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BULLETIN OF THE BURMA
STUDIES GROUP

#45

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Association for Asian Studies
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The Burma Studies Group Colloquium of 1990

The Burma Studies Group convened for its bi-annual Colloquium on September 28, 1990, at the Center for Burma Studies at DeKalb, Illinois.

The following were present: Louis Alley, Anna Allott, Maureen Aung-Thwin, Michael Aung-Thwin, Euan Bagshawe, Sallie Bagshawe, Sarah Becker, Mary Cameron, Cao Thi Lieu, Carol Compton, Lin Comton, Paul Cooler, Richard Cooler, Thecla Cooler, Lee Dutton, Michael Egan, Don Erickson, Jeffrey Falt, Catherine Ferguson, John Ferguson, George Fisher, Jim Guyot, Hazel Johns, Mrs. William Jones, William Jones, Kris Lehman, John Little, Sylvia Lu, Eleanore MacDougall, Hugh MacDougall, Robert Maule, May Kyi Win, Min Sun Min, Ohn Mar Khin, Anne Parsons, Jay Parsons, Gaye Paterson-Lamb, Edith Piness, U Saw Tun, Herbert Spivack, Annie Spivack, David Steinberg, Than Than Win, Thant Myint U, U Thaung, Ed Thomas, Kirby Vining, Frederick Vreeland, Yusana Khin, Kit Young, Patricia Young, Yuan Tsing, and Catherine Zimmer. How many of these fine people do you know?

The Colloquium provided varied fare -- offering more than just the views of seasoned academics.

Euan Bagshawe told us of the near completion of his translation of U Tin's Myan-ma-min Ok-Chok-pon Sa-Dan. John Ferguson showed slides of illustrations, covers, and photographs of highlights of the P. Jerry Bennett library donated to the Foundation. Ed Thomas talked about his physical culture class in Burma and its goals of self esteem. Sylvia Lu showed slides of the wooden architecture of Burma in the colonial period and discussed some of the symbolism involved. Thant Myint-U discussed the refugee crisis from 1988 to 1990. Herb Spivack reminisced about Sir Paw Tun and his era (with a comment or two about his car). Bill Jones showed slides and discussed his extensive research on Burmese art in museums and private collections. Kit Young used a piano to capture and interpret the explosive and exciting dynamics of Burmese music. Anna Allott celebrated the Burmese literary rally and even showed part of one on video tape. U Thaung thoughtfully analyzed the army as an economic reach for power under various ideological guises. David Steinberg spoke about the growing economic power of South Korea in Southeast Asia. Sarah Bekker showed how the Kubyakgyi murals were being cleaned, with almost miraculous results. Mary Cameron discussed the tradition of Burmese education and its plight today. Thant Myint-U, Min Sun Min, and Yusana Khin gave a painful and very personal account of the student protests of 1988 and 1989, stressing the disbelief that Burmese soldiers would turn on their own unarmed people engaged in a peaceful demonstration. David Steinberg and Jim Guyot led a discussion after the presentation on the student protests.

Colloquium Cont.

Cao Thi Lieu reviewed the concept of slavery down to 1948. Hazel Johns recalled the energy and dedication of missionary William Hackett. U Saw Tun savored a few prophecies and considered the import of the prevalence of such forms of wisdom. Than Than Win explored the cultural linkages connected to the Burmese word for big sister, "Ma Ma." Hugh Mac Dougall savored the wit and anecdotal acuity of H.H. Munro ("Saki") in terms of the Burma connection. Bob Maule investigated the convolutions of the Kengtung Opium Scandal of 1935.

These noble efforts were delivered to the BSG in the white splendor of the new Burma Gallery in Altgeld Hall, in which were freshly installed choice art items from the Konrad and Sarah Bekker collection, some unusual paintings on historical and religious themes that have been loaned by William Wise, and two large, dramatic kalagas from Mr. and Mrs. Louis Cohen.

The Colloquium was the occasion for a number of welcome new donations. Sarah Bekker presented some illustrated manuscripts. Tricia Young donated a palmleaf manuscript. Louis E. Alley donated a bronze weight and a bronze pyin-sa-yu-pa.

Once again, the Burma Studies Group proved that the study of Burma lives, with participants coming from as far away as France (Cao Thi Lieu) and England (Anna Allott). From this continent, travelers from afar included Bob Maule (Canada), U Thaung (Florida), and Herb Spivack and Mary Cameron from California.

Thanks to Richard Cooler, Anne Zeller and staff, the graduate students, and NIU for hosting the Colloquium with such style and care.

(Secretary's Note:

The Saturday evening presentation on the student protests was the most moving moment your secretary has ever experienced in his years of association with the BSG. The issues transcend politics and deal with fundamental issues of human decency -- matters that must be addressed by all who care about Burma.)

Do You Know What It Means to See New Orleans?

The annual meeting of the Burma Studies Group will be held on Saturday, April 13, 1991, at 6:30 PM, in La Galene 4, the New Orleans Marriott. Please come and share with us news of your activities. We will have our traditional dinner on Friday evening at 6 PM at a place to be announced by the Emerald Queen (Maureen Aung-Thwin), who will issue her royal invitation at 5:45 PM at the Message Center in front of the letter "B."

New Orleans cont.

One matter that will need your involvement is the selection of a new Burma Studies Group Secretary. The time has come for fresh leadership. Your Secretary has enjoyed the opportunity to work with you so much that it is time to let someone else have a chance to sit under the tattered umbrella at the bazaar.

Foundation News

The annual meeting of the Burma Studies Foundation will be held on April 11, 1991, at The New Orleans Marriott, at 8 PM. If there are any matters you would like the Foundation to consider, please speak to any of the trustees.

The Foundation has published its brochure, thanks to the efforts of Maureen Aung-Thwin. The publication of the brochure was made possible by the meritorious donation of \$100 from each trustee. You will receive a copy soon, along with a letter from Kris Lehman. We will be happy to send additional copies to anyone you suggest. Important to the Foundation is introducing itself to new and old friends of Burma.

While the estate of P. Jerry Bennett has not been settled yet, his executor released the items selected by the Foundation's Secretary-Treasurer. Last October the remaining bibliographic items and art were packed and sent to the Center for Burma Studies, where they are being accessioned for the Foundation. The trustees of the Foundation will decide what will be done with each item in Jerry's generous bequest. The executor of Jerry's estate also released to the Foundation the sum of \$7,500 as an advance.

The costs to the Foundation (\$1156.08) of shipping the first part of the Bennett library to DeKalb last summer were generously reimbursed by the Southeast Asia Program at Northern Illinois University.

The Foundation is pleased to have received in 1990 two magnificent kalagas from Mr. and Mrs. Louis Cohen and 106 volumes of the Burma Legislative Council Proceedings from David Steinberg. Also in 1990 from Sarah Bekker has come the supporting research data from her classic anade study back in 1963, and Sarah also has donated five fine parabeiks on tatoo designs. Louis Alley has given a bronze weight and a bronze figure, pyin-sa-yu-pa. BaSaw Khin has sent a copy of his book on evangelist Thra Mooler Theh. Five maps and various bibliographic items have been given by Richard Cooler. Initiating the video collection are two tapes on physical culture in Burma by Ed Thomas.

Foundation News cont.

All the way from Lausanne, Switzerland, came another item from Jean Marc Rastorfer, La Vita Intima Di Un Pre. Quindici Anni Di Apostolato In Birmania Orientale. A copy of Dave Steinberg's Future of Burma was given by Michael Aung-Thwin. Through the kindness of John Badgley and the Echols collection at Cornell have come 165 issues of Mravati magazine and 47 items on Burma and other Southeast Asian subjects. Also sharing with us was Raymond Lum of the Harvard College Library, who sent along sixteen books on Burma. From U Pan Mya has come a carving of the Buddha, of wood, 5 and 1/4 " high.

To all these donors, many thanks.

News:

Not Out of Hate/ A Novel of Burma by Ma Ma Lay has been published by Ohio University Press, translated with loving care by Margaret Aung-Thwin and edited by William Frederick. This is a happy event in Burma Studies. What will the next one be? *** From Burma has come an announcement that a meditation center will open later this year at Mount Tant-Kyi on the western bank of the Irrawaddy opposite Pagan. The meditation master is the Venerable Baddata Somavuddhi (Information Bureau, No.29, 26B Road, Aungdawmu, Mandalay, Myanmar). *** In CORMOSEA Bulletin, a note of microfiches at the Oriental Collections of theses by Rangoon University students on many topics, including the lives and literary achievements of Burmese writers. Contact Patricia Herbert if interested. *** A new movie noted by Hugh MacDougall called "Lines of Fire," 62 minutes, 16mm and video, distributed by First Run/Icarus Films, 153 Waverly Pl., NY, NY 10014 (800-876-1710). The film is by Brian Beker and deals with the jungle war and with the student uprising of 1988. *** Mailed to your Secretary is a copy of "Report on the Myanmar Election" (5-27-90) prepared by the International Human Rights Law Group with the law firm of Patton, Boggs and Blow, Washington, DC, in 1990. *** Michael Aung Thwin will be speaking at a seminar on historiography at Arizona State U. on March 30. *** Containing a number of used books on Burma is the catalog of Tamarind Books, Box 49217, Greensboro, NC 27419. *** Notice has been sent by Hugh MacDougall of Lokanat / The Burma Contact Magazine, edited by Myo Chit Thu and Hpone Myint, 3a Chatto Road, London SW11 6LJ, the first issue due January, 1991. *** The Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) will offer Burmese this summer at Cornell, June 3 - August 9 (Contact John Wolff, 607-255-1906). Applications for tuition fellowships due 4-1-91. *** Cornelia Ann Kammerer sent a copy of her "customs and Christian conversion among Akha highlanders of Burma and Thailand," American Ethnologist 17(2):277-291, 1990.

NEWS cont.

*** From Kiscadale Publications, 23 Lauriston Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 9HH, Scotland, are notices of a number of books on Burma: Scots in Burma and Tales of Burma by Alister McCrae, The Caged Ones by Ludu U Hla, A Wonderland of Burmese Legends by Daw Khin Myo Chit, Burmese Lacquerware by Sylvia Fraser Lu, Outrage, Land of Jade, and Aung San Suu Kyi by Bertil Lintner, Irrawaddy Flotilla by Alister McCrae and Alan Prentice, Burman in the Back Row by Aye Saung, and Aung San and Burma and India by Aung San Suu Kyi. *** Edited by Mya Than & Joseph L.H. Tan is Myanmar Dilemmas and Options / The Challenge of Economic Transition in the 1990s, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990. *** Notices were received, through the kindness of U Thaung, of the last kathina ceremony and the Stupa Dedication Ceremony at the Taungpulu Kaba-Aye Monastery, 18335 Big Basin Way, Boulder Creek, CA 95006 (408-338-4050). *** In Southeast Asian Affairs 1990 (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) are "Myanmar Agriculture: What Happened to Asia's Rice Bowl?" by Mya Than and "The Burmese Way to Capitalism" by John Badgley. *** Offering Burmese books is Stephen Feldman, Asian Rare Books, 234 Fifth Ave., NYC, NY 10001 (718-259-3732).

Until we meet under the umbrella.

Your editors: John P. Ferguson & Hugh C. MacDougall