

**THE HÁTANEE: A
TALE OF BURMAN
SUPERSTITION**

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The Hátanee: A Tale of Burman Superstition by Arthur Eggar

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ARTHUR EGGAR

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TALE OF BURMAN
SUPERSTITION**



Frontispice

MÁ PWÁ CHIO—THE PAGODA-SLAVE

Chamber of Egeon-Rosset, Ltd.





THE HÁTANEE

A TALE OF
BURMAN SUPERSTITION

BY ARTHUR EGGAR

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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PREFACE

THE following appeared in a Rangoon newspaper at some time during the year 1902:

THE MURDER AT YENAMA.

Our correspondent at Thayetmyo sends us an account of the extraordinary outburst of homicidal mania in Yenama, on Monday last, which resulted in the murder of the Burmese woman, Ma Ma Gyi.

It appears that the whole village, without provocation and for no conceivable reason, set upon the unfortunate woman and pounded her to death with bamboos and stones; but the motive for the crime remains enshrouded in mystery, for the victim, Ma Ma Gyi, was a woman of high repute in the village, and much respected for her charity and "works of merit." . . . Her relatives, too, are strangely reticent upon the matter, and the only explanation that the police have been able to extract from the villagers is the absurd statement that this woman had developed some occult power by which she could transform herself into a tiger at night-time.

The "motive remains enshrouded in mystery," for the Burman has an unfeigned horror of

speaking on the subject of this haunting terror. Fear holds him tongue-tied, for the very whisper of the name of the dreadful Thing, if overheard, would entail disastrous consequences.

As to the origin and grounds of this belief, I have no material from which to form an opinion; but the extract quoted above and my own personal observations testify to the fact that the superstition has a firm hold in the Burman's mind. With bated breath and nervous, but earnest manner, my several informants related the details to me. I submit, however, that I am in no way bound to secrecy, and the risk of making this disclosure rests entirely on myself.

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THE HĀTANEE

INTRODUCTION

In the "Toung-ya"—in the Clearing
On the hillside of the forest,
There's a hut of grass and bamboo
 Raised aloft on four supports.

Standing close beside the jungle—
As a sambur, that has ventured
From the covert to the open,
 Still and silent stands at gaze—

Looking forth across the valley
To the hills that rise beyond it
Densely covered with the forest,
 Like a rolling sea of green ;

Like a boundless, heaving ocean,
Where the rise and fall of tree-tops
Are the ripples on the surface
 Of the mighty swell of hills,