

## Preface

This does not purport to be an exhaustive collection of Burmese proverbs. It is intended to provide a selection of them, which can illustrate Burmese proverbial wisdom. They have therefore been arranged loosely under five headings, covering man's characteristics, behaviour, relations with others and the world he lives in. Each of these five sections is introduced by an explanatory note, and the general Introduction will, I hope, help the reader appreciate the meaning and implications of the proverbs.

The preparation of such a work in English presents many complex problems, the most formidable being the translation of Burmese rhymed sayings into idiomatic English prose, capturing the spirit of the original without sacrificing the sense: the two languages are entirely different in structure and cultural background.

Mr H. F. Searle, co-editor of the new *Burmese-English Dictionary*, encouraged me in the compilation of this book, read the manuscript and gave me wise counsel. But for his unstinted help the work might not have been completed. I am greatly indebted to John Murray for invaluable suggestions and criticisms and also deeply grateful to Mrs M. Searle, who spent many long sessions with me translating French versions of Burmese proverbs, as I have mentioned in the Introduction. U Tin Maung of the B.B.C. read the manuscript and put forward several suggestions. I have accepted gratefully many cogent comments by Mr J. Okell, who read the proofs.

I dedicate this book to my two mentors and friends, Mr C. W. Dunn and Mr H. F. Searle, who have inspired me in all my scholastic pursuits.