

**BOOK V**  
**BURMA AND THAILAND**  
**CHAPTER I**  
**BEGINNINGS OF INDIAN COLONISATION**  
**IN BURMA**

**I. LOCAL TRADITIONS**

BURMA is the biggest country in Indo-China covering an area of 237,000 square miles, its greatest length being 1200 miles and greatest breadth about 500 miles. It has two natural divisions, Upper Burma and Lower Burma, the boundary between the two running along the 20th parallel of latitude.

Arakan, which forms the western part of Burma, may be regarded as a continuation of south-eastern Bengal. Beyond this a series of high mountain ranges,—the Arakan Yoma, Chin Hills, Naga Hills and Patkoi Hills,—shut off the country from India. But though constituting effective barriers and preventing easy access, they are not impassable, and from earliest historical times roads from Assam and Manipur led through them to Upper Burma. The same thing is true of the eastern hills that separate Burma from the southern provinces of China and the heart of Indo-China. There was always an overland route through Burma which joined Eastern India to China and Tonkin.

The rich delta and the valley of the Irawadi constitute the most important region in the country. This great river is navigable for nearly 800 miles from its mouth, and most of the important towns and harbours, in all ages, such as Bhamo, Ava, Mandalay, Prome, Rangoon and Bassein were situated on its banks or near its mouth. The Salween, though a longer river, is not navigable, but in its lower course its valley opens out into a wide fertile plain which contained some of the most important colonial settlements of the ancient Hindus who came by

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sea. The more important ports, besides Bassein and Rangoon on the Irawadi, are Akyab, the chief town of Arakan, Moulmein, at the mouth of the Salween, and Mergui and Tavoy on the coast of the Tenasserim Peninsula.

Burma, being the nearest to India, and directly accessible both by land and sea, naturally attracted Indian traders, merchants, missionaries and more ardent military spirits from a very early period. There is no doubt that by the first century A.D., and probably long before that, there were already large Hindu settlements both along the coastal region as well as in the interior of Burma. Unfortunately, the beginnings of Indian colonisation in Burma, as in the rest of Indo-China, are shrouded in darkness and are merely echoed in local legends. These legendary accounts of early Indian immigrants into Burma are many and varied in character, and have been recorded in local chronicles of which we possess quite a large number. The most widely accepted legends about Indian settlements in Burma may be summed up as follows:

“Abhirāja, a prince of the Śākya clan of Kapilavastu, marched with an army to Upper Burma, founded the city of Sankissa (Tagaung) on the Upper Irawadi, and set himself up as the king of the surrounding region. After his death the kingdom was divided in two parts. The elder son ruled over Arakan and the younger over Tagaung. Thirty-one generations of kings ruled over Tagaung when the kingdom was overthrown by tribes coming from the east. About this time, when Gautama was still alive, a second band of Kshatriyas from the Gangetic valley in India arrived in Upper Burma under Daza (Daśa or Dāsa) Raja. He occupied the old capital and married the widow of its last king. After sixteen generations of kings of the second dynasty had ruled, the kingdom of Tagaung was overrun by foreign invaders, who dethroned the king.

“The elder son of this king had a miraculous escape and founded a new kingdom with his capital near modern Prome. His son Duttabaung founded the great city of Thare Khetara (Śrīkshetra) near by and made it his capital. Eighteen kings ruled after him till 84 A.D., when a civil war broke out. Of the three constituent tribes, Pyu, Kanran and Mramma, the first two fought for supremacy for eleven years. The Pyus having gained the contest by an artifice, the Kanrans went off to Arakan. The Pyus themselves were shortly after defeated by the Mons or Talaings of the south, and after wandering in various regions founded the city of Pagan and settled there. After this the chronicles do not mention the separate tribes and the name Mramma, from which is derived the modern name Burma, appears as the national designation for all the peoples.”

The Mons or Talaings in the coastal districts of Lower Burma have their own traditions regarding the early history of

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their country. According to traditions current among the people of Pegu, Indian colonists from the lower courses of the rivers Krishna and Godavari had at a remote time crossed the sea and formed settlements in the delta of the Irawadi and on the adjoining coast. We are told that Buddha himself, who came to this country, was stoned and driven away. The first settlement from India among these savage tribes is said to have been made by the two sons of king Tissa, who reigned in the country of Karanaka and the city of Thubinna. These princes lived as hermits and brought up a child born of a dragon on the sea-shore. This child, when grown up, built the city of Thaton and reigned as Siharāja (Siṃharāja). A list of fifty-nine kings who reigned at Thaton (Sudhammatī) is given in the chronicles.

Some time about the sixth century A.D. (573 A.D.) two sons of the reigning king of Thaton, Thamala (śyāmala) and Vimāla, excluded from succession to the throne, collected people from the surrounding country, and moving north-west founded a new city called Bogo or Pegu, known also by the sacred or classic name Hamsāvati.

Śyāmala, king of Pegu, promised his younger brother Vimāla succession to the throne. But when Vimāla went to Taxila to study, a son was born to Śyāmala, and Vimāla, finding on his return that his brother had forgotten his promise, killed him and ascended the throne. Sixteen years later Hindu strangers came in ships to Pegu and surrounded it. Śyāmala's son came out from concealment, fought with the invaders, and defeated them, capturing seven ships and three thousand and five hundred Hindu strangers. He succeeded Vimāla as king. There were altogether 17 kings in this dynasty, the last of whom, Tissa, ascended the throne in 761 A.D. A legend describes how this heretic king was converted to Buddhism by the devotion of a lady who became his chief queen.

The deltaic country including Thaton and Pegu, is generally identified by local traditions with Suvarṇabhūmi in Indian Buddhist literature, and is regarded as the region converted by Asoka's missionaries, Sona and Uttara. Even the birth-place of the two merchants, Tapusa and Bhalluka, who, according to Buddhist canon, saw the Buddha and became his first converts, is located in the same country. They are said

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to have brought home eight hairs of Buddha's head and enshrined them in a pagoda since known as the Shwe Dagon, near Rangoon.

Leaving aside the chronological system, and the references to the Buddha and the Śākya clan, which are easily explained by the Buddhist proclivities of the chroniclers and the people at large, the broad facts underlying these legends are the settlement of the Indian colonists in Arakan and Burma, among the Pyus, Mramma and Karens, who were branches of the same race, and the Mons or Talaings in the south who belonged to a different race; the foundation of the Hindu kingdoms of Arakan, Tagaung, Śrīkshetra, Thaton and Pegu; and destruction of the Hinduised Pyu kingdom of Śrīkshetra by the Mons or Talaings of Pegu leading to the foundation of the new kingdom of Pagan where the Hinduised Mrammas or the Burmans came to occupy the supreme place.

The historical character of these broad facts rests on unimpeachable testimony. The literary and archaeological evidences prove beyond dispute that the entire culture and civilisation of Burma was of Indian origin, and although the Chinese were nearer neighbours of the Burmese, and more allied to them in blood and speech, they exercised no influence, worth speaking of, in this direction. This indirectly testifies to the immigration of Indians into Burma on a large scale which is positively proved by the memorials they have left behind, from remote antiquity, in various parts of the country. But although a mass of interesting facts about Hindu colonisation have come to light, sufficient materials are not yet available for writing a history of Burma, in the form of a consecutive narrative, till after the 11th century A.D. For the period before that we can only draw a general picture of Hindu colonisation, and it will be convenient to discuss it briefly before we deal separately with the different tribes, viz., the Mons, the Pyus, the Mrammas and the Arakanese, who came under the influence of the Hindu colonists and imbibed Hindu culture and civilisation.

### II. THE ANTIQUITY AND GENERAL NATURE OF HINDU CIVILISATION

It appears very probable on general grounds that the earliest colonial activities of the Indians were directed towards the

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neighbouring country of Burma; for its upper highlands could be reached from Eastern India by well-frequented routes over the Patkoi hills and Arakan Yoma, and its vast coastal region was easily accessible by sea from the whole of eastern sea-board of India. That such was indeed the case may be gathered from a careful study of the evidence available to us, in addition to the Burmese traditions referred to above.

First of all, we have the Ceylonese Buddhist tradition that Asoka's missionaries visited Suvarṇabhūmi, which has been identified with Lower Burma. Although the identification, and even the tradition itself, cannot be regarded as absolutely proved, the testimony of Buddhaghosha, the famous commentator of the Pāli canon, is highly important. This author, who lived in the beginning of the fifth century A.D., not only locates the scene of activities of Asoka's missionaries in Burma, but also regards, as natives of the same country, the two merchants who became the first lay disciples of the Buddha shortly after he attained Bodhi at Gayā. Improbable as these stories might seem, Buddhaghosha's writings prove that early in the fifth century A.D. people regarded the introduction of Hindu culture in Burma as reaching back to hoary antiquity, and even going back to the time of Gautama Buddha.

Howsoever that may be, the settlement of Indians in Burma long before the second century A.D. is proved by Sanskrit place-names mentioned by Ptolemy which have been located with a tolerable degree of certainty in Burma. The discovery of isolated Indian Brāhmī alphabets on stones in Burma also points to the same direction. According to the Chinese chronicles of the third century A.D., a kingdom, called Lin-yang, which has been located in central Burma, had an ardent Buddhist population of over 100,000 families including several thousand monks. On the whole we shall be justified, on these grounds alone, in dating the beginning of Hindu colonisation in Burma certainly before, and probably long before, the beginning of Christian era.

The archaeological explorations in Burma are of recent growth, and so far only a few important old sites have been systematically excavated. But even these few excavations have yielded very interesting evidence of Indian culture. The finds may be broadly classified as written records, images, votive

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tablets (mostly terra-cottas), and religious structures. The records, mainly engraved on stones and terra-cotta tablets, and occasionally on gold plates and funeral urns, are written in Sanskrit, Pāli, Mon and Pyu languages, and the alphabets used are either Indian, or derived from them. The use of both North and South Indian alphabets indicates that colonists from different parts of India settled in Burma. So far as we can judge from the form of alphabets, the records cover the period from about third or fourth to tenth century A.D.

These records prove that Indian languages and literature, both Sanskrit and Pāli, were cultivated, and Indian religions, both Brahmanical and Buddhist, were adopted by the people at a remote antiquity, certainly not later than the earlier centuries of the Christian era and probably long before it. The two main Brahmanical sects, Śaivism and Vaishṇavism, were known, though the latter seems to have been more in favour. As regards Buddhism, we can trace the existence of various sects of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, and even the Tantric form of a somewhat debased character. Religious structures, particularly *stūpas*, belonging to 5th-7th century A.D., images of various gods and goddesses, Brahmanical and Buddhist, of the Gupta style, extracts from Buddhist scriptures engraved on gold plates in Indian character of fifth or sixth century A.D., and a large number of terra-cotta votive tablets with bas-reliefs, representing scenes from Buddha's life, and inscribed with the well-known Buddhist formula "*Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā*" etc. in late Gupta alphabets prove the dominance of Indian culture, introduced by colonists emanating both from Northern and Southern India, during the first millennium of the Christian era. The archaeological finds also prove the existence of important centres of Indian culture at or near Prome, Pegu, Thaton and Pagan.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EARLY HINDU KINGDOMS IN BURMA

#### I. RAMAÑÑADEŚA

It appears from the legends and the archaeological evidence that the Hinduised Pyus and Mons in Lower Burma formed the most powerful political units in Burma during the first millennium of the Christian era. This is evidently due to the fact that Indian colonists who went by sea to Lower Burma were far larger in number than those who proceeded by difficult land-routes to Upper Burma. The racial characteristics of the original tribes with whom they came into contact also probably partially account for the difference. In any case, the Hinduised Mons seem to have been the most advanced in culture and civilisation, and at the beginning, also politically the most powerful.

The Mons were also known as Talaings. The origin of this name has been a matter of dispute. The most reasonable view seems to be that the name originally denoted the Indian colonists who came from Telingana in India (the Telugu-speaking region on the coast of Bay of Bengal). It is probable that this name, originally confined to Indian colonists, or a section of them, was ultimately used to denote the whole people. It must be remembered, however, that the Mons themselves never used this term as a national name or designation. Even if we accept this explanation of the name Talaing we must not suppose that the Indian colonists, who settled in the deltaic regions of Burma, all came from the Kalinga or Andhra country. Apart from general considerations and evidence of culture and archaeology, this is disproved even by the names of localities.

According to the Kalyani Inscriptions, dated 1476 A.D., the capital of the kingdom, when Asoka's missionaries visited it, was Golamattikanagara or Golanagara (modern Ayetthema, 20 miles

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north of Thaton) on the sea-coast. The city, we are told, was so named because "it contains many mud and wattle houses resembling those of the Gola people." This Gola has been identified by scholars with Gauḍa, and it has been pointed out that this name gradually became the Mon and Burmese appellations for all foreigners from the west. Thus the people of Gauḍa or Bengal must be supposed to have played a considerable part in the Hindu colonisation of Lower Burma, a conclusion fully in keeping with the geographical position of Bengal, and the importance of its sea-ports, specially Tāmralipta, during the first millennium of the Christian era.

Classical Pali names are given to certain cities and localities. Thus we find Sudhamma (or °vatī) and Haṁsāvatī as well-known names of Thaton and Pegu. Thaton is really a corrupted form of Sudhāmma.

The name Utkaladeśa, denoting the Hindu colonial settlements from Rangoon to Pegu, is of special interest. Every reader of the Buddhist Pali canon knows the story of the two merchants, Tapussa and Bhalluka, who met the Buddha at the end of the seventh week after his enlightenment, offered him food and became his first lay devotees. It is said that the Buddha gave the merchants a few hairs of his head and these were deposited as relics in a shrine which they erected in their native city. Now, the Pali canon mentions Utkala as the home of the merchants. This presumably refers to the well-known coastal region now called Orissa, but the Buddhists in Lower Burma regard the merchants as natives of Utkaladeśa in Burma, and identifies the famous Shwe Dagon Pagoda near Rangoon as the shrine containing the hairs of Buddha. It is possible that the name Utkala was originally applied to a region in the delta in Lower Burma by the colonists from Orissa coast, and the resemblance of the name led to the localisation of the story of Tapussa and Bhalluka in this country. It is less probable, as has been suggested, that the name Utkaladeśa was applied to this region in Burma, in order to localise the story there. The names of many other Hindu settlements in Lower Burma are known from inscriptions and literature. Thus we have Rāmāvatī and Asitāñjana-nagara (near Rangoon), Kusima-nagara or °maṇḍala (Bassein), Rāmapura (Moulmein) and Muttima-maṇḍala (Martaban).



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The Hinduised Mon settlements in Lower Burma were known collectively as Ramañña-desa. It was evidently so called after the racial name Ramen, found in an eleventh century inscription, from which, through the medieval form 'Rman,' is derived the modern word 'Mon' as the designation of the people.

Except the legendary accounts referred to above, we possess no information about the history of the Mons till we come to the seventh century A.D. The names of the kingdoms beyond the frontiers of Samatāṭa (Lower Bengal) which we find in Hiuen Tsang's accounts supply valuable information regarding the political geography of Burma. These are (1) Shih-li-cha-ta-lo near the sea, north-east of Samatāṭa; (2) Ka-mo-lang-ka to the south-east of the preceding; (3) To-lo-po-ti further to the east; (4) I-shang-na-pu-la, further east; (5) Mo-ha-chen-po or Lin-yi, further east; and (6) Yen-mo-na-chou, south-west of the preceding. I-tsing also refers the countries 1-3 and 5, the second kingdom being called Lankasu.

The identification of these localities has given rise to a great deal of controversy into which we need not enter. There can be hardly any reasonable doubt that Nos. 4 and 5 refer, respectively, to Kambuja, known as *Isānāpura*, and *Champā*. There is equally little doubt that No. 3 refers to the kingdom of *Dvāravatī* on the lower Menam Valley. The identification of No. 1 with *Śrīkshetra* or Old Prome in Burma is the most reasonable view. It is true that the direction, north-east of Samatāṭa, does not apply, but on the other hand, this direction cannot lead to any locality near the sea. Besides, I-tsing places *Śrīkshetra* close to the sea-coast and south of the range of hills between Tibet and China. If we assume these identifications to be true, No. 2 can only refer to the Mon country in Lower Burma and its identification with Tenasserim appears very reasonable. Although the exact name of the Mon kingdom cannot be restored, Hiuen Tsang's account proves the existence, side by side, of the Pyu kingdom round Prome and the Mon kingdom to its south-east. It also shows that these kingdoms were well-known in India, at least in East India, and there was intercourse between the two. It may be noted here that the *Kaṭhāsaritsagara* refers to a kingdom called *Kalasapura*, which

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is also referred to in Chinese history and may be placed to the south-east of Prome at the mouth of the Sittang river.

There are good reasons to believe that the kingdom of Dvāravatī mentioned by Hiuen Tsang, in the valley of the Menam, was also a Mon kingdom. This kingdom comprised the lower valley of the Menam river, and its capital, Dvāravatī, was probably located near Nakon Pathom, about 40 miles to the west of Bangkok. It was divided into a number of principalities, the most important one having its capital at Lavapurī (modern Lopburi). Several Mon Inscriptions, in archaic character, probably belonging to the seventh or eighth century A.D., and the formula 'ye dhammā', etc. in Pali, found in these two cities, indicate that the people were Mon and they followed Hīnayāna Buddhism. The Pali chronicles *Chāmadevīvaṃsa* and the *Jinakālamālinī* fully support the same view. These two annals of the kingdom of Haripuñjaya (modern Lamphun and Chiang Mai in N. Siam), based on vernacular local texts, were written, respectively, at the beginning of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century A.D., and give an interesting account of the spread of Buddhism in this region from the earliest time. Leaving aside the legendary accounts of the Buddha and his immediate followers, the historical account of the Medieval age, preserved in them, is on the whole fairly reliable, as is proved by inscriptions and other evidence. According to these chronicles, the *ṛishi* (ascetic) Vāsudeva founded the town of Haripuñjaya in 661 A.D. Two years later, on his invitation, Chāmadevī, daughter of the king of Lavanagara or Lavapurī and a spouse, probably a widow, of the king of Ramañña-nagara, came from her father's capital with a large number of followers and Buddhist teachers, and was placed on the throne of Haripuñjaya (modern Lamphun). Her descendants ruled over the kingdom and Buddhism was spread over the surrounding country. The people of this kingdom fled during an epidemic to Lower Burma, whose people, we are told, spoke the same language.

The dates, as recorded in the chronicles, cannot be implicitly accepted, and checked by those derived from inscriptions, appear to be about a century too early. The Mon settlement at Haripuñjaya may therefore be placed about the eighth century A.D.

We may thus reasonably infer that not only was Dvāravatī

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a Hinduised Mon kingdom in the sixth or seventh century A.D., but that from this centre the Hinduised Mons spread their power and influence in the more inaccessible regions in North Siam and West Laos. In any case there is no doubt that by the eighth century A.D. the Hindu colonists in the Mon country in Lower Burma had spread their power along the coast right up to the valley of the Menam river. The history of the kingdoms founded by them has been preserved in local chronicles, written in vernaculars, as well as in Pali texts. They give us a long list of royal names (mostly in Indian form), and describe their fight with the Mlechchhas (the aborigines) and pious foundations of Buddhist monasteries.. Archaeological discoveries fully confirm their general picture of the Hindu culture and civilisation established in these regions.

The power and prestige which the Mons had established in Lower Burma and North Siam in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. lend support to the statement in the Burmese chronicles that they defeated the Pyus of Śrīkshetra (old Prome) and extended their authority over this region. But we possess no detailed account of their history.

## II. ŚRIKSHETRA

To the north of the Mons in Lower Burma the Hinduised Pyus established a kingdom with Śrīkshetra (modern Hmawza, near Prome) as the capital. According to the legends quoted above, this kingdom was founded by a member of the Hindu or Hinduised royal dynasty of Tagaung on the Irawadi in Upper Burma. There is no inherent improbability in the assumption that the Indian colonists who went by land-route to Upper Burma from East India, through Manipur, gradually spread southwards along the Irawadi. But in view of the fact that Prome was much nearer the sea in those days than at present, arrival of fresh Indian colonists by sea, or by land through Arakan, cannot be altogether discounted, and even appears quite probable. This view gathers further strength from the undisguised attempt in the Burmese chronicles to regard the later Burmese kingdom proper of Pagan as a mere continuation of the kingdom of Prome. Philological evidence, however, proves that the Pyus who undoubtedly dominated in Śrīkshetra

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or Prome, were very distantly related to the Mrammas or Burmese proper who ruled over the kingdom of Pagan. On the whole it would be much safer to take the Pyu as a distinct political unit, and regard the kingdom of Śrīkshetra as a separate Hindu colony, rather than a mere offshoot of that of Upper Burma. There is no doubt that the Hinduised Pyus were much more advanced in culture than the Mrammas, for the former possessed a script of their own from an early period whereas the latter do not seem to have any knowledge of writing before the eleventh century A.D. A large number of fragmentary Buddhist texts have been found in the region round Prome. Reference may be made to the two gold plates found at Maunggun which contain quotations from Buddhist scriptures inscribed in characters which were in vogue in the first century A.D. Twenty gold-leaves, containing passages from the Buddhist Pali canon, and three inscriptions on terra-cotta, containing a fragment of Vibhaṅga, have been found at Moza and its neighbourhood. Although the inscribed records of the Pyus, discovered so far, do not enable us to reconstruct even an outline of their political history, they furnish the names of certain kings and throw light upon their culture and civilisation. The records were all found at or near Hmawza (old Prome), the ancient Pyu capital, and we may notice a few of them.

(1) An inscription, engraved on the pedestal of a Buddha image, composed in beautiful Sanskrit verses, interspersed with Pyu renderings of Sanskrit Text. The script and the style of the image both resemble those of Eastern India of about the seventh century A.D. It appears from the record that the image of Buddha was set up by king Jayachandravarman at the instance of his *guru* (religious preceptor) for maintaining peace and goodwill between the king and his younger brother Harivikrama. We are further told that king Jayachandra built two cities side by side.

(2) Seven inscriptions on five funeral urns, found at Payagi Pagoda, contain the names of three successive kings, Sūryavikrama, Harivikrama, and Siha(Siṃha)vikrama. If the dates of these inscriptions are referred to the Burmese era of 638 A.D., the death of these kings falls, respectively, in 688, 695 and 718 A.D., and there is also an earlier date, 673 A.D. But this is by no means certain. The inscriptions are written in Pyu language and archaic South-Indian alphabets which appear to belong to a much earlier period.

(3) The Pyu inscription on a *stūpa* gives the names or titles of donors as Śrī Prabhavarma and Śrī Prabhudevi, and most probably these are the names of a king and his queen.

The antiquity and the importance of the Pyus is proved

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by the fact that the earliest notices in Chinese texts regarding Burma refer to the people as P'iao, which undoubtedly is the same as Pyu. These notices go back to the third century A.D., and show that the Pyus then occupied the valley of the Irawadi. The continued existence of the Pyus is confirmed by references in Chinese texts between the third and the seventh century A.D. The account of Hiuen Tsang, referred to above, shows that the Hinduised Pyu kingdom of Śrīkshetra was the first great Hindu kingdom beyond the frontier of East India. The several inscriptions, noted above, probably also belong to the same period, i.e., 7th century A.D.

The rise of the powerful Thai kingdom of Nan-chao in Yunnan proved a source of great danger to the Pyus. The Thais of Nan-chao seem to have dominated upper Burma in the 8th and 9th centuries. Ko-lo-fong, the king of Nan-chao, inflicted a defeat upon the Chinese in 754 A.D., and the internal dissensions of the Chinese empire, following shortly after, freed him from any danger in that quarter. He, therefore, turned his attention to the west and invaded the Pyu kingdom. The Pyu-Nan-chao frontier corresponded with the present Sino-Burman frontier in the neighbourhood of Bhamo. Some time between 757 and 768 A.D. Ko-lo-fong conquered the upper Irawadi Valley and the Pyu king seems to have submitted to his powerful neighbour. When I-meu-sin, the grandson of Ko-lo-fong, submitted to China towards the close of the eighth century and sent embassies to the Imperial court, the Pyu king also imitated his example. In 802 A.D., he sent an embassy led by his brother (or son) Sunandana, governor of the city of Śrī (perhaps Bhamo or Tagaung), and sent the musicians of his court as present to the Chinese emperor. Another embassy was sent in 807 A.D. It is presumably from these embassies that the Chinese derived the information about the country which we find recorded in Chinese chronicles. According to the Chinese account the Pyu kingdom was 500 miles from east to west and 700 or 800 miles from north to south. It adjoined to Kambuja on the east and the sea on the south. On its south-west (probably meaning south-east) was Dvāravatī, and on its west Eastern India. It extended up to Nan-chao on the north. The Pyus claimed to have 18 subject kingdoms, mostly to the south of Burma, but as the list includes Palembang, Java, Śrāvastī, etc. it seems to

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be largely an empty boast. Lists of 8 or 9 garrison towns and of the 32 most important among the 298 tribes or settlements, are also given.

The Old History of the Tang Dynasty contains an account of the Pyu kingdom from which the following extracts are quoted:—

"The king's name is Mahārāja. His chief minister is Mahāsena. The city-wall is faced with glazed bricks; it is 27 miles in circumference. The banks of the moat, too, are faced with brick. Within the walls the inhabitants number several thousands of families. There are over a hundred Buddhist monasteries with courts and rooms all decked with gold and silver. It is their custom to love life and hate killing. Their laws contain no mention of punishment nor any kind of chains or fetters. When they come to the age of seven, both boys and girls crop their hair and stop in a monastery where they take refuge in the Sangha. On reaching the age of twenty, if they have not awakened to the principles of Buddha they let their hair grow again and become ordinary townfolk. Their clothes are all made of silk-cotton cloth (?). They do not wear silk, because they say it comes from silk-worms and involves injury to life."

The *Man-Shu*, another Chinese chronicle, adds that the Pyu custom is "to esteem modesty and decency. Their disposition is peaceful and good. They are men of few words. There are many fortune-tellers and astrologers."

The new history of the Tang Dynasty contains a long passage about the Pyus from which the following extracts are quoted:—

There are twelve gates with pagodas at the four corners: the people all live within. They make their tiles of lead and tin, and their timber of lychee. They are acquainted with astronomy and delight in Buddha's law. There is a great white image, 100 ft. high ("opposite the gate of the palace," adds the *Man-Shu*). Their money is of silver and gold (*Man-Shu* says only of silver) shaped like the half-moon. They traffic with their neighbouring tribes in glazed ware and earthen jars, among other things. The married women wear their hair piled in coils on the top of the head and ornamented with silver and strings of pearls. They wear blue skirts of silk-cotton (?) and throw about them pieces of guaze silk. When out for a walk, they hold a fan. Those of high rank have five or six attendants at their side, all holding fans. They have 22 musical instruments, made of 8 different substances—of metal, 2; of shell, 1; of string, 7; of bamboo, 2; of gourd, 2; of leather, 2; of ivory, 1; and of horn, 2. (detailed description follows of these musical instruments and the dress of the musicians and dancers). The twelve songs they sang at the Chinese Court were on Buddhist themes."

The musical instruments appear to be mostly those with which we are familiar in India. The number and variety of

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instruments and the excellence of the musical performance which produced great impression on the Chinese court indicate that the Hinduised Pyus had attained to a high degree of civilisation. This is fully borne out by the other facts that we know about them, from their inscriptions, artistic remains, and the manner and customs described by the Chinese.

How and when this glorious Pyu civilisation came to an end is not known with certainty. In 832 A.D. the king of Nan-chao invaded the Pyu kingdom. According to *Man-Shu* the invaders "plundered the Pyu capital, took more than 3000 persons as prisoners and banished them into servitude at Yunnanfu," Nan-chao's eastern capital. Some scholars are of opinion that this brought about the sudden end of the Pyu civilisation. But Pelliot points out that the Pyu kingdom continued after that and sent an embassy to China in 862 A.D.

It would appear from the Chinese accounts that the Pyu kingdom in the ninth century A.D. included a large part, if not the whole, of Upper and Central Burma. But we know very little of this kingdom after the 9th century. It is probable that they were worsted in a fight with the Mons of the south and removed their capital higher up on the Irawadi, probably at Pagan.

When the Mrammas (Burmans) came into prominence at Pagan by the middle of the 11th century A.D. they borrowed the religion and script of the Mons. This seems to confirm the legends that the Pyu dynasty was conquered by the Mons, and possibly the latter incorporated the southern part of the Pyu kingdom, including Prome, within their kingdom. Pressed by the Mons from the south and the Mrammas from the north the Pyus gradually lost all political power, and were ultimately merged into their powerful neighbours. This alone satisfactorily explains the complete disappearance of the Pyus from the subsequent history of Burma.

### III. TĀMRAPĀṬṬĀNA AND VAIŚĀLI (ARAKAN)

Arakan extends for nearly 350 miles along the shore of Bay of Bengal and is shut off by a mountain range—the Arakan Yoma—from Burma. Its northern part, which may be regarded as almost a continuation of E. Bengal, is intersected by chains

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of hills, and watered by the two rivers, the Myu and the Kaladan. Its southern part, specially the Sandoway district, had, generally speaking, a separate history of its own.

Arakan, like Burma, possesses traditions of early colonisation by Indian settlers, and some of the Burmese chronicles represent the royal family of Arakan as elder branch of the old Indian royal family of Tagaung in Upper Burma. The chronicles also refer to inroads into Arakan by the Kanran, the Pyus, Shans and other Burmese tribes. Whatever may be the amount of truth in these traditions, there is no doubt that the Arakanese were connected, by blood and language, to the Burmese.

The geographical position of Arakan makes it likely that it received Indian colonies and Indian culture and civilisation from a remote antiquity, a period certainly anterior to that of the Indian colonisation in Burma, and probably centuries before the Christian Era. But we have no reliable record of this early period of its history.

According to the chronicles of Arakan the first Indian royal dynasty was founded by the son of a king of Varanasi, who fixed his capital in a city called Rāmāvati. The second royal dynasty was founded by a Brāhmaṇa, in Arakan district, who had married a daughter of the earlier royal family. A female descendant, again, of this family became the progenitor of the third royal family ruling at Dhanyavatī which became the classical name of the whole country. A Kshatriya chief of Tagaung in Upper Burma came to Arakan, after leaving the ancestral kingdom to his younger brother, married the daughter of this royal family and founded the fourth royal family which reigned, first on the top of the hill called Kyauk-panduang and then in the city of Dhanyavatī, now known as Rakhaingmyu. In A.D. 146, during the reign of a king called Chandra-Sūrya, was cast the famous Buddha image called Mahāmuni which has been regarded as the tutelary deity of Arakan throughout the historic period.

In the eighth century A.D. Vesali (Vaiśālī) was founded as the new capital. According to the chronicles it was built in 789 A.D. by Maha-tain Chandra who had abandoned the previous capital Dhanyavatī where some revolution or war had taken place during his father Sūryaketu's reign. Sūryaketu, we are told, was the fifty-third king in lineal descent from the Tagaung



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prince who founded the fourth royal family in Arakan. The Vesali dynasty came to an end during the closing years of the tenth century when the city was abandoned. This episode is connected in local legends with Shwe-daung, the Golden Hillock, a large monument, of which the ruins still exist near the village Vethali, which represents the site occupied by the palace of the old capital Vesali. King Chula-tain Chandra, so runs the legend, went about his kingdom with a retinue of unwise and dissolute companions and never came back. This happened at about 957 A.D. Some time later, Amratu, chief of the Mron tribe living in the hills of Arakan, seized the throne of Vesali by treachery and married the late king's queen Chandadevi. Angry at the conduct of this Mron chief, the Pyu king invaded Arakan with 90,000 men. Amratu's nephew, who later became king of Vesali, enticed the Pyu king to a spot not far from where the Shwe-daung stands, and defeated him. 80,000 Pyu were massacred and the Pyu king fled with the rest of his army. The place where the property—gold, jewels *etc.*—of the Pyu king and his army was buried is marked by Shwe-daung. This happened about 964 A.D. or somewhat later. The abandonment of Vesali took place about 1018 A.D.

These legends, like those of Burma, seem to contain a kernel of truth. The discovery of a Buddha image, with inscriptions in Gupta character, proves the introduction of Buddhism and probably also the establishment of Indian settlements in the early centuries of the Christian era. Although we have no record of the early history, the existence of kings with names ending in Chandra, is definitely proved by coins and inscriptions. A large number of coins have been discovered in various parts of Arakan, issued by kings Dharmachandra, Prīichandra, Dharmavijaya, Nīichandra and Vīrachandra. The inscriptions of the last two kings have been found at Vesali, and they probably ruled in the first half of the sixth century A.D.

The most important historical record is an inscription engraved on a pillar which is now in Shitthaung temple at Mrohaung. It is a *praśasti* (eulogy) of king Ānandachandra belonging to a family called *dev-āṇḍaj-ānvaya* or *Śrī-Dharmarāj-āṇḍaja-vamśa*, which may be interpreted as a family claiming descent from the celestial bird Garuḍa. The inscription gives,

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in three sections, the names of kings of this dynasty with their regnal years. The first section, which gives a list of kings who together ruled for more than a thousand years, is mythical. The second gives a list of 13 kings who ruled for 230 years. The third gives the names of eight predecessors of Ānandachandra, ruling for a total period of 119 years. These twenty-one kings may be assigned to the period from A.D. 370 to 720.

The inscription was issued in the reign of Ānandachandra who is said to have erected many *vihāras* and Buddhist temples, and set up beautiful images of copper. He gave every day linen cloth to the monks coming from different parts of the country and constructed various dwellings and roads in different parts for the use of the Ārya-saṅgha. He also granted land with servants to fifty Brāhmaṇas.

As Ānandachandra is described as the king of Tāmrapaṭṭana, that must be regarded as the name of Arakan. The chronicles name the capital city as Vesali (Vaiśālī), presumably named after the famous city of that name in North Bihar. Ruins of this city still exist in and near a village called Vethali (Vesali), 8 miles to the north-west of Brohaung. Remnants of an old moat and the surrounding walls of the old palace have been traced. Other remains of both buildings and sculptures, scattered through the surrounding jungle, now the haunts of tigers and leopards, indicate the once wide extent of the ancient city and bear unmistakable signs of Gupta influence. In addition to the two inscriptions mentioned above, a bronze bell with a short Sanskrit inscription of about the sixth century A.D. engraved on it and an inscription probably of the 7th or 8th century A.D., have been found in Vesali. It is possible that there were two branches of the royal family, if not two separate royal families, of kings bearing names ending in Chandra. The fact that Ānandachandra was probably a Buddhist, while the coins bear Śaiva and Vaishṇava symbols, lends some support to this theory. But these questions, as well as the relationship, if any, of these kings with those of the Buddhist Chandra family, ruling in South-East Bengal, somewhat later, cannot be settled at present. It is probable, however, that the Chandra kings represent fresh batches of colonists from Bengal.

According to the chronicles, the Shans invaded Arakan in

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the tenth century A.D., and occupied it for eighteen years. This probably refers to the invasion of the Pyus, as we have no evidence of the advance of the Shans so far west about this period, or it may be due to confusion with the later Shan invasions.

The sculptures discovered so far in Arakan are predominantly Buddhist, but, as noted above, there are Śaiva and Vaishṇava symbols on the coins. It is probable that the kings and people were mainly Buddhist, though Brahmanical religion was also favoured. This also follows from the inscription of king Ānandachandra, who was evidently a Buddhist, but also granted lands to fifty Brāhmaṇas.

As we shall see later, North Arakan was conquered by the Burmese king Aniruddha, though the southern part of the country remained an independent kingdom. But the Burmese supremacy over North Arakan was, generally speaking, more nominal than real, and it was ruled over by its hereditary kings. The Burmese suzerainty ceased with the fall of Pagan, though once in the fourteenth century the people asked the Ava court to nominate a king, and there were occasional raids both by the Burmese and the Talaings. In 1404 the king of Arakan, driven by the Burmese, fled to Bengal, and with the help of the Muslim ruler of Gaur, regained his kingdom in 1430. He founded a new capital at the city of Mrohaung. From this time the Buddhist kings of Arakan added Muhammadan designations to their names.

Mrohaung is situated in the rocky plain forming the watershed between the Lemro (Anjanadi) and the Kaladan rivers. There was a great deal of architectural activity in Mrohaung during the 15th and 16th centuries A.D., and the best temples and sculptures of Arakan, all Buddhist and made of stone, belong to these two centuries. Mrohaung remained the capital up to 1785 when Arakan was conquered by Burma and became a province of this kingdom.

## IV. THE RISE OF ARIMARDANAPURA

Popular philology derives the tribal name Burman from the Sanskrit word Brahma, invested with a sacred character. It seems to be more probable, however, that Mramma (*var.*

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Myamma) was the original ethnic appellation of a branch of the Tibeto-Dravidian tribe who settled in Burma and ultimately gave its name to the whole country and its peoples of diverse origin. It has been suggested that the name of the tribe was derived from the Brahmaputra river, on whose banks it lived for a long time.

The Burmese chronicles refer to the Mrammas and the Pyus as branches of the same race, but this may be doubted. The affinity, if there were any, must be of a remote character. The Mrammas were a rude unlettered people, without any knowledge of writing, even when the Hinduised Pyu kingdom and civilisation flourished at Śrīkshetra (near Prome), and there is nothing to indicate that they attained to any considerable political power long before the 11th century A.D. Far from the Pyus and the Mrammas coalescing to give birth to the united Burmans, as the chronicles would have us believe, the Mrammas seem to have borrowed the essential elements of civilisation, such as religion, language and literature from the alien Mons conquered by them, and not from the Pyus. This seems to indicate that the Mrammas had little in common with the Hinduised Pyus, and that the civilisation of the latter was a spent up force before the 11th century A.D. when the Mrammas gained political ascendancy in the territories once occupied by them.

In the light of what we know about the Pyus the legendary account of the early Hinduised kingdom in Tagaung should be held as applicable to the Pyu rather than to the Mramma.

How and when the Mrammas first attained political importance we do not know. It is probable that when the rule of the Pyus in Upper Burma was weakened by the raids of Nanchao, the Mrammas found their opportunity to establish independent authority. Later, when the Pyus were worsted in their fights with their southern neighbours, the Mons, and were forced to retire northwards, the Mrammas gradually acquired a supreme position. According to the legendary account the Pyus, driven from Śrīkshetra (Prome), founded a new capital at Pagan further up the Irawadi river. This may be true, but there is no doubt that Pagan soon became the centre of the Mramma power, and the capital of a mighty Mramma kingdom.

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It is very likely that the Mrammas poured in Burma in large number in the ninth or tenth century A.D., and their first important settlement in the plains was in the Kyaukse district. The Burmese national era, which starts from 638 A.D., is attributed by the chronicles to a chief of Pagan, and this, if true, might be regarded as marking the foundation of the Mramma power in that city. But the origin of the era is involved in obscurity, and is a matter of keen dispute among scholars. The latest view regards it as a Pyu era inaugurated by the Vikrama dynasty ruling at Prome referred to above.

According to some chronicles the city of Pagan was founded by king Pyaṅpya in 849 A.D. Its classical name was Arimardanapura. The kingdom was called Tāṃbradipa, and the region, Tattadeśa. The Ari heretics are said to have flourished in the neighbourhood about the tenth century A.D. The chronicles refer to many kings of Pagan before the accession of Anawratha, but only one, Saw Rahan, is mentioned in inscription. He built a Buddhist Sīmā (Ordination Hall) at Mt. Turan, about 8 miles east of Pagan.

According to Burmese legends a king of Pagan, named Theinhke (Simha), while roaming in the forest, felt hungry and ate a cucumber in a farmer's field. For this offence, the farmer struck him dead, and, strange to say, became himself king through the favour of the widowed queen. The farmer king, Saw Rahan, was overthrown by Kyaunghpyu. The latter was forced to take to monastic life with his son Anawratha, by two sons of Saw Rahan who ruled one after another. The younger of this was challenged to a single fight by Anawratha and killed. Thereupon Anawratha ascended his father's throne.

This legend, which is typical of the rest, can hardly be accepted as true without further evidence, but seems to indicate that the kingdom of Pagan was neither powerful nor very extensive.

With the accession of Anawratha we enter upon a period in the history of the Mrammas, where the inscriptions enable us to check the accounts of the late Burmese chronicles, and supply reliable historical information. They show that the dates recorded in the chronicles are mostly wrong, though not by a very wide margin, and that the names borne by the kings were really Indian, though presented in the chronicles in a

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Burmese form, whose Indian original is not always easy to discover. Thus according to Burmese chronicles Anawratha became king in A.D. 1010. But from inscriptions we know that the king's name was really Aniruddha, and he ascended the throne in A.D. 1044. In dealing with the history of Burma, we should, therefore, use the Indian names and correct the dates of kings from inscriptions, whenever it is possible to do so. Further, we may henceforth use the modern name Burman to denote the Mrammas, who seem to have absorbed the Pyus, as we can no longer trace their separate existence as political or racial unit, except in stray references to individuals or small groups still bearing the old name. It may be added also that most of the localities in Burma had an Indian name along with a local one. Pagan, as noted above, was called Arimardanapura, and was also known by other names of Sanskritic origin. These Indian names will be indicated whenever possible.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ARIMARDANPURA EMPIRE

#### I. KING ANIRUDDHA, THE GREAT

THE reign of Aniruddha was a turning point in the history of the Burmans. He raised the small principality of Pagan into an extensive kingdom, including the greater part of modern Burma, and introduced elements of higher culture and civilisation among a rude unlettered people.

At the time when he ascended the throne, a Buddhist sect, called the Ari, dominated the religious and social life of the people of Upper Burma. The practices of the Aris were of debased Tantric character, and to this they added a nāga-cult in which Buddha and his *śaktis* played a prominent part. The Aris kept long hair and beards, wore black dresses, drank heavily, practised riding and boxing, fought battles, and pretended to a knowledge of charm and magic. They professed Mahāyāna Buddhism in name, but seem to have been greatly influenced by its Tibetan form. The village of Thamahti, a few miles south-east of Pagan, was the stronghold of 30 Ari lords and their 60,000 pupils and their teachings and authority were accepted by the king and the people.

The chronicles describe how king Aniruddha was converted to the pure Theravāda form of Buddhism by a Brāhmaṇa monk of Thaton named Arahan, known as Dharmadarśī. Encouraged by the sympathy of the king, Arahan sent for more monks from the Mon country in the south and soon they began a crusade against the powerful sect of the Aris. The efforts of Aniruddha and Arahan were successful. The power of the Aris was broken; many of them retired to Shan States in the east, and others took to peaceful life of cultivators. Thus a great religious reform was brought about by the king. Necessity

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was now felt of sacred books of the new religion, without which it could not make further progress, or be placed on a solid foundation. Arahan urged the king to secure complete copies of Buddhist Tripitaka from the Mon kingdom of Thaton. The king accordingly sent envoys to the Mon king. The latter, however, not only refused the sacred books, but insulted the royal messengers. Aniruddha now decided to carry by force what he could not secure by peaceful means. He marched with an army and besieged Thaton. After 3 months' siege Thaton capitulated, probably in 1057 A.D. Aniruddha returned in triumph to Pagan with the royal captive Manuha, bound in golden chains, and accompanied by all the monks and a large number of prisoners including artisans and craftsmen. But the most priceless treasure in the eye of the king was the Buddhist scriptures and sacred relics which were carried by thirty-two white elephants of the vanquished king. On his way king Aniruddha razed the walls of the ancient Pyu capital Śrīkshetra (near Prome) and carried away the relics enshrined in its pagodas for many centuries. Practically the whole of the Delta, except Pegu, was incorporated into his dominions.

Aniruddha next led an expedition against North Arakan and defeated its king. The Shan chief of the east also acknowledged his suzerainty. Aniruddha is also credited with conquests outside the frontier of Burma. He is said to have visited "the Indian land of Bengal." Probably in course of his expedition against Arakan he advanced within the Chittagong district, but there is nothing to show that he attained any conspicuous success. The Burmese chronicles, however, represent his kingdom as bounded by Paṭṭikera, a principality in the district of Tippera. To the east he led his victorious army against Burma's old enemy, the Thais of Nan-chao. He is said to have besieged the capital Tali, but ultimately a peace was concluded and the two chiefs exchanged presents. On his return journey he passed through the Shan States, received the homage of their chiefs, and married the daughter of one of them. When the Chief of Chieng-Mai in North Siam attacked Pegu, Aniruddha sent a detachment of picked Indians who drove away the invader.

Aniruddha carried out great irrigation works, which enriched the Kyaukse region and made it the granary of Burma. He



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married an Indian princess, Pañchakalyāṇī of Vesali (Vaiśālī), and the chronicles give a long account of her journey to Burma and some romantic episodes in that connection.

Aniruddha's victories had far-reaching results. They placed nearly the whole of Burma, excluding Tenasserim, under his authority, and brought about a political union of the country, probably for the first time in its history. Far more important was the complete transformation of Burmese culture under the influence of the Mons. The Burmese adopted their religion, script and sacred literature, and while the Mon kingdom was destroyed, the Mon culture commenced a new career in Pagan. Never before was a conquering power so completely captivated by the vanquished. Even the classical example of Rome and Greece was far surpassed. Henceforth the kings of Pagan became great champions of the Hīnayāna form of Buddhism hitherto current in Lower Burma, and it has flourished over the whole country down to our own time.

Aniruddha was fired by the zeal of a new convert. He built numerous pagodas or temples and monasteries, and his example was followed by his successors. There is one interesting feature which characterises the religious faith of the great king. He had the well-known Buddhist formula '*ye dharmā*' etc. engraved on votive tablets, but in the concluding portion, instead of "so said the great Śramaṇa *i.e.* Buddha," we find "so said Aniruddha-deva". This is a striking example of the zeal of a new convert carried to excess.

Aniruddha's name and fame spread far and wide, and he came to be recognised as the Defender of Buddhist Faith. When Ceylon was invaded by the Cholas, its king Vijayavāhu I sent ships asking Aniruddha to come to his aid. When the invaders were driven out without the help of the Burmese king, the king of Ceylon, in order to repair the ravages done by the enemy, requested Aniruddha to send him monks and scriptures. Aniruddha complied with it, and asked, in return, for the tooth of Buddha which was enshrined as a priceless relic in Ceylon. The Ceylonese king sent him a duplicate. When the ship carrying the jewelled casket, containing the relic, reached the Irawadi, below Pagan, a mighty procession went out to receive it. King Aniruddha himself waded into the river up to the neck, placed the casket on his head, and carried it in procession

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to the shrine he had built for it,—the famous Shwezigon Pagoda which still attracts worshippers from all over Burma.

### II. KYANZITTHA

Aniruddha died in 1077 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Sawlu (Śalya?). His reign was an inglorious one. The Mons of Pegu revolted, and marched up to Pagan. The king fell into their hands and was executed in 1084 A.D.

Kyanzittha, the other son of Aniruddha, born of the Indian Princess of Vesali, who had fled to the north, now marched against the rebels and defeated them. He was formally crowned, probably in 1086 A.D., and assumed the title Śrī-Tribhuva-nāditya-dharmarāja. His early romantic career is described in great details in the chronicles, but need not be repeated here. He built a new palace and many pagodas. He desired to marry his daughter to the prince of Paṭṭikera, but the minister objected to it. The prince's love for the daughter of Kyanzittha, ending in suicide, forms the theme of Burmese poems and dramas, which are acted on the stage even now.

During Kyanzittha's reign, Burma was in intimate touch with India. Many Buddhists and Vaishṇavas went from India and settled in his kingdom. It is said that the king fed eight Indian monks with his own hands for three months, and hearing from them the description of Indian temples, designed and built the famous temple of Ānanda, the master-piece of Burman architecture. Whatever we might think of this story, there is no doubt that the Ānanda temple was designed on Indian models. A modern European author writes:

"Still in daily use as a house of prayer, the Ānanda, with its dazzling garb of white and its gilt spire glittering in the morning sun, is to-day one of the wonders of Pagan. Inside the temple, two life-size statues kneel at the feet of a gigantic Buddha; they have knelt there for more than eight centuries. One of these is the king and the other his teacher Arahān. The face of the king is not Burmese—his mother was an Indian lady."

Kyanzittha completed the Shwezigon Pagoda begun by his father and built some 40 smaller pagodas. He even repaired the famous temple of Bodh-Gaya. We read in the chronicles:

"King Kyanzittha gathered together gems of divers kinds and sent them in a ship to build up the holy temple at Buddha-Gayā, and to offer lights which should burn for ever there. Thereafter king Kyanzittha builded

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anew, making them finer than before, the great buildings of king Asoka, for they were old and in ruins."

Kyanzittha is also said to have persuaded a Chola king of India to adopt Buddhism. The latter offered his daughter with rich presents to the Burmese king.

Kyanzittha sent an expedition against South Arakan and compelled its chief to acknowledge his suzerainty. He also sent a mission to China in 1106 and insisted on precedence over the Chola ruler. The Board of Rites reported in favour of Pagan as it was a sovereign state.

### III. THE LATER KINGS OF ARIMARDANAPURA

Kyanzittha died about 1112 A.D. and was succeeded by his grandson (daughter's son) Alaungsithu who had a long reign of fifty-five years. His reign was troubled with rebellions. The chief of South Arakan, who raided frontier villages, was beheaded and the king himself suppressed a rising in Tennaserim. The king of North Arakan, dispossessed of his throne by a usurper, sought the protection of the court of Pagan. Alaungsithu sent an expedition both by land and sea and restored the rightful owner to his throne. When the grateful king of Arakan wanted to do something in return, he was asked by Alaungsithu to repair the Bodh-Gaya temple; he sent his agent with enough funds to do the same.

Alaungsithu spent much of his time in travelling and is said to have visited Malaya, Arakan and Bengal. He is also reported to have gone to Nan-chao with an army to obtain the tooth-relic of Buddha, but without success. He built the famous Thatpyinnu temple at Pagan and many minor ones. He married a daughter of the king of Paṭṭikera. He was murdered in his old age by his younger son Narathu who ascended the throne in 1167 A.D.

Narathu was cruel and blood-thirsty. He treacherously killed his elder brother who claimed the throne, and slew numerous members of the royal family. He oppressed monks and people alike, and at last killed with his own hand his step-mother, the princess of Paṭṭikera. The father of this lady was determined to take vengeance. Eight of his best guards offered to sacrifice their lives for this purpose. They entered

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Narathu's palace in the disguise of priests, and when the king came to take their blessings, drew out the daggers concealed under their robes and killed him. Thus died the cruel monster of a king after an inglorious reign of three years.

Narasimha (Naratheinkha), who succeeded his father Narathu, was engaged in distreputable palace intrigues and killed after a reign of three years by his younger brother Narapatisithu. The latter ascended the throne in 1173 A.D. and his reign is chiefly remarkable for the dominance of Ceylon in religious matters. The Ceylonese Buddhism was introduced in Pagan in 1192 A.D., and ultimately replaced the Buddhism introduced from the Mon country in 1056 A.D. by Aniruddha. The king built the two beautiful temples known as Gawdaw-palin and Sulamani at Pagan and undertook many irrigation works. He nominated his youngest son Jayasimha (Zeyatheinkha) as his successor, and died in 1210.

Jayasimha, also known as Htilominlo and Nantaungmya, left the cares of State to his brothers and busied himself with religious activities, specially building temples. He built the Mahābodhi temple, in imitation of the famous temple at Bodh-Gayā, and another magnificent temple, called Htilominlo.

Kyaswa, who succeeded his father Jayasimha in 1234, was still more devoted to religious activities and spent his time in reading Buddhist scriptures and writing religious texts. He made the famous artificial reservoir known as the Emerald Lake, in Minbu district.

Uzana (Udayana?), who succeeded his father Kyaswa in 1250, was a great contrast to his two predecessors. He was given to drinking and hunting, and was trampled to death by an elephant (1254 A.D.).

### IV. THE MONGOL CONQUEST AND DISINTEGRATION

Uzana's younger son Narasimhapati (Narathihapate) succeeded him. He was a pompous glutton who boasted that he swallowed three hundred dishes of curry daily and had three thousand concubines. Such a king was eminently unfit to face the storm which swept over the country. In 1253 the Mongol Chief Kublai Khan had annexed Yunnan. In 1271 he sent envoys to Burma asking the king to accept his suzerainty. As

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this was refused, an imperial ambassador was sent in 1273. But as he and his colleagues refused to take off their shoes as often as was demanded by the etiquette, Narasimhapati executed them with their numerous retinue. Four years later the Burmese king even invaded Kangai, a State on the Taping river, 70 miles above Bhamo, on the ground that its chief had submitted to Kublai. The Governor of Yunnan defeated the Burmese army. In 1283 the Burmese again raided the frontier and were again defeated with heavy loss. As soon as he heard the news, king Narasimhapati fled from Pagan in panic and reached Bassein. The Mongols did not proceed to invade Burma, and when the king sent a monk offering submission, he received a sympathetic reply. But the defeat and cowardly flight of the king was a signal for revolt and conspiracy on all sides, and the king was poisoned by his son at Prome (1286 A.D.). The news of the king's death induced the Mongols to strike a final blow in 1287. Led by a grandson of Kublai Khan they marched to Pagan which perished 'amid the blood and flame of the Tartar Terror'. Thus ended the great kingdom founded by Aniruddha after a glorious existence of two hundred and forty years.

The conquest of Burma by Kublai Khan ushered in a period of political disintegration and cultural decay. Burma was now divided into a number of small principalities among which there stood out prominently three leading States: (1) Upper Burma, with its capital first at Pinya and then at Ava on the Upper Irawadi, dominated by the Shans; (2) Mon or Talaing kingdom of Pegu in the Delta; and (3) the Burmese kingdom of Toungoo intermediate between the two. The stories of the interminable fights, intrigues, cruelty and treachery of their chiefs fill the pages of the chronicles. As the Chinese empire now extended to the border of Burma, and she was politically subject to that great centre of civilisation, one might expect that a new era of culture, under Chinese influence, would dawn upon Burma. But the fact was just the opposite. The period of two hundred and fifty years that followed is almost a dark period in the history of Burmese civilisation. Civil wars among the petty States ruined the peace and prosperity of the people; art and literature languished; and the framework of civilisation built up by the Indians maintained a precarious existence. Pagodas

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continued to be built, but "most of them are of a sort which might just as well remain unbuilt, while even the best cannot be mentioned in the same breath as the temples of Pagan." It was not till the 16th century, when Burma was once more reunited under a single dynasty, that the torch of civilisation lighted by the Indians, which feebly flickered so long, again flared up, removed the darkness that enveloped the country and ushered in a new era of progress and prosperity.

### V. HINDU CULTURE IN ARIMARDANAPURA

It is unnecessary to describe in detail the elements of Indian culture and civilisation in Burma during the rule of the Pagan dynasty, for they are substantially present even today. The chief notable factor is the gradual disappearance of Brahmanical religion leading to the exclusive predominance of the Theravāda form of Buddhism. The kings of the new dynasty showed great zeal in the propagation of the new doctrine, and many of them have left evidence of unparalleled piety and devotion to it. The old Pali literature was cultivated with great assiduity, and a new Pali literature grew on the soil of Burma. This was facilitated by a close association with Ceylon, which became stronger in proportion as Buddhism lost its hold in India.

One singular trait in Burmese Buddhism is an attempt to transfer to the soil of Burma the important events and localities associated with Buddhism. Thus the Buddha, according to Burmese legends, visited many places in the country, and many episodes in the career of the great master, as found in the scriptures, are supposed to have taken place in various localities in Burma. Sometimes the Buddha is even made to prophesy the growth of important cities like Pagan and Mandalay. Of similar psychological import is the endeavour to trace the ruling dynasties of Burma as directly descended from the Śākya clan, of which Buddha was a member, as in the case of Tagaung; or, as in the case of Arakan, to explain the origin of the royal family by adopting a Jātaka story with suitable modifications of localities.

The dynastic pride, religious fervour and the natural instincts of the colonists to import familiar place-names in their

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land of adoption have all resulted in the introduction of quite a large number of well-known Indian geographical names into Burma. Some of these names are fairly early. The name Maurya, used in Burmese inscriptions to denote Mweyin on the Upper Irawadi, is probably the origin of Ptolemy's Mareura, and thus goes back to the second century A.D. Śrīkshetra and Haṁsāvati also must be older than 5th or 6th century A.D. Some of the other old and important names are Aparānta, Asitāñjana, Avanti, Vārāṇasī, Champānagara, Dhanyavati, Dvāravati, Gandhāra, Kāamboja, Kelasa (Kailāsa), Kusumapura, Mithilā, Pushkara, Pushkarāvati, Rājagriha, Saṅkāsyā, Utkala, Vaiśālī etc. This list may be multiplied almost to any extent. Not only legends concerning Buddha, but even scenes of subsequent episodes in the history of Buddhism and in the lives of previous Buddhas or holy men referred to in Buddhist literature are located in Burma. Most of the places visited by Asoka's missionaries are also placed there. Nowhere else, in Indian colonies, we find such a deliberate attempt to create a new India.

The most important aspect of the development of Buddhism in Burma is the growth of a distinct and voluminous Pali literature. The knowledge and study of the Buddhist canon may be regarded as a common feature in every Indian colony where Buddhism made its influence felt, but nowhere else, except in Ceylon, has it led to the adoption of the language of the sacred texts as a classic, which has evolved a new literature and continued its unbroken career down to the present times.

Even a brief outline of the Pali literature of Burma cannot be attempted here. Fortunately there are standard works, by Dr. Bode and others, which give adequate account of this fascinating subject. It is only necessary to emphasise its extensive scope which embraced not only the different aspects of Buddhism, its doctrine, monastic discipline and philosophical speculations, but also an intensified study of the grammar of the language, and various secular subjects including law and politics. So voluminous did it grow that it became necessary to write a history of this literature. One such treatise, *Gandhavarṁsa*, was written in the seventeenth, and another, *Sāsana-varṁsa*, in the nineteenth century.

There was a great literary activity in Burma even in the

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nineteenth century when the country was conquered by the British. The reign of Mindon Min (1853-1878) has been described as a golden age both of Buddhism and Pali literature, when the Burmese *theras* made a conscious attempt to revive the ancient tradition as faithfully as possible. As Bode has observed: "Thus the nineteenth century is linked with the twelfth, the history of Pali literature in Burma repeats itself." But this scholarship has not died out in Burma. The same scholar has pointed out that "scholarship in the twentieth century followed the lines first traced as long ago as the twelfth century in Burma." Bode has given a long list of works composed by a learned monk at the beginning of this century which is fairly representative of the fields covered by Pali literature.

Some idea of the literary activity in Burma may be obtained from an inscription, dated 1442 A.D., recording the gifts by a Governor and his wife to the Buddhist Order. In addition to a monastery, garden, paddy lands and slaves, they offered a collection of manuscripts. Fortunately a list is given of the texts thus offered, and it includes 295 separate works. It gives us a clear idea of the Pali literature in Burma before the 15th century A.D. and enables us to fix the dates of many works.

The list contains a number of titles of Sanskrit works. We have already seen above that knowledge of Sanskrit was cultivated in Burma as far back as the early centuries of the Christian era. The list proves that, in spite of the dominance of Buddhism and Pali, Sanskrit language and literature had not altogether vanished from its soil. As a matter of fact the Burmese Pali literature on Law—Dhammasathas—was based on Sanskrit originals, and did not owe anything to Ceylon which inspired its other branches. It is now generally agreed that the law-codes of Burma, both ancient and modern, were based on the Hindu Dharmaśāstras like those of Manu, Nārada and Yājñavalkya. Of course, the dominance of Buddhism has modified the provisions of this law in many respects, but there is no doubt of the Indian origin. The Dhammasatha, compiled by king Wagaru of Lower Burma towards the close of the thirteenth century A.D., was translated into Pali in the 16th century by a Talaing jurist named Buddhaghosha, as the work was known till then only in the Talaing language. The Pali book was named *Manu-sāra*, and a good many works of the



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same kind, composed in the 17th and 18th centuries, were named after Manu, thus showing the association of the Burmese law-code with the Indian Dharmaśāstras. It is difficult to realise fully the part played by the Pali literature in developing the intellectual, moral and social life in Burma. As a foreign critic has observed:

"Burma shows how the leaven of Indian thought worked in a race and idiom having no close relationship with India. We may say that the essentially Indian genius, the psychological subtleties, the high thoughts of Buddhism have forced the Burmese language to grow, deepen and expand continually. When Burmese was at last raised (in or about the fourteenth century) to the level of a literary language, it was by the addition of a great body of Indian words necessary to express ideas beyond the scope of that picturesque vernacular."

We may conclude this topic with a few more observations of the same author:

"The great historical service of the Pali literature is to show the peculiarly Buddhist character of Burmese civilization. If we follow the calm main stream of Buddhist belief, as we see it in the religious and scholarly literature of Burma, we cannot but feel impressed by the continuity of its progress, and the force of its unbroken tradition. When we follow in the chronicles the struggle of the neighbouring states we must needs wonder at the Law that never failed, in the end, to dominate barbarism, to make customs milder and laws more just, to do away with barriers by raising men above them. Of that Righteous Law as a social and intellectual influence the Pali literature is an almost complete embodiment. Thus to use the ancient metaphor, India conquered Burma. Of all the conquests in history none has been more enduring or more beneficent".

Reference has been made above to the building of temples by various kings. Many of them are fine pieces of architecture and reflect great credit on the artistic skill of the people. There was an extraordinary activity in architecture, sculpture and painting, but practically everything bears the stamp of Indian workmanship. Indeed constant and intimate intercourse between India and Burma was an important feature in the evolution of Burmese civilisation, and we find streams of merchants, artisans, Brahmins, soldiers, astrologers and Buddhist missionaries from India visiting and settling in different parts of Burma. On the other hand, the Burmese visited India in large number for purposes of trade and paying visit to holy shrines. A story preserved in a local chronicle depicts the Burmese captain of a ship regularly trading in divine images. He

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bought at Varanasi the holy images picked by men from the ruins of old temples washed by the Ganges, and carried them for sale to Pegu. This may be one of the ways in which Indian art influenced that of Burma. But the easy facilities of communication between India and Burma both by land and sea must be regarded as the primary cause which intensified the Indian culture and made it durable in Burma.

The Ānanda temple in Pagan, to which reference has been made above in connection with king Kyanzittha, is the finest in the whole of Burma (Pl. XVIII). It occupies the centre of a spacious courtyard which is 564 ft. square. The main temple, made of bricks, is square in plan, each side measuring 175 ft. A large gabled porch, 57 ft. long, projects from the centre of each face of this square, so that the total length of the temple, from end to end, on every side, is nearly 290 ft. In the interior the centre is occupied by a cubical mass of brickworks, with a deep niche on each side, containing a colossal standing Buddha image, 31 ft. in height above the throne which is about 8 ft. high. The central mass is surrounded by two parallel corridors, with cross passages for communication between the porch and the Buddha image on each side.

Externally, the walls of the temple, 39 ft. high, are crowned with a battlemented parapet, having a ringed pagoda at each corner. Above the parapet rise in succession the two roofs over the two parallel corridors below, each having a curvilinear outline and an elongated *stūpa* at the corner and a dormer-window in imitation of the porches at the centre. Above these two roofs are four receding narrow terraces which serve as the basement of a *sikhara* crowned by a *stūpa* with an elongated bell-shaped dome and a tapering iron *hti* as its finial. Each of the receding stages has the figure of a lion at the corner and small imitation porch openings in the centre. Apart from the graceful proportions and the symmetry of design, the beauty of the Ānanda temple is enhanced by the numerous stone sculptured reliefs and glazed terra-cotta plaques that adorn its walls. The stone-reliefs, eighty in number, and some of the plaques illustrate the principal episodes in the Buddha's life, and 916 plaques depict the Jātaka stories. The unique character of the plan of the temple has evoked much discussion about its origin. But, as noted above, there is no doubt of its Indian

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origin. Temples of the same type existed in Bengal and most probably suggested the model of the Ananda temple. This is the view of Duroiselle who has made a special study of the subject in recent times. He further observes as follows:

"There can be no doubt that the architects who planned and built the Ananda were Indians. Everything in this temple from *Sikhara* to basement, as well as the numerous stone sculptures found in its corridors and the terra-cotta plaques adorning its basement and terraces, bear the indubitable stamp of Indian genius and craftsmanship . . . In this sense, we may take it, therefore, that the Ananda, though built in the Burmese capital, is an Indian temple."

The plain around Pagan, about one hundred square miles in area, is full of ruins and must have once been covered by numerous shrines. It was estimated by Yule that there are remains of no less than 800 or 1000 temples in the city of Pagan itself, extending about 8 miles along the Irawadi with an average depth of 2 miles. A few of them, in a fair state of preservation, are quite magnificent. Their plan is the same as that of Ananda, the difference being only in details. All these were built before the fall of Pagan *i.e.* before the end of the 13th century A.D., and practically nothing is to be found in them that does not bear the stamp of Indian workmanship.

## CHAPTER IV

### BEGINNINGS OF INDIAN COLONISATION IN SIAM (THAILAND)

THE country, until recently known as Siam, is now called Thailand, or the land of the Thais. In spite of the popular etymology which seeks to explain it as the land of the Free (Thai), there is no doubt that Thai is a tribal name and Thailand properly denotes the land of the Thais.

The Thais, however, did not establish political ascendancy in Siam till the thirteenth century. For at least one thousand years before that, Siam was colonised by the Hindus and a number of Hindu principalities flourished in various parts of it.

The beginnings of Hindu colonisation in Siam may be traced to the first two centuries of the Christian era, if not earlier still. The oldest examples of Indian sculpture, dug up at Pra Pathom, belong to the second century A.D., or possibly a somewhat earlier date. The remains recently dug up at Pong Tuk, twenty miles further to the west, including remains of a temple and a little statuette of a walking Buddha, may also be referred to the same period. Buddhist sculptures of the Gupta style, a bronze Buddha statue of the Amarāvati school and remains of temples have also been found in the same locality. Images of both Brahmanical and Buddhist deities, of the Gupta style, have been found all over the country. A Sanskrit inscription, belonging to the fourth century A.D., has been found at Mung Si Tep near Pechaburi, along with Śaiva and Vaishṇava sculptures. A bronze Buddha image of Amarāvati school has been found as far east as Korat.

The character of some of the Buddhist sculptures, which reflect the most primitive ideas of Buddhism, forms, according to Coedès, "a very strong argument in favour of an early colonisation of Southern Siam by Indian Buddhists." "One is even induced," says he, "to wonder whether that region with

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its many toponyms like Supan, Kanburi, U. Thong, meaning "Golden Land," has not a better claim than Burma to represent Suvarṇabhūmi, the "Golden Land," where according to Pali scriptures and ancient traditions, Buddhist teaching spread very early.

Whatever we may think of this there cannot be any doubt that there were many Hindu colonies in Siam since the first or second century A.D.

But none of these early colonies grew up into any powerful kingdom. As already noted above, the major part of Siam was subject to the kingdom of Fu-nan. It was not till after the fall of Fu-nan that we find an important principality in Siam called Dvāravatī, which sent embassies to China in A.D. 638 and 649 and seems to have extended from the borders of Cambodia to the Bay of Bengal. As stated above (p. 226) the Hinduised Mons dominated over this kingdom and extended their influence as far north as Haripuñjaya or Lamphun. This kingdom flourished till the tenth century when the kings of Kambuja extended their supremacy over the Lower Menam valley. Gradually the Kambuja authority was established over the whole of Siam. The Kambuja control continued till the 13th century A.D. when the Thais established several independent States.

A very interesting record of the pre-Thai period is engraved on the two faces of a stone slab, found at Ban Map Makham (District of Banpot in the Province of Nakon Savan) in the central Menam Valley in Siam, to the north of the junction of the Me Ping with the Menam river. The first face contains a Pali inscription in 20 lines, of which the first ten alone are partly legible. The second face contains 33 lines written in Khmer which are almost wholly legible. It contains the date, 1089 Śaka (1167 A.D.). Both the records refer to the holy body-relic of Kamraten Jagat Śrī Dharmāsoka and gifts of land etc., in its honour. Mahāsenāpati Śrī Bhuvanāditya Išvaradvīpa carried the order of Mahārājādhirāja Kuruṅ Śrī Dharmāsoka to the local ruler of Dhānyapura, Sunatta, who actually made the gifts. As the title 'Kamraten Jagat' is usually reserved for divinities or deified persons, the body-relic may be that of the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka of India who is traditionally believed to have sent Buddhist missionaries to this region. Mahā-

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rājādhirāja Dharmāsoka, the donor, was probably a ruler of Haripuñjaya.

Before taking up the history of the Thais, we must say a few words about the culture of Siam before their advent to power. As proved by the inscriptions, sculpture and architecture, Siam thoroughly imbibed Indian civilisation during this period. Indian religions and religious texts, and Indian language and literature exercised a predominant influence all over the country which exists even to this day. The early Buddhist sculptures of the Dvāravatī period show a very close resemblance to the contemporary Gupta art of India, and the face of the images is typically Indian. Although the later images, both Buddhist and Brahmanical, have a more Mongoloid face, they clearly belong to Indian school of art somewhat modified by local influence. Some of the sculptures are of high artistic value, and it is surprising that these have been found even far into the interior, remote from the sea-shore where we naturally expect the strongholds of Indian colonists. Siam has yielded quite a large number of sculptures, both in stone and bronze. The oldest examples, dug up at Pra Pathom, represent the Wheel of the Law (*Dharmachakra*) associated with figures of crouching deer. This presumably belongs to that stage in Indian art when the Buddha was never represented as human being and was only indicated by symbols. The actual specimen of Siam may not be so old, but is certainly not later than the first or second century A.D. In that case we must suppose that the original Buddhist shrine at Pra Pathom, which was decorated by these sculptures, belonged to an earlier period when the figure of the Buddha was still unknown in Indian iconography, *i.e.*, before the beginning of the Christian era, and the tradition was continued in later times. These sculptures therefore furnish a very strong evidence for the early colonisation of Southern Siam by Indian Buddhists. The Bronze Buddha image found at Pong Tuk belongs to the Amarāvati school of art of the second century A.D. A large number of Buddhist images show distinctly the Gupta style, of an earlier and a later type. Two stone statues, of the later type, appear from inscriptions engraved on them to belong to the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. The earlier images may, therefore, be referred to the fourth century A.D. The torso of a Yakshinī, belonging to this period, is a

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remarkably fine piece of sculpture. It was found at Si Tep (Śrī Deva) near Pechaburi, remote from the sea-shore, and shows the influence of Indian culture spreading far into the interior.

Some Brahmanical sculptures, though belonging to the same period, are not so close copies of the Gupta original, indicating the influence of indigenous elements. Nevertheless, the sculpture of the Dvāravatī period must be regarded as products of the Gupta art with more or less local modifications. During the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries the Hinduised Khmer art of Kambuja profoundly influenced that of Siam, but the original Indian character was never lost.

As in sculpture, so in architecture, Siam seems to have copied Indian models of different periods. Unfortunately the early examples, mostly built of perishable materials, have vanished. But the fact that in later examples we get almost all the types, derived from India, which are met with in different Indian colonies in the Far East, such as Java, Kambuja, Champā and Burma, seems to indicate their existence in old times. The conservative character of Siamese art is indicated by the curious example of a thirteenth century stone-railing at Savankalok which offers striking resemblance to that of Sanchi stūpa. The most distinctive architectural type in Siam is what is known as Prang, a square temple with a very high roof consisting of a number of low stages which, taken together, have the aspect of a curvilinear *śikhara*. This has been a fashionable mode of building since the fourteenth century, and is no doubt evolved from earlier examples which were made up of a curious blend of the *śikharas* of North and South India.

## CHAPTER V

### THE THAIS

#### I. EARLY HISTORY

THE Thais are a Mongolian tribe and are generally believed to be ethnically related to the Chinese. They lived in southern and south-eastern part of the country now known as China. Long before the beginning of the Christian era large groups of them migrated to the south and south-west, and set up a number of independent principalities. The date and gradual stages of their advance cannot be determined with certainty, but by the 8th or 9th century A.D. they advanced as far as the Upper Irawadi and the Salween Rivers in the west and the frontiers of Siam and Cambodia in the south.

The most powerful of the Thai principalities comprised the territory which we now call Yunnan. It did not then form a part of China, but was frequently invaded by the Chinese. The Thais of Yunnan, though occasionally defeated, and subjugated for longer or shorter periods, never ceased to defy the authority of the Chinese. By the seventh century A.D. they had freed themselves completely from Chinese control and established a powerful kingdom which played an important rôle in Indo-China for six hundred years.

Although allied to the Chinese in blood, and living near them under their political control for centuries, the Thais of Yunnan were brought under the influence of Indian culture. Although the Chinese referred to the country as Nan-Chao, it was known in Indo-China as Gandhāra; one part of it was also called Videha-rājya, and its capital was known as Mithilā. The people used an alphabet of Hindu origin. Local traditions in Yunnan affirm that Avalokiteśvara came from India and converted the region to Buddhism. It is said that when, towards the close of the 8th century A.D., the ruler of this kingdom became enamoured of Chinese civilisation, seven



religious teachers of India rebuked the king. In the first half of the ninth century A.D. a Hindu monk named Chandra-gupta, born in Magadha and therefore designated Māgadha, led a brilliant career of a thaumaturgist in Yunnan. There was in Yunnan the famous Pippala cave, the Bodhi tree, the sacred hill Gṛidhrakūṭa and many other localities associated with Buddhism. A Chinese traveller of the tenth century A.D. refers to a local tradition that Śākyamuni obtained Bodhi near Lake Ta-li in Yunnan. The Buddhist influence in Yunnan is still attested by two bells of the 11th century with inscriptions in Chinese and Sanskrit. The king of Nan-chao had the title Mahārāja and also another Hindu title, which means the king of the east. According to local tradition the royal family was descended from Asoka. Rasiduddin, writing in the 13th century, not only calls the country Gandhāra but asserts that its people came from India and China. All these demonstrate that the Thais of Yunnan had imbibed Hindu culture and civilisation to a very large extent.

There were many other Thai States to the west and south of Yunnan. The Chinese refer to the Brahmana kingdom of Ta-tsin to the east of the mountain ranges that border Manipur and Assam, and another about 150 miles further east, beyond the Chindwin river. Whether these were mainly peopled by the Hinduised Thais we cannot say. But a group of Thai States, united in a sort of loose federation, which occupied the region between the Irawadi and the Salween, was known as Kauśāmbī. The southern part of this is now known as the Shan States, the Shan tribe being that branch of the Thais which proceeded farthest in the western direction. To the east of these were a series of small States extending from the frontier of Yunnan to those of Kambuja and Siam. These were, from north to South, Alāvīrāshṭra, Khmerarāshṭra, Suvarna-grāma, Unmārgaśilā, Yonakarāshṭra, Haripuñjaya and many others whose internecine wars and consequent changes in boundaries and sometimes also in names are recorded in the local chronicles, written in Pali, of which we possess quite a large number. According to the chronicles, the first Thai prince to settle on the southern bank of the Mekong was Brahma (Prom) who founded the city of Jayaprākār in the district of Chieng Rai early in the second half of the ninth century A.D. The Pali

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chronicles give detailed accounts of the ruling dynasties and the religious foundations of the different local States. These cannot be regarded as historical annals in the sense in which we understand the term, but they leave no doubt that the main source of the civilisation of most of the Thai States lay in India and not in China. The evidence of the Pali Chronicles is fully corroborated by the archaeological finds, for images of the Gupta style and those of somewhat later date have been found in these regions. It is a significant fact that these Thais, though ethnically belonging to the same race as the Chinese, and living nearer to them, should have been brought so profoundly under the influence of Hindu culture and civilisation rather than Chinese. It is accordingly very likely that the Hindus had set up colonies in these regions, or at least settled there in large number.

There is nothing to be surprised at this. For we have definite evidence that as early as the second century B.C. there was regular communication, by overland route, between East India and Yunnan. In the second century B.C. Chang-kien, the famous Chinese ambassador in Bactria was surprised to find there Chinese silk and bamboo products which, he learnt on inquiry, came from Yunnan and Szechuan across the whole breadth of Northern India right up to Afghanistan and Bactria beyond the Hindu Kush. The two Indian Buddhist missionaries who visited China in the first century A.D. most probably passed through the upper valley of the Irawadi and Yunnan. There are references also to the regular communication between China and Western Asia *via* Yunnan, Upper Burma and India, in the first, second and third centuries A.D. I-tsing also refers to 20 Chinese pilgrims as having gone to India from Szechuan through Upper Burma in the third or fourth century A.D. The geographical memoir of Kia Tan, written between 785 and 805 A.D., describes two routes leading from Tonkin through Yunnan and Burma to India. That this route was well frequented in the tenth century A.D. is attested by the fact that the 300 religious missionaries sent by the Chinese Emperor to India in 964 A.D. in search of sacred texts, returned by way of Yunnan. Thus although the direct land-route from India to hinterland in Indo-China was comparatively little known in recent past, the case was different in ancient times, and a

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constant stream of Indian emigrants passed by this route to spread Indian culture and civilisation in this region.

The independent Hinduised Thai Kingdom of Gandhāra grew to be a powerful and organised State. At first it lived in peace with China and concluded treaties of friendship with her. Ko-lo-fong, who ascended the throne in A.D. 750, and made Tali-fu his capital, paid a visit to China. Being insulted there, he returned indignant and invaded China. He captured thirty-two towns and villages and thrice defeated the Chinese forces sent against him. He formed an alliance with Tibet and defeated the Chinese again in 754 A.D., inflicting heavy losses upon them. Imoshun, who succeeded his grandfather, Ko-lo-fong, in A.D. 770, invaded China with his Tibetan allies, but was defeated. Thereupon he concluded a treaty with China, massacred the Tibetans in his kingdom and successfully invaded Tibet, capturing sixteen towns and carrying away an immense booty. But the peace with China did not last long. In A.D. 820 China was again invaded by a successor of Imoshun who brought back many captives, including skilled artisans. In A.D. 850 the king of Gandhāra assumed the title of Emperor. This gave great offence to the T'ang Emperor of China, and a long war followed in which the Chinese were consistently unsuccessful. The emperor of Gandhāra invaded Tonkin in A.D. 858 and conquered Annam in 863 A.D. But the Chinese recovered it three years later. A new emperor of Gandhāra, called Fa by the Chinese, succeeded to the throne in 877 A.D. He made peace with China and in A.D. 884 his son married a daughter of the Chinese emperor. Henceforth China left Gandhāra in peace. The failure of the great T'ang dynasty in its protracted struggle with her made deep impression in China about her power. Indeed so painful was the memory of this fruitless campaign that when the general of the first Song Emperor (960-976 A.D.) proposed to invade Gandhāra, the latter, reflecting upon the disasters sustained by the Chinese under the T'ang dynasty, refused to have anything to do with that kingdom.

Excepting Gandhāra or Videharājya in modern Yunnan, the other Hinduised Thai States could not rise to great power or influence, being mostly subordinate to and often annexed

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by their more powerful neighbours, the Hinduised Burmans, Mons and Khmers.

The Hinduised Thai kingdom of Gandhāra flourished till 1253 A.D. when it was conquered by the great Mongol Chief Kublai Khan. In an attempt to attack China from the south Kublai performed one of the most daring military feats recorded in the annals of the world. Marching at the head of 100,000 men from Ning-hsia in Mongolia he passed over the snow-capped mountain chains, several hundreds of miles in length,—savage outliers of the Kuen Lun mountains and the Himalayas—which stood like an impenetrable wall between China and the lofty plateau of Tibet. Fighting intermittently with warlike hill tribes, he made his way for a thousand of miles through ice-bound valleys till he reached the banks of the Yang-se-kiang on the border of Yunnan. The king of Gandhāra refused to submit and resisted the Mongols with all his might. He was defeated in several engagements, and his capital was captured. At last the king surrendered in 1253 A.D. and the Hinduised Thai kingdom of Gandhāra ceased to exist.

It is generally held that the destruction of the kingdom of Gandhāra perhaps led to a general movement of the Hinduised Thais from this State towards the south and west, and accounts for the gradual expansion and consolidation of the Thai kingdoms in these regions. It has been suggested, however, that a slow peneration of the Thais in southern region had begun long before the Mongols had conquered Gandhāra. This view gains some support from the traditional date of the foundation of the Thai principality of Mogaung to the north of Bhamo in 1215 A.D. and of Mone or Muong Nai in 1223. In 1229 the Thais conquered Assam in the north and advanced up to Tennasserim and Arakan in the west. Further, the Shans, who lived in the hilly region along the eastern border of Burma, grew more powerful and became the real rulers of Upper Burma for nearly two centuries and a half (1287-1531) A.D.). But it was in the south that the Thai conquest was more brilliant and enduring, for they established their authority over the whole of Siam and rule there to this day.

## II. THE THAIS IN SIAM

As in Burma, the Thais must have settled in Siam long before the 13th century, and it is probable that they set up small principalities. King Phrom of Sib Song Chu Thai and his successors extended the Thai dominion over what is now French Laos, including the Mekong valley with the cities of Luang Prabang and Vieng Chan as well as Northern Udon, and right over westwards to Pechabun and Chalieng (old Savankalok). The Mons reigned over the kingdom of Hari-puñjaya at the beginning of the 13th century A.D. King Sabbādhisiddhi is known from several inscriptions written in mixed Pali and Mon, dated 1213, 1218 and 1219 A.D. A few other kings followed, according to the Chronicles, before its conquest by the Thais. But the first Thai kingdom of importance was that of Sukhodaya, founded in the thirteenth century by a chief named Indrāditya. It was the result of a successful rebellion against the king of Kambuja to whom the whole of Siam was subject at this time. A Kambuja general was sent to put down the revolt, but was defeated in a pitched battle, and the victorious Indrāditya founded an independent kingdom with his capital at Sukhodaya (Sukhothai). Indrāditya spread his dominions in all directions by constant fights with his neighbours, and in one of these his son Ram Kamheng distinguished himself. The date of Indrāditya cannot be determined with certainty, but may be provisionally fixed at about the middle of the thirteenth century A.D. He was succeeded by his second son who ruled for a few years, and after his death Ram Kamheng ascended the throne some time before 1283 A.D. He has left a long record which gives us detailed information about his family and his own achievements. It contains a long list of countries conquered by him. This includes not only several Thai States in Siam, but also Hamsāvati or Pegu in Lower Burma, Nakhon Si Thammarat in Malay Peninsula, and several Khmer States on the Menam and Mekong as far as Luang Prabang on the other side of the last-named river. Even making due allowance for exaggerations he must be regarded as a great and powerful ruler who raised Sukhodaya to a powerful State. In addition to Sukhodaya, the kingdom had another capital called Sajjanālaya,

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and the kingdom is sometimes referred to as Sajjanālaya-Sukhodaya. The Mon kingdom of Haripuñjaya was conquered in 1291-2 by an allied Thai Chief Mangray, prince of Chieng Ray, who transferred the capital to Chieng May.

Although Ram Kamheng's conquests extended from Luang Prabang to Ligor and Vieng Chan to Pegu, it must not be presumed that the whole of Siam really formed a united kingdom under him. As a matter of fact Siam proper was divided into several States, of which at least three others, under independent Thai rulers, are well-known, viz., two in Lan Na Thai embracing the ancient Yonok of North Siam, and Lan Na Chang with its capital at Vieng Chan. Further, to the south of Sukhodaya, in the Lower Menam valley, was Lvo or Lopburi. All or most of these were under Kambuja sovereignty and seem to have acquired independence under adventurous Thai chiefs during the thirteenth century. The Chinese historians refer to frequent embassies from two States, Sien and Lo-hu, between 1282 and 1323 A.D. There is hardly any doubt that these two Chinese names stand for Shyām and Lopburi. It is thus apparent that Lopburi was still an important State, even though it had to acknowledge the suzerainty of Sukhodaya. It is interesting to note that the name Shyām (Siam) was still confined to the northern part of the country and was not applied to the whole of it. This distinction is also met with in Kambuja, where, in the south-west gallery of Angkor Vat, soldiers dressed like Cambodians are described in the inscribed labels as troops of Lvo, while others dressed and armed in a different manner are called soldiers of Shyām-kuṭ. That the name Shyām, originally denoting Sukhodaya, was afterwards applied to the whole country is no doubt due to the supremacy of Sukhodaya over other States in Siam, brought about by the victories of Ram Kamheng.

Apart from military skill Ram Kamheng possessed other qualities of a high order, and he truly deserves the title Ram Kamheng the Great. The high ideals of justice and humanity which ring through his long record are remarkable for the age and surroundings in which he lived. He describes the people as happy and enjoying plenty and prosperity under a just and benign rule. The king scrupulously observed the rights of his subjects and dealt even-handed justice to great and small alike.

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In order that even the meanest of his subjects can get his protection, he hung up a bell near the gate. Anyone who felt aggrieved and sought for royal protection was only to ring the bell. The king would hear this and mete out justice to him.

But the greatest boon that Ram Kambheng conferred upon his people was the introduction of a reformed system of alphabet suitable for the Thai language. The Indian alphabet, as modified in Kambuja, was hitherto current in Siam; he adapted it to suit the special needs of the Thais, and it has become the national alphabet of Siam. The king was an ardent follower of Buddhism and decorated Sukhodaya with temples, monasteries and images of Buddha. The Buddhist sacred texts were held in great honour and regularly studied.

Ram Kambheng's known dates are 1285 and 1292 A.D., but we have no exact idea of the reign-period of the king. Coedès suggests that he probably reigned till A.D. 1318. In that case he was the king who sent the military expedition to Champā in A.D. 1313. In any case, this expedition shows the growing power of the Thais and the rapid decline of the Kambujas through whose territories the Thais must have passed in order to reach Champā.

Ram Kambheng's son and successor, Lo-Thai (Lodaiya), reconquered Tavoy and Tenasserim, but suffered a defeat when he attempted to conquer Martaban. He probably died in 1347 A.D. Lo-Thai's son, Lu-Thai (Lidaiya), served as a regent during his father's reign for seven years (1340-1347 A.D.) and was formally consecrated to the throne in 1347 A.D. under the title Śrī Sūryavaṃśa Rāma Mahādharma-rājādhirāja. He was a Buddhist and studied Vinaya, Abhidharma and Jyotisha. He set up images of Viṣṇu and Śiva, and in 1361 A.D. invited a learned Buddhist priest from Ceylon to his capital. He was a pious king devoted to religious activities, but was unable to keep his hold upon the extensive dominions conquered by Ram Kambheng.

Even during the reign of Ram Kambheng the old kingdom of Lopburi had maintained independence as a Thai principality, and had sent several embassies to China between 1289 and 1299 A.D. Its Thai ruler, named Jayaśrī, was succeeded by his son and then by his son-in-law, the Chief of U Tong, who was forced by an epidemic of cholera to leave U Tong and

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fixed his residence on an island in the Menam, about 31 miles south of Labo (Lopburi), in 1350 A.D. The new city was called Dvāravatī śrī Ayodhyā (Ayuthia) and the new king took the title Rāmādhipati. He had already, in 1349, invaded Sukhodaya and imposed his suzerainty over its ruler. Henceforth, the kingdom of Ayodhyā took the place of Sukhodaya as the leading Thai State in Siam. Rulers of Sukhodaya, shorn of power and glory, at first became vassals of Ayodhyā, and were gradually reduced to the position of hereditary governors of Sukhodaya. The kingdom of Ayodhyā gradually extended its authority over Laos and a large part of Cambodia, but suffered serious defeats in the hands of Burmese king. Having passed through periods of power and glory as well as reverses and misfortunes, it has continued down to our own times. The city of Ayodhyā was destroyed in course of the Burmese invasion of 1767 A.D., and the capital was removed to Bangkok, which still occupies the same position.

The Thais were partially Hinduised even in their original homes, as already noted above. After the conquest of Siam they imbibed the Indian culture and civilisation, which was already flourishing in the land. The people and rulers of Sukhodaya and Ayodhyā were followers of Buddhism, and this is still the religion of the country. The Pali was the sacred language, and in the 15th and 16th centuries historical chronicles and other texts were written in this language. Thus Siam, like Burma, has still preserved the Indian culture through language, literature, art and religion. Further, we find the same tendency as in Burma to give Indian names to cities and to connect the history with events recorded in the legends of the Buddha.

The Thai rulers of Siam also showed great zeal in building temples and images. The Thai art, though influenced by the Hinduised art of Kambuja and Dvāravatī, shows new elements and developed new tendencies which formed the basis of the classical Siamese art. An eminent authority observes:

“At that time Indian influence was no longer felt directly, but such was the vitality and personality of the architectural forms of the *stūpas* and the *śikhars*, of the sculptural type of the Buddha images, and of so many decorative designs, that even without a preliminary study of how and when these forms reached Siam, a layman would at once, without the slightest difficulty, recognise in Siamese art a branch of Indian colonial



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art. Even Siamese minor arts as exemplified by silver work, lacquer work, carving and textile, show the Indian origin and stand in close connection with Indian art."

Indeed the archaeological evidence leaves no doubt that Siamese art owes its origin to Indian colonists and was inspired and dominated throughout the ages by the classical art of India.

In conclusion, reference should be made to the Thai principality of Laos. Even after the conquest of Vieng Chan by Ram Kamheng, the Kambuja rulers exercised authority as far north as the grand bend of the Mekong river. up to the middle of the 14th century.

But soon after the fall of Sukhodaya Fa Ngum founded the independent kingdom of Vieng Chan in 1353, and gradually conquered Luang Prabang and other neighbouring regions. Thus was created the powerful Thai kingdom of Laos which forced the Kambujas to retire towards the south beyond Bassak and Korat. The establishment of this kingdom had one good effect. It brought the Indian culture of Siam and Cambodia to the regions of Upper Mekong.

