

# Mandalay

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two main sections: a Verse and a Chorus. The Verse spans measures 1 through 13, and the Chorus spans measures 14 through 29. The score is written on a single staff in treble clef. Chords are indicated by letters (C, F, G7) above the staff. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 29.

**Verse**

Measures 1-13: C, F, C, F, G7, C, F, C

**Chorus**

Measures 14-29: F, C, G7, C, F, C, F, G7, C

1. By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea,  
There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me;  
For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they say:  
"Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to Mandalay!"

**Chorus:**

Come you back to Mandalay,  
Where the old Flotilla lay:  
Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Rangoon to Mandalay?  
On the road to Mandalay,  
Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

2. 'Er petticoat was yaller an' 'er little cap was green,  
An' 'er name was Supi-Yaw-Lat jes' the same as Theebaw's Queen,  
An' I seed her first a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot,  
An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot:  
    Bloomin' idol made o' mud  
    Wot they called the Great Gawd Budd  
    Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er where she stud!  
    On the road to Mandalay  
    Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
    An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!
3. When the mist was on the rice-fields an' the sun was sinkin' low,  
She'd git 'er little banjo an' she'd sing "Kulla-lo-lo!"  
With 'er arm upon my shoulder an' 'er cheek agin' my cheek  
We useter watch the steamers an' the hathis pilin' teak.  
    Elephints a-pilin' teak  
    In the sludgy, sjudgy creek,  
    Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy you was 'arf afraid to speak!  
    On the road to Mandalay  
    Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
    An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!
4. But that's all shove be'ind me—long ago an' fur away,  
An' there ain't no 'busses runnin' from the Bank to Mandalay;  
An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the ten-year soldier tells:  
"If you've 'eard the East a-callin', you won't never 'eed naught else."  
    No! you won't 'eed nothin' else  
    But them spicy garlic smells,  
    An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the tinkly temple-bells;  
    On the road to Mandalay  
    Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
    An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!
5. I am sick o' wastin' leather on these gritty pavin'-stones,  
An' the blasted Henglish drizzle wakes the fever in my bones;  
Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea to the Strand,  
An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do they understand?  
    Beefy face an' grubby 'and  
    Law! wot do they understand?  
    I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land!  
    On the road to Mandalay  
    Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
    An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!
6. Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,  
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst;  
For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I would be  
By the old Moulmein Pagoda, looking lazy at the sea;  
    On the road to Mandalay,  
    Where the old Flotilla lay,  
    With our sick beneath the awnings on the way to Mandalay!  
    On the road to Mandalay,  
    Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
    An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

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"Mandalay" is a poem from Rudyard Kipling's book **Barrack-Room Ballads**. It was inspired by the reminiscences of participants in the third Burmese War (1885-90) which led to the overthrow of King Thibaw. Kipling himself visited Burma in 1889, falling deeply in love (his words) with a girl sitting on the pagoda steps just as he described.

Peter Bellamy sang "Mandalay" on his third album of songs set to Kipling's poems **Peter Bellamy Sings the Barrack-Room Ballads of Rudyard Kipling**. He commented in the sleeve notes:

This song endures in its several formal settings (one of which was an adaption entitled Panama for the American audience) and is probably the best remembered of the Barrack-Room Ballads. The soldier's nostalgia for the East when returned to the 'gritty paving-stones' of London is beautifully realized. Supi-Yaw-Lat was the widow of King Theebaw of Burma. Hathis are elephants. The tune is from the traditional song "10,000 Miles Away".

"Ten Thousand Miles Away" (Roud 1778) is a shanty printed in Stan Hugill's **Shanties from the Seven Seas**.

Geographic notes:

- Moulmein (now spelled Mawlamyine) is the fourth largest city in Myanmar on the western coast facing the Andaman Sea.
- The "old Moulmein pagoda" is thought to be the Kyaik Than Lan pagoda in Mawlamyine.
- Mandalay is the second largest city in Myanmar. It sits in the center of the country by the Irrawaddy River. It was the royal capital until 1885 when the British defeated King Thibaw and annexed Burma into the British Empire.
- Rangoon, now called Yangon, is the colonial name of the largest city in Myanmar. It is near the coast of the Andaman Sea.

Since the Andaman Sea is to the west of Burma, no one in Moulmein or Mandalay can see "the dawn come up like thunder outer China 'crost the bay".

John Roberts and Tony Barrand sang Mandalay to Peter Bellamy's setting in 1997 on their CD of songs of Rudyard Kipling, **Naulakha Redux**.