



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

## **The People of India, Volume Eight**

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## KARENS.

They possess a Caucasian class of features, with long faces and straight noses. They are remarkably free from idolatry; a few have become Buddhists, and Atheists are met with. They have no priesthood; nevertheless a religion of extraordinary purity. They are addicted to a considerable extent to nat worship, demonolatry, or pneumatolatry. To propitiate these spirits in the rivers, hills, plains, and trees, they sacrifice buffaloes, swine, and fowls. A portion of them worship their ancestors, and make offerings to their manes. They commonly burn their dead. Those under the Burmese sway are less favourably situated than those under the Siamese: they are guilty of drunkenness and are filthy; but they are truthful, continent, hospitable, kind, and religious. Their traditions of the Deity, creation, and sin are those of the Old Testament, and they anticipate great prosperity under a new coming king. Their traditions point to an Israelitish origin, and they are, by some, supposed to be an Israelitish band, though they do not practice circumcision."

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