

Of the "signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost," which are to accompany the preaching of the Word, none is greater than this.

A PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICES AMONG THE HILL TRIBES OF BURMA.

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There are several tribes in Burma, and report says in other provinces as well, which have a priesthood and sacrifices more or less developed. This priesthood is always hereditary, so far as known to the writer. It is found especially among the Red Karens, a numerous tribe on the Salwen River, and which is independent.

This tribe is one of the oldest of the Hill peoples, and has traces of the worship of Jehovah.

Within the yard of the priest's temple, which is a house made somewhat better than the houses of the common people, is erected a pillar of wood sacred to the great "Nat," or Spirit who is over all things. Unlike other spirits, he is regarded as beneficent and kind; but men having become sinners, he has turned away from them and left them a prey to demons, whom they are always trying to propitiate. This pillar is four square, and about fifteen feet in height. It is covered with hieroglyphics, which are also found on an ancient plate and a few coins peculiar to this people; the plate having, according to their traditions, been given them from heaven. These characters also are found on rude carvings, with which they adorn the graves of their chiefs. This plate is also covered with a writing in a strange language, which has not yet been deciphered.

Once a year a festival is held about this pillar, over which their priest presides. Young girls are selected, to whom new bamboo buckets, never before used, are given. These girls take these bamboos to a spring of clear water, and, having filled them, return with them, singing and dancing along the way, and pour out the water at the foot of the pillar. Offerings of goats, pigs, and cattle are often seen exposed on rude altars, of which there are several before every village, but especially so before the priest's temple. This people have also, as have most of these Hill tribes, a custom of divining with a chicken, which partakes of the nature of a blood offering.

Perhaps, however, the best illustration of the office of the priesthood among these Hill men is found among the Mopgha tribe, in Toungoo. This tribe was among the first to embrace the Gospel, and is now wholly Christianized. These people have, from the first, been the most substantial helps of the missionaries. They give them a large number of their preachers and teachers for the tribes beyond.