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INTRODUCTION

ATTEMPTS had been made to check Burmese history by means of inscriptions as early as the eighteenth century. U Kala when compiling the *Great Chronicle* soon after the accession of King Taninganwe (1714-33) was the first to use them and Twinthing Mahasithu followed suit. Twinthin produced the *New Chronicle* in the late 18th century. In 1829, a committee of scholars compiled the *Glass Palace Chronicle* and thirteen inscriptions are mentioned in connection with our period. Their use of epigraphic evidence, however, was so meagre that it was almost negligible. When *Silavamsa* wrote the *Celebrated Chronicle* in ? 1520, he had only a few sentences on the Pagan dynasty but U Kala wrote nearly two hundred pages on it and the *Glass Palace Chronicle* was almost a copy of U Kala's chronicle. Of course they used local legends known as "thamaing" and many stories from Jataka to enlarge *Silavamsa's* account on Pagan. Naturally these incorporated stories have little or no value as history. Perhaps, the reason for such incorporation was the desire to describe a given episode with a similar and better known story from the Jataka or the misinterpretation of the old records. For example, when a son of a junior queen was given the throne superseding the sons

waned. It was partly due to the Sinhalese invasion of 1165. There was an interregnum of nine years (1165-74). Since Kyanzittha usurpers were on the Pagan throne. So in 1174 the *Aniruddha* line was restored. A burmanization movement set in and by the reign of *Cansu II* (Narapatisithu, 1174-1211) Burmese became the official language of the country. Architectural style also changed. Pagodas of the early half of the dynasty mostly had cave-like hollows, dark and gloomy. Burmans put up wide windows, tall doors and shortened the passage leading to the interior so that the buildings had better light and sanitation. The Pagan Empire was at its zenith under *Cansu II*. It extended from Ngachaunggyan (near Bhamo) in the north to Tavoy the Salween River in the east to the Chin Hills in the west. It had a well organized form of government under five ministers who had to perform both civil and military duties. Customary Laws were codified under the name of Dhammatthat and the criminal procedure was known as *Amunwanca*. It seems that the Mon of the south were quite contented under the Burmese rule at least until the time of *Tarukplyi* (Tayokpyemin). The dangers of the empire usually came from the north and therefore the chief minister himself had to look after the northern frontier. *Cansu II* was succeeded by *Natonmya* (Nandaungmya) who was definitely not the youngest son of the king as mentioned in the chronicles. *Narasingha-Uccanā* (Naratheinhka) was the next king. He was placed by the chronicles about sixty years earlier than his actual reign as predecessor of *Cansu II*. After him, his brother *Klacwā* (Kyaswa) became king. He was not a weakling as suggested in the chronicles. He made a unique attempt to suppress crime in his realm by issuing an edict against thieves, and to increase his revenue he confiscated much of the religious land in his country. His successor *Uccanā* (Uzana) was not his son but his nephew.

*Uccanā* died at Dala; probably he was assassinated. His elder son and successor *Man Yan* (Min Yin) also met with the same fate. *Tarukplyi*, his half brother finally became king. When the Mongols came, he took refuge in the hills west of Prome. *Syan Disapramuk*. (Shin Dithapamauk) a reverend monk was sent on a peace mission to Peking in 1285. *Disapramuk* was able to persuade the Great Khan to withdraw the invading army and so the king returned to Pagan but was killed on the way. This is the political story of Burma during 1044-1287 told in the light of epigraphic evidence.

The Buddhism as practiced in those days was in general very similar to the one as practiced in Burma today with the exception that the Brahmanical influence was more felt than at the present day. When tracing the rise and development of the Buddhist monastic order various facts have been observed which upset some of the traditional beliefs of Burma. As mentioned above, the Ari sect appeared only in the latter half of the dynasty and it was not a very debased form of religion as alleged. Another point of great interest is the presence of *bhikkhuni* - female ascetics - in the Order in those days. Most Burman today maintain that women were not allowed in the Order since A.D.456. The thesis ends with the architectural and social aspects of the period under survey in chapters nine and ten which are also of much importance as they aid the better understanding of the Religion in those days.