

Burma for protection, but *the Burmese surrendered them* and they were carried to China. (*Report on E. Frontier of Bengal*, p. 112.)

I see no sufficient evidence as to whether Marco himself visited the "city of Mien." I think it is quite clear that his account of the *conquest* is from the merest hearsay, not to say gossip. Of the absurd story of the jugglers we find no suggestion in the Chinese extracts. We learn from them that Náruddin had represented the conquest of Mien as a very easy task, and Kúblái may have in jest asked his gleemen if they would undertake it. The haziness of Polo's account of the conquest contrasts strongly with his graphic description of the rout of the elephants at Vochan. Of the latter he heard the particulars on the spot (I conceive) shortly after the event; whilst the conquest took place some years later than his mission to that frontier. His description of the gold and silver pagodas with their canopies of tinkling bells (the Burmese *Hti*), certainly looks like a sketch from the life;\* and it is quite possible that some negotiations between 1277 and 1281 may have given him the opportunity of visiting Burma, though he may not have reached the capital. Indeed he would in that case surely have given a distincter account of so important a city, the aspect of which in its glory we have attempted to realize in the plate of "the city of Mien."

It is worthy of note that the unfortunate King then reigning in Pagán, had in 1274 finished a magnificent Pagoda called *Mengala-dzedi* (*Mangala Chaitya*) respecting which ominous prophecies had been diffused. In this pagoda were deposited, besides holy relics, golden images of the Disciples of Buddha, golden models of the holy places, golden images of the King's fifty-one predecessors in Pagán, and of the King and his Family. It is easy to suspect a connection of this with Marco's story. "It is possible that the King's ashes may have been intended to be buried near those relics, though such is not now the custom; and Marco appears to have confounded the custom of depositing relics of Buddha and ancient holy men in pagodas with the *supposed* custom of the burial of the dead. Still, even now, monuments are occasionally erected over the dead in Burma, although the practice is considered a vain folly. I have known a miniature pagoda with a *hti* complete, erected over the ashes of a favourite disciple by a *P'hungyi* or Buddhist monk." The latter practice is common in China. (*Notes by Sir A. Phayre*; *J. A. S. B.* IV. *u. s.*, also V. 164, VI. 251; *Mason's Burmah*, 2nd ed. p. 26; *Milne's Life in China*, pp. 288, 450.)

NOTE 3.—The Gaur—*Bos Gaurus*, or *B. (Bibos) Cavifrons* of Hodgson—exists in certain forests of the Burmese territory; and, in the south at least, a wild ox nearer the domestic species, *Bos Sondaicus*. Mr. Gouger, in his book *The Prisoner in Burma*, describes the rare spectacle which he once enjoyed in the Tenasserim forests of a herd of wild cows at graze. He speaks of them as small and elegant, without hump, and of a light reddish dun colour (pp. 326–327).

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## CHAPTER LV.

### CONCERNING THE PROVINCE OF BANGALA.

BANGALA is a Province towards the south, which up to the year 1290, when the aforesaid Messer Marco Polo

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\* Compare the old Chinese Pilgrims Hwui Seng and Seng Yun, in their admiration of a vast pagoda erected by the great King Kanishka in Gandhára (at Peshawur in fact): "At sunrise the gilded disks of the vane are lit up with dazzling glory, whilst the gentle breeze of morning causes the precious bells to tinkle with a pleasing sound." (*Beal*, p. 204.)