Miscellaneous Notes on the Word "Talaing"

The following three notes relating to the origin of the Burmese word "Talaing" were published shortly before World War I. It is hoped that they may be of some use to ongoing debates on "Mon" history.

M.W.C.

Origin of the Word "Talaing" (1912)[79]

M. O.

Phayre, in his History of Burma, page 28, says that the name "Talaing" is obviously connected with the word Telingana, and accepts the theory that the Mun (or Mon) were originally settlers from southern India. There is a great deal to be said in favour of this view, but many have been inclined to place faith in the story that the epithet "Talaing" (said to mean "downtrodden") was applied to the Peguans by Alompra after his conquest in 1757. That the latter suggestion is utterly incorrect may easily be proved; we have only to turn to several well-known Burmese works of much earlier date to see that the term as designating the people of the delta was known and used long before Alompra.

The *Yakhaing Minthami Egyin*, written about 820 B. E. (1458), the *Thakin Twe Egyin,* composed in honour of a princess born in 830 (1468), and the *Mindaya Shwehti Nadaw-thwin*, an ode submitted to Tabin Shwehti, who reigned from 1530 to 1550,—all give the name "Talaing," rhyming with other words having the same vowel-ending.

Among other works there are also Maung Kala's histories, the Yazawingyi, the Yazawin-lat, and the Yazawin-gyok, all written about 30 years before Alompra appeared, and in all of which the same name is found.

The Alaung-mindaya-gyi Ayedawbon, a detailed account of the great King's exploits, does not mention the alleged re-naming of the Mons.

JBRS 2 (1912)

Note on the Word "Talaing" (1912)[80]

Charles Duroiselle

The etymology on the word "Talaing" has given rise to much controversy.[81] The derivation offered by Forchhammer,[82] followed later on by J. Gray, is absolutely inadmissable, not only because it is fundamentally wrong, not to say absurd, but principally because it makes the word "Talaing" originate with Alompra in the 18th century. Now, as M. O. rightly points out, the name was known to the Burmese before Alompra, and this alone would be sufficient to refute Forchhammer's view; but this word was also known to the Chinese early in the 17th century.[83] Kou Tsou-Yu, in his Tou che fang yu ki yao, speaks of the great Kou-la[84] called also Pai-kou, that is Pegu, to the north of which are the people of Tong-wou (Taungu) and to the south-east the people known as Tö-leng; these latter, we are told, are a division of the Kou-las (that is Peguans=Talaings) and in 1610 A.D. they sided with the Siamese in an attack on the Burmese. It remains to see whether Tö-leng was the indigenous tribal name, pronounced by the Bur-

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[79] Original source: *Journal of the Burma Research Society*. M.W.C.

[80] Original source: *Journal of the Burma Research Society*. M.W.C.

[81] Cf. Hobson-Jobson, 889-90.

[82] Notes on the Early History and Geography of British Burma, Part ii, p. 11-12, Government Press, Rangoon, 1884.

[83] See Bulletin de l'École Français d'Extrême-Orient, Vol. IV, 1904, 292 and note 5.

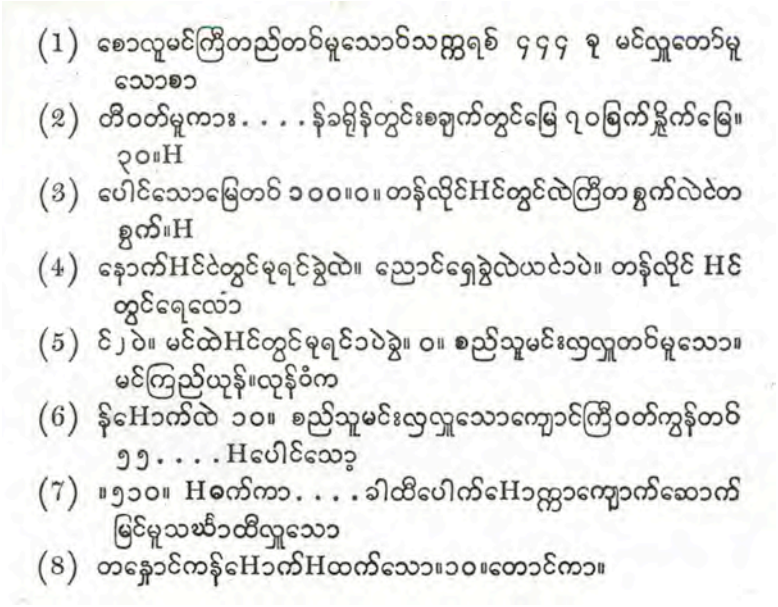
[84] On Kou-la cf. also Parker's Burma, its Relations with China, 65f. He writes: Kulah and Kulat.

mese Talaing, or whether it was a Chinese pronunciation of "Talaing" itself; I incline to the latter assumption, and in this case the word Talaing was known to the Burmese at least before the beginning of the 17th century. The derivation of Phayre,[85] which makes it come from Telinga=Kalinga, is no doubt the right one.

A Further Note on the Word Talaing (1913)[86]

Maung Mya

At page 246, Vol. II, Part II, of the Journal of this Society [*Journal of the Burma Research Society*], Mr. Charles Duroiselle in his note on the word *Talaing*, referring to an inscription dated B. E. 469 = A. D. 1107, says that that word has been in use long before it was thought to be, and thinks that it was probably in use among the Burmese in the time of King Anawrata in the llth century A. D. In support of the above I am glad to be able to give below another inscription,[87] dated B. E. 444=A, D. 1082, wherein the same word "Talaing" occurs, thus taking us back a few decades further and bringing us within a few years from the end of the reign of King Anawrata (A .D, 1044-1077).[88]


(1) စောလူမင်းကြီးတည်တဝ်မူသောဝ်သက္ကရဇ် ၄၄၄ ခု မင်လူတော်မူ
သောစာ
(2) တိဝတ်မူကား။ . . . . နံခရိုနံတွင်းစချက်တွင်မြေ ၇၀ခြက်နှီက်မြေ။
၃၀။H
(3) ပေါင်သောမြေတဝ် ၁၀၀။၀။ တန်လိုင်Hင်တွင်လဲကြီးတ စွက်လဲငံတ
စွက်။H
(4) နောက်Hင်ငံတွင်မုရင်ခွဲလဲ။ ညောင်ရှေခွဲလဲယငံဝဲ။ တန်လိုင် Hင်
တွင်ရေလော်ဒ
(5) ငှဝဲ။ မင်ထဲHင်တွင်မုရင်ဒဝဲခွဲ။ ဝ။ စည်သူမင်းလွှလူတဝ်မူသော။
မင်ကြည်ယုန်။လုန်ဝံက
(6) နံHဒက်လဲ ၁၀။ စည်သူမင်းလွှလူသောကျောင်ကြီဝတ်ကွန်တဝ်
၅၅. . . . Hပေါင်သော့
(7) ။၅၁၀။ Hခက်ကာ. . . . ခါထိပေါက်Hဒကွာကျောက်ဆောက်
မြင်မူသဘီာထိလူသော
(8) တနှောင်ကန်Hဒက်Hထက်သော။၁၀။တောင်ကာ။

Translation

(1) (The year) in which the King Saw Lu built (this pagoda) is Sakkaraj 444,[89] and the land which the King dedicated to the pagoda

(2) is comprised of 70 (plots of) land at Sagyet, 30, at Chet, within the district of .....

(3) totalling 100, and of one large plot, and one small plot, of paddy land in *Tanlaing-in*

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[85] History of Pegu in *J. R. A. Society of Bengal* Vol. XLII, Part I.

[86] Original source: *Journal of the Burma Research Society*. M.W.C.

[87] The inscription was found among those collected by King Bodawpaya, and placed originally near the Sin-gyo Shwe-ku Pagoda, but now removed to the Patodawgyi Pagoda, Amarapura. The whole collection has now been transcribed into modern Burmese characters and printed. It is expected that the volume will issue from the Press in a few month's time.

[88] This date was taken from the "Jātā-bôn Yazawin" which is considered to be more trustworthy than the *Hman-nan* (see para 44 at page 16 of Mr. Taw Sein Ko's report [i]n the Archaeological Survey of Burma for the year ending 31st March, 1911.

[89] This date falls outside of that assigned by the *Hmannan* to the reign of King Saw Lu. According to it King Saw Lu reigned from B. E. 421-426 (A. D. 1059-1064). But if we accept the date given in the "Jātā-bon-Yāzawin", B. E. 439-446 (A. D. 1077-1084), the date in the inscription fits in very well, and the construction of the pagoda took place two years before the death of King Saw Lu.

(4) of Mayingwè paddy land at Anauk-in-ngè, of one pè at Nyaung-she-gwè, at Tanlaing-in

(5) of 2 *pès* of land that has to be watered, and of one and a half *pès* of *Mayin* at Min-dè-in, (The land) dedicated by Sithu Min Hla (to this pagoda) is, below Lôn Wun *Kan* (lake) of Mingyi Yon,

(6) 10 (plots of) paddy land. The land dedicated by Sithu Min Hla to the great monastery is 55 (plots of land) for cultivating betel, totalling

(7) 510 Above.....is Khādibauk, and below are Kyauksauk and Myinmu. (The land) dedicated by (the monk) Thingahti is

(8) below and above Tahnaung *Kan* (lake), 10, On the South.....

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The word *Talaing,* occurs in lines 3 and 4 and is spelt *Tanlaing,* in the same way as in Mr. C. Duroiselle's. inscription. It is used here as an appellation or name of a certain lake, perhaps in commemoration of a certain event connected with the *Talaings.* This fact. would probably take us right into the reign of King Anawrata, if perhaps not earlier, for the event after which a certain place is called will occur some years before the name becomes popular.

The inscription records the dedication of land to a pagoda and a monastery by Kings Saw Lu and Sithu Minhla[90] and a Monk; therefore it is not contemporaneous with King Saw Lu. But there is no reason to doubt that the name *Tanlaing In* has been kept intact without any attempt to obliterate the original that existed in the time of King Saw Lu.

[90] There were two Kings with their names ending in *Sithu:* Alaungsithu, B. E. 473-529 (A. D, 1111-1167) and Narapatisithu, B. E. 535-572 (A. D. 1173-1210). It is not certain to which of them the name in the inscription refers, most probably Alaungsithu is meant.

The inscription was put up probably in the time of Alaungsithu, i.e., about 50 years after the reign of Saw Lu. This is borne out by the archaic character of some of the words; for example, စာတီ (line 1) for စေတီ (a pagoda), ခရိုန် (line 2) for ခရိုင် (District), တန်လိုင် (lines 3 and 4) for တလိုင် (Talaing), ပဲ (lines 4 and 5) for ပယ် (pè=about 2 acres).

Note:

The following is an abstract of a letter read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1871. It was originally published in the *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal January to December 1871* (Calcutta: C. B. Lewis, Baptist Mission Press, 1871).

M.W.C.

On Some North Arracan Celts (1871)

Mr. St. John

Mr. St. John gives outlines of several celts in his collection. One large form is from Upper Burma and, in having a short abrupt shoulder, resembles the Burmese celts described and figured by Mr. Thoobald in the Proceedings of the Society for 1869, p. 181 &c., pls. iii and iv. Two other celts are from the hills in North Arracan and are in form and size very similar to those figured in the Proceedings for 1870, pls. iii and iv. One of them has the lower edge sharpened from both sides, the other only from one. A fourth outline represents a long iron hatchet, of the shape of a broad chisel; it is still in use by the Arakanese in being simply put through a hole at the end of a stick of a male bamboo.

The following royal edict issued in 1867 was originally published in *Official Narrative of the Expedition to Explore the Trade Routes to China viâ Bhamo, Under the Guidance of Major E. B. Sladen, Political Agent, Mandalay, with Connected Papers* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1870): xxxix.

M.W.C.

Royal Edict of King Mindon, 1867

Colonel Albert Fytche, Chief Commissioner of British Burma, has represented to me that commerce is likely to be immensely increased and improved and the prosperity of both countries secured by opening out the old overland route between Bhamo and the Chinese frontier. He further informs me that it is his intention to depatch an expeditionary party, whose duty it will be, under instructions received from the Government of India, to proceed overland from Bhamo as far as the Chinese cities of Yoonchan and Talifoo in Yunan. My co-operation and assistance are solicited in a work which is intended to increase trade and add to the material prosperity of both countries. I therefore agree to assist this party as far as lays in my power, and will cause it to be well received at each of the places at which it may arrive en route. All officials, Saubwas, Magistrates, and Tseekays within my territories, are hereby ordered not to impede in any way, but to further, the progress of the English party by every means in their power.

Given at our Royal Palace at Mandalay, the first day of the increasing moon Ta-shoung-hmon 1229, Burman Era.

Letter from Colonel A. P. Phayre addressed to Captain Crisp, Rangoon
Dated 22 June 1852, Akyab[91]

My dear Capt. Crisp,

Many thanks for your interesting letter of the 26th ultimo delivered to me by your nephew. I am sorry to say he could not procure a cargo of tobacco and betel nut. The former has been a good deal exported to Europe this year and the latter now in the market is not of good quality, so he was obliged to go on to Calcutta.

I am looking forward anxiously to see what will be the upshot of this expedition to Rangoon. As you remark it will be quite impossible to give up the Pegu country to the Burmese again. I should much like to know if you would undertake to hold the country with the people themselves, the British Government only supplying arms and ammunition to arm the people.

I was glad to see mention made of your son's gallant conduct at the storming of the Pagoda. I hope his exertions will be well rewarded. I know not in what way I am to get across the mountains to you, but I shall be sorry to be shut out of all participation in the struggle if further operations are determined on.

I shall be doubly anxious to hear what the Government is replying to the petition of the people of Rangoon to have you as their Civil Magistrate. You have great claims from your long residence among them and your intimate knowledge of their claims, interests and wants.

I shall yet hope to meet you there and so until then between lines, my dear Capt. Crisp,

Very truly yours,
A. P. Phayre

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[91] Source: *Journal of the Burma Research Society*.

Two Missionary Letters from Arakan (1839)

Circa 4 March 1835

Letter of Mr. Comstock
Originally published in *Baptist Missionary Magazine* 16.2 (1836)

Original editorial comments: Mr. and Mrs. Comstock arrived at Kyouk Phyoo, in this province [Arracan], the 4th of March last [1835]. In a letter to the Corresponding Secretary, Mr. Comstock gives the following description of the Province.

As this province is a new field of labor, perhaps a hort account of it will not be uninteresting. It is situated on the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal, and extends from 15° 54' to 20° 51' North lat. Its width is very variable.

At the northern part. of the province, it is about 90 miles wide, while the width at the extreme southern point is but 2 or 3 miles. Probably the average width is something less than fitly miles. It is bounded on the north by the province of Chittagong, on the east by the Burman empire, and on the south and west by the Bay of Bengal. An extensive range of mountains is the boundary between Arracan and Burmah, over which are several passes—one to Ava, one to Prome, another to Bassein, &C. Only the first, is very much travelled. By this we are only six or eight days' journey from Ava. A good deal of this province is mountainous, and much of the rest is jungle or uncultivated land. The people live in small villages, which are scattered over the whole province.

The population according to the government census, I do not exactly know, but it must be something less than 250, 000. It is very difficult, however, to ascertain the population, as the people will deceive all they can, to avoid taxes, which were very oppressive under the Burman government, and are not very light now. A great deal of itinerant labor must be performed here, as the inhabitants are so scattered; and much must be done by tracts. Two or three laborers beside br. Simons and myself, I think should enter this field as soon as may be. The province is subdivided into four subordinate jurisdictions, called districts. The northern one, Akyab, is the largest.. Here is br. Fink, with his native church, and here I believe br. Simons intends to settle. The Ramree district is the next in size. It consists of Ramree Island, about forty miles long, and on an average about fifteen wide, extending from 18° 51' to 19° 24' N. L., of Cheduba Island, lying a short distance to the S. W. of Ramree, which is 18 miles long, and 14 wide, and of several smaller islands. There are in the district 374 villages, and about 70,000 inhabitants. This is the field of labor I occupy. Kyouk Phyoo is on the northern point of Ramree Island, and, though not as central or as large as some other places, is on some accounts a very desirable station. It is very healthy, is visited by a good many natives from other places, who bring articles to sell to the English, troops, &,c., and the harbor is an anchoring ground to the numerous native boats belonging to Rangoon, Bassein, &c., on their way to and from Calcutta. I do not, however, feel decided in reference to a permanent location. The Sandoway, and Aeng districts are important fields of labor; but very little can be done for them, till more missionaries are sent to Arracan.

4 March 1839

Extract From a Letter of Mr. Comstock
Originally published in *Baptist Missionary Magazine* 19.11 (1839).

Original editorial comments: It will be seen by the following letter that Mr. Comstock and family, who were compelled to leave Kyouk Phyoo, near the close of 1837, on account of ill health, have been enabled to recommence their labors in Arracan, at a more salubrious station, and in circumstances favorable to the permanent prosecution of the mission. The letter is dated at Ramree, March 4, 1839.

I left Maulmain with my family and br. And sister Stilson, on the 1st last month, in the ship Louvre, of Boston, and reached Kyouk Phyoo on the 18th. I brought with me from M. two native assistants, beside an old Mug Christian baptized by br. Judson two or three years since. Br. S. has also two assistants with him After reamining ten days at Kyouk Phyoo, we (br. S. and myself) left for this place, where it is the intention of both of us to locate. The Board, I think, are already aware of the size and importance of Ramree, being itself a town (including suburbs) of nearly

10,000 inhabitants, and the centre of a large population. We think there is ample scope here for both of us; and the advantages of having two missionaries at one station, every where important, are in such a place as Arracan peculiarly so.

I am not yet definitely informed as to the course which the English Baptist Society will take in reference to Akyab station, but have heard indirectly that Mr. Fink is to spend a portion of each year in A., and native assistants are stationed there all the while. Were this not the case, I am not prepared to believe it our duty to locate at present at A. It is a large, fine town, and is improving rapidly; but from the time that Europeans first inhabited the place till the present, it has had the reputation of being very sickly. It is believed to be improving in salubrity, and that it will eventually be a healthy place. Should this anticipation be realized, and the field opened to us, it certainly will be very desirable to occupy it. At present, the districts of Ramree and Sandoway, if suitably occupied, will afford room for all the missionaries we are likely to have in the province for four or five years to come.

We have come here with strong desires to be made instrumental in the salvation of souls, and I can but hope that God will graciously grant us his blessing, and convert many of these heathen through our instrumentality. We beg an interest in the earliest and frequent prayers of the Board, and all our Christian friends at home.