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P.02

LESSON 15.1 THE RIDER ON THE FOREHEAD

The rider on the forehead

You have already learned to read the rhyme - \acute{e} , as in

၁။	မင်နီ	Minnie
၂။	လင်ကန်	Lincoln
၃။	ဘင်ဘို	bimbo

Diphthongs in the roman transcription:
pronounce *ei* as in *vein*, *ai* as in *Thailand*, *ou* as in *though*, *au* as in *Sauerkraut*.

Burmese: An Introduction to the Script

and so on. In a few words — many of them loanwords — the ၵ is not written on the line in the usual way, but is placed above the first consonant of the next syllable. Examples:

	<i>correct spelling</i>	<i>pronounced as if written</i>	<i>meaning</i>
၄။	ဘင်္ဂါလီ	ဘင်္ဂါလီ	Bengali
၅။	အင်္ဂါ	အင်္ဂါ	Tuesday
၆။	သင်္ကေတ	သင်္ကေတ	symbol

The effect is as if the word has been compressed from either end, and the ၵ has been forced up and over the succeeding letter. Notice, however, that the ၵ is placed over the *consonant* of the next syllable even if, as in Example 3, there is a င before that consonant: you write သင်္ကေတ not သင်္ကေတ .

The name of the character ၵ, the reduced form of င, is ကင်းစိး, pronounced kìn-zì, and meaning "forehead-rider" — for obvious reasons.

When you are taking dictation and come across a word with the rhyme -င, you won't know — unless you have already learned the spelling of the word — whether it should be written with the full င or the reduced ၵ. As a rule, write င : it is far more common than ၵ ; but as the Practice sections below are to give you practice in reading and writing ၵ, here you can safely use ၵ throughout.

The common greeting that is pronounced /မင်္ဂလာဘာ/ is another word written with the reduced င. The /ဘာ/ on the end is the voiced version of the suffix ဝါ ; so the spelling and pronunciation of this phrase are:

	<i>correct spelling</i>	<i>pronounced as if written</i>	<i>meaning</i>
၇။	မင်္ဂလာပါ	/မင်္ဂလာဘာ/	Greeting!

Unmarked high tone

In the examples above all the syllables written with ၵ are in the low tone, and so are pronounced as if they were written with -င. In a few words (a very small proportion of the words written with ၵ) the ၵ syllable is pronounced with a *high* tone, as if it were written with င : . Examples:

	<i>correct spelling</i>	<i>pronounced as if written</i>	<i>meaning</i>
၈။	တနင်္သာရီ	တနင်္သာရီ (not /တနင်္သာရီ/)	Tenasserim
၉။	ဒင်္ဂါး	ဒင်္ဂါး (not /ဒင်္ဂါ/)	coin

The spelling of the words gives no indication that they are pronounced with a high tone on the ၵ syllable. This is an area where you learn the spelling and pronunciation as you add the word to your vocabulary. In the Practice section below the unmarked high tones are signalled in advance.