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A Short Account of the Hill Tribes of North Aracan

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as words of Arabic abuse indicating his character. At a meeting at Vienna, a discussion resulted in the conclusion that the words were Burmese, and the whole workmanship is evidently Burmese ornamental tattooing. The pose in the various figures and their execution indicate great proficiency of the performers; and much regret was felt that this skin might be injured by the ultimate effects of his malady. The proposition to avert such a mishap by making him the subject of lethal experimentation was not adopted. When last seen he was meditating a tour exhibition.

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The following paper was read by the author:—

A SHORT ACCOUNT of the HILL TRIBES of NORTH ARACAN. By R. F. ST. ANDREW ST. JOHN, Assistant Commissioner of British Burma.

THE following notes were taken during a sojourn of only eighteen (1870-71) months amongst the Hill tribes of North Aracan, and spent in their supervision as magistrate and collector, and are, therefore, not so full as they might be, yet, though these and similar tribes have been already described by Sir Arthur Phayre, in the "Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society," and Captain Lewin, the Deputy-Commissioner of the Chittagong hill tracts, in his book "The Wild Races of the South-Eastern Frontier of India," I think that there are several points which have not been touched on by either which may be of interest to ethnologists; and, moreover, the late Loo-shay war has shown that, in order to ensure a lasting peace and immunity from their depredations, a close study of their manners and customs is absolutely necessary to a sound understanding of the difficulty. A difficulty which, from being shunned, has at last ended in a large expenditure of money with a still imperfect result. I do not mean altogether to deprecate the use of force, for in many cases this is the only argument that convinces certain portions of the human race, but I am of opinion that oftentimes a seasonable show of power and determination is quite sufficient, and obviates the necessity of resorting to measures to which humanity is averse.

The tribes herein treated of are located in a large tract of hilly country lying between the 21st and 22nd degrees of north latitude and 93rd and 94th east longitude, and drained by the Kulah-dan and Lay-mro rivers with their affluents. A survey party has been as far north as about  $21\frac{1}{2}$  deg. north latitude; but the sources of the Kulah-dan which flows into the sea at Akyab are as yet unknown, unless they have been discovered by the surveyors of the late expedition. The classical name of the Kulahdan is Gittshabā, but the Hkamies call it Yam-pang.

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The tribes inhabiting this hilly tract of country are—1, the Rahkaing or Chyoung-thah ; 2, Shandoo ; 3, Hkämie, commonly called Hkway-mie ; 4, Mro ; 5, Anu, or Hkoun-g-tso ; 6, Chin, or Hkyn ; 7, Chaw.

The Rahkaing, commonly called Chyoung-thah (*i.e.*, children of, or dwellers near, the stream), are of the Burmese or Mran-ma stock, and speak a dialect differing but little from the dialect commonly spoken in the lowlands of Aracan. They are divided into clans, or families, each having a separate name, some of whom trace their origin to Peguans who were sent over with a Peguan princess who was married to an Aracanese king. Though their manners and customs are similar to those of the Burmese in general, and they profess themselves to be Buddhists, yet long contact with the wilder hill tribes has caused them to adopt many of their customs and superstitions. Formerly their villages were pushed far up the Kulah-dan, or Git-tshabā river, but the pressure of the tribes above has of late years driven them in. The name Mran-ma is applied to the Chyoung-thah, Aracanese, and Burmese, and is, I firmly believe, the original name of the race. Sir Arthur Phayre has already in the "Journal of the Ethnological Society," vol. v, expressed his opinion that the name is a modern corruption of the Pali Brāmāh or Brāhma ; but with all due deference to such a great authority, I must say that I cannot understand how Brāmāh or Brāh-ma can be corrupted into Mran-ma, though the reverse is easy. Besides the Burmese are known to the Chinese as "Mreen," or "Mien," and to the Shans as "Man," both very like Mran, and it is well-known that the termination "ma" (feminine) denotes chief or parent. They are a quiet, pleasant people, in disposition more like the Burmese than their nearer relations the proud, indolent, overbearing Aracanese, who seem to have received a large admixture of foreign blood. Their dress consists of a "dolyah," or waist-cloth of dark homespun cotton, and a white cotton "goung-boung," or turban, the long hair being tied in a knot on the top of the head. I believe it will generally be found that this way of fastening the hair is one great mark of difference between Burmese and Indian Hill tribes. The women wear a dress similar to the Aracanese, which is the same as that worn by the Burmese, save that it comes further round the body so as not to expose the leg in walking ; the colours, however, are sad, and throughout the whole Aracanese family there seems to be a want of appreciation of the harmonious blending of bright colours so dear to the Eastern Burmese eye. It has often been stated that this peculiar dress was introduced amongst the Eastern Burmese in order to put an end to certain disgusting practices, but I do not believe that there are any good

grounds for this assertion, and that the present dress is merely an enlarged form of the old dress worn by the Mranma before they advanced in civilisation, and which is still worn by their wild cousins. Tattooing is practised, but not to such an extent as in Burma proper, the utmost being a few charms on the back, chest, or shoulders. The Burmese practice of tattooing the thighs has also been attributed to the above-mentioned practice, but I think a more rational reason is, that when the Burmese males took to wearing a long waist-cloth, the unexposed parts did not turn so brown as those exposed, and this light skin being unsightly when the loins were girt up, tattooing was introduced to enhance their personal appearance. The written character used by the Chyoug-thahs is the same as that used all over Burma, but that of their books slightly differs, as the original Burmese books were for a long time copied by Bengali scribes who were ignorant of the language, and introduced new forms.

The next tribe on the list is the Shan-doo, but of their manners and customs very little is yet known. Major Tickell in 1852 had an interview (described in the "Bengal Asiatic Society's Journal") with one Leb-bai, the chief of a clan called Bouk-kie. In appearance they differ but little from the Hka-mie and Chin tribes, but their language or dialect is not understood by either, though there a few words common to both. On comparing the account of this tribe by Captain Lewin in his "Wild Races of the South-eastern Frontier of India," with that given by Major Tickell and my own observations, the only points in common are that they frequently use timber in building their houses, whereas other tribes use bamboos, that they are polygamous, that they had a dread of water above knee-deep, and that they bury their dead in graves dug in the village, together with their valuables, instead of burning them after the manner of the other tribes and the Burmese. Captain Lewin states that "their features do not bear any signs of Mongolian physiognomy, and Major Tickell remarks this of one specimen only; those, however, which I have come across were decidedly Mongolian in feature. The women are far better clad than those of the other tribes, and are said to be much handsomer. It was to have been hoped that the late expedition against the Looshays would have afforded more information regarding this almost unknown tribe, but, as far as I have heard, the column never penetrated to it, which is much to be deplored on another account, as they are inveterate raiders, and hold many of our fellow subjects captive.

The Hkă-mies, or, as they are more commonly called, the Hkway-mies, are the principal tribe of those under British protection, though not so numerous as the Chins. Three or four generations ago this tribe dwelt further to the north-east in the

country now occupied by the Shandoos, but have been driven southwards by them, in turn displacing the Mros and Chyoung-thahs. They are divided, like all the hill peoples, into clans, which doubtless in their former habitat had their own peculiar lands, and were each ruled by influential chiefs, but their forced migration has now destroyed all this, and the clans are scattered and confused, though keeping together for the most part in clan villages, under a head man or "a-raing," whose office is usually hereditary. The name Hkämie is the one by which they call themselves, and means "man" (*homo*). From features, language, and manners I consider that they are of the same family or nearly related to the Mran-ma, as are also the Mros, who differ but slightly in language and customs. The dress of the male Hkämies is a long home-spun cotton cloth, about one foot in width, which is passed several times round the waist and once between the legs, the coloured ends hanging down in front and behind; the hair is knotted over the front part of the head, and a long twisted white cloth is bound round the head so as to make a turban standing well up over the forehead. This adds to the height and sets them off to great advantage; they are generally well set up and muscular, but vary greatly in stature; though wary and occasionally deceitful, I have always found that to be honest and straightforward is the best way to get on with them—their distrust is the result of their dealings with people whom they know deceive them, and if once convinced that you will keep your word, they will always trust you. Generally speaking, I think they are more open to improvement than any of the other tribes, not even excepting the Chyoung-thahs; there can be no doubt but that they are more fully able to understand the benefits of peace and trade, and are desirous of changing their former predatory habits. This seems to be a universal law with regard to people who have been driven to change their habitat. The Mros wear a small blue waist-cloth, about four inches wide, and are not particular about their head-dress or personal appearances; their houses, too, are small; the desire for improvement is not so great. The women of both dress almost exactly alike, in a short dark blue cloth reaching to the knee and open at the side; it is fastened round the waist with a net of cords covered either with large beads or copper rings; over the breast is also worn a small strip of cloth. They are more squarely built than the men, and the habit of carrying very heavy weights on their backs in baskets with a band passing over their forehead up the precipitous hill paths makes them walk with a constrained and waddling gait; some when young are good-looking, but constant labour soon destroys their personal appearance. The last remarks are true of all the Hill tribes.

The Anus or Hkountsos and Kôngs are tribes not much known. Their dress and customs are said to be similar to those of the Hkămies, but they speak a distinct dialect which contains many words and expressions intelligible to the Manipooreans.

The Chins are the most widely spread of all the tribes, and inhabit the mountain range that divides Aracan from Burma (*i.e.* Ava and Pegu) extending from far north almost down to Cape Negrais; though all acknowledge that they are of the same family, and universally tatoo the faces of their women—a practice peculiar to the tribe—yet there is a great difference between the dialect of those who are brought captive from the east side and that of those inhabiting the Arakan Hills. Generally speaking, they are very shy and averse to improvement, cultivating neither cotton nor tobacco for sale. They are divided into numerous clans, each of which is located on certain tracts sufficiently large to supply them with cultivation, but whose boundaries they are never allowed by clan law to exceed. It has been said that they adopted the custom of tatooing the women's faces in order to prevent the Burmese kings from carrying off the pretty ones to their harems; this explanation, however, is highly improbable; the most likely reason is that it was adopted as a mark whereby they might be recognised when carried off by other tribes, or perhaps to enable them the better to conceal the women of other tribes captured by them. Their language, though not understood by either Hkă-mies or Mros, has many words in common. The men knot their hair more over the forehead, and the waist-cloth is reduced to the smallest dimensions; in fact, it can hardly be said to have the slightest pretensions to decency. The women wear a short waist-cloth, open on both sides like an apron before and behind, and a short smock; some clans, however, wear it long.

The Chaws consist of only a few families in a single village, and are undoubtedly of the Kookie race, but it is not known how they became separated from the main body. The men knot their hair behind, and the women plait it into tails which are brought up over the forehead. Having now mentioned the various tribes and a few of their characteristics, I will proceed to give a general sketch of their manners and customs, for, though there may be a few minor differences, yet, on the whole, one account will suffice for all.

The religion of all these tribes is spirit-worship of the most primitive kind (the Chyounghahs excepted), and simply consists in a sacrifice—usually of blood—to the spirits of the rivers and fells as a means of averting evil; and the performance of almost every act has to be accompanied with the shedding of the blood of some animal or bird. The word Kă-nie is used by the

Hkāmies to represent a spirit or dryad, also the sun and day; a spirit or kǎ-nie is supposed to reside in almost everything. The last part of the word kǎ-nie is identical with the Burmese “nay”, sun or day, pronounced by the Aracanese “nie”; the “ka” being pronounced quickly, was soon lost, but I think may still be detected in the Burmese, “ta-nin-ga-nway”, day of the sun, as compared with “ta-nin-la”, day of the moon, when “la” undoubtedly means moon. During the year there are two very important ceremonies for the propitiation of the Kǎ-nie, viz., at the time of sowing seed, and before harvest. At the first a fowl or pig is taken alive to the place to be sown; a small heap of rice-seed is placed on the ground, and the blood of the animal poured thereon; the flesh is taken home and eaten. The second is performed when the rice-plant is well-grown, but before the ear has come; a fowl, pig, or dog is killed at home, the blood smeared on long bamboos, decorated by shaving round the joints, so as to leave tassels and tufts hanging from them. These bamboos are taken and stuck up in various parts of the field. There is also another important annual feast, not in honour of the Kǎ-nie, but of the departed spirits called “hpa-law”; this ceremony is performed by the Hkamies and Chyounghahs, but not by the Mros. It is held by the Hkamies after harvest, and called “ta-proung-pa-oung,” or “the opening of the house of the dead.” When a person dies, and has been burnt, the ashes are collected and placed in a small house in the forest, together with his spear or gun, which has first been broken in pieces. These small houses are generally placed in groups near a village, and are sometimes large enough to be mistaken for one. After harvest the whole of the deceased’s relatives cook various kinds of food, and take them, with pots of “a-moo”, or liquor made from fermented rice, to the village of the departed; the doors of the houses are opened, and food having been placed inside, are reclosed; the relatives then weep, eat, drink, and return home.

The Chyounghahs perform this ceremony thrice a year, but it simply consists in setting aside food and drink for the departed for a short time, and then throwing it away.

During the dry season numerous feasts are given, at which large numbers of cattle are killed and eaten, and rice-beer and spirits consumed. It is a mark of distinction to be able to have it said that they have killed so many head of cattle at a feast. The largest number I ever heard of was one hundred and fifty. The gayals, oxen, and buffaloes are tied up to a post and speared, but other animals have their throats cut. Dogs are often castrated when young for use at these feasts. The post used by the Mros is shaped like a Y, and just below the fork carved so as to represent two or more breasts. There is some peculiar

signification attached to this symbol, both by the Mros and Hka-mies, and it may often be seen carved on the posts of the headmen's houses, and on the house-ladder. The true meaning I never could get; the usual answer being, "It is the custom inherited from our forefathers." The Hkamies and Chins, however, do not carve their posts, but set them up in the rough; in the Chin villages I have sometimes seen stones set up on end.

At the feasts there is always a great drinking of rice-beer. This is made by cooking rice in a large pot, with certain ferment-causing roots; when required for use this pot is brought out, and filled up to the brim with water, and a reed, with two small holes cut at the sides just above the bottom joint, thrust down into the rice; the drinkers suck up the liquor through this tube, and when the first man has done he fills up, and the pot is passed on to the others in succession. One pot is sufficient for a large number of men. Sometimes five or six pots are placed in a row, and the drinkers have to begin at one end, and go down the line to the other. This rice-beer is not disagreeable, and moderately intoxicating.

The dances which take place at these feasts are very peculiar, but must be seen to be clearly understood. The movement is more of a side-closing step, the body being kept in a position resembling the "Grecian bend"; the line is headed by players on drums, small gongs, and a wind instrument formed by passing a long bamboo through a hollow gourd; after these come men armed with spears, muskets, choppers, and shields. The young men generally commence the dance, and then drag the girls in between them; the whole line thus formed slowly closing round and round the animal to be speared, whilst the men make love to the girls by their sides. Before commencing a feast the faces of all are usually smeared with a mixture of saffron and rice-flour, which is supposed to keep off the bad effects of drinking.

Sometimes a wild sort of war dance is executed with swords and shields; and there is also a rather clever dance, something like the Scotch sword dance, but between two long heavy rice pestles, which are clapped together by two men to the sound of a drum; if the dancer be not very agile or exact, he is liable to get his leg broken between the two pestles.

Till marriage the intercourse between the sexes is unrestrained, and it is considered rather a good thing to marry a girl in the family-way, even though by another man; if, however, a girl has a child before marriage, it is exposed in the forest. Not to be sought after by the young men is considered a reproach. After marriage, however, which is a simple contract, unaccompanied by ceremony, conjugal fidelity is generally respected. A wife is purchased from her father with large presents.



The ceremony of "ya", or taboo, is strictly enforced on the following occasions: firstly, when any person belonging to the village is killed by a tiger, alligator, or other animal, or when any woman of the village dies in child-birth, or when the body of any person who has died as above has been brought into the village, all intercourse with that village is cut off until the appearance of the next new moon; secondly, when a village or house is burnt, or when a new village is erected, intercourse is forbidden for the period of three days; thirdly, when any epidemic breaks out intercourse is forbidden with that village until the disease has disappeared; fourthly, when the rice-plant is well up, and requires weeding, intercourse is forbidden for seven days; fifthly, when a villager dies by accident, intercourse is forbidden for a day. Any person breaking the taboo is fined by the head men of the neighbouring villages. To show that a village is tabooed strings or canes are suspended across the road.

At harvest time the people are forbidden to eat flesh or fish; and any person who has killed another, or been wounded by a wild beast, is obliged to abstain from flesh for a period extending from three months to one year. It is also considered wrong to take money as a reward for the slaughter of a dangerous wild beast.

When the inhabitants of a village have been successful on a foray, or in repelling an attack, a sacrifice is offered to the "kă-nie" of the village, all dancing a war-dance, with spears and shields, round the village post. When a person dies the body is laid out in the house, and a feast made; food is set apart for the ghost, which is supposed to remain over the house as long as the body is there. Seven packets of rice for a man, and six for a woman, are left at the place of cremation for the ghost to eat, and neglect of this custom is a bar to inheritance.

According to Hill custom, all offences or injuries are remedied by fine only, and this fine is commonly called "the price of a head." This price is most rigorously demanded, and has become the source of constant warfare. If the fine be not paid, means are first taken to endeavour to recover by capturing and enslaving the debtor. If however, this be not possible, the creditor will bide his time, and at an unexpected moment, together with his friends, attack and kill or carry off the debtor's fellow villagers. This blood-money is often demanded on very imaginary grounds, and the feuds are kept up for years. The following are the laws usually adhered to:

*Criminal*.—1. If a person commit murder, he should be fined the value of two slaves and several spears, swords, and gongs—say in all about Rs. 600. If death be caused accidentally the

fine should be half the above. 2. When a village is plundered by a body of raiders the leader is alone to be held responsible ; and, if apprehended, is bound to return the value of all property taken (including persons killed), and also a fine. 3. If a village be burnt down in committing a raid, the leader is bound to make good the damage done and pay a fine in addition. 4. A person who commits theft is bound to return the property or its value and pay a fine not exceeding Rs. 30. 5. A person who causes grievous hurt may be fined Rs. 100. 6. If a person assault another he is to pay a fine not exceeding Rs. 30. 8. If rape be committed on a married woman the husband is entitled to demand a sum not exceeding Rs. 60. Rape of an unmarried woman is to be punished by a fine not exceeding Rs. 30.

NOTE.—All the above fines are to be accompanied by the cost of the animal (pig) slain to make the agreement binding. When murder is committed in a raid, any raiders caught red-handed are at once beheaded and the heads stuck up in the village. A woman may not receive a fine, but a male relative or husband may receive it for her.

*Civil*.—1. If two persons dispute about a debt or other matter, and neither can produce evidence, they are obliged to go through the ordeal of ducking the head in water, decision is given in favour of him who keeps under longest. 2. If a debt be not paid, and the debtor should not be apprehended, the creditor's party, if strong enough, attack the debtor's village and carry off as many captives as they can. 3. The rate of interest on a debt is double the principal if one year be allowed to expire from date of contraction. 4. The debts of the father must be paid by the sons. 5. If a man die without male issue, his property is claimed by his nearest male relative ; he, therefore, is responsible for the debts of deceased, whether there be property or not. 6. Should a man die leaving a son who is a minor, the nearest male relation acts as guardian until minority ceases, or marriage, when he is bound to give an account of his stewardship. 7. A woman cannot inherit, and is, therefore, not responsible for debts. 8. If a man die leaving two or more sons, the property is divided as follows:—Two divide equally. If there be more than two, the eldest and youngest take two shares each, and the others one share each. 9. On the death of the father, the eldest son must give his maternal uncle a full grown buffalo, or the value. On the death of the mother, the youngest son must give his paternal uncle a full grown buffalo, or the value. Can this not be done, a son should be given. 10. If a man be on the point of death and cannot pay his debt, he will leave a son to the creditor to work it off. 11. Slaves do not inherit unless adopted according to rule ; in this case they will be held responsible for debts. 12.

If a slave, however, be adopted by a master who has sons he cannot inherit. 13. There is no fixed age for marriage, nor is any constraint used to influence choice. 14. Marriage is contracted on consent of the woman's parents, after payment of the fixed dowry by the suitor. 15. If a husband wish to divorce his wife, he may do so and take all the children, but in so doing he will forfeit claim to dowry. 16. If a woman have children by a former husband, she is entitled to them on divorce. 17. A divorced woman must be supported by the male relative who received her dowry or his heir until remarried. 18. No female can receive dowry, it must be received by the nearest male relative. 19. If a husband chastise or ill-treat his wife and she absconds in consequence, he is nevertheless entitled to receive back the dowry. 20. If a wife abuse or ill-treat her husband he may chastise her, but if on that account he divorce her, he forfeits claim to dowry. 21. If the husband divorce the wife for adultery he is entitled to receive the dowry, and may also demand a sum equal to it from the adulterer in addition to fine and costs. 22. If a man commit adultery the wife has no redress. 23. Should a woman die in giving birth to a child before marriage, the reputed father must pay her value to her nearest male relative.

An oath is usually taken by swearing to speak to truth whilst a musket, sword, spear, tiger's tusk, crocodile's tooth, and stone hatchet (occasionally found and supposed to be a thunder bolt) are held in the hand. Some tribes of Chins consider that the most binding oath is taken by dipping a cup into the water of a running stream once with and once against the current. These oaths, however, are not very binding, for the Hill people fancy that they can even deceive the spirits.

Cultivation is of the simplest character, and merely consists in selecting a suitable spot on the side of a hill and clearing it by cutting down the underwood early in April. Shortly afterwards this is set fire to and immediately sown broadcast with rice seed; cotton and sesamum are also scattered on the same ground. The only implements used are an iron chopper about twelve inches long and three inches broad at the head (this broad end is also used for digging), and a primitive axe which is simply an isosceles triangle of soft iron run through a bamboo handle. In August the rice ripens, and the family, choosing a sunny day, repair to the field with a basket some four or five feet in diameter; the women and children reap the ears with rough jagged sickles and carry them to a man, who tramples out the grain in the basket; it is then taken home and dried in the sun, or, if the weather will not admit, over fires.

Cotton cultivation has of late years been much increased, and

the people begin to understand its value as an article of commerce.

Tobacco is much cultivated on the banks of the Kulah-dan river, and is of a far better quality than that grown in other parts of Burma. It is sown broadcast on the mud banks as soon as the waters begin to subside after the rains, in November, the long elephant grass having first been cut and burnt. The young plants are not transplanted, but well weeded and thinned out. When the plants are about two feet high the top shoots and lower leaves are pinched off to make the good leaves grow larger, and in April and May the leaves are picked and hung up to dry. The tobacco is never dried by exposure to the sun, and is kept till the rains for sorting, so that the leaves may be pliant. I have not been able to ascertain whence this plant was introduced, but the Hkämies and Chins call it "sarak," "sarok," and "see-ruet," which are evidently corruptions of the Aracanese "see-ruak," a tobacco leaf. The Shandoos, however, call it "omah," which may be a corruption of the Hindustanee "tumaco."

The women do most of the cultivation with the exception of cutting the jungle.

To the people who live there, the climate of these hills appears to be very healthy, but to Europeans and lowlanders conducive of very severe fever. Many, after the first few attacks, become acclimatised, but on returning to the lowlands are liable to a return of it. Burmese and natives of India seem to suffer more than Europeans; the most dangerous months are April, May, and June, when the rains commence. The pleasantest time of the year is from 1st November to the 31st of March; about Christmas time the nights are cold, but frost is unknown.

The usual weapons are muskets, spears, short swords, knives, and shields; short bows and cross-bows, with poisoned arrows, are sometimes met with. The muskets are all European, obtained from the traders of Aracan and Chittagong. Powder is home-made, and not very strong. Spears are of different shapes, but generally short in the shaft, and with a long iron foot. The shields of the Shandoos and Hkamies are of buffalo hide and similar in shape, being about two feet long, eighteen inches in width at the top, and fourteen inches at the bottom; the centre is slightly bossed, and there is a double handle inside to grasp it by. A Shan-doo chief's shield is usually ornamented with four rows of small brass plates on the upper half, and from the lower row hang coloured tufts of long goat's hair. The second in command of a war party, or chief's son, has one large brass plate in the centre of the shield, about ten inches in diameter. The spears used by the Chins are very long and heavy, and their buffalo-hide shields are longer, and rounded to cover the body, like the Roman shields; they have only one handle and no ornaments.

From the Aracanese histories, which, like all Burmese records, are, as far as pre-historic times are concerned, a mixture of tradition and romance, worked up with a view to fabricating for the early kings a fabulous descent from the solar race of India, and also introducing the imaginary tour of Gaudama Buddha through their countries, very little is to be gained in the way of reliable information. The first Buddhist monks apparently pursued the same course as the Brahmans in Manipoor, where, after converting tribes of a similar description, they made out a fabulous connection between them and the heroes of the Mahābhārata. From the fact, however, that the Burmese admit that these tribes are related to them, and from frequent reference in their traditions to fabled immigrations, *viâ* the Kulah-dan Valley, and stories of Bee-loos (the Burmese equivalent to Rakshas), it would seem that in remote ages a great Mongolian horde, consisting of several tribes passing southwards from Thibet, became divided in the Manipoor Valley; the one proceeding down the Kyin-dwin Valley peopled Upper Burma; whilst the others, proceeding down the Valley of the Kulahdan, drove before them an ugly aboriginal race, similar to the Yakkos of Ceylon, or the present Andamanese. It is said that Aracan derives its proper name, Ra-caing, from the fact that there were Bee-loos in it; but as the Burmese never allude to the present hill people as Bee-loos, a very different race must have been thus denominated. As soon as the heads of this column became checked in their onward progress by the sea a reaction would naturally set in, resulting in the improvement of those who held the plains and the isolation of smaller families in the hills, which, by the process of isolation and want of a written language, would soon result in separate and unintelligible dialects. That these dialects are more like one another and the Burmese than is at first apparent, is proved by the number of words in common, words, too, which could not be borrowed—"ane" (or "eim," as some write it) is "house" both in Burmese and all the dialects, and so also is "lam" or "lan," a road. But owing to an arbitrary rule in Burmese spelling, which requires a final *m* to be pronounced like *n*, the Burmese say "lan" and "ane," though they write "lam" and "ame;" and the illiterate hill men say "lam" and "ame" according to the original language. In the comparison of dialects, too great reliance must not be placed on vocabularies; idiom and construction are far better guides. As an instance of similarity not made apparent by a vocabulary, take the following:

ENGLISH.	BURMESE.	HKA-MIE.
Come .....	lah .....	youk.
Go .....	thwa.....	sait.

Now, both "youk" and "saik" mean "to arrive" in Burmese. As regards construction, it will be seen that in the Hkamie and Burmese (both monosyllabic) the words run in the same order, but on comparing the Shan or Thai with Burmese, it will be found that the order of the words is reversed; in Hka-mie and Burmese the order would be "rice-eat-wish," but in Shan "wish-eat-rice," when saying "I want to eat rice."

The houses of all these tribes are built of bamboo on bamboo or wooden posts; those of the Hkă-mies are decidedly better and larger. The Hkă-mie house is usually raised five or six feet from the ground, and about three fathoms broad, and five or six in length. The interior is one large hall, with a fire-place at each end; the walls are double, and made of split bamboo, woven like a mat. This sort of wall is common to the Burmese and other races; but the Hka-mies, instead of weaving them on the ground and fixing them up afterwards, invariably weave them *in situ*. At one end a door leads through a small vestibule for holding water-bottles to the interior of the house, and at the other end is another door leading out on to a raised open platform. On the central post of the house are fixed the skulls of animals killed at feasts, and over the outside door are placed the skulls of animals killed in the chase. The floor is also of woven bamboo; and the roof, which is round and brought more down at the corners, is thatched with grass, or bamboo leaves, over a bamboo matting. Between the double walls is a place for the fowls, and below are the piggeries. The Chyoung-thah and Mro houses are also of bamboo, but not nearly so large; and the Mros always make the wall next the fire-place of whole bamboos, in order that the smoke may escape better. Many of the Chins build their houses rather larger at the top, so that the walls lean outwards, like those of a sarcophagus. The Hkamies, however, are the only tribe that make a rounded roof; the others all have a ridge with gable ends. The only difference in a Chin house is that the floor is made of split bamboos laid side by side, without interweaving. The villages are usually perched on a height, and where the ground will admit, arranged in a rough circle, with the slaughter-post in the centre; one or two of the larger houses have guest-chambers attached, but under a separate roof. Sometimes there is a rest-house in the centre of the village.

The only arts practised are those of weaving cotton cloths and baskets. The blankets made by the Hka-mies are generally white, and have thick ribs of cotton run in to make them warm; some are like large Turkish towels. The Mros generally weave their wrappers in black and white, showing the pattern on one side only. The Chins, however, weave them in broad-coloured stripes. No frame is used, but the web is fastened to a post,

whilst the end to be worked at is fastened to a broad strap passing round the body of the weaver. A large kind of earthen jar, something like a Roman amphora, is made by the Chins; in order to make them stand upright, they have to be fitted into a cane-work stand, which also serves as a handle.

In decorative art these tribes seem to be very deficient, though the Hkamies sometimes ornament their door-posts with patterns drawn in soot. Very handsomely-inlaid powder-horns are purchased from, and said to be made by, the Shan-dooes, but they may have got them from the Shans of Kalay, or the Yaws in Upper Burma.

#### DISCUSSION.

SIR ARTHUR PHAYRE observed that he had listened with deep interest to the account given of the hill tribes of Northern Arakan. Long and familiar intercourse with those tribes enabled him to speak to the accuracy with which they had now been described. It was curious to consider that beyond the tribes mentioned were others of the same Indo-Chinese race, who, though little more than one hundred and fifty miles from our principal station in Arakan, were now as little known to the rest of the world as the tribes of Southern Africa were before the days of Livingstone and other recent travellers. It was to be hoped that Mr. St. John, on his return to that country, would, under the patronage of this Society, be able to visit and describe them as fully and lucidly as he had described the nearer tribes. With reference to an observation that had been made, Sir A. Phayre further remarked: In regard to the name of the people called by Europeans Burma, or Birman, it appears to be a corruption of the native word, and that I believe is derived as follows: The name given in the Buddhist Scriptures to the first inhabitants of the earth, who were celestial beings superior to man, as he is at present, is Brahmá. When the Buddhist missionaries from India penetrated into the valley of the northern Irrawaddy, some 2,500 years ago, they found there numerous wild tribes very similar in character and appearance to those Mr. St. John has described this evening. In process of time the missionaries instructed and converted those tribes, who were gradually formed into a nation, and probably under a king of Indian race. It was then that the national name of Brahmá was assumed, and the various tribal names gradually disappeared. The word Brahmá was and is now written in the Burmese alphabet *Mram-ma*, or *Mran-ma*; but in speaking is almost always softened to *Ba-má*. The letters *B* and *M* are used interchangeably in the vernacular languages of India and of Burma; and this appears to me to account for the written form of the word, differing as regards the initial letter, both from the original and the present ordinary-spoken form of the national name *Ba-má*. As to Arakan, that is the European form of the native name for the country, which is *Ra-Khaing*. That again is a native corruption of the word *Ráksha*, a Sanscrit or Pali word for monster. This name

was given by the Indian missionaries either to the unconverted inhabitants, or to a race of people supposed at one time to inhabit the coast, similar to the present Andaman Islanders. These, of course, have long disappeared, but the name remains.

Dr. CHARNOCK did not agree that the appellation Mran-ma is a corruption of Brahma; nor the reverse. The name may not be of native origin. It might be from the Thai or language of Siam, or one of the neighbouring languages. The name of the tribe was perhaps from that of a part of the country. In Anamitic, *miên* is rendered "regio," and *mên*, "regnum;" hence Cao-mên = Cambodice regnum. Further, the name of the district of Aracan or Racaing may be derived from the town, and the latter from its river; just as Aeng, in the same country, appears to have had its name from the river Aeng. The Anamitic word *rach* is rendered "rivus," and *kinh* "magnus;" so that the name Racaing may mean "great river." This *kinh* is another orthography of the Chinese *king*, great, lofty (figuratively a kingdom); hence Pih-king, Nan-king, Tun-king (Tonquin). But the appellation Mran-ma (in Chinese *Mreen* or *Mien*) is possibly from the Sanscrit. In the latter language *baran* or *varan* means "class" or "tribe;" and *ma*, "great;" and *mran* would easily corrupt from *ma-baran*. A great deal of Sanscrit is found not only in Siamese and Tibetan, and all over India, but even in Russian river names. That the tribes of North Aracan are an intelligent people seems to be proved by their knowledge of horticulture. They pinch off the tops of their tobacco plants, whereas those not acquainted with horticulture would probably shorten them with a knife. One of the names of the original inhabitants of Aracan is that of Magh or Mugh. Many of them dwell in Chitagong. One of their customs is peculiar. When a man wishes to raise money, he mortgages his wife until the debt is paid off, or only for a short period. He (Dr. Charnock) thought this an excellent arrangement, and had no doubt that if the custom were introduced into England, where there are quite eighty-five per cent. of ill-assorted marriages, there would be more business done in this line than on the Stock Exchange. The name Magh or Mugh is not a native name, but is probably derived from the Persian, in which language it has the various meanings of tavern-keeper, wine-drinker, fire-worshipper, pagan, lunatic, infidel. The latter signification seems to agree with the religion practised by the natives of Aracan. They are infidels to the Persians and many of the neighbouring peoples.

Mr. ST. A. ST. JOHN, in reply to a question on the upright stones, said when he went into the village all the inhabitants were out in the jungle, and he had no opportunity of finding out what they were erected for. He only observed this rough attempt at a circle in one village, but elsewhere he had occasionally seen single stones, which were said to have been set up in the same manner as a post to show the number of oxen that had been slaughtered, and were then set up simply because they were to hand.