

MANDALAY TO MOMIEN

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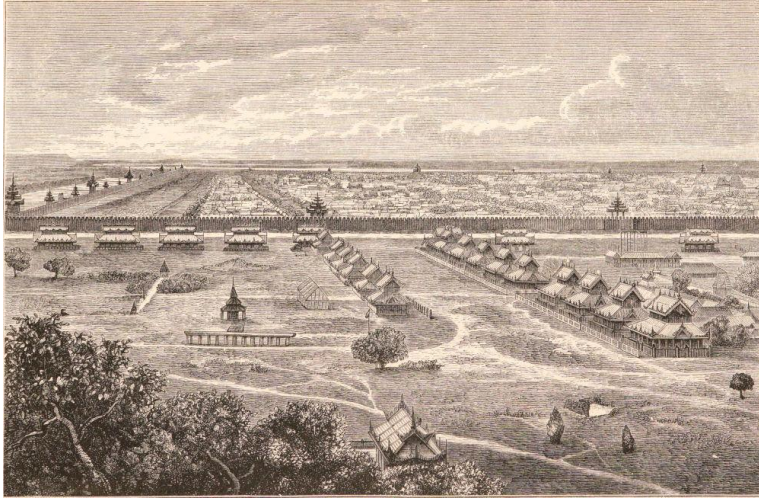
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**MANDALAY, THE CAPITAL OF INDEPENDENT BURMA;
FROM MANDALÉ HILL.**

PREFACE.

Seven years have elapsed since the date of the expedition which furnishes the subject of the larger portion of this work. Its results have been recorded, but can hardly be said to have been published, in the official reports of the several members, printed in India, and not accessible to the general reader.

The public interest in the subject of the overland route from Burma to China, called forth by the repulse of the recent mission and the tragedy which attended it, has suggested the present publication. It is hoped that a compendious and popular account of the expedition of 1868 will be acceptable, if only as an introduction to the simple narrative of the mission of this year, commanded by Colonel Horace Browne. The statement of the difficulties which beset our advance in 1868 will prepare the reader to estimate the opposition which, under a changed political condition of the country, compelled the mission under Colonel Browne to return without accomplishing its object.

The narrative of our experiences of the border country between Bhamô and Yunnan, and its motley population, has been supplemented from materials collected by Colonel Sladen, including a catalogue of Kakhyen deities obtained by him, and which will be found in the Appendix, along with a Panthay account of the origin of the Chinese Mahommedans. To him, as well as to my fellow travellers, Captain Bowers and Mr. Gordon, I gladly record my obligations for the information that has been derived from them.

For many details illustrating the condition of Yunnan and the Mahommedan revolt in that province, I am indebted to the volumes, issued by the French government, which contain the results of the French expedition from Saigon to Yunnan, under Lagrée, Garnier, and Carné, whose premature loss their country has to deplore, and to the travels of that enterprising pioneer of commerce, Mr. T. T. Cooper.

No one can treat of the border lands of Cathay without deriving assistance from the stores of knowledge collected and arranged by the erudite editor of 'Marco Polo,' Colonel Yule, to whom I tender my tribute of admiration and indebtedness.

My observations on the Kakhyens are confirmed by the learned Monsig. Bigandet, the annotator of the 'Life of Gaudama,' who was the first European to visit those hill tribes, and who communicated his experiences to the columns of the leading Rangoon journal. The reader will find among the appendices a valuable note by the same author, on Burmese bells, especially those of Rangoon and Mengoon.

The list of Chinese deities given in the Appendix has been translated from the original by the well-known Chinese scholar, Professor Douglas, of the British Museum, who has kindly added an explanatory note. The appended vocabularies may prove interesting to philologists.

The illustrations of the country and people as far as Ponsee have been executed from photographs taken by Major Williams and myself, while the views of the country to the east are reproductions of sketches which fairly claim the merit of accurate delineation of its features.

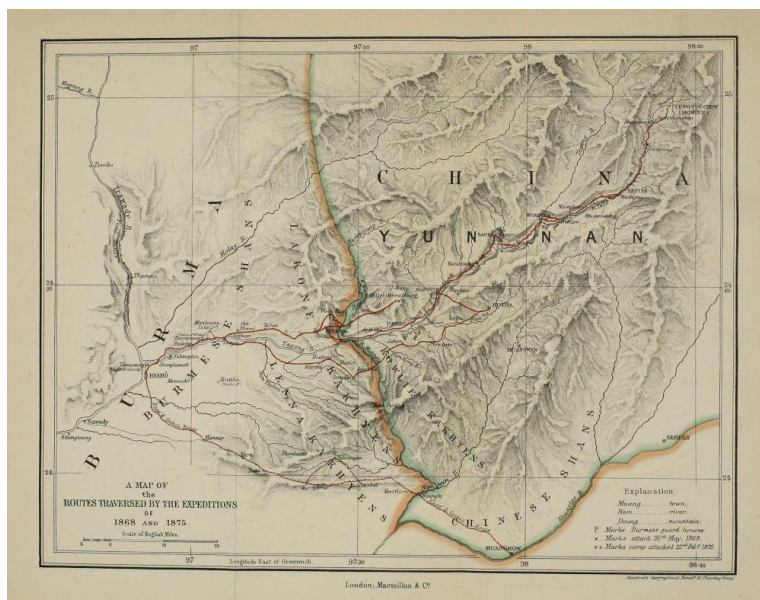
The map illustrating the topography of the district travelled has been based upon surveys made during the expedition by Mr. Gordon and a Burmese surveyor, and a second has been added to show the general relations of our Indian empire to Western China, with the various routes which have been explored or projected, including those followed by the French expedition, and by Margary from the terminus of the boat journey to Bhamô.

The journal of our ill-fated companion, recently published in China, and received in this country when this work was completed, unfortunately does not carry him on to Tali-fu, but his impressions of the country beyond this point have been briefly summarised in these pages.

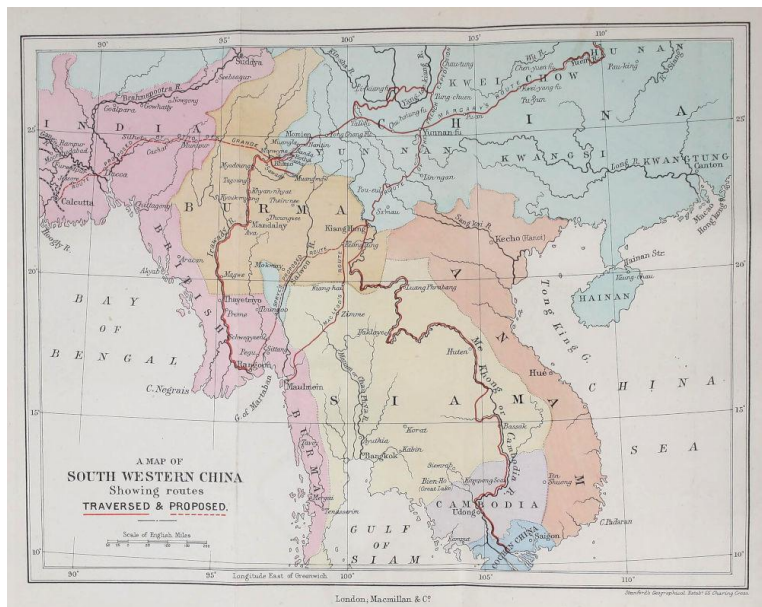
The scientific reader will perhaps be inclined to complain that the following pages do not contain more of the results of the proper work of a naturalist. Of these, a full and illustrated report, unavoidably delayed by absence from this country, is in active preparation. This will be published by the aid of the Indian government, given at the instance of the Chief Commissioner of British Burma, the Hon. Ashley Eden, by whom the opening up of the overland route to China, as a measure beneficial to the province administered by him, has ever been strongly advocated.

J. A.

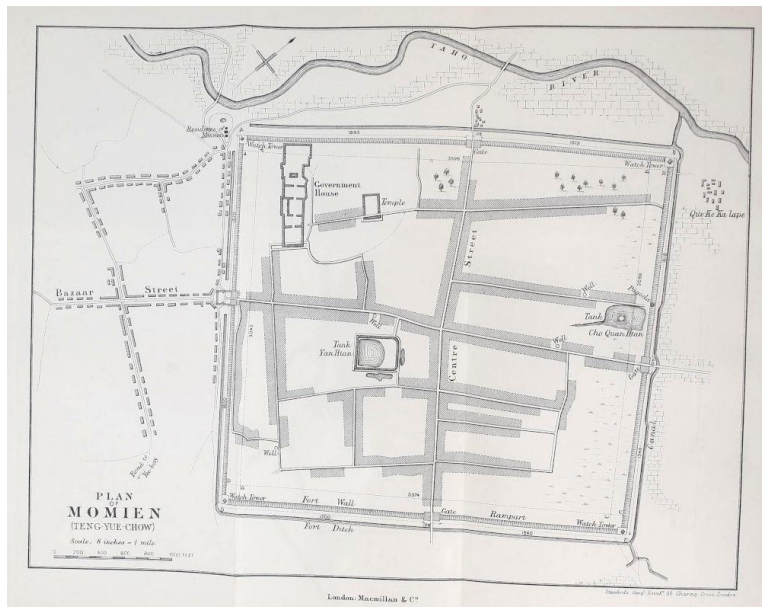
6 ROYAL TERRACE, EDINBURGH,
DECEMBER 31, 1875.



**A MAP OF
the
ROUTES TRAVERSED BY THE EXPEDITIONS OF
1868 AND 1875**
Stanford's Geographical Estab^t 55 Charing Cross.
 London; Macmillan & C^o.



**A MAP OF
SOUTH-WESTERN CHINA
Showing routes
TRAVERSED & PROPOSED.**
*Stanford's Geographical Estab^t. 55 Charing Cross.
London; Macmillan & C^o.*



PLAN OF MOMIEN (TENG-YUE-CHOW)

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London; Macmillan & Co.***

MANDALAY TO MOMIEN.

CHAPTER I.

MANDALAY TO BHAMÔ.

Overland trade of Burma and China—Early notices—English travellers—Burmese treaty of 1862—Dr. Williams—Objects of the expedition—Its constitution—Arrival at Mandalay—Second coronation of the king—The suburbs—The bazaars—Mengoön—Burmese navigation—Shienpagah—Coal mines—The third defile—Sacred fish—Tagoung and Old Pagan—Ngapé—Katha—Magnetic battery—The first Kakhyens—The Shuaybaw pagodas—The second defile—View of Bhamô.

For some years previous to the date of the expedition of which the progress is narrated in these pages, the attention of British merchants at home and in India had been directed to the prospect of an overland trade with Western China. Most especially did this interest the commercial community of Rangoon, the capital of British Burma, and the port of the great water highway of the Irawady, boasting a trade the annual value of which had increased in fifteen years to £2,500,000. The avoidance of the long and dangerous voyage by the Straits and Indian Archipelago and a direct interchange of our manufactures for the products of the rich provinces of Yunnan and Sz-chuen might well seem to be advantages which would richly repay almost any efforts to accomplish this purpose.

One plan, then as now, zealously insisted upon by its promoter, Captain Sprye, was the construction of a railway connecting British Burma and China via Kiang-Hung, on the Cambodia river, and the frontier position or reputed town of Esmok.

But as it was, and still is, necessary to send a surveying expedition over an unknown and alien country, as a preliminary, this project, whether chimerical or not, could not compete with the immediate possibility of opening a trade by way of the river Irawady and the royal city of Mandalay.

Although before 1867 but four English steamers with freight had ascended the river to the capital, harbingers of the numerous flotilla now plying on the Irawady, it was known that a regular traffic existed between Mandalay and China, especially in the supply of cotton to the interior, which was reserved as a royal monopoly.

This trade was reported to be mainly carried on by caravans traversing the overland route via Theinnee to Yunnan. According to the itineraries of the Burmese embassy in 1787, the distance is six hundred and twenty miles, and forty-six hills and mountains, five large rivers and twenty-four smaller ones, had to be traversed in the tedious journey of two months. But an unbroken chain of tradition and history indicated the natural entrepot of the commerce between Burma and China to be at or near Bhamô,^[1] on the left bank of the upper Irawady, and close to the frontier of Yunnan.

The Burmese annals testified that during several centuries this had been the passage from China to Burma either for invading armies or for peaceful caravans. The most recent Burmo-Chinese war had

arisen out of the grievances of Bhamô Chinese merchants, and the treaty of peace that was signed at Bhamô in 1769 stipulated that the “gold and silver road” between the two countries should be reopened. Mutual embassies had consequently journeyed between Peking and Ava, and almost all had proceeded by way of the Irawady and Bhamô.

European travellers and traders had early discerned the importance of this channel of intercourse, which seems to have been alluded to by the great Venetian, Marco Polo, under the name of Zardandan.

The old documents of Fort St. George record that the English and Dutch had factories in the beginning of the seventeenth century at Syriam, Prome, and Ava, and at a place on the borders of China, which Dalrymple supposes to have been Bhamô. According to this authority, some dispute arose between the Dutch and Burmese, and on the former threatening to call in the aid of the Chinese, both the English and Dutch were expelled from Burma. In 1680 the reputation of this field for mercantile enterprise seems to have again attracted the attention of the authorities at Fort St. George, and four years afterwards one Dod, trading to Ava, was instructed to inquire into the commerce of the country, and to request that a settlement might be sanctioned at Prammoo, on the borders of China. This mission was unsuccessful, and Prammoo cannot with certainty be identified, but the strong similarity of the name seems to point to Pan-mho or Bhamô.

Coming down to more recent and certain data, we find that Colonel Symes, H.E.I.C.’s envoy to Ava in 1795 (and who was accompanied by that able geographer, Dr. Buchanan), states that an extensive trade, chiefly in cotton, existed between Ava and Yunnan. “This commodity was transported up the Irawady to

Bhamô, where it was sold to the Chinese merchants, and conveyed partly by land and partly by water into the Chinese dominions. Amber, ivory, precious stones, betel-nut, and the edible birds' nests from the Eastern Archipelago, were also articles of commerce. In return, the Burmans procured raw and wrought silks, velvets, gold-leaf, preserves, paper, and utensils of hardware." Both the researches of Wilcox and the journal of Crawford's embassy to Ava in 1826 referred to the trade and routes by Bhamô, and the Bengal government in 1827 published a map containing the best procurable information about the Burmo-Chinese frontier.

Colonel Burney, who was Resident at the court of Ava in 1830, published a large number of valuable contributions to the history, geography, and resources of Upper Burma, and accurate itineraries of the Theinnee and Bhamô routes to China. Our experience demonstrated the accuracy of the latter as far as Momien, and it may be inferred that the remainder will be found equally exact. Pemberton^[2] seems to have been the first to fully realise that—to use his own words—"the province of Yunnan, to which the north-eastern borders of our Indian empire have now so closely approximated, has become from this circumstance and our existing amicable relations with the court of Ava an object of peculiar interest to us." In the same year Captain Hannay accompanied a Burmese mission to Mogoung, and for the first time Bhamô was accurately described by an eye-witness, and much valuable information gained respecting the trade then carried on between Ava and China. His description of the importance of the town, however, differed widely from that of Drs. Griffiths and Bayfield, who visited it two years later.^[3]

Hannay gives the reported number of houses as one thousand five hundred, while the latter travellers estimated town and suburbs as

containing five hundred and ninety-eight houses, “neither good nor large,” which latter description is more in keeping with the present condition of the town.

In 1848 Baron Otto des Granges published a short survey of the countries between Bengal and China, showing the great commercial and political importance of Bhamô, and the practicability of a direct trade overland between Calcutta and China.

In this paper the far-seeing author advocated the equipment of a small expedition to ascertain the mercantile relations of the country about Bhamô, to examine the mineral wealth of Yunnan, and to enter into negotiations with the Chinese merchants.

In 1862 the government of India, in the prospect of a treaty being negotiated with the king of Burma, directed their Chief Commissioner, Sir A. Phayre, to include in it, if possible, the reopening of the caravan route from Western China by the town of Bhamô, and the concession of facilities to British merchants to reside at that place, or to travel to Yunnan, and for Chinese from Yunnan to have free access to British territory, including Assam. The first of these objects was to be effected by obtaining the king's sanction to a joint Burmese and British mission to China. A treaty was concluded whereby the British and Burmese governments were declared friends, and trade in and through Upper Burma was freely thrown open to British enterprise. It was further stipulated that a direct trade with China might be carried on through Upper Burma, subject to a transit duty of one per cent. *ad valorem* on Chinese exports, and *nil* on imports. The proposal, however, as to the joint mission was unsuccessful.

In the following year, Dr. Williams, formerly resident at the court of Mandalay, obtained the royal permission to proceed as far as Bhamô, where he arrived in February, after a journey of twenty-two days. His object was to test the practicability of a route through Burma to Western China, and the results of his experience led him to strongly advocate the Bhamô routes as politically, physically, and commercially the most advantageous.

His energetic advocacy led the mercantile community of Rangoon to appreciate the importance of their own position, commanding, as it does, the most ancient highway to Western China. His claim, however, to have been the first to suggest this trade route must yield to that of Otto des Granges; and the assertion that he was the first Englishman who visited Bhamô could only have been made in ignorance or forgetfulness of the labours of Hannay, Bayfield, and Griffiths.

When the commercial acuteness of the merchants was thus directed to the possibilities of the overland trade, it might seem at first sight that the stream could be tapped at Mandalay without following it up to the borders of Yunnan.

But our growing intercourse with the capital of Burma made it known that for twelve years the Burmo-Chinese trade via Bhamô, which in 1855 represented £500,000 per annum, had almost entirely ceased. Whether this were owing to the effects of the Mahommedan rebellion in Yunnan, or, as some alleged, to Burmese policy, was uncertain. It was an additional problem, and the then Chief Commissioner, General Fytche, anxiously pressed upon the government of India the importance of solving it, and under the treaty of 1862 of thoroughly examining the possibility and probable results of reopening the Bhamô trade route.

This enterprise might be deemed one of hereditary interest to the descendant of that enterprising merchant-traveller, Mr. Fitch, who has left an account of his visit to Pegu in 1586. The proposed expedition was sanctioned by the government of India in September 1867, and the consent of the king of Burma having been duly obtained, arrangements were forwarded for the departure of the mission from Mandalay in January 1868. The chief objects of the expedition were, to use the words of General Fytche, “to discover the cause of the cessation of the trade formerly existing by these routes, the exact position held by the Kakhyens, Shans, and Panthays, with reference to that traffic, and their disposition, or otherwise, to resuscitate it, also to examine the physical conditions of these routes.”

Thus the duties to be discharged were multifarious, pertaining to diplomacy, engineering, natural science, and commerce. These accordingly were all represented among the members of the mission, which consisted of Captain Williams, as engineer; Dr. Anderson, as medical officer and naturalist; with Captain Bowers and Messrs. Stewart and Burn as delegates from the commercial community of Rangoon.^[4] A guard of fifty armed police, with their inspector and native doctor, formed an escort, while the command of the whole was entrusted to Major Sladen, Political Resident at Mandalay. It is saying scarcely enough to add that to the foresight, tact, and resolute patience displayed by him as leader was due whatever measure of success was obtained. He had already secured not only the consent but the co-operation of the king. Written orders had been despatched to the *woon*, or governor, of Bhamô, and to other places, to render all assistance. Besides these verbal aids, the king placed at his disposal a royal steamer, named the *Yaynan-Sekia*, better known as “The Honesty,” to convey the party

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