Chapter- Six
Coromandel’s ‘Country Trade’ with Burma

The English Company trade on the Arakan coast seems to be far lacking behind. By the time, the English enter this coast Coromandel merchants have been well entrenched to the Arakan coast. The rulers of Golkonda had extended diplomatic and trade relations with the rulers of Arakan.¹ The port of Mrohaung, capital of Arakan was a populated trading center. The king owned a large fleet and pursued trade vigorously. The place was also good for shipbuilding, though the timber was not as good as that of further south. The coast had the advantage of being more favorable to sailings in the difficult south-west monsoon period. Access into and out of the river was possible throughout the year.

Further down the coast, Syriam was the major port in the kingdom of Pegu. It was situated on the estuary of a river about forty miles upstream from the city of Pegu, which had for long been the capital of the kingdom. Syriam was well protected from strong winds and high seas in all weather, by the natural channel formed on both sides of the coast. It was also an important shipbuilding center which provided the much-needed parts material for the Indians who were venturing and constructing the ship in large numbers. The timber known here was reputed to be the best for constructing ships. Coromandel merchants had their settlements with agents in Syriam and Pegu, and had strong relations with the rulers and the nobility.

In these trade of Burmese coast the main item of export were textiles and in return lac, ivory, martaban jars, small supplies of gold, copper, tin, benzoin, elephants, timber, saltpeter and horse with inferior quality were imported.² In Pegu people did not know how to cut and polish the precious stones. These stones were

² Diary and Consultation Book, (hereafter D&CB), 1692, p.1. see also D&CB., 1690, pp. 21
therefore brought to Pulicat where there were excellent craftsmen to do this job. These precious stones finally found their way to the Golconda town where there was a capital market for jewels, gems and precious stones. Saltpeter was forbidden to be traded, but from time to time it was available from different sources. The horses were continued to be the most sought goods to carry even though it was considered to be inferior in breed; every ships coming from Pegu continued to bring Pegu horse in the eighteenth century due to high demands. The price of Pegu horse can be compared from others in the following table.

Table 6.1: Price of horse in the Coromandel Coast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horse Type</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab horse</td>
<td>130 pagodas</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Arab horse</td>
<td>100 pagodas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gray Manila horse</td>
<td>100 pagodas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grey Pegu horse</td>
<td>90 pagodas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Pegu horse</td>
<td>45 pagodas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grey Persia horse</td>
<td>150 pagodas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Manila horse</td>
<td>180 pagodas</td>
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</table>

(Source: Diary and Consultation Book, 1717, pp. 11, 181)

The English East India Company knew the value of Burmese trade from the settlers of Madras where they obtained such as martaban jars, gold, copper, tin, benzoin and lac. Among travelers who visited in the early sixteenth century was Duarte Barbosa, who came along with Pedro Alvers Cabral, then in the service on the Portuguese Government (*Estato do India*), from about 1500 to till 1517. Barbosa account of Pegu is of great interest considering the period when it was written. It is difficulty to say whether he had visited Pegu personally. There is no evidence that he did so, but the accuracy of his observation seems to make it probable. In his account he stated that “they take here cargoes of very fine lac which is produced in the country, and mace, cloves and many other goods from

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3 Dames, L.M (ed.), *The Book of Duarte Barbosa, An Account Of The Countries Bordering Of The Indian Ocean And Their Inhabitants*, vol. ii, pp. 217-218.
4 E. F. 1., 1651-1654, pp. 205-206.
5 D&CB., 1717, pp. 11, 181.
China were brought hither from Malacca, and the rest of their money they bought abundance of musk (and rubies), which comes from an inland city called Ava.  

A French traveler Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who was an expert as well as having business interest in precious stones gives a statement that “there are only two places in the east where coloured stones are obtained, namely in the kingdom of Pegu and in the island on Ceylon, the first is the mountain twelve days journey or thereabouts from Siren (Syriam) in the north-east direction, and it is called Capelam (Kyatpyem, its distance from Ava is about 70 miles). It is the mine from whence is obtained the greatest quantity of rubies, spinelles or mothers of rubies, yellow topazes, blue and white sapphires, hyacinths, amethysts, and other stones of different colours...It is one of the poorest countries in the world; nothing comes from it but rubies, and even they are not so abundant as is generally believed, seeing that the value does not amount to 100,000 ecus (22,500 pounds) per annum.”  

Ralph Fitch an English traveler who visited Pegu in the end of sixteenth century gives an account that in Pegu the merchandise which they got were 'gold, silver, rubies, sapphires, spinelles, muske, Benjamin(benzoin), long pepper, tinne, leade, copper, lacca (lac), rice, and wine made of rice, and some sugar.'  

Perhaps Van Linschoten who visited Burma in the end of the sixteenth may be the first completely known among the travelers account by the western world. He said, ‘these kingdoms of Aracan and Pegu are very rich and fruitful of all things, besides gold and precious stones as rubies, espinels, saffires, iacinthes, emeralds, granates, and such like, as it is well known by the great numbers that are dayly brought out of those countries into all places.’  

Burmese lac seems to have been the best procurable in the east in the seventeenth century. It was in great demand because of its uses in the manufacture

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7 Ball, V, (ed) Travels in India by Jean Baptiste Tavernier, vol.ii, pp. 77-78. 
8 Foster, William (ed), Early Travels in India, 1583-1619, p. 35. 

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of sealing-wax. This was given in great detail by Van Linschoten on the manner of
it production: 'when the lac is raw, as it commeth from the tree, it is a darke red
colour, but being refined and cleansed, they make it of all clours in India. They
beat the lac to powder, and melt it, and so mix all manner of colours upon it as
they list, red, black, green, yellow, or any other colour, and make pieces thereof,
such are sold here to seale letters with all.' 10 William Methwold, who had been
agent at Masulipatam (1618-1623) and later President, while at Masulipatam, on
several occasions sent home small quantities of Burmese lac. 11 To supply in large
amount was uncertain as there was not permanent market to procure, which often
caused its prices very high.

William Methwold considered Burmese lac far superior to the Indian
variety that he always kept a watchful eye on the Pegu market. In his letter to
London he said, 'gum-lac on sticks is not here to be had; and besides they hear
from Masulipatam that a plentiful supply can there be obtained from Bengal,
Arakan and Pegu.' 12 In another letter which he wrote on 2nd January 1636 he said
that, 'gum-lac on sticks is dear, because it yields so much profit in Persia. Last
year fetched 30 larees the Surat maund; at present the price at 18 mahumudis. This
sorte commenth all from bengals, where is cheape and plentifull; insomuch that
wee doe sometimes admit that you are no better furnished from thence.
Masulipatam, wee thinke, should also supply you with that which commenth from
Arracan and Pegu, which doth afford to our knowledge a farr deeper tincture and
would therefore be more valued in the generall use whereunto it is now
imployed.' 13 Three years later President William Fremlen of Surat wrote home to
the Company of it as a sort ‘which noe part of the world besides can aequall.’

10 TieJe, P.A, (ed), The Voyage of the John Hughen van Linschoten to the East Indies, From the Old
11 E. F. I., 1618-1621, p. 343. and see also E. F. I., 1622-1623, p. 45.
12 E. F. I., 1634-1636, p. 66.
13 E. F. I., 1634-1636, p. 146.
William Methwold’ added: ‘remembreth to have sent you from Masulipatam, wen the way to make use of the tincture was hardly known in England.’

Early travelers also often mentioned about the Martaban jars sometimes confused as Indian jars, which was in great demand for the purpose of storage of water on board ship in their long journey and for domestic use. Barbosa in his statement says: ‘at this town (Martaban) is made also many great porcelain jars very big, strong and fair to see; there are some of them which will hold a pipe of water. They are glazed in black and greatly esteemed and highly prized among the moors, who take from this place with store of benzoin in loves.’ Van Linschoten on his visit described that, ‘in this towne many of the great earthen pots are made, which in India are called Martauanas (Martaban) and many of them carried throughout all India, of all sortes both small and great some (are so great that they) hold full two pipies of water. The causes why so many are bought into India, is for that they use them in every houses, and in their shippes in stead of caske. There are none in India but such as come out of Portingall, therefore they use these pottes to keepe oyle, wyne, and water which preserveth it wel, and it is a good thing for a traveler.’ English traveler Alexander Hamilton, who visited Burma in 1709, mentions that he saw some large enough to contain two hogsheads of liquor.

Foreign traders and trading prospectors who came to Burma in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries found their journeys to and from the land of pagodas dominated by the North-East and South-west monsoons, which imposed upon travelers certain definite sailing seasons. It was customary for ships proceeding to Burma from the eastern coast of India to set out in September just as the South-West monsoon was on the change. The best information concerning this sailing

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14 E. F. I., 1637-1641, p. 94.
between the Coromandel Coast and Burma is in the Records of Fort St. George, Diaries and Consultation Books. From about 1686 onwards the records maintain particulars of all ships arriving at and departing from Fort St. George, Madras, in each case with the name of captain and master and also the name of the port of bound for.

In these journeys September was the favorite time for departure from Madras to Burma, and April was the usual month for their return. At the same time few ships leave Madras in August and October, and a few return as early as January and as late as May, but majority followed the wind and monsoons pattern. The coming of ships especially from Pegu played a major role for the Madras custom revenue collection. The port of Pegu was one of the largest numbers of ships coming and going from Madras and if it fails to arrive or happened to be late, the revenue collection certainly decreases in the custom’s house as for example it recorded that: “non-arrival of Pegu ship decreased 2480 pagodas on land and sea customs.” The number of ships arrived and departed from Madras is given in table below.

Table 6.2: Number of ships ‘arrived and departed’ from Madras to Arakan, Pegu and Tenasserim

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Arakan depart</th>
<th>Pegu arrived</th>
<th>Pegu depart</th>
<th>Tenaserim arrived</th>
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19 D&CB., 1726, p. 6.
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(Source: Diary and Consultation Book, 1686 to 1740)
In 1676 the Dutch East India Company's Council at Batavia decided to close its trading operation in Burma. The departure of the Dutch from Burma coincided with the revival of interest in the Burmese trade by the English Company. It was also due to the fact that the demand of Burmese sticklac and saltpeter was much increased 'alsoe the merchants having a Parcell of Pegu sticklack by them of about 60 candys. It is resolved to buy it, the price agreed for at 7 and half pagodas per candy with which to compleat said ships lading, taking out only soe much saltpeter (notwithstanding the order of the 22nd : instant) as that she may take in all the said stick lac and the calicoes now ordered to be packt.'

The demand of Burmese lac in the 1670s was less than one hundred ton a year but in the 1680s the demand was much increased. From the dispatches to the Council of Fort St. George, were told to increase the Burmese lac, if possible by fifty tons.

Saltpeter was considered as an important commodities in the Company's trade but not allowed to be exported as Hamilton states ' saltpeter they have in abundance, but it is death to export it.' Still we find coming from Burma. The demand of these two commodities increased by the time of the Dutch pulled out from Burma, making the Fort St. George Council to think again for restoring the old Syriam factory which was closed in 1657. This issue was taken seriously by Streynsham Master, who was appointed Agent-Governor in 1677.

Streynsham Master who had a distinguished career at Surat and won much applause from the Company's Directors started a process to re-negotiation between Fort St. George and the king of Pegu with the main objective to procure 'saltpetre and Stick Lack.' The initiative taken by Streynsham Master was due to Company's special demand for saltpeter and lac, and the hope of establishing a successful trade with Burma, in view of the recent withdrawal of the Dutch. On

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23 D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 8. see also E. F. I., 1678-1684, (New Series), vol, iv, p. 17.
23rd February, 1680 at the Council meeting it was agreed to appoint Joan Pereira de Faria Junior as an emissary to negotiate with the court of Ava. Joan Pereira de Faria Junior who was frequented in the region because of his traded and had vast experiences of the place at the same time was inhabitants of Fort St. George, was entrusted to negotiate with the king of Ava.

For his services the English reduced one half of the customs on his cargo on the first full shipment of English goods to Syriam after the treaty come into effect, and the usual rate of duties levied at the Burmese port.24 The English Company’s houses in Pegu, Syriam and Ava were also given to Joan Pereira de Faria for his use. The order was translated that ‘the Company have ground and house standing thereupon at Syriam, Pegu and Ava which have been used by strangers for some years past. It is now resolved to give Joan Pereira de Faria junior order to take possession of the said house.’25

More importantly, Streynsham Master asked for trading concession on British goods to 5 percent from the Burmese customs of charging 16 and half percent, which they can save 11 and half percent.26 He also requested to allow him to procure saltpeter at cheap price. In his letter he wrote that: “may be able to hold the trade, also for salt peter, for liberty to make it and transport it, if that may be had cheap and we may be free to employ the natives to make it for us and to export it in such quantitys as we shall require it will much encourage us for supply of ballast for our Europe ships, and for our kings want to it by reason of the great expance of powder in his sea warrs with his neighbours. The next thing is how to supply money or goods to pay for those goods we shall carry out of the country, and the last and most needful to continue our commerce is such a freedome and liberty for our factorys and ships as may not discourage our people, for we have forsaken many profitable trades by reason of the inconveniencies that attend an over strickt and severe usage, which is altogether needless to the English who are

25 D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 15.
26 D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 9.
friendly and true people to what they promise as they have approved themselves of all times."\textsuperscript{27}

The proposed articles of commerce were much in favour to the English Company with lot of concession and conditions for the peaceful trading relation between king of Pegu and Fort St. George. These articles was also very important as in the later period most of the Governor’s of Fort St. George used or based their proposal by citing while negotiating with the rulers of Pegu.\textsuperscript{28} The main idea to draw this proposal was due to the difficulties experienced in the past by the Company’s official subjected through Burmese officials on the high rates customs duties imposed upon the foreigners

In the following year, on 24\textsuperscript{th} January Joan Pereira de Faria returned from Pegu, along with several ruby merchants, on their arrival order was given specifically to them with all civility and better treatment to encourage others to come trade at Fort St. George. A cowl was also granted by Streynsham Master to all Pegu ruby merchants: “That all whatsoever merchants from Pegu or Ava that shall desire to come to this place upon any ship or Vessel belonging to this Towne, or upon any other Vessels, and shall bring their bules of Rubys, they shall only shew and Register them at the Choultry, without being obliged to open the Seals or to pay any Custome for the said Rubys until they does sell them, and after that they have sold them then they shall pay the usuall Custom of one and half per cent: and half percent to the Towne Broker and noe more any hindrance carry away their said Rubys either by Sea or Land, or by what means soever they please, without being anywise obliged to any Custome for the same, the same shall be understood for Jewells and Rings as it is for loose Rubys, yet noe customes shall be paid. For any Gold or silver that they shall bring to this place, and for all other goods Imported or Exported they shall pay noe otherwise then according to the Customes and usage of the place; And this Cowle I the Agent and Governor with

\textsuperscript{27} D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{28} For article of commerce see Appendix-7, (D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 10-12.)
the advice and consent of my Councell, doe grant in behalfe of the Honoble English East Company."²⁹ He also brings reply from the king of Pegu, which is ordered to be translated and sent home to the Company's official.³⁰ The reply he brought from the king, however, postponed consideration of the request for permission to settle factories in his country till the arrival of a special ambassador, who should be sent with presents to be laid under the golden fleet of his Majesty.³¹

The Directors at home were taken completely surprise on hearing on the development at Fort St. George Council plan to re-open factory at Burma. They were not in favour of Streynsham Master plan as they were not inform. So the Directors at home opposed to open any factory at Burma. In their dispatch to Fort St. George dated 5ᵗʰ January, 1681, they were concern much about supplies of Burmese lac but not ready to open factory: "we have no purpose at present to settle a trade at Pegu but doe again enorder you to doe what is possible for procuring us this year a per cell of that sticklack and successively hereafter in other years."³²

Though the Directors were opposed but the request to sent Pegu lac were kept on mentioning in their dispatches, 'though wee have mentioned before we doe again commend to your esspeciall care the providing for us to come by this shipping 100 tons Pegu sticklack."³³ Again the Pegu lac was included in the list of goods to be sent home: 'pegu sticklack 150 tons."³⁴

Dispatches from England continue to demand Pegu lac despite stiff opposition for a settlement of factory. In their dispatch in a year later, 8ᵗʰ February, 1682, they wrote, "we like well, procure and send us all you can therof but we do not think it worth our charge to settle a factory there. We hope that you being persons that will study our interest and having so many Portugal and other

²⁹ D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 12.
³⁰ D&CB., 1681, p. 3.
³¹ EFI., 1678-1684, New Series, vol, iv, p. 34.
³³ DFE., 1680-1682, p. 21.
³⁴ DFE., 1680-1682, p. 29.

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merchants living under your government and some that trade to Pegu and Acheen contrive with and so encourage them, that they may in the course of their own trades bring to our town of Madras, Benjamin and the commodities of Acheen and black Sticklack from Pegu, which you may but of them at moderate rates and which may come much cheaper to us than by settling of factories in places of such small trade.”

The Directors decision not to open factory temporarily ceased the interest of energetic Governor Streynsham Master for a while, partly it was also due to the increase of Burmese commodities without even opening a factory there as large number of ruby merchants and the musk were obtain in good number, and the Directors sent instructions that this should be encouraged. At their meeting: ‘A parcel of Pegu Musk being offer’d to Sale it is thought fitt to but the same for the Honble Company’s account, some of that sort having been bought for them heretofore, besides the Honble Company have order’d us to encourage that trade, and the buying of this parcel may occasion the bringing of greater quantities hether, if this parcel is approved of by the Honours.”

With the demand for the Burmese commodities increase at home, Fort St. George Council decided to approach again to reconsider their decision against reopening their factory. The Directors at home reply that their previous factory were forced to withdrawn as the trade could not maintain the charges of their factory and royal policy of high charges of customs duties and many restriction imposed on them. Therefore, if they wanted to open the factory again the Directors are willing to agree provided it will be advantageous for the Company while negotiating the terms.

On 6th September, 1684, at the consultation meeting it was agreed to reopen negotiations with the court of Ava. This time William Gyfford, Governor of Fort St. George, choose Captain Peter Dod, commander of ship Providence, a

35 DFE., 1680-1682, p. 72.
36 Pringle, Arthur.T., (ed) D&CB., 1683, p. 34.
37 DFE., 1681-1686, p. 35.
private ship which is plying between Madras and Syriam to be send as Agent.  

He was given all the instruction, 'to enquire into the state and trade of that contrys and how the king and people stands effected to us and our settlement in those parts, and to inform himself from Ministers to state what privileges we may expect or can procure, particularly what hopes there may be of a settlement at Bhammo.'

Peter Dod takes his journey on 15th September, 1684, on the ship _Prosperous_. Only return next year on 4th February, bringing two letters from the court of Ava. The letters were just an atrocious letter concerning little about the purpose of the visit and nothing about the trade concession and settlement at Bhamo. On mentioning to bind itself by definite articles of trade the Council decided to send Peter Dod once more to Burma. He left for Pegu on the ship _Providence_ before wet monsoon of 1685. This time also there was nothing conclusive on the matter of settlement and returned on 19th February, on the same ship with a letter from the king of Ava, 'this evening the Providence Peter Dod Master arrived here from Pegu and Acheen, and the Master delivers a letter which came from Ava.' But unfortunately Peter Dod died on 25th March, 1686, when his ship was weighing anchor in Madras harbour accidentally killed by a bar of capstan.

On the other hand, adequate supplies of lac were forthcoming as a result of indirect trade, and Directors were of the opinion that without exceptionally good trading privileges in Burma the profits of the trade might be swallowed up by the

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42 Ibid., D&C.B., 1685, p. 51.
43 D&C.B., 1686, p. 20.
44 D&C.B., 1686, p. 29. Peter Dod served as mate in Robert Fleetwood's ship the recovery in 1675-1676. In September, 1678, he is described as a mariner and inhabitant of Masulipatam. He was then building a ship for George Chamberlain at Gingerlee and was at variance with Matthew Mainwaring. Temple, R,C, (ed.), _The Diaries of Master Stresynsham_, 1675-1680, vol.ii., p. 106.n.
45 DFE., 1681-1686, p. 96.
cost of maintaining a factory there, and they wrote, ‘we do but rise to fall, and
make a noise for nothing’. Therefore, in August, 1685, they once more sent out
definite instruction that the project of establishing a factory in Burma was to be
given up, ‘Pegu will never be a place for us, worth the charge of a factory, so we
would have you proceed no further therein.’ These orders arrived in Madras
some time in 1686, and there for the time being the matter ended. When next time
the issue was taken up, it was the King of Ava who took the initiative by inviting
the English to come and open a factory over there.

The matters continue to drag on with no support from the home Directors.
In 6th March, 1688, Henry Burton captain of ship James brought a letter from
Chief Minister and Governors of Syriam, gave approval to settle there with terms
given by the Fort St. George Council. The matter was discussed on 8th March:
‘The James a Country Ship being lately arrived from Pegu, brought letters to the
President from Severall Governors their, inviting us to a settlement, upon unusuall
good terms, and privileges, and that the King would grant us any thing.’
However, the Council decided to go beyond their authority as the instruction was
very clear not to proceed any of open a factory without their approval: ‘wee could
reasonably desire in a settlement there, but the Honble Company having positively
forbid itt, wee can resolve nothing about treating thereon, till wee have better
authority for itt.’

While the home Directors words were final which Fort St. George may not
like but there was some decision which gave some favours to Fort St. George by
permitting inhabitants of Madras and Company officials to settle at Pegu. Here we
see some of the settlers migrated, for instance, Augustine Hart, which also owned
ship Pegu Merchant trading regularly with Pegu: ‘Ship Pegue Merchant belonging
to Hart an Inhabitant of this citty set saile this evening for Pegu carrying with him

46 DFE., 1681-1686, p. 88.
47 DFE., 1681-1686, p. 165.
48 D&CB., 1688, p. 43.
49 D&CB., 1688, p. 46.
50 D&CB., 1688, p. 46.
his family and several of the Inhabitants of this place with him to dwell there by
reason of the Great Famine here which caused their removals hence. 51 Not only
him some of the Company’s official had also planed to venture in the Pegu trade
by giving petition. For example Captain Thomas Lacy, commander of the
Company ship Sapphire, was allowed to leave but his pay to be deducted: ‘Wee
doe allow thereof, conditionally that he is not to receive any salary or allowance
from the Honble Company, during his absence.’ 52 Another such petition brought
to the Company’s notice was Thomas Makreeth: “promiseing his best Service for
the Company in procuring priviledges from the King...incharge of repaireing the
factory there.” 53 But his salary and all other allowances will be ceased same as
with Thomas Lacy.

With no approvals from home Directors in spite of offering concession by
the king of Pegu, the Fort St. George Council was hesitant to move. This act annoy
the court of Ava, by which they reacted by seizing two sloops of Bartholomew
Rodrigues, St. Anthony and St. Nicholas, it was while proceeding from Acheen to
Bengal, forced to land because due to lack of wood and water. The two ships
landed at the Burmese port of Martaban, unfortunately, paid the consequence by
the wrath of king of Ava. They did as it was according to their law of Burmese
custom. Along with this the property of Adrain Tilbury, a Dutchman and
inhabitants of Fort St. George, who was married to local Pegu woman had died
while on a trading voyage there at Martaban and the Burmese officials seized it.
By the next year Antonio de Silva was sent by Cojee Gregory Paron with presents
to give at the court of Ava and his four principal governors for redemption of
Bartholomew Rodrigues, his ships, cargo and its crew and also for the recovery of
the estate of Adrain Tilbury. 54

51 D&CB., 1688, p. 143.
52 D&CB., 1689, p. 66.
53 D&CB., 1689, p. 68.
54 D&CB., 1694, p. 95.
The presents carried by Antonio de Silva in his ship *Nossa Senhora de San Juan* never reached the said destination because his ship wrecked in the island of Negrais. The news of shipwrecked brought in the next year on 23\textsuperscript{rd}, March, 1695, says, 'Thomas Plumb Master of Shipp Jelpha Merchant from Pegu arriveing this day reports that the ship of Antonio de Silva which went from hence in September last bound for Sirian, and fetch'd Point Bargo where finding the north Easterly winds sett in put back for Negrais to stay there till the winds changed, and anchored between the Island and the main about the 17\textsuperscript{th} of October. The next day the monsoon came on, and the wind blew with extremity for several days as drove the ship ashore & overset her at the same time the flood comeing in, increased to that height as covered the Shipp and forced the men to leave her, those that swan well escaped to the shore when the water increasing upon, and by degrees covering the Island, they betooke themselves to the trees during the tide, ...few of the men lived to Pegue, above a dozen Pegue merchants who had freighted goods to a considerable value were all lost.'\textsuperscript{55}

The mission was completely devastated for Cojee Gregory Paron and to provide further presents will be a profitless. Therefore, it was left to Fort St. George Council to decide in which manner they would deal this long unfinished task. In long discussion held on 11\textsuperscript{th}, September, 1695, the Council finally decided to send Edward Fleetwood and captain James Lesslie with presents to the court of Ava and his subordinate to negotiate the release of Bartholomew Rodrigues cargo's, his crewmen and the property of Adrain Tilbury.\textsuperscript{56}

These two emissary returns after two years of negotiation with no definite answer. Upon their return on 26\textsuperscript{th} March, 1697, Nathaniel Higginson called an extraordinary meeting to consult the outcome of the mission sent at Pegu: "the perusal of the Council in order to the settleing of a method whereby the Trade of that place may be rendered usefull to this, particularly for the repaireing and

\textsuperscript{55} D&CB., 1695, p. 41.  
\textsuperscript{56} D&CB., 1695, pp. 116-117.
refiting of shipps." The idea of opening up a factory became a serious and lengthy discussion, later there was a proposal of forming a private joint stock Company to trade at Pegu. The formation of private joint stock Company was just a proposal 'not being subscribed by a sufficient number,' therefore, the idea was ultimately dropped. Instead, this time the Council decided seriously to send someone to stay there as representative, so chose to Thomas Bowyear, a free merchant, to send 'for redemption of the cargo of Bartholomew Rodrigues, and 'to reside and act as Chief of the English affairs in Pegu.' Thomas Bowyear left his journey on 15th September, 1697, by the ship Pegu Merchant.

Nothing much was heard except his letter written by him probably in February, 1700, as recorded in the diary: "I presume this trade may be worth the prosecuting and that it might not be thought the Right Honble Company rejects it, the king being desirous of a trade I have sent Cat: Hancocke to Ava where he will remaine till further orders from your honour & Council he being well disposed to the service and willing to try his fortune with a small adventure between Capt. Manuel da Silva and himselfe I sending seven pieces of Beetella's with him to present the governor at his first arrival. I am told the king is concerned that the Company has sent him noe present now having pretended to a Settlement in his Father's time, as by the Present I brought and he having granted most that I requested and willing to grant more...The king is indeed ready to grant almost anytime that can in reason be desired for the encouragement of a trade for more particulars I beg leave to referr to my arrival. Mr. Pearce remains here in Syriam till the next monsoon designing then for Ava." The letters was brought by the

57 D&CB., 1697, p. 15.
58 D&CB., 1697, p.84.
59 D&CB., 1697, p.102.
60 D&CB., 1697, p.106.
ship *Dolphin* which reached Madras on 8\textsuperscript{th} March, 1700.\textsuperscript{62} Soon Thomas Bowyear also arrived by the *Messiah* on 11\textsuperscript{th} March.\textsuperscript{63}

In the next few years the Company's official's lost all their interest and Governor Higginson was replaced by Thomas Pitt. During these years private merchants were continued to trade though the English Company official didn't participate, and most of the trade was done by the local merchants of Madras, like Collawa Chitty, who also owned a ship *Bon Voyage* and regularly brought elephants.\textsuperscript{64} Other residents of Madras like Francis Holt also brought elephant from Pegu.\textsuperscript{65}

After a long year of absence, in 1708 there was particular name called Robert Stockes who seek approval for his staying at Pegu: "desireing that we would countenance him with the Companys Protection at Pegu where he designs to reside some time, agreed the same be granted upon the Terms of his Petition."\textsuperscript{66}

Whether he was appointed by the Governor of Fort St. George is not known. Regarding his petition where he wish to stay longer and also the king invited to reopen factory, "I having formerly been at Syria in the Kingdom of Pegue, am desirous of returning thither to reside for some time. And as the Honble Company have privileges there, where which they don't enjoy at present, and as I am informed are Invited to resettle a Factory there by that King, I humble desire of your Honour & that I may have the liberty to remain there under of a notice of a Companys servent ; That I will oblige myself to be no way chargeable to the Company thereby, and to return whenever your Honble & C. shall think fit to recall me, farther desiring that the Honble President will Honour me with his Letter to that King, therein mentioning upon what account I settle there, all which shall be acknowledge as very obligations done to."\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{62} D&CB., 1700, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{63} D&CB., 1700, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{64} D&CB., 1703, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{65} D&CB., 1703, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{66} D&CB., 1708, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{67} D&CB., 1708, p. 18.
His petition was accepted with four conditions. Firstly, to give letters send from the Governor of Fort St. George and present to the Prince at Syriam and seek his advice to proceed further to the court of Ava. Secondly, to use the Company's house at Syriam and hoist St. George flag and no any other place will allowed to hoist. Thirdly, to use uttermost endeavors and advice and lastly, avoid any dispute with the government of Pegu and if any unjust done also not to proceed any further against them.  

During this gap years Alexander Hamilton visited Syriam in 1709 and what he saw is that the English were already neglected with only doing business in the building and repairing of ships, so the trade was entirely in the hands of Muslims and Telugus of South India, and the Armenians, who had the monopoly of the ruby trade. After Robert Stokes death, there were no further mentions of the appointment of any representative from the English Company until 1724, when Captain Charles Wybergh was sent as captain for the English Company representative to reside at Pegu and his ship Barrington was sailed on 18th 1724. The representatives sent from Fort St George were most of them temporary as it was for a short period. Most of these posts were given in charge to the English captain whose ships were sailing to Pegu. Captain Charles Wybergh didn't stay for long; he came back from Pegu on 27th January 1725, on the ship Barrington which was commanded by him.

Next came Lewis Torney, he too, didn't stay for long as he was very annoyed by failing to capture John Baptiste Alano who took large amount of money in Madras, unable to pay back he ran away to join the pirates who intend to built a large ship at Pegu: 'Alano a French man had join a crew of Pyrates, that they are gone to Pegu to built a large ship which may be of the utmost ill consequence to the trade of India; and also the said Alano having about five year

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70 D&CB., 1712, p. 135.  
71 D&CB., 1724, pp. 91, 94.  
72 D&CB., 1725, pp. 12.
since, borrowed considerable sums at *Respondentia* of several people here, which they have never been able to recover of him, agreed that we give direction by a ship now going to Pegu to our resident there, to seize the said Alano and send him over to us; as also so many of his accomplices, as shall plainly appear to be pyrates." Toney reply back the reason for not able to seize Alano, but Fort St. George had already decided to change the Resident of English representative. His place was given to captain James Berriman and he was there till 1731: "*Brigantine Cumberland* Captain James Berriman sailed for Pegu and carried a Commission from the Humble Government and Council appointing him Resident there for the English nation." 

Captain James Berriman left for Pegu on 8th August 1726, on the ship Cumberland. He was entrusted to construct a dockyard to repair the ship as timber is available in abundance in Pegu. Ships were sent to repair from time to time, in each ship dispatched for repair a general letter would be directed, containing full instructions concerning the exact nature of the repairs to be executed. One such letter has recorded: 'to oversee the repairing of said *Brigantine*, that the materials be good and the work well and furgally performed, but that as we intend a thorough repair that nothing proper and necessary be wanting that being to be new Sheathed they do first search her bottom carefully to see where she is Ironsick and Drive Spicks everywhere wanting, that her upper works be well strengthened and masts and yards surveyed and if any of them faulty that be changed for good & sound, & that she be returned us in January with a particular Account of repairs done, and of stores then aboard.' In the following year, the ship *Marlborough* was sent to Pegu for a repair with: 'fifteen hundred ounces of silver to pay the expances and purchase a Loading of Timber and plank.'

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73 D&CB., 1725, p. 101.
74 D&CB., 1726, p. 1.
75 D&CB., 1726, p. 102.
76 D&CB., 1727, p. 39.
77 D&CB., 1726, p. 133.
78 D&CB., 1727, p. 112.
One of the assignments given to Berriman to execute was to bring back all the interlopers who were abusing the Company’s rules in Pegu. Letters was received in early 1727 from the home Directors to bring back all the unlicensed private traders. The instruction given to Berriman was: “several persons without Indentures or License to Trade as Free Merchants, thrusting themselves into several branches of the Trade of India, are a great prejudice to the Trade in general and to the Company’s Covenanted Servants and others and have License, particularly in Pegu, that we are Directed by the eleventh paragraph of the general Letter from the Humble Court of Directors dated the 7th January 1725/26 to send home all such Traders.”79

Ten years after this attempt to rout out the unlicensed English traders in Pegu, things had once more developed to such a bad that it comes with the King George II Proclamation, forbidding any British subjects from residing or trading in the east contrary to the Company’s privileges, was ordered to be posted up in the factory building at Pegu, and Syriam, and the Resident instructed to arrest all such offenders, and send them back to be dealt by the Fort St. George authorities:

“The board having received information that several of the Kings subjects do annually steal over to Pegu without License from hence and during their residence there live in a riotous and disorderly manner and also that many of them hire themselves to navigate the ships belonging to the Moors and other Indians which if not prevented many of great prejudice to the English trade. To put a stop therefore to the Mischief’s which may arise from such practices, it is agreed to direct the Resident that in the first place he admonish all person in the English service that they live soberly and without giving offence to the Government or natives of Pegu least they should endanger the privileges we enjoy there at present. And to prevent the prejudice to the English Navigation which may arise from any of His Majesty’s Subjects sailing in the Indian ships, it is agreed to enclose to the Resident several printed proclamations by his present Majesty

79 D&CB., 1727, p. 56.
forbidding all his subjects trading to or being in the East Indies contrary to the Privileges granted to the Company which Proclamations he must fix up in the factory and if any of the English or others his Majesty's subjects shall notwithstanding enter into any foreign Service that he be directed to use his best endeavors to secure their persons and send over to us." 80

After James Berriman the next Resident appointed was Samuel Palmer, who stays for two years. He was unable to utilize the money entrusted to him on the Company's behalf, and on 31st December 1732 the Fort St. George accountant reported to the President and Council that 'he had an elopement and was not to be found.' 81 The next resident was Captain John Kelsall of the ship Eagle. 82 Nothing much information was heard from him except on 20th December 1734 he send timber plank to Vizapatnam on the ship George. 83

Probably the last resident was Jonathan Smart, who held the post until the factory was burnt down by the Talaings rebellion in 1743. On 24th May, 1737 his letter was received by the Fort St. George mentioning that they have already built two sloops and there was no crew to navigate the said sloop, so he requested to send crews, 'letter from Pegu relating to the two sloops building there for the Company and that we cannot get any able seamen to go over from hence to take charge of them, agreed that we write to the gentlemen in Bengal to send from thence proper person to navigate them with sufficient number of Lanscars.' 84

During Jonathan Smart tenure the English tried to procure saltpeter, it was due to the continuing shortfall of supply from Bengal. Governor John Stackhouse from Fort William wrote to the President of Fort St. George, asking to approach the Burmese Government for permission to procure saltpeter. It was the difficulty, he wrote, in procuring adequate supplies of saltpeter in Bengal. In his letter

80 D&CB., 1737, p. 98.  
81 D&CB., 1732, p. 112.  
82 D&CB., 1733, p. 35.  
83 D&CB., 1734, p. 157.  
84 D&CB., 1737, p. 84.
Governor Stackhouse wrote that 'the difficulty of procuring salt peter in Bengall, intimated that he had been informed that for a present and proper application a Grant might be procured for the Company for the Liberty of exporting salt peter from Pegu & that large quantities could be made there which if true, it would be worth the Company's while to give a very considerable present for the grant.'

The President without delay wrote to Jonathan Smart, the resident at Pegu to seek channel for the negotiation with the Court of Ava regarding the proposal to procure saltpeter. Smart entrusted the negotiations to an influential Armenian merchant named Koja Simon. Smart also talk with the Prince of Ava, which assure him in favorable to the success of the project. The Prince, in fact, went so far as to promise his own good office and assured that there was saltpeter enough in the country to load many ships annually. However, on another letter dated 18th December 1737, Smart wrote that the Court of Ava had intimated to Simon that 'it was not impracticable to gain liberty of exporting saltpeter but he wanted to know whether the Company proposed to make a present at once for it or pay an annual rent to the king, to which Koja Simon reply'd that his instructions went no farther than to know from the ministers whether the king might be prevailed upon to grant such liberty.'

Fort St. George’s reply showed that the Council suffered under no illusions regarding the precise value of grants of trading rights, made by the Court of Ava. Taken into this consideration the Council agreed to write Smart, that his own experience of the government in that Kingdom is sufficient to convince him. Further it stated that 'we can have no reliance upon their faith so as to put any consideration value upon any of their grants besides if we are rightly informed of the constitution of the government no Grant of his present majesty will be binding upon his successor for which reasons we shall never advise the Company to give

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85 D&CB., 1738, p. 11.
86 D&CB., 1738, p. 11.
any considerable present nor to pay anything annually for a liberty the enjoyment of which will be very precarious.’ 87

In their opinion, what they said, ‘the only certain and secure terms’ upon which the Company could export saltpeter would be by paying the customs duties upon every 100 viss taken out of the country. But before that they could be decided upon, whether the quality of the saltpeter was sufficiently high for the Company’s use. Smart was therefore requested to send a few samples for trial. 88 The parcel was received from the ship Rockingham, when tested it proved to much lower quality than the Bengal variety. The finer reported that in the process of refining Pegu saltpeter lost five-eights compared with the Bengal of one-fourth. The Council decided that nothing further could be done until Smart had furnished full particulars as to the price at which the commodity could be exported. 89 But any further development occurred, the Talaing rebellion had broken out, and the chaos to which witness during the next decade completely frustrated Fort St. George hopes to procure saltpeter in Burma.

Therefore, it can be seen that the English East India Company trade to Burma is very unique as it was initiated from the Madras and not from London Director’s. The Home Director policy in the extension of the Company’s sphere of influence, and the development of the East Indies trade, could be achieved only through factories. But this did not apply to Burma, the Director’s completely ignored the importance in the Burma Coast and it was only from Madras officials that really want to open a factories as they knew the coming of ships and the goods valuable in their trade.

From time to time the Director’s officially declined the request from the Madras to open a factory at Burma but still then without authorization from London, the Madras Council took the initiative to open a factory, it was because after knowing the importance they disobey the orders from Director’s.

87 D&CB., 1738, p. 11.
88 D&CB., 1738, p. 12.
89 D&CB., 1738, p. 120.
This was because Pegu trade was one of the importance and fragmented place from the Coromandel Coast. Several sorts of goods came from the Burmese ports (Arakan, Pegu and Tenasserim) like’s elephant, precious stones, timber, saltpeter, lac, etc. The Company had even tried to have a permanent factory in Burma but due to adverse situation caused by the local rulers as well as due to the opposition by the Directors it was not completed. But through the private merchants trade flourished and continued to bring all sort of good items from those ports.