

BULLETIN OF THE BURMA STUDIES GROUP
ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES
SOUTHEAST ASIA COUNCIL

February 1981

No. 21

Greetings and Apologies.

Like the Report to the People of the Pyithu Hluttaw, the Bulletin of the Burma Studies Group does not enjoy the reputation of the timeliest of publications. Your Secretary/Editor remains a person of the best intentions who of late has been held captive by the trials and tribulations of Washington's transition and the frequent indulgence of his own vices. It has been a time as the Burmese would say of , "winged termites flying in swarms." For those of you unable to sleep because of the tardiness of The Bulletin I send my apologies and the assurances that the next issue may fall hostage to the same considerations. On to the news.

Third Burma Studies Group Colloquium Resounding Success.

The Burma Studies Group held its Third Biennial Research Colloquium at Denison University, November 7-9, 1980. By all accounts it was a splendid affair, characterized by provocative scholarship, nostalgic reminiscences, collegial fellowship, scintillating entertainment, and sumptuous Burmese cuisine. The weather was brisk, but pleasant and Denison University's hospitality was unmatched.

Burma wallahs from around the world, perhaps forty altogether, came to the colloquium. Following our casual registration practices of past gatherings records of attendance may not be complete but the following were certainly present: Joe Withey, Muriel Williamson, John and Kay Ferguson, Charles Smith Jr., David Steinberg, Melissa Werthman, Steve Allers, Jim and Dotty Guyot, Edith Piness, Konrad and Sarah Bekker, Mrs. A. F. Carrol, Maureen Aung Thwin, Euan and Sally Bagshawe, Robert Taylor, Margaret Aung Thwin, Michael Aung Thwin, Mrs. David Tin Hla, John and Vivian Cady, Mark Woodward, Thomas Gibson, Julianne Schober, Dr. Wum Son and family, Tomi Castelli, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bixler, Mr. and Mrs. U Thaung, John and Betty Musgrave, M. Ismael Khin Maung, Paul Sarno, Richard Cooler, and Jon Wiant.

Presentations during the three-day Colloquium ran the gamut from contemporary political and economic assessments to historical, anthropological, and cultural studies. For your interest, I have enclosed a copy of the program with this Bulletin and I suggest you write directly to the Colloquium participants for copies of the papers.

The cultural offerings of the Colloquium were especially delightful. Meetings were held in Burke Hall, site of Denison University's major exhibition, "The Art of Burma." Professor Jane Terry Bailey, Curator of the Denison Burmese art collection, developed a chronological presentation of Burmese sculpture from the Pyu period to the present. Interspersed with this wide representation of Buddha images were examples of textile and lacquer works. In one gallery Terry had assembled a small collection of hand woven silks, while in the foyer a complete series of Moore and Marryat's colored engravings done in 1826 portraying the First Anglo-Burmese War was displayed. Terry arranged a special display area where Colloquium members John and Kay Ferguson, Tomi Castelli, and Jon Wiant exhibited nats from their own collections.

Terry Bailey arranged two sumptuous banquets for the Colloquium and, in keeping with our group's own traditions, we were again treated to Denison's interpretation of Sheila Lehman's version of Mrs. Aung San's chicken curry. Following the Friday

banquet, Daw Tin Tin Win (Mrs. U Thaug), formerly of the Burmese National Dance Troupe, entertained the Colloquium with natkadaw dances. On Saturday night, Paul Sarno showed slides and films of his trip from Rangoon to Moulmein last summer.

The Burma Studies Group gives its special thanks to Denison University for hosting the Colloquium and making us feel so welcome. To Terry Bailey, who again was the inspiration for the meeting and whose efforts were everywhere apparent, we can only say, Thadu, Thadu, Thadu.

On a final Colloquium note, Studies Group Chairman John P. Ferguson writes that the Studies Group had insufficient funds to pay for the transportation service at the Colloquium and that our accounts are currently in the red. We ask that those who participated in the transportation make a \$5.00-\$10.00 contribution -- payable to John Ferguson -- to erase this debt.

Annual Business Meeting Scheduled.

The annual meeting of the Burma Studies Group will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Toronto, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday, March 13, 1981, in the Peel Room of the Sheraton Centre, site of the AAS meeting. The Studies Group meeting will be followed by one of our traditional invasions of some hapless thamin sain, undoubtedly identified by Maureen Aung Thwin's own intelligence service, for a dinner of curry or some local approximation.

German Symposium on "Buddhism in Burma."

Professor Heinz Bechert from the University of Gottingen writes that the Akademie der Wissenschaften (Academy of Science) in Gottingen will be presenting a symposium on "Buddhism in Burma," April 21-25. The list of participants remains tentative but is expected to include three scholars appointed by the Government of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma and Dr. H. Braun (Gottingen), Dr. E. Denis (Bangkok), Dr. Klaus Fleischman (Köln), Professor Dr. R. F. Gombrich (Oxford), Dr. E. Guillon (Paris), Dr. P. Gutman (Canberra), Professor Dr. O. von Hinuber (Mainz), Professor Dr. S. Lienhard (Stockholm), Professor Egaku Mayeda (Nagoya), Professor Dr. E. Rosner (Gottingen), Dr. G. Roth (Gottingen), Professor Dr. M. Sarkisyanz (Heidelberg), Professor M. Spiro (San Diego), Professor Janice Stargardt (Cambridge), and U Tin Htway (Heidelberg).

Participation in the symposium is by personal invitation. Space is limited and only a few observers will be admitted. Colleagues interested in attending the symposium should write Professor Dr. Bechert at Seminar für Indologie und Buddhistenwissenschaft, Hainbündelstrasse 21, D-3400 Gottingen, Federal Republic of Germany.

Kris Lehman in Burma.

Kris wrote your acting chairman a nice, informative letter on his activities in Burma. He reports that he and Sheila spent three weeks in Rangoon, "mainly thesis reading at the University there and consulting with language specialists there and at the language Commission." By September 5 they were in Mandalay, put up at a small hotel for about ten days, and since then have been living in the upper storey of a nice house out near the University, the house being that of a very scholarly young man, a geology graduate turned tourist guide, who has worked with several other visiting scholars and is closely connected with my mentor, here, U Maung Maung Tin; his name is Tin Maung Oo, and on his mother's side, he's descended from the Limbin Prince, which means he has connexions of the closest kind with the Palace Language speakers I need to

work with. His wife cooks excellently, and so we are very fortunate, indeed. We have three bicycles to get round on, and we shall be here at least until some time in February, after which we go, as soon as the permission letter is written, to Pakokku and Gangaw to work on Yaw Burmese. The last three months before we leave, we shall stay in Rangoon, whilst I work with someone there on Tavoyan (he's a lecturer in the Burmese Department at RASU and a Tavoyan). I shall also try to get ordained a Monk for about a month, and hope this will be videotaped along with much else once the rains cease making taking the equipment about impossible, as it has been so far. We shall return next August, of course.

My wife, Sheila, is about to work on some glazed plaques, later, by at least one and a half centuries, than the ones Terry Bailey wrote on -- these being at Mingun and belonging to the unfinished Temple there, built by Bodawpaya (late 18th century).

Kris goes on to report that John Okell of SOAS was in Burma from September to December.

A goodly number of university MA theses in Burmese have been noted by Kris, and he hopes to have their titles available for publication in our Bulletin when he returns, thanks to the interest of U Thaw Kaung, the librarian at Rangoon.

Finally, Kris reported good progress on his Palace dialect research, apparently delving with relish into many Burmese novels and plays for dialogue.

To contact our distant leader, write him c/o U Tin Maung Oo, 'Thida Aye,' Mahamyang Quarter, Mahabodhi Meditation Centre, East Side, Mandalay. [JPF]

Note on AAS Meeting.

On page 75 of the program the Burma Studies Group is incorrectly mentioned as involved in a "Film Presentation and Workshop." In no way has the Burma Studies Group given its approval or endorsement of the program. Members of our group who are participating do so as individuals. [JPF]

Recent Books and Publications of Interest.

Maureen Aung Thwin of the Asia Society has posted a copy of the recent Burma Newsletter (Vol. 11, No. 1), a forty-page compendium of news on Burma, book reviews, and other matters of interest. The Newsletter invites items for publication and new subscribers. Correspondence should be sent to the Burma Newsletter, The Asia Society, 112 E. 164th St., New York, N. Y. 10021.

Anna Allot, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, wrote of two works recently published in the USSR on Burmese art and culture. Nina Ivanova Ozhegova's Iskusstvo Birmy (The Art of Burma) (published in 1979 by Izdatel'stvo 'Izobruzitel'noye Iskusstvo, Moscow) covers a wide variety of Burmese art from Pagan architecture to modern paintings and lacquerware. It is well illustrated, with 147 plates including a number of drawings by the author.

The Leningrad Branch of the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Science of the USSR has issued another volume in its series of the Cultures of the Nations of the East--Elena Aleksandrovna Zapadova's V Strane gde techyot Iraudi (The Country Where the Irrawaddy Flows). This is a rich study of music, literature, drama, cinema, and the press, particularly in the post-War period. Regrettably, the 52 photos illustrating the work are poorly reproduced.

Other publications of note: Taylor, Albert H. "Burma in the Anti-Fascist War." In Alfred McCoy, ed., Southeast Asia Under Japanese Occupation. New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1980.

Cooler, Richard M. British Romantic Views of the First Anglo-Burmese War 1824-1826. DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Department of Art, 1977.

Griffin. A Brief Guide to Sources for the Study of Burma in the India Office Records. London: India Office Library and Records, 1979.

Forthcoming Publications.

The India Office Library announced that Professor Hugh Tinker, University of Lancaster, has been appointed to edit a volume of documents and commentary relating to the events leading up to Burmese independence. Provisionally entitled Burma: The Contest for Independence, 1944-48, the work is expected to be completed in 1983 and will be published by HMSO.

Jon Wiant
Secretary/Editor
Burma Studies Group

Late Notice Re. AAS Meeting

3/2/81: A telephone call today regarding the three group presentation on Friday night revealed that the Burma Studies group was supposed to have been asked to endorse the program. AAS believed we had. I suggest we treat the program as though we had endorsed it and give it our full support.

John Ferguson

THIRD COLLOQUIUM OF THE BURMA STUDIES GROUP
at Denison University, November 7-9, 1980

PROGRAM:

Friday

- Introduction to the special exhibit, "The Art of Burma"
Prof. Jane Terry Bailey, Denison U.
- "The Teaching of Music and Dance in Mandalay, 1958-62"
Also slides of Taungbyon festival.
Mrs. R. C. Williamson, Gainesville, Florida
- "Aesthetic Interchange in 19th Century Burma"
Dr. Richard M. Cooler, Dept. of Art, Northern Illinois U.
- "Reminiscences of Burma"
Daw Hla Thwin Hla, New York City
- "Looking at Burmese Politics"
Dr. Robert H. Taylor, Dept. of Eco. & Poli. Studies, SOAS, London
Mr. Jon Wiant, State Department, Washington, D.C.
- "Burmese Communist Insurgency"
Mr. Charles B. Smith, State Department, Washington, D.C.
- "Ne Win's Sangha Purification as Fact or Fancy?"
Dr. John P. Ferguson, SUNY Ag. Tech. College, Cobleskill, N.Y.

Saturday

- "Current Burmese Economic Developments"
David I. Steinberg, Agency for Inter'l Develop., Washington, D.C.
Dr. Ts. Gibson, Asian Dept., Inter'l Monet'y Fund, Washington, D.C.
- "Flawed Empathy: Social Attitudes of Majority and Minority Groups
in Burma." Dr. Sarah Bekker, New York City
- "Press Freedom in Burma"
U Thaung, writer, former editor of Daily Mirror, Rangoon
- "Yokthe: Marionette Theater as Reflecting Traditional Burmese
Society." Prof. Joseph A. Withey, Hanover College, Indiana
- "The Zo People in Burma"
Dr. Vum Son, New York City
- "Mortuary Ritual and Sacrifice in Tribal Groups of Northwest Burma"
Mr. Mark Woodward, Dept. of Anthro., U. of Illinois at Urbana

Sunday

- "An Alternative Tradition in Burmese Buddhism"
L. E. Bagshawe, Hampton, N.H.
- "The Snake Head Cult at Pagan"
Dr. Richard M. Cooler, Dept. of Art, Northern Illinois U.
- "Spirits Within the Theravada Buddhist Tradition: A Cognitive
Approach to Canon and Cosmology"
Ms. Juliane Schoben, Dept. of Anthro., U. of Illinois at Urbana