

FROM TWO OLAS, or palm leaf manuscripts: 1, Burmese; 2, Sinhalese. Probably 18th Century. The sacred literature of both Burma and Ceylon is preserved in Pali, which has survived as the priestly language of the Southern Buddhist countries. Pali was the living tongue of the people of India at the time of the Gotama, but together with the religion the glories of which it still celebrates it gradually receded before the rising tide of Brahmanism. Hence scholars must search the monasteries of Burma, Ceylon and Siam for the sacred Buddhist records long since lost or destroyed throughout India. These records exist largely in the form of just such manuscripts as are here shown, prepared leaves from the Talipot (or Palmyra) palm upon which the scribe writes with a sharp stylus, applying a pigment to render the characters legible. Should the writing in these specimens become faint, it can be made visible by applying a little lampblack with the finger, afterwards wiping the leaf with a cloth. Both these specimens are from Buddhist canons, and in both cases the Pali has been transliterated into native characters. The short leaf is from Ceylon, while the long leaf, which we have been forced to fold, is from Burma. ¶ The making of olas is a fast vanishing art. Like the book-manuscripts of other lands they are being superseded by the printed page, and already good specimens are becoming rare. Note the holes through which cords were inserted and wound around the manuscript to hold the leaves securely within their wooden bindings. However, as a Pali scholar amusingly observes, "it was discovered, after an experience of a thousand years or so, that the second series of holes in the ola were not really necessary to the preservation of the book-mass, and we often find that the second lot of perforations are ignored by the owner of the ola in wrapping his manuscript."

<p>             ௨௭              ௨௮              ௨௯              ௩௦              ௩௧              ௩௨              ௩௩              ௩௪              ௩௫              ௩௬              ௩௭              ௩௮              ௩௯              ௪௦              ௪௧              ௪௨              ௪௩              ௪௪              ௪௫              ௪௬              ௪௭              ௪௮              ௪௯              ௫௦              ௫௧              ௫௨              ௫௩              ௫௪              ௫௫              ௫௬              ௫௭              ௫௮              ௫௯              ௬௦              ௬௧              ௬௨              ௬௩              ௬௪              ௬௫              ௬௬              ௬௭              ௬௮              ௬௯              ௭௦              ௭௧              ௭௨              ௭௩              ௭௪              ௭௫              ௭௬              ௭௭              ௭௮              ௭௯              ௮௦              ௮௧              ௮௨              ௮௩              ௮௪              ௮௫              ௮௬              ௮௭              ௮௮              ௮௯              ௯௦              ௯௧              ௯௨              ௯௩              ௯௪              ௯௫              ௯௬              ௯௭              ௯௮              ௯௯              ௧௦௦           </p>	<p>             ௧௦௧              ௧௦௨              ௧௦௩              ௧௦௪              ௧௦௫              ௧௦௬              ௧௦௭              ௧௦௮              ௧௦௯              ௧௧௦              ௧௧௧              ௧௧௨              ௧௧௩              ௧௧௪              ௧௧௫              ௧௧௬              ௧௧௭              ௧௧௮              ௧௧௯              ௧௨௦              ௧௨௧              ௧௨௨              ௧௨௩              ௧௨௪              ௧௨௫              ௧௨௬              ௧௨௭              ௧௨௮              ௧௨௯              ௧௩௦              ௧௩௧              ௧௩௨              ௧௩௩              ௧௩௪              ௧௩௫              ௧௩௬              ௧௩௭              ௧௩௮              ௧௩௯              ௧௪௦              ௧௪௧              ௧௪௨              ௧௪௩              ௧௪௪              ௧௪௫              ௧௪௬              ௧௪௭              ௧௪௮              ௧௪௯              ௧௫௦              ௧௫௧              ௧௫௨              ௧௫௩              ௧௫௪              ௧௫௫              ௧௫௬              ௧௫௭              ௧௫௮              ௧௫௯              ௧௬௦              ௧௬௧              ௧௬௨              ௧௬௩              ௧௬௪              ௧௬௫              ௧௬௬              ௧௬௭              ௧௬௮              ௧௬௯              ௧௭௦              ௧௭௧              ௧௭௨              ௧௭௩              ௧௭௪              ௧௭௫              ௧௭௬              ௧௭௭              ௧௭௮              ௧௭௯              ௧௮௦              ௧௮௧              ௧௮௨              ௧௮௩              ௧௮௪              ௧௮௫              ௧௮௬              ௧௮௭              ௧௮௮              ௧௮௯              ௧௯௦              ௧௯௧              ௧௯௨              ௧௯௩              ௧௯௪              ௧௯௫              ௧௯௬              ௧௯௭              ௧௯௮              ௧௯௯              ௨௦௦           </p>	<p>             ௨௦௧              ௨௦௨              ௨௦௩              ௨௦௪              ௨௦௫              ௨௦௬              ௨௦௭              ௨௦௮              ௨௦௯              ௨௧௦              ௨௧௧              ௨௧௨              ௨௧௩              ௨௧௪              ௨௧௫              ௨௧௬              ௨௧௭              ௨௧௮              ௨௧௯              ௨௨௦              ௨௨௧              ௨௨௨              ௨௨௩              ௨௨௪              ௨௨௫              ௨௨௬              ௨௨௭              ௨௨௮              ௨௨௯              ௨௩௦              ௨௩௧              ௨௩௨              ௨௩௩              ௨௩௪              ௨௩௫              ௨௩௬              ௨௩௭              ௨௩௮              ௨௩௯              ௨௪௦              ௨௪௧              ௨௪௨              ௨௪௩              ௨௪௪              ௨௪௫              ௨௪௬              ௨௪௭              ௨௪௮              ௨௪௯              ௨௫௦              ௨௫௧              ௨௫௨              ௨௫௩              ௨௫௪              ௨௫௫              ௨௫௬              ௨௫௭              ௨௫௮              ௨௫௯              ௨௬௦              ௨௬௧              ௨௬௨              ௨௬௩              ௨௬௪              ௨௬௫              ௨௬௬              ௨௬௭              ௨௬௮              ௨௬௯              ௨௭௦              ௨௭௧              ௨௭௨              ௨௭௩              ௨௭௪              ௨௭௫              ௨௭௬              ௨௭௭              ௨௭௮              ௨௭௯              ௨௮௦              ௨௮௧              ௨௮௨              ௨௮௩              ௨௮௪              ௨௮௫              ௨௮௬              ௨௮௭              ௨௮௮              ௨௮௯              ௨௯௦              ௨௯௧              ௨௯௨              ௨௯௩              ௨௯௪              ௨௯௫              ௨௯௬              ௨௯௭              ௨௯௮              ௨௯௯              ௩௦௦           </p>
--	---	---



யகைகையாநதமபநதமாநவையலததேனாகொமபநவ  
ரகைகையாநதமபநதமாநவையலததேனாகொமபநவ

Handwritten Burmese script on a palm leaf manuscript strip.



[illegible]





