

1984 BURMA STUDIES GROUP COLLOQUIUM

The Colloquium was held at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor on August 3 and 4, in conjunction with the Southeast Asian Studies Conference at the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute, with blessings from the Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies.

Friday morning was devoted mainly to a lively and far-ranging portrait of present-day Burma by Hugh MAC DOUGALL, State Department, home after several years in the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon. Hugh's balanced presentation set the stage for the Colloquium, bringing everyone up to date on recent developments, with much discussion from the floor.

Friday afternoon was devoted to the historians: MICHAEL AUNG THWIN delved into scholarship dealing with the early pre-Pagan centuries, JERRY BENNETT explored the Chinese sources on the Kingdom of T'an in Arakan, and VIC LIEBERMAN developed a conceptual overview of the rise and fall of Burmese kingdoms. Edith PINESS and JOHN CADY both served as commentators.

Also on Friday MURIEL WILKINSON presented a fascinating account, with color slides, of a steamer ride in the upper defiles of the Irrawaddy River. Her call to adventure was followed by a superb Khaukswe dinner cooked by resident experts.

Saturday began with attention to the arts: U THAUNG presented an incisive and delightful Burmese view of the importance of knowing the Ten Previous Lives of the Buddha in order to understand the fortunes of modern political persona; ROBERT WILLIAMSON, with very useful and understandable tapes, made the evolution of Burmese harp tunings sound easy; TERRY BAILEY, with slides, spoke of Burmese items included in the forthcoming Zanesville Art Center collection; and MARK WOODWARD, fresh from a stay in Burma, used his important slides to discuss trends in Burmese mural art since Annexation, with emphasis upon public murals at Mandalay Hill.

The afternoon began with MIKE AUNG THWIN'S setting the stage historically for a discussion of monastic purification, with your editor's making a few remarks on the permanent illusions connected with the same, and with JULIANE SCHOEBER'S absorbing analysis of recent governmental purification developments observed during her recent stay in Burma.

The Colloquium ended with a "business meeting." Two topics dominated the discussion: 1) future meeting plans and 2) a possible Burma Studies Center. On both issues we seek opinions from our membership.

1. Do you agree or not that we should meet every year at Michigan for an abbreviated meeting in the summer (as we did this year) and that we should have a more intensive colloquium at Elmira every other year? Or do you favor some other plan? Please let us hear from you.
2. Proposed was a Burma Studies Center where those of us who have materials Burmese may safely leave them when we permanently depart this hurly-burly world, or before then, ideally. A home is needed

for art works, books, slides, movies, tapes, notes, and the important minutia collected by the typical incurable student of things Burmese; otherwise such treasure will surely be scattered across the land, unavailable and unknown to those who in the future would really cherish and use it well.

Where? Washington, N.Y.C., Chicago, at a center of higher learning?

Financed? Donations, admissions, dues, part of a larger institution?

Government-to-government interest?

(Note: Your editor has reasons to believe that should we be able to establish such a Center, several major donations readily would be forthcoming from our membership).

Your secretary-editor was asked to collect any ideas you may have and support you may offer add report same at the AAS meeting. May we hear from you before it is too late?

Present at Michigan: D. Y. Chang, J. T. Bailey, C. Carlin, T. Yuen, J. Wright, D. Hallman, C. Compton, D. Lewis, M. Ernst, E. A. Schack, U Thaug, M. I. Khin Maung, E. Stanhope, C. Wilder, L. Leffert, J. Schoeber, M. Woodward, P. Van Esterick, S. Myers, G. Zimmer, M. Aung Thwin, J. P. Ferguson, W. B. Jones, E. L. Piness, P. J. Bennett, V. Liberman, J. Cady, L. Fessler, F. K. Lehman, L. L. Lay, J. Musgrave, H. C. MacDougall, E. MacDougall, L. Gesick, C. Ferguson, D. Robinson, R. R. Rumsey, M. Williamson, K. Moblman, W. W. Gage, P. Pranke, R. Johnson, B. Gosling, S. Bekker, H. Berg, T. E. Leahy, M. Aung Thwin.

FRANK N. TRAGER (1906-1984)

We mourn the loss of a devoted student of Burma and a long-standing member of the Burma Studies Group, Dr. Frank N. Trager, professor emeritus of international affairs at New York University. Since the days when Frank was director of the American aid program in Burma in the 1950's, he had been a frequent visitor to the country and an active author and researcher. Particularly remembered will be his Building a Welfare State in Burma, Burma, From Kingdom to Republic, Burma: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography, and, with W. Koenig, Burmese Sittans, 1764-1826: Records of Rural Life and Administration. We shall miss his energy and enthusiasm. Our deepest sympathies are extended to his wife Helen.

A NEW BAGSHAW TRANSLATION

Euan Bagshaw has translated a 1982 paper sent to him by U Maung Maung Tin from Mandalay, co-authored by U Win Maung (Tambavati), entitled "Iconography of Images of Certain Periods."

This important essay establishes a set of criteria for dating images of the Buddha from the Pagan, Ava, Amarapura, and Mandalay periods. Euan has generously offered to share his clear translation with us. If you are interested, please write your editor, and we can determine how to proceed next. Needless to say, Euan Bagshaw has made a major contribution to Burma Studies by this effort, not to mention the kindness of U Maung Maung Tin.

NEWS

FRANK J. SHULMAN has covered Burma-related dissertations in his Doctoral Dissertations on Asia: An Annotated Bibliographical Journal of Current International Research, Vol.6, Assoc. for Asian Studies, 1983. WON YOON plans to complete during a spring, 1985, sabbatical his "Japanese Military Administration in Burma, 1942-43." CHARLES SMITH will see his "Armed Communism in Southeast Asia: The Burmese Communist Party" (approx. title) published by the Institute of Southeast Asian Affairs in Singapore during 1984. His new address is C. B. Smith, Jr., Am.Con.Gen. (KAK), APO New York, NY 09213. ROBERT GARFIAS in April gave a paper on the history of the Hsaing at a meeting of the International Council for Traditional Music held in East Germany. JANICE LEOSHO has left Denison to teach at Wheaton College in Norton, MA. She is particularly interested in Burmese artistic connections to Eastern India. The BUDDHIST TEMPLE of Nashville, Tenn. conducted a meditation course last summer; address: Win Myint, Pres., 230 Treutland St., PO Box 121191, Nashville, Tenn. 37212. Also supported by Burmese is the TAUNGPULU KABA-AYE MONASTERY, 18335 Big Basin Way, Boulder Creek, Santa Cruz, CAL 95006. Another active organization seeking interested members is the BURMESE-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO, 1925 Pffingsten Rd., Northbrook, IL 60062.

Other Burmese monasteries supported by the Burmese community in the United States include the following: the DHAMMODAYA VIHARA, 115 So. Commonwealth Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90004; the DHAMMANANDA VIHARA, 68 Woodrow St., Daly City, CA 94014; the MANGALARAMA VIHARA, 1708 Power Mill Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20903. Emanating from the DHAMMANANDA VIHARA address above is the Newsletter of the Theravada Buddhist Society of America.

Southeast Asian Regional Research Grants are available for Burma in the arts, history, language, and literature, as are grants for the Translation Project in Southeast Asian Literature. For details write Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES), 11 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.

Active in Brooklyn is the AMERICA BURMA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION, INC., 640 Dean St., Brooklyn, NY. HAN KYU is president of the Executive Committee. They are currently renovating their Burmese Monastery.

DAW MYA SEIN recently visited England and met ROBERT TAYLOR and other Burma stalwarts there, so writes MYA THANDA POE from New Delhi. LUCIEN HANKS will publish "The Lahuski Bakio: Birth of a New Tribe" in Festschrift for David Mandelbaum, Paul Hockings editor, in press. The article has some material on the Lahu of Burma. DAVID SZANTON visited Burma in July. NORMAN L. BROWN writes that the World Bank is planning an energy assessment in Burma, including all energy resources. For information write Julian Bharier, Director, Energy Assessment Program, Energy Dept., World Bank, 1818 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20433. MAUNG MAUNG GYI has published Burmese Political Values: The Socio-Political Roots of Authoritarianism, N.Y.: Praeger, 1983. A most pleasant telephone call from ERLING DESSAU, resident representative of the United Nations development projects in Burma, indicated that he and his wife would be happy to see any of our members visiting Burma: address, P.O. Box 650, Rangoon (Tel. 78278). MAUREEN AUNG THWIN wrote to remind all that the Voice of America will be filling as many as four or five positions dealing with Burma in 1984-85. Mr. Richard Van Der Karr, of the Burmese Service, Voice of America, Washington, DC 20547, would be particularly interested in hearing from those fluent in Burmese and English who would be interested in working as Burmese language broadcasters. For more details, contact Mr. Beasley or your editor, who has a copy of the recruiting bulletin.

ANNA ALLOTT kindly has sent us her welcomed annual report of the Britain-Burma Society, as well as a most useful updated membership list. Highlights included an account of a talk by JOHN OKELL, "Burmese Buddhist Ceremonies Today," depicting such events as the washing of the face of the Maha Myat Muni image in Mandalay, the filming of a kahtein ceremony at Pegu for Burmese television, the erection of large religious plaster images at the Melamu Pagoda north of Rangoon, and the ceremonies accompanying the laying of the foundation stone of the Maha Wizaya Pagoda nearby the Shwedagon. Also included in Anna's report was an account of a talk by KENNETH WATTS, recently retired UN representative in Burma, who described, among other matters, an early warning station for cyclones at Kyaukhypu, and seldom-seen Tennasserim communities built on complex bamboo staging.

I have a request for any information on U HTIN MAING, Fulbright coordinator in Rangoon some years ago. SARAH BEKKER will be teaching a course in Jan., 1985, "Motif and Meaning: Buddhist Symbols in Southeast Asian Art" for the Institute for Asian Studies in New York City. She will feature slides from her recent trips to Thailand and Burma. Sarah Bekker draws our attention to an exhibit, "Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian Art," at the Brooklyn Museum, 11/1/84-2/10/85. She notes particularly the stone Pyu image (Denison), other early Burmese images, a Pagan votive plaque, and an ivory tusk with multiple images of the Buddha. VIRGINIA M. DI CROCCO reviewed in the Journal of the Siam Society (71,1-2), 1983, U Bo Kay's Pagan Thuteithana Lanhyunt (The Pagan Research Guide), Rangoon: Sarpay Beikman, 1981 (459pp in Burmese). MICHAEL AUNG THWIN gave a talk at Cornell in September, entitled, "The British Pacification of Burma: Order without Meaning." Details on the Robert Ellsworth return of the Pyu bronze figures to Burma are given in Orientalism, March, 1984, p.74.

JOHN FERGUSON wrote the chapter, "The Society and Its Environment" in the new edition of Burma: A Country Study, ed. by Frederica M. Bunge, Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1983. HIRAM WOODWARD, JR., has published "Burmese Sculpture and Indian Painting" in Chhavi-2: Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume, Varanasi: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1981. The paper relates the "sculptural art of Pagan to artistic developments in Indian art of the same period," writes Sarah Bekker.

HUGH MAC DOUGALL'S new address is 413 7th St. SE, Washington, DC 20003.

A welcome gift to the Burma Studies Group was sent by the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, Washington, D.C.: Facts About Burma, published by the government in December, 1983. We thank particularly U Thant Kyaw, Second Secretary for sharing this new profusely illustrated publication with us.

Westview Press has published Southeast Asia, containing an essay, "Burma: From Colonialism to Socialism." ROBERT TAYLOR has sent a copy of Working Paper No. 28 from the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash Univ., Melbourne, entitled "An Undeveloped State: The Study of Modern Burma's Politics." VIC LIEBERMAN's book is published: Burmese Administrative Cycles: Anarchy and Conquest, c.1580-1760, Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1984.

NEW MEMBERS (individuals, not institutions) since last issue:

Robert M. Williamson, Dept. of Physics, Oakland U., Rochester, MI 48063.
Yee Yee Lay Stein, 1925 Pfingsten Rd., Northbrook, IL 60062.
Catherine Zimmer, 208 Springwood, Oxford, OH 45056.
Ward Keeler, Dept. Anthropology, N.Y. University, 25 Waverly Pl., NYC, NY 10003.
Andreas K. Gasser, Jurastrasse 6, 4313 Mohlin, Switzerland.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

The concept of a Burma Studies Center is an exciting dream. Is there any conceivable manner of making it a reality? Your editor does not travel in circles where such an audacious notion can be placed before the people who could make it happen, but perhaps you do. Ample material exists to swell such a center to overflowing -- art, books, photographs, tapes, notes, and much more -- if only one of our members has the inspiration.

Your comments are most welcome.

John Ferguson
Editor-Secretary
Burma Studies Group