

TADAGALE:
A BURMESE VILLAGE IN 1950

by
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Data Paper: Number 13
Southeast Asia Program
Department of Far Eastern Studies
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
April, 1954

Cornell University Southeast Asia Program

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FOREWORD

Dr. Charles Brant was associated from 1948 to 1951 with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Cornell University, from which he received his degree in cultural anthropology with special emphasis on the cultures of Southeast Asia. The University in 1947 had inaugurated on the campus and afield a teaching and research program designed to explore cultural repercussions related to the introduction of new technology and scientific ideas in a variety of peasant communities. Among the projects established in connection with this program in anthropology, and sponsored also by the Cornell Department of Far Eastern Studies, were village researches which had been begun in eastern Uttar Pradesh, India, and in the central rice plain of Thailand. The University therefore welcomed Dr. Brant's suggestion that he carry out a community study in Burma, a region which had been united with India administratively and which shared many cultural elements with Thailand.

As recounted in the introduction of this report, political and military conditions in Burma in 1949 forced several changes in research plans and eventually made it necessary to retreat to Rangoon, where the present study was finally begun late in that year. However, the choice of a community adjacent to the primary metropolis of Burma in which to carry on the field research admirably fitted the purposes of the larger comparative anthropological program. It has made possible a point by point comparison of the urban influences of Rangoon on this village with influences exerted by Bangkok on the village being studied under this program which is located some twenty miles from the center of the Thai capital. It has also proved possible for Cornell to sponsor the study of a second Burmese village, on the outskirts of Mandalay, in which Mr. John Brohm conducted research during 1952 and 1953.

So little is known of contemporary conditions in the Burmese village that this study, as Dr. Brant suggests, will contribute towards filling a large void. Readers who know Burma will find much in the report with which they are familiar. They will be particularly interested, however, in the valuable case study in Part III of the solution found for the tensions between the Burman villagers and the Indian minority. And they will obtain a picture of the radical changes in behavior which mark an inevitably increasing sector of Burmese rural life. These new behaviors incorporate conflicts between a peasant technology which can hardly be altered for some time and the new ideas and ideals which can only be rapidly enlarged—conflicts for which flight is no solution.

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Ithaca, New York
April, 1954

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a summary report of field research which I conducted in the village of Tadagale, Insein District, Burma, during the period November, 1949, to April, 1950. The work was made possible by a scholarship under the Fulbright Program, supplemented by an Area Research Training Fellowship granted by the Social Science Research Council. I am indebted to both of these organizations for the support of my work.

A word seems in order concerning the selection of Tadagale as a community for study. It was my original intention, before I reached Burma and learned in detail of the then prevailing conditions, to do fieldwork among the Burmese of the delta or dry zone, using as a base a single village which would more or less exemplify contemporary Burmese peasant culture. Nothing was more impossible, in view of the internal conditions, and the plan had to be abandoned. After several months of efforts to shift my research to the Shan States, during which time one project had to be abandoned before it actually commenced, and another came to an abrupt halt in its second week -- both because of the spread of the internal disturbances to the areas concerned -- it became clear that the greatest assurance of continuity of research was to be found in the general area near Rangoon. After a brief survey of communities within a few miles radius of the capital, Tadagale was chosen. It appeared most suitable for several reasons, among them accessibility, manageable size, and, owing to its contact with Rangoon, the possibility of studying socio-cultural change.

The fieldwork was done by interviewing of informants, by direct observation of events and behavior, and by the compilation of a detailed census concerning household membership, occupations, marital status, religious affiliation, group membership, income, and other matters. With the aid of a fluent, college-educated interpreter fieldwork was carried on daily.

This paper does not purport in any way to be a complete or definitive study. An approximation to such a report, I am convinced, can result only from fieldwork done under a set of conditions very different from those that were possible for the research here reported. These should include extended continuous residence (minimally one year) in the community by the investigator, and participation by him in community life without self-imposed or assumed separateness or distinction from the people; and a command of the native language adequate to conduct interviews and conversations without the use of interpreters. For Southeast Asia especially, the real fulfillment of such conditions is most difficult, but to the extent that they are met in ethnographic work the material obtained will possess richness and depth. Since, for a variety of reasons, these conditions could not be met in my study of Tadagale, no apology is offered for the inadequacies of this report. It is well, however, in these days of studies of 'cultures from afar' and other short-cut methods of fieldwork, to indicate how we have worked and how our results are thereby affected. Since knowledge of contemporary Burmese village culture is virtually non-existent, a report such as this perhaps may be regarded as a small contribution towards filling a large void.

I am much indebted to Miss C. A. Rustom, of Mandalay, my interpreter, whose tact and insight certainly minimized the limitations that are inherent in fieldwork done by means of an interpreter. Dr. Paul F. Cressey of Wheaton College (Massachusetts), who was teaching in Rangoon University at the time of

my fieldwork, gave helpful suggestions and advice. The greatest thanks are doubtless due the people of Tadagale. At a time when their own problems of living were unusually difficult, they were friendly and cooperative towards one who must, at times, have seemed a quite aimless and overly inquisitive outsider. To Professor Lauriston Sharp of Cornell University I am grateful for making it possible for me to spend part of my time during the spring term of 1951 in the organization of data embodied in this report; and no less appreciative of his forbearance in the face of my unusual tardiness in getting the report written.

Charles S. Brant

Easton, Maryland
January, 1954

I

THE VILLAGE SETTING AND THE PEOPLE

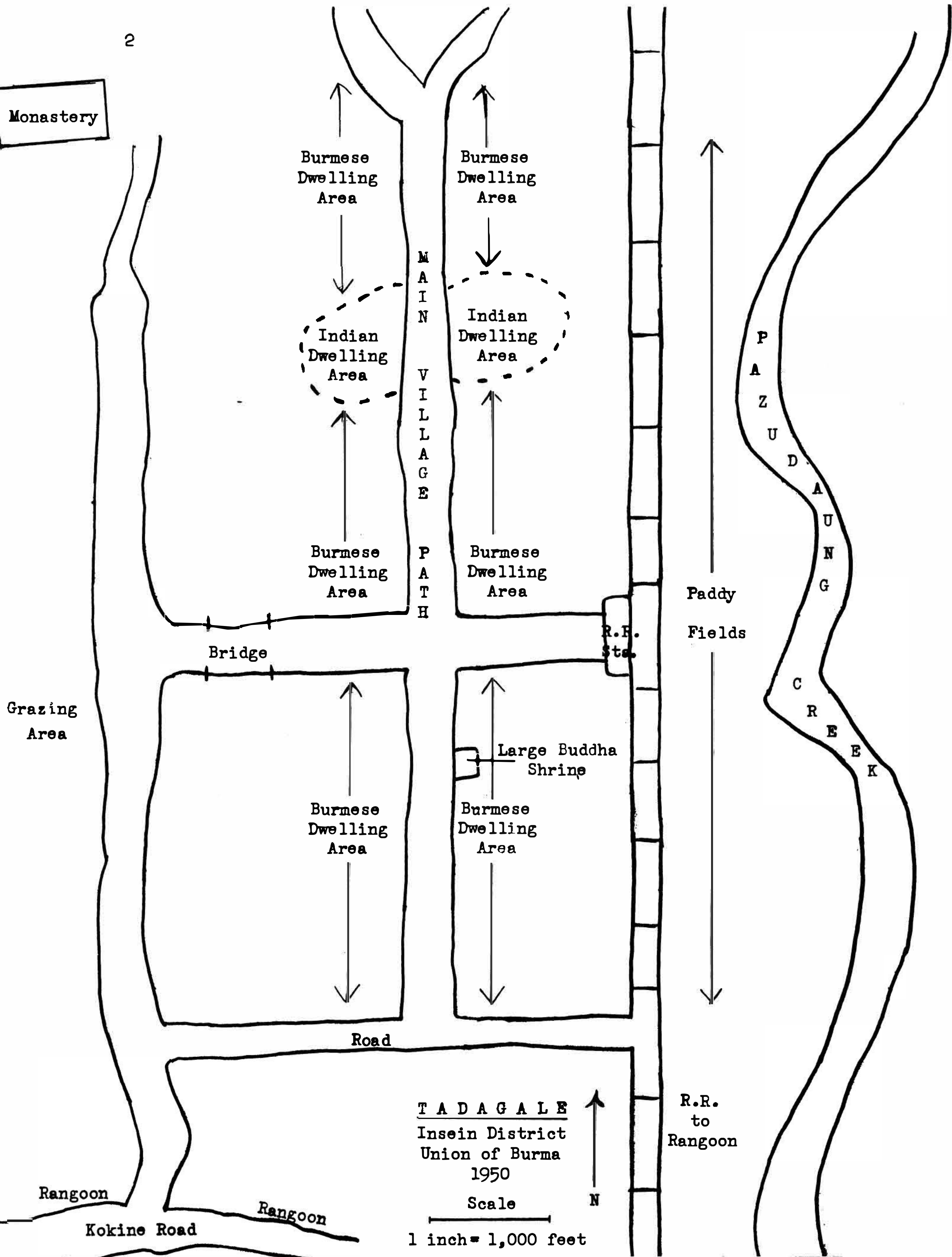
Tadagale is a suburban community of Lower Burma, about four and one half miles north of the city center of Rangoon, chief port and national capital of the Union of Burma. To reach the village most readily one travels by automobile northward from the city along Prome Road, a main highway, to the junction with Kokine Road, beyond the city limit, on to which one turns eastward. After a quarter mile or so, one again goes northward on to a bumpy, poorly surfaced road which soon becomes dirt and terminates abruptly, after another quarter mile, at a small bridge. Tadagale means 'small bridge,' and it is after this bridge that the village is named. A few steps walk over the bridge brings one almost to the center of Tadagale. (See map on following page.)

Tadagale is more or less a 'line' type village, about 3000 yards in length. The domestic dwelling area is constituted by houses and granaries strung along the sides of a main dirt path which is just wide enough for a single bullock cart -- or a jeep -- to pass without scraping the bushes and trees. This area is heavily shaded from the intense tropical sun by many trees that grow in the household compounds and along the path; palms and banyans are the most prominent types. The houses are rectangular in shape, with low, slanting roofs, and platform-like porches in front. Among the more prosperous families of the village it is not unusual to find houses of plank construction, with roofs of corrugated iron. More frequently, houses are made of bamboo matted sides and palm thatched roofs. Every two or three houses share a well, which is simply an unlined and uncovered hole of perhaps ten to twelve feet in depth. In almost every compound there is a vegetable garden, from which the family supplies itself and realizes some cash income by the sale of any surplus.

To the east of Tadagale's dwelling area, perhaps five hundred yards distant and running parallel to it, is a railroad line, which begins in Rangoon and terminates at Mingaladon, about five miles north of Tadagale. A small railroad station is located at the eastern terminus of the path on which one finds oneself immediately after crossing the bridge that leads into the village. The villagers do not use the railroad nearly so much as they use buses, which run from Tadagale to Rangoon frequently.

Beyond the railroad line, still farther east, lie the paddy fields, extending out to the winding Pazundaung Creek. This creek begins at the southeastern tip of Rangoon, where the Rangoon and Pegu rivers join, and flows in a twisting course northward to separate Rangoon and the heavily populated area immediately north of the city from the sparsely settled area to the east.

Tadagale's climate is that of the tropical monsoon belt, with three well-defined seasons. From the end of October to about the end of February is the Dry Season, characterized by the absence of rain, with cool mornings and evenings. The daily maximum temperature is in the 80's and the humidity is moderate. English-speaking Burmese call this season winter; at night it is cool enough to sleep under one light blanket. The Hot Season commences at the beginning of March and lasts until June. Temperatures rise to daily maxima in the middle to high 90's, the earth is parched and cracked, and the loose dirt on the village paths, caught by occasional breezes, forms choking



clouds of dust. The Rainy Season begins sometime late in May or early in June and lasts until October. Almost all of Tadagale's 90 to 100 inches of annual rainfall comes during this period. It rains every day, in periodic downpours which often start so suddenly that the newcomer to the area is caught unaware on a good many occasions. Although temperatures drop during the Rainy Season to daily maxima in the low 80's, the discomfort, for the average denizen of the temperate zone, is greater than in the Hot Season because of the extremely high humidity and the small difference between daily maximum and minimum temperatures.

The Burmese inhabitants of the community, who are 90% of the population, are medium brown in skin color, tend to be broad-nosed, have straight black hair, and are of medium stature.

All of the men, with the exception of a few of the old ones, wear their hair in western style, cut short and parted on one side. The women, however, adhere to the traditional Burmese hair styles, without exception. Little girls wear their hair in a top-knot on the middle of the head, with a circular part around the temples and crown, short bangs hanging down in front. Adult women comb their hair, liberally oiled, back to form a coiled knot at the nape of the neck. Adherence by the women to traditional hair styles and mode of dress is strikingly in contrast with the situation in neighboring Thailand, where permanent waves and short skirts may be seen among peasant women many miles outside the capital.

Burmese dress is universal in the village. It consists of the longyi, a circular, single-seamed skirt reaching to the ankles, and a jacket. The longyi is worn by both sexes. The woman's longyi differs from the man's in that it has a black waistband sewn to the upper edge. It is folded over and tucked in at the waist. The man's longyi is drawn tight about the waist and knotted in front to hold it in place. Women's jackets (the aingyi) are not quite so loose-fitting as men's, and for dress occasions they are made of fine muslin, or, if it can be afforded, sheer nylon, climate notwithstanding. Men's jackets are of a heavier material, and are never worn at the workaday tasks of everyday life in the village; the men generally go unclad from the waist up. For ordinary wear both sexes use wooden clog-like shoes, held to the foot by a single band of rubber over the in-step. For dress occasions, single-thonged leather sandals are worn.

About nine hundred people live in Tadagale. Census data collected at first-hand do not yield exact information because a few families could not be interviewed. The data include 807 people, and it is doubtful if as many as one hundred people were not covered by the census.

In Table I below the population of the village is given in terms of ethnic groups. The imposition of any a priori set of categories was avoided, and informants were simply asked the question, "To what people do you consider yourself to belong?" In this way it was possible to learn something of the group identifications of informants.

Table I
Ethnic Identification of Villagers

| <u>Response</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Per Cent of Total</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Burmese | 726 | 90.0 |
| Indian Hindu | 46 | 6.0 |
| Indian Muslim | 3 | 0.4 |
| Pakistani Muslim | 1 | 0.1 |
| Chinese | 2 | 0.2 |
| Talaing (Mon) | 12 | 2.0 |
| Karen | 1 | 0.1 |
| Tavoyan | 1 | 0.1 |
| Sino-Burmese | 7 | 1.0 |
| Indo-Burmese | 3 | 0.4 |
| Indo-Burmese Muslim | 3 | 0.4 |
| Karen-Burmese | 2 | 0.2 |
| Total | 807 | |

It is interesting to note that 2% of the village population identified themselves as Talaings (Mons). The general area of Burma in which Tadagale is located was first settled by the Talaings, who came with the first of three major historic waves of migration into Burma. The Burmese arrived centuries later in the dry zone of Upper Burma and then thrust southward to conquer the Talaings and Burmanize the area. No doubt many more than 2% of the people of Tadagale can trace their ancestry back to the Talaings, but today they think of themselves simply as Burmese.

The majority of the people of the village were born either in Tadagale or in its immediate vicinity. Nearly 68% were born in Tadagale or in nearby villages included with the administrative unit "Tadagale Tract." Another 19% were born elsewhere within Insein District, the next higher administrative-geographic unit to which the village belongs. 11% originate from other districts of Burma, while the remaining 3% are foreign-born. The latter are all Indians, save one person born in China.

II

MAKING A LIVING

Occupations

The occupational pattern in Tadagale is a highly diversified one. There are thirty-eight principal gainful occupations in which a total of 341 individuals are engaged. A large proportion of these people have secondary and even tertiary pursuits at which they spend part of their time in order to round out a living. The following table shows the outstanding principal occupations in order of frequency.

Table II

Principal Occupations of Villagers

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>No.</u> |
|--|------------|
| Gardener | 52 |
| Bus operator (driver, spare) | 44 |
| Paddy cultivatorrr. | 43 |
| Field laborer | 38 |
| Dairy farmer | 26 |
| Prepared foods seller | 20 |
| Urban laborer | 19 |
| Trader (middleman) | 17 |
| Shopkeeperr. | 15 |

Some of the other principal occupations, of lesser frequency, are carpenter, fisherman, casual laborer, cowherd, woodcutter, and seamstress.

1. Gardening. The leading mode of making a living is truck gardening. The gardens are located on small patches of ground adjoining dwellings, and range in size from tiny plots up to perhaps 3000 square feet. They are cultivated intensively, four crops a year being usual, and six crops not unknown. The crops include gourds, cucumbers, mustard, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, radishes and spinach.

For all households, the garden supplies the family with the many vegetables that form an indispensable part of the various Burmese curries. Many gardens produce a surplus which is sold in nearby town bazaars or in the larger markets of Rangoon. The trend has been for gardening to become increasingly important as a source of income in recent years, particularly during the period of disturbed conditions in Burma. These conditions have seriously impeded the normal flow of fresh vegetables and fruits to Rangoon from more distant points; thus the people of Tadagale have been provided with an opportunity to secure high prices for almost all the vegetables they can supply.

Garden cultivation is quite simple. Hand tools, such as steel mattocks, rakes and hoes, which are obtained from Rangoon, are employed to prepare the soil. Cattle or water buffalo excrement is mixed with water to a thin consistency and poured from bamboo-spouted metal buckets over the ground. (The use of human excrement as a fertilizer, common in China and Japan, is not practiced in Burma.) During the monsoon season there is, of course, no problem of irrigation, but during the hot and dry seasons the gardens must be watered frequently. This task is often performed by young boys, who draw water from the wells and apply it to the gardens. The work of picking the matured crops and preparing them for transport to market is commonly done by female members of the household.

2. Paddy Cultivation. The principal occupation of forty-three persons is cultivation of paddy. This category is here defined to include individuals who own or rent land on which they cultivate paddy, as distinct from persons who work on a wage basis in the paddy cultivation of others. The latter are referred to in this report as field laborers.

Of the thirty-four paddy land holdings on which we have data, twenty-nine are rented and five are owned by the cultivators. All but one of these holdings is under twenty acres. This high ratio of renters to owners, as well as the small number of paddy cultivators relative to the total number of gainfully occupied villagers, is reflective of long-run trends in agriculture in this general area. Rural tenancy has been the outcome, in Lower Burma, of a long period of loss of land ownership to moneylenders, largely absentee, through inability of the cultivators to repay loans taken out at very high rates of interest. As tenancy has grown apace, individual cultivators have become discouraged with their small return for hard work. Accordingly, many have given up paddy cultivation altogether in favor of less arduous and relatively more rewarding occupations. However, this trend may be reversed, for there began in early 1951 actual implementation of the Land Nationalization Act of 1948, which provides for distribution of agricultural land to the cultivators on an individual ownership basis.

For the great majority of the paddy cultivators of Tadagale it is possible to eke out little more than subsistence from season to season. A few, after paying their hired labor, putting aside seed for the next year's planting, and filling the granary for home use, can realize some cash income by the sale of a small surplus of paddy. If the cultivator with a little surplus can possibly afford it, he holds the paddy until the hot season, when the market price is highest.

The average yield per acre in Tadagale, based on data for thirty cultivators for the harvest season 1948-49, is 19.8 bushels of paddy. This compares closely with the overall average figures for Burma. According to the Yearbook of Food and Agriculture for 1949 (U.N.-F.A.O.) the average yield per acre for Burma was 20 bushels.

In late March, the paddy fields of Tadagale are burned over, depositing an ash from any stubble remaining from the previous harvest. Sometime after the New Year celebration (which begins about April 13th and continues several days) the cultivators spread manure over their fields in preparation for the coming planting season. The manure is obtained from the Indian dairy farmers of the village in exchange for paddy stalk.

When the monsoon rains become heavy and steady in late June or early July the fields are plowed with a succession of bullock-drawn implements. The first is a single-toothed harrow, followed by a six-toothed plow. Finally, the soil is gone over with a seven-bladed revolving share. If the ground is not yet sufficiently churned up, a harrow with a large number of teeth may be used.

A few days before the planting time the paddy seed is soaked and placed in a wooden cask, the top of which is packed with hay and cow dung. This promotes germination of the seed.

The seed is broadcast sown.* The sower begins at the outermost edge of the field and works his way towards the center, walking in increasingly smaller circles. Beginning at six o'clock in the morning and working until four o'clock in the afternoon, with an interval at mid-morning for his meal and again in the early afternoon for a nap, a sower can cover ten acres in a day. It requires one basket of seed (ca. 48 lbs.) to sow one acre. It is said by villagers that when one is experienced at broadcasting of paddy seeds, regular rows of plants result.

During the period of about seven days required for the sown seeds to sprout, the cultivators weed the fields, block off water channels, and build up the embankments between fields. About forty days after sowing, when the plants have reached a height of several inches, some necessary thinning is done. Two inches is regarded as the optimum space between plants. Where they are growing closer together some are pulled up and re-planted in thinner areas.

Once sowing and thinning has been completed, in mid- to late August, there is little work for the cultivators until harvest time in December, except for frequent visits to the fields to make sure that the water is sufficient and evenly distributed.

At the harvest season, the cultivator and his hired field laborers work in teams of two. One team cuts the paddy about eighteen inches from the top with small hand sickles. These tools are made of good steel blades, obtained in the Rangoon bazaars, which are affixed to handles of buffalo horn. The paddy cutters are followed by another team, which cuts the paddy stalk close to the ground. In the case of hired field laborers doing this work, the prevailing wage is 12 to 16 rupees (ca. \$2.50 to \$3.50) per acre for paddy cutters, and twenty rupees (ca. \$4.00) per acre for stalk cutters. The higher wage for the latter type of work is paid because it is considered harder. Sometimes such field laborers are remunerated in paddy rather than in monetary wages.

The cut paddy is gathered into small piles, about an armful around, which are left in the fields a few days to dry. Then they are bound as sheaves and transported in bullock carts to a cleared area nearer the domestic area, which serves as a threshing floor.

Threshing is accomplished by leading bullocks, yoked together and muzzled to prevent their eating the grain, over the paddy sheaves. The bullocks are

* This method is not common in Burma. One cultivator, when queried concerning the reason for this method, stated: "The land here is not fertile, and though the transplantation method would give a higher yield, the added labor cost would not justify it."

led around in circular fashion until the grain is thoroughly separated from the stalks. A pronged hoe is then drawn over the stalks to further the separation, after which the bullocks further stamp upon them. When the grain appears to be full separated from the stalks it is swept up into large heaps, while the stalks are put aside for use as cattle fodder.

Winnowing apparatus consists of a tripod of bamboo poles, from the top of which is suspended a plaited round tray of wide weave. Basketsful of grain are handed up to a man who stands on a platform, often an old barrel or a chair, and empties them on to the tray. As he shakes the tray the grain falls through to the ground, while any chaff is carried away by the wind.

The paddy for household use may then be allowed to dry further before being sent by boat down Pazundaung Creek to be milled. In a few households the paddy for home consumption is husked by a foot-operated pounding device, or by a large, hand-operated mortar and pestle. If there is any surplus, beyond the requirements of home consumption, seed, payment of laborers and debts, it is sold to nearby millers who come to purchase it.

3. Bus Operation. Forty-four men of the community are principally occupied as bus drivers or fare-collectors. The latter are known as 'spares' in the local terminology. Because of the total destruction of public transportation facilities during World War II in Rangoon and the surrounding area, large numbers of surplus military vehicles have been converted into buses. These buses are owned individually or by small groups of partners. The Tadagale men who engage in bus operation ply between the village, which is a terminus, and Rangoon. Their vehicles are, for the most part, in poor repair, and breakdowns along the route are not uncommon. No regular time schedule is followed; rather, they begin a trip when fully loaded, which is to say extremely tightly packed with passengers. By carrying maximum loads, and by charging a fare of 6 annas (ca. 8 cents), the bus operators are able to make a profit, despite the high cost of fuel (ca. 47 cents per Imperial gallon) and of repairs.

4. Field Labor. Thirty-eight villagers make their livings mainly by field labor. During the planting and harvesting seasons they work steadily for cultivators, either in Tadagale or in nearby communities. They are paid in kind or in cash, seldom in combination. During the growing season, August to November, and again, between the end of the harvest and the beginning of the planting season, these people must depend on other temporary jobs to round out their livings.

5. Dairy Farming. This occupation is carried on exclusively by the small group of Indians in Tadagale, who possess herds of water buffalo and cattle. Fresh milk is taken daily by bus, in large metal containers, to Rangoon, where it is sold for cash, mostly to Muslim restaurants. The Burmese inhabitants of Tadagale make but slight use of milk and there is virtually no market for it in the village.

6. Selling of Prepared Foods. The preparation and itinerant selling of certain Burmese foods supports twenty persons, of whom many are women. Because of the Burmese habit of informal, occasional eating between the two regular daily meals, food sellers do a considerable business. They are invariably present at the pwees, outdoor dramatic presentations staged during holidays and on other festive occasions.

One of the most popular foods of these vendors is mohingha. Rice noodles are made by pounding rice into a flour, mixing it with water, and grinding into a paste between two flat stone slabs. After the excess water has been expressed from this paste, it is pushed through sieves with narrow holes, to form noodles. Once dried, the noodles are cooked and mixed with a curry to make mohingha.

A beverage sold regularly by food vendors is molesaun. It is made of sugar, coconut milk and bits of rice noodles, mixed together. The villagers consider this drink very tasty and refreshing.

7. Shopkeeping and Middleman Trading. The typical shop in the village consists of nothing more than a few large glass jars containing cigars, matches, candy, soap, and various other articles, set out on the porch in front of a house. The stocks of these are very small and are periodically replenished by purchase in Rangoon. Customers are occasional and sales are very small.

Seventeen villagers devote their main activity to what we have called middleman trading. These persons make a living by periodically buying quantities of such goods as second-hand lumber from dismantled dwellings, bamboo, cloth, etc., and selling them in the village and nearby places.

8. Urban Labor. The nineteen individuals listed in Table II as urban laborers are employed in a government medical warehouse in Rangoon. They are unskilled workers who perform such tasks as moving boxes of medical supplies in and out of the establishment and arranging them in the warehouse. These people commute daily between Tadagale and their place of work by bus.

These are the numerically most significant of the variety of occupations followed by villagers. There are six unemployed persons and fourteen who are not gainfully employed because of old age, ill health, or blindness. The great majority of the married women and unmarried girls are occupied most of the time with domestic housework, looking after small children, and helping with gardening.

The whole character of the occupational pattern is shifting and unstable. Individuals move opportunistically from one form of activity to another as circumstances change, in an effort to round out a living. Informants stated that in former times the community was much more agricultural, but that owing to loss of land through indebtedness people had gradually left farming for other occupations.

Income

In analyzing our data on income, figures for the Indians of Tadagale have been calculated separately. The Indians are occupationally a homogeneous group, all engaged in dairy farming. The range and average of income within this small group is so far above that of the Burmese that a misleading idea of the community's economic structure would be conveyed were the data on the Indians included in a single, overall computation for the village.

The following tables show family incomes.

Table III

Family Incomes of Burmese
(In rupees. Rs. 100 = \$21)

| <u>Income</u> | <u>No. Families</u> |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 0- 500 | 42 |
| 501-1000 | 51 |
| 1001-1500 | 26 |
| 1501-2000 | 18 |
| 2001-2500 | 10 |
| 2501-3000 | 6 |
| 3001-3500 | 0 |
| 3501-4000 | 2 |
| 4001-4500 | 1 |
| 4501-5000 | 2 |
| 5001-5500 | 3 |
| | <u>161</u> |

The mean annual family income for the Burmese is Rs. 1186 (\$249). The mean annual per capita income is Rs. 259 (\$54).

When the family incomes of the Burmese are broken down by the categories of cultivators and non-cultivators, we can make the following comparison.

Table IV

Family Incomes of Burmese

| <u>Income</u> | <u>No. Cultivators</u> | <u>% of Total</u> | <u>No. Non-Cultivators</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |
|---------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 0- 500 | 6 | 19 | 36 | 28 |
| 501-1000 | 12 | 38 | 39 | 30 |
| 1001-1500 | 5 | 15 | 21 | 16 |
| 1501-2000 | 4 | 13 | 14 | 11 |
| 2001-2500 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 5 |
| 2501-3000 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| 3001-3500 | - | - | - | - |
| 3501-4000 | - | - | 2 | 2 |
| 4001-4500 | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| 4501-5000 | - | - | 2 | 2 |
| 5001-5500 | - | - | 3 | 2 |
| | <u>32</u> | <u>100</u> | <u>129</u> | <u>100</u> |

The mean annual family income of cultivators is Rs. 1091 (\$229), and the mean annual per capita income is Rs. 203 (\$42). For non-cultivators, the comparable figures are Rs. 1210 (\$254) and Rs. 276 (\$57). However, when we compare median family incomes (a more reliable measure of central tendency for our sample) the apparent advantage of non-cultivators disappears; they receive Rs. 900 as against Rs. 910 for cultivators. The only significant difference in the range of incomes for the two groups is that some 7% of the non-cultivators receive incomes over Rs. 3500 (\$735), while no cultivator receives over Rs. 3000. However, the idea is prevalent in the village that cultivation is a relatively unprofitable occupation and that it is possible to realize as much or more income by less arduous types of work.

The Indians of Tadagale are much more prosperous in terms of income, as shown below.

Table V

Family Incomes of Indians
(in rupees. Rs 100 = \$21)

| <u>Income</u> | <u>No. Families</u> |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 0- 500 | 0 |
| 500-1000 | 3 |
| 1001-1500 | 1 |
| 1501-2000 | 2 |
| 2001-2500 | 2 |
| 2501-3000 | 3 |
| Over 7000* | 4 |
| | <u>15</u> |

(*includes two families of Rs. 7200 each; one of Rs. 8640; and one of Rs. 18,000.)

The mean annual family income for the Indians is Rs. 4030 (\$848), and the mean annual per capita income is Rs. 1343 (\$281).

Differences in family incomes are not reflected in external status symbols, except in extreme cases. In poor families the type of house is usually bamboo and thatch, while among relatively prosperous families it is more likely to be of plank construction, with perhaps a galvanized iron roof. In the wealthier families the women have more silk longyis for dress occasions. Major differences in economic standing are often shown in the size, elaborateness and expensiveness of ceremonials, such as weddings and boys' initiation ceremonies, and in the contributions made towards the support of the Buddhist monks.

In general, however, wealth differences in Tadagale do not seem to provide any clear basis for differential association of persons. Kinship, which cuts across economic lines, is far more important. Although a few families are generally regarded as well off, they do not live apart from the rest of the community either in the spatial or social sense. Wealth does not appear to have any direct correlation with status, rank or privilege, or to form the

basis of invidious distinctions. Persons of means are esteemed more for the socially valued uses to which they may put their money, such as charity, ceremonial activities, and support of the clergy, than for sheer richness or consumption.

Economic Change

The changing pattern of Tadagale's economic life may be described from the point of view of shift from a once largely subsistence economy to one based more upon commodity production and exchange. In discussing this shift, the general trends are best indicated if we focus upon Lower Burma rather than upon Tadagale exclusively. It is desirable to make this large area our unit because pertinent data are available for it, whereas historical information specific to the village is somewhat scant and fragmentary. The term "Lower Burma" is an administrative and geographical one. It comprises about 81,000 square miles and a population of some 9 millions, four of the administrative divisions in the highly fertile, deltaic 'rice-bowl' of Burma.

1. Background. The trend from a relatively self-sufficient subsistence economy, with little dependence upon money, to a more commercialized economy coincides with the coming of British colonial rule in Burma. Our historical perspective thus extends over a period of about 150 years. Within this span of time, profound economic change occurred in Lower Burma. Here we cannot give a detailed account of events from decade to decade, but must limit ourselves to a brief consideration of the major trends.

In pre-British Lower Burma, villages consisted of what might be called islands of clearance in a big jungle. In these settlements the Burmese peasants lived by cultivation of paddy and vegetable gardens. Individual small holdings were the rule, and the size of the plot depended almost entirely upon need. No incentive existed to clear and cultivate land beyond the requirements of household subsistence and taxes, paid in kind, to the representative of the Burmese Crown. Cotton, from the dry zone of central Burma, was spun and woven into cloth, and garments were made in the local community. Housing was of a simple bamboo and thatch type, made of materials available locally. The bullock cart provided transport on the relatively few occasions that it was necessary for the Lower Burma villager to travel distances that could not be walked. Contact between villages was minimized by the expenses of intervening, uncleared jungle country. In Tadagale, for example, one of our oldest informants was able to recall the period of his youth, around 1885, when jungle clearance and settlement was still taking place, bringing Tadagale into closer communication with other communities in the area. Local craftsmen provided the villagers with simple utensils, tools and implements.

When British colonialism took over, money came to dominate over barter. Taxation was ordered to be paid in money. The Burmese cultivator was encouraged to clear the heavy jungle, cultivate more land, sell surpluses of paddy to commercial millers, and spend his money on attractive manufactured goods imported from England, which were on display in the town shops and bazaars. Moneylenders, some of them Burmese, but especially Indians of the moneylending Chettiar caste from Madras, who could enter Burma freely, were at hand to loan money in fairly unlimited amounts to the Burmese peasants. Thus the latter could finance the expansion of their cultivation. Rates of interest charged were unregulated, and commonly ranged from 10% to 35% per year. The Burmese peasant was an easy victim: he was, at first, entirely unsophisticated in money

matters, and cases occurred in which he unwittingly signed away title to his property, thinking he was only signing 'loan papers.' In some cases, Burmese cultivators, encouraged by moneylenders, borrowed sums greater than actually required for crop financing and used the excess for sponsorship of ceremonial activities, dramatic presentations, purchasing imported goods never before needed, and so on.

The result of this was the tremendous growth of rural indebtedness and much foreclosure by creditors holding mortgages on the land. By the 1930's, about half the cultivated land of Lower Burma was owned by landlords, largely absentee. The once independent Burmese land holder was converted into a rural tenant, or, in many instances, a landless agricultural laborer. Many tenant farmers, dependent upon rent-racking landlords, worked from harvest to harvest with little to show for their efforts beyond perhaps enough of the crop, after payment of rent, hired help, and debts, to feed their families through the planting and growing seasons. Large numbers left agriculture for other pursuits, such as petty clerical jobs in the towns and itinerant trading in imported goods. In Tadagale, for example, in 1949-50 it was possible to record cases of cultivators in such difficult straits that after paying their help and taxes, they did not have enough paddy left for the family granary to last until the next harvest, and were thus in the position of having to purchase in the market, at inflated prices, the very commodity they produced.

2. The Shift in Tadagale. The economic shift within the village may be summarized in terms of modes of employment, resources, imports and exports:

a. Employment. Rice agriculture has been decreasing as the land has passed, over time, into the hands of absentee landlords and independent owner-cultivators have become fewer. The tenant farmers are likewise small in numbers.

The manufacture of clothing has also diminished. Formerly, cotton was spun and woven in the village. Now, clothing is very largely obtained by purchase of imported piece goods in Rangoon and having it finished by city tailors and seamstresses.

Oil pressing as an occupation has disappeared. The one remaining presser of oil seeds recently abandoned this work because of the difficulty and high cost of obtaining sesamum seeds from central Burma.

In a few occupations there seems to have been no notable change. These are carpentry and work in bamboo and thatch, which keep a few people occupied; itinerant selling of prepared foods; shopkeeping; and medical practice (indigenous medicine).

Several occupations are new or increasing in the village. Agricultural wage labor has increased as more people have been unable to secure a living as tenant farmers and have gone to work for others in and near the village. Vegetable gardening, always important because of the nearby Rangoon markets, has become a leading occupation, especially since the beginning of the insurrections in 1948 which reduced the supply of fresh vegetables from the north.

As motor transport has replaced animal transport over the years, the men of Tadagale have been increasingly employed in operating buses. Related to this is the establishment of a repair shop by a motor mechanic to service the buses owned by villagers.

An increase has occurred in the number of individuals engaged in small-scale middleman trading. Such manufactured items as candles, mats, jewelery, and books are bought in Rangoon and sold increasingly in the village and nearby.

Wage labor of an unskilled sort has increased. Some villagers have found jobs in a warehouse in Rangoon, others in a mental hospital not far from the village. A very small number have become office and clerical workers.

Unemployment is said to be a new development, although these people are only a few.

b. Resources. Both cultivated land and grasing land resources have declined. The grazing land is very badly eroded, with little grass left. Fishing resources remain steady; the large Pazundaung Creek at the eastern edge of the village yields as many fish as ever.

c. Imports. There has been a decrease, as indicated earlier, in the amount of Burma-grown cotton that comes into the village for making of clothing. A variety of miscellaneous food items, such as salt, dried chilis, cigars, cooking oil, betel, potatoes, onions, and various spices are obtained from the outside as much as in the past. Increasingly sought beyond the village are building materials, housewares of all types, clothing, and medicine.

d. Exports. The amount of rice sold has declined, while the sale of cooked foods, ~~r~~fresh vegetables, labor and services has increased.

In 1949-50 the villagers of Tadagale felt that their economic lot had worsened over the preceding several years, owing to the aftermath of World War II and the instability prevailing in Burma. The most pressingly felt needs were for land and the curbing of inflationary high prices, and hope was expressed that the plans of the national government in these and other matters might bring some measure of relief.

III

SOCIAL GROUPS AND RELATIONS

In this section we describe the patterns of kinship and interpersonal relations, the beliefs and customs pertaining to the life cycle of the individual, associations, and intergroup relations.*

Kinship

The kinship system reflects very clearly the bilateral family structure in the absence of terminological differentiation on the basis of the sex of the connecting relative. The other outstanding characteristic is the recognition at many points of relative age. For each generation a distinct set of kinship terms is employed. On the speaker's (ego's) generation, all cousins are merged with siblings, the terms being differentiated, however, according to relative age. In the first ascending generation, the parents' siblings are differentiated according to the degree of age relative to the parent. In the first descending generation the factor of relative age loses significance; sex is the sole basis of differentiation of kinship terms, except for separate terms to distinguish the speaker's own children from others. On successive descending generations sex distinction is absent and all relatives of a given generation are subsumed under a single kinship term.

Relative age is the all-important hub upon which the wheel of village social life revolves. Deference to one's elders is reflected in such customs as carrying objects for them, refraining from sitting with one's head higher than those of elders, and avoiding postures in which the feet are extended towards such persons.

Beyond such matters of etiquette, the importance of age is even more fundamentally demonstrated in the showing of obeisance to one's elders. This is done on all the important ceremonial occasions. Four such occasions are regarded as obligatory times for paying one's respects. These are the beginning and the end of Waso (sometimes called the Buddhist 'Lent'), a period of about three months, roughly from mid-July to mid-October; the New Year; and the harvest. Respect is paid to all of one's elders in the parental generation and above. A visit is made at which an offering, valuable or symbolic, is brought and the elder's blessings are received.

Interpersonal Relations

Husband and Wife. The household is normally composed of husband and wife and their offspring. It is a bilateral, limited type of family structure, contrasting markedly with the patrilineal extended Chinese family and the joint family of India. Unlike the position of the wife in the traditional Chinese and Indian family systems, that of the Burmese wife is not one of an outsider living in a group dominated by her husband's relatives. Where a married couple reside is a matter of choice and is decided very largely on the basis of economic opportunity. When there is such opportunity in the village for an outsider who marries a girl of Tadagale, he is urged to establish their residence there, but there is no particular pressure or feeling about the

*The material on kinship and the life cycle, with certain changes, was published under the title "Burmese Kinship and the Life Cycle: an Outline" in Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, vol 7, no 4, 1951, pp. 437-454. The reader interested in the technical details of the kinship terms and a diagrammatic presentation of the kinship system is referred to that article. The author wishes to express his thanks to Mi Mi Khaing for valuable assistance in the compilation and analysis of the material on this aspect of the culture.

matter. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by visits from time to time. People from Tadagale seldom marry individuals from villages that are very distant. The structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and male domination in the family.

Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in contrast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the historic resultant of two patterns of thought. One is the apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheritance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of property in the event of divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and the absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese concepts: whatever ideas of male superiority exist stem from Buddhist ideas of reincarnation, it being assumed that only a man can attain reincarnation.

In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

Certain observances and taboos, reflective of a deferential attitude towards males, are expected of a wife. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by village wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of malice by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is a tendency towards a double standard of sexual conduct. A husband who has reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a philandering husband, on the other hand, will usually do no more than display hurt feelings for a brief period; rarely will she separate from her husband, especially if they have children.

Siblings. It is the duty of the younger to show deference to the elder. This pertains to the order of serving food, fetching and carrying things, and even the arrangement of sleeping mats--a younger sibling should never sleep with his feet extended towards an elder sibling. Upon the death of a parent, the eldest child of the same sex assumes that parent's socio-economic role in the family.

Father and Daughter. Consistent with the age principle, it is a daughter's duty to be obedient and to wait upon her father. Once an unmarried daughter passes the age of puberty, her father is expected to lead a circumspect and moral life more than ever before. Any deviant sexual behavior or drunkenness on his part reflects upon his daughter and detracts from her marital chances.

Mother and Son. Although a son owes obedience to his mother, her claim upon him in this regard is tempered by the fact that, in Burmese Buddhist

thinking, being the mother of a son is itself considered the greatest event of a woman's life and represents the achievement of full existence as a female human being. The relationship is close and indulgent. The mother is regarded by her son as more important than his wife; in fact, a son normally will choose a wife with a great deal of regard for his mother's opinions and wishes.

Mother and Daughter. The mother is her daughter's early teacher. It is considered most important for the girl to learn prayers, how to prepare the daily food offering, and how to change the flowers on the household altar. These things are taught almost from the time the child begins to speak and understand. Other household duties in which a mother instructs her daughter vary considerably with the economic status of the family. In poor families some assistance with tending animals and winnowing the rice is part of the girl's work from about the age of ten. Daughters are expected to show filial respect and deference equally to the mother and father.

Father and Son. The father occupies the role of disciplinarian in the family. Disciplining of sons may include physical punishment, though such measures are not resorted to readily. Prior to adolescence, boys are taught prayers and good habits by their mothers, with the father remaining more or less in the background and interfering only when disciplinary action may be required of him. After a son passes adolescence the father becomes important as his mentor.

Husband and Wife's Elder Sister. This relationship tends to mirror a conflict between age and sex as status factors in the social structure. There is an implicit conflict between the husband's position as a man and his wife's elder sister's position, in many cases, as his senior, having a claim on outward respect and obedience. In practice this relationship is often cool and aloof in nature, very much in contrast to the free and easy one between a man and his wife's younger sisters.

Husband and Wife's Younger Sister. A man is expected to show great favor to his wife's younger sisters and to display more interest in them than in his own sisters. He buys them presents, gives them spending money when he can, and covertly he is expected to be on the lookout for prospective husbands for them. Quite frequently, the wife's younger sisters will accompany her and her husband when she marries, and all will live together in the same house. Although husband and wife's younger sisters engage in a great deal of mutual joking and teasing, the relationship does not normally assume a sexual aspect. Polygyny is permissible but very rarely practiced; when it is, however, it takes the sororal form. The rather free and easy relationship between a husband and his wife's younger sisters sometimes gives rise to village gossip-- especially when it is known that he and his wife are not getting along well-- that he is carrying on love affairs with his younger sisters-in-law.

In-Laws. A daughter-in-law is definitely subordinate to her mother-in-law. If they live in the same household, the mother-in-law is entitled to the best room and to be waited upon by her daughter-in-law. Significantly, the Burmese word for daughter-in-law (*cwêimà*) means 'sweat women.'

The term for son-in-law (*Qame?*) means 'desired son.' A son-in-law is a privileged member of his wife's family. His wishes are respected and his comforts looked after. His mother-in-law instructs her younger children to show him respect and deference.

Since the son-in-law has the social status of a son in his wife's family, he has the right to expect his father-in-law to sponsor his career, even more than he expects this of his own father.

A daughter-in-law is expected to regard and treat her husband's father very much as her own father.

Grandparent and Grandchild. Because of the great difference in age between these generations, great respect is theoretically due grandparents. In practice, this may be flouted and great indulgence shown to grandchildren. Grandparents quite frequently help in rearing their grandchildren, tell them stories and teach them the Buddhist precepts.

The Life Cycle of the Individual

Birth and Infancy. When a woman is pregnant her dreams are considered to be especially significant. She is expected to remember those dreams that concern what her child will be like. The welfare of the child is forecast by some dreams. A dream of only one of things that normally come in pairs, such as earrings, bodes ill, possibly death, of the child in infancy. If the woman dreams of her viscera coming out it is indicative of a great future for the child. Persistent dreams of a particular deceased individual are indicative that the child will represent his reincarnation. In all forebodings of ill the normal counter-measure is to consult a Buddhist monk or an astrologer, who may give the woman an inscribed prayer (mantra) to keep or some amulet for the child to wear as protection.

Although village women need not avoid any specific foods during pregnancy, strong spices are regarded as harmful.

No supernatural means are employed to influence the sex of the prospective offspring. Certain signs are considered prognosticative. If the pregnant woman's stomach appears pointed, a boy will be born; a flat, broad stomach indicates that a girl is in prospect.

Pregnancy is considered a time of great happiness; the woman is greatly indulged and pampered by all concerned.

When the time for delivery approaches, any other pregnant women in the household must depart, lest their presence impede labor. Normally the woman's mother, grandmother, or aunt, in addition to a midwife, assists at birth. A fire is prepared in the room in which delivery is to take place and is maintained for ten days.

As soon as delivery has occurred, the umbilical cord is cut with a bamboo knife. The afterbirth is wrapped in the mother's skirt and is buried at once in the cardinal direction associated with the day of the week of the baby's birth. The mother is fed an infusion of turmeric, and turmeric paste is rubbed all over her body. She is kept close to the fire and made very warm. For three days she is carefully watched to prevent her from sleeping heavily during daylight hours.

The mother is treated as a delicate invalid for about one month and, in some cases, for as long as three months. She is fed only white rice and dried fish. A soup of garlic and banana stems is drunk to promote the flow

of milk. She is not permitted to read, sew, or to do anything that will 'arouse or stir the blood.'

Omens are read from the position of mongoloid spots on the newborn baby's body. They are said to represent marks put on in a previous existence and their presence proves that the child was then a human being. A blue spot on the foot presages a life of travel. Any marks leading from the right shoulder to the left hip, the line that the royal riband takes, traditionally indicated a royal future; today, however, in the absence of royalty in Burma, such marks merely forecast a 'great' future for the child.

A child is constantly watched from the time of birth for signs of whose reincarnation it represents. This is a constant topic in the family conversations.

Any disfigurement in a newborn child is regarded as a carry-over of the parents' store of demerit, as well as the child's, from earlier existences. It is regarded with a sense of shame and sorrow.

Although multiple births are neither preferred nor desired, they are not looked upon with any marked anxiety nor are there any supernatural means employed to prevent them.

A number of things are done by parents to protect the newborn baby from malevolent influences. Before it is a month old, a tiger bone should be ground on a stone, together with a little water, and mixed with honey. This is fed to the child to ward off a mysterious infant illness associated with the tiger. A connection is believed to exist between the tiger and convulsions; some parents place a tiger skin under the mattress of the baby's bed to guard against such illness. A knife similarly placed is said to protect against illness in general.

To insure good health and well-being for the child, a white thread over which certain prayers have been recited may be given by a Buddhist monk and tied around the baby's wrists. People should refrain from making admiring remarks about a baby's growth; if they do so, the thread may be left on the baby's wrists to neutralize the harm that may come.

When the stump of the child's umbilical cord has dried and fallen off, it is kept and used as a medicine for any illness that befalls the child. A little of it is ground up and mixed with water for such purposes.

A very close connection is believed to exist between mother and child during the nursing period. Certain observances are necessary. The mother must not eat tomatoes at this time, for they may appear in the baby's stools; for the same reason, she must abstain from green vegetables. Any falling out of her hair during the nursing stage is said to be caused by bubbles blown into her by the suckling baby. To prevent the milk supply from drying up, the nursing mother avoids fruits of astringent quality, such as pomegranates and buds of the banyan. She must also take care not to allow milk to fall on the floor and dry.

The baby is weaned very gradually, beginning at the age of about nine months to a year in most cases, although some children may be given the breast occasionally up to the age of two or three years. Weaning is facilitated by the mother's application of a bitter substance to her breasts.

From infancy an attempt is made to mold the child's features. The ears are pulled outward and the bridge of the nose is pulled upward to prevent a flat nose. A protuberant, prominent forehead is disliked; to prevent it, people play at bumping foreheads with the child. To elongate its neck the child is held under the chin when lifted up from its bath. After being dressed its limbs are pulled straight and it is wrapped around, to insure straight growth. A baby girl's nipples are squeezed to prevent her having a large bosom.

Naming. It is believed that one's name can influence the course of life events; therefore the name of a child is chosen with care. Burmese personal names normally consist of monosyllables which are chosen in a rather complex manner. The thirty-three characters of the alphabet are traditionally divided into seven groups, each group corresponding to a given day of the week. The first syllable in a personal name begins with a letter which belongs to the group of letters assigned to the particular day of the week on which the child was born. Another syllable begins with a letter belonging to a day that is considered congenial to the day of birth. There is a tendency for the villagers to follow these rules only for the first syllable of the name. The terms in the name stand for qualities of character, physical beauty, various gems, wealth or prosperity. Boys' names usually denote strength, success or brilliance; while grace, beauty, tenderness and various precious stones are the most common meanings of girls' names. A son is never named syllable for syllable after his father, for this is considered disrespectful and an obstruction to each other's prosperity. There is also a tendency to avoid naming children after deceased relatives. Terms indicating large numbers, such as million, sometimes appear in the names of both sexes.

The name of the child is conferred rather informally by means of a feast to which the family invites relatives and friends in the village. Sometimes written invitations are sent on which the name of the child is announced. The feast takes place at home, where the invited guests bring gifts and may see the child. The only ritualized feature of this event is the washing of the child's hair, always done by an elderly person. This may occur, however, before the arrival of the guests.

Because of the significance and influence attributed to the personal name, it may be changed very readily and informally. If it is felt that ill fortune is in the offing, an announcement may be made in the village of the change of one's name.

Childhood nicknames as well as teknonymy are used in the village, but not to the exclusion of use of the personal name.

Childhood. The children in Tadagale are generally indulged and their existence is more or less carefree, unencumbered by rigid discipline-- apart from inculcation of respect for elders-- until they are of educational age and considered capable of understanding the moral teachings of Buddhism. A male child is valued religiously, for at an early age he will be initiated into the monkhood as a novice. This brings great religious merit to his parents.

Children are valued for the economic help they render. This varies, of course, with family circumstances. But in the ordinary family of Tadagale, sons and daughters help from the age of nine or ten in tending cattle, getting firewood, and winnowing rice. Children are also looked upon as a kind of social insurance for old age.

Puberty and Adolescence. The Burmese view, in the village, is that one is an adult when one becomes physiologically mature. Upon reaching pubescence boys as well as girls are referred to by a term which means 'virgin.' The connotation is that the individual has now entered a period of life in which the dangers of temptation are especially great and in which correspondingly greater precautions are necessary.

A girl's first menstruation is believed to cleanse her system; frequently, such phenomena as eruption of the skin or sexually delinquent behavior preceding the first menstrual period are regarded as evidence that the 'blood is trying to flow.' Although the idea of uncleanness is associated with menstruation, there is no segregation of the girl or any particular fear of contamination. So long as she conducts herself with propriety and modesty a girl is free to move in public at this time.

Ideally, the attainment of puberty is the time for the girl's ear-piercing ceremony, but in actual practice this often takes place as early as her seventh or eighth year-- if it occurs at all. There is a tendency for this ceremony to be omitted in Tadagale. Since it is a feast occasion involving considerable expense to her family, the trend is towards holding a single ceremony, at which several girls who are related will have their ears pierced. The initiate is dressed for this occasion in the traditional garb of the Burmese Court, and also wears a spired-helmet type of head dress. The villagers gather at the family house for the event. An elderly woman rubs an anaesthetic plant substance on the girl's ear lobes and pierces them with gold pins. These pins are left in the ears, bent back. Later, if larger holes are desired, rolled leaves may be inserted. The family presents gifts to the assembled guests; often these are conventionalized tokens, such as inscribed cigars or fans.

On the same occasion boys of approximately the same age may be initiated into the Buddhist monkhood.

Boys' Initiation. For Burmese boys one of the most important events is initiation as a novice into the Buddhist monkhood. The traditional rite of shinbyu continues to be an important part of Burmese culture, in the urban as well as the rural setting. In the towns and cities, of course, it has been affected by the greater contact with western culture; the procession, for example, is likely to take place in automobiles rather than on horseback and on foot. Nevertheless, city-bred as well as rural Burmese feel it is very important for social as well as religious reasons that their sons be initiated; and everywhere the shinbyu involves large expenditures if not great sacrifices, requires the services of many people for its planning and carrying out, and is the occasion par excellence for joyous celebration as well as religious solemnity.

No two shinbyu ceremonies are the same in detail. The circumstances of the sponsoring families, the physical setting, the idiosyncrasies of individual monks all make for variation. Here we shall indicate the main features of the initiation ceremony as observed in Tadagale.

The ceremony proper is held on the open-sided ground floor of a wooden building, in the upper portion of which the monks and their pupils live. On the south side of this room is a platform raised about three feet above the ground, on which the monks sit during the proceedings. The room is decorated with various hangings, tapestries, and net curtains; the floor is covered with mats and carpets. Four tables front the platform, on which are placed various

objects used in the ceremony. The largest table is covered with a lace cloth and on it stands an alabaster statue of the Buddha in a carved and decorated case. Before the figure of the Buddha are offerings of flowers, water, a candle, bananas and coconuts, placed in a special bowl. There is also a dish of puffed rice, a carved gilt bowl, and three new bowls, the latter for the initiates. Each of the bowls contains some of the traditional articles required for a monk: beads, water cups, needle and thread, a straight razor. The carved, gilt begging bowl symbolizes the type used by the Buddha when he was on earth. The second table contains offerings of bananas and coconuts for the monks, and richly decorated gilt trays symbolic of the kind used in the days of the Burmese kings but now only for purposes of decoration. These will be carried by young girls in the procession. The third table contains robes and other gifts for the several monks who are invited to the ceremony. On the fourth table are mats and pillows for the initiates to use. They will be presented to the monks as gifts afterwards.

The elaborate preparations for the ceremony begin on the morning of the preceding day. Young girls go from house to house to borrow betelnut boxes, mats and carpets. In the afternoon a five piece orchestra, hired for the occasion, arrives at the place of the ceremony. It consists of two large drums, a small drum, a wind instrument, a xylophone, and cymbals. Now an elder makes offerings to the spirits (nats). Bananas, a coconut and a lighted candle are placed on a tray. The elder holds the tray and recites invocations to the good and the evil spirits. The evil spirits are implored not to harass any person who participates in the ceremony, because it is a work of merit; the good spirits are reminded of the meritorious nature of the ceremony and asked to watch over and protect the proceedings. As the spirits are so addressed he swings the tray towards each member of the orchestra in turn, sometimes three, sometimes nine, and sometimes twelve times. The orchestra continues to play intermittently throughout the afternoon, evening, and into the night. Early in the evening the young men of the village come to the monastery with their own musical instruments -- mandolins, guitars, and violins -- and sing and dance into the early morning hours. The orchestra group remains at the monastery all night.

About midnight, a group of men who are responsible for cooking the food set to work at this task. Women do not normally cook meals for an occasion as large as this; it is felt that the quantities of food required and the amount of labor involved is too much for them to manage. Around three hundred people are expected at a large shinbyu in the village. The cooks, about a dozen middle-aged men, sit around the fire they have lighted in a clearing a short distance from the monastery, drink tea, smoke, and make jokes. One man is introduced to the group as the 'all-Burma curry-cooking expert'; another is called 'No. 1 soup cook'; a third is dubbed 'best rice cook of the village.' During the night they prepare large quantities of boiled rice, pork curry, sour bean sprouts, fried fish paste, and a vegetable soup.

Early on the morning of the day for the ceremony, the initiates are dressed by friends of their families. After a bath, thanakha, an astringent-like paste made from ground tree bark and water, is applied to their faces. Then they don silk longyis and thin, white muslin jackets, beneath which they wear cotton vests. The longyi is very ornate, made of heavy silk, and is seamless. Gold chains and necklace, bracelets and rings are put on. The head dress is a fine silk cloth, wound round the head, and decorated with garlands of flowers.

Guests begin to arrive later in the morning at the site of the ceremony. As each enters he is given a large cheroot by one of the girls who is posted at the entrance to the room. The guests are seated on mats before the platform for the monks and the tables of offerings described above. They are served tea and pickled tea leaf while the orchestra entertains them.

The young men of the village arrive with their musical instruments, which they will play during the procession to follow. They join the other guests, taking seats on mats. The continued music of the orchestra forms a background to the constant buzz of conversation among the assembled guests.

The initiates are carried into the room-- on this day their feet must not touch the ground-- and seated in chairs facing the monks' platform. A few persons spontaneously break into dance as the music goes on; more guests arrive; the horses which have been hired for the procession are brought to the scene and tethered nearby. Gradually the guests are summoned, in groups, to eat in a nearby building.

When all have had their meal, the procession is made ready. The young girls are given the carved trays and betelnut containers. The initiates make obeisance (shiko) with folded hands to the monks, as do all the guests. A monk chants prayers and blessings, the audience sings responses. The initiates now are carried from the room and seated on the horses, which will carry them around the village. A golden umbrella is opened and raised over each initiate, whose young male attendants hold it aloft, guide his horse, and carry him on their shoulders whenever he is required to dismount.

About mid-morning the procession leaves the monastery grounds, lead by the fathers of the initiates and young male relatives carrying the lacquer begging bowls which the initiates will use, followed by their mothers and female relatives bearing mats and pillows. Next follow the young girls, each carrying a decorated tray or container. After them come the initiates on horseback, led by their male attendants and followed by the young men's musical band which dances, sings, and plays as it moves along. The guests followed in their rear.

This procession wends its way along the road that links Tadagale with Kokine Road, and arrives at a spirit shrine. The guests make obeisance to the shrine and sit on the ground. The initiates are carried to the shrine by their attendants, to be shown to the spirits so that these beings will know of their work of merit and thus restrain their evil influences. The procession resumes, going along the main village path to the large Buddha shrine located about midway along this route. Here the boys are again carried from their horses to make obeisance, after which the procession sets out on the last part of the route, to the monastery again.

Now the initiates are lifted from their horses and carried, shoulder-high, three times around the monastery building, in clockwise direction. They are followed by their fathers, young male kin, their mothers and the young girls bearing the trays and containers.

As the third round of the building is completed and the group reaches the entrance to the room of the ceremony and tries to enter, they find themselves blocked by two women who hold a silk scarf across the entrance and loudly demand a huge sum of money as payment for permission to pass. The father of an initiate offers them, instead, five balls of candied puffed rice. Much good-

natured bickering and banter takes place, in the midst of which the boys' attendants carry them off and hide them nearby, out of sight of the crowd. They demand ransom. Finally, the women who have blocked the entrance accept the offer of puffed rice balls, and the attendants who have hidden the initiates are persuaded to reduce the huge sum they have demanded to a token amount. The boys are returned, the crowd enters the ceremonial room, and the rite may proceed.

Sometime before noon the monks and the pupils of the monastery school have a meal, their last of the day, while the assembled guests sit in groups sipping iced soft drinks, smoking and gossiping.

About two o'clock gongs are struck to summon the monks to the ceremony. Now the initiates no longer wear jewelery or flowers, symbols of worldliness; and the silk scarves which earlier were worn on their heads are now worn across their chests, under one arm and over the other shoulder. The initiates sit on mats before the chair on which the chief officiating monk will be seated. A new earthenware pot is filled with water, flowers are placed in it, and a few yards of white thread are twined around the flowers. The pot is placed on the table to the right of the monk's seat. Its presence is supposed to counteract any evil influences by spirits or humans. It is a warning to evil spirits and enemies not to mar the proceedings.

When the monks arrive the orchestra again begins to play and candles are lighted. The several monks ascend the platform and sit according to rank. The chief officiating monk sits, as indicated, in a chair below the platform, facing the initiates and assembled guests.

The initiates repeat after an elder prayers and requests that they be allowed to enter the monkhood. The audience intones prayers for the remission of its sins, and the chief officiating monk recites the Five-Fold Path of Buddha. Further prayers by the monks are recited, in Pali, and then the chief monk preaches a sermon. His emphasis is very strong on the great glory brought to parents through the sponsorship of an initiation ceremony for a son. There are numerous allusions to incidents in the history of Buddhism to illustrate the importance of shinbyu and the even greater significance of entrance into the monkhood for life.

Following the sermon, the fathers of the initiates ascend the platform and place before each monk an offering of a new robe in an aluminum bowl.

At this point comes the ritual of water-pouring. The initiates' parents and nearest of kin slowly pour water, drop by drop, from bowls into cups which are set on the ground, as the chief monk recites prayers to call the attention of the earth spirit to the deed of merit being performed. It is believed that if they should be reincarnated in some lower form, they can be reminded by the earth spirit of their good deeds, and this will relieve them of their suffering and help to transform them into better reincarnated forms.

Now, threads are taken from the enclosure in which the initiates sat during the sermon. Their entrance into this enclosure, which followed their asking for admission to the monkhood, symbolized their acceptance into the order. These threads are now tied across the initiates' chests, over one shoulder and under the other.

The orchestra plays as the initiates depart for the adjoining building to change into ordinary clothes, eat their last meal of the day, and bathe. Some guests now leave; borrowed articles, such as plates, cups and mats are gathered up for return to their owners, and eventually the orchestra departs.

The initiates return to the front of the building in which the ceremony took place. They sit on mats for the shaving of their heads. Two women hold a long piece of white cloth before them to catch the hair as several men proceed to wet their heads and shave them clean with straight razors.

Once more the boys leave to bathe, then return and are seated before the chief monk. Their robes held in their hands before them, they recite prayers, give their robes to the monk, and ask him to dress them properly in the monkish garb.

Their robes donned, they squat before the monk and recite additional prayers, now following very carefully the special intonation appropriate to monks. The ceremony proper is complete.

The following morning, early, a few relatives and close friends go to the monastery. The monks, including the novices, are offered food by them. A monk recites the Five-Fold Path, and then the ceremony of pouring water drop by drop is performed. Names are given the initiates-- special monastic names which they will bear only for the duration of their novitiate.

In former times, and still today in the very remote villages of Burma, an initiate might spend many months, possibly several years, in the monkhood. Sometimes a boy would remain a monk for life. Today in Tadagale, as almost everywhere, initiates spend only a token period of about one week in the monkhood. During this time, they live the austere existence of the order, rising very early, spending long periods in prayer recitals, and abstaining from food after noon until the following morning. The short period of life as a novice is strongly in contrast with the easy-going, carefree childhood days that precede it. Some boys approach the time of their shinbyu with feelings of trepidation, and all are glad when the period spent in the monastery is over and they can return to the much less stern discipline of their parents.

Courtship and Marriage. Young people in the village find ample opportunities to assess each other's manners, physical appearance, and personality, in the company of others at feasts and various gatherings. If a young man and woman are together apart from the company of others, people assume that sex relations are involved. In fact, such going together is spoken of as 'getting married.' Villagers find it hard to conceive of a young unmarried couple associating on a purely friendly, non-sexual basis; such behavior is regarded as contrary to nature. But however much it occurs, unchaperoned association is not approved, much less encouraged.

Once a pair have decided they want to marry, the boy will inform his parents of his desire. They will already know, in a relatively small village such as Tadagale, something of the standing of the girl's family and of her dowry potentialities; in fact, as soon as they have sensed their son's interest in a particular girl, they will take steps to acquire this information. They will also ascertain whether acceptance by the girl's family is likely. Sometimes the approach to the girl's family is made directly; in other instances a female go-between will be employed. The latter is more likely when the girl's family

is not particularly well known to them. The boy's parents will be informed by the girl's family that their decision must await the outcome of consultation with an astrologer concerning the compatability of the birth dates of the prospective bride and groom. If the marriage is found to be an auspicious one -- which it usually will be found to be if the girl's parents desire the match -- an affirmative answer is relayed to the boy's parents. The latter thereupon call on her parents, and in the presence of elders, formally ask for the girl's hand. From this moment the couple are considered betrothed and must not go about in public unchaperoned.

The wedding date is astrologically determined. The length of the engagement depends upon the availability of an auspicious wedding date. In general, lengthy engagements are disliked. In no case should an engagement carry over the period of Waso, the so-called Buddhist 'Lent.'

Before the wedding ceremony, the bride's house is open to friends and relatives, who are expected to drop in to help prepare the house for the wedding, lending household items that may be needed for the occasion. A pavilion adjoining the house is erected to accommodate the crowd that will attend. All the helpers and would-be helpers in this work are offered meals and light refreshments.

The bride's family normally bears all the expenses of these preparations, but sometimes the boy's family will mention a sum of money either as a contribution towards the wedding or as an indication of their son's ability to support a wife. If such funds are offered, they will be mentioned at the time the girl's hand is sought.

One room in the girl's house is set aside as the bridal chamber. In families of average or better means it is furnished with a bed, draperies, and complete toilet and dressing facilities. In poorer families that cannot afford to furnish the bridal chamber in elaborate fashion, some show of style will be made in furnishing the bed, at least. By the evening before the wedding day the room must be ready, with all the wedding gifts on display.

On the wedding day three or four intimate married friends of the girl dress her. This must not be done by widows or divorcees, for it would bode ill for the marriage. For unmarried girls to perform this task would be immodest. Neither should a pregnant woman take part in dressing the bride, for that would be bad for her baby. The dressing of the bride must begin sufficiently early so that she will be completely ready at a precise, astrologically determined wedding hour.

The bridegroom's party arrives just prior to the appointed time for the ceremony. It includes two of his bachelor friends as well as his family. He takes his seat on a cushion on the platform that has been specially erected. The bride is brought out by her matrons and approaches with eyes downcast. She takes her seat on a cushion to the bridegroom's left. Across the platform, from left to right, are placed three silver offering bowls. A fourth bowl, on the right hand edge of the platform, contains puffed rice. The bridegroom's bachelor friends take seats to his rear; the matrons of the bride sit directly behind her.

A lay elder, arranged for by the bride's mother, officiates. He recites a paean of praise concerning the merits of the bride and groom and the goodness

of their families. The bride and groom are each handed a spray of flowers from the offering bowls and they make obeisance to the guardian spirits of their respective households. With a second spray they make obeisance to their parents and elders. Then a small tray containing fruit and rice is placed before them. The lay elder places a spoonful of this food first to the bridegroom's, then to the bride's lips. As he does this he makes a statement to the effect that this is the auspicious meal and that he hopes blessings may flow from it.

At this point, a happy and fruitfully married couple from among the oldest people in the community step forward to marry the couple. The left hand of the man is placed on top of the right hand of the girl. Water is poured on their hands thus joined and a silk scarf tied over them as the elderly couple recite words to the effect that they are now united. A chanter arises and intones a song of praise for long life. The contents of the bowl of puffed rice and money are scattered among the audience, and everyone scrambles for them. Now the bride and groom rise and are led to the bridal chamber, across the doorway of which is stretched a golden chain. After the bride has entered, anyone who wishes to do so tries to barricade the doorway and demand money of the groom. He is obliged to pay everyone who makes such demands. This money is known as 'stone money,' from the old custom, still practiced sometimes, of stoning the house of a couple on their wedding night until the bridegroom arises and pays them to desist. This behavior, the taunts and demands that are expressed, has an implied bawdiness about it. Once the couple have entered the bridal chamber, others may go in to inspect it. When all have left the chamber there is a general feast. Usually the feast in Tadagale partakes of the nature of a tea party, since a full scale feast is expensive. Each guest receives a symbolic gift, usually a cigar or a fan.

Old Age. Old age is the period after one's children are grown, the 'third age' of life. Women are definitely regarded as old after the menopause. The Burmese terms for 'old lady' and 'old man' are synonymous with grandparent terms, both in address and reference. Sometimes 'old mother' is used instead of 'old lady.' Long life is considered a great blessing and an indication of merit earned. Long life is prayed for and old age greatly idealized.

The ideal aged person is one who has successfully reared a family, has grandchildren, and a certain amount of material wealth. The aged are expected to be retiring and unobtrusive in their behavior. They should not go out visiting very much; they should eat less and avoid appearing too well dressed or jeweled when attending religious observances.

An attitude of resignation characterizes the outlook of the aged person. It is unheard of that old people should work. A possible exception would be a village headman, who, it is felt, should be a person of long experience. When aged people live with their children they assume the role of teachers of their grandchildren. Most of the time of elderly people is spent in activities centering around the pagodas and monasteries, organizing of religious festivals, and raising funds for the monks and charities. They often take leading roles in such activities.

The elderly members of a household arise early to see that the rice is cooked for the daily offering to the monks, and to insure that the household altar is properly looked after. It is preferable for them to arise before dawn, for to do so is considered very meritorious.

Death and Funeral Observances. The decline of the human body is regarded simply as part of the inevitable course of nature. When this occurs, the soul must leave. The butterfly is the symbol of life; when one dies, 'the butterfly leaves the body.'

When death approaches, valuables, such as jewelery, are removed from the person and the death-bed, because people are reluctant to use anything with which a person dies. These things are given to the monastery. A relative chants as the person is dying, to fix his mind upon the truths of Buddhism and to divert it from worldly goods and ties of kinship.

As soon as death occurs, everyone present cries and wails. Sometime before rigor mortis sets in, relatives bathe the corpse, using a new water pot for this purpose, and pouring the water over the body from foot to head, the opposite direction from that practiced by the living. If the water pot must be refilled at all, this must be done an odd number of times. The pot is then put outside the house, upside down, and anyone outside the family of the deceased may take it. Then another filled pot is placed underneath the bed of the corpse. His hair is dried and spread out, hanging loose. His jacket is put on backwards; his longyi is tucked in or tied at the back instead of the front. The two large toes are tied together, as are the thumbs; the arms are folded on the breast; and the body is covered with a white sheet. Money may also be placed in the mouth. This practice is sometimes attributed to the practice of earlier times when, it is said, bodies were simply abandoned; the belief is that then the deceased had to walk to the cemetery, where the gravedigger buried him and took the coins from his mouth in payment.

The corpse must be watched at night; groups take turns at this duty. It is said that the night watch is kept to prevent malevolent spirits from stealing the body. An impending funeral may be the occasion for a pwe, an outdoor theatrical presentation, and gambling games. In such event, the proceeds from the gambling will go to the bereaved family to help them. The corpse, in a coffin, will be placed on a bier nearby the scene of the pwe. It is said that thus he does not become lonely.

Burial occurs as soon as the relatives can conveniently gather together. While the body lies in state there is open house for those who wish to come to pay their last respects. When ready for burial, the body is placed in a wooden coffin, and a sheet is placed over the coffin. The water pot, taken from beneath the bed, is carried behind the coffin as it is taken out. Water is sprinkled on the floor until the party is out of the house, at which point the pot is broken. The body is carried feet first towards the cemetery. As it is lowered into the grave, the relatives kneel and make obeisance. On the return trip from the cemetery one member of the party is required to carry the sheet and to refrain from looking back.

By the time the funeral party reaches the house the bed has been cleared away for disposal. A white cloth is spread on a mat in one corner of the room. The person bearing the cloth says, as if talking to the deceased, 'There is your seat.'

On the sixth day after death, the person who placed the white cloth for the deceased to sit on, carries a paper umbrella to the cemetery and sticks it into the grave, saying, 'I have come to call you for tomorrow's ceremony.' If the umbrella remains upright it means the deceased will return as requested.

If the umbrella falls down it indicates that the spirit has departed and cannot return. The person who performs this ritual must not talk to anyone en route to the cemetery.

On the seventh day a ceremony takes place. The monks come to the house to eat and chant prayers. They are given offerings for their own use and a special tray containing white thread. The monks hold the thread, which symbolizes good, while they chant. The people present are seated before the monks, repeating the prayers and precepts after them. The deceased person is supposed to be sitting on the mat prepared for him and benefiting from this ceremony. Then the people are fed, the monks depart, and the influences of death are considered to be banished. The thread is kept in the house.

Graves are not visited, nor is there any upkeep of the cemetery, for folk belief has it that the tidying of graves will cause more people to die. The dead are commemorated by the meritorious act of feasting the Buddhist monks.

Associations

Bus Union. Owners of buses plying between Tadagale and Rangoon are organized into a union. In terms of its functions, this organization might be more fittingly termed a mutual protective and insurance association. These are: to prevent outsiders from infringing on their route and competing with them; payment of damages in case of accidents between members' buses and other vehicles or persons; payment of any costs of litigation that arise in connection with accidents; and maintenance of a repair shop and mechanic in the village. Members of the union pay an initial sum to join, plus monthly dues and a small toll fee for each trip that is made.

Peasants Union. The Tadagale Peasants Union is a constituent body of the All Burma Peasants Union and operates directly under the Insein Division of the parent organization. Some fifty to sixty households in Tadagale are members. When the head of a family or household joins, the union regards all its members as union members. In theory, meetings are supposed to occur once a month, but in fact take place at irregular intervals, whenever a problem arises that is considered sufficiently important to warrant a meeting. Commonly this is a dispute between members over land. If opinion remains divided after considerable discussion of a dispute or other issue, the union meeting votes by written ballot.

The more long-run aims of the Peasants Union concern rent and taxes of cultivators. Protests and petitions are sent to the government when it is felt taxes are too high. The union was characterized as 'an organization that is against the landlords.' At the time of our research, its aim was to reduce the landowners' share of the produce to one-third from two-thirds. The union also favored land nationalization, under which it was believed rent would be paid in a just amount to the government. Just where the Peasants Union fitted in with existing political party programs and alignments in the country at large it was not, for various reasons, feasible to investigate.

Ceremonial Assistance Groups. For purposes of rendering help at such ceremonies as weddings, funerals and initiations, the villagers are divided into informal groups. These are: men's group; married women's group; and unmarried girls' group. The men's group does the heavier tasks, such as chopping and carrying firewood, erecting ceremonial structures, and preparing

large amounts of food. The married women prepare food, serve, and entertain the guests, while the unmarried girls assist them. If a ceremony involves a procession, the unmarried girls bear the gifts which are invariably taken to the monks on such occasions.

These 'groups' are so informal and loosely organized that in the strict sociological sense they should not be so designated; rather, they are simply the conventional lines along which cooperation takes place and labor is divided, in a spirit of mutual aid, whenever a family sponsors a ceremony-- an occasion involving much work. Each is willing to help, for when his own family sponsors an event, similar assistance will be expected and forthcoming.

Education. In addition to the Buddhist monastic schools, to be discussed in the next chapter, there is a small secular school in the village. This is operated on a voluntary basis by a middle-aged schoolmaster, a widower, who migrated, together with his daughter, to Tadagale two years ago. It is his hope that eventually the school will be incorporated into the regular school system, as compulsory education is gradually extended to the country. The school is financed wholly by voluntary contributions. The village headman personally contributes ten rupees per month, his brother gives a like amount, and the Bus Union donates five rupees. From this income of twenty-five rupees per month (\$5.25) the schoolmaster pays five rupees for his house rent and provides blackboard chalk and his own books and pencils. On what remains, plus a little profit he derives from maintaining a small shop in his house, he must support his daughter and himself. But he is confident that once compulsory education is extended to Tadagale, his sacrificial efforts of the present will be rewarded by a regular appointment at Rs. 100 per month, an expanded program of instruction, and perhaps the services of an assistant. For the present he operates the school without any responsibilities to superiors, devising his own curriculum and teaching according to his own methods. The schoolmaster was himself once a student at a normal school in Moulmein.

About eighty children attend the school with varying degrees of regularity. The average daily attendance is about sixty. The schoolmaster feels that many more children of school-age living in the community should attend, but finds that parents are reluctant to send their children. Some feel they are needed for household and field labor; others prefer what they regard as the stricter environment of the monastic school, with its great emphasis upon religion and correct conduct. The schoolmaster deplores the ignorance and negative attitudes of villagers concerning education, and their unwillingness to contribute financially to the maintenance of his school.

Instruction is given in five grades or 'standards' as they are called in Burma. These are termed 1B, 1A, 2, 3, and 4.

Standard 1B is equivalent to the kindergarten of the pre-World War II schools. The schoolmaster has divided the class into two sections, one for the children of seven to eight years who already can read to some extent, the other for the younger ones of four to six who cannot. According to the rules of the government schools six years is the minimum school age, but the schoolmaster in Tadagale is not bound by such regulations. He teaches these two groups of kindergarteners according to their own levels and at the pace which he thinks appropriate. They learn the alphabet and simple numbers at first, later moving on to reading and spelling. No regular allocation of time to different subjects is possible, since the schoolmaster must teach this and four other classes without any assistance.

In Standard 1A, numerals up to one hundred and the various arithmetic operations are taught. Reading is done from a primer which contains fifteen commandments of the Buddha in Pali, with Burmese translations. In addition, a more advanced reader is used, containing sermons of the Buddha in both languages. The children in this class range in age from six to thirteen years, the average being nine.

The next class, Standard 2, provides further reading in the sermons and precepts of Buddhism, arithmetic ranging into high numbers, multiplication tables up to sixteen, and sums involving money. The geography of Burma is introduced. The pupils average ten and a half years.

More advanced arithmetic, reading of historical tales, and more advanced geography are included in the curriculum of Standard 3, the pupils of which average in age about the same as those in Standard 2. Hygiene is begun, literally called 'lessons to insure good health.' Besides cleanliness, the children learn proper postures for sitting, sleeping, and eating. Exercises in Burmese grammar are given by mass recitation-- which is the method of teaching all subjects. Another subject is the writing of letters and social invitations.

Children ranging from ten to fourteen years are in Standard 4. They use an advanced reader containing Buddhist sermons and history. Their arithmetic includes weights and measures, land measurement, and simple interest calculations. There is more emphasis on writing of letters and essays.

The school building is simply a vacant house. The entire school group is assembled at the same time, seated on the floor. The lessons of the different standards are recited one after another. While one standard is engaged in recitation, the other pupils are expected to study, or at least remain quiet. On the religious duty days, and of course on the holidays, the school is not in session.

This school contributes to the literacy of the village, although in large measure the high literacy here and generally in Burma, as compared with India and China, is attributable to the monastic schools. In Tadagale, 357 of a total of 640 persons, eight years of age and above, on whom literacy data could be secured, were literate. This is 55%. The criterion of literacy employed was ability to read a newspaper in some language. Of the 331 men in this number, 251 were literate, or nearly 76%. Women, however, were only 34% literate. Literacy in English is rare in the village; there were but twelve persons who could read an English language newspaper, and of these, nine were men.

Tadagale's proximity to Rangoon, where several newspapers are published, gives villagers access to the press. In fact, a few vendors of the metropolitan newspapers sell them in the community. Few persons buy them, but these copies receive very wide circulation. A survey of newspaper reading, carried out among those claiming literacy indicated a frequency range from zero to daily reading of newspapers. The largest group, nearly a third, both men and women, read a paper once or twice a week, while another 20% read one twice or three times a month. 10% reported never reading papers, while 16% claimed to be daily readers.

Intergroup Relations

As indicated earlier, about 6% of the population of Tadagale consists of Indians, some of them born in Burma. The Indian inhabitants came to the village

within the past two or three decades. In almost every way, they form a village within the village. They are spatially clustered together, apart from the Burmese. Their living is earned by dairying; milk from their cattle and water buffaloes is sold in Rangoon, for cash, to Muslim restaurants. Since the Burmese do not consume milk, the Indian dairymen find no market for their product in the community. The only economic relationship between the two groups consists of some exchange of Burmese paddy stalk, when the harvest is over, for animal manure. The Indians use the paddy stalk as fodder for their animals, while the Burmese use animal manure to some extent for their not very fertile garden and rice lands.

The Indians being Hindus, the Burmese Buddhists, the two groups have no basis for common participation in religious or ceremonial life. Nor is there more than a negligible tendency towards intermarriage; our census showed two cases.

As shown by our figures on income, the Indians as a group are far more prosperous than the Burmese. Although the Burmese seem to realize this, they tend to phrase the matter not so much in terms of greater wealth of the Indians as in terms of how little the Indian spends of his income. To the average Burmese of the village, the Indian is something of a lesser breed who lives on next to nothing and so grows rich.

Throughout the course of research in Tadagale, an effort was made from time to time to study intergroup feelings and attitudes, but this was a subject on which informants who were quite ready to discuss almost any other matter were loath to speak. The Burmese seemed to know little (or at least so professed) about the ways of the Indians; the Indians were very tight-lipped concerning the Burmese.

It was towards the close of our work in Tadagale that certain events occurred which brought out, in sharp focus, the nature of Burmese-Indian relations and attitudes, and completely broke the silence maintained earlier. At this point, however, some digression is necessary to provide a background for understanding what took place.

In 1949-50, the internal disturbances which have beset Burma since the end of World War II were at their height. During this time the maintenance of law and order sank to a very low point; robbery, armed and unarmed, was rampant. Tadagale was robbed three times within the preceding year, according to informants. On such occasions, bandits entered the village, fired their guns into the air to frighten the defenseless villagers, and then proceeded to tie up some villagers and remove their money and other valuables. Anyone who resisted was beaten. According to villagers, the police, located about half a mile away, could not be depended upon for protection or for action once a crime occurred, for the bandits were better organized and armed than the police, making the latter extremely reluctant to take any action.

Some early evidences of distrust between Indians and Burmese appeared about the middle of our research period, when an Indian dairyman stated that he was convinced that the bandits who periodically invaded Tadagale had Burmese collaborators in the village. He based his belief on the fact that the bandits seemed always to find their way directly to the homes of the more prosperous inhabitants, which knowledge, he claimed, could be gotten only from villagers.

On February 18, 1950, on arriving in the village early in the morning for our usual daily period of observation and interviewing concerning village life, we were immediately struck by the absence of villagers going to and fro in their daily tasks and by the deadly silent atmosphere pervading the whole village scene. On the veranda of one house located just across the bridge leading into the village a large number of people was assembled. An informant related that on the previous evening, about eleven o'clock, some fifteen armed bandits carrying automatic weapons as well as small arms came via Pazundaung Creek and invaded the village. Firing their guns into the air to frighten the people, they proceeded directly to the house where the large gathering was now assembled and demanded Rs. 1000 in cash and ten ticals of gold. When the head of the household protested that he did not have that much, they took him to the ricefields, bound his feet, and shot him to death. They also visited another home and made demands upon the woman who was the head of the household. When money was not forthcoming, they tied up the members of the family, struck the woman on the head, and removed all the clothing in the house except that being worn. Although the police were notified immediately after this attack upon the village, they did not come to investigate until many hours later. Villagers expected no real assistance from the authorities, whom they considered incompetent and afraid of bandits. The village headman said that although he suspected that there were accomplices among the villagers, he was afraid to name these suspects to the police, lest revenge be taken upon himself and his family.

This event, climaxing a series of attacks upon the village within the past year, set in motion a number of actions which are interesting for what they reveal of the social structure of the village as well as for the light they throw on intergroup relations.

The village headman, who had spoken of the need for the community to arm itself, and of the high cost of doing so, decided that a village meeting should be called to consider the matter.

A few days after the murder described above, the meeting was called. Early one morning the village crier went through the community sounding a gong and summoning the people to the school-house. Within an hour some fifty villagers arrived. As the group slowly gathered, several men came to tell the headman that their gardening or other work was urgent and asked to be excused.

As the meeting began, the elders sat on the veranda of the school-house, surrounding the headman, who sat at the schoolmaster's desk. A good deal of informal discussion took place between the elders and the headman before the meeting was called to order, and it was at this point that actual decision making was doubtless done.

The headman opened the meeting formally by addressing the assembled group, telling them that he was sure they were tired of the attacks upon the village and that they wanted to take action; that there was no future for them so long as they remained defenseless; and that once the rainy season came, it would not even be possible to flee during an attack. Although he could have made a decision in consultation with the elders, the headman told the gathering, he had called a general meeting because he wanted to be sure the community would support him in any course of action he might take.

The headman now proposed that a fund be raised for the purchase of arms and a plan formulated for defending the village. Since the idea of a common

fund, which he had broached informally on past occasions, did not meet with enthusiasm, the headman suggested that the village be divided into territorial units, and that each unit be responsible for raising its own money for arms and for deciding on the custody of its weapons. He called for volunteers from the elders to take responsibility for soliciting funds from inhabitants of their respective areas.

The headman's speech was met with total silence for a time, followed by a great deal of whispered conversation among various small groups. At this point the eldest man in Tadagale, himself a retired headman and a relative of the present headman, exhorted, 'Speak out your thoughts. It is not good to keep things bottled up within yourselves.' The headman now told the group that as their representative he could do nothing unless they wished it.

As hushed conversations continued among the assembled villagers, the headman and elders proceeded to talk among themselves for several minutes. It was then and there decided that each household would be asked to contribute what it could afford; no fixed assessment would be levied. A household too poor to contribute to its unit fund would be expected to help in the event that an attack occurred. Since some elders objected to giving assistance to any unit which chose not to arm or could not afford to, it was decided that armed groups would not come to their aid. Now another call for volunteers to raise funds was made by the headman, and several elders offered their services. The headman asked them to make every effort to persuade people to contribute.

If we may digress for a moment, this village meeting is instructive in showing how authority is exercised and decision making takes place in the community. The traditional emphasis upon the wisdom and authority of age is seen in the fact that only the elders spoke in the meeting, although the headman presumably called the meeting, in the first place, to mobilize village-wide support and tried to evoke expressions of opinion. An informant questioned later about the meeting said, 'It is not customary for the younger people to voice their opinions or take part in the discussion during a meeting. The elders do that.' The idea of a free give-and-take discussion is almost totally foreign to these peasants, who live but a few miles from Rangoon, a center of diffusion for western concepts and practices.

To return to the bearing of the above described meeting on Indian-Burmese relations in the village. During the meeting the question arose whether the Indians would be asked to contribute to the fund for purchasing arms, to which the headman answered in the affirmative. At that point one man quipped, 'Of course they must contribute; they have thousands of rupees.'

Two spokesmen for the Indians were present. The village headman explained to them that those who lived towards the northern end of the village would be included in a nearby unit for defense purposes, while the others could contribute their money directly to him. Then, half in jest, he said that each Indian household should give the cost of one gun. Somewhat irritated, one of the Indian spokesmen said that if need be he was willing to pay for five guns, but the question he wanted answered was who would have custody of the weapons. The headman was extremely hesitant to answer, and the Indians left the meeting without a definite answer.

So matters rested for about two weeks. On March 7th the Indian quarter of the village was suddenly the scene of intense activity. Houses and barns were being dismantled and ox carts and motor trucks were being loaded with animal fodder and dismantled buildings. The normally quiet Indian community was a beehive of activity. Quite without warning, the Indians were leaving Tadagale en masse. Eagerly we sought out Indian informants to determine what had happened.

An Indian woman tearfully related her version of events:

The Burmese want the Indians of the village to pay 1,150 rupees for guns to defend the community. How can we afford that amount? Our money has all been spent buying hay. Besides, we Indians are not wanted in this village. We have been abused and threatened; men have walked into my house carrying sticks and pieces of iron and have kicked the dogs. We can't afford to move; it costs 20 rupees to have a house dismantled, 10 rupees to have it transported, and 60 rupees to have it erected again. We will be heavily in debt by the time the move is over. But we Indians prefer to move because the Burmese here are bad. Last night I saw one of them trying to steal chickens from his neighbor's house.

An Indian man expressed himself with great agitation and feeling:

These people think that when we come to Burma we take leave of our senses. We raise the money; we buy the guns; the licenses are in our names, but they keep custody of the guns. What could we do if they sold the guns, or just kept them and told us they were stolen? We would be in trouble with the police. Would they believe us if we told them we gave the guns to the Burmese and the Burmese denied it?

There is no justice left in Burma. At least under the British Raj everyone was equal before the law in India and Burma. But now that the Burmese are in power they are loath to punish their own people. An Indian in Yegu caught a Burmese trying to rob his house. The magistrate sentenced him merely for having a gun without a license and he went free in two days.

According to the same informant, in the two days since the Indians had decided to leave Tadagale, the Burmese had rifled the house of one of them. This was confirmed by other Indians, who expressed their feelings about the Burmese of the village in similar vein. At one point in an interview with one of the Indians, a Burmese woman passed and picked up some sticks and bamboo poles at the site of a dismantled Indian house. The Indian said, with great bitterness, 'If a Burmese can pick up free a pinch of dirt which belongs to an Indian he is delirious with joy; he thinks he has gotten the better of an Indian.'

Further inquiries indicated that the Indians of Tadagale were moving to a nearby community, where the Indian minority was considerably larger than in Tadagale. Although they admitted there was danger of banditry there, too, and that the Burmese might not be friendly, they felt that where there were larger numbers of Indians there was less chance of abuse by the Burmese. Many Burmese in Tadagale, according to the Indians, had begged them to re-

consider, because they did not want to lose the Indians as customers for their paddy stalk and as a source of manure for their gardens and fields.

The headman of Tadagale, when queried as to the reasons for the departure of the Indians, shrugged his shoulders and said simply that they were afraid, despite the plans for village defense, that their animals might be injured in the event of any fighting between villagers and bandits.

Within a few days, the Indians of Tadagale had all departed; and in the vacant spaces where their houses had stood, the Burmese were eagerly at work erecting buildings of their own.

Social Change

Prior to effective British rule in Lower Burma (about 1830), the local autonomous unit was the village circle, consisting of several villages under the authority of a headman. The office of headman seems to have been hereditary in fact, although elections were held. That is to say, headmen tended to be elected in a particular lineage. Rule was through personal relationship between the headman and the villagers. Under the circle headman was a council of elders, appointed by him, one from each village in the circle. Disputes were almost entirely settled by arbitration and compromise, rather than with any concern over the abstract legal right and wrong of the case.

Within the village, a system called 'ten-house heads' was operative. This system appears to have been operative through British times, but at least since 1948 has lost effectiveness. Tadagale houses are strung out along a main path, and the ten-house division is such that the houses belonging to one group are mostly contiguous. The head of each ten-house section acted as a kind of deputy to the headman and sat on the council of elders.

With the coming of British rule, much of this changed. They established a hierarchical system, in which there were, in descending order of size, nation, division, district, township, village circle, and village. All officials at each level were appointed from the capital, even down to the village level, where the headman was made an appointed civil servant. He was paid on a percentage basis of his total tax collections and fines levied. The circle headman had police power and judicial authority in petty crimes.

A judicial system was introduced by the British to replace the old informal arbitration. With an almost total disregard for indigenous institutions and customs, the British established a territorial system based upon law. The loosely structured and informal system of old gradually broke down.

Early in 1948 Burma gained her independence. Since that time the country has been in a state of disorganization. The civil strife has brought about an almost complete breakdown of administrative function on many levels. Certainly the ties of the village with higher units have been curtailed. One indication of this is the fact that the headman no longer submits reports with any degree of regularity to higher echelons, as was required under British rule. Even the local ten-house heads council has largely ceased to function. It exists, but is scarcely used.

IV

RELIGION

The people of Tadagale are overwhelmingly Theravada Buddhist in faith. The exceptions are the Indian minority, who are largely Hindus. There are three Indians who profess Mohammedanism, and three Indo-Burmans and one Pakistani of like faith. Being Burmese and Buddhist are almost identified in the thinking of the majority, as evidenced by the fact that almost all replied 'Burmese Buddhist' to the question, 'To what people do you consider yourself to belong?'

In discussing the religious life of Tadagale, realism calls for emphasis upon actual religious beliefs and behavior, rather than any extended setting down of the formal theology of Buddhism. The latter has been done in any number of specialized works, to which the interested reader may refer. Here we shall refer to Buddhist precepts insofar as is necessary to illuminate religious beliefs and practices of the villagers.

The Five Precepts or Commandments. Almost all villagers know well the fundamental Buddhist injunctions against the taking of life in any form, the consumption of alcohol, illicit sexual activity, theft, and prevarication. These moral rules are, of course, sometimes breached. In Tadagale, the use of alcohol, sometimes to excess, is perhaps the most notable instance. The 'good Buddhist' does not, however, seem to experience feelings of guilt or pangs of conscience in such matters. Rather, the following of the moral precepts has instrumental value for him, in relation to his accumulation of merit and his reincarnation after death.

Merit. One's behavior throughout life determines one's store of merit, and this, in turn, determines one's reincarnation after death. Morally proper behavior, such as the following of the five basic commandments of Buddhist faith, is regarded as contributing to one's store of merit and thus enhancing one's state of reincarnation after death. Religious acts, such as making daily offerings of food to the monks, saying prayers, and attending the pagoda festivals on the important sacred days are likewise considered to increase one's merit. Breaking the moral precepts, irreligiosity, acting selfish or quarrelsome, detract from merit and accordingly tend to lower one's state in reincarnation.

Such is about the extent of the average villager's lay conception and understanding of the moral code and the ideas of the afterlife in Buddhism. He has little or no knowledge of the detailed concepts of reincarnation, with its elaborate gradationary ladder leading from the four states of punishment up to the ultimate achievement of Nirvana. Such theological learning is the property of the monkhood and of a few laymen who spent more than the usual few years as pupils in the monastic school.

Functions of the Monks. The functions of the Buddhist monks in the village may be conveniently classified as three-fold: formal education; officiation at certain rites; and providing personal advice and guidance to individuals.

With respect to formal education, the monks of four monasteries close to the village conduct schools which are attended by a considerable number of

the small boys, as day pupils. Monastic education is a traditional part of Burmese Buddhism, and almost all the men of Tadagale, whether reared in the village or elsewhere, have attended monastic schools for varying lengths of time.

The monastic school curriculum includes elementary reading, writing and arithmetic, rudiments of history and geography, heavily colored by Burmese cosmology and folklore, and instruction in Buddhist precepts and proper conduct. There is heavy emphasis upon proper conduct. Instruction takes the form of mass recitation and rote memorization. Discipline is strict and the inattentive pupil is kept alert, when necessary, by means of the rod. As indicated earlier, many parents in the village favor the monastic as against the public school because of the strict discipline and the emphasis upon conduct and religion.

Concerning the second function of the monks, officiation at certain rites, it should be indicated that because Burmese Buddhism is not a congregational type of religion, the monks are not called upon to officiate at regular assemblies in any fashion akin to the role of the Christian minister. The monks do, however, play an important part in the initiation of boys into the monkhood; and sometimes take part in funeral rites.

The monk's function of giving advice and guidance stems from the fact that he is regarded, in the thinking of the villagers, not only as one to whom the greatest respect and deference is due by virtue of his dedication to his life to religion, but also as a living repository of wisdom and universal knowledge. He is a person to whom one may turn in time of uncertainty, doubt or stress for personal counsel. Problems relating to the conduct of one's children; concern over persistent lack of success in one's economic activities; or even matters of health may be taken to the monk. A great deal of the advice rendered by monks is formulaic, folkloristic and magical in nature. Particular monks tend to acquire reputations as being especially wise and helpful in particular kinds of problems.

Support of the Monks. The monastery buildings and the land on which they stand are the property of the monastic order, held in perpetuity by grant of the government, free of taxation.

The monks are supported by the donations of the villagers. Every morning a monk, accompanied by one or two monastic school pupils, passes through the village to collect offerings of food. As he enters the compound of each home a member of the household takes a pot of cooked rice, which has been prepared for the morning meal, and places a few large spoonfuls in the monk's begging bowl. This minimum daily contribution of food is made by every Buddhist household, without exception; in addition, many families send bowls of curry and rice to the monastery. Giving food to the monks is an important act of merit to Burmese Buddhists. It is regarded as unthinkable that any household would refuse. When the hypothetical case was posed of such a deviant household, villagers agreed that such a family would be severely criticized and shunned in the village.

The few other things that the monks require for their austere existence are given by villagers on the important ceremonial days of the year. These items include robes, soap, matches, begging bowls, water strainers and needles.

Duty Days. The Burmese calendar is a lunar one, and in each month there are four days-- duty or sabbath days-- on which the villagers go to the monastery

to worship. These are the eighth day of the waxing of the moon, full moon day, the eighth day of the waning moon, and a day during the transition to the new moon. The second and fourth of these are considered especially sacred. On these duty days all work in the village ceases and the public school is closed. The people go, usually in family groups, to the monastery. There they say prayers before the images of the Buddha and present gifts to the monks. For a good many, a large portion of the day, after the visit to the monastery, is passed in social visiting and in generally relaxing. For the more devout, usually the elderly people, the duty days are more serious; they abstain from food and drink after midday until the following sunrise, spending the day in silent meditation and prayer.

Ceremonies

Thingyan, the New Year. Throughout the year a number of the Burmese religious festivals are celebrated in Tadagale. We may begin with the New Year festival, which occurs in April, beginning on or about April 13th, according to the determination made by astrologers.

Traditionally, the New Year festival calls for visiting the pagodas and monasteries and washing the images of the Buddha, after which one calls upon his elders and sprinkles them gently with scented water from a silver bowl. The young men of the village go from house to house, dancing and singing to the accompaniment of an orchestra. At each house they sprinkle water on the elders and ask them to call out the young girls. The girls are likewise sprinkled with water by means of a flower carried in the bowls.

In Tadagale today, many of the traditional customs of the New Year are still observed. Preparatory to the holiday, houses are swept and compounds cleared of all refuse. Everything is made clean and orderly. The images of the Buddha are washed, elders are called upon, sprinkled with water, and wished well. But, as in many parts of the country, the New Year festival has tended to take on a rather secularized character in modern times. Water sprinkling has become water throwing; groups of people, especially youngsters, go into the towns in carts or trucks, armed with buckets of water which they throw at passers-by. The name 'Water Festival' which has been given to the New Year celebration is singularly appropriate, since water-throwing and associated hilarity has overshadowed the sacred significance of the occasion. Some villagers go into Rangoon for the celebration, where everyone engages in dousing everyone he encounters (monks excepted), utilizing every means from buckets to large hoses attached to city water hydrants. These activities are in contrast with the traditionally serious, sacred character of the New Year as conceived by older villagers. The schoolmaster of the community, a middle-aged man with many years of religious training, spoke of the New Year:

Thingyan is the New Year festival, but the villagers do not know the significance of the festival. They know only that it is a feast day and a holiday and a day for having fun. In reality there should be no frivolity on New Year's day; it is a day on which one should fast and pray, for one is now one year older and therefore nearer death. One should meditate on the futility of frivolity as compared with the blessedness of deeds of merit.

Waso, the Buddhist Lent. In July, on the full moon day of the month of Waso, there begins a sacred period of some three months, corresponding closely

with the rainy season. The Buddhist monks take vows to live strictly by the Buddhist precepts and not to spend a single night away from the monastery during this time. The laity pledge to observe the fast from noon of the weekly duty day to the following dawn, an observance that at other times of the year is carried out by few people. Marriage must not take place during this sacred period; engagement contracted before the beginning of Waso should be consummated in marriage before the period begins, not carried over to its close.

On the full moon day that inaugurates this sacred period, the villagers make gifts of robes to the monks. Households sometimes pool money in a common fund from which the robes are purchased. The robes may be sent to the monastery or the monks may be invited to a donor's house to be fed and presented with the garb.

On the following day, the young people of the village go out in small groups to pick the 'Waso flower,' the flower of the Padauk tree (*Pterocarpus* sp.). In the evening, dressed in their finest clothes, they offer these flowers to the image of the Buddha that stands to one side of the main path of the village, about halfway between the northern and southern ends of Tadagale. Some travel to Rangoon to make their flower offering at the Shwe Dagon pagoda, the most famous of Buddhist shrines in Burma.

Thadingyut, the Festival of Lights. For three months, from the first day after the full moon of the month of Waso, until the first day after the full moon of Thadingyut (October) it is believed that the Lord Buddha is in the land of the spirits preaching to his mother. On the first day after the full moon of Thadingyut he is said to return to the world of human beings. For this occasion, lanterns are lit and houses are gaily decorated with them. The lanterns are made of colored paper, shaped into small cylinders and placed around a saucer in which there is a kerosene-soaked wick. Villagers nowadays purchase these lanterns ready-made in the bazaars of Rangoon and use candles rather than wicks in them. All over Rangoon, and along the road between Tadagale and the city, colored lanterns are lit and hung around the houses, fences and hedges, providing a bright and glittering spectacle. Many villagers go to Rangoon to see the lights at this time.

Kahtein, a Ceremony of Offerings to Monks. Between the day following the full moon of Thadingyut and the day after the full moon of Tasaungmon (November) the villagers observe Kahtein. On this occasion of giving gifts to the monks, the offerings are on a larger scale than those of individual households at other times of the year.

The village headman collects money from each house in the village for this observance. A total of about Rs. 1000 (ca. \$200) is gathered to purchase gifts for each of the four monasteries located near the community. The presentation ceremonies for the various monasteries are held on different days, and many villagers attend all of them.

The purchasing of the gifts for the monks is entrusted to the headman. This is done in Rangoon and includes robes, food-carriers, utensils, crockery, brooms, and fans.

The ceremony takes place at the monastery. Each family cooks a meal of rice, curry and a sweet dish. All the food is pooled, and after the monks have partaken of their morning meal, the villagers eat. Music, dancing and singing

goes on throughout the morning. About 2 P.M. a monk gives a sermon and recites prayers. One of the elders reads aloud to the assemblage an account of the expenditures for the gifts to the monks, concluding the event.

Animistic and Magical Beliefs

Underlying the elaborate organization and practice of Buddhism, there is a considerable belief in nats, or spirits, and magic. Spirit worship, supposedly contrary to the teachings of Buddhism and opposed by the monks, is indulged in to varying degrees by the villagers. In Tadagalerone frequently comes upon small wooden box-like structures affixed to trees, on which there is usually a little food and perhaps a flower as offerings to a particular nat. There seems little doubt that animism was even more important among the Burmese prior to the coming of Buddhism centuries ago. As noted in the description of initiation and wedding ceremonies earlier, nat worship has become interwoven with Buddhist beliefs and practices. It is also manifested in beliefs concerning guardian spirits of houses and particular places and in theories of the causes of many illnesses, including bewitchment and mental disturbances. Mediums, specially versed in the ways of the nats and possessing knowledge of cures for spirit-caused maladies, may be called upon for assistance.