Social life in Burma, AD 1044 - 1287

Analyzes social life and customs of the Bagan people during the period AD 1044 - 1287. The vocations of the Bagan people were: agriculture, including cowherds; food suppliers; craftsmen; musicians; and such diverse work as midwifery, launderess, boatmen, palanquin carriers, oil producers, water carriers and canal diggers. The slaves (kywan) in those days was different from later periods as individuals voluntarily turned themselves into slaves of religious establishments. A pagoda slave did not sink in the social scale, rather he gained merit and respect from his family and community.

Subject Terms
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2. Myanmar - history

Key Words
1. Slaves (Kywan)
SOCIAL LIFE IN BURMA, A.D. 1044 - 1287

by

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CHAI TA RWA (Pl. 423, 12) of Kyaukse district and Khrok Kharuin (Pl. 117a/9) of Minbu District were the first homes of the Burmans in Burma. It seems that they took the eleven kharuin from the Mon and the six kharuin from Poiloñ and Cakraw. Outside the kharuin area, there are the tuik areas which include Toñthwañ (Pl. 12/9) and Prāntawsā (Pl. 51/10) island in the south, the Yaw area in the west, the Pañkli Chai Tuik (Pl. 162/24) up to Monywa in the north west and the area extending up to Tagaung in the north. The social life that we are about to discuss is confined to these kharuin and tuik areas which roughly form the dry zone of central Burma getting less than fifty inches of rainfall per year. These areas as a whole were known as Tattadesa (Ep. Birm. I, ii, I-F/34) or the Parched Land, with centre at Arimaddanapura (Ep. Birm. I, ii, I-A/18) or Pagan. Later the area was divided into two portions which were known as Sunāparanta on the north of the Irrawaddy and Tambadipa on the south of the Irrawaddy. Kyanzittha’s Shwezigon Inscription (B/24)

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mentions the men "of the four castes" but there is no reason to believe that caste was recognised in Burma even at that time. It only means "the people in general" (Ep. Birm. I, ii, p. 78). The ruling people were known as mañ (Pl. 3 / 24), mañ kri (Pl. 24 / 3), mañ khyañ (Pl. 257 / 6, 13), mañ ce (Pl. 215b / 6), mañ nhama (Pl. 73 / 3), mon phathuy (Pl. 90 / 20), mañ phwā (Pl. 126b / 2), mañ myā (Pl. 31 / 21), mon sami (Pl. 67 / 13), mañ sā (Pl. 31 / 20), cuiw sā (Pl. 68 / 23), cuiw mañ (Pl. 133 / 27), amātya (Pl. 10a / 1), and buil pā (Pl. 6 / 21). We shall, however, dwell more upon the common people here with special reference to the slave community because lithic inscriptions of the period tell us more about the slaves than about anybody else.

Of the common people, we propose to deal first with the different nationalities living within the Parched Land. The most important of them were the Burmese. A Mon inscription of A.D. 1101 - 2 mentions them as mirma (Ep. Birm. III, i, IX-B / 42). The word mrañmā (Pl. 10a / 20) occurred first in an inscription of A.D. 1190. The spelling changed to mrañmā (Pl. 446b & Pl. 469a / 2) in about A.D. 1332. Mrañmā prañ (Pl. 87 / 1) which of course was the Tattadesa was first mentioned in A.D. 1235. Next we have Pyu (Pl. 31 / 7) who were probably the Chinese P'iao and the Mon Tircul (Ep. Birm. III, i, IX-B / 42). They lived on the northern and southern tips of the Burmese area and it seems that they mixed so freely with the Burmans that they disappeared rapidly during the Pagan period. Sak (Pl. 361a / 30) also must have been absorbed by the Burmese though a few of them still remain in the Akyab district. A peak near Pagan was known as Turan Sak Cuiw (Pl. 126b / 4) - a peak of Turan from where Sak were controlled. Saw lived to the west of the Mu in the Tabayin area (Pl. 228b / 5 & Pl. 94a / 17) and Kantu in the upper Mu. Sañthway Prañ (Pl. 271 / 13) or Tagaung was the centre of Kantu. The final conquest of their lands by the Burmese seems to have taken place in A.D. 1228 (Pl. 231b / 1). Khyañ (Pl. 78b / 32) and Yaw (Pl. 31 / 12) occurred in the inscriptions of our period more in geographic than in ethnic sense. There must have been also people from Arakan among the Burmese because we find the mention of Rakhiñ among both the slaves (Pl. 35 / 27) and the donors (Pl. 391 / 29, 37). The southern portion of the Burmese area must have been peopled first by Cakraw (Pl. 147b / 15), who were enlisted by the Burmans for military service (Pl. 162 / 5, 6, 7). Toñsu was also used in its ethnic sense in the inscriptions (Pl. 392 / 17, Pl. 393 / 13). Rmeñ (Ep. Birm. III, i, IX-B / 14, 42, G
or Tanluin (Pl. 27/4) were able to exercise quite a considerable influence over the Burmans in the first half of the Pagan dynasty. Kharinhu kharin including Tanluin Rwā Ma (Pl. 205/12.17) was located at the junction of the Samon and Myitngė. Krwam (Pl. 10a/24) or Cambodian population was also quite numerous, among whom Nā Pu Tat (Pl. 186/6, Pl. 239/12) was noted for bravery during the reign of Nātōmya. Lava lived perhaps in Sa'ito kharin to the east of the Sainthway canal (Pl. 20a/2) in Kyaukse district. Syam (Pl. 110/6) were also found to be very much mixed up with the Burmese as the word is frequently mentioned among the slave names. Cin (Pl. 216/33) or Chinese slaves were mentioned in A.D. 1266. Taruk (Pl. 271/3) might mean the Mongols. Kula (Pl. 10a/19) or Indians were most frequently recorded in the inscriptions. They must have had a great cultural influence over the Burmese. One type of architecture was called after them as Kulā kloń (Pl. 64/6) i.e. a brick monastery. Perhaps they were more numerous at saiphaw chip—shipping port, like Yhanpuiw (Pl. 76/1). Among the slaves, Indians formed the majority next to the Burmese. With this racial background, I think, we could now briefly examine their family life.

Family was very important in a society of that period: Im thoń (Pl. 73 passim) is the Burmese word for it. Some of the terms for blood relations are achuyamluiw (Pl. 13/20) or achuyaw (Pl. 3/17) or just chuymluiw (Pl. 44a/14) or pokpo (Pl. 36/12). Ancestors are àbep aphuiw (Pl. 6/23). A father is sometimes called khamañ (Pl. 90/19) but usually the parents are àmi òpha (Pl. 6/23). A husband and wife with children are often referred to as lań miyā sa cuń (Pl. 417/14). The loving couple are known as moń nham (Pl. 80/1) or myok sā (Pl. 42/30) or khāń pwan (Pl. 14/7). In-laws are yokkham (Pl. 197/14)—parents-in-laws yokpha (Pl. 205/27) or mat (Pl. 144/7)—brother-in-law, samak (Pl. 12/12)—son-in-law, khruyma (Pl. 265/37)—daughter-in-law, Step mother is nhoń ami (P.1.56b/4). Mother’s brother is either ari (Pl. 74/35) or uri (Pl. 597/11) and sister is ataw (Pl. 214b/6). But mother’s elder sister is mikri (Pl. 384/15) and younger sister mithuy (Pl. 181/2). Father’s elder brother is pha kri (Pl. 386/31) while the younger one is phathuy (Pl. 594/11). Beloved wife is pay myā (Pl. 3/13) or mayā pluiw (Pl. 134b/9). Since there are references to miyā ñay (lesser wife) (Pl. 7/12) and kuiw lup concubine (Pl. 1.40b/15) it would be quite safe to assume
that polygamy was recognised during that period. Though sā could mean son, the word sā (Pl. 180/8) is used as a generic term for children because daughter is invariably written as sāmi (Pl. 10b/5) or smi (Pl. 376/9). A suckling is nuiw cuiw (Pl. 22/9) and nuiw khuiw stealer of milk (Pl. 68/16) is perhaps an adopted child. Among the children, to a girl her elder sisters are acma (Pl. 199/8) and younger ones are nīma (Pl. 376/7) — and her elder brothers are ackuiw (Pl. 9b/7) and younger ones are moń (Pl. 376/10); and to a boy his brothers are noń whereas the elder brother is ackuiw and the younger one is ni (Pl. 376/5) or noń nai (Pl. 67/2, 9) and his elder sisters are acma — and younger ones nhama (Pl 376/10). Kamay (Pl. 4/7) is the word for widow. Thus they had well-knit family ties as the Burmans of to-day have. Their professions would enlighten us on the social conditions of these days.

Their professions roughly fall into five categories. Firstly there are the agriculturalists including cowherds; secondly the food suppliers including cooks; thirdly the craftsmen; fourthly the musicians and finally the miscellaneous.

Of the agriculturalists, lay sań (Pl. 193/26) or lay su (Pl. 110/7) — farmers, topped the list. Then there were such people as lay uyan con, (Pl. 75a/33) — those who guarded the fields and gardens, capā cuik (Pl. 175/2) — planters of paddy, and uyan sań (Pl. 76/2) — gardeners. Next come those who looked after cattle and poultry and for convenience sake we include here herders of other animals as well. They were nwa thin cowherds (Pl. 138/13), klawy thin buffalo herds (Pl. 73/47), chit thin goat-herds (Pl. 153a/19), chań thin elephant-keepers (Pl. 76/23) and wampay thin tenders of ducks (Pl. 183a/12). Queen Saw in A.D. 1299 proudly mentioned a nwa kloan cwm (Pl. 390/33) — expert cowherd called Nā Lyoń among the slaves dedicated to a pagoda. Burmans as indicated in an inscription were fond of nuiw sac nuiw thamm ryak tak thawpiy thawpat arasā nā pā (Pl. 235/9) — five delicacies of fresh milk, sour milk, butter milk, unclarified butter and clarified butter. Nuiw ūhat nwa ma (Pl. 134a/4) — the milch cows, must have been specially reared for such delicacies.
and curry and thus they had _thamañ sañ_ (Pl. 36/16)—rice cooks and _hañ sañ_ (Pl. 36/18)—curry cooks. Perhaps these were attached to big monastic establishments where preparing rice alone required an army of cooks. For the house-cook they had _im thamañ khyak_ (Pl. 110/6). To supply meat there were _away soñ_ (Pl. 391/33) of _may sañ_ (Pl. 153a/22)—butchers, _säcuñw_ (Pl. 36/19)—keeper of game and _muchuñw_ (Pl. 71/7)—hunters. _Puik sañ_ (Pl. 7/9) or _kwam sañ_ (Pl. 267/4)—net men, supplied fish. For sweetmeats, there were _nwə nuwi sañ_ (Pl. 36/18)—the milkman, and _vana, pyā sañ_ (Pl. 36/18)—the honey man. Chewing betel was a regular practice and perhaps demanded specialized service (See _JBRs_, XXX,i, p.312,n, 64) They had _kwam sañ_ (Pl. 391/13), _kwam taw sañ_ (Pl. 476/13), _kwam sə tañ sañ_ (Pl. 229/18) and _kwaimwan taw sañ_ (Pl. 74/28) as servers of _kwam yə_ (Pl. 139/11)—betel quids.

The third category includes craftsmen who were responsible for the beautiful Pagan architecture which we admire very much to-day, and who made articles of everyday use and weavers. They were _laksmañ_ (Pl. 81/12)—carpenters _tacañ sañ_ (Pl. 102/14)—plane men, _puran_ (Pl. 68/22/97)—masons, as builders; _panpu_ (Pl. 81/8)—woodcarvers, _pakhī_ (Pl. 144/5)—painters, _panpwat_ (Pl. 392/19) wood turners, _tañkyat sañ_ (Pl. 194/27)—canopy makers as decorators; _ut sañ_ (Pl. 595/13)—brick makers to supply bricks; _panphay_ (Pl. 68/22)—blacksmiths to supply things made of iron and _athu sañ_ (Pl. 392/11) or _purpa sañ_ (Pl. 391/3)—image makers to supply the images of the Lord. _Thi sañ_ (Pl. 148b/3)—umbrella makers to manufacture golden umbrellas (Calcutta Museum BG 232 shows a Burmese umbrella cast in bronze in A.D. 1293) to spread over pagodas or images. These builders, suppliers of building materials and decorators must have had a very busy time during the period under survey which is often called the period of temple-builders. There were also _panthin_ (Pl. 3/22)—goldsmith to make jewellery as well as the spires of temples and pagodas, where precious metal and stones were used. For pots and pans, there were _uiw thin_ (Pl. 392/11)—potters, _kara sañ_ (Pl. 216/30)—jug makers, and _laipūn sañ_ (Pl. 164/25)—tray makers. For making clothes, there are _khrən sañ_ (Pl. 391/36) and _khrə nyay sañ_ (Pl. 393/28)—spinners, _pukhrən sañ_ (Pl. 392/30) loincloth makers, and _yan sañ_ (Pl. 164/21)—weavers.

In the forth category were the musicians; these were players of various musical instruments among which the drum seemed to be the
most popular. Singing and dancing accompanied by the drum seemed to be one of the favourite diversions of the old Burmans since there were more people employed as cañ soñ (Pl. 9/8) - drummers and pantyā (Pl. 5/8) - nautches than any other musicians. For singing alone they had sikhrān sañ (Pl. 3/18) - the singers and for dancing they had kakhrīy sañ (Pl. 15/12) - the dancers. Other musicians were persons to blow tapuiw (Pl. 367a/5) - horns, pasā sañ (Pl. 10a/18) - side drummers khwakkhwan sañ (Pl. 17/19) - cymbal players, noinān sañ (Pl. 367a/5) - bell players, khara sañ Pl. 68/22) or nhañ sañ (Pl. 81/21) - trumpeters, caṅdra sañ (Pl. 85/9) - dulcimer players, narañerā sañ (Pl. 138/8) - trumpeters, coñ sañ (Pl. 265/36) - harpists and saro sañ (Pl. 387a/3) - violinists.

Lastly, there were professionals of various types. These were lak sañ (Pl. 79b/7) - midwife, kuhā sañ (Pl. 81/17) - launderers, lhaukā sañ (Pl. 376/4) - boat men, saṅryaṅ sañ (Pl. 275/18) - palanquin carriers, chañ chum sañ (Pl. 417/12) oil producers, riñ sañ (Pl. 392/2) - water carriers, mloñ mliv sañ (Pl. 423/30) - canal diggers, thañ.

As has already been stated, we know more about the slaves than about anybody else. Kywan (Pl. 10a/28) is the Burmese word for slave and it implies nowadays menial service by a person to another. But to a Burman of the medieval times the connotation of the word must have been different. We have evidence to show that people in those days voluntarily turned themselves into slaves of religious establishments (Pl. 6/10 - 15). Even kings had their children dedicated as slaves (Pl. 34/10). If a king could turn his own children or children whom he regarded as his own into slaves, it is obvious that to become a pagoda slave in those days did not imply that the person would go down in the social scale: workers as rakan soñ (Pl. 216/33) and alay sañ (Pl. 422a, iii/5). The wide range of professions shows us that the town community or the village community was self-sufficient.

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The majority of the slaves were hereditary. Hence such phrases as sä can mliy can (Pl. 164/31) or sā chak mliy chak (Pl. 164/32) meaning from son to grandson in succession. A slave community would come into being and every child born thereafter into that community was considered to be a slave. Perhaps the word sapok (Pl. 182a/21) was applied to a person born of slave parents. Eventually slave villages came into existence as kyôn rwāluṁ (Pl. 51/8) - the whole village of slaves, (in an inscription dated A.D. 1223); kloñ kywan rwā (Pl. 127a/3,4) - the village of monastery slaves, (in an inscription dated A.D. 1235); and wat kh läk rwā (Pl. 215b/18) the rice cooking village, meaning that the villagers were all slaves to the nearby monastery and that they served it as cooks. The famous Gubyàukgyi inscription of Prince Rājakumār mentions the three slave villages of Sakmunalon, Rcpāy and Henbuuw (Pl. 364/30–2). Owners naturally regarded slaves as part of their estates that could be handed down from father to son, or could be bought or sold or used in settling debts (Pl. 303/15) which often led to disputes and law suits concerning their ownership (Pl. 74/8–20). Perhaps to avoid such disputes at a later date, judges were called upon in some cases to witness the transfer of ownership (Pl. 56b/6–9) which was duly registered, signed and sealed (Pl. 77/6,10). Amuy kywan (Pl. 75a/3) - the inherited slave, is the term used by Nā U Lyōn to describe eleven slaves whom he inherited from his aunt Yaptaw Sañ Khyat Ma a concubine of king Cañsu I. But there are also records which explicitly state that same slaves were not part of the inherited property (Pl. 70/6–8). In such cases it can be deduced that certain slaves were acquired through buying or settling a debt or winning a law suit. If buying or selling slaves was possible, it could be assumed that there was some form of a recognised slave trade.

There are instances where donors in making dedication of slaves to religious establishments, very often mentioned the prices they paid for the slaves (Pl. 75a/3–6). A slave cost approximately thirty ticals of silver (Pl. 75a/57–8) or twenty viss of copper (Pl. 392/11–12). or twenty baskets of paddy (Pl. 392/30), while fifty slaves were exchanged for an elephant (Pl. 156/3–4), forty for an exceptionally good horse (Pl. 94b/13), one for a boat (Pl. 75a/45–6) or ten areca-nut palms (Pl. 175/16–17). A slave could redeem himself for as little as five viss of copper (Pl. 182a/18–19). On the other hand the price for redeeming an insolvent debtor who became a slave would be enormous. A piysma (Pl. 79a/1–13) who prepared palm leaves for writing,
called Nā Tañ, Sañ went bankrupt in A.D. 1227. He and his family became slaves of a minister called Anantasu. There are also probably instances of war captives and certain followers of a rebel prince being turned into slaves (Pl. 42 / 13 - 16). These slaves could become free again by either redemption or by simply running away.

Even though a modest sum of five viss of copper was the fee of liberty as mentioned above, some did run away (Pl. 75 b / 36, Pl. 76 / 10). But this did not happen frequently and we can find no evidence that they were even tracked down and given capital punishment. Most of the slaves were probably too contented with their lot and many of them were perhaps too attached to their native place to run away. Besides, the slave owners were merciful and benevolent. Slaves were never taken away from their native place but instead they were allowed to follow their own trade or profession with the added comfort that they had a master who would keep them for better or worse. Usually they were attached to a land in their locality (Pl. 216 passim) or in the case of professionals, people of the same vocation were grouped together (Pl. 144 / 22, 23). Cowherds stayed with their cows in their pasture lands (Pl. 138 / 13, 20). It was only the ownership which changed. Nevertheless there were some blacksheep amongst the slaves. Towards the end of the dynasty, in A.D. 1266, a whole group of Indian slaves at Yhanpuw was recorded to have absconded (Pl. 216 / 33). Yhanpuw was a port and was within easy reach of the sea. This proximity to the sea coupled with an uneasy political situation at that time might have tempted them to escape.

Benevolence as a characteristic of the slave owners is an outstanding feature of Pagan slavery. A donor (Pl. 19 b / 9 - 11) in A.D. 1198, dedicated to a pagoda 567½ pay of land and 228 slaves, the majority of whom were labourers who served the pagoda with the produce of the land, and the rest were slaves who were skilled artists. Among these were leader of the group who was the general supervisor; firewood cutter, a granary keeper, a dancer or singer and a drummer, all of these in their own skilled ways served the pagoda. For their service and for their welfare, the donor was meticulously careful to leave special special provisions for them. Out of 567½ pay of land, ten were allotted to the supervisor, five to the woodcutter, five to the granary keeper, five to the singer and three to the drummer.

Queen Saw, mother of Singhapatii and Tryaphya dedicated to a pagoda in A.D. 1241, 260 pay of land, 2 gardens and 178 slaves. So
bountiful was she that she left detailed instructions regarding the food supply for the slaves who were not even connected with the land (Pl. 138/30–6). Again the wife of Prince Gāṇgasura, in making a dedication of 511 ½ pay of land in A.D. 1242 stated that 15 pay were for the slaves (Pl. 147b/21). Queen Saw, mother of Rājasura, dedicated slaves to a monastery in A.D. 1291 and said that when these slaves became sick or old, the monks must give them proper treatment and care (Pl. 275/28–9). This is the best security that a man could desire against old age and infirmity and many of the Pagan slaves had that security. Very often we find raḥan (Pl. 7/9), pancaṅ (Pl. 146/3), and bhikkuni (Pl. 89/27, Pl. 92/14) among the lists of slaves. The only reason we could think of their presence in the lists of slaves is that they were born of slave parents. The Buddhist Order recognizes no class distinction nevertheless slaves must obtain the consent of their masters before they could become monks or nuns. These slaves must have had the permission of their masters before they joined the Order probably with the understanding that if and when they left the Order they should revert to slavery again. It is conceivable that their names were included in the lists of slaves so that should there be any disclaimer after he had left the Order, one of these lists might be used as an evidence against him. Apart from that the inclusion of their names in the lists seems to have no meaning at all. In one case it is specifically mentioned that a minister called Gāṇgabijaṅ allowed two adults and twenty children of his slaves to become monks and novices (Pl. 308/33).

There were also equally magnanimous slave owners who set their slaves free out of sheer kindness (Pl. 191a/15–16, Pl. 201a/9–14). Some owners not only set their slaves free but also gave them land so that they might not be in a paradoxical plight of gaining freedom yet being without work. When allowing their slaves to go free, the owners used this regular phrase mraṅ nu riy kraṅ hi rā lā ciy (Pl. 201a/9–10) meaning that the slaves could go wherever there is "tender grass and clear water". In one particular case the slaves of a pagoda were even given the right to decide for themselves when to leave the pagoda service (Pl. 280a/9–10). They could have sought freedom whenever they wanted. But with ample funds provided by the rich donor and only one image to look after, they decided perhaps to remain slaves for ever. They must have been either quite contented with their lot or devoted to their duties.
Their duties seem to be onerous. In A.D. 1197, Jeeyasethiy dedicated 141 slaves to a pagoda and monastery, in order that samput wat chîmî wat ma prat cim so nhā (Pl. 16/4-5) - 'in order that rice food and oil lamps shall be served without intermission'. Slaves whose exclusive duty was to cook rice or food at a monastery were known as samput khyak kyon (Pl. 50/22) or wat khyak kywan (Pl. 186/28). Minister Anantasura in A.D. 1223 clearly defined their duties as follows:—

To go on forever doing the necessary repairs (at the establishment); to sweep the compound; to go on serving the Lord and the Law without intermission with rice food, oil lamps, betel and flowers; to go on serving the patient reverend monks with the flowers of rice food on behalf of the loving couple (Pl. 73/30-1).

Minister Mahāsmān in A.D. 1255 gave another definition:

These slaves are to fetch the water for the monks to wash their feet, hands and bodies, and water to drink. They are (also) to cook the rice food and to sweep and remove the refuse (Pl. 186/27-8).

In A.D. 1269 a donor dedicated a lakṣmā (Pl. 261/7-8) - carpenter and a panphay (Pl. 261/24) - blacksmith to a ruined monastery to carry out necessary repairs. Another donor dedicated eleven slaves in the same year to his religious establishment (Pl. 225/6-7) so that they would be useful when necessity for repairs arose. The nature of duties might vary slightly among the slaves who were attached to the pagoda (Pl. 9/5), to the Law (Pl. 42/28), to the Order (Pl. 114a/7-9) and to the sima (Ordination Hall) (Pl. 212/15-16). Some of the slaves were personal attendants to the heads of monasteries (Pl. 229/20).

Beside the slaves of the religious establishments, there were domestic slaves who would be called variously as im kywan (Pl. 156/3, 4), im thōn kywan (Pl. 181/3), and im niy (Pl. 228b/9). Slaves at the court were known as either kywan taw (Pl. 228b/5) or mañ im kri sān (Pl. 421a/2).

Another interesting phenomenon about the slaves in the inscriptions is the terms used to describe them. In giving a list of slaves,
whenever it is necessary, short descriptive account accompanied their names e.g. ìm thon for the head of the family, kamay for a widow, Yà (Pl. 4 / 7) as prefix for a woman of Mon extract, pucù (Pl. 7 / 9) for young people, nùiw, cuiiw, (Pl. 22 / 9) for sucklings, cùtát (Pl. 7 / 6) for literates and samì apluiw ñay (Pl. 270 / 11) for young unmarried daughter. There are certain terms used as prefixes to the names of both sexes but unfortunately we have not been able to identify them yet. These are mhùra (Pl. 73 / 51), mrakra (Pl. 73 passim), phut (Pl. 73 passim) and uiw, phu khi (Pl. 73 passim).

With regard to literacy among slaves, three inscriptions dated A.D. 1227 (Pl. 73), A.D. 1235 (Pl. 181) and A.D. 1249 (Pl. 376) throw much light on this subject. They mention the expression cùtát (literate) more than any other inscriptions. The first inscription enumerates seventy eight slaves, among whom nine were literate (five boys and four girls). In the second one there are 116 slaves, of whom eight were literate (only boys). In the third there were 140 slaves, of whom seventeen were literate (thirteen boys and four girls). Therefore according to the statistics, approximately 10 percent of the slaves were literate. Among the free people the percentage would still be higher. It is interesting to note that there were girls among the literate of which they formed a quarter. The slave community was considerable and there were slave villagers with their own administrative officers as sukùri (Pl. 89 / 22) headman, to control the village; kumtháñ (Pl. 68 / 19) to supervise cultivation; and sañkùri (Pl. 25 / 8) and sañlyáñ (Pl. 73 / 49) as village elders. The mentioning of a slave wife is conspicuous by its absence. Perhaps taking a slave wife was unpopular though the society, as has been stated, allowed polygamy. To sum up: slaves especially pagoda slaves, it seems, were not regarded as social outcast in that period as they are at the present time.

This then is a very brief survey of the social life in Burma, A.D. 1044 – 1287.