

YE DWAY

According to historical, archeological and literary evidences so far traceable, it is reasonable to assume that at the beginning of the Innwa Dynasty (1364-1516), the art of puppetry emerged; by the middle of the dynasty, the art of drama was attempted with puppets; and, before the end of the same dynasty, the live (human) drama came into existence.

The Ten Great Jatakas (*Zat-kyi-sair-phwe*) were and still are held in great esteem by the Myanmar people. Each symbolized a particular virtue as follows -

1. Tay-mi-zat (Taymiya) relinquishment (**Tay**)
2. Za-na-ka-zat (Maha Janaka) fearlessness (**Za**)
3. Thu-wa-na-shan-zat (Thuwana Thama) benevolence (**Thu**)
4. Nay-mee-zat (Nemi) determination (**Nay**)
5. Ma-haw-tha-da-zat (Mahawzada) sagacity (**Ma**)
6. Bu-ri-dat-zat (Buridatta) tenacity (**Bu**)
7. San-da-kon-ma-zat (Sanda Kumara) patience (**San**)
8. Nar-ga-da-zat (Narada) imperturbability (**Nar**)
9. We-du-ra-zat (Vidhura) honesty (**We**)
10. Way-than-daya-zat (Vesantara) generosity (**Way**)

(b)

Stories from the Myanmar Classical Theatre

All plays or dramatic repertory were categorized as follows -

1. **Buddhawin** (plays based on the life of the Buddha)
2. **Mahavamsa of Mahawin** (plays based on the religious texts mostly of Sri Lankan origin)
3. **Nipata or Nipatwin** (Five-hundred-and-fifty Birth Stories of the Buddha.)
4. **Rajavamsa or Yazawin** (factual or semi-factual plays based on the historical figures of the past)
5. **Phaya-Thamaing** (plays based on the chronicles of the famous pagodas)
6. **Nat-Thamaming** (stories of Nats or spirits particularly of the famous Thirty-seven Nats)
7. **Thike-Thamaing** (stories of guardian - spiritis of treasure troves)
8. **Hto-Zat** (plays based on fiction)

In the past, plays based on pleibian life or contemporary life were never attempted. Whether royalty is involved or not, a play must begin with a stock-scene known as "Founding of a Kingdom Scene (for puppet theatre)" or "Foundation Laying of a Play Scene (for live human theatre)". Only afterwards, does the play unfold in the logical manner.

(c)

YE DWAY

The stories-in-outline of the plays staged by both the live *Zat-Thabin* and puppet *Yoke-Thay-Thabin* theatres mentioned in this book may be taken as specimens of the Myanmar drama which still exercises so widespread an influence on the minds and manners of the people. Some of the dramas are fine examples of Myanmar tragedy without bloodshed.

The Myanmar drama is interspersed with gestures and speeches, movements and monologues, recitatives and musical background, dramatic speeches and verses, music and dances and speeches and songs and combinations of these to create the necessary moods, emotions and dramatic situations.

(d)

Stories from the Myanmar Classical Theatre

CONTENTS

No.		Page
	Introduction	(a)
1.	Maha Janaka (Based on the Second of the Ten Great Jatakas)	... 1
2.	Mahaw Thahtar (Based on the Fifth of the Ten Great Jatakas)	... 5
3.	Buridat (Based on the Sixth of the Ten Great Jatakas)	... 9
4.	Vesantara (Based on the Last of the Ten Great Jatakas)	... 17
5.	Sambula (Based on a story from the Nipata or Nipatwin or Minor Jatakas)	... 20
6.	Padasayee (Based on a story from the Minor Jatakas)	... 22
7.	Five Hundred Thieves (Based on a story from the Minor Jatakas)	... 26

YE DWAY

No.		Page
8.	Oodeinna (Based on a story from the Dhammapada Wuttu)	... 29
9.	Wizaya (Based on a story from the Mahavamsa)	... 34
10.	King Thiha Bahu (Based on a story from the Mahavamsa)	... 39
11.	Myanmar Ramayana	... 44
12.	Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda (Based on a Phaya-thamaing)	... 52
13.	Maung Tint De (Based on a Nat-spirit story)	... 54
14.	Shwe Phyin Brothers (Based on a Nat story)	... 57
15.	Mya Sein (A female guardian spirit of a treasure torve)	... 61
16.	Nandiya Kumma (Based on fiction)	... 66

17.	Devagonban (Based on a fictitious story)	... 71
18.	The Wonderful Scales (Based on a fictitious story)	... 76
19.	Shwe Phaw Eine (Based on a fictitious story)	... 80
20.	The Five Alphabets (Based on a fictitious story)	... 85
21.	Man, Naga-serpent and Parrot (Based on a fictitious story)	... 89
22.	Maung Pauk Kyaing (Based on a folk tale)	... 93
23.	Eighty Thousand Hermits (A humorous tale)	... 98
24.	Lamaing Nat (Patron Spirit of the theatre)	... 103