

BULLETIN OF THE BURMA STUDIES GROUP  
ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES  
SOUTHEAST ASIA COUNCIL  
November, 1982  
No. 23 24

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you wish to continue receiving the Bulletin in 1983, please send \$3.00 U.S. for postage to Burma Studies Group, c/o Dr. J. P. Ferguson, SUNY Ag.Tech., Cobleskill, N.Y. 12043.

Colloquium at Elmira College

The fourth Burma Studies Group Colloquium was held at Elmira College from October 15 through the 17th, 1982, hosted by Dr. Michael Aung Thwin. Those attending were Jane Terry Bailey, David Steinberg, F. K. Lehman, Catherine and John Ferguson, Frances Colley, Sarah Bekker, Maureen Aung Thwin, Margaret Aung Thwin, John Foggie, Paul Sarno, Myo Myint, Dorothy Guyot, Robert B. Jones, John Ambler, Carol Compton, Gene T. Hlaing, Sao Ying Sita, S. Sahai, Robert S. Wicks, Thomas Gibson, Jon A. Wiant, and Sallie and Euan Bagshawe. All were warmly and generously welcomed by the college community. Highlights included a dormitory floor to ourselves where we could socialize, magnificent meals (including a Burmese dinner by Margaret Aung Thwin and Jim Siconofli), a reception hosted by the college president Dr. Leonard Grant, and a series of stimulating papers and presentations.

For the benefit of those absent, your secretary summarizes the presentations, with my apologies to those whose ideas have been so cruelly muddled.

David Steinberg presented a paper, "In Media Res - Burma's Third Four-Year Plan; Half Way to Socialism and Industrialization?," followed by comments by Tom Gibson. Both stressed the overall economic improvements not without accompanying challenges presented by using high-yielding rice strains. Other topics included the increasing home demand for oil now being exported, the storage and milling capacities for rice, government rice prices versus "private" sales, difficulties in manufacturing home goods, and various interpretations of land ownership and transfer today. John Ambler of Cornell stressed basic economic differences between Upper and Lower Burma in his paper, "Rural Development in Burma." Among topics he touched upon were the production of non-rice crops such as sesame, ground nuts, pulses, and sunflowers; the mysteries of continuing agricultural tenancy in a socialist country; private and government loans: marketing options for farmers; and income distribution choices with regard to government support and taxation (overt or hidden). The gist of the session: rural Burmese are more prosperous now than they were a few years ago, but many serious economic problems remain unsolved.

Robert Wicks of Cornell presented a talk on "Ancient Coinage in Burma," based upon his doctoral work in numismatics in Southeast Asia. He explained the importance of coins in terms of archeology, trade, mandalas of power, and symbolic messages that coin designs can convey. Stress was placed on the Srivasta design in conjunction with the conch, bull, Bhaddapitha, and Rising Sun variations from the 5th to 8th centuries. Of note was the coinage hiatus in the 7th century corresponding to an inter-regnum between the Candara and post-Candara rulers in Arakan. Wicks stressed the value of coinage study in conjunction with the more common evidence for historical analysis, particularly involving Pyu studies.

Sarah Bekker used color slides for her presentation, "Transformation of the Nats - A Comparison of Ancient and Modern Images." Her thesis was that over

the centuries from Kyanzittha to U Nu, nats have become more humanized in artistic representation and less other-worldly. Using images from the Shwezigon 37 group, she compared them with those (the Ashmolean collection) used by Temple for his classic work and those modern versions commissioned by U Nu. Discussion centered around how Burmese perceived nats in general, how nats were created, and whether the distance between spirits and humans was truly lessening.

A few slides of Pagan murals, taken by E. M. Mendelson, were shown. The hope was expressed by John Ferguson that those with other mural slides might register the fact with the Burma Studies Group for future reference. Later, movies were shown that were taken in the late 50's by E. M. Mendelson. Subjects included a monk's funeral, complete with tug of war, a Kachin buffalo sacrifice (manao), and extensive footage of the dancing at the Taungbyon Festival.

Charles Smith's paper on the "Burma Communist Party from 1968" was read by Jon Wiant. The overall impression given by the analysis was that at present the pro-Chinese elements were less strongly supported from inside and outside the country than in the past and that, isolated a bit in northern sections of the country, their opportunity for mass appeal was greatly reduced. Internal factionalism was also reducing their effectiveness.

Daw Khin Yi's master's thesis was abstracted in a presentation entitled "Thakins in the Thirties" by Dorothy Guyot, who sought suggestions regarding possible changes for publication. The audience's response was advice to preserve the details about all the individuals involved and for Daw Khin Yi to compare and contrast versions of events as already described by other writers with those of her own (such as the oil strike).

Sao Ying Sita reached back into her own experiences in a Shan royal family to share with the group "A Personal View of Shan History," based upon articles written for presentation at Chiang Mai University by her brother Sao Tzang, a columnist with the Bangkok Post. The lasting impression from her talk was her intense pride in unique Shan traditions, both royal and Buddhist.

Euan Bagshawe explored the way Victorian notions of schooling affected "Education in Burma in the 1870's." Tracing educational theory to British notions of responsibility, he concluded that monastic schools never coordinated their religious/moral training with British notions of education for a livelihood. No unified system could in the 1870's be created by colonial administrators who could neither keep religion out of total education nor successfully include it as the church schools of England had done.

Based upon a long-standing interest in the military influence in Burmese politics, Jon Wiant in an informal presentation considered possible future directions of a post-Ne Win army as high ranking officers increasingly come from a broader base. He also spoke of possible decreases in internal military engagements, the influence of more equipment purchases, military control of party activities, and attempts to involve military personnel in work projects to get closer to the people.

In another informal presentation, John Ferguson challenged many of the conventional conclusions regarding the success of typical Sangha purification efforts, including the present activities of the Burmese government. Issues brought up by Mike Aung Thwin involved cyclical land and taxation problems caused by merit donations. Other discussion involved the possible significance

of the contemporary Luthe-Luphyit case so extensively publicized in purification literature - a paper tiger or a real one?

In the evening sessions Mendelson movies were shown as well as recent slides on Burma taken by Jon Wiant and John Fogle.

Business Meeting:

The major decision was to ask each subscriber to our Newsletter to contribute \$3.00 per year for postage. Payments made now will be good through the entire year of 1983. Some members paid at the meeting. The rest are asked to send their contribution payable to The Burma Studies Group  
c/o Dr. J. P. Ferguson  
SUNY Ag. Tech.  
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On specially costly mailings (bibliography issues), we will make special application to the AAS for funds.

The group voted to consider having the next Colloquium at the University of Michigan in June of 1984 in conjunction with Michigan's plans to have an extensive summer session (SEA SSI, formerly ISSI) which will include courses on Burma and Burmese language. (A call to Aram Yengoyan of the U. of Michigan by Kris Lehman has since established that such a suggestion is welcome. Further discussion is planned at the San Francisco AAS meeting next spring, but our Colloquium is included in preliminary plans and proposals.)

Mention was made that the Toyota Foundation is translating two Burmese novels. The Foundation publishes a newsletter.

The new Crossroads publication (out of Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois U.) is considering an issue on Burma. Those with papers ready on Burma might contact J. P. Ferguson for further details which hopefully will be forthcoming.

A few new books were shown: The Short Story in Southeast Asia: Aspects of a Genre, ed. J. Davidson & H. Cordell, SOAS, 1982 (contains article by Anna Allott); Burma, A Socialist Nation of Southeast Asia, by David I. Steinberg, Boulder, Colo., Westview Press; an excellent Insight Guide on Burma; Burma, a Travel Survival Kit, by A. T. Wheeler, Victoria, Australia, Lonely Planet Publications. Mentioned also were Klaus Fleishman's book on Arakan (in German) and U Bo Kay's recent book on Pagan (in Burmese).

Bob Taylor reports that he is back from Burma in one piece and sends regards to all. Frank Huffman is working on his Bibliography of Mainland Southeast Asian Linguistics. Dotty Guyot has returned from Bangkok, but Jim and children will be in Thailand for the next year. They spent a week in Burma last June to visit friends in Pyinmana: "When we were there 20 years ago there was but one horse drawn gherry in town - now there are 1,300 registered. Otherwise the changes are insubstantial." Lee Lefferts has returned to Drew from his Fulbright year at Khon Kaen University. He reports that Isan is quiet, except for Development agents scurrying about. R. B. Jones wrote that Cornell will be hosting a new Burmese lecturer this fall - Eugene T. Hlaing. U Thaung sent a copy of "the first Burmese Buddhist book printed in America." U Thaung is at

Intercontinental Printing, 1321 S. Powerline Rd., Pompano Beach, Fla. 33060. Muriel Williamson presented a paper on the Burmese harp for the Society for Ethno-musicology at their recent Maryland meeting. Edith Piness will publish her paper "The British Administrator in Burma: A New View" in JSAS. Myo Myint is a graduate student at Cornell, doing research on Burmese royal military tactics and theory. Klaus Fleishman's address is Wenner-Gren Center, App. L21, Svearagen 166, S-113 46 Stockholm.

Please send any news to

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