

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. RELICS FOUND IN RANGOON.

SIR,—At pp. 298–308 of Vol. XVII. of the Society's *Journal*, for 1860, there is an account of some relics which were taken out of a temple (stupa ?) which was demolished when the site was being cleared for the *European barracks* in Rangoon in the year 1855.

They consisted of—

1. A large gold pagoda.
2. A smaller one.
3. Parts of one that was still smaller.
4. A gold helmet or cap of State.
5. A gold tassel.
6. A gold bowl, with cover, containing parts of human cremated bones.
7. A small gold cup.
8. A gold leaf scroll, on which there was an inscription.
9. A gold waist belt.

Most of these articles, which are of considerable value, are now exhibited in a case at South Kensington. There is a copy of the inscription in the *Journal*, but, on enquiry at the South Kensington Museum, it appears that the scroll itself is not to be found. The inscription is in Pali, and was translated at the time by Professor Fausböll, and it is curious to note that the supposed translation made in Rangoon by, or under the orders of, Major Sparks, is not in any way a translation of the scroll submitted to Professor Fausböll.

Major Sparks' translation begins thus: "In the year 846 (A.D. 1484-5) the King and I built a pagoda," etc., etc. In a note Major Sparks remarks: "Neither the name of the king or queen is given in the inscription. A reference to Talaing history shows that in 846 Pinya Kyaula was King of Pegu." It is perfectly true that there is no definite name in the inscription, but neither is there a date: how then did Major Sparks fix it at B.C. 846?

On referring to Phayre's History, I find that Dhammaceti was King of Pegu at that date. I can find no such king as Pinya Kyaula anywhere. The inscription terms the King "Rájarájá, Sabbarájissarorájá" and "Sabbarájindo sattumátangakesarí," and states that he is Kupati, the son of Setebhissara. Kupati, Professor Fausböll thought, might be the same as Bhupati (earth lord), but Professor Rhys Davids is inclined to think it a proper name.

There are no such names as Kupati or Setebhissara in Phayre's lists, but they may have been titles of some of the Kings of Pegu, though not generally used. If it were not for the general correctness of the spelling on the scroll, I should have suggested that Setebhissara was a mistake for *Setibhissara*, "Lord of the white elephant." This title was used for King Binya U, who reigned from A.D. 1348 to 1385, and was succeeded by his son Binya Nwè, commonly known as Rájádirit (Rájádirájá). According to Phayre (p. 67), this king "took possession of Dagun, now Rangoon, and engaged the services of some Western foreigners." . . . He was successful in his wars with Burma, and after the decease of Min Khaung, his enemy, devoted his latter years to religion.

It is quite possible that Setebhissara is the Peguan corruption of *Setibhissara* and equivalent to the Burmese word "Shinbyushin." Professor Fausböll thought it might mean "Ruler of the Setebha," but I cannot connect this word with any people.

His supposition that these relics belonged to Alompra is founded on a misconception. The relics were not "found by digging among the ruins of the famous temple

at Rangoon," but on a hill about a quarter of a mile distant from it.

The workmanship of the belt is, I think, far superior to anything in the Burmese regalia, and the helmet or cap of State most remarkable and unlike anything that is Burmese. It is shaped like a large snail shell or turban with a kind of loop behind, and a hole in front into which I would insert the tassel of flowers.

As regards the character in which the scroll is written, Professor Fausböll remarked: "It cannot be old, because the characters do not differ much from those now in use among the Burmese." With all due deference to so high an authority, I see essential differences, especially in the form of R, which in modern Burmese is \mathcal{Q} , but in this inscription \mathcal{S} , almost identical with the Kambodian \mathcal{S} . From the Po-u-daung inscription, given in the *Indian Antiquary* of 1893, by Taw Sein Ko, it appears that there was an old Burmese form, \mathcal{S} , somewhat similar; but it is not clear that this form was generally used in Burma, and may have been used on this occasion by a Peguan mason. I notice that the general character of the letters is nearer the Kambodian as given by Frankfurter than it is to Burmese.

The term "Sattumátangakesarí," if correctly translated, would apply quite as well to Rájádirit as to Alompra—perhaps better.

I think the matter is well worthy of investigation, and hope some of our members in Burma will make further enquiries.—Yours faithfully,

R. F. ST. ANDREW ST. JOHN.

July 27th, 1894.

To the Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.