

Acknowledgements:

First and foremost I should like to acknowledge my debt to Professor Hla Pe, my first Burmese Hsaya, who, by choosing (over twenty years ago) this passage of the Konbaungzet for our students to read, first drew my attention to it. Further, he prepared a most useful set of vocabulary and notes for the students to use when studying it. Many of these have been incorporated into the notes to this translation, together with his patient answers to my frequent questions.

However the more I studied the passage, the more problems I found it raised in my mind. I continued to work on it in lessons with succeeding groups of students, all of whom have helped me to understand aspects of it more clearly. Finally, in order to complete what I hope is a competent translation into English, there remained a few last puzzles which I submitted to Professor Than Tun to solve, during the time when he was working on his mammoth undertaking of translating the Royal Orders of Burma. I am most grateful to him for his help.

The reason for the long delay in completing the project was the physical difficulty of typing the bi-lingual text, but the advent of personal computers and the designing by my ever-helpful colleague at SOAS, John Okell, of an elegant Burmese font for Apple-Mac computers has eliminated that difficulty. The lengthy task of typing out the notes in two languages was carried out by Daw San San May of SOAS Library, to whom many thanks.

My primary aim in translating the passage and providing the accompanying notes has been to help students who are learning to read Burmese chronicle and historical material. The passage records how the Burmese came to terms with their defeat at the end of the first Anglo-Burmese war and how the Treaty of Yandabo was finally negotiated. It was a devastating moment for the Burmese Court; and a very difficult moment to record in the official chronicle without humiliation for the King. It is easy to see how an unsympathetic Englishman such as Crawfurd could be misled by the use of 'royal language' into thinking that the Burmese were arrogant, when in fact the chronicle writers were using the only permissible vocabulary to refer to royal actions.

I have also tried, by the inclusion of background material from contemporary accounts, to throw light on the attitudes of the two sides involved in the war and to show how important was the role of the interpreters, Armenian and American, in achieving some understanding between them.

If there are any errors in my translation or interpretation, the fault lies entirely with me, and not with any of those who have so generously helped me in my efforts to understand.

Anna J. Allott, August 1993
School of Oriental and African Studies, London.