.

Meantime, Brigadier General Frank Merrill's American Marauders, which were a part of General Stilwell's command, captured the Myitkyina airfield on the 17th of May. Mogaung was finally reduced by joint British-Chinese action on June 26, although the enemy squeezed between Mogaung and Kamaing continued to resist until the end of July and fighting was almost constant despite the fact that much of the country was flooded. Many wounded were evacuated by R.A.F. Sunderland flying boats from Indawgyi lake, Burma's largest. The Chinese-American forces continued their drive toward the Burma Road and before the end of 1944 crushed the Japanese in the Bhamo area and pushed forward on the road to Namkham, south to the vicinity of Katha, and into the rugged country between Mongmit and Namkham along the

valley of the Shweli. Meantime the British 36th Division, under Major General Festing, had advanced down the railway from Mogaung to points beyond Pinwe to the Naba-Katha area against stiff Japanese resistance.

Just as the second Wingate expedition was on a larger scale than the first, so its results were greater. The Eighteenth Division, one of Japan's best, was shattered front and rear by the Allied operations. In the capture of Mogaung, Myitkyina, and the railway south to Pinbaw the Allies for the first time in the Burma war seized an area that was in itself worth having. The goal of reopening land communication with Free China was brought within reach. These operations in the spring and summer of 1944 were highly successful from every point of view. Combined with the Japanese defeat in Manipur, they marked the beginning of the end of Japan in southeast Asia. These successes were the result of several truly international expeditions. British, Americans, Chinese, East and West Africans, Kachin Levies, Indian troops of many units, the formidable Gurkha, and others had many fingers in the pie.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.

### Post-war Burma.

*"When two buffaloes fight*
*the grass becomes trampled down."*
—Burmese Proverb.

What direction is the new Burma likely to take and what will be the tone of its post-war government? There are at least three sources of information from which we may expect to find the broad outlines of the answer to this all-important question facing Burma and the Burmese. These are: First, certain public statements by Burmese and British members of the Reconstruction Department of the Government of Burma; second, reports of debates and proposals by members

of the British Parliament; third, the so-called "Blue Print for Burma" issued by a committee of seven Conservative Members of Parliament, which in November, 1943 formed themselves into a body to consult official and non-official opinion on Burma's future.

Examination of the status of Burma in the midst of the campaign to drive the Japanese from her fair hills and plains reveals these facts: according to the Japanese she is an independent nation in the Co-Prosperity Sphere of Greater East Asia; in fact she is a puppet state of Japan; at law she remains a part of the British Empire.

How will order emerge from this tangle; what are the views of the Burmese themselves; and what are the announced plans of the British Government on the future of Burma? The future happiness of the Burmese people and a true measure of the British genius for evolution and growth in government will be found in satisfactory answers to these questions.

First, it may be assumed that in politics every Burman is at heart a nationalist. If this means anything it means that complete and immediate home rule is the desire of the leaders of the country, whether members of the British or the Japanese Government of Burma. With this platform the Japanese profess to be in full agreement. In the case of the British Government, at home and in Burma, the attainment of full Dominion Status for Burma has been announced repeatedly as the goal of British intention.

In the latest statement of this policy shortly before the opening of the Japanese war, Sir Archibald Cochrane, then the Governor, declared before both houses of the Burma legislature on August 26, 1940:

> "The statement which I made on July 2nd with the authority of His Majesty's Government makes it clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that full self-government, which is the essence of Dominion Status, is the goal for Burma as for India and further immediately the war is brought to a victorious end His Majesty's Government will be willing to discuss the problems to be solved in Burma. That is a definite statement

of intentions, it will become effective as soon as our victory makes this possible."

Burmans have been told before and since that the ultimate goal is Dominion Status. This is no new pronouncement. The all-absorbing question up and down the Irrawaddy is: When? To this great question the "Blue Print for Burma" of the Conservative Party proposes a definite answer: "The period of reconstruction and of making the necessary arrangements for the establishment of self-governing institutions shall not exceed six years."

Plans for the reconstruction of post-war Burma have been under discussion by a great many people in a great many quarters. It is perhaps significant that officials (Burmese and British) of the Burmese Government in exile, Burmans who escaped the Japanese occupation, Indian and Anglo-Burmese former residents of the land of pagodas, and representatives of Indian, Chinese, and British business interests in Burma, all displayed equal interest in building a better and happier Burma after the expulsion of the Nipponese invader.

Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, the Governor of Burma, has consistently been a leader in the formulation of progressive plans for the future of Burma, and all parties interested in this important problem have the benefit of his liberal, modern ideas.

Up to the Spring of 1945 there had been no official announcement as to the time when the devastation of war may be healed and a constitution providing complete home rule prepared for adoption by a constitutional convention freely chosen by the people of Burma. But six to ten years would seem not an unreasonable period.

On December 12, 1944, a full-dress debate on Burma took place in the House of Commons, the first since 1934. The debate was remarkable for its candour in discussion of Burma's economic problems and Britain's political intentions. One member quoted from a speech made by the Governor, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, to the East India Association in London in 1942:

"Politically-minded Burmans and indeed many countries are wondering just what our intentions towards

Burma are. Do we really mean to lead them on to that goal of self-government, or have we some reservation at the back of our minds which will mean that self-government will always be around the corner and never an accomplished fact. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain by being perfectly explicit as to our intentions."

The debate was carried generally along this level and soon got into a discussion of the specific problems of reconstruction of the country and formation of a national government. One member stressed the responsibility of the British Government to repair the ravages of war and stated that ".... during that six years there will be an enormous number of problems to be solved : no shorter period is possible without doing an injustice to the people of Burma." A third member stressed the need for a clear unequivocal statement that self-government shall carry Dominion Status "in the full implications of the Statute of Westminster," but insisted on a period of reconstruction. Sir Stanley Reed summarized the discussion by saying, ".... anybody who knows Burma can produce a dozen good arguments against a fixed period of reconstruction. I will produce only one in its favour—without it there can be no Burmese co-operation in the task before us."

Let us examine some of the problems of reconstruction and the proposals for their solution. First, the immediate problems : Burma is at present in a very unhappy state. With the single exception of China she will have suffered more from the ravages of war than any other area of the Far East. Her trade is gone. There is very little cloth in the country, hardly any medicines, salt, no steel or manufactured goods, hardly enough rice in what was once the greatest rice exporting country in the world. It is estimated that 450,000,000 yards of cloth will be required in the first two years after expulsion of the Japanese.

Cattle, carts, seeds, and a host of other requirements for her cultivators must be provided in order to restore the productiveness of her fruitful acres. The necessary machinery to get the oilfields and mines working again must be found

and shipped out to Rangoon. In order to encourage the full production of rice, peanuts, rubber, timber, sesamum, and cotton, there should be some official plan to guarantee full purchase at remunerative prices to the producers.

Plans for the reconstruction of village life are equally basic and vital. New emphasis might well be given to the village headman as the chosen representative and leader of his village rather than as an agent of government. These headmen should be elected for a term of seven years, with eligibility for re-election. To assist him there should be village committees chosen for three years on the basis of say one representative for fifty houses, with power to spend for village purposes a large share of the revenues collected. Informal village courts might be given certain civil and criminal jurisdiction, based largely upon customary law which worked so well in the days of the Burmese Kings. Village committees might elect representatives to the Township Councils, which in turn could send representatives to the District Councils. In this way democratic machinery might be built up from the bottom, instead of being imposed at the top.

Since agriculture produces about 50% of Burma's Rs. 50 crores (£ 37,500,000) of exports and absorbs some 65% of the working population, the reconstruction of this basic source of wealth is vitally important.

Before the war half the land in Lower Burma, and a still greater proportion in the fertile plains of the Delta, was owned by people who did not work it. At least half of these absentee landlords were Indian moneylenders, most of them living in South India. To prevent further land going into the hands of non-agriculturists the Land Alienation Act was passed in 1941.

Under the terms of this Act, land may not be sold to or taken over on mortgage by people who are not agriculturists. If a man mortgages his land and the chettyar forecloses, the latter may only have the use of it for 15 years. After that period it must be handed back free to the original owner.

To restore the land which is now owned by chettyars and absentee landlords to agriculturists the Land Purchase

Act was passed, but at the time of the Japanese occupation was not yet working. This act which provides that land may be bought back over a period of years needs to be implemented. It is estimated that a loan of £50 million would be necessary to repurchase all this alienated land for peasant farmers. The land so redeemed could be used for an extension of State Colonies, for experiments in collective farming as in the U.S.S.R., or it might be sold to cultivators on a hire-purchase scheme.

But these Acts will not fully solve the problem, which is in part due to the thoughtless borrowing by farmers and the usurious rates of interest charged by moneylenders. Most cultivators need credit to buy their seed, ploughs and cattle. To meet this need for reasonable short-term loans there ought to be some kind of a State Agricultural Bank to lend money at moderate rates on the security of the land. £7½ million would enable this bank to function, and the capital borrowed could be repaid over a period of years.

Such a scheme would ultimately do away with the need of moneylenders but until that happy day arrives, there is a need for further legislation to register all moneylenders, inspect their accounts, fix their rates of interest, forbid compound interest, and limit the maximum amount of interest recoverable to the amount of the original loan.

Nearly half of the land was worked by tenants on a yearly lease, so the conditions of tenancy are important. Up to 1941 these had not been satisfactory : a yearly lease does not give security to good farmers ; the rents were too high ; there were far too many sub-tenants ; holdings were often fragmented. These abuses should also be remedied by legislation, and land revenue should be fixed periodically in relation to market prices. There is a desperate shortage of draught cattle in Burma owing to the wastage of war and unchecked disease, and steps will have to be taken to remedy this. In the dry zone it is proposed to use tractors for cultivation, which will help offset this grave shortage.

Finally there is an urgent need for better methods of cultivation and better types of seed. More research and experimental farms should be established, in which new

methods can be shown and stocks of seed made available.

In the field of education, bold progressive plans are needed. A self-governing country will need an intelligent and responsible electorate ; education more than anything else can produce this. Burma educationists talk of a ta get of free, universal, primary education within a period of 25-40 years.

In the past there have been three un-co-ordinated systems of Vernacular, Anglo-Vernacular and English schools. These need to be combined into one homogeneous system, divided into primary, post-primary and pre-university grades. Vernacular education previously was controlled by Local Government bodies, who often did not appreciate the value of education and were unwilling to make adequate grants for it out of the local revenues. In future this should give place to a system of state-supported and state-controlled primary schools.

The medium of instruction in all schools will probably be both Burmese and English, and it can hardly be expected that instruction will be given in the many non-indigenous languages, which claimed that right before the war. There will undoubtedly be a new effort to improve the training, status and pay of teachers, especially village teachers, whose qualifications and training in the past have been quite inadequate.

It has been suggested that village schools should also become village institutes, with reading rooms, libraries, and opportunities for adult education and training in civic responsibility, fitted with radio sets and visited regularly by a village film unit.

In the past the general public has tended to think of education as merely the means to a secure job as a government clerk or a teacher. In the future the aim must be to relate education to life ; there must be more training for different kinds of work through vocational and trade schools. An attempt must also be made to get rid of the examination obsession, so common to countries in the East.

Much of the education in the past has been through Buddhist monastic schools. These should be continued and encouraged to appoint well-trained teachers and to use more

modern methods. In State schools, it is hoped that monks and teachers of other religious bodies will be given the right of entry to give religious teaching to the children of their own persuasion.

Under the Japanese there has been a tragic decline in health standards. The emphasis here needs to be on teaching people how to live healthy lives rather than on curing them when they are sick. There must be a school medical service, an extension of physical training, more attention to nutrition and the securing of pure food and drugs, preventive measures against endemic diseases, the provision of more and better trained health officers in municipalities and rural areas.

The training of more and better doctors and nurses is one of the keys to good health. For the training of nurses, adequate nursing colleges and more teaching hospitals are needed with an extension of training in the Burmese language.

In Burma there was one doctor per 15,000 of the population, and one hospital bed per 1,700, as compared with the corresponding figures of one doctor per 2,000 and one hospital bed per 150 in Great Britain. An initial target of a hospital of at least 50 beds in every district headquarters, with one nurse to every ten beds, and one doctor to every twenty-five patients should not be too difficult to achieve. There should also be special departments attached to each hospital for bacteriological examination, anti-rabic treatment, X-ray, venereal clinics, together with ante-natal and maternity clinics, together with special centres for the treatment of tuberculosis and leprosy.

Before the evacuation there were no doctors and very few nurses in rural areas. The jungle medicine man was usually little more than a superstitious quack, while the village midwife was completely untrained and enslaved by custom and superstition.

Experiments might be made on the lines of the Punjab scheme of paying grants to doctors who will live in the villages and undertake the care of a group of villages. The proper training of village midwives and the institution of country-wide infant welfare together with the provision of a larger

number of rural and travelling dispensaries, is absolutely essential.

Burma's crime rate was deplorably high, and every use should be made of radio, film, publicity leaflets and posters to warn and deter the potential evil-doer and to arouse a sense of civic responsibility among the people of the country. The prison system should have as its object reform rather than punishment, and prisons should provide elementary education, physical training, village crafts and libraries.

A great need here is for a better paid, better dressed, better equipped, better housed police force, which would be looked upon not so much as enemies of the public (as they are often thought to be) or only called in when a crime has been committed, but as the representatives of the people to maintain law and order, with public opinion and conscience behind them.

One of Burma's greatest needs is that of getting the people of the country to take a bigger share in the industry and trade of the country, both as regards management and labour and the investment of capital. British firms in particular have expressed their intention of training Burmans for higher posts.

Burmans have also felt that their country should derive more benefit than formerly from the great timber, oil and mining industries of the country. Burmese leaders in India are asking for facilities for training Burmans for industry, engineering, and with greater emphasis on the development of cottage crafts.

Communications are another essential for the development of trade and industry. The war will have developed many new roads and airfields but much still needs to be done to co-ordinate communications and to open up the villages to the new influences.

Up to this point there has been pretty general agreement on the broad lines of reconstruction, economic and political, needed in post-war Burma. There are a few issues on which full agreement has not been reached. These are concerned principally with questions of relationships between Burma and neighbouring countries and with her own minorities.

Shans, Kachins, Chins, and Hill Karens together occupy something like two-fifths of the area shown as Burma on the map. In addition nearly 1,000,000 Karens live on the plains and deltas of lower Burma, that is in that part of the country which was under the control of the Burmese ministers before the war. Altogether, but excluding the Karens of the plains whose interests are similar to those of the Burmese in neighbouring villages, the hill people total nearly 2,500,000.

The Shans, who have their own system of states, are the largest group; there are some 400,000 Kachins, a strongly individualistic group who never yielded to the Japanese and who fear both the Burmese and the Chinese.

Politically, they are less advanced than the Burmese (the Nagas and wild Was still practise head-hunting) and under the constitution of 1937 they were not under control of the Burmese ministers. These numerous tribal divisions living in the great horseshoe of hills that surround the plains of Burma proper have retained their separate languages although many of them have some knowledge of Burmese and most of them sprang from the same common racial stock. U Tin Tut, the senior Burmese member of the Civil Service, has stated his belief that these racial minorities have no political future apart from the remainder of Burma and that they should join some form of federation with Burma proper.

It has been proposed that for an undefined period these Hill peoples shall not be under political Burma lest they be swamped by the more numerous and politically-minded peoples of the plains. After a period (say twenty-five years) of education and development of local government suited to the customs and traditions of the hills, these loyal peoples may have the necessary training and experience to enable them to take their place in the larger nation. This period will involve expenditures in the hills greater than their own resources or the budget of Burma can provide, and this money may have to be found from outside the current revenues of Burma.

Incidentally, the Anglo-Burman community has set an example which might well be followed by the other minority communities of the country: they have announced publicly

that they regard themselves as people of Burma and will ask for no special privileges and safeguards. Burmese leaders in India have responded generously to this wise gesture and have offered to assist Anglo-Burmans to preserve their own religion, language, and way of life.

In the case of Burma's association with her neighbours, it is most probable that her future relations with India will be of the greatest importance to her own post-war economy. There will be need for the closest ties of alliance and friendship between the two countries. India is the principal market for Burma's agricultural products. Burma is India's greatest source of rice and an important market for her manufactured goods, particularly steel, textiles, and chemicals, as well as her coal. But the 1900-1937 struggles for separation from India indicate clearly that Burma is not willing to enter into federal relationship with India. And if India is wise, she will not wish to add a " Burmistan " facet to the complexity of the Indian political scene. Burma will most likely insist upon some measure of control of Indian immigration into Burma, and this control is equally necessary for the welfare of Indian workers themselves.

With respect to relations with China, the same general desire to prevent unlimited immigration exists, although personal relations between the Chinese and the Burmans of the central plains have been, in the main, cordial. Indians and Chinese who have established long residence in Burma may be sure that the tolerance and good sense of the Burman will insure fair treatment to those who identify themselves politically and economically with the Burmese on a basis of equal citizenship. They have nothing to fear. But it must be recognized that the 17,000,000 people of Burma know that they would be lost in any federation with the 450,000,000 people of China. They desire neither India nor China as guarantors of their political and cultural future.

As for Burma's future relations with Great Britain, I cannot do better than to quote from an address by U Tin Tut before the Indian Institute of International Affairs in New Delhi on October 15, 1944 :

"Looking ahead into the mist of the year to come, I do not myself see any satisfactory future for Burma outside the British Commonwealth. Seventeen millions are, under modern conditions, too small a unit for a powerful nation in war as in peace. The power of the United States and Soviet Russia lies in their size and in their productive power which is largely due to size. The actual and potential power of India and China is again due to their being large units. The power of Great Britain lies largely in the size of her Commonwealth and Empire. Burma has roughly the same population as Turkey and could be like her a powerful small nation but I think that Burma has her best future as a free and equal partner in a federation or commonwealth of nations. I like the pattern of the British Commonwealth and perhaps I may be pardoned for disliking any empire. The conception of a Dominion is the product of British political genius and for a small nation I have no doubt that the status of a Dominion in the British Commonwealth is the one that conduces to the highest degree of freedom. Compare Australia with Iran."

Taking the long view, there is no reason for believing that the Burmese may not evolve a reasonably sound and satisfactory governmental structure within the broad outlines of Dominion Status. It may not be exactly the type under which Americans or Englishmen would care to live, but if it is satisfactory to the Burmese and offers reasonable freedom of trade and travel what does that matter? The old dictum that a people get as good a government as they deserve will apply to a free Burma as well as to any other country. In the earlier chapters of this book I have painted what may seem too black a picture of the Burmese political scene. But I am obliged to insist that the Burman's very great common sense, his unfailing good humour, his country's very ancient democracy, and his freedom from internal divisions of religious and racial strife, all form a powerful augury for a new Burma in which the Burman will find the satisfaction of happiness and personal dignity.

By comparison with India and China, Burma in point

of time is a new country. Modern Burma is much younger than France, Germany, Spain, or the Balkans, and viewed historically there is every reason for having faith in her ability to become, in a relatively short period, an honoured and respected member of the family of nations.

## EPILOGUE.

During the dry season of 1945 good progress continued to be made by the Allied armies in the task of clearing the Japanese from Burma. This was not regarded as a "reconquest" of Burma and the Burmese, but rather as a necessary step in the removal of the Japanese menace to all the peoples of continental and insular Asia.

Following the capture of the Myitkyina airfield on May 17, 1944, and the occupation of the town itself in August, Chinese and American forces in the north crossed the Irrawaddy and advanced along the road toward Bhamo, which was cleared of the Japanese on December 15, 1944. On January 28, 1945, the 483 miles of the Ledo-Wanting road were cleared and through overland traffic to China became possible for the first time since May, 1942. The first motor convoy passed over the Burma border into China. For the first time in history wheels moved across the North-east frontier from India to China. Meantime other Chinese units drove the Japanese from Western Yunnan and began the difficult task of clearing the rugged country between the Bawdwin mines and Lashio and the valley of the Shweli.

To the South, the British 36th Division and other British and Indian forces began moving down the "railway corridor" towards Mandalay. Kawlin, 185 miles south of Myitkyina by rail, was occupied on December 20 by forces which moved east from the Chindwin. After the seizure of Kalewa on December 2 by African and Indian troops a rapid advance brought these forces to Ye-U, on the central Burma plain. Soon the mid Irrawaddy was reached and fighting was severe along a broad front of some 225 river miles from Thabeitkyin in the north to Chauk in the south.

Southward, in western Burma, the pressure on the

Japanese was continued through the Mayu peninsula. A British landing on Akyab Island on January 3, 1945, found the town deserted. Thereafter an island and coast hopping programme brought British landings at Myebon on January 14 and at Ramree Island on January 21, while Cheduba Island was seized by a force of Royal Marines on January 26th. Some of the fiercest fighting of the entire Burma campaign took place in the chaungs and jungles about Kangaw, as the British cut the coastal escape road from the ancient Arakanese capital of Myohaung to Taungup and the Irrawaddy Valley. Here the Japanese left some 1,500 dead within a week—and failed to break the block. Further landings forced them to retire across the ridges of Arakan by the " Bandoola Pass " and the An Pass routes.

Between March, 1944 and February, 1945 the Japanese were driven from 80,000 square miles of their holdings in Burma and the Manipur hills. This was accomplished by the joint efforts of a most cosmopolitan force including British, Indians, Chinese, Gurkhas, Americans, East and West Africans, and Levies from the Kachin, Chin, and Lushai hills. It could scarcely have been accomplished without Allied air superiority and air supply.

Meanwhile the Japanese were in deep trouble in other theatres of wars. American attacks on Japan ranged from the Kuriles in the far north to the islands of the Bonin and Ryukyu groups within a few hundred miles and easy reach by fighter planes of Tokyo and the principal Japanese industrial centres. In the Philippines, Manila was entered on February 4th. Air attacks on Singapore and carrier and land-based raids on the oilfields of Sumatra and Borneo all increased in intensity. American Superfortresses ranged over the Burma-Siam railway and penetrated the Japanese holdings from Manchuria to the home islands.

Everywhere the Japanese resisted to the utmost of their ability. Despite Allied assaults on the entire perimeter of their defence from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean there was no evidence to the end of March, 1945, that he had withdrawn a single fighting man from Burma for the defence of more valuable interests nearer home.

By that time Chinese forces in the north were within twenty miles of Lashio. In the central dry zone one of the finest strategic moves of the Burma war was in progress. Crossings of the Irrawaddy were made in force along the great east-west bend of the Irrawaddy west of Mandalay ; while the 17th Indian Division with a large force of tanks crossed the mighty river virtually unobserved at Nyaung-u, near ancient Pagan, and headed for Meiktila. Patrols entered this key communication centre on the last day of February and seized the adjacent airfields. The drive led on toward Mandalay and Rangoon. The Japanese appeared bewildered by this sudden thrust across their lines of communications to the Mandalay area, and the stage was set for bottling up elements of four Japanese divisions. Along with this 17th Division, which had been forced by the Japanese to retire the length of Burma in the campaign of 1942, came the only tank which the British had been able to extricate across the Chindwin in those unhappy days. It eventually reached Imphal and on the long journey back led the advance into the central dry zone in February, 1945. The Tommies who came along dubbed it " The Curse of Scotland."

On March 20th, 1945 Mandalay, the most typically Burmese city of Burma, was liberated after a fanatical defence by the Japanese which culminated in a bitter fight for King Mindon's embattled palace. Another British force striking across country made a suprise entry into Maymyo. Meanwhile troops and tanks poured across the bridgehead near Pagan into the Meiktila plain. It was here that the last great battle for Burma was fought. Japanese armour, artillery and infantry were completely defeated and to all practical purposes destroyed. The victorious allied armour now made a dash down the main Rangoon road and railway through the Sittang valley. Pyinmana, Toungoo and Pegu fell in quick succession. Another column moved into the oilfields and down the Irrawaddy valley to Prome. Time was pressing for the monsoon was about to break. The final touch was provided by paratroops and troops landed by a naval force on both banks of the Rangoon river south of the capital. Opposition

was slight and these forces entered Rangoon on 3rd May 1945 to find that the Japs had almost evacuated the city. The liberation of Rangoon means the virtual end of the Burma campaign and provides a great base for the final defeat of Japan in Malaya, Thailand and Yunnan to keep pace with the swift advance of the American forces towards the Japanese home islands.

One of the most significant features of the liberation of Burma has been the attitude of the Burmese people themselves. The war effort of the Kachins and Chins is well-known and takes its place by the side of the resistance movement in France, and the loyalty of the Karens has never been in doubt. These three races together with Anglo-Burmans have been the ears and eyes and intelligence of the Allied forces moving into Burma, as well as centres of resistance within the country. It now transpires that the Burmans have been awaiting our return also ; all along they have among themselves spoken of the allies as ' our folk ' and their reception of our troops has been most friendly. This augurs well for the future, when British and Burmans can co-operate together for the revival of national life and the achievement of Burma's destiny as the keystone of the arch of Indochina and a happy prosperous member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

## APPENDIX I.

*Order of the Day issued by General Wingate to his troops as they crossed the Indo-Burma Frontier.*

" Today we stand on the threshold of battle. The time of preparation is over and we are moving on the enemy to prove ourselves and our methods. At this moment we stand beside the soldiers of the United Nations in the front line trenches throughout the world. It is always a minority that occupies the front line. It is a still smaller minority that accepts with good heart tasks like this that we have chosen to carry out. We need not therefore, as we go forward into conflict, suspect ourselves of selfish or interested motives. We have all had the opportunity of withdrawing and we are here because we have chosen to be here; that is we have chosen to bear the heat and burden of the day. Men to make this choice are above the average of courage. We need therefore have no fear for the staunchness and guts of our comrades.

The motive which has led each and all of us to devote ourselves to what lies ahead cannot conceivably have been a bad motive. Comfort and security are not sacrificed voluntarily for the sake of others, by ill-disposed people. Our motives therefore may be taken to be the desire to serve our day and generation in the way that seems nearest to our hand. The battle is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift. Victory in war cannot be counted on, but what can be counted on is that we shall go forward determined to do what we can to bring this war to an end which we believe best for our friends and comrades-in-arms; without boastfulless or forgetting our duty, resolved to do the right so far as we can see the right.

Our aim is to make possible a government of this world in which all men can live at peace and with equal opportunities of sacrifice. Finally, knowing the vanity of man's effort and the confusion of his purpose, let us pray God may accept our services and direct our endeavours so that when we shall have done all, we shall see the fruit of our labours and be satisfied."

O. C. Wingate, Commander.

## APPENDIX II.

### *GLOSSARY.*

This brief glossary explains only those Burmese words which are not defined where first used in the text or whose meanings are not clear from the context.

dacoit —a robber, especially one of a gang of thieves.
dah —a knife, sword.
daw —courtesy, title for a matronly lady or one of position, married or single. The Burmese word for jungle has the same sound to European ears.
ma —Miss or Mrs., applied to a younger Burmese woman, married or single.
maung —" brother " roughly equivalent to " Mr. " and appropriate for younger men.
longyi —the skirt-like dress worn by Burmese men and women.
myosa —" town eater ", under the Burmese Kings the town headman or Mayor, now applied only to the chief of a Shan or Karenni State of the second class.
neikban —Buddhist " heaven ".
pongyi —" great glory ", a Buddhist monk.
pwe —a festival, play
sawbwa —the chief of an important Shan State.
shwey —gold, golden.
tamein —a woman's outer garment, " skirt " of a style now generally out of style.
thugyi —" big person " a village headman.
toddy —a species of palm tree from which is produced a potent liquor of the same name.
U —" uncle " an honorific prefix to the names of officials, pongyis and elderly respectable men.

Most of the names of Burmese towns mentioned in this book bear names descriptive of their origin or location. Thus Rangoon " the war is finished "; Amarapura " the city of the Immortals " (it was once the capital); Kyaukpyu, " white rock "; Myitkyina " beside the great river " (the Irrawaddy); Taunggyi " big mountain".

An excellent brief guide to the Burmese language is provided in *SIX MONTHS HARD LABOUR* written by the Rev. George Appleton and published by the Government of Burma, Simla, in 1944.

## APPENDIX III.

### *Burmese Poetry and Prose.*

As mentioned in the Preface, there are offered here several samples of Burmese poetry and prose. These are presented for two reasons : first, only a few examples of Burmese literary craft have been made available in English ; second, to refute in part the old statement that " the Burmese have no literature." In point of fact, the Burmans are inveterate story tellers and writers. They have produced an extensive literature, running all along the full keyboard from shoddy " pulp " stories to drama, epic poems, history, philosophy, religion, and solid fiction of much merit. The modern short story made its appearance in Burmese about 1915. During the two decades 1914-34, some 2,500 books were published in Burmese. One novelist, U Tin Hla, who wrote under the pseudonym Tet Tun as one of Burma's most popular writers, published more than a hundred novels before his death in 1937 at the age of twenty-eight years.

### *SAMSARA.*

Such a still, beautiful night ! How slowly the moon raised herself from her couch of silver. How lazily the one gauzy cloud floated against the blue black of the bending sky, borne aimlessly on by the slow breath of the sleeping zephyr. How utterly happy I was sitting there on the dreamy little bamboo bench in the back garden with her, who was my sole joy and only care, beside me. Fair were the white roses around us bending under their fragrant heaviness of dew.

We were speaking of the forms under which in the past ages we had lived. I asked of her, " Dost thou remember, dearest, having been loved in the distant erstwhile, when you were not yet one of the prettiest belles of the present ?'

"Of course they loved me," said she. "When I showed myself at Benares, dressed and coiffed according to the latest fashion of the time, the most handsome and the richest *katriyas* went out of their way to compliment me upon my toilet, and to offer me, in exchange for a kiss, golden shells and precious stones that Indian slaves bore behind them upon purple cushions. Later on, at Rome, it was for me, impudent and magnificent courtesan, that lecherous cardinals quarrelled in the streets after the mass, or after supper in the cloisters. I was the very austere spouse of a pig-tailed mandarin who said to me in adoration, 'There are saints notwithstanding, since you exist.' And I remember having been the promised bride of a French lieutenant who had himself killed in the battle of Marengo because on the day of his starting for the war I refused him the rose from my bosom."

I was highly delighted, not without some jealousy, however, to learn that my sweetheart, in all her anterior existences, had possessed the wherewithal to please. "And," I asked her, a little uneasy, "dost thou remember, in all the hours of the past, having loved?"

"Certainly I do," said she. "Queen of the Arabs, at the head of my army, I fought the Scythians who came to steal the treasure amassed beneath our tents; but after the victory, I stabbed my own breast with a very keen poniard because one of my favourite young warriors had been slain in the combat. Clad in furs, I have adored, in my subterranean hut, a stalwart Eskimo, fisher of narwhales and walrus. I have coquetted, not without some tenderness, on arising in my chamber of a marchioness, with a Jew—fresh as a young damsel, with a German Viscount—painted like a girl of the opera. I have been a little grisette who sang a song while watching for the coming of her lover beneath the drooping flowers of a garret window, and a slender, blushing Russian maiden awaiting with a beating heart the entrance of the bridegroom."

That she had loved so many times was somewhat annoying, but at least, so I thought, it proved the tenderness of her heart persisting athwart the ages. I assumed the air of one

deeply gratified. " Kyi," I asked her (Oh, how anxious I was this time), " dost thou remember, having been, in those vanished days. . . faithful ?"

She thought. She studied for a long time. Then at last, " No," she said, " I do not remember it."

That speech, as you can imagine, hurt me cruelly. How could I believe in the present constancy of a woman who in no epoch had been constant ! My despair was not relieved when, throwing her arms around my neck, " No, no, of that I've no recollection ; but come, I'll try to remember it," said she, " . . . in the future existences."

* * * *

This whimsical modern short story was written by Maung Thein Tin when a student in Rangoon University, and published in *The World of Books*, Rangoon, under the pen name " Nyo Mya." The tale is concerned with transmigration, a favourite topic of conversation among Burmese Buddhists. Only the university educated would have knowledge of cardinals, Marengo, Scythians, and narwhales, but their escape from the provincial would not in the least have impaired their faith in a long chain of rebirths, each dimly remembered with results seen in this story. *Samsara*, the title of the story, is a way of interpreting the Universe, and not, as one might suppose, a houri or voluptuous young woman. It has been translated as " The Stream of Existence."

## *TRANSLATION OF BURMESE SONGS.*

*By* G. E. R. Grant Brown, I.C.S.

### *A Lover's Lament.*

Hard is my lot, and unassuaged my yearning,
How have the gods ordained ?
(Wrap well my robe about me, for I shiver.)
Distraught with sorrow, on my gold-lacquer couch
Wildly I ask myself, Where is my love, my glorious jewel ?
It's in the round heaven,
Where the moon spreads his beams afar, afar,
Radiating,
Radiating over all,
Reaching into the dimness with shimmering waves ?
Under a load of grief I reel and swoon,
Blinded, dazed, bowed down with sorrow,
With remembrance of my woe.

———: o :———

### *In the Forest.*

The place is dim and grey, the darkness spreads;
The feet of cloudland enter, the silver mists commingle.
Sweet-smelling zephyrs whirl and kiss each other,
And many a flower blossoms in the glades.
Clusters of lilies deck the way,
Clusters of scented lilies.
But that I yearn for is not,
And I am weary : yet 'tis sweet—
The woods, the driven mist on the hillsides—
' Tis wondrous sweet !

*Love-Ditty.*

Little one, whose radiance fills
All the house with light :
Dainty form that daily thrills
Thy lover with delight !
Flashing black with emerald sheen
Like wing of humble-bee
Tresses trim that measure sure
Cubits more than three !
Pure thou art as gold refined,
Ne'er a blemish thine :
Thuza's self is not more fair,
Nor Saddan's form divine.
Smooth limbs with beauty graced :
Swelling bosom, supple waist :
Not Zabu itself, I ween,
That enchanted isle, could show
Searcht from end to end, a maiden
Fairer than my queen !

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