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# DEVELOPMENT OF THE BURMESE LANGUAGE IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD\*

by Maung Wun

The Burmese are a mongoloid race and though they received writing from India—the earliest inscription (VIth century) is a Pali text in Kadamba script—their language is Tibeto-Burman. The first inscription in Burmese itself appears after 1058 and the language thus presents a continuous record extending over nine centuries.

In the earlier part of this record the vocabulary is limited, as the inscriptions are concerned with little but pious gifts; but vernacular literature, both prose and verse, is already traceable in the XVth century.

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\*This thesis was written in 1937. Hoping to revise and improve it one day I have laid it aside ever since. Now that I have been out of touch with research for so long it should, I deem, be published as it is so that other people may do what I fondly hoped and utterly failed to. I would be greatly gratified, even in the face of adverse criticisms, if it could arouse further interest in the subject. The author.

## RACES OF BURMA & CULTURAL ORIGINS

The written history of Burma is the history not of a geographical unit but of a few populous civilised tribes, ruling generally in the Irrawaddy basin which is seldom broader than a hundred miles and tapers northwards, enclosed between vast & thinly populated stretches of comparative barbarism in the hill country to the north-west & north-east.

In prehistoric times the country must have been traversed by races now found far to the south in Malaya & Indonesia, leaving only traces of their passage in pockets of the hills.

The last arrivals were Southern Mongol. It is those who remain, and chief among them are the Burmese. Their language belongs to the western or Tibeto-Burman division of Tibeto-Chinese. Their name first occurs<sup>1</sup> in the XII-XIIIth century when it is recorded as Mranmā & Mrammā, the forms still used, by the Burmese themselves; as Mirma by the Mon of the Irrawaddy delta; and as Mien by the Chinese. Their language & physique alike suggest that they originated somewhere north of Burma; and this is echoed by a comparatively late piece of evidence, their tradition that Tagaung in northern Burma was their earliest settlement in the country- as the proverb says မြန်မာ့ မြို့မူလံ တွင် နေထိုင်ခဲ့ကြသည် - and that their subsequent movements were to the south. It looks as if they did not reach Tagaung before the IXth century; indeed Mr. GHLuce, Reader in Far Eastern History to Rangoon University, basing himself on the Chinese chronicles Hsin t'ang shu & Man shu & on the earliest of Burmese inscriptions, the XIIth and XIIIth century inscriptions at Pagan, sums up as follows:

The Burmans, I imagine, came down from the hills of the Northern Shan States into the plains of Burma from 832 AD onwards. They settled first in Kyaukse district- "the eleven villages of Myittha" (Mlacsā chay ta kharuin) -where they increased and multiplied. Some of them gradually spread westwards to the Irrawaddy and founded Pagan. In the south they got as far as the rich land of Calaṅ, Laṅkuṇ and Mapaṅcara- "the six khayaing" (khrok kharuin). Northwards they had another kharuin at Toṅplun in Mandalay district, and slowly pressed north-west and occupied the Mu valley. Wherever they went (except Pagan itself) they chose well-watered spots, and started or developed wet-rice cultivation (lay), and sometimes even irrigation-canals (mroṅ) and dams (chaṅ).

JBRs 1932 120 Luce "Burma's debt to Pagan"

Needless to say, this is not the Burmese account. They claim to be descendants of Buddha's clansmen who migrated from India to Tagaung in northern Burma in 850 BC

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1 1931 Census of India vol. XI part i. 296 Luce "Note on the Peoples of Burma in the XII-XIIIth century".

and thence to Prome in southern Burma in 443 BC. There is no evidence that they were ever in India,<sup>1</sup> and their tradition antedates events by a millenium and a half.

As stated above, they did not enter even northern Burma till the IXth century. And they can hardly have got as far south as Prome at the head of the Irrawaddy delta till the XIth Century when they first overran that delta.

## THE PYU

Moreover we know that till at any rate the IXth century Prome- still called ပြည် “the Capital” to this very day- was the principal city of a race, dominant throughout central Burma, known as the P’iao to the chroniclers of the T’ang dynasty of China 618 -905 AD, and as the Pyu to the Burman chroniclers who are much later.<sup>2</sup>

To judge by their language, a Tibeto-Burman language, the Pyu were, like the Burmese, mongoloids from the north: if so, their journey south, across the overland trade route between north-east India and south-west China (which dates back to the IIInd century BC), would expose them to Indian influences; and on approaching the sea- Prome was virtually a port- they would be exposed to yet further Indian influences. Ptolemy 140 AD mentions the Irrawaddy delta as inhabited by cannibals, but a century later civilisation had spread north from the wealthy brahmanic trading centres near the Isthmus of Kra which were in contact by sea with all parts of India and were receiving immigrants, like the rest of Indo-China and Indonesia, especially from the Kadamba and Pallava kingdoms of the Deccan. Already by the VIth century the Pyu were professing Hinayana Buddhism of the Pali canon, recording it, as well as their own language, in Vth or even IVth century<sup>3</sup> Kadamba script: their royal city Prome was called Śrī Kṣetra (“Field of Glory”), and in addition to uninscribed objects- images of Viṣṇu and Avalokiteśvara- there have been found, in its ruins, gold plates bearing the “Ye dhammā” formula, and burial urns with inscriptions in the Pyu language referring to kings styled Vikrama who reigned from 673 to 718 AD and to others styled Varman who are undated.<sup>4</sup> Sanskrit inscriptions containing the same “Ye dhammā” formula, and the same two royal styles, have also been found there, but not among the earliest, and they are in a different

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1 Führer’s claim in 1894 to have found at Tagaung a stone slab dated 416 AD with a Sanskrit inscription telling how Tagaung was founded by immigrant princes from Hastinapura (Old Delhi) is discredited: the stone has never been produced.

2 JBRS 1937 239 Luce “The Ancient Pyu.”

3 1912 Rep Supt Arch Sur Burma § 37

4 Indian styles are common in the royal families of Indo-China, the earliest being the Śrī Māra family in the II-IIIrd century Sanskrit inscription at Vo-can in Champa, RCMajumdar “Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East: vol I Champa” (Lahore 1927) book iii p. 1

script, the VIIth century Gupta-Brāhmi script of north-eastern India;<sup>1</sup> nor does that script appear to have been used then or since for any Burma vernacular.

## THE MON

Again, south of Prome, the Irrawaddy delta and the country as far east as the Menam valley in Siam was occupied by the Mon, a mongoloid race whose language belongs to the Mon-Khmer branch of Austroasiatic. In Burma their principal sites were Pegu (Haṁsāvati) and Thaton (Sudhammapūra); these sites have not been adequately explored but they go back approximately to this period and Thaton is frequently mentioned in Pali commentaries of the IV-Vth century.<sup>2</sup> Already by the VIIIth if not the VIth century the Mon were recording their language, with loan words from Sanskrit and Pali, in Pallava script (pp: 65, 66 below).

Such were the two civilised races of Burma, the Pyu and the Mon. What happened to them? The Mon continued to have kingdoms of their own off and on till the XVIIIth century and they still have their own language.

The Pyu ceased to rule in the IXth century, their language (with its alphabet) died out after the XIIIth, and even their stock has long ceased to be traceable: it is probably an important ingredient in the Burmese people of today. They were overthrown by racial movements, first from the south and then from the north. In the middle of the VIIIth century Prome succumbed to the Mon, and the Pyu fell back on central and northern Burma where they extended up to the present Burma-Yunnan frontier with a city at Halin now a village south of Shwebo. And here again, in 832, they were overthrown by Nanchao or tribes under Nanchao, a powerful Shan kingdom stretching over what is now the Chinese province of Yunnan.

## THE BURMESE

It would be at this point, the Nanchao irruption of 832, that, one imagines, the Burmese entered the narrow plain of northern Burma widening rapidly to the south. They built their homes wherever, to quote their XIIth century inscriptions ရေကြည် ဂရမြက် နှံ ဂရ (“where water is clear and grass is tender”), and soon they found themselves at Pagan, admirably situated on the great river near the confluences, the navel of Burma: already in 849 it was a cluster of nineteen hamlets sufficiently important to be surrounded by a wall. Their traditions suggest that they absorbed the Pyu rather than conquered them, and the fact that both their languages belong to the Tibeto-Burman subfamily suggests

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1 Nihar-Ranjan Ray “Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma” (Calcutta 1936) 19-30, 88, 96.

2 1938 Rep Supt Arch Sur Burma 21

that they were kindred stocks.

At what stage of civilisation were the Burmese? They were the latest of the major immigrant waves, and culturally behind their predecessors the Pyu and the Mon. They must have gained from their coalescence with the Pyu but there is no direct evidence of this, and such writing as they used came from elsewhere nor did they use it to record their own language. The earliest evidence consists of clay tablets bearing the titles of Burmese royal personages and the "Ye dhammā" formula: occasionally these are in Pali but the earliest are in Sanskrit, and all alike are in IXth century Eastern Bengali or proto-Bengali scripts of a type used in Bengal and Bihar;<sup>1</sup> now it is in these two countries that Mahayana came to be predominant in the VIII-IXth century, and the XIth century Ari clergy<sup>2</sup> at Pagan- the earliest Buddhist clergy we can trace in northern Burma- were not merely Mahayanist but Tantrist: and Tantrism is associated with Eastern Bengal. Evidently the Burmese received their first culture from north-eastern India, in the IXth century, along the overland trade-route.

If, when entering the plains in 832, the Burmese were subject to Nanchao, they soon outgrew their dependence. The throne at Pagan to which Anawrahta succeeded in 1044- at last we are on historical ground- was an independent throne, and the dynasty he founded, the Dynasty of the Temple Builders 1044-1287, held sway over all Burma. Anawrahta's reign is a landmark, for in addition to unifying the country he introduced a great culture; indeed the chronicles attribute his conquests to evangelistic zeal. Hitherto Pagan had professed not only Tantric Buddhism but also Brahmanism, witness a Visnu temple (the Nathlaung temple) there, erected in his own reign<sup>3</sup>; and for that matter his reforms seem to have been accompanied by an increase in Mahayana of a respectable type (neither he nor any other Burmese king was a persecutor). Syncretism is also apparent in the religion of the Pyu and the Mon; but with them Hinayana had been dominant almost from the first, and it was from Thaton, the Mon capital, that Saint Arahā, a veritable apostle of the Theravada, set out for Pagan in 1057, converted Anawrahta, and so brought about the final triumph of the Hinayana throughout Burma. Immediately after his conversion Anawrahta demanded the Pali Pitakas from the king of Thaton and meeting with a refusal proceeded to conquer him. Professor Duroiselle writes:

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1 Nihar-ranjan Ray "Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma" (Calcutta 1936) 32-3

2 Ann Rep Arch Sur India 1915-6 Duroiselle "The Ari of Burma and Tantric Buddhism."

3 Indian Antiquary 1932 Nihar-ranjan Ray "The Nat-hlaung temple and its gods"; Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art 1934 Nihar-ranjan Ray "Sculptures and bronzes from Pagan."

It is in that year [1057] that Anorata, king of Pagan, swooped down upon the deltaic provinces of Burma, that is, Rāmaññadesa, the Talaing country, and after a siege of three months entered Thaton the capital... The result of the conquest of Thaton was momentous for Pagan;... Anorata took... the most learned monks, the Pali scriptures and their commentaries, and all the best artisans and artists he could find, and, adds the Talaing chronicle, "from that time Pagan flourished exceedingly." Materially the conquerors, the Burmese became, to a great extent, intellectually the conquered; such examples are not rare in history. The form of Mahayanism then extant at Pagan gave way to the Hinayanism of Thaton; magnificent temples were built under the supervision of Indian and Talaing architects; it is only soon after 1057 that inscriptions on stone and votive tablets in Burmese, Talaing and Pali make their appearance at Pagan. It was from that time that writing was adapted to common use by the adoption of a foreign alphabet to represent Burmese sounds; if it is considered that... the Talaing and Burmese characters at that time were identical, and that the greater antiquity of Talaing civilisation is accepted on every hand, I think the rational conclusion is that the Burmese borrowed their alphabet from the Talaings. This does not certainly mean that writing was unknown at the Burmese capital; it can be easily proved that Sanskrit works, Mahayanist, and probably also Sanskrit Hinayanist and Brahmanical works, were in use at Pagan before Anorata. But it is only after the conquest of Thaton that an alphabet is devised for writing the vulgar tongue. It is noteworthy that no inscription whatsoever in Burmese or Pali has yet been found at Pagan antedating Anorata (*Epigraphia Birmanica* I i 6).

That is now the accepted theory on the origin of Burmese writing, but it is a comparatively recent discovery. Most Burmans would, rather vaguely it is true, claim that their writing originated in Buddha's time; and some European surmises have been little better. It may therefore be of interest to show the stages by which our knowledge developed; the following citations are in chronological order, and if they appear to mention two scripts that is only because the script has two main forms- a round form has long been universal but the original form was largely rectangular, it alone occurs in inscriptions until comparatively recent centuries and it survives in the Ordination Ritual, *upasampadā*, which is of course in Pali.

*Chronological Summary of research on Burmese and Mon writing*

1776 The first<sup>1</sup> European record of the Burmese alphabet is that of Father Carpani,

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1 Carpani says the 1687 French Embassy to Siam "brought some letters of the Pali alphabet

printed by the College of the Propaganda, Rome, in a series of language studies by missionaries returning to Europe. Carpani's guess at an ultimate origin tallies with the modern view that Indian alphabets are derived from Ancient Egyptian and were introduced by the Persians. He prints the square or "Pali" and round alphabets and specimens of texts side by side, saying:

Anyone can easily perceive the source of the Burmese characters if he turns his eyes to the characters of the Pali, Bali or Balia language, the sacred language of those parts, the only one taught by the Talapoins, which is exceedingly ancient and has preserved its purity. It is very hard to say from what part of the world this sacred language came, and what its origin is; some say the letters are derived from the oldest Hebrew characters, others that they, together with the rest of the letters of the languages of Asia and the East, are sprung from the Egyptians. Our opinion rather is that they came first from the Hebrews and then from the Persians through fusion and communication of peoples (*Alphabetum Barmanum seu Bomanum Regni Avae Finitarumque Regionum, Typis Sacrae Congreg. de Propaganda Fide, Romae 1776, pp. XXXVII-VIII*).

1795 The character in common use throughout Ava and Pegue is a round Nagari, derived from the square Pali, or religious text; it is formed of circles and segments of circles, variously disposed and combined, whilst the Pali, which is solely applied to the purposes of religion, is a square letter, chiefly consisting of right angles (M. Symes "Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava" London 1800, p. 338).

1820 Abel-Rémusat saw the resemblance to the Tibetan alphabet- Burmese was among the alphabets before him- and he inclined to the first of the following alternatives.

Ou les alphabets du Tibet, de l'Inde ultérieure et des îles sont pareillement dérivés d'une source commune, qui doit avoir été une variation du dévanagari, ou l'alphabet Tibetain a donné naissance a tous ceux qui se sont répandus au midi, ou bien, enfin, l'écriture Tibetain a été formée sur le modèle de quelqu'une de celles de l'Inde ultérieure (Abel-Rémusat "Recherches sur les Langues Tartares" Paris 1820, vol. 1 p. 350).

1826 Burnouf and Lassen confirmed Abel-Rémusat's first alternative.

Quoi qu'il en soit, le rapport de l'alphabet pali-barman et siamois, avec le kavi et le cinglais, même tel que nous l'avons, mène a cette conclusion, qu'un ancien alphabet immédiatement dérivé du dévanagari, a dû être porté à Ceylan et a Java, et de-là, passant

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to Europe but they are none other than Burmese characters and of the Laos kingdom." I have not seen his reference La Loubère "Du Royaume Du Siam 1687-8" (2vols Amsterdam 1691) II 78 but the reproduction at Burnouf & Lassen "Essai sur le Pali" plate I shews the letters to be an angular Siamese variety of Burmese.



au Pégou et a Siam, y prendre la forme du pali du Kammouva [a Burmese Pali text], et du pali du Boromat [a Siamese Pali text], et donner naissance au barman et au Siamois modernes- il faut en même tems rendre raison de la ressemblance- avec le tibétain (Burnouf et Lassen "Essai sur le Pali" Paris 1826 p. 67).

1834 The Mekkhara prince, uncle to the king of Burma has been reading with the greatest interest M. Csoma de Koros's different translations from the Tibet scriptures in your Asiatic Society of Bengal journal, and he is most anxious to obtain the loan of some of the many Tibetan works which the Society is said to possess. He considers many of the Tibetan letters to be the same as the Burmese, particularly the b, m, n and y. (Extract from letter from Col. Burney, British Resident at Ava, to BHHodgson in JASB 1834 p. 387).

1858 Bishop Bigandet, Vicar Apostolic of Ava and Pegu, saw that the Burmese alphabet is derived from the Mon (Talaing).

The language of the Talaings is totally different from that of the Burmans, but the characters for writing are somewhat the same. It is from them that the latter have received their religion, the scriptures, and the characters used in writing (Bigandet "Life or Legend of Gaudama" 2 vols London 1911 edn, Vol. II p. 143).

1878 The Burmese, as well as the Talaings, received their religion and alphabet from India. Their alphabets differ very slightly, both being a circular variety of the ancient Deva Nagari; but the two languages have no radical affinity, the Burmese being cognate with the Tibetan.- Metaphysical works are in the Pali language, in the vernacular alphabet, the ancient square Pali character being seldom adopted, except in the sacred Kambhawa, or rules for to be observed at the ordination of priests- It is not unlikely that the Burmese obtained both their religion and their alphabet through the Talaings (Lieut-Gen Albert Fytche "Burma: Past and Present" 2 vols London 1878, vol. II pp. 2, 8, 171).

1885 Dr. Forchammer saw that the Mon alphabet derives from Vengi.

The Burmans borrowed their alphabet from the Talaings- with but few modifications- The letters of the most ancient Talaing inscriptions are almost identical with the Vengi characters of the 4th and 5th centuries A. D. and the eastern Calukya letters. From these alphabets the Talaing letters appear to be derived: the ancient Cambodians have their writing from the same source (E. Forchammer "Jardine Prize Essay on Burmese Law" Rangoon 1885, pp. 5, 23).

1894-1919 Mr. Taw Sein Ko, both before and during his long tenure as Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Burma, published his views passim. They hardly lend themselves to reproduction. He derived Burma, a variation of Mrammā, from Brahmā, the deity; at one time he claimed that Burmese writing is derived from "the Indo-Pali

alphabet of Kanishka and not from the South Indian alphabet of the Calukya dynasty of Kalinga from which the Mon alphabet is derived", at another that both Burmese and Mon writing are derived from the Pyu. It is doubtful whether he appreciated the data before him, and the Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient gave up noticing his work.

Scholars like Abel-Rémusat 1820 who had seen that Burmese script was only one of a family scattered over Further India, and Bigandet 1858 who realised that it was derived from the Mon, wrote before the evidence on which they could follow up their clues was available, for it was not till the third quarter of the XIXth century, when the recording on which Bühler based his "Indische Palaeographie" 1896 had accumulated, that the matter became demonstrable. Hence Forchhammer 1885 is the first who, in addition to being a competent judge, had the real field of fact before him; subsequent research confirms and expands his verdict.

#### *Mon Script derived from Pallava*

That the Burmese received their writing from the Mon is generally accepted, and it is demonstrable. No inscription in Burmese has been found antedating Anawrahta's conquest of the Mon 1057, and Mon is the only vernacular used in the inscriptions of his dynasty until the third reign after the conquest. It is only at the beginning of the fourth reign that Burmese occurs, in the Myazedi Inscription at Pagan 1113, a quadrilateral bearing on each face the same text in a different language; the Pyu text is in the Pyu (Kadamba) script but the Mon, Pali and Burmese texts are all in the Mon script, the script which with minor modifications the Burmese have continued to use ever since.

Whence did the Mon get their writing? Their inscriptions are found both in Burma and in Siam, and their continuity is clear. The Mon of Burma are the same people as the Mon of Siam, they speak the same language, and there has always been ample intercourse between them; thus, in the VIIth century the princess who founded Lamphun (Haripuñjaya) was daughter to the king of Lopburi and wife to the king of Rāmaññadesa (the Mon country of Lower Burma).<sup>1</sup> The XIIIth century Mon inscriptions of Lamphun<sup>2</sup> near the hills of northern Siam are in but a slightly developed form of the letters used in the earliest Mon inscription in Burma, the famous Shwezigon inscription set up at Pagan by Anawrahta's son King Kyanzittha 1090-1112, and this again is but a slightly less archaic form of the script used in the octagonal Mon inscription at Lopburi.<sup>3</sup>

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1 BEFEO 1925 XXV Coedes "Documents sur l'histoire du Laos occidental."

2 BEFEO 1930 Halliday & Blagden "Inscriptions mon du Siam."

3 Lopburi at the head of the Menam delta above Bangkok must have been on a route to the Mekong basin, for Śrī Deva, a lately discovered site to the north-east at the entry to the

The Lopburi inscription is the oldest Mon inscription so far found anywhere, and it is in VIIIth century Pallava script.<sup>1</sup> And that is the script one might *a priori* expect: it has long been noticed that the alphabets of Indo-China and Indonesia<sup>2</sup> bear a close resemblance to those used in the IV-VIth centuries by the Kings of Vengi, the Pallavas and Kadambas, latterly it has been established that the Hindu overseas expansion emanated largely from the Pallavas, and the oldest inscription in all Indo-China, the Sanskrit inscription at Vo-canb on the east coast of Annam (Champa) is in IInd-IIIrd century Pallava script.<sup>3</sup>

Such other evidence as exists points in the same direction. Early Mon notes on Pali Buddhist literature often mention the Vth century commentator Dhammapāla and Conjeveram (Kāñcīpura) the Pallava city where he lived. Indeed the very name, Talaing, by which the Mon are best known- Mon is their own name for themselves- is probably derived from Telingana the Kalinga country to the north of the Pallavas, and it may well be that their cultured classes came from there.

Thus the alphabet of the Burmese is in origin Pallava, and they had adopted it by the early XIIth century from the Mon, to whom it was already familiar in the VIIIth.

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plateau, contains Visnu temple ruins & V-VIth century Sanskrit inscriptions in a lettering Dr. Barnett assigns to Vengi & Telingana rather than the Pallava country, Indian Art & Letters 1936 New Series X, Quaritch Wales "Exploration of Sri Deva."

- 1 Unless a VIth century fragment nearby is really in Mon. BEFEO 1925 XXV 186 Coedes "Inscription mone de Lopburi."
- 2 Thus, Kawi, the old Javanese alphabet, is a Pallava form, and when Duroiselle shewed it to his Burmese assistants they mistook it for old Burmese, see his invaluable discussion of Mon cultural origins 1919 Rep Supt Arch Sur Burma §§ 40-42.
- 3 Bergaigne & Barth "Inscriptions Sanscrites du Cambodge et Champa" in Notices et Extraits des MSS de la Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris 1885, XXVII part i p. 191. The old verdict still stands. Scholars like Finot (e.g. "Inscription de Vo-canb" in BEFEO 1915 XV part 2-xiv p. 3) and Krom ("Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis," s'Gravenhage 1926, p. 65) accept it. RCMajumdar ("Le Paléographie des Inscriptions du Champa" in BEFEO 1932, p. 127) rejects it, arguing that the Vo-canb script originated from a IIIrd or IVth century North Central Indian alphabet which had already been tinged with southern forms before reaching Champa, and these southern forms were further accentuated when Pallava colonists supplanted the earlier North Central Indian colonists; but he stands alone and he is answered by KANS-astri ("The Origin of the Alphabet of Champa" in Journal of Oriental Research Madras, 1936 X, p. 191, an article which also appears at BEFEO 1935, p. 233).

## THE EARLIEST BURMESE LITERATURE

The cultural impetus produced by the conquest of Thaton 1057 led to a marked increase in the use of writing. The zeal of a newly converted people is apparent in the inscriptions of Anawrahta's dynasty, and the dedication of ricelands and villages, of money and slaves, is not solely for the erection of pagodas or the gilding of spires. Even when these are all that is mentioned, the maintenance of the monks, and therefore the education of the young, is implied, for teaching is one of a monk's main duties ( မဂ္ဂ ဝါဒ : the Burmese word for monastery is also the word for school); and sometimes a donor will specifically provide for a school- thus, five schools (or lecture halls) are founded as part of a pagoda dedication<sup>1</sup> in 1237. A network of monasteries spread over the land, and with the course of time the effect became cumulative. European travellers, arriving from the XVIth century onwards, mention the prevalence of literacy among the people, and a generation or two ago it used to be a commonplace with the Census Officers of the Government of India that the percentage of literates in Burma was higher than in Spain or South Italy.

But the new alphabet did not even begin to be applied to the vernacular until half a century after the conquest. The library Anawrahta built- you can still see it at Pagan- was for the Pali Tipiṭaka. He supplemented the thirty complete sets he had captured from Thaton with yet further sets which he now obtained by sending a mission to the king of Ceylon, and after they had been compared and verified, copies were made and distributed throughout the kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Ceylon, the then home of Pali literature, ended by becoming in Burmese eyes the source of all religion, second only to Magadha; and Pali ended by becoming the only sacred language.

Yet the study of Sanskrit continued<sup>3</sup> despite the fact that in Upper Burma Sanskrit Buddhism connotes the Mahayana. Indeed the period at which Mahayanism flourished best at Pagan was under Anawrahta's dynasty 1044-1287, the very period during which Hinayanism became the established religion of the land, and as late as 1442 the list of books a governor bestowed upon a monastery includes Tantric as well as Mahayanist and Brahmanical titles. Not that this is typical, for Sanskrit played an inferior role: the Burmese studied and translated it, they did not<sup>4</sup> and do not write it.

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1 L 242 (abbreviation explained at p. 84 below).

2 Mahādhammasaṅkham "Sāsanālaṅkāra Sādan" (1831, edn Rangoon 1928) 95.

3 Thus, L 404, year 1278, says "A minister, called Caturaṅgabijay, well versed in the Three Piṭakas, learned in Sanskrit, Vyākaraṇa, astrological and medical sciences." See also Nihar-  
ranjan Ray "Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma" (Calcutta 1936) pp. 34-7, 94, 98.

4 Save for a few short inscriptions, BEFEO 1912 XII viii 19 Duroiselle "Inventaire des inscrip-

They did and do write Pali. The earliest literature is entirely Pali. The first work of which there is any mention is *Kārikā*<sup>1</sup> (extant), a grammatical treatise written about 1090 by Dhammasenāpati, monk of the famous Anada temple at Pagan. The next, *Saddanīti*<sup>2</sup> (extant), written in 1154 by Aggavaṃsa, monk, is also a grammar, a grammar of the *Tipiṭaka* which Duriotelle calls “the most comprehensive in existence”; its second volume, on roots, gives the Sanskrit equivalents of the Pali forms, and it won such a reputation that pupils came from Ceylon to study at Pagan. Numerous other works survive; the authors include a king and a princess but usually they are monks; they write prosody, medicine, astrology, scriptural commentaries and doctrinal expositions, but grammar, and Pali grammar at that, is the dominant subject.

Not until the late XVth century do we find a surviving work written in Burmese; then, in the very first examples, prose and verse alike, the style shews that the language had long been practised; and indeed there is mention<sup>3</sup> of its being used for a translation (not extant) from the Pali about 1190. But it must have been used as a main language before that, for it was used as a matter of course in inscriptions after 1113. The inscriptions are there for us to see, and they shew us how the Burmese wrote their language for the first time (pp. 72, 73, 84-99 below).

## THE LANGUAGE (I)

### Tibetan and Burmese

I must briefly place the Burmese in its general setting before passing to the stage in which we find it in the inscriptions. It belongs to the numerous Tibeto-Burman subfamily described at length in the *Linguistic Survey of India* vol I part i chapters IV, VI from which I take this diagram shewing relationship within the subfamily:

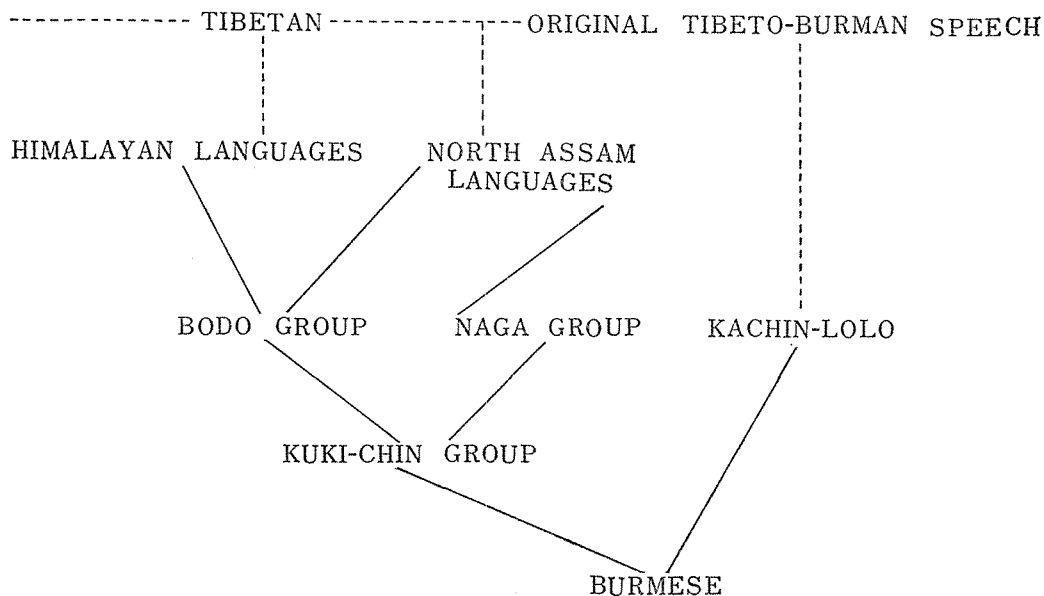
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tions palies, sanskrites, mon et pyu de Birmanie.”

1 XVIIth century “*Gandhavaṃsa*” (ed. Minayeff JPTS 1886) 63; Mabel Bode “Pali Literature of Burma” (London 1909) 16.

2 Helmer Smith “*Saddanīti: la grammaire palie d'Aggavamsa, texte etabli par Helmer Smith*” 3 vols, Lund 1928-30.

3 “*Sāsanavaṃsa*” (ed. Mabel Bode, London 1897) 75.



None of these languages are literate, save only Tibetan and Burmese.<sup>1</sup> Many of the others are doubtless now written, but this is only a recent development, usually due to the introduction of the Roman alphabet by Christian missionaries, and it is therefore on Tibetan that I must rely for a comparison with Medieval Burmese.

Tibetan was first written in the VIIth century when Thon-mi-sambhota, minister to king Sroñ-btsan-sgam-po, introduced a North-Western Gupta script.

The scripts of India, north and south alike, derive from a common source, and today Tibetans and Burmans still arrange the letters in their alphabets, the same letters, in the groups known to Panini two thousand years ago.

We thus have, in much the same notation, a record of Tibetan from the VIIth century and of Burmese from the XIIth on which to base a comparative study of the two languages.

Sir George Grierson has indicated the difficulties which confront the comparative philologist when he comes to Tibeto-Burman languages- they seem to be invertebrate, amorphous, to have no grammar. It so happens that such words as Tibetan has in common with Burmese are *prima facie* not likely to be importations, for they are largely concerned with the oldest and simplest things in life; but they are few, and in any case vocabulary is no guide, for otherwise- to take a stock instance- English, especially Johnsonian English, would have to be classed as a Romance language. And when we pass

1 Lolo and Moso have scripts of their own. Hans Jensen "SIGN, SYMBOL AND SCRIPT" (London 1970) pp. 185-9, 193-5.

to grammar, the standard Indo-European framework, with its definite parts of speech, its regular inflections, is totally absent: Tibeto-Burman languages have few if any parts of speech let alone inflections.

But grammar cannot be thus restricted. Moreover, as exponents of Linguistics<sup>1</sup> have pointed out, there is in every language a basic plan, a certain cut, a structural genius which is much more fundamental than any single feature. Its individual features may have no necessary connection, they may be easily thinkable apart from each other, and yet they seem to cluster in the wake of some controlling impulse which drives them together and dominates their trend. Two cognate languages may have been separated for centuries, their vocabularies may have become utterly different, their accidence, their syntax even, may have drifted apart, and at first sight they may seem to have no relationship; yet examination will shew that throughout they have sought or shunned the same linguistic developments and that their phonetic pattern, their morphological type, has remained constant.

That may well prove to be the case throughout the Tibeto-Burman languages. But the sum total of our present knowledge is inadequate, on modern standards, even for the two major languages. The material has only begun to be collected for Burmese, my own language, and of Tibetan I, a beginner, can hardly speak; yet already it is possible to glimpse what may one day become demonstrable. Both Tibetan and Burmese have increased their vocabulary since they adopted the Indian alphabet (Burmese from Malay, Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, Portuguese and latterly English), but the first Tibetan grammar written by Thonmi Sambhota in the VIIth century is still the standard grammar of the language, the grammar disclosed in the earliest Burmese on record, the XIIth century inscriptions, is the grammar of Burmese today, and the basic similarity between the two languages persists despite their lack of mutual contact within the historic period. Take a random instance: Sir George Grierson says of the Tibetan spoken in Baltistan at the other end of Tibet, the western and two thousand miles from Burma:

The usual order of words is subject, object, verb. The object may precede the subject when it is followed by the suffix *la*. The genitive precedes the governing word. Adjectives and pronouns usually precede the noun they qualify while numerals follow it. Adverbs are put immediately before the verb or at the beginning of the sentence. (Linguistic Survey of India III i 38).

Well, in Burmese the order is subject, object, verb though for emphasis the object may precede the subject. The possessed follows the possessor. Qualifying words or clauses

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1 E Sapir "Language: an Introduction to the Study of Speech" (Oxford University Press 1921) 127, 152, 200.

precede the qualified, numerals follow it.

I shall attempt to examine the vocabulary, phonology and grammar with reference as far as possible to early Tibetan and to Burmese as found in the inscriptions of Pagan. Phonetics<sup>1</sup> have so far been applied only to modern Burmese speech.

### Vocabulary

The similarity of the cardinal numbers in Tibetan, Burmese and the intervening languages is apparent.

<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Naga</i>	<i>Kuki</i>	<i>Chin</i>	<i>Burmese</i>
1.=gcig	chā, hak, wān-thek	khat, iñ-khat	ma-kat	tat, tac
2.=gñis	ni, anyī, wā-ni	a-nhi, in-ni	ma-nhi	nhac
3.=gsum	lum, chum, sem, azam	a-thūm, in-thūm	ma-tōn	suñ <sup>3</sup> suñm
4.=bshi	peli, āli, lai	man-li, palli	ma-li	le <sup>3</sup>
5.=lña	ngā, ā-gā, bangā	na-ngā, pa-ngā	ma-ngā	nā <sup>3</sup>
6.=drug	wok, luk, ārok, irak	a-rūk, ka-rūk	ma-rūk	khrok
7.=bdun	ni-yet, ānāt, ingit	sāri, tak-si	ma-seri	khū-nhac
8.=brgyad	tāt, set, ā-chat	ā-riet, ki-rēt	ma-rit	het, yhat, rhac
9.=dgu	tu, ā-kū, ikhu	kūo, ta-kū	ma-ko	kui <sup>3</sup>
10.=bcu	ichi, sā-o-chi	som, shōm	ma-rā, shom	chai, chay
11.=bcu-gcig				chay-tac
12.=bcu-gñis				chay-nhac
20.=ñi-çu		som-ni		nhac-chay
100.=brgya		ra-jā-kāt, ri-yā-h	ya-kat	ryā, rā
1000.=ston				thoñ

1 LEArmstrong & Pe Maung Tin "A Burmese Phonetic Reader" (London 1925); & JRFirth "Alphabets & Phonology in India & Burma" in Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London University 1936 VIII ii, iii. In my romanisation of Burmese I use one system for the spelling, another for the sound.

For the actual spelling (regardless of pronunciation) I use the tone symbols, and the roman equivalents of the Indian letters, given by Duroiselle in Epigraphia Birmanica I. i 9-15.

For the modern pronunciation (regardless of spelling) I use Firth's phonetic script.

Little has been done on the historical grammar and still less on the history of sound changes but the problem is indicated in JRAS 1896 Houghton "Outlines of Tibeto-Burman Linguistic Palaeontology"; JBRS 1913 Duroiselle "Burmese Philology" and 1914 Blagden "Transliteration of Old Burmese Inscriptions."



Notice, too, the similarity between the following:

<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Burmese</i>	
kun	kun, a-kun	all, entire, whole
klag-pa	kyak	study, reading
kha	khā, a-khā	time
kha-ba	khā <sup>3</sup>	bitter
khag-po	khak	difficult, hard
ña	ñā	1st person pronoun
thañ	thañ	clear, serene
nag-po	nak	black, dark
pha, a-pha	a-pha, pha	father
ma, a-ma	a-ma, mi	mother
mag-pa	[sā <sup>3</sup> .] mak	son-in-law (sā <sup>3</sup> in B=son)
tshwa	chā <sup>3</sup>	salt
yab-mo	yap	a fan; wave the hand
lag-pa	lak	hand
lam	lam <sup>3</sup>	road, way
ça	a-sā <sup>3</sup>	flesh, meat, surface of body
ça	sā <sup>3</sup>	stag
hab	hap	eat quickly

#### Phonology

*Alphabet.* In Indo-China as a whole, Sanskrit had usually preceded Pali, and therefore it is not surprising to find that when the Burmese came to write their language, the letters they adopted were those used in Sanskrit rather than in Pali, for ś, ṣ and the *repha* (letters used in Sanskrit but not in Pali) recur in the inscriptions. The range thus offered was more than sufficient, the

mediae	g	j	d	b
mediae aspiratae	gh	jh	dh	bh
cerebrals	ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh
spirants	ś	ṣ		

being used only for non- Burmese words (even in such words the initial letter tends to become voiceless when the words are adopted into Burmese, e. g.

<i>Pali</i>	<i>Burmese</i>
daṇḍa	tan
guhā	kū);

and the cerebrals being written as dentals from the first

Indian	Burmese
letter	
ṭa	ṭa
ṭha	ṭha
ḍa	ḍa
ḍh	ḍh
ṇa	ṇa.

When the Burmese first applied the alphabet they presumably gave its letters the sound values used by their Sanskrit and Pali teachers, many of whom must have been Indians. But that was nine hundred years ago: Burmese pronunciation has changed since then, and that, too, without corresponding changes in spelling. The result is an alteration of sound values which in some cases is surprising. Thus, according to the original values,

ṭṭ and ṭṭ should be pronounced *sak* & *tac*: actually they are pronounced *θe?* & *ti?*. And the changes have affected even pure Pali words, *saṅghā* and *sacca* being pronounced *θinga* & *θi?sa*'.

*Parallel sound changes.* Often the change is parallel to that in Tibetan: thus, take the palatals

Indian	Burmese	Burmese	Tibetan
letters		pronunciation	
		Firth's script	
च ṭ	ca (porch)	sa'	tsa (parts)
छ ṭ	cha (porch-house)	sha'	tsha
ज ṭ	ja	za'	dsa (guards)
झ ṭ	jha	za'	dsha;

and र ṭ *ra* is often pronounced as a palatal, *ya*; indeed it is sometimes actually written as the palatal

य ṭ	ya	ya':
व ṭ	va	wa'
स ṭ	sa	θa', ṭha'.

The voiceless letters

ṭ	ka	ṭ kha
ṭ	ca(sa')	ṭ cha(sha')
ṭ	ta	ṭ tha
ṭ	pa	ṭ pha
ṭ	sa(θa')	

are pronounced *voiceless* when preceded by the final consonants ṭ *k*, ṭ *c*, ṭ *t*, ṭ *p*,

(all of which constitute a glottal stop), or the neutral vowel ə, or nothing; *voiced* when preceded by a vowel (other than the neutral vowel ə) or nasal.

Contrast the pronunciation of

ကျက် ပါ	kyak pā	ceʔ pa
ချစ် ပါ	khyaç pā	chiʔpa
အကောင်	akoñ	əkaung
မခက်ဖူး	ma khak phū <sup>3</sup>	mə khesʔ 'phu
ထွက်သွား	thwak swā <sup>3</sup>	thweʔ 'θwa

with the pronunciation of

ရွှေကို ရွှေ ငါ ပါ။	lhe kui lho <sup>2</sup> pā	hle go hlo ba
လင် ကော င်း	lañ koñ <sup>3</sup>	liṅ 'gauṅ
ပြည်ကြီး	prañ kri <sup>3</sup>	pyi 'ji
လခ ပေး ြါ	lakha pe <sup>3</sup> pā	la' ga' 'pe ba
အိမ် စော င်း	im coñ <sup>1</sup>	eig zaup'
လယ် ကော	lay to <sup>3</sup>	le 'do
မင်း သား	mañ sā <sup>3</sup>	'miṅ 'ṣa.

Similarly in Tibetan where, however, the spelling also changes: when the preceding word ends in *n*, *m*, *r* or *l*, *kyi* changes to *gyi*; and to *gi* when the preceding final is *ga* or *ṅa*

ལམ་གྱི་ lam gyi  
 བྱང་གྱི་ byan gi  
 མིག་གྱི་ mig gi.

The word ཅིག་ *cig* changes to ཞིག་ *shig* after a vowel or འ་ *n*, ན་ *n*, མ་ *m*, ར་ *r*, ལ་ *l*.

ལྷོན་པ་ཤིག་ ston pa shig  
 མིང་ཤིག་ min shig.

The word तु becomes दु after final ण, द, न, म, र, ल.

ནང་དུ་	nañ du
མདུན་དུ་	mdun du
སྤང་དུ་	slad du
ཁྱིམ་དུ་	khyim du
བར་དུ་	bar du.

*Pas* (sign of the comparative) changes to *bas* after a vowel or final ɕ·n̄, ʃ·r, ɰ·l

hbras ljoṅs bas bod yul graṅ ba yin འབྲས་ལྗོངས་བས་བོད་ཡུལ་གྲང་བ་ཡིན།  
Tibet is colder than Sikkim.

རྟ་བས་ཁྱི་ཆུང་བ་ཡིན།

rtā bas khyi chuñ ba yin

The dog is smaller than the horse.

#### Final Consonants

The correlatives are

	<i>Tibetan</i>		<i>Burmese</i>	
guttural	-g	-ñ	-k	-ñ
palatal			-c	-ñ
dental	-d	-n	-t	-n
labial	-b	-m	-p	-m
miscellaneous	-h, -r, -l, -s		-y	-w

The vocabulary at p. 72 above includes instances of Tibetan -g, -b = Burmese -k, -p and the third paragraph hereunder instances of Tibetan -d = Burmese -t. And the sound values of the Tibetan letters may have been that of the Burmese, for

It must be observed that ག་ད་བ་ (g, d, b) as finals are never pronounced like the English g, d, b in leg, bad, cab but are transformed differently in the different provinces. In Ladak they sound like k, t, p (Jäschke "Tibetan Grammar" § 5).

Both languages use the same nasals save that Burmese alone uses -ñ which however used to be -n

#### *Burmese*

Old	Modern
acan	acañ in a line;

in Tibetan its place is taken by -ñ, -n

<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Burmese</i>	
miñ	mañ	name
sen-mo	sañ <sup>3</sup>	[finger-] nail.

Burmese alone uses -c (which however used to be -t) and in Tibetan its place is taken by -g, -d

	Old	Modern	
<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Burmese</i>		
brgyad	het	rhac	eight
chags-pa	khyat	khyac	to love.

Burmese -y is hard to explain. In the following solitary instance it corresponds to Tibetan -l

<i>Tibetan</i> dñul	<i>Old Burmese</i> ñuy	money, silver.
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No correlation has been found for Burmese -w (now obsolete); or for Tibetan -h, -r, -l, -s.

## Initial Consonants

Both languages use *tenuis* and *tenuis aspiratae*. Tibetan alone uses *mediae* but they are often as it were interchangeable with *tenuis* because—witness the part prefix letters play in Tibetan—prefix *s* generally raises a *media* to a *tenuis* and its absence reduces a *tenuis* to a *media*.

gañ-ba to be full

skañ to fill

(Jäschke "Tibetan Grammar" 139).

The rule is

<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Burmese</i>	
$s - \begin{cases} \text{tenuis} = \text{tenuis aspirata} \\ \text{media} = \text{tenuis aspirata} \\ \text{nasal} = \text{aspirated nasal} \end{cases}$		
s kyi-ba	khye <sup>3</sup>	borrow
s toñ	thoñ	thousand
s tod	thot, thwat	upper/higher part of a thing
s na	nhā	nose
s nabs	nhap	nasal mucus
s bañs	phañ	dung of large animals
s bug-pa	phok	perforate, pierce
s bo-pa	pho	swell, distend
s bod-pa	phut	tassel, tuft
s min-pa	mhañ <sup>1</sup>	ripe, ripened, to ripe.

Other prefix letters have much the same result, save only *m*-, and the rule is

$g-, d-, b - \begin{cases} \text{tenuis, media} \\ \text{nasal} \end{cases} = \begin{cases} \text{tenuis, tenuis aspirata,} \\ \text{aspirated nasal} \end{cases}$		
b kag	khak	obstructed, obstruction
r ku-wa	khui <sup>3</sup>	steal
d gu	kui <sup>3</sup>	nine
d guñ	[san-] khoñ	midnight
b gre-ba	kri, <sup>3</sup> gri	grow old
r duñ	toñ	hillock
r duñ-ba	thoñ <sup>3</sup>	beat, smash
g nañ-ba	nhañ <sup>3</sup>	give
h bu	pui <sup>3</sup>	worm, insect, snake
ḥ bur-ba	phū <sup>3</sup>	spring up
r me-ba	mhai <sup>1</sup>	speck, mole, birth-mark

r moñ-ba	mhoñ	be obscured
r tsi	chiy, che <sup>3</sup>	varnish, paint, medicine
b sab-pa	chap	return, pay
b su-ba	chui	go to meet

#### Sibilants

By sibilants I mean

Jäschke's	<i>Tibetan</i>		
palatal sibilants	<i>tsa</i>	<i>tsha</i>	<i>dsa</i>
semivowels	<i>za</i>	<i>ça</i>	<i>sa</i>

#### *Burmese*

<i>ca</i>	<i>cha</i>	<i>sa</i>
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now pronounced

*sa'*      *sha'*      and the third, though now a dental pronounced

*θa'* was apparently pronounced *sa'* as late as the end of the XVIIIth century.<sup>1</sup>

<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Burmese</i>
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ts-, tsh-, }  
ds-, z- } = c-, ch-, sometimes s-

tsag-ge	cak	bull's eye on target
g tsañ-ba	cañ	be clean, pure
b tsan-po	san	strong, power
r tsig-pa	cuik, chok	erect, build
tshigs	chac, chak	knuckle, anything that joins
ḥ tshag-pa	cac, chac	filter, press out
ḥ tshab-pa	chap	repay
ḥ dsugs-pa	cuik, chok	to plant/erect/found/settle
za-ba	cā <sup>3</sup>	eat

ç-, s- = s-, sometimes ch- and rh-

ça	a-sā <sup>3</sup>	flesh, meat, body-surface, complexion
çaba, cwaba	sā <sup>3</sup>	hart, stag, deer, animal
çi-ba	siy, se	die, expire, go out (fire)
çes-pa	si	be cognisant, know
b çur-ba	rhui <sup>1</sup> (fo')	singe
sañ-ba	san <sup>1</sup> , [sut-] sañ	cleanse, do away with
su	a-sū	who?

1 JBRS 1922 128 Pe Maung Tin "Phonetics in a Passport."

su	suiw <sup>1</sup>	to
so	swā <sup>3</sup>	tooth
stras-po	sā <sup>3</sup>	son
stras-mo	sa-mī <sup>3</sup>	daughter
srog	a-sak	life
g sad	sat	kill, murder
b sab-pa	chap	return, repay kindness
b su-ba	chui	go to meet

### Nasals

Of the four Tibetan nasals three (ñ-, n-, m-) have quite regular correlatives in Burmese.

#### *Tibetan*

#### *Burmese*

ñ- = ñ-

ña	ñā	1st person pronoun
ñag	[ño- <sup>2</sup> ] ñak	word, speech, talk
ñañ	ñan <sup>3</sup>	male goose
ñu-ba	ñui	weep
d ñul	ñuy, ñwe	silver, money
l ña	ñā <sup>3</sup>	five

n- = n-

na-ba	nā	be ill, ache
nag-po	nak	black, dark, gloomy
nu-ma	nuiw'	nipple, female breast
m nam-pa	nañ, nañ <sup>3</sup>	to smell (of)
r na-ba	nā <sup>3</sup>	ear
r nañ-ba	nañ	be choked

m- = m-

ma	ma	mother
ma	ma	negative & prohibitive particle
mig	myak	eye
mun-pa	mun, mhun	dark, obscure
r me-ba	mhai <sup>1</sup>	speck, mole, birth-mark
d me-ba		
s me-ba		
r mog	a-mok, [kha-] mok,	helmet
r moñ-ba	mhoñ	be obscured, obscurity

The fourth Tibetan nasal is a complex character with more variable correlatives in Burmese.

	$\tilde{n}- = \tilde{n}-, \tilde{n}-, n-$	
$\tilde{n}a$	$\tilde{n}\tilde{a}^3$	fish
$\tilde{n}ag-\tilde{n}ig$	$\tilde{n}ac$	filth
$\tilde{n}i-ma$	$niy, ne$	sun
$\tilde{n}in-mo$	$niy', ne^1$	day
$\tilde{n}e-ba$	$n\tilde{i}^3$	near, be near
$s \tilde{n}ug-pa$	$\tilde{n}ut(-p)$	dip in, immerse

#### Semi-Vowels

Tibetan y-, r-, l-, (allowing for their prefixes and postfixes) have quite regular correlatives in Burmese.

<i>Tibetan</i>		<i>Burmese</i>
y-	with pre-and	y-
r-	post-fixes	r-
l-		l-
g yab-pa	yap	beckon
yab-mo	yap	a fanning, fan
g yaḥ-ba	yā <sup>3</sup>	to itch
g yas- pa	yā	right hand/side
rus-pa	rui <sup>3</sup>	lineage, family, bone
g rib-ma	a-rip	shade, shadow
b rgya	ryā, rā	hundred
b rañ	rañ	chest, breast
ḥb rañ		
ḥb ri-ba	riy, re <sup>3</sup>	write, draw, to paint
lag-pa	lak	hand, arm
lam	lam <sup>3</sup>	road, way
lus	lū	body, physical frame
lon-pa	lon, lwan	elapse
g lod-pa	lhot, lhwat	relax, loosen
lhod-pa		
s loñ	loñ <sup>3</sup>	give (alms)
z la-ba	la	month, moon
z lum-pa	luñ, luñ <sup>3</sup>	circular



W in Tibetan was not invented till about 1300.

	ph-, b- = w-		
phag-pa	boar, pig	wak	boar, pig
s be-ba	to scuffle, wrestle	whe <sup>1</sup>	to push with hand/horn
phag	what is hidden, secret	whak	conceal
phañ-bu	spindle	wañ <sup>1</sup>	spin cotton
bal	wool	wā	undressed cotton

H- is generally onomatopoeic in both languages. It is interesting to find sometimes Tibetan h- = Burmese rh-, seeing that sometimes old Burmese h- (e. g. het, hi) = Modern Burmese rh- (e. g. rhac, rhi)

	h- = h-, rh-		
ha	a yawn	ha	to gape
ha-ha } hā-hā }	sound of laughter	hā <sup>3</sup> hā <sup>3</sup>	sound of laughter
hi-hi	displeased or angry laughter	hī hī hā hā	with loud and shameless laughter
hañ	vacant, vacancy	hañ <sup>3</sup>	be vacant
hañ-ba	to pant/gasp	hañ <sup>3</sup>	alas!
hab	mouthful	hap	snap at, join
hig	a sobbing	rhui	inhale
hu	breath	rhū	breathe
he	holla!	he	holla!
hrag	cleft, fissure	hak	to cut asunder edgewise

#### Initial Vowels

In a few cases the Tibetan word minus its prefix or initial letter is the Burmese word.

<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Burmese</i>	
kyi, gyi, gi, ḥi	e'	of
khab	ap	needle
khyim	im, im	house, dwelling place
ḥdi	iy	this, the
dbañ	añ	power
dbu	ū	the head
ḥog	ok	below, under
la	ā	at, off, concerning

I have traced the third of the above words through the Tibeto-Burman languages:

khyim, khim	Tibetan
khi, im, tim etc	non-pronominalised Himalayan
khyim, khim, kim, him	eastern pronominalised Himalayan
nām, ang etc	North Assam
cham, ham, yim etc	Eastern Naga
a-hem, kī etc	Naga-Bodo
chim, shim, sim etc	Naga-Kuki
in, ĩn, im etc	Chin
ēm, ĩn etc	Old Kuki
im, im	Old Burmese
im	Burmese
i	Tayoy dialect of Burmese

#### Vowels other than initial A-I-U-E-O

Burmese has long vowels. Tibetan has none save in accentuated vowels and Sanskrit words.

<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Burmese</i>	
Often -a = -ā		
kha	khā	time of
kha-ba	khā <sup>3</sup>	bitter in taste
brgya	ryā	hundred
ña	ñā	1st person pronoun
lña	nā <sup>3</sup>	five
ña	ñā <sup>3</sup>	fish
na-ba	nā	be ill, ache
rna-ba	nā <sup>3</sup>	ear
sna	nhā	nose
rma	a-mā	scar, wound
tshwa	chā <sup>3</sup>	salt
za-ba	cā <sup>3</sup>	eat
gyah-ba	yā <sup>3</sup>	to itch
ça	sā <sup>3</sup>	flesh, stag
gyas-pa	yā	right hand/ side
sras	sā <sup>3</sup>	son

-i = -iy Old Burmese, -e Modern Burmese

skyi-ba	khye <sup>3</sup>	borrow
ñi-ma	niy, ne	sun
ñin-mo	niy', ne <sup>1</sup>	day
ḥbri-ba	riy, re <sup>3</sup>	write, draw
mi-mo	miy-ma	woman
rtsi	chiy	varnish, paint, medicine
çi-ba	siy, se	die, expire, go out (fire)

-u = -uiw Old, -ui Modern Burmese

rku-ba	khui <sup>3</sup>	steal
sku	kuiw	body, physical frame
dgu	kui <sup>3</sup>	nine
ñu-ba	ñui	weep
nu-ma	nuiw	nipple, female breast
ḥbu	pui <sup>3</sup>	worm, insect, snake
ḥtshugs	cuik	take root
rus	rui <sup>3</sup>	lineage, family, bone
bçur-ba	rhui <sup>1</sup>	singe
su	sui <sup>1</sup>	to
bsu-ba	chui	go to meet

Tibetan has a few words ending in -uñ. Here Burmese has not u but o, perhaps owing to influence of nasalisation.

-uñ = -oñ

kluñ	river	khloñ	creek
khuñ	hole, pit	khoñ <sup>3</sup>	hole, pit
sna-khuñ } sna-bugs }	nostril	nha-khoñ <sup>3</sup> -pok	nostril
guñ	middle	[a-lay-] khoñ	middle
rtuñ-ba } thuñ-ba }	shorten	toñ <sup>3</sup>	be short
rduñ	hillock	toñ	mountain
rduñ-ba	beat, hammer, smash, pound	thoñ <sup>3</sup>	pound (with pestle or elbow)

# Vowels other than initial

## Tibetan



## Burmese

-e == -i

me	mī <sup>3</sup>	fire
çe-pa	si	apprehend, know
bgre-ba	grī, kri <sup>3</sup>	grow old
ñe-ba	nī <sup>3</sup>	near, to be near
ḥtshe-ba	[phyak-] chī <sup>3</sup>	injure

Tibetan -o-is sometimes represented by the Burmese prototype-o-which is now pronounced *ow* as in English *cow*, German *au*

stoñ	thoñ	thousand
skyoñ-ba	kyoñ <sup>3</sup>	tend cattle

But it is more often represented by that o in Old Burmese which has today become -wa-, the subscript wa called *wa-chwai* in Burmese and *wazur* in Tibetan. In Old Burmese this -o- was often interchanged with -wa- thus, kyon or kywan, a slave; and in Tibetan “The figure  sometimes found at the foot of a letter is used in Sanskrit words to express the subjoined व , as in  swā-hā for स्वा हा ; and is now pronounced by Tibetans = ō: sōhā” (Jäschke “Tibetan Grammar” p. 8).

## Tibetan

## Burmese

-o- = -wa-

koñ	crooked, bent	khwañ	bent, curved
rkon-pa	net, fowler's net	kwan	casting net
tog	top of anything	thot, thwat	top, summit, pinnacle
thog	roof, cover, top		
stod	upper, higher, former		
	part of a thing		
thoñ	plough	thwan	a plough
doñ	pit, deep hole	twañ <sup>3</sup>	hole in ground, pit
chu-doñ	waterhole, well	riy-twañ	waterhole, well
lon-pa	elapse	lon, lwan	elapse
so	tooth	swā <sup>3</sup>	tooth
glod-pa	(lhod-pa) relax,	lhot, lhwat	to free, emancipate
	loosen		

## THE LANGUAGE (II)

### Medieval Burmese Grammar

#### The Inscriptions

I will now describe the grammar of medieval Burmese. It is of course, the first Burmese on record, and if I use the term medieval for the inscriptions of the Pagan Dynasty 1044-1287 (and occasionally a little later), that is because the period happens to coincide with much of the Middle Ages in Europe. My sources are

Copies of varying accuracy

“Inscriptions of Pagan, Pinya and Ava” (Rangoon 1892)

“Inscriptions copied from the stones collected by Bodawpaya and placed near the Arakan pagoda, Mandalay” 2 vols (Rangoon 1897)

“Inscriptions collected in Upper Burma” 2 vols (Rangoon 1900, 1903)

“Original inscriptions collected by king Badawpaya in Upper Burma and now placed at the Patodawgyi pagoda, Amarapura” (Rangoon 1913)

Original spelling retained

Pe Maung Tin & GH Luce “Selections from the inscriptions of Pagan” (Rangoon 1913)

Collotype photo facsimiles

GH Luce & Pe Maung Tin “Inscriptions of Burma: Portfolio I, 493-599 BE (1131-1237 AD)” (Oxford 1934)

I cite inscriptions thus “L 242” by their serial number in CDuroiselle “List of Inscriptions found in Burma” (Rangoon 1921).

The list includes over 300 original inscriptions of the Pagan dynasty; it is to these that I adhere in the main, and it is of them that Professor Luce says:-

they are full of life and vigour down to 1300 AD at any rate. The style is usually brief and simple... Personally (but I am no judge) I find these unpretentious records of Pagan offerings delightful. They are unquestionably the fountain head of Burmese literature, and they are nothing for Burmans to be ashamed of. Before the extravagant and bombastic style of Indian literature captured Burmese, the Burman could express himself with clarity and swiftness which, as the cognate tongue Chinese shows, is the rock-bottom of style in both languages... Ideas, at the dawn of a literature, are simple; there is nothing subtle or recondite about Old Burmese. The vocabulary is small, and as the subject of the inscriptions is usually the dedication of a pagoda or offerings to it, one soon gets familiar with the ordinary words (JBRS 1932 120 & 1936 132 Luce “Burma’s Debt to Pagan” and “Prayers of Ancient Burma”).

The grammar is as simple as the ideas it expressed; it remains simple to this day, and if I use the terminology of Indo-European grammar it is only for convenience sake. In reality there are at most three, not eight, parts of speech in the language; what Dr. Stewart says of Modern is equally true of Old Burmese—

There is no evidence that more than two classes of full- words exist- *nouns*, including pronouns, and *verbs*. Besides these there are *form-words*, either mere particles or broken-down full-words, which are used to shew grammatical relation (JAS Stewart “An introduction to colloquial Burmese” Rangoon 1936, preface).

### The Article

No *definite article* is traceable.

The *indefinite article* is supplied, if at all, by the numeral one, *tac*, often written *ta* in this use. Possibly it is not a native idiom, for it is rare in purely Burmese inscriptions; it appears in the earliest original Burmese inscription, the polyglot Myazedi dated 1113, but the Burmese face may well be modelled on the Pali face; thereafter its occurrence is usually in the brief ink- writings on temple walls describing Jataka scenes, and these ink-writings are undoubtedly condensed translations from the Pali.

pāy mayā <i>tac</i> yok su kā	a beloved queen (Myazedi)	} ink-writings
nwā-kloñ-sā <i>ta</i> yok so sañ	a certain cowherd	
stañ-sañ <i>ta</i> yok so sañ	a certain devotee	

In Tibetan the numeral one, *gcig*, when written *cig*, serves as an indefinite article  
khab *cig* a needle

### The Noun

*Gender.* There are two genders, masculine and feminine, usually unexpressed; and a third, common or neuter, always unexpressed. Distinctive words are occasionally found, usually for human relationship.

a-phuiw	grandfather	mi-phwā	grandmother
a-pha	father	a-mi	mother
sā	son	smi	daughter
moñ	woman's younger brother	nha-ma	man's younger sister

Sometimes the word *miyma*, woman, is used as postfix to a noun of common gender  
kywan slave

kywan *miyma* female slave

The words *amlyui-sā*, *amlyui-smi*, which recur in the brief Jātaka ink-inscriptions, may be translations of the Pali *kula-putta*, *kula-dhītā*.

Sometimes a masculine form is rendered feminine by the postfix *ma* (female)

tū	nephew	tū-ma	niece
ñi	man's younger brother	ñi-ma	man's younger sister

Animals are invariably common

klā	tiger
chañ	elephant
khuy	dog
and nwā	taurus is actually used for a milch cow.

Tibetan uses postfixes

pa (pha), ba	father	}	for male
po (pho), bo	male		
ma	mother	}	for female
mo	female		
rgyal-po	king	rgyal-ma	queen
jo-bo	prince	jo-mo	princess.

The masculine often omits the postfix while the feminine retains it

señ-ge	lion	señ-ge-ma	lioness
ba	bull	ba-mo	cow.

Modern Burmese has postfixes

pha	father	}	for male
phui	male		

which (unlike *ma* = female, mentioned at extreme top of this page) do not occur in the inscriptions; they are virtually confined to birds, although there is a solitary human instance; and mammals use *thi*<sup>3</sup>

krak pha	male	}	domestic fowl
krak ma	female		
doñ <sup>3</sup> phui	(‘daup pho)	pea{	cock hen
doñ <sup>3</sup> ma	(‘daup ma’)		
mu-chui <sup>3</sup> phui	(mo ‘sho pho)		widower
mu chui <sup>3</sup> ma	(mo ‘sho ma’)		widow
klā thī	male	}	tiger
klā ma	female		

*Number.* There are two numbers, singular and plural. The plural is formed by a postfix *tuiw’*, *atuiw’*, *myā-tuiw’* (*myā* means many, to be many)

thuiw skhañ tuiw'	those lords
īy sū 6 yok atuiw'	those six people
phurā skhañ tape' sā skhiñ myā- tuiw'	the holy disciples of the Lord Buddha.

The postfix tends to be omitted when the actual number is mentioned

lay 47 pay	47 <i>pays</i> of ricefield
nwā 4 khu	4 oxen
kywan 20	20 slaves
rattanā 3 pā	The Three Gems.

A universal plural is expressed by a postfix *khap-sim*, *takā* or *akun* meaning all, whole, entire (usually followed by the plural sign *tuiw'*)

lū nat sattwā <i>khap-sim</i> sa tuiw'	all gods, men & creatures
sū tāw <i>takā</i> tuiw'	all the holy men
saṃpyaṇ klan <i>akun</i>	all the <i>saṃpyaṇs</i> & <i>klans</i>

Tibetan forms the plural by postfixing *rnams*; or more rarely words like *dag*, *tsho* which originally were words denoting plurality; or *thams* (all), *kun* (all), *dgu* (nine). But, as in Burmese, these signs are usually omitted when plurality is indicated by the context.

#### Pronouns

##### *Personal pronouns*

1st person	ñā
2nd	nañ
3rd	sū, ayañ, khyañ.

The postfix *tuiw'* forms the plural save for *ayañ*,

First person

ñā is used to an individual only by a superior or senior.

ñā le lhū pā tuñ e' hu ruy mañ krī kā... lhū tuñ sate the king presented it again saying "I also present it again" L 230

ñā chuiw luik e'... ñā kā kok pai cuik liy ū aṇ

I proceeded to say "I will first go & grow corn" [The Burmese monk Disapramuk to the Emperor of China!] L 376

But in a general statement, not addressed to an individual, *ñā* can be used by anyone, and this usage recurs throughout the Pagan period.

īy ñā lhū so ratanā 3 pā kuiw these Three Gems which I offer.

And in the possessive *ñā* may be used even to a senior; then, however, it is not really the 1st person but an elegant substitute for the 2nd

ñā skhañ

my lord = Your Honour



A junior addressing a senior calls himself *atuiw' kywan* meaning, apparently, Your slave (although *atuiw'*, originally a plural postfix, can in itself constitute the 1st person plural, see the last three examples hereunder). A prince offers an image for his father the king and tells him

iy rhuy purhā kā ña skhañ aphei' *ati' kyon plo' su teh*

this golden image has Your slave made for my Lord (Myazedi)

A king's aunt tells the king ña skhiñ *atuiw kywan* kuiw plu piy so im te

it is the house Your Majesty has made for Your slave (L 289)

In a general statement, not addressed to an individual, *atuiw* can be used for *we*, usually in the possessive (with or without the possessive sign, the short tone).

*atuiw* ra la so phut ñā mway

Phuthamway whom we have obtained (L 223)

*atuiw' cakkrawalā*

*atuiw muiw mliy*

our universe (L 190)

our rainland (L 270)

#### Second Person

*nañ* is used only by seniors; thus, the king to his ministers

mahāpuiw kuiw *nañ* tuiw taruk e' alā alā kuiw si oñ mū liy hu ciy tau mū e'

"Do you make yourselves acquainted with the movements of the Chinese" thus saying the king sent away Mahāpuiw (L 376)

To a superior, substitutes such as my Lord, our Lord are used

phurhā-loñ kuiw ñā krā e', mlatewā so ñā *skhiñ* *atuiw' kywan* kuiw plu piy so im te

I informed the Bodhisat [the king] "This is the house which my noble Lord has made for Your slave" (L 289)

Quite commonly however the use of a pronoun is avoided altogether and the person is addressed by his name (or preferably his title)

mi thuy tañ ap nuiw so sañkhā thā lañ hu min taw mu e'

The king said "Put whatever monks [you] the aunt thinks suitable in the monastery" (L 289)

paṇḍit lā ruy pliy pliy sa syañ tuiw kuiw khaw liy... taruk mañ chuiw e'

"[You] the Pandit goes and calls the monks who have fled" said the Chinese king (L 376)

#### Third Person

The only real pronoun is *khyañ*

ñā *khyañ* kuiw oñ sa te

I won the case over him (L 281)

*Sū* (person), *ayañ* (that, the above-mentioned) are rare and it is doubtful whether they

were recognised as pronouns although nowadays *sū* is common in popular and *yañ*<sup>3</sup> in literary usage

*sū* tuiw kã... anā myā so phlac ciy  
may they be full of diseases (L 334)  
smi i'phak, *ayañ* mi thuy i'truy  
daughter I'phak and her aunt I'truy (L 81)

Quite commonly however the use of a pronoun is avoided altogether & the person is addressed by his name (or preferably his title)

thiw pāy mayā siy kha rā, thiw pāy mayā tanchā nhañ' thiw kyon suñ rwoh su nhañ'  
teh thiw pāy maya' sã rājakumār mañ so ā mañ.piy tuñ e'

as that beloved wife had died the king gave again the ornaments & the three slave-villages of that beloved wife to the son of that beloved wife called Rajakumar (Myazedi).

#### Possessive

This is formed in the same three ways as for nouns

*atuiw'* cakkrawalā  
our universe  
*ña* skhañ  
my lord  
*ñā e'* mi pha phiy phuiw tuiw  
my parents & ancestors

#### Reflexive

No reflexive pronoun is traceable save in the 3rd person. *Kuiw* (body) is so used, *mimi* (self, own) is used in no other way

*mimi* lañ  
husband of oneself  
*mimi* kiew muy so... klañjo  
kindness with which oneself was looked after (L 51)  
*mimi* phwā rā parim prañ nhuik  
in the town of Parim where oneself was born (L 49)  
kawañ kuiw... *kuiw* tau thwak ruy puiw lhyañ le e'  
the king himself came out and sent the image of Kavam (L 23)

#### Demonstrative

*thuiw* (that), *iy* (this)  
dhattāw thañ' so tancikū krwac *thuiw* apa kã phan plu so krwac  
the sandalwood casket where the relic is kept; outside that is the crystal casket (L 190)

*ī sañ kā cañsū mañ kri e' alhū tau te*  
this is the royal gift of Cansu-man-kri (L 533)

*Interrogative*

*atī* (which, what, who) followed by the interrogative postfix *nhe*  
*thuiw kywon kā atī dhe*  
who are those slaves? (L 123)  
*arap 3 pā hū sa kā atī tuiw' dhe*  
which are the three establishments you talk of (L 263)

*Relative*

see under Adjective at p. 96 below.

The Verb

As indicated at p. 85 above there are only two classes of full-words (nouns and verbs); a full-word falls into one or other of these two classes according to the form-words it takes, and indeed a verb hardly becomes a complete verb until a verb form-word is added. One of these verb form-words, the negative, is a prefix; the others are postfixes which I will now record as tenses and moods.

*Present*

The postfixes *e'*, *cwa*, *su teh* (*sa te*), *te* are really aorist; they always suffice to form the present tense and they frequently suffice to form the past tense

*jeyyapwat kā asak le kri e' atuiw' thañ le suñay nhañ' thap tū niy ñan chuiwñray e'*  
Jeyyapwat is now rather aged. He endures hardship day and night, as well as a young man, in serving us (L 230)

*ña syañ kuiw te mañ toñta cwa*  
the king longs for my lord (L 376)  
*iy rhuy purhā kā... atī' kyon plo' su teh*  
this golden Buddha image I make (Myazedi)

*te* by itself is a noun form-word, see p. 94 below. If its addition to a noun sometimes seems to constitute in itself a verb predicating that noun's existence it is probably none the less still a noun form-word and the real translation of the passage hereunder may be "Lo! the house which..."

*ñā skhiñ atuiw kywan kuiw plu piy so im te*  
this is the house which my Lord has made for your slave (L 289)

*Past*

The present (really aorist) postfixes suffice for the past tense unless the context is so ambiguous as to render a specific indication of past time desirable, in which case an

additional postfix *piy*, *luik*, *kha*, *lat* precedes the aorist and, if there be one, the plural postfix too.

athak carañ tañ *piy* e'

they sent up the list (L 230)

kū kā... miyā plu *piy* sate

the wife made the cave (L 235)

mañ kri ā krā *luik* e'

I informed the king (L 230)

ñā mi kuiw kā ñā ma si *luik*

I knew not my mother (L 289)

ñā e' mi pha phiy phuiw tuiw le amuy utcā tuiw cwan *kha* ruy swā *kha* kun e'

my parents and grandparents too all passed away leaving behind the inherited property (L 384)

ku tau arā nhañ *kha* e'

[the king] endowed the site of a temple (L 113)

mahādān mliy khap sim yū *lat* te

[the king] took away all the royal gift land (L 230)

### *Future*

The postfix *añ* expresses the future, and preceded by the additional postfix *lat* (*lat añ*, *lat tañ*) it expresses the remote future

ñā kā kok pai cuik liy ū *añ* I shall first grow corn (L 376)

noñ lā *lat añ* so mañ khap sim all kings who shall come in future (L 334)

phlac *lat tañ* so purhā the Buddha who will come (L 242)

a-suiw' mu tuñ *añ* nhe what will you do again? (L 223)

*Perfect & Pluperfect* alike- there is no distinction between them: it is left to the context- are expressed by inserting the postfix *phū* between the aorist and the past postfixes

carap le plu kha *phū* e

I have made a resthouse too (L 184)

ami ma riy kha *phuh* so klok cā

the stone inscription my mother had not written (L 81)

### *Imperative*

The verb by itself suffices without postfix

ī mliy acā noñ lui ra rā yū

take whatever you like instead of this land (L 384)

But one or more postfixes *lañ*, *mū liy*, *lat*, *tuñ*, *phi*, *piy*- are common, adding shades

of politeness or abruptness which are not always easy to translate

mi thuy tañ ap nuiw so sañkhā thā *lañ*

keep whichever monks the aunt thinks suitable (L 289)

taruk e' alā alā kuiw si oñ *mū liy*

just make yourself acquainted with the movements of the Chinese (L 376)

ñā kuiw lhwat *lat tum*

kindly send to me (L 376)

chuiw *phi lat piy*

do please, do, inform the king (L 376)

### *Subjunctive*

A condition or supposition is expressed by a postfix, *am̃*, *mū kã*

i.. alhū kuiw... thok pañ rac *am̃*... asak le rhañ ciy sate

if they support my gift, may they live long (L 354)

syañ disāprāmuk te pã *mū kã* amhu choñ nuiñ aṁ

if Syan Disapramuk were here we would be able to carry out the mission (L 376)

Precation is expressed by inserting the postfix *ciy* before the aorist postfix

ñaray kri yhat thap nhuik kyak *ciy e'*

may they be burnt in the Eight Hells (L 404)

lu twañ le phun kri *ciy sate*

may they be glorious among men (L 344)

phiy phyañ rok ruy siy *ciy sate*

may they die attacked by calamities (L 263)

*Mū* (perform) and *ciy* (let, cause) are both verbs used as postfixes: full-words used as form-words.

*Number* is usually unexpressed. If it is really necessary to indicate the plural a postfix, *kra*, *kun* immediately precedes the tense postfix

amrū cakā lhyañ chuiw *kra e'*

we conversed together

Indeed the latter postfix, *kun* (all), implies more than mere plurality

sañpyaṁ klan akun anumotanā khaw pã *kun e'*

all the ministers say their blessing (L 161)

niyraban suiwañ ra ciy *kun sate*

may all enter Nirvana (L 334)

*Negation* is expressed by the prefix *ma* which eliminates the aorist postfix but not the past or perfect

tumtapai le lhwat ra sañ *ma* hi

there exists no sending of an envoy (L 376)

ami *ma* riy kha phuh so klokcā

the stone inscription my mother had not written (L 81)

Sometimes *ma* hi "not to be" is written *may'*

chuiwñray *may'* so niraban

Nirvana where misery is not (L 190)

Sometimes *ma* is replaced by *a*, especially in precation

purhā skhañ *a* phū ra ciy

let him not see the Lord Buddha (L 51)

### Interrogation

There are two postfixes. When the question can be answered simply yes or no, the verb and its tense postfix- or if there be no verb the noun- is followed by the postfix *lo*

atuiw kywan ñray wacyi khañ wam' añ *lo*

shall Your slave dare suffer Avici Hell (L 333)

thuiw tok sañ kā mī *lo*

that which is shining, (is it) fire? (L 113)

When the question cannot be answered simply yes or no, the verb and its tense postfix- or if there be no verb the interrogative pronoun- is followed by the postfix *nhe*

lhū ap sa lai atī rap hi sa *nhe*

in what place are the fields which have been given away? (L 533)

asuiw' mu tuñ añ *nhe*

how will you act? (L 233)

thuiw kywon kā atī *nhe*

who is that slave? (L 123)

The only instances which occur of a negative interrogative involve *lo* and a noun; the negative postfix immediately precedes *lo*

mañ krī kā phurhā chu toñ so sū *ma lo*

is not the great king a man who prays for Buddhahood? (L 376)

### Participles

The aorist participle is formed by adding a postfix *ruy'*, *sa phlañ'*, *ra kā* to the verb; the past by inserting that postfix between the verb and the past postfix

kywan kā ña kuiw oñ ciy hu prat *ruy* ña kuiw nhañ piy pri sate

it being decided that I should win, the slave has been bestowed on me (L 223)

i suiw ña klañcū hi *ra kā*

there being such obligation of mine (L 376)

lū nat sattwā khap siñ sa tuiw' kuiw akrwañ may' *sa phlañ'* sañsarā chuiwñray  
mha thwak mlok kha *ruy'* chuiwñray may' so niraban prañ suiw' rok ciy khlañ so  
kroñ'

because I wish that all men, gods and creatures, there being no remainder, may  
reach the city of Nirvana where there is no misery, after having escaped from the  
misery of Samsara (L 190)

tantuiñ le nhac thap rañ lat *ruy'* tantuiñ twañ nhuik kã... kũ le tañ e'  
having made a double line of wall around, a temple is built within the wall  
thiw pāy mayā siy kha *ra kã*

that beloved wife having been dead (L 51)

purhā skhañ sāsanā anhac tac thoñ khrok ryā nhac chay het nhac lon liy bri *ra kã*  
one thousand six hundred and twenty eight years of the religion of the Buddha  
having elapsed (L 51)

#### Syntax

The order of words is subject, object, verb; or quite often object, subject, verb.

*Subject* whether pronoun, noun or clause needs no postfix

*mañ* riy son e'

the king poured out libation water

im le *ñā* niy e,' kywan le *ñā* ciy e,' lay le *ñā* cā e'

I inhabit the house, I employ the slaves, I enjoy the fields (L 289)

*ñā khamañ* piy sa le cañ e,' *jeyyapwat* purhā lhū sa le cañ e'

that my father has given it away is clear; that Jeyyapwat has presented it to the  
temple is also true (L 230)

For emphasis or clearness sake the subject, especially if it be a noun or noun-clause,  
takes a postfix (after the plural postfix if there be one) *kã, sañ, sañ kã, te*

mlat krī *kã* sim phurhā kuiw lhū sate

the noble one presented (the fields) to the sima-Buddha image (L 378)

iy sū 6 yok atuiw *sañ* min kun e'

these six men said (L 30)

iy *sañ kã* cañsu mañ krī e' alhū tau te

these be the royal gifts of the great king Cañsū [Jeyyasura]! (L 533)

*ñoñrañkrī* smi *te* atañ may' so tryā kuiw thit lan' ruy'

the daughter of Ñoñrañkrī being agitated by the law of impermanance (L 263)

*kã* is especially used for converting a clause into a noun-clause

thuiw tok *sañ kã* mī lo

that which is shining, is it fire? (L 113)

*Object* whether direct or indirect, pronoun, noun or noun-clause, similarly needs no postfix but may take one *kuiw*, *kā*, *kuiw kā*, *ā*, *lhyañ*, *teh*

purhā loñ *kuiw* sujātā nwā nuiw thamañ lhū e

Sujata offered milk-rice to the Bodhisat

i mhya so ña alhū khapañ sa *kā* phurhā sangha *lhyañ* ñā chok nhañ sate

I offer all these gifts of mine to the Buddha and the Sangha (L 174)

lay 750 so *kuiw kā* ratanā 3 pā ā akun ñā lhū e'

all the 750 pays of rice land I give to the Three Gems (L 22)


thiw mañ *kā* kyon suñ rwoh *teh* pāy mayā ā piy e'

that king gave the three slave-villages to the beloved wife (L 51)

tim khai pri sañ *kuiw* phaw pā sa sū *kā*

he who repairs what has been in ruins (L 273)

#### *Possessive*

The postfix (following the possessor & followed by the thing possessed) is *e'* or simply apostrophe' which letter is the romanisation of the vowel *a* (with the Burmese virama above it) written as  in Burmese either after or under the possessor to create a short tone

thiw mañ *e'* pāy mayā

that king's wife (L 51)

mañ' ñi

mañ' sā

king's younger brother, king's son (L 190)

When the possessor ends in a vowel the length of which can be shortened without otherwise impairing its meaning, the apostrophe may be omitted and the vowel shortened

ña sā (for ñā' sā)

my son

ña mliy (for ñā' mliy)

my grandson

The inscriptions continually waver in their representation of the short tone, writing for instance "my" indifferently as

ñā'

ña

or even ñā which contains no indication whatever of the possessive.

#### *Locative*

The postfixes are *nhuik*, *ā*, *nhuik ā*, *twañ*, *twañ nhuik*, *lhyañ*

mlac kwe *nhuik*

at the bend of the river (L 533)



6 niy ā  
 on the 6th day  
 arimaddana mañ su prañ *nhik ā*  
 in the city called Arimaddana (L 51)  
 nakā kan *twañ*  
 in the Naga Pond  
 iy lū *twañ nhuik*  
 in this world  
 sum pahui' *lhyañ*  
 at three paharas

When the meaning is clear from the context the postfix may be omitted

intapacra le ñāchoñkhyam mruiw niy ra liy e'

Intapacra also had to stay at Fort Nachonkhyam (L 389)

The postfix for a noun-clause is *rhaw* which seems to be a noun denoting time rather than a form-word, and indeed some of the other postfixes, certainly *twañ*, may be full-words

pitakat lhwat so *rhaw ā*  
 at the time when the Pitakas were presented (L 123)

#### *Terminative*

The postfix is *suiw*

arhe turañ *suiw* thwak tau mu lat so akhā  
 when the king went out to Turan in the east (L 113)

#### *Ablative*

The postfix is *mha*

ñray *mha* kā prittā suiw  
 from Niriya to Peta world (L 334)

#### *Adjective*

There is no adjective. A noun, verb or clause is rendered adjectival by the postfix *so* (or its variants *sa*, *su*, *sañ*, *sow*) which nowadays is justifiably regarded as a relative pronoun

12 yūjanā *so* rhuy piman  
 the golden mansion which is 12 yojanas [wide]  
 cā *so* thamañ hañ  
 the rice & curry which he eats (L 81)  
 bhun tankhuiw plañā nhañ plañ cuñ cwā *sow* anoradhā mañkri  
 the great king Anoradha who is endowed with glory, power and learning (L 23)

### Conjunction

The postfixes are *nhañ'* (and), *lañkoñ* (or)

tanchā *nhañ'* thiw kyon suñ rwoh  
the ornaments and those three villages  
miyma *lañkoñ* yokyā *lañkoñ*  
woman or man

### Numerals

Counting is decimal. Numbers are formed as in Tibetan and Chinese, one ten=10, ten one=11, two ten=20, ten two=12, three ten four=34

Sāsanañ anhas tac thoñ khrok ryā nhac chay het nhac

1-1000      6-100      2-10      8

Religion year one thousand six hundred twenty eight year=Buddhist Era 1628

Numbers follow the noun they qualify and must themselves be followed by a generic word shewing the class of thing the noun denotes. These generic words are usually called numerative particles; and already that is the only use in which many of them are found in the inscriptions, for even then they had become worn down; but some were and still are nouns or verbs.

They never fail to be assigned but Modern Burmese which has long graded them almost into a hierarchy would be scandalised at the way they can be assigned: the pious donors of the inscriptions assign the same numerative to The Three Gems as to a water-closet.

#### Numerative Particle Use

#### Noun/Verb use

pā	rattanā 3 <i>pā</i>	The Three Gems
	riy im 3 <i>pā</i>	3 waterclosets
	arap 3 <i>pā</i>	3 buildings, establishments
yok	burhā 3 <i>yok</i>	3 Buddhas
	skhiñ pancañ nhac <i>yok</i>	two reverend brothers
chū	sañkan <i>chū</i> 1000	1000 yellow robes
	tanchoñ sum <i>chū</i>	three candlesticks
	tamkhākhunklok 1 <i>chū</i>	1 doorway stone
	khyū 3 <i>chū</i>	3 tinkle bells
	nātoñ nhac <i>chū</i>	two eartubes
khu	nwā 14 <i>khu</i>	14 oxen
	rhuy purhā 1 <i>khu</i>	1 golden Buddha image
	kwañkapnhim 1 <i>khu</i>	1 low betel stand

pum	wineñ tac <i>pum</i>	one pile of Vinaya	pum heap
cī	mrañ 1 <i>cī</i>	1 horse	cī to ride
	chañproñ 1 <i>cī</i>	1 bull elephant	
thañ	sakkhañ 1 <i>thañ</i>	1 yellow robe	thañ garment
yhyān	nwā <i>yhyān</i> 30	30 yoke of oxen	
uiw	pyā 1 <i>uiw</i>	1 pot of honey	uiw a pot
khlap	lañpan 2 <i>khlap</i>	2 platters	khlap a flat piece
up	khwak 5 <i>up</i>	5 covered dishes	up cover
lum	thūnphū ta <i>lum</i>	one limebox	lum sphere
klam	dhammapada tac <i>klam</i>	one book of Dhammapada	klam pair of wooden planks binding a palm leaf book

#### Tones

The three tones of Burmese are given at Stewart "An introduction to colloquial Burmese" pp. 2, 17 and their romanization for purposes of historical grammar is given at Epigraphia Birmanica vol 1 pt 1 p 12. Burmese never indicates the medial tone as it is inherent in every long vowel but the other two tones are carefully indicated by tone signs.

The tone signs are modern. The inscriptions use no tone signs of any sort; nevertheless they recognise the existence of tone. In the very first inscription, the Myazedi (year 1113) we find

န ဣ̃ nhañ' ဂု ဣ̃ ruγ' မိ ဣ̃ min' တို ဣ̃ tuiw' မယ ဘ ဣ̃ mayā' အ ဣ̃ am'  
the (a), after or under the syllable affected, representing the short tone, see p 46 above;  
today we would write န ဣ̃ ဂု ဣ̃ မိ ဣ̃ တို မယ ဘ ဣ̃ အ ဣ̃

As for the heavy tone, it can of course exist only in words ending with a final long vowel. Now it is only words which today end in a final long vowel and bear the heavy tone that the inscriptions write with a final h. Thus, the Myazedi has

လေဟ် leh တေဟ် teh

where today we would write

လညိး lañ³ ('li) တညိး tañ³ ('ti)

and in inscription L 81 (year 1165) we find

အဟ် ah ဖုဟ် puh ယိုဟ် smih မိယဟ် miyah သဟ် sah နှဟ် nwh

where today we would write အ ဘ ဣ̃ ယို ဣ̃ မယ ဘ ဘ ဣ̃ နှ ဣ̃

Such are the indications of tone in the inscriptions, and even they are spasmodic, for as often as not they are omitted. Nevertheless the tones must have been there, and probably they were much the same as today; Burmese abounds in words which are dis-

tinguishable only by a difference of tone; thus

လှ လာ (la) to come လှ လာ လာ (lā<sup>3</sup>) to go

In the following passages these two words, come & go, are written without any indication of tone difference yet they clearly have the same opposed meanings as today

thipesyañ arap mha lā ruy'

*coming* from Thipesyan

iy sū tuiw lā ruy' tac phan mliy roñ lhā tuñ rakā

as these people *came* once again to sell lands (L 270)

ma hi mu kā mrak nu riy krañ hi rā lā ciy sate

when I am no more let the slaves *go* where there is tender grass and clear water (L 303)

pañdit lā ruy pliy pliy sa syañ tuiw kuiw khaw liy

Pandit, *go* and call the monks who have fled (L 376)

nañ tuiw taruk e' alā alā kuiw si oñ mū lañ

make yourselves acquainted with the *goings* and *comings* of the Chinese (L 376)

### THE LANGUAGE (III)

#### Orthography and Indian Words

##### Orthography

The spelling of the inscriptions is inconstant. A word is often spelt differently in one and the same inscription; thus the Myazedi has both *plo'* and *plu* for the Modern Burmese *pru* "to make"; and this continues to the very end of the medieval period. The combinations of letters, too, look impossible at first sight to a modern Burman; yet they soon become intelligible, for in groping their way the writers used conventions which it is possible to equate with Modern Burmese.

Old                      Modern Burmese

-iy = -e

akr iy	akr e	the lower country
kr iy	kr e	copper, brass
kh r iy	kh r e	leg
n iy	n e	day
n iy	n e	live, stay
p iy	p e	give
r iy	r e	water
lh iy	lh e	boat
s iy	s e	die, expire, go out (fire)

n iy	n e	sun
ml iy	mr e	earth
-uy = -we		
ñ uy	ñ we	silver, money
th uy	th we	speech, a command
th uy	th we <sup>3</sup>	junior, youngest
m uy	m we <sup>3</sup>	nourish, bring up
r uy	r we <sup>1</sup>	participle postfix p 93 above
rh uy	rh we	gold
s uy	s we <sup>3</sup>	blood



-on = -wan

-ot = -wat

ky on	ky wan	a slave
th ot	th wat	summit, top
l on	l wan	elapse
lh ot	lh wat	to set free
s on	s wan	pour out water

-w, no longer used, is represented in Modern Burmese by -o<sup>2</sup> or -o, and the preceding vowel was often lengthened.

bhava	Pali
bhaw, bhāw	Old Burmese
bho	Modern Burmese

Modern Burmese -o<sup>2</sup> or -o also represents Old Burmese  or  a symbol romanised as -au or -āu; this symbol is sometimes strengthened by -w thus -auw, -āuw

#### Old – Modern Burmese

-aw, -āw	} -o <sup>2</sup> , -o
-au, -āu	
-auw, -āuw	

aklaw	aḵyo <sup>2</sup>	fame
aphaw	apho <sup>2</sup>	companion
amipurhā cau	miphurā <sup>3</sup> co	Queen Saw
tāw, tau, tāu, tauw	to <sup>2</sup>	royal, sacred
tāw, tāu	to	forest
thāw pat	tho pat	ghee, butter
pucaw, pujāw	pūjo <sup>2</sup> (Pali pūjā)	offer worship

sāuw	[so]	name of an extinct race
haw	ho	preach

Occasionally -ñ = -e

kañ klañ	kañ kywe <sup>3</sup>	provisions
kleñ, klwañ	kywe <sup>3</sup>	feed
klañjū	kye <sup>3</sup> jū <sup>3</sup>	gratitude
cañ wañ	cañ <sup>3</sup> we <sup>3</sup>	assemble

Occasionally -e = -ñ

te	tañ <sup>3</sup>	postfix, pp. 90, 94 above
tape'	tapañ <sup>1</sup>	pupil
le	lañ <sup>3</sup>	also

often -y = -ai

-ai = -y

khway	khwai <sup>3</sup>	half
chway	chwai <sup>3</sup>	to hang
pulay	pulai <sup>3</sup>	pearl
phway'	phwai <sup>1</sup>	put together, compose
may'	mai <sup>1</sup>	not existing
rway	rwai <sup>3</sup>	precious stone
lway	lwai <sup>3</sup>	vary from course
athay	athai <sup>3</sup>	inside
apai ñaray	apāy ñarai <sup>3</sup>	hell
minphwai	min <sup>1</sup> phway	what is to be said
lai	lay	field

#### Medial L

-l-, medial -l-, is interesting. It has completely disappeared from Modern Burmese, although it survives in a few cases in Modern Mon (and some Burmese dialects.)

<i>Old Burmese</i>	<i>Modern Mon</i>	<i>Modern Burmese</i>	
klā L 344	kla	kyā <sup>3</sup>	tiger
pla	pla	pra	to show
plan L 113	plan	pran	again, to return
ploñ plan L 213	plun plan	proñ <sup>3</sup> pran	over & over
plwan L 190	ploñ	prwan, proñ <sup>3</sup>	tube

Its place is taken by -y-, or -r- in the following circumstances

*Old                      Modern Burmese*

kl-, khl- = ky-, khy-

akluiw	akyui <sup>3</sup>	result, fruit
aklwat	akywat	release
klañjo	kye <sup>3</sup> jū <sup>3</sup>	obligation, gratitude
klañ, klwañ	kywe <sup>3</sup>	feed
klam	kyam <sup>3</sup>	book
kliy kywan	kye <sup>3</sup> kywan	a slave
kloñ, klyoñ	kyoñ <sup>3</sup>	monastery, school
klok	kyok	stone
klyat	kyap	tical of silver
khla	khya	let fall
khlañ, khlyañ	khyañ	to wish
khluṇ	khyup	bind
khloñ	khyoñ <sup>3</sup>	a stream
khlwat	khywat	liberate
mañ klañ	man kyañ <sup>3</sup>	tamarind

pl-, phl-, ml- = pr-, phr-, mr-

aplac	aprac	evil deed
plañ apa	prañ apa	exterior
plañ'	prañ <sup>1</sup>	be full
plan	pran	return, inform
plwan	prwan	tube, pipe
plu	pru	do, make
phlañ'	phrañ <sup>1</sup>	with, by
phlac	phrac	to be
phlū	phrū	white
mlac	mrac	river
mlac ok, mlok	mrok	north
mlañ' mlay	mrañ <sup>1</sup> mrai <sup>3</sup>	permanent
mlat	mrat	holy
mliṇ	mre	earth
mliṇ	mre <sup>3</sup>	grandchild

Very occasionally pl-, phl-, ml- = py-, phy-, my-

plak	pyak	inconstant, ruined
plañmanā	pyañ <sup>3</sup> manā <sup>3</sup>	Pyinmana town

plyuiw	pyui <sup>3</sup>	to plant
phlak	phyak	destroy
phlā	phyā	mat
mlyuiw	myui <sup>3</sup>	race, kind, sort

Another combination which has disappeared is *ry*. The inscriptions have it not only in Sanskrit & Pali loan words but also occasionally in Burmese. Today either *r* or *y* has dropped out leaving only the other

<i>Old</i>	<i>Modern Burmese</i>	
aryā (Skt ārya)	ariyā	Aryan
mitta ryā (Skt maitreya)	metteyya	the next Buddha
tukkaciryā (P dukkara cariyā)	dukkaracariyā	arduous conduct
chi ryā (Skt ācārya)	charā	teacher
aciāryañ	aciārañ	arrangement
tryā	tarā <sup>3</sup>	the Law
mu ry añ	murañ <sup>3</sup>	winter rice
ry ā	rā	hundred
ry ā	yā	dry cultivation
ry ak	rak	day
ry ak tak	raktak	a milk preparation
ry ap	rap	to stand
ry am	rañ	surround
san ry añ	sanlyañ <sup>3</sup>	palanquin
si ry ak	sarak	mango

There are a few words in the inscriptions which today insert -y- immediately after the initial consonant

kī kra	kyī kra	granary
kin	kyin	swear, take oath
kin	kyin <sup>3</sup>	dwel (of monks)
kip	kyip	ten
khipañ	khyī pañ <sup>1</sup>	promote
khīmhwariñ	khyi <sup>3</sup> mwam <sup>3</sup>	applaud
khiy	khye	settle accounts
khin	khyin	weigh
ñi	ñi	younger brother; united
ñhi	ñhi	kindle; make even



The following change is confined to the words here listed

-n = -ñ

-t = -c

acan	acañ	succession, continuity
uyan (P uyyāna)	uyyāñ	a park
ñhan	ñhañ	oppress
ñoñkhyan	ñoñkhyañ	Ficus infectoria
yhan	yhañ	place side by side
khyat	khyac	to love
cat	cac	investigate
ñhat	ñhac	squeeze; to milk
tat	tac	one
yatkuiw	ackui	man's elder brother
yhat	yhac	eight

#### Indian influence on vocabulary

Indian influence on the vocabulary of Burmese is strongest in matters connected with religion- and these include the calendar, astrology, weights and measures, architecture- but it is not confined to these, and Indian loan words, as well as Burmese words with new Indian meanings, have long formed part of everyday Burmese speech.

First there are purely Burmese words which, under Buddhist influence, received a new meaning. Sometimes a single word received the connotation of a Sanskrit or Pali term and is henceforward used in that sense; sometimes words are strung together to correspond to a similar string in Sanskrit or Pali.

#### *Sanskrit/Pali*

#### *Old Burmese*

phala	akluiw (L 184)	result, fruition, blessing
muñcana	aklwat (L 146)	release
yo... so	akrāñ.. thuiw...	correlative pronouns (always followed by nouns) "who /which.. what" framed on the Pali model
anicca	atañ may [sa phlac] (L 270)	[become] impermanent
anicca dhamma	atañ may so tryā (L 334)	the law of impermanence
anicca dhamma sañvejita	atañ may' so taryā kuiw thit lan' (L 263)	be agitated by the law of impermanence

Burmese had a perfectly good word for "to die" (siy) but Buddhism with its new concept of death necessitated a new terminology and it is accordingly framed

on the Buddhist model

jāti jarā maraṇa      aphlac uiwmañ sekhrañ (L 213) birth, old age, death

There is nothing new in each single word but the threefold concept links up with saṅkhāra loka, and beyond them is the City of Nirvāna, where none of them exist

moha dosa lobha      amuik amyak rañmak (L 409) bewilderment, anger, greed

The three akusala mūlā. Amuik is simply “darkness” but here it has become “bewilderment.” Rañmak is sometimes used for Pali taṇhā “craving”

amluiw sā      kula putta son of a family  
amluiw smī      kula dhitā daughter of a family } fellow country men

Burmese recognised only man and woman till the idea of caste (which he never accepted) led the coining of these phrases on the Indian model

saraṇa      kuiw kway rā      body -protection- place; a refuge (L 325)

This is now a standard Burmese phrase, but in one ink inscription saraṇa is actually burmanised as “suir”

kusala kamma      koñ mhu      good deed  
puññaphala      koñ mhu akuiw      result, fruition of good deed  
puñña bhāga      koñ mhu aphuiw (L 334) share, portion of good deed  
asaṅkheyya      ma riy twak nuiñ [so saṅsarā] (L 242) innumerable [saṅsāra]  
atidullabha      ra khai cwā [so ratana suñ pā] (L 213)

[The Three Jewels which are] very hard to obtain

udaka kicca      riy son (L 51) pour out water  
re cañ taw khla (L 273) let fall pure holy water  
taṇhā dāsa      rañmak kywen (L 123) a slave to craving  
khama      sañ kham [so skhiñ ariyā] (L 190)

[The Holy Lord who is] patient and forgiving

Secondly there are doublets- a Burmese word and an Indian always used together. Sometimes they have the same meaning, sometimes one defines or restricts the other.

ratana      uccā rattanā (L 213) property, goods, possessions  
kalasa      kalasā uiw (L 190)  
kalasā kwan uiw (L 354)

a pot shaped like kalasa, the top of a temple

bali      pali acā (L 384) pali-food, food offered to gods  
paccaya      paccañ athok apañ (L 384) support & prop, monk's requisite

saddhā	yurū krañ cwā saddhā (L 325)	} believing, faithful
	saddhā yurū krañ cwā (L 354)	
prajñā	si krā prañā (L 354)	knowing-hearing prajñā, intelligence
sabbaññutañāṇa	si cap mrañ nham' so sabbaññuta ñān (L 190)	
	know-deep see-wide omniscience	

Thirdly there are loan words pure & simple: the Sanskrit or Pali word is adopted into Burmese. Spelling & pronunciation alike are altered.

Thus, Burmese, having few voiced consonants, substitutes unvoiced

#### *Gutturals*

guhā	kū	cave
Migāra	mikāra	the Sāvatti banker
Maṅgala	maṅkalo	the 3rd Buddha
Gotama	kotama	the 25th Buddha
saṅgha	saṅkhā	the Clergy, the Church
bhavagga	phavak	acme of existence
saṅgraha	saṅkruw	supporting

#### *Palatals*

yojana	yūcanā	measure of distance
Assaji	assaci	fifth of the Five Disciples
Ajapāla	acapāla	the Ajapāla banyan tree
Jambudipa	caṃputit	one of the Four Continents
pūjā	pucau	honour, worship

#### *Dentals*

dāyaka	tāyakā	donor, benefactor
dasa jātaka	tassajāt	the Ten Jatakas
Devadatta	tevatat	Buddha's evil kinsman
khandha	kanthā	bulk, body
Nandiya	nantiya	the Benares householder
vedāṅga	betāṅ	the Vedas
dukkaracariyā	tukkaciryā	arduous exertion
Medhaṅkara	methaṅkara	an early Buddha
Sumedha	sumethā	the Bodhisatta under Dipaṅkara
vyādiś	byatit	assign, appoint to duty
danḍa	tan	punishment-stick
saddhā	satthā	faith
Arindama	arintama	king Arindama

### *Labials*

sam bhojana	saṇput	feeding, offering of food
bhīru	philu	demon
bali	pali	an offering to gods
vimāna	biman	heavenly mansion
bhavagga	phavak	acme of existence among the gods
nīrvāṇa	nerapan	Nirvana

Changes such as the above are necessitated by the phonological range of the language. And so may others prove to be some day when we know more about its phonological structure. But it is difficult not to suspect that often the change is due to mere mannerism. The Burman can pronounce the following words in their classical form perfectly well

saṅgha	the Church
saṁsāra	Transmigration
sāsana	teaching

and he actually does pronounce the first when reading Pali: yet when reading Burmese- which retains the name of the Third Jewel but uses native terms *burā*<sup>3</sup> (Buddha), *tarā*<sup>3</sup> (Law) for the other Two- he persists in lengthening the final vowel; and his pronunciation of the above list is ordinarily

saṅghā
saṁsarā
sāsanā

Ordinarily the change is greater than this. I attach five lists shewing the five groups into which the changes fall.

The final -i in a classical word becomes -iy or -e. Sometimes the vowel in the first syllable changes too.

sīrī	asariy	glory
avīci	avīciy	one of the major hells
koṭi	kutiy	hundred thousand
kuṭi	kuṭiy	hut
cakra vartī	cakkravatiy	universal monarch
cuti	cutiy	vanishing, disease
nīrvāṇa	niyraban	Nirvana
ṛṣi	rasiy	seer, sage
seṭṭhi	satthe,	
	saddhiy, saṭhiy	treasurer, banker

When the last two syllables of the classical word each end in *a* or *ā* the first becomes

*ui*, the last is dropped, and the intervening consonant is either marked with the Burmese virāma or (more rarely) replaced by -w.

iriyā patha	iriyāpuit	way of deportment
Konāgamana	gonāguim	the 23rd Buddha
Padumuttara	padumuttuir	the 10th Buddha
pahara	pahuir	division of time (6 or 7 nāḍika)
puggala	pukkuil	person, man
bala vāhana	buil pā	troops, army
vyākaraṇa	byākaruiṇ	grammar
bhaya	bhuiy, phuiy	fear
yamaka	yamuik	double, twin
Rājagriha	rājagruih	capital of Magadha
vārṣa, vassa	wāchuiw	Lent
saṅgrah	saṅkruiw	help, protection
Saṅjiva	saṅjuiw	a Hell
Siṃhala, Siṅghala	sinkhuiw	Ceylon
saraṇa	suir	a refuge, the Three Refuges

The final -ya in a classical word becomes -ñ with the Burmese virāma. Only a few instances occur in the inscriptions but subsequently it became a regular method of Burmanisation.

Ariya metteyya	ariya mittañ, ariya mettañ	the next Buddha
Jeyya sūra	cañsū, ceysū	a king of Pagan
Citra paccaya	cittarā picañ	the artist Citrapaccaya
ñāṇa paccaya	ñāṇa picañ	the minister Ñāṇapaccaya
paccaya	paccañ	support, requisite
Bhatta paccaya	bhatta bicañ	the cook Bhattapaccaya
Vinaya	winañ	the Vinaya Pitaka
Suvaṇṇa paccaya	suwanna pijañ	the minister Suvaṇṇapaccaya
Śrī Indra paccaya	Śrī Indra picañ	the minister Śrī Indrapaccaya

Commonest of all: the final consonant of the classical word loses its vowel value by being marked with the Burmese virāma; and sometimes this process is applied to the penultimate consonant, the final syllable disappearing altogether. Not that the spelling of the remnant remains constant; anything that expresses the Burmese pronunciation does even when the classical spelling expresses it equally well.

abhisekha	apisip	coronation
amātya	amat	king's minister

Anāthapiṇḍika	anāthapin	the Sāvatti banker
ānubhāva	ānubhaw	greatness, magnificence
āpatti	āpat	ecclesiastical offence
antarāya	antarāy	danger
iṭṭhakā	ut	burnt brick, tile
uyyāna	uyān, ūyan	a park
kappa	kap	an age of the world
camma khaṇḍa	camakhan	animal's skin used as rug
jambudīpa	jambudip, caṃpputit	one of the Four Continents
jātaka	jāt	birth story
ñāṇa	ñāṇ	knowledge, intelligence
tambadīpa, tāmradvīpa	taṃpratit	the kingdom of Pagan
ṭiracchāna	tricchan	animal
thera	ther	monk
Devadatta	tewatat	Buddha's evil kinsman
dhātu	dhat, that	element, relic
nibbāna	nibbān	Nirvana
paritta	paruit	charm, palliative
pañcaṅgikaturīya	pañcaṅgatur	the Five Kinds of Music
paṇḍita	paṇḍit	learned man
pallaṅka	panlaṅ	couch, sofa
piṭakattaya	pitakat	the Three Pitakas
prāsāda	prasat	palace
phalika	phan	crystal
bhavagga	bhawag	acme of existence
mahādāna	mahādān	great gift
vitāna	pitan	canopy, awning
vimāna	piman, biman	heavenly mansion
veḷuvana	veḷuwan	park near Rājagaha
samāpatti	samāpat	attainment
sambhojana vatta	saṅput wat	duty of feeding monks
saṃskṛta	saṃsakruit	Sanskrit
śākya varṇa	sākyawaṇ	Sākya family
Siridhammāsoka	siridhammasuk	Emperor Asoka
sīmā	sim	boundary, parish
suvaṇṇa lipi	suvaṇṇlip	gold writing

Himavant	himawan	Himalaya
sammuti	samuit	boundary determination

But perhaps the majority of classical loan words are those in which burmanisation follows to particular rule; a vowel here, a consonant there, is lopped or modified, and the result is an everyday Burmese word, usually no doubt, but by no means always, religious. Here are a few examples:

anumodana	anumodanā	thanks for gift
arahant	rahanta	arahant
kappa, kalpa	kaṁpā, kaṁphā	world
cetiya	ceti	pagoda
thapana	thāmanā, ṭhapanā	enshrinement of relics
dāyaka	dāyakā	donor
dhammacakka	dhammacakrā	the Wheel of the Law
dhammasālā	dhammasā	preaching hall
nāḍika	naḍi, nāri	hour of 24 minutes
nāga	nāgā	serpent
parikkhāra	parikkharā, parikharā	requisite, equipment
paṁsukūla	paṁsakū	rags from dust heap
prajñā	prajñā, pracñā, prañā	intelligence
pārata, pārada	pratā	quicksilver
pariṣad	parisat	assembly, multitude
preta	prittā	departed spirit
visai (Tamil)	bisā	standard 3½ lb weight
mettābhāvanā	mittabhāwanā	love for all creatures
yamaka pāṭihāriya	yamuik prātahā	the Miracle of the Double Appearances
yojana	yūjanā	a 7 mile league
ratana, ratna	ratanā, rattanā	jewel
saṅgha	saṅghā	the Clergy, the Church
saṁsāra	saṁsarā	Transmigration
sacca	saccā	truth
sabbaññu, sarva jña	sabbañu, sarwwañu	omniscient
sāsana	sāsanā	Buddha's doctrine, religion

The Burmese Calendar

*Sakarac Era*<sup>1</sup>

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1 JBRS 1912 197 Mg May Oung "The Burmese Era" & 1932 150 Pe Maung Tin "The Saka Era in Pagan."

As in other Indo-Chinese countries the era is Indian. It is called sakarac, sakarāc, sakaraj, sakarāja (the spelling varies in Old Burmese).

The name must be that of the Saka Era (dated from 78 AD) which indeed seems to have been in actual use even though it occurs only once in the inscriptions, thus

sakye tripañcāsāt saḥassarakē in 1053 Sāka Era (1131AD)

But the name is always applied to the current era, which is totally different, being dated from 638 AD (Julian 21 March, Gregorian 24 March, 638). This era is also used in Siam under the name Chulasakaraj. Its origin is unproven. The Burmese attribute it to Popa Saw Rahan a priest-king, who, reigning at Pagan 613–40 AD., dropped 560 years-Saka 560 was our year 638- and started anew. We have no real evidence about Pagan till some centuries later but the era may have originated thus, under the guidance of Hindu astrologers.

#### *Cycle of Year Names*

No Burman has heard of this today outside astrological works but in the inscriptions there is a 12 year cycle<sup>1</sup> with the same 12 names, in the same order, as is found in Indian calendars based on the revolutions of the planet Jupiter.

	<i>Sanskrit / Pali</i>	<i>Old Burmese</i>
1	Jeyya	cay, jay, ciy
2	Visākhā	pisyak, bisya
3	Jeṭṭha	cissa, citssa
4	Asaḷhi	āsirñ, āsin
5	Saravaṇ	sarawan, sawan
6	Bhadra	phat, phatsa, bhassa
7	Assayujja	āsāt, āsut, āsit
8	Krattikā	kratuik, krātuik
9	Migasi	mrikkasuir, mruiksuil
10	Phuṣya	pussa
11	Magha	mākha, māgha
12	Bharaguṇṇī	phlakun, phlakuin

#### *Month Names*

Unlike the Mon, who adopted the Indian names of the lunar months, the Burmese retained their own. The origin and meaning of these names are alike unknown. The 4th, 5th and 7th months in the list below, however, received additional Buddhist names which are Indian to the extent that they begin with Lent (Skt. varṣa) and these addi-

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<sup>1</sup> JBRS 1916 90 C. O. Blagden "The Cycle of Burmese Year Names"



tional names have superseded the original ones. The equation with the English months is only approximate.

1.	April	Tankhū
2.	May	Kuchun, Kūchun
3.	June	Nañyun
4.	July	Mlwaytā, Wāchuiw Lent month
5.	August	Naṁkā, Wākhoṇ Mid-lent
6.	September	Tāuslaṇ
7.	October	Santū, Wāklwat Free-from-Lent, Sataṅkhlwat Free-from-Sabbath
8.	November	Tanchoṇmhun
9.	December	Nattaw
10.	January	Plāsuiw
11.	February	Tapuiwthway
12.	March	Tapoṇ

#### *Days of Week*

The Burmese names for Sunday and Monday are inexplicable; the final syllables may be significant- in Sunday it suggests the Burmese for sun (niy), in Monday the Burmese for moon (la). All the other days are Indian.

	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Old Mon</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>Old Burmese</i>
Sun	Ādityavāra	Ādittawār	Tanhaṅkanuy, Tannhaṅkanuy
Mon	Candravāra	Candrawār	Tanhaṅlā, Tannhaṅlā
Tue	Aṅgāravāra	Aṅā (Modern Mon)	Aṅā
Wed	Budhavāra	Buddhawār	Buddhahū
Thu	Bṛihaspativāra	Brahaspatiwar	Krāsapate
Fri	Śukravāra	Sukrawār	Sokkrā, Sukrā
Sat	Śanivāra	Saniscār	Caniy

#### *Hours*

Time was measured by a man's shadow at sunrise or sunset, the shadow being so many phlwā (sole-of-foot) long

niy tak 9 phlwā khway

rising sun 9½ soles of the foot (L 242, year 1131)

But the inscriptions also use the long & short Indian hours

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1 From Epigraphia Birmanica III i "An inscription (Mon Inscr IX) found near the Tharaba Gate, Pagan"; Tuesday does not occur.

	<i>Burmese Old/Mod</i>	<i>Modern Mon</i>
prahara, pahara (3hours)	pahuir	bahuil
nāḍi, naḍi (24 minutes)	naḍi nāri	nāḍi

In view of the other evidence (p 66 above) that Burmese culture came through the Mon (Talaing) from the ancient Telinga (Kalinga), it is interesting to find the Burmese today calling the English hour a *nāri* and using the 3½ lb *bisā* weight, and the Tamils similarly using (Tamil forms) *nāḷi* and *visai*, for they are not used in Upper India.