

AROUND THE WORLD WITH WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

Distinguished American Travels "The Road to Mandalay" and Tells of Many Interesting Things He Noted in Burmah, Although He Missed the Flying Fishes Referred to in the Kipling Song

CALCUTTA, India, March 1.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Burma is another country which was added to our list after leaving home, but as its people are quite distinct from the inhabitants of India, and as it is one of the strongholds of Buddhism, we turned aside to visit it en route from Ceylon to Calcutta. On the map it occupies a part of the east side of the first of the three great peninsulas that stretch down from Asia to the Indian ocean, and is separated from India proper by the Bay of Bengal. Its principal stream is the Irrawaddy, famed in story for the magnificent scenery along its course, and for the fertile valley through which it passes on its way to the sea.

Rangoon, the seaport of Burma, is situated some 20 miles inland upon a river of the same name, and has a harbor quite different from those of Singapore and Colombo. At those places the passengers on the incoming and outgoing steamers amuse themselves by tossing silver coins into the transparent waters and watching the divers catch them before they can reach the bottom, but at Rangoon the water is so muddy that a diver would have difficulty in finding an electric light. The depth of the water, too, is insufficient, except when the tide is high.

But the city of Rangoon is substantially built and has a number of fine business blocks and excellent public buildings. A municipal hospital, now in course of construction, surpasses anything which we have seen in the east. The park system at Rangoon is very attractive, and one sees the well-to-do element of the city fully represented there in the early evening. The roads about Rangoon are good, but not equal to those of Ceylon and Java. I have already spoken of the Java roads, and those of Ceylon are not behind them. No one can see these well-graded, well-drained and beautifully-shaded highways without having his interest in good roads quickened.

Elephants at Work in Burmese Lumber Yards

At Rangoon we saw the elephants at work in a lumber yard, and they did not attract anything like the attention from the natives that "Jumbo" and the "Baby Elephant" did in the United States during my boyhood days. It is not necessary here for the head of the family to take his wife and all the children to the circus in order that the younger members of the family may catch a glimpse of one of these ungainly beasts. In Burma the elephant is simply an everyday beast of burden and earns his food as faithfully as the horse or the ox. We saw three at work in the lumber yard, which we visited, the oldest of which is more than three score years and ten, and has labored industriously for more than fifty years. A native rides upon his back and directs him by word, sometimes emphasized by an iron-pointed stick, and the huge fellow lifts, pushes and twists the logs about with almost human intelligence. The elephant has an eye for neatness, and one would hardly believe from hearsay with what regularity and carefulness he works, moving from one end of the log to the other until it is in exactly the right place. In lifting he uses his tusks, kneeling when his work requires it. In carrying large blocks of wood he uses both tusks and trunk. Sometimes the elephant pushes a heavy log along the ground with one of his forefeet, walking on the other three, but generally the logs are drawn by a chain attached to a broad breast strap. An 18-year-old elephant, working in the same yard, was thus drawing heavy timbers and went about his work uncomplainingly so long as he was permitted to draw one at a time, but when two of these timbers were fastened together, he raised his voice in pathetic lament which grew even more touching when he received a pointed suggestion from his driver. These trumpetings were really terrifying to a stranger, but did not seem to alarm the Burmese. The ears of the old elephant showed signs of age; in fact, they were thin and frayed with flapping and looked like drooping begonia leaves.

Eight Hundred Pounds of Feed a Day

The elephants which we saw weighed about two tons each and consumed about 800 pounds of feed per day. When I was informed that an elephant ate regularly one-fifth of his own weight per day, I could understand better than ever before what it means to "have an elephant on one's hands." The fact that they can be profitably used in business shows their capacity for work. The old song that credits the elephant with eating all night as well as all day is founded on fact, for the animal requires but two hours' sleep out of twenty-four, and when not otherwise employed he puts in his time eating.

The elephant, notwithstanding his huge bulk and massive strength, is a very timid animal, and can be put to flight by a dog, or even by a rat. A short time ago a drove of Rangoon elephants was stampeded by an automobile. As is well known, the shipping of an elephant is a difficult task. The elephant has a small hole, resembling a knife cut on the side of the head, and at times a watery fluid is discharged therefrom. For some reason, apparently unknown, the animal is subject to frenzy during the period of this discharge and must be kept in confinement.

No Fishes Flying on the Road to Mandalay

Mandalay, the second city of Burma, is 386 miles north of Rangoon by rail, and is situated on the Irrawaddy river. Kipling in his poem declares that "the flying fishes play on the road to Mandalay," but he has been guilty of using poetic license. The captain of one of the steamers warned us in advance that no flying fish would be seen on the river, and an Englishman went so far as to say that the poet had never been in Mandalay. We planned to take a ride up the river, but our purpose was thwarted by a sandbar, which detained our boat from noon until the next morning, so that our view of the river, while very thorough at that point, was not very extensive. Most tourists go to Mandalay by train and return as far as Proms by boat, but the scenery is finer in the defiles above Mandalay.

In going by land from Rangoon to Mandalay one sees nothing but rice, and this piled along the road in seemingly inexhaustible quantities. One is reminded of the wheat and corn states of our own country as he sees the piles of sacks and loose grain awaiting shipment. While there are other industries in Burma, the rice fields and the piles of teak wood are most in evidence. In northern Burma there are some rich ruby mines, and the jewelry stores are as fascinating as those of Ceylon.

The goods of Mandalay are famous throughout the world for richness of tone, and carving in ivory, teak and sandalwood gives employment to many artisans. Elephants and images of Buddha in wood, brass and alabaster are exposed for sale in all the shops, and the silks are delicate in texture and beautiful in color and design.

Local Customs and Appearance of Burmese

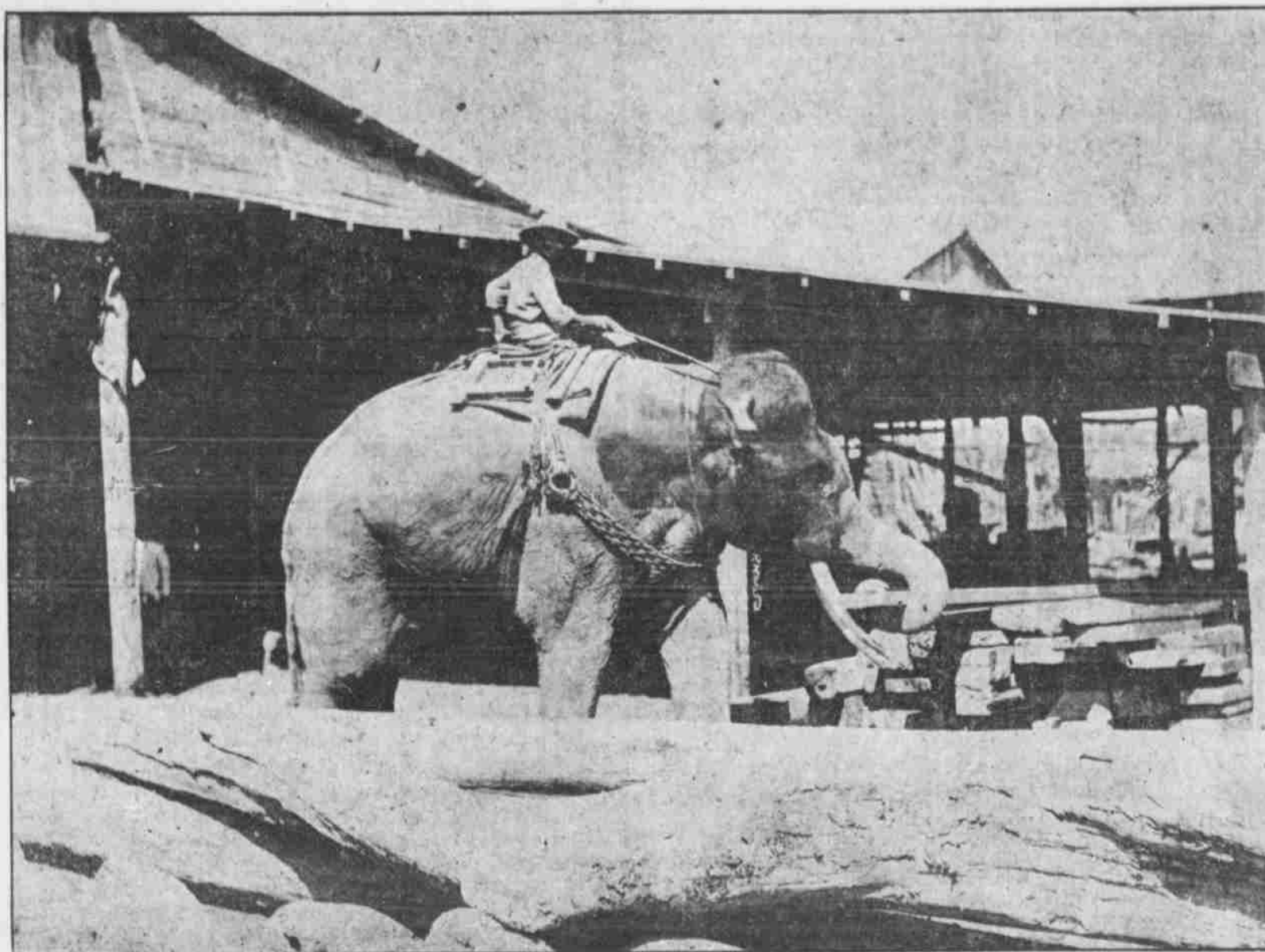
The Burmese have a large mixture of Chinese blood, as is shown by the features and traits of character, but they are darker in color. They are a cheerful and docile people, and their women have never been the victims of the seclusion that burdens the life of the women of India. Both men and women wear gay colors, which lends picturesqueness to the scenes of the street. In China and Japan we were amused at the small pipes used by the men. In Burma one is amazed at the enormous cigarettes—six inches long and an inch thick—which the women smoke.

In Burma, as in other oriental countries, the streams are the washbasins of the nation, and a flat stone takes the place of a washboard. It was wash day on the Irrawaddy when we started on our boat ride, and the bank of the river looked like a flower bed, so bright and varied were the colors of the turbans and dresses of the long rows of washers, swinging the clothes high above their heads and beating them upon the stones.

Pagodas Where the Temple Bells Ring

Burma is the home of the pagoda; one is never out of sight of them, but they differ in shape from those seen in China and Japan. The Burmese pagoda is usually circular, though sometimes octagonal. The largest of these is known as the Shwe Dagon pagoda at Rangoon. It is a solidly built pyramidal cone, with gradually diminishing outlines, and is surmounted by a tall or "umbrella" spire of

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ELEPHANT AT WORK IN BURMAH—"BLOOMIN' HATHIS PILIN' TEAK."

concentric iron rings, from which hang little bells which tinkle when moved by the breeze. This pagoda has a circumference of 1,355 feet at the base, rises to a height of 370 feet and stands upon a terraced mound which is itself 160 feet above the level of the country around. The upper part of the pagoda is gilded and its base is surrounded by many elaborate shrines containing images of Buddha. Here the faithful offer their devotions during the day and evening, and the vendors of candles, incense and flowers do a thriving business. Here, also, assemble the lame, the halt and the blind, to gather their penny tribute from the passerby.

Mandalay is still more liberally supplied with pagodas. At the largest, the Aracon, one sees repeated the scenes of the Shwe Dagon, only the beggars seem more numerous. At this pagoda there is a filthy pool in which live a number of sacred turtles, and they must have charmed lives to live at all in so foul a place. They rise to the surface when food is thrown into the water, but they are so slow in their movements that the kites which hover about the place generally snatch up the morsels before the turtles reach them.

Burmese Pagodas in Good Condition

Far more beautiful than the Aracon pagoda is the group known as the 450 pagodas. This remarkable group which actually numbers 729, stands at the foot of Mandalay hill and was built by an uncle

of King Thebaw. In the center of the group is the usual pagoda, and around it in parallel, rectangular, rows, are small square pagodas, each terminating in a graceful tower and containing a slab inscribed on both sides. These slabs together contain all the writings of Buddha, and the smaller pagodas, viewed from the central one, present an imposing spectacle. These pagodas are well kept, and all the buildings are snowy white. I emphasize the fact that these are in good repair, because so many of the Buddhist pagodas and monasteries are in a state of decay. Whether this is due to decrease in the zeal of the followers of Buddha or to the fact that the Burmese king, Thebaw, has for more than twenty years been a political prisoner on the west coast of India, I do not know. A writer for one of the Rangoon newspapers naively described the annexation of Burma by the English as "necessary," and this "necessity" has deprived the Buddhist buildings of the governmental patronage which they formerly enjoyed.

Temple that Ruined a Monarch

About six miles above Mandalay, near the Irrawaddy, stands the foundation of a pagoda which its builder intended should be the largest in the world. It was begun by King Bodopaya in 1790, after an unsuccessful campaign against Siam. In his disappointment his mind turned to religion, and he hoped to "acquire merit,"

Cemeteries Wherein Repose the Nation's Brave

Roster of National Graveyards, Their Location, History and Governmental Supervision

PROBABLY half a million graves of soldiers and sailors will be decorated in the cemeteries of the United States next Wednesday. From the Atlantic to the Pacific the nation's heroes will be honored by a loyal and loving people. From the time the sun rises over the hills of Maine until it sinks to rest beyond the mountains of California the vast extent of our land will echo with the bugle call and the booming of cannon. The youth of the nation will get their best lesson in patriotism when they lay a wreath of flowers on the stone that marks a soldier's grave.

It is at the present time impossible to state exactly how many soldiers' graves will be decorated, as no record has been made of them for several years. Of course, the number of graves has increased since then. The veterans have become fewer and fewer. They have not fallen as rapidly as they were mowed down before the death-dealing fire of Gettysburg, nor as they fell in the awful charges of Bull Run, but their ranks have been thinned by the grim reaper, and for each one that passed away there has arisen another mound to be decorated Wednesday.

National cemeteries, as is, perhaps, well known, are burying places maintained at the expense of the United States government, and wherein only soldiers are buried. Many of these are near some military post, but by far the larger ones are located in the vicinity of the big battlefields. Some of the heroes were buried near the spot where they gave up their lives for their country, and numbers were taken to as near their homes as possible. In the national cemeteries near the battlefields most of the graves are unnamed. Only a number and a tiny stone tell where a hero lies sleeping.

When shells and shot mowed men down by the thousand it frequently happened that there were none left to identify the bodies. In most cases it was known to what company certain men had belonged, although each could not be identified individually, and in such cases all are buried in groups and the names of all the men who were missing after the battle are inscribed on a single shaft.

National Cemeteries

There are in all about ninety national cemeteries in the United States, and so scattered that each presents an entirely different appearance. Could pictures of them be viewed one after another they would present a panorama of our country. Each characteristic would be shown. There would be cemeteries far out on sandy wastes where the sun beats down mercilessly and the dry desert wind carries the hot sand in blinding clouds over the shiny stones that mark the graves. There would be cemeteries in mountain wilds and on boundless western prairies. There would be peaceful little spots sheltered 'neath church towers, and vast stretches of beautiful park where thousands lie buried.

The most easterly of the national cemeteries is the one known as Cypress Hills. It is located not far out of the city of Brooklyn, and is a typical eastern burying place that contains some of the finest monuments that are placed over soldiers' graves in the country. The natural aspect of the country at Cypress Hills is somewhat flat, but the cemetery has received so much attention and art has done so much for it that the flatness is not noticeable. It is a most beautiful spot, where 5,000 heroes are buried. Woodlawn is the name of the national cemetery of New York

as the Buddhists say, by the erection of this temple. The structure begins with four galleries; the first is 500 feet square, and each succeeding one is a little higher, but fifty feet less in diameter. Then the base of the pagoda proper, about 250 feet square, rises to a height of 100 feet. The entire building as planned would have reached to a height of 500 feet, but the labor expended had become so great that the people complained and he was compelled to abandon his enterprise. He was warned by the experience of a former king, whose extravagance gave rise to the proverb, "The pagoda is finished and the country is ruined." King Bodopaya is not the only "captain of industry" who has attempted to "acquire merit" by constructing monumental buildings with the labor of others, but he was not so successful as some of our trust magnates have been.

To match this great pagoda a bell was cast, weighing ninety tons, said to be the largest sound bell in the world. The great bell of Moscow is larger, but is cracked. The Mingoon bell, as this one near Mandalay is called, is eighteen feet in diameter at the base, nine feet at the top and thirty-one feet in height to the top of the shackle. It was formerly supported on immense teakwood beams, but the foundation of one of these gave way, and for years one side of the bell rested on the ground. Lord Curzon, while viceroy of India, caused the bell to be suspended from iron beams and put a roof over it.

Mandalay a Mecca for Buddhists

The Buddhist priests seem to have made Mandalay their Mecca, for of the 57,000 in Burma, more than 7,000 reside there. The Buddhist priesthood is the greatest mendicant order in the world, the members of it being pledged to live by begging. Having occasion to ride out early one morning we saw 100 or more, bare-headed, barefooted, their only garb a yellow robe, carrying their rice bowls from door to door. They cannot ask for food by word of mouth; they simply hold out the bowl and if food is denied they move silently to another house. They are permitted to own no property except a robe, a bowl, a leather mat, a razor, a needle, a fan and a filter cup. They must live under a tree unless some one furnishes them a house, and must live on roots and herbs unless better food is given them. They have no parishes or congregations, but are expected to spend their lives in meditation, free from all worldly cares, except when engaged in expounding Buddhist writing or in teaching the young. They live, as a rule, in monasteries, built for them by pious Buddhists, and from what we saw of these buildings no one would accuse them of being surrounded by luxury. These monasteries rest upon posts some distance above the ground, and each room has an outside door about large enough for one to enter upon his hands and knees.

I visited one of these monasteries at Rangoon in company with a native Christian whose father was half Chinese. To my surprise the first priest whom I met was an Englishman, who turned Buddhist five years ago and donned the yellow robe. While I waited for the native priest, to whom I had a letter, this Englishman gave me something of his history and a brief defense of his new faith. He came from London six years ago as a ship carpenter and a year after adopted Buddhism, which, he explained to me, does not require one to believe anything. While his parents were members of the Church of England he has never connected himself with any church and, being an agnostic, the doctrines of Buddha appealed to him. He described his adopted religion as one of works rather than of faith, and declared that the alms of Christendom had no counterpart in Burma. The visitor, however, sees everywhere poverty and squalor which can only be paralleled in the most destitute portions of our great cities, and nowhere the comfort and refinement which are general in the United States.

Analysis of Buddha's Cult

Buddhism is reformed Hinduism, and in its teachings presents a higher system of ethics than the religion from which it sprang. Gautama, called the Buddha or the Enlightened, was born between 500 and 600 years before Christ, and was of the Brahmin caste. Not satisfied with the teachings of the Hindu philosopher concerning life, he went into seclusion at the age of 29, and devoted himself to meditation. Six years later he announced his doctrines, destined to impress so profoundly the thought of the orient. Accepting the Hindu theory that the soul passes from one person to person, and even from the human being to the animal and back, he offered Nirvana as a final release from this tiresome and endless change—Nirvana, a state of unconsciousness which follows the absorption of the individual soul in the soul of the universe. This was the end to be sought, and no wonder it came as a relief to those whose philosophy taught perpetual transition of the soul through man and beast and bird and reptile. The means of reaching Nirvana was through the renunciation of self. Life, he conceived to be prolonged misery, infinitely drawn out, and love of self he declared to be the root of all evil. So long as one loves life, he argued, he cannot escape from the bondage of existence. In the entire relinquishment of a desire for separate existence here or hereafter—in this alone could he find a path to Nirvana.

The next forty-five years of his life he spent in expounding and elaborating his doctrines, in formulating rules and in perfecting the details of his system. Many of his precepts are admirable. For instance, he divides progress toward the blissful state into three stages. In the first he puts those who abstain from evil through fear of punishment; these he commends, though he considers the motive comparatively low. In the second stage are those who, passing from negative harmfulness to helpfulness, do good from hope of reward; these he praises as acting from a higher motive than the first. In the third stage the seeker after Nirvana does good, not for hope of reward, but for the sake of love alone. The last gift loves has to give is to give up love of life itself and pass from forever change to changelessness.

At one time Buddhism spread over India and promised the conquest of Asia. Two hundred years after the Buddha's death a great king, Asoka, sent out 84,000 missionaries, and the doctrines of Gautama were accepted as far east as China and Japan and as far south as Java. But the wave receded; India returned to Hinduism, China to Confucianism and Japan to Shintoism, and Mohammedanism now outnumbered Buddhism on the Ganges. The Buddhists still hold Burma, Tibet and Ceylon, but even in these countries there is evidence of decline. Kandy, the capital city of Ceylon, has the distinction of guarding a "sacred tooth," thought by the ignorant to be one of the eye teeth of Buddha. It is kept in a gold and jeweled casket enclosed in six larger ones, and is an object of worship, but the more intelligent Buddhists know that it is a fraud.

At Rangoon I found a Baptist school, conducted by Americans, with nearly 900 pupils, and learned of the gratifying success which has attended missionary work in Burma.

And yet, there is a Buddhist propaganda in Europe and America! In a review called Buddhism, published at Rangoon by the International Buddhist society, I read that Kaiser Wilhelm is "alarmed" at the progress that this religion is making in Germany, and I also read that our country offers a promising field for Buddhist missionaries.

As a religion of agnosticism, requiring belief in neither God nor immortality, nor yet in the morality taught by Christ, it may appeal to some who, like the Englishman whom I found in the monastery, have already rejected Christianity, but it is not likely to appeal to those who have had a religious experience. Those who emphasize good works, and fail to recognize the need of an inspiring faith behind the works, may take refuge in the teachings of Buddha from the more exacting requirements of the Nazarene, but no one is likely to be led astray who compares altruism, the philanthropy and the benevolence of Christianity with the fruits of Buddhism. To live, even in poverty, upon the labors of others with a view to gaining thus an earlier entrance into blissful unconsciousness is not so unselfish, after all, as to spend oneself in the service of his fellows and to convert life into an exhausted fountain.

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