

BURMA GAZETTEER

SANDOWAY DISTRICT

VOLUME A

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is inscribed in Sanskrit characters of the 8th century the first couplet of the Buddhist text from *Ye dharma* down to *Maha Sramana*. In the same year a smaller slab inscribed with similar characters, was dug out of a hill close to the village of Ngaldnmaw, which is near the police-station of Kindaunggyi north of Taungup. In 1881 some bronze implements were dug up near the village of Lintha which is about 7 miles south-west of Sandoway, but it is not known what has become of them. This is a pity, as they may have been relics of an extinct race known as the "Lins".

Celts of the Neolithic age are sometimes found in the beds of streams and on hill sides cleared for *taungya* cultivation. These celts are in the form of adzes and axes chipped out of chert, basalt and hornstone rocks which do not occur in this district.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

Population—Rate of increase—Density—Races: Arakanese; Burmans; Chins; Burman Mahomedans; Natives of India; Lins—Languages—Religions.

The population of the district has increased from about 20,000 in 1828 to 102,803 in 1911. Except for two periods of depression, which occurred immediately after each of the first two wars with Burma, the increase has been regularly maintained year by year. After the first war the heavy taxation that was imposed under the circumstances which will be explained in the chapter dealing with Revenue, drove large numbers of people to migrate to the territories of the King of Ava, and the ravages of dacoit gangs drove others to take refuge in Ramree. But when taxation had been reduced and dacoity had been suppressed most of these people returned, for in 1835 the population was reported to be the same as in the year 1828. After the second war there was again a large decrease in the population owing to two causes. In the first place many subjects of the King of Ava, who had fled to this district in order to escape the troublous times of kings Tharrawaddy and Pagan Min, returned to their old homes after the annexation of Pegu in 1852. The other cause for decrease was that in 1853 a large slice of country was handed over to the newly formed district of Bassein. Consequently the population decreased from about 43,000 in 1853 to 30,000 in

Popula-
tion.

1858. Eleven years later a portion of the tract which had been given to Bassein was restored and the population of the district was found to be 46,000 in 1865. Since then the number has steadily increased, as the following enumerations show: 1872, 55,325; 1881, 65,182; 1891, 78,509; 1901, 90,927; 1911, 102,803.

Rate of
increase.

Between 1832 and 1852 when immigration from Burma was most active the population increased by 30 per cent. in the first ten years and by 50 per cent. in the second ten years. From 1853 to 1864 there was the decrease of population explained above; after the latter year immigrations set in again, but the numbers who came to the district only slightly exceeded those who left it, and a more normal rate of increase began to be set up. During the past twenty years there has been no immigration, on the other hand a few Burmans leave the district yearly to return to Bassein and Henzada, and even a few Arakanese are following their example. Partly on this account, the rate of increase has dropped from 15.9 per cent. in the decade ending 1901, to 13 per cent. in the decade ending 1911. For Lower Burma the rate of growth is slow though it is higher than in the adjacent districts of Kyaukpyu and Akyab. At the enumerations of 1891 and 1901 there were in rural areas 978 females to every 1,000 males.

In 1911 there were in the district 51,328 females and 51,475 males, or 997 females to every 1,000 males.

Density.

The mass of the population lives in a strip of country 5 to 10 miles wide. In the north this populated strip is about 8 miles from the coast, in the centre it is broadest and extends to the coast, in the south it is narrowest and hugs the coast. Inland of this strip the only villages to be seen are a string along each of the larger streams, and the isolated and frequently shifted hamlets of *taungya* fellers. Nowhere are there any villages more than 20 miles in a straight line from the sea.

The density, which in 1911 was 27 persons to the square mile is below that of Kyaukpyu, it was 15 in 1871, 21 in 1891, and rose to 24 in 1901; so that in each decade of the last forty years there has been an increase of three persons to the square mile. The density by townships in 1911, was 23 in Taungup, 33 in Sandoway, and 27 in Gwa. In view of the large proportion of hill country, this density is never likely to be very much enhanced. Sandoway is a district of small villages; in 1871 the average number of houses in a village was 26.7, in 1901 it was 27.7, and in 1911 it was 25.3. Of a total of 791 villages in

1911, only six have a population of more than 1,000, and the headquarters of the district has only a little more than 3,000 inhabitants. The average number of persons occupying a house was 5·5 in 1891, 5·4 in 1901 and 5·1 in 1911; in 1828 the number was estimated to be 3·25.

The races permanently resident are in order of numbers Burmans, Arakanese, Chins, a people who may be called Burman Mahomedans and Natives of India. Races.

The bulk of the Arakanese population is to be found in the northernmost township of the district. Going southward in the next township, they have more and more been displaced by other races, until they are almost lost sight of after passing a line drawn 10 miles south of Sandoway town. The Arakan country proper extended beyond this line and reached its limits about 30 miles further south at the Kyeintali river, but few Arakanese ever settled in this portion of their country. Here the old Arakanese villages can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and beyond this river there was only one small colony of them, which was at Yahaing near the mouth of the Gwa river. After the annexation however immigrants chiefly from Cheduba and Ramree in Kyaukpyu district established a few villages a little to the north of the Kyeintali river and even formed about a dozen in the tract between this river and Satthwa. Except in the extreme north the Arakanese are not of such a pronounced type as those found in Akyab and Kyaukpyu districts; but wherever found the Arakanese tend to congregate in villages by themselves, few being found where Burmans have taken up their abode. The numbers noted under each of these races at the last three enumerations, show that, owing to the slight differences in general between the Burman and the Arakanese as found in this district, more and more Arakanese are being classed as Burmans. The figures given for each class are :— Arakanese.

—		1872	1891	1901	1911
Burmans	...	19,000	28,000	49,700	59,792
Arakanese	...	28,400	27,500	29,400	30,128

It can however be said that unlike the districts of Akyab and Kyaukpyu, Sandoway possesses more Burmans than Arakanese. Officers who have been called upon to differentiate between the two peoples as found here, describe the

Arakanese as being of poorer physique and less frank mannered than the Burman. The Arakanese also dispose of their dead by burning oftener than the Burman does.

Burmans. The country south of the Kyeintali river was peopled by Burmans even when Arakan was an independent kingdom, but now they form the greater proportion of the population as far north as Taungup. Their presence is due to immigrations after the conquest of Arakan by the King of Ava in 1784, and again after the annexation of 1826. Just as the Arakanese in Sandoway have been modified by the stronger charactered Burman, so also have the latter suffered alteration to some extent by contact with the former, for the Burman found here is not quite the same man as known in Burma proper.

Chins. Chins are found along the upper waters of all the rivers as far south as the Kyeintali. They are more thickly grouped together in the northernmost township of the district, southward they are found in more scattered hamlets. Their numbers are given as 6,600 in 1852, 4,800 in 1872, 6,000 in 1891, 6,800 in 1901, and 8,077 in 1911. Previous to 1826 there were comparatively few Chins and they lived in the immediate vicinity of the Yoma. But after the annexation of Arakan large numbers came in from the hill tracts of Mindôn, and owing to the harassment of transborder raiders many Chins formed settlements nearer the plains. Some have become plainsmen and live in hamlets alongside Burman villages, especially on the borders of Sandoway and Gwa townships. The Chins found in this district have been so long separated from the parent stock that they retain few characteristics of the race. The men dress like Burmans, and the women are taking more and more to the Burmese *lôngyi* and jacket, they however retain under the *lôngyi* the small loin cloth or "*nhi*," and fasten it as low down as is done in all Chin land. Some of the older women wear a dark coloured smock-frock called by Burmans a "*Thin-dzing*." This however is not a "wild" Chin garment, and must have been fashioned by Chins as they became "tame" and wished to clothe their nakedness. The custom of tattooing the faces of the women is dying out, and the practice of burning their dead is, owing to the influence of the American Baptist Mission on the decline. A full account of the Chins is given in Mr. Houghton's note attached as an appendix to the Census report of 1891.

**Burman
Mahomedans.**

There are two distinct groups of Burman Mahomedans. The more numerous and older group known as *Kamans* from the *Urdu* word for a bow, are descendants of the archers

among the followers of the unfortunate Shah Shuja. These after he had been murdered took service under the Arakanese kings. They came here from Ramree, speak the Arakanese dialect, and are found in four villages 3 miles west of Sandoway and in three villages of Thade circle north of Sandoway. The other group known as *Myedu* is found only in Sandoway town. They speak Burmese and claim to be descendants of the Mahomedan portion of the garrison left in Sandoway after the Burman conquest. They call themselves Myedu because their progenitors came lastly from Myedu in the Shwebo district. In 1852 the members of both groups numbered about 1,500; in 1872 the total was only 1,587, but in 1901 the number was given as about 3,000 and in 1911 as 3,676. Except in their religion and in the social customs their religion directs, these Burman Mahomedans are not distinguishable from their Burmese and Arakanese neighbours.

As in the case of Kyaukpyu families of Mahomedans and Hindus have long been established in the district, many are descendants of officials imported at the annexation. The rest of the natives of India are immigrants mostly from Bengal and Chittagong. A few are fishermen from the Madras coast. They numbered 504 in 1872, 1,474 in 1901, and only 961 in 1911.

Natives
of India.

Mention may be made here of an extinct race called Lins, who formerly inhabited a part at least of the Sandoway district, and whose name appears in the palm leaf chronicles as one of the tribes then living in the country. It is not unlikely that the Lins were a tribe of the same origin as the Chins, but nothing certain can be predicated concerning a people who died out so long ago. The only traces of their existence are found in the village names Lin-tha, Lin-thi, Lindi, Lingôn, and in Lin-mudaung or hill of the drunken Lin.

Lins.

The prevailing language is Burmese. In this term Arakanese is by degrees being included, because the dialect spoken in this district is of a far less pronounced type than that spoken in Kyaukpyu and Akyab. The census figures show that 5,375 fewer persons spoke Arakanese in 1911 than in 1891.

Lan-
guages.

Chin is spoken by 8,000 persons; Indian languages by 960, the chief of which is the Chittagonian dialect of Bengal. The Chin language spoken here has varied so much from the languages spoken by cognate tribes in the Chin Hill Tracts that it is almost a different language. There are few Chins who do not also know Burmese.

In 1901, 87 per cent. of the population were Buddhist s

Religions.

The religion however is not professed in the living way it is in Upper Burma or even in parts of Lower Burma; pagodas are comparatively rare, *pôngyi*s are not so numerous as in Burma and the people lay little store by them. It is quite common to hear of a *pôngyi* being maltreated by a section in the village. The *kyauungs* when not dilapidated show that a general lack of interest is taken in them, and one rarely comes across an inhabitable *sayat*. Animists numbered 6,500, they are found entirely among the Chins. Mahomedans numbered 3,900 and there are 558 Hindus. The American Baptist Union has a Mission among the Chins which dates back nearly fifty years, it has a Church and a school at Sandoway. Of the 528 Christians enumerated in 1901, 477 were natives and the bulk of the latter were converts of this Mission.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION.

Condition in pre-annexation days—Progress—Classification of agricultural lands—Gardens—*Kaing*—Paddy land soils: Coast lands; Inundated areas; Loams; Uplands—*Taungyas*—Irrigation—Chief crops—Paddy: Mode of cultivation; Varieties—Tobacco—Sugarcane—General condition of agricultural population—Sales and mortgages.—Landlords and tenants—Labour—Agricultural stock—Grazing grounds—Ploughs and carts—Agricultural loans.

Condition
in pre-
annexa-
tion days.

The records show that a few months after the district had been formed in 1827 an enquiry which was held estimated the cultivated area at 6,000 acres, including nearly 1,000 acres of *taungya*, and the population at 20,000. It also stated that only 1,516 families, or little less than one-third of the population, were agriculturists. The records show that during the next 15 years the cultivated area increased by a little less than 300 acres a year. From these facts it will be seen that Sandoway was not an agricultural country in pre-annexation days. At that time besides the *taungyas* little more than the best paddy lands, which lie along the banks of the larger rivers and are 8 to 10 miles from the sea, were under cultivation. On each of these rivers and near each patch of cultivation there was an agricultural village or two; between these rivers and above these lands the country was covered with dense forests of