

BULLETIN OF THE BURMA STUDIES GROUP

Association for Asian Studies

Southeast Asia Council

March, 1985

#29

FORTHCOMING MEETING

The Burma Studies Group will meet on Friday, March 22, 1985, at 4:30 PM in Salon 2 of the Franklin Plaza, Philadelphia, Pa. We will conclude at 6 PM, re-convene at a fashionable but inexpensive (?) restaurant for dinner, and then find a place to continue serious discussion and possible frivolities elsewhere.

BAGSHAWE TRANSLATION

Those who have shown an interest in receiving a copy of Euan's work shall not be disappointed. Your editor is hard at work discovering a black market press to do the job at the right price. In due time all will be made evident.

BURMA STUDIES CENTER?

At our annual meeting on March 22 we will discuss proposals for a possible Burma Studies Center. The concept was raised at our last meeting in Michigan, and since then considerable interest has been germinating. Your secretary was asked to garner ideas and report back. He now does just that.

Many members wrote or called with suggestions.

Sarah Bekker is willing to consider donating to such a Center a collection of Burmese art now on loan to the Volkerkunde Museum, Basel, Switzerland. The over 60 items in this fine collection were obtained by Sarah and her late husband Konrad.

Two other members have indicated a willingness to donate specific items to such a center.

Dave Steinberg has been working on possible foundation help to provide "seed money" to aid a host institution to get a Center on its feet.

Two institutions have indicated a strong interest in the collection: University of Northern Illinois and the Elvehjem Museum associated with the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Both proposals will be discussed in detail at our forthcoming meeting, and a full report will be given in the next Bulletin.

Two concepts seem to be involved -- a collection and a center. The collection would consist of whatever materials are donated by our membership for the use of future researchers: art, ethnographic items, personal memorabilia, black and white negatives and prints, slides, movies, video tapes, computer discs, manuscripts, files, books, pamphlets, magazines, etc. This collection would need to be housed, exhibited, conserved, safeguarded, catalogued, protected against de-acquisition to commercial interests, and made available to the BSG members and the public.

A center could operate out of the same space where the collection is housed, or it could be the conceptual umbrella that unites different functions, such as a home for the Collection, a place for meetings of the BSG, areas of study for visiting scholars, a fund-raising and administrative office, a pooling of various talents (academic or otherwise) dealing with Burmese expertise, and a place ideally to which all interested in Burma could turn for inspiration and assistance.

The Burma Studies Group could, for example, form a non-profit organization and elect five trustees to collect, disburse, and safeguard a Burma Studies Group Collection. These trustees would then give to a Burma Studies Center any collections received as long as certain legal restrictions were met, such as, the Center's obligation to do the following:

1. House and care for the collection in a special place, with at least 20% of the art always on public exhibition.
2. Provide annual meeting place for the BSG.
3. Provide access for the public to the entire Collection at least during normal business hours of the host institution.
4. Keep an up-to-date catalog of the Collection available to the public.
5. Store together like objects in the Collection in the same area.
6. De-accession to non-profit institutions only with approval of the majority vote of the BSG trustees.
7. Provide a paid Director of the Center, who would devote at least one-third of his or her time to the Center.

The trustees would be legally obligated to give all items they received to the Center unless any one or more of the above seven conditions was or were not being met, in which case they would seek legal redress and ultimately the return of the Collection to the trustees if the Center did not meet its legal obligations. Should the Center cease to exist, the Collection would revert back to the trustees, who would seek a new Center.

The Center, then, could be established by the host institution in any number of ways, preferably with some representation of Burma Studies Group members in its governing body. Since the host institution (university, museum, monastery, cultural association) would be financially responsible for the Center, it would presumably wish to retain control of its governing body. The Center might create any combination of programs that involved exhibits, research facilities, course work, exchanges, or loans. The success of the Center, however, would presumably relate closely to the willingness of BSG members to contribute items to the Collection and possibly funds to the Center itself.

The above suggestions, and they are only suggestions, might form a background with which to evaluate proposals at our forthcoming meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting, please communicate your ideas to your editor-secretary by letter or telephone (518-234-2276).

NEWS

The Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) for 1985 Conference will again be at the U. of Michigan, Aug. 1-3. SEASSI will offer Burmese language between June 17 and August 23. For information write SEASSI, CSSEAS, 130 Lane Hall, U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. Papers and panels welcome.

LEEDOM LEFFERTS hopes for some joint efforts between the Burma Studies Group and the Thai/Laos/Cambodia Council.

SYLVIA FRASER-LU writes to say that KHIN MYO CHIT has put out Burmese Legends and is planning a book on Pagan and Burmese Lacquerware. F. K. LEHMAN (CHIT HLAING) published "Freedom and Bondage in Traditional Burma and Thailand" in the Journal of Southeast Asian Studies (XV,2), Sept. 84. Published by the American Buddhist, 301 West 45 St., NY, NY 10036, is The American Buddhist Directory. Prepublication price was \$15.00 plus \$1 handling, etc. ROBERT TAYLOR has published Marxism and Resistance in Burma: Thein Pe Myint's 'Wartime Traveler' (Athens: Ohio U. Press, 1984), and he has written a chapter on Burma in Civil-Military Relations in Southeast Asia (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford U. Press, 1985), ed. by H. Crouch and Z. Haji Ahmad. RICHARD COOLER's British Romantic Views of the First Anglo-Burmese War is available in limited supply from the Cellar Book Shop, 18090 Wyoming, Detroit, MI 48221. Well attended was the Burma panel at the Middle Atlantic States meeting at Princeton last fall. Discussing possible developments after NeWin were JOSEF SILVERSTEIN, DAVID STEINBERG, and MAUNG MAUNG GYI. The International Association for the History of Religions will hold its 80th Congress at Sydney, Australia, Aug. 18-23, 1985. Buddhism and Southeast Asian religions are topics of sessions. Papers are due by April 30 (IAHR Congress Secretariat, Religious Studies, U. of Sydney, NSW2006, Australia). AYE KYAW is teaching Burmese at Cornell U., as well as completing a book on Burmese and Thai family laws, a project sponsored by the Southeast Asian Studies Program, Singapore, and the Social Science Research Council, New York. SARAH BEKKER will be giving a lecture on Burma in NYC on May 1 at the Institute For Asian Studies (212-535-7496). SAO SAIMONG (4 Ye-t'wet-Oo Rd., Taunggyi, S.S.S.) is hoping to work on parabaik chronicles discovered while at Cambridge Univ. in 1981-2. WILLIAM JONES is working on the concept of documenting Burmese sculpture in U.S. museums. E. M. MENDELSON ("Mike the Nat") has moved to New Mexico, P.O. Box 566, Tesuque, NM 87574. MARGARET AUNG THWIN is on a trip to visit daughter MAUREEN in Hong Kong. MICHAEL of the same family will chair the pre-history session at the Oct. 25-27 Middle States meeting in Washington. MURIEL and ROBERT WILLIAMSON are putting finishing touches on their paper on Burmese harp tunings and modes and looking forward to working on tapes of Shwei-pyi U Ba Tin of Mandalay. JON WIANT joined DAVID STEINBERG and PAT BYRNE for a program on Burma last fall at Trinity College, Washington. Working with Jon on an Asia Survey article was HUGH MAC DOUGALL. Josef Silverstein, in response to a query regarding U Htin Maing, noted that the latter died sometime in the late 1970's.

New Members Since Bulletin #28:

Gordon A. Tubbs, USIA/P/REA, Rm.356, 301 4 St.SW, Washington, DC 20547.
Nina Kammerer, 30 High St., Florence, MA 01060.
W. V. Schendel, Dept.of Hist., Erasmus U., Box 1738 3000 Dr. Rotterdam, Nether's.
Patricia M. Hswe, Yale Station, Box 315, New Haven, CT 06520.
Charles Hallisey, 5107 S. Blackstone Ave., Apt. 1208, Chicago, IL 60615.
Mark Tatz, Phil.& Relig.Program, Cal.Inst.of Integral Studies, 3494 21 St. San
Sylvia Lu, American Embassy, APO San Francisco, CA 96346. (Francisco, CA 94110
Edwin W. Martin, 3025 Daniel Lane N.W., Washington, DC 20015.

Membership Report (3/6/85): Individuals in U.S. and Canada = 101. Individuals overseas = 14. Institutions in U.S. & Canada = 15. Institutions overseas = 8.
Balance on Hand: (3/6/85) \$843.72.

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