

# MISSIONARY REGISTER.

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## Burma].

### MR. MASON'S JOURNAL.

(Continued from Page 81.)

Jan. 12. A long walk this morning brought us to Pyen-pyoo-ngay, the second Taleing village on our way. Here I left Burman tracts for a man that can read, but who was absent at the time of our visit. At Tsung-tzen, I presented the villagers with "the Balance," in Taleing, and passed on to Men-dat, the principal and oldest village in the settlement. It stands on the south side of a large creek without ford or bridge, which falls into the Tavoy river near its mouth. Here is a small wharf and a large kyoung, which seems fast going to decay; though scenes from the Burman books, carved on its door-panels, are not yet entirely effaced. I spent about an hour here, where I found three priests, and seven boys studying for the priesthood. One of the former could read Burman, and was altogether an inquisitive and interesting individual; much more so than his brethren seemed to like. With him I left Burman tracts; while to an intelligent and attentive layman that came in, I gave one in Taleing.

#### KIND RECEPTION OF KO-THAH-BYOO.

14. Ko-Thah-byoo brought quite a favorable report this morning of the Karens with whom he spent the night, and from the looks of his "scrip," it certainly appears he met with a welcome reception. We found the walk to this place, Pai, extremely fatiguing, our path sometimes leading us over barren hills exposed to the sun, and at others through a thick growth that

sufficiently resembles cane to remind me forcibly of walking through the cane brakes of the Mississippi. We fell in with a Karen house, on our way, and found that its occupant was known to some of our company, having visited Tavoy. He listened to the truth with attention; and, on receiving the tracts I gave him, raised them between his hands over his head, symbolical of his intention to observe their instructions.

On reaching this village, I found the zayat occupied by a priest who seemed to be engaged in a like work with myself, propagating religion. Willingly would I have shared the shelter with him; but, no sooner did he see me, than he began to pick up his things, and call his scholars to leave the place. He would say little more to me than—"I have seen you before in the city and read your books," regarding both, apparently, with utter abhorrence. We had twelve or thirteen men at worship to night, a respectable audience for six houses—the number in the village.

Sabbath, 15. Learning from the villagers that there was a feast or funeral ceremony among the Karens near, I sent Ko-Thah-byoo and Moug Sha Too up the creek this morning, to preach to them. They returned about dark; and the old man says he had an audience of thirty or forty, who gave good attention to all he said; and while some opposed, many promised to consider and examine. We had one Karen at worship in the A. M. with us, who, so far as appearances go, affords encouragement. But the sound of the axe and the loom, that have been ringing in my ears, forcibly admonishes me that, in this land, the "poor man's day" is unknown;

while the call of the peacock, the hallooming of the monkey, and the tiger's yell, which at different hours have been heard around us, tell me I am far, far from the land which remembrance paints with halos of heaven.

#### APPLICATION FOR TRACTS.

19. I concluded this morning to go down to Pa-la, a day's journey still further south. To make ourselves as effective as possible I left Ko-Thah-byoo and Moug Sha Too, with directions to spend the time during my absence in preaching at the kyoung, and wherever they could obtain hearers. I was surprised, before starting, to have an application from a man in the village for tracts, which shows br. Wade has not filled them to satiety. I was also gratified to have the man I discharged at Palow come to me for tracts, before leaving the village. After I had my hat on for traveling, the men started a difficulty in not being able to find the road. This however was soon overcome by obtaining a guide from the neighbourhood, and the event showed that he was needed. The road, after the first two or three miles through paddy fields, was over a succession of hills, and through a corresponding series of swamps, in which the path for a considerable distance would be knee-deep in mud and water. Before arriving at Thing-gu the guide and myself started a rhinoceros near our path. The men were in great fear of it, and moved on with all possible stillness, as they represent them very dangerous; and my guide told a long story of a Karen that was killed by one. Some five or six miles brought us to Thing-gu (10 hours.) While we were waiting for the tide to go down in a neighboring creek, the villagers assembled around us and for the first time heard the gospel. While some were pleading for Gaudama, the part of the zayat in which they were sitting broke down; at which I cried out, "that is like Gaudama's religion; all who rest on it will find it break down, and drop them into hell."

We had few at worship; it was late when we arrived; and the kyoung is a little out of the village, which contains I judge fifty houses. I learned, however, that br. Wade had sent up tracts from some point accessible with boats; and indeed the people here call it only a day and a half journey to Mergui; and all the villages south of us belong, I believe, to that province.

20. Having visited nearly all the villages in this province south of Tavoy, I now turn my face homewards, intending to pass

up among the mountains, and, in like manner, visit all the Karen settlements. Two or three miles beyond Pa-la, the road from the east crosses an extensive plain to a hill of no great altitude, on its west side. At the northern point of the western extremity, is the large village of Pa-la. The road, in the interval which passes along the side of the hill, commands in some places a beautiful prospect of the eastern mountains, and the plains below—little clumps of woodland interspersed with extensive paddy fields, in some of which the ox is seen treading out the corn, and in others, raised on a little platform suspended from the angular point where four bamboos meet above his head, the reaper pours out the fruit of his toil, now rice and chaff, to the mercy of the wind; and the view cannot fail to remind one of that man, "who is as the chaff which the wind drives away." Beyond, a novel sight presents itself, and beautiful as novel—paddy-fields, green with their second growth. By the contrast they form with the dry straw in the fields around, and the dull and fading verdure of the woods beyond, the sight is one which seems to refresh and invigorate a weary man to gaze on. The water for the growth of the rice is obtained by an expedient precisely similar to that adopted by the New-England farmer to obtain crops from his meadows. A stream is dammed up, until it spreads its waters to a sufficient depth around the roots of the rice. I was forcibly struck while contemplating the scene, with the Psalmist's expressive simile of the pious man, "as trees planted by the waterbrooks." Passing through Ka-dai, we found a dead priest lying in state in a zayat built for the purpose. He died in the rains, and is cased up in a coffin sealed with pitch, or some bituminous substance. Of course there is an abundance of gilt and tinsel about the external decorations, and a hundred despicable ornaments in the zayat. The kyoung is supplied by an old priest, who told me he was originally from Penang; and on inquiry he said there were many Boodhists there. I found "The View" lying at his side, which he had obtained at Pa-la. On asking if he believed it, he replied "I am examining and considering." I hastened to cross the creek, that detained us yesterday, before the tide came, in which we succeeded. This is a place that cannot be surpassed by all which has been represented of the famous tree at Nerbudda. The path for 150 yards lies in a bottom, overflowed at flood tide and overshadowed by a complete net-work of branches, which throw down a

thousand roots that stand like pillars in the ground, and form a perfect labyrinth, impervious to the sun's rays. Some of the branches arch the creek and put down roots on the opposite bank.

21. I succeeded this morning with some difficulty in obtaining two small canoes to carry us up to Pa-lan-goung, the village from which I write. During the hour we were waiting for the tide to turn, two Burman men applied for tracts; I reluctantly gave one to each, out of the few reserved for the Karens. Three hours brought us to this place without fatigue, other than exposure to the sun, but to which I am getting inured. On the way, I stopped a few minutes at Shat-kwen goung, which is a hill close to the river, composed almost entirely of shells. Several persons are employed in digging them out of the steep sides of the hill for the purpose of burning to make lime. They are found, almost unmixed with extraneous matter, immediately under a thin coat of loam, sufficient however for the nourishment of a thick forest. The place where I found them at work, though far above high water, is still at the foot of Nantoung, a mountainous ridge that runs down to the water's edge. The shells resemble most those found imbedded in the limestone rocks of the Mississippi valley—principally what are denominated *Pectines*, less than an inch in diameter, though a few solitary oyster shells, uncommonly large, are wedged in among them. The Burman tradition connected with the formation of this mountain is sufficiently marvellous. "The shells were brought here," say they, "by the great bird H, tu-lon-ga—a bird so powerful and ravenous, that it made war on cities and devoured their inhabitants. On leaving the neighborhood of this mountain, it flew to the city Pah-gan,\* and was prevented from destroying it at once, only by the king offering to furnish it daily with a virgin princess for food. During seven days, the contract was punctually performed; but at the end of this time, the king's son killed it with a bow and arrow." I know not but this is a fair specimen of what a Burman treasures in his mind for truth.

Telling Moug Shwa Moug the shells were probably brought there at the time of Noah's flood, I bade him relate the history of that event; and this account afforded them a subject for conversation the remainder of the way.

\*Pah-gan, an ancient city on the Irrawaddy, mentioned in Mr. Judson's Journal.

## KAREN VILLAGES.

On my arrival here, I despatched Ko-Thah-byoo and Moug Long without delay, to explore the head waters of the stream for Karens. Soon after, the head man of this village came and asked for tracts; and I am sorry for not adhering to my original plan of taking two thousand with me. The twelve or thirteen hundred have gone off, and they seem in greater demand than ever. We had several men from the village at worship to night, and they were more than commonly attentive, and promised to consider and examine our religion.

I sometimes groan for success; but to be a pioneer is a privilege, and should no apparent success attend, it is no less my duty to labor. The work is God's and must ultimately succeed. The time, manner, and instruments, by whom that success shall most eminently appear, are known only to him, who "worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will."

The Sabbath brought the mission boat from Tavoy with a supply of tracts, and periodicals to gladden my heart, from America. Several Karens also arrived in the course of the day, with whom we had some interesting conversation.

23. We found our Karen visitors, after being under way about an hour, who were waiting to furnish us with a canoe on arriving at the head of tide water, the mission boat being too large to proceed further. A single canoe received us all; and after a long ride on a stream sometimes so shallow that the men had to lighten the canoe to pass the shoals, and in others 15 or 20 feet deep, with an abundance of wild scenery on its banks, we reached the house, in which I am now seated. The man with whom I was most interested yesterday proves to be the head man of the Karens on this creek.

It appears he had previously heard part of an "Investigator" read by some Burman with whom he met, and he professes a wish to know more. The first object that struck me on coming into the house was a little bamboo shell or cage, with offerings in it for demons. I told him demon-worshippers would go to hell; and gave him to understand such foolish things ought to be put away at once; but he told me he wished to learn more of our religion, and increase in knowledge gradually. We had several about us before dark, who kept us talking or reading to them until worship, when I addressed them from Luke xix, 9—"This day is salvation come to this house." Two men manifested considerable interest; but the people here are Bood-

hists as well as demon-worshippers; so Satan rules supreme. I feel confident, however, that his reign is short with the Karens—They have an ear to hear.

24. Was occupied with various little companies of Karens that came, and with visiting several houses in the settlement, where we ever found attentive hearers. There are about thirty houses belonging to the valley, in which the head waters of Palow creek rise; but more than two or three are not found together, and rarely more than one. Excepting two or three families the inhabitants are all of the Meat-khyeen nation.

25. Before starting this morn. for the En-boung Karens, one of our most interesting hearers with his wife, brought a present of rice, eggs, and plantains, which are most acceptable as being an indication of their favorable regard for the truth. We passed fourteen houses to day in the Palow settlement, among which we made four considerable halts. Ko-Thah-byoo literally used all diligence in preaching at the houses as we passed along. The people were attentive, but Christianity is wholly new to them, and I fear, much is not understood—the more so, from the fact that our Karens are not well understood by these Meat-khyeens. So far as I can judge, the languages of the two nations differ as widely as Latin and Greek. Many of the Meat-khyeen tribe understand the Meat-thos, because the two languages are nearly alike. Moungh Sha-htoo says the Meat-khyeen sounds as foreign to his ear as Chinese. It is a fact worthy of noting, that while the Meat-tho is very generally understood by Meat-khyeen men, the reverse is not true in respect to the other nation.

26. Was absent in going from house to house in the En-boung settlement. It embraces but nine houses, and the people are all Meat-khyeen, who understand so little of Meat-thoo, that Burman was our principle medium of communication. We met with several, however, who appeared well, and promised better; but the "Lord knoweth the heart."

27. Before leaving the house where we slept last night, one of the two men, heads of the families that compose its inmates, asked for a tract, urging that he could read and wanted a book of his own, the one already allotted to the house, being claimed, it seems, by his associates. They listened with much interest to the language I addressed to them at parting, and were, on the whole, highly interesting individuals.

## CURIOUS DWELLING AND DISCIPLE.

On reaching the first houses in the Tamen-ma-tsa settlement, we were informed that nearly the whole of the inhabitants had gone to a "feast of bones," at Pyee-khya creek; but, added an informant, "there is one of your disciples in the village, who has not gone." I of course soon took a guide to where our disciple lived, and was surprised, on approaching the house in which I am now seated, to see a large building with graduated roofs built on the model of a Burman temple. I found the internal arrangement as singular as the external appearance was unexpected. The first room like an outer court, incloses a more central one, which in its turn incloses a third, and each with a floor raised a step or two above the more external one. The apartments are separated from each other by partitions of mats, about four feet high. The whole is finished in the highest style of which this people are capable, and the central room furnished with a tin chandelier of foreign workmanship, suspended from the roof. This apartment has a shelf running round the top of the partition, which was well furnished with flower-pots, in the custom of religious Burmans, and, on one side, a small temple, some two feet high, with five or six graduated roofs, and bearing the marks of a work of considerable ingenuity, and as I judged, beyond Karen skill. There I found one disciple, a man with short hair and a white upper garment, like a religious order, among the Burmans, large white pantaloons, like a Parsee, and eyes like the eyes of a maniac. He professed, on being questioned, to have worshipped the "one God," for seven years, sometimes saying he heard of God by means of the English arriving in Tavoy at that time, and at other times boasting "I was taught by no teacher; I was taught by the Spirit of God himself."

Pointing to the little demon temple I inquired, "is not that connected with the worship of demons?" "No, we have broke off such things as that," was the ready reply. Soon after, a Karen from a neighboring house came in. "For what purpose," I demanded, "was this building erected?" "To worship in he answered. "What do you worship?" "That demon temple, he rejoined, with the Christian books on the top of it. We assemble in this outer court, one that can read, reads a portion of the books, and then the books

are placed on the top of the temple, when we all fall down and worship." On asking to see the books, he brought me a bundle of tracts, carefully tied up, including a copy of Matthew. I told him they ought to do as the books said, and worship the God they revealed; but not worship the books. He replied "the teacher told us," pointing to our "disciple" that sat smiling near.—When worship-hour arrived, we found that eight men had assembled from the settlement, most of whom gave us their undivided attention, and approved apparently of all we said. After our religious exercises closed, I asked, "are you determined to go to hell?" and when they replied in the negative, I added "then destroy that demon temple." At this point, the "teacher" in white prostrated himself and made a short prayer in Karen, for the spread of Christianity.

After a short interval, I again resumed the subject of demon worship. On their promising to abandon every thing of the character, I continued "unless I see you destroy that demon temple, I shall not believe you." The matter was now referred to the teacher, as being a thing under his control. He said, "do as the great teacher says." No sooner were the words spoken, than one of the men, jumping up, exclaimed, "I will burn it then;" and in a few minutes, Ko-Thah-byoo, who had laid down to sleep, was preaching to the little circle assembled round its blaze. A large white umbrella also adorned the room, for the use of which I began now to inquire; when I learned that on spreading it out, "the teacher" saw the demons in it! This, I of course condemned to our auto-da-fe. Next appeared two frames of palm-leaf shades, used by Burman priests, but covered with white cloth—then a large bunch of rattans, loaded at one end with lead, and used, as I was informed, to beat demons out of their unfortunate possessions; all which were condemned to the flames. I now asked, "is there any thing more?" "The cap only," the *teacher* replied; and seeing this adorned with rows of green beetles, I reserved it for a curiosity.

Conversing with the teacher, after these things were over, he remarked, "teacher Boardman told the Karens before he went to Maulmein, to build zayats every where, and worship according to the books. We talked with each other in respect to the form of worship; and having no one to teach us, we devise this way ourselves." I directed them to keep the zayat for the service of God, in which they should assemble frequently, but more particularly on the

Sabbath, to read the Scriptures and pray to the Eternal God. The leading man however, seems an odd mixture of villainy and insanity, who has acquired a powerful influence over these credulous Karens by his magical practices; and I fear little permanent good will be effected, without the use of permanent means.

FRANCIS MASON.