



# Burma Studies Group

## News #5

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F.K. Lehman, Chairman

Bloomington, Ind.

La Raw Maran, News Editor

November 5, 1975

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### Chairman's Report

As Chairman, I must begin by apologizing to the membership for the great delay in getting out this issue of the Newsletter. I plead the pressure of all sorts of distractions, practical and personal.

We met the afternoon of 24th March with very few members attending. My records show as present: myself, John Musgrave (University of Michigan), Dr. Richard Butwell (SUNY), Dr. Theodore Stern (University of Oregon), A. Thielmeyer, Mr. James J. Dalton, Dr. Konrad Bekker, Mrs. Sarah Bekker, Dr. and Mrs. Norman Nyunt Han, Sao Saimong Mangrai (currently at the University of Michigan and working on, among other things, Shan chronicles), Dr. A. Wilber Stevens (University of Nevada), Dr. Kyaw Win, Dr. Kenneth Sein. There may have been a couple of others, but they did not sign in. The addresses of the two new members, Dr. Stevens and Dr. and Mrs. Nyunt Han, will be found, with some other new ones, in the revised membership list included with this Newsletter.

At the March meeting several issues were discussed. First and foremost we took up the perennial issue of getting under way our proposed series of roving seminars or colloquia on Burmese studies. It is clear that if we are ever to be able to approach any agency or foundation for funding any such series of colloquia, we must, on our own, hold a first, pilot colloquium, and we should do it soon. So it was tentatively decided that a subcommittee be formed comprising Lehman, A.L. Becker of Michigan and Josef Silverstein of Rutgers, to plan for such an undertaking this academic year. It was then thought a good thing to try and hold it in the Autumn of 1975 (now, alas, nearly gone by) possibly to coincide with one of the performances of the Burma National Dance Troupe. However, owing to my own temporary incapacity and to the unclarity, until all too recently, of the schedule of the troupe, I was unable to see my way clear to getting on with these plans in time.

My current view, however, is this. We should hold it in the Spring of 1976 (the subcommittee will have soon to come up with a date) and I would hope to be able to hold it at Denison University in Ohio, if we can persuade them to accept the arrangement and a suitable date not too near to the March, 1976 meeting of the Association of Asian Studies at Toronto. There are good reasons for this suggestion. Of course, Denison has the big collection in this country of Burmese arts and related materials and we ought all to see it. But also, associated with that collection is a small but impressive staff of Burma research people, so that it is a university where work on Burma is well institutionalized. And we have already seen that the roving seminars must be held only at such places, on the grounds that money for them will be forthcoming, if at all, only for the purpose of furthering already existing programs on Burma at the institutions holding the sessions - not for the purpose of stimulating new programs and interest.

It was urged, at the meeting that this first seminar be devoted to an assessment of current work on Burma in four areas: history, linguistics, literature and religion; with an invited speaker and one discussant (at least) for each area--open discussion from the floor to follow. It should last two days, with each half day for a different such area topic.

I am herewith asking my fellow subcommittee members to help suggest speakers. Professor Becker should put up the literature person, Silverstein the history person (I think Michael Aung Thwin might be appropriate for discussant, since he is doing a thesis on early Burmese history at Michigan). Becker and Silverstein in tandem ought to come up with names for the speaker on studies of religion, while LaRaw Maran and I will come up with the linguist.

I once again suggest that the proposed program is broad but concise enough to give us a basis for knowing what directions might be fruitful for subsequent seminars; and that, if successful, it can well be presented as solid evidence of work already in progress when seeking funds for further seminars.

I have been advised recently by the SEARC office (Ms. Marta Nichols, Coordinator, Box 17, 5828 South University Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637--the new Chairman of the Southeast Asia Regional Council is Professor Paul Wheatley) that we have a few hundred dollars left in our account that can, if we wish, be used towards helping get this first seminar going. It is too little to do much with, but, if the subcommittee wishes and so decides, it can be used for organizing expenses and--perhaps--to help bring one or other of the proposed speakers if no other way is found to bring him or her.

The other matter that came up for discussion, brought to our attention by Konrad Bekker, of the Asia Society, was the fact that there exists a large body of manuscript materials constituting essentially a fourth volume to the already published three of Professor Gordon Luce's Old Burma, Early Pagan. This comprises important historical and allied material of largely a technical nature, as I understand it, that must not be lost sight of for Burma scholarship. It is in the care of Dr. Alexander Griswold and would, in current circumstances, be prohibitively expensive to publish in bound letterpress and would, in any case, take unconscionably long to get out in such form--considering also Professor Luce's great age. But it is confidently thought that it could be turned out in thoroughly usable offset form at an acceptable cost to scholars and institutions interested, and in fairly rapid order, provided a sufficient number of persons would indicate in advance their interest in obtaining a copy. It is therefore urged that all interested persons communicate their interest and enquiries to Dr. Konrad Bekker, The Asia Society, 112 E. 64th St., New York City, N.Y. He will be in touch with Dr. Griswold to try and arrange to have the volume brought out accordingly.

In a letter dated last Saint Patrick's Day, John Musgrave, of the University of Michigan, informed me that there has been no movement on the production of a master check list of Burmese holdings of published and ms. materials in the United States. In part, at least, this is owing to the fact that the people involved, for instance Musgrave himself and U Thein Swe of Northwestern University, have been otherwise more than fully occupied; in part also it is because there continues to be a controversy, involving the Library of Congress and CORMOSEA, concerning the standardization and appropriateness of LC's conventions on the romanization of Burmese (and also Thai, as it happens). In the mean while, however, over the past year or so, Cornell University's Wason Collection (Southeast Asia) has, in its more-or-less monthly accessions lists, been putting out an extensive listing of Burmese language titles of all sorts in its possession -- in, I would add, a romanization frequently impossible to decode. I believe that most libraries get this accessions list regularly and I, myself, have been excerpting the Burmese listings; so, one way or other, interested persons can obtain a copy.

Finally, I note that the Burma Association -- with which our Burma Studies Group is in no way connected, it is to be understood -- has published a membership directory (\$2 to non-members) that just might be of some use for scholars concerned with Burma. It can be got from The Burma Association, Inc., P.O. Box 2414, Anaheim, California 92804

#### The Burmese National Theatre Performance: A Review

St. Louis, Mo. Friday, October 24, 1975. Dancers and musicians of the Burmese National Theatre gave a performance at the Edison Theatre, International Centre, Washington University, St. Louis today. Those who were fortunate enough to get tickets were given a preview of a performance tradition which reaches back to the 9th Century, A.D. The novelty of the rhythm & dance movements was enhanced by the fact that this was the first such visit ever by a group of accomplished artistes from Burma. Thus, it was an air of high anticipation coupled with not knowing precisely what to expect which was to permeate the concert hall; it being the case that no more than 25 to 30 people in the audience had previously seen a Burmese dance performance.

The programme started at about 8:18 pm when the musicians entered under a sudden flare of stage spotlighting. While they were beginning to tune up the instruments the entire corp of dancers entered from the opposite entrance to the stage and lined up in centre stage, three women to the right and four men to the left. After offering kadaw to the audience, the dancers sat down by the side of front stage and at this point U Than Tun (small cymbal and clapper) and U Than Aung (big cymbal and big drum) began beating out a pattern of rhythm. Each dancer got up and gave a pattern of basic steps and moves used in Burmese dancing; some of these were bending exercises, intricate movements using the head, hands, feet and shoulders. Each pattern was an 8-count phrase separated by 2 to 4 count transitions. This information was clearly provided in the handsomely printed programme. The men's routine and the women's were the object of this demonstration. From the outset it was clear that the programme was intended both to inform the audience regarding the art of Burmese dancing, and to entertain. This was a wise move on the part of the director as it was the first function which reached the vast majority of the audience.

Following the demonstration of the basic movement and rhythm patterns of dancing the full orchestra broke out in the familiar theme beginning all such performances. Ah, but it sounds so good to hear this again after a decade! And the dance of the Nat Votress is on, and Daw Khin Than Htay in that gorgeous costume of a min:-thami: is alternately dancing and singing, interacting with the orchestra instead of with an open-air audience (as it would generally be in Burma). She calls out "Ko Gyi Kyaw ye.....", but it is U Than Tun in the orchestra who is to reply "Byou. byou. byou...." Many of us who ought to know about this thing are simply being numb about responding, having been away entirely too long. Ah well, back to the past tense of the reviewer. After this scene it was the familiar hnapa:-thwa:-aka. where the Prince returns from the University of Taxila. This is followed by U Soe Nyein's Zawgyi dance and then it was time for intermission, an hour having quickly passed. The moment the dancers and musicians vacated the stage a flood of people surged in to take a closer look at the musical instruments.

The second half of the show featured synoptic spotlights on a series of scenes from the Tales from the Ramayana; specifically, selections from these acts were included: Dasagiri and the Invitation to Parasurama, the Bow Contest, Rama and the Enchanted Deer, and Sitka's Rejection of Dasariri's Courtship. And the performance was over. The audience rose up to express its appreciation and the applause was long enough to require two entrances by the cast. And then it was time to see the instruments at close range and to mix with the musicians who must dismantle each, piece by piece, and pack them for the next day's trip to Ann Arbor, Mich.

I walked around the stage sampling audience response as well as asking questions to U Than Myint, the Director. "Was it been a good program? Was it informative and entertaining?" There was quite a mixture of people on the stage now, children and parents, old Burma hands, photographers, curious on-lookers, those with questions to ask, and apparent

Students of ethnomusicology and the anthropology of dance. Response to inquiries range from "This is so different from anything I've ever seen", "Just wonderful", "I wish it had gone on a little longer" to "Frankly, I didn't understand what was going on. Why was the orchestra making such noise during the singing of one of the dancers? Was one of them a little drunk?" At this point, I realised that I could not afford to simply gather a survey of audience response, that I must inject a note of explanation here and there. I soon gathered a small group of listeners myself.

From the standpoint of demonstrating what Burmese dance is like, the patterns of bodily movements, the rhythm and the cadence, the performance was a major success. Those who came with knowledge about dancing as an art form learned how Burmese dancing is conceived, institutionalised and expressed; those who came out of curiosity were largely in awe of the dancing which was radically different, of the gorgeously ornate and archaic features of costuming and the lovely and accomplished dancers with cherubic faces. It all seemed unreal to everyone, and yet, here they were, mixing among us. If the audience had been familiar with the epics from which scenes were enacted, the role of dancing as a vehicle of stylised storytelling might have been made eloquently. As it was, those who were familiar with the Jatakas realised that what they were getting were mere glimpses, and those who did not were unaware that the entire second half was designed to illustrate how dance forms serve a social and cultural function in Burmese life. And yet, St. Louis is not Burma, and the Jatakas are not the common epic stories read here; and here lies the inherent limit to the effectiveness of such performances. The education the audience came with did not naturally match the education the performers were there to impart. As such, all that could be expected under the circumstances, was the hope that many might become aware of dancing and music as art forms in Burmese life. In this task, the performers did an outstanding job and the appreciation generously given reflected the audience's full awareness of this. In other words, the occasion served not the function of intensive education in Burmese life, but the enhancing of the special context where a facet of America came face to face with a facet of Burmese life; the uniqueness of the performers and performance enhanced this very unique feeling which permeated throughout the programme.

And so, following the concert, we accompanied the Burmese artistes to a reception being planned for them across the street by U San Hla and Ken Rogers, both of Washington University. And there was *oun:nou*. *hkaukswe*: and two versions of apple cider to partake. It was a super reception and the food was really quite good. And gathered here were the entire Burmese community within driving distance from St. Louis; from Peoria, Macomb, Springfield and Chicago, Illinois, they came. Plus myself from Bloomington, Ind. and the contingent from the St. Louis area, making the reception a gathering of about 70-75 people. Things happened fast in this sort of situation; there was that thirst for news from "home" long denied a satisfactory quench, and there was that agitation in the chemistry of the blood brought about by being in the company of those who had made it possible to feel the vibrance of Burmese life again for an evening. And these combined to generate a sense of nostalgia, a feeling of wanting to reach out and just talk on and on with the performers. The latter were themselves fully prepared to respond in kind and the general air which engulfed everyone was one of close affinity and sharing. The performers were ill-equipped for the unpredictable Midwestern weather about this time of the year. And of course, they wanted to take back little mementos and other things home. But there was hardly the funds to do this. However, each performer had been allowed to bring out certain artefacts for such purposes and many of us literally emptied our purses helping them to remember us and the U.S., and in helping us to remember the old country. Quite seriously, some of us ended up staying until three in the morning trying to offer help within the context of certain presumed transactions - *sei:po:leik*, ladies dresses, for instance. This entire sojourn might appear trivial and unnecessary to many outside observers. But, for those who were there, there was nothing that was absurd or superfluous. It was a moment which offered things that we were simply not

prepared to deny ourselves of. If these chattering and exchanging of gifts and funds did appear somewhat out of line to some, so be it. Our performers clearly needed it and so did we and this mutual coming together of needs must be considered the human, and therefore, the final justification.

It was quite apparent that the rugged schedule had taken its toll in some ways. The enchanted deer was danced by Daw Nu Nu Khin and she seemed poised, accomplished and nothing seemed amiss. However, from the bleacher section it was obvious to me that between entrances to the stage she doubled up in pathetic fits of cough. The musicians and the dancers must each disassemble the instruments and costumes after each performance and pack them carefully. On days when there was a performance and three demonstration sessions in four different places, life must be rough, frustrating and severely tiresome. The discipline which has sustained them from day to day in this kind of situation seems incredible indeed. And when we started to talk about the rigors of this schedule, they seemed to feel that while it was inconvenient it could not be helped, and that they were not going to fuss about it. Somehow, one appreciates their efforts much better after a glimpse of this sort.

And so a rare and wonderful evening ended early the next morning. And yet, this review of the whole affair cannot end without a note or two of appreciation about the organisers who made it all possible. Let me briefly recount this side of the story.

This unprecedented visit of the members of the Burmese National Theatre came about through a contractual agreement between the Burmese Government and the Performing Arts Program of the Asia Society, New York, the contracting party in the U.S. Actual performances were arranged through further contracts between local groups and the U.S. contractors. In the case of the performance at St. Louis, the leading role of local contracting was done by the Asian Art Society of St. Louis. The performance was arranged at the Edison Theatre of the International Centre, Washington University where Ken Rogers is director. And thus, the circle narrowed down to the shoulders of a former U.S.I.A. man in Burma. He and U San Hla, also of Washington University, were to "host" the event. By any yardstick, the event was a major success. About 1,000 people attended the performance. I would have missed it due to the tickets being sold out before I moved to acquire a few, except that the Burmese troupe generously consented to the addition of a bleacher section. Now this made the audience section a horse-shoe literally fitting the stage inside its curve. This apparently caused certain inconvenience in entering the stage and exiting from it. However, it provided another 200 or so seats. Of course, every seat in the theatre was taken. That the event was warmly and appreciatively received by the community will be seen in two reviews reproduced in this News. I would like to thank Ken Rogers for helping me to obtain them and also for providing the necessary information about the organisation of this event. To him and his associates at St. Louis many of us owe a profound debt of gratitude for arrangement of this performance by the Burmese National Theatre.

La Raw Maran

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# Dancers deserve ovation

The dancers and musicians of the Burmese National Theater deserved the enthusiastic standing ovation of the audience in Edison Saturday night. Because this is the first time any performing art has come to the U.S. from Burma and because of its distinct independence from other dance forms, the Burmese National Theater initially seemed foreign and strange. The technically difficult exercises exhibiting the fundamental movements and steps upon which the other dances are based were done clearly and expertly to begin the program. They were interesting, as was the Dance of the Nat Votaress performed next, but difficult to fully enjoy because of the lack of understanding most Americans had of the symbolic meaning behind each position of the hands, feet and various dramatic gestures.

Although the dancing and sing-

ing was disturbing. However, part of the beauty of the dancer's movements is contained in this restrictiveness and the way she deals with the limits of her imprisonment. As much of the modern dance in the U.S. reveals a freedom of movement and lack of inhibition in this country, the Burmese dances were a clue to the traditions and culture of Burma. Their movements were confined to the head, hands and feet. The torso was not used except in *Tales From the Ramayana*, in the exquisite dancing of the enchanted deer. The dancing included a lot of human gestures that told us stories of love, sorcery, justice, human weakness and temptation.

The Zwagyi Dance was the most choreographically inventive dance in the performance. In a

glittering red costume, U Soe Nyeim soared into the air, danced on the floor and moved across the stage using the different dimensions of space. Perhaps this is the most liberated and lively dance because it is a portrayal of a sorcerer, being more than human, having the powers to fly in the sky and pass through the earth.

Because the fairytale, *The Tales from the Ramayana*, is known universally, American audiences can participate in its magic. One realizes that in Burmese dance, the elaborate cos-

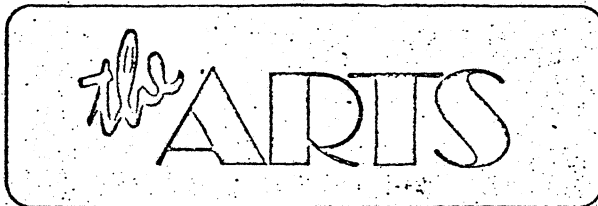
tumes are as important as the dancing. The tale is centered around a bow contest that will decide who will win the hand of the beautiful Sita in marriage. The evil Dasagiri has by an unfortunate coincidence received an invitation to the contest, where by he competes against the good Rama and Lakhana. Rama wins, and goes off with Sita, but Dasagiri deviously sends a mischievous deer to lure Rama away while he goes to seduce Sita. The highlight of the evening was the playful dancing of the deer. The deer easily leaped about, occasionally twitching her shoulders and tilting her golden head so skillfully as to make the audience adore her.

I hope that other American audiences the National Burmese Theater come in contact with on their tour welcome them with such open arms and minds as the audience at Washington University. This company has much to charm and please American audiences, but also reveal to the U.S. the uniqueness of a beautiful art form preserved and restored from an ancient past. The dances tell us of the unique individuality of Burmese culture and society.

As the poet, Po-Chu-i wrote: "At one blow from the copper gong, / Their painted limbs leapt, / Pearl streams glitter as they twist, / As though stars are shaken from the sky..."

The Burmese National Theater dancers create a brilliantly colorful and graceful image on stage. They have come to dazzle the eyes of Americans and succeed in revitalizing an interest in and a deep respect for the performing arts from other countries and cultures.

— Jody Nagel



ing of the Nat Votaress was hard to understand, the dancer's repetitive movements to the vibrant rhythms of the Burmese Orchestra were fascinating. One becomes aware of the dancer's incredible strength when she crouches down and springs up supporting her body, as well as shooting out her delicate feet, and using her graceful hands like waves to form stylized patterns. Meanwhile, the dancer was continuously smiling expressing the joy of her dancing and as an enchantress, appealing to the nats (spirits) to come down. She offers them gifts of rice, coconuts, and bananas so that they will ensure a good performance.

The female dancers are reflected by a white train that hangs from the back of their costumes. At first, the restrictiveness and awkwardness of the ill-fitting skirts and white tail

glittering red costume, U Soe Nyeim soared into the air, danced on the floor and moved across the stage using the different dimensions of space. Perhaps this is the most liberated and lively dance because it is a portrayal of a sorcerer, being more than human, having the powers to fly in the sky and pass through the earth.

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St. Louis POST-DISPATCH, Sat., October 25, 1975

## Burmese Dancers At Edison

By FRANK PETERS

Post-Dispatch Music Editor  
The first Burmese dance-theater group to tour the United States appeared last night in Edison Theater at Washington University. Its movement vocabulary proved to be rich, eloquent and subtle; the music, from an on-stage gamelan, was equally engrossing in its variety; the decor was beautiful, and the total theatrical experience quite entertaining.

It is in short, a significant and even an important introduction to American dance audiences. The Burmese performers do story-telling dances but they achieve their theatrical effects through abstract movement, with infrequent recourse to mime and acrobatics. And their movements outside any dramatic context are, as they showed in an opening demonstration, of a classical self-sufficiency.

The dancers moved on flexed knees and almost never left the floor. Raised feet were presented with the toes high and contacted the floor with the heel — the opposite of the Western pointe style, yet the dancers used a full foot turnout like that of European ballet. Waists and knees could bend deeply.

There was little turning and leaping. A right-left alternation — foot out on one side, arm up on the other — was a frequent pattern, with the limbs seldom mirroring each other in pairs. This pattern gave the dances a characteristic rhythmic flow. The dancers were always in equilibrium but never posed or statically planted.

Head carriage was easy, without Indonesian rigidity and abruptness, yet there was a catlike tension or spring running through the bodies

that kept sinuousness and languor out of the picture.

The hands moved supply but in planes, with a well-defined line to the curves. It was a marvelously alert, disciplined and expressive dance style, too rich in detail for absorption in a single viewing; it is too bad this company could not stay longer, for the theater was sold out.

A short notice of this kind cannot take adequate account of the gamelan, which drew an ovation with its brilliant musical postlude; of the voices, particularly that of the solo woman dancer in her invocation; of the masks and costumes, nor of the cheerful, humane quality that animated the whole performance. The Burmese and their National Theater, from which this company was taken for the tour, are something very special.

From the editor's desk

"Work expands to fill the time available for its completion," says the law Parkinson gave us. Recently, I've been discovering the truth of this law, that it provides us no insight whatsoever into the mitotic aspects of the expansion of work in order to kill the time one assumes is there for its completion. For instance, I was not aware of the fact that Murphy's law ("If anything can go wrong, it will"), provides the anaphase in the process by which work expands, and that this happens without exception.

I have been on leave from Indiana University since the end of May this year. I began this period with a smirk on my face; for once, I was going to do only those things that I wanted to do for personal enjoyment, that I was going to do only a few things. No need to teach Burmese syntax, neurolinguistics and psycholinguistics for a whole year. Ha! Was I wrong, I have not even finished cataloguing the things which meet my criteria. Whether I exuded enthusiasm and vigour or boredom and indifference, the chosen few things to do expanded with frightful efficiency.

Work has expanded and become complex. Time has shrunk to the point of making me aghast. I think my obvious recourse lies in a premature retirement from the pursuit of the enticements of a year's leave of absence.

This is, of course, easily construed as a grumbler's excuse for being late with this issue of the News. Put me down as one more victim of the Parkinson-Murphy conspiracy. My sincere apologies to all readers of the News. And with that I say, "On with the news."

Dancers from Burma are here.

Dancers and musicians of the Burmese National Theatre are currently on tour in the U.S. This is the first such visit ever and we are giving a list of locations and dates of the remaining performances after this weekend. The tour is under the auspices of the Performing Arts Program of the Asia Society, Mrs. Beate Gordon, Director, 505 Park Ave., New York City, 10022. This unprecedented tour is also the subject of a cover story in the October, 1975, issue of the SMITHSONIAN, with photographs and text by Shelley and Carl Mydans. Here is the itinerary: Oct. 26, University of Michigan; Oct. 27-30, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Oct. 31-Nov. 4, University of Pittsburgh; Nov. 5, University of California, Santa Cruz; Nov. 7, University of California, Santa Barbara; Nov. 9, UCLA; Nov. 10, Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, Calif.; Nov. 11-17, University of Hawaii, Honolulu.

I sincerely hope that you can fit your schedule into one of these performances.

Newsmen from Burma in U.S.

Under the sponsorship of the State Department, 19 foreign journalists came to Bloomington, Ind. to participate in a special programme of the School of Journalism, Indiana University. Among these visitors were two from Burma, U Tin Mya and U Hla Tun. Two local papers carried stories written by them and for your information, I have obtained permission to reproduce these stories. I am sure that you will appreciate the story on the earthquake which struck the ancient relics of Pagan. U Hla Tun is chief editor of New Agency Burma (internal), Rangoon; and U Tin Mya is editor of the Working People's Daily, Rangoon. Arriving in the U.S. on August 17 at Washington, D.C. the visiting journalists commenced their programme at Bloomington on August 23. After a month of orientations on U.S. press history, comparative journalism and American culture, each visitor will be assigned a particular tour of duty ranging over the entire U.S. The group will reconvene at Bloomington prior to departure for home countries by the 15th of November.

Ford Foundation Fellow from Burma

Mr. Jose Abueva of the Ford Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand informed us in a recent letter that Miss Sally Tun Thein is attending the University of Michigan under the Ford Southeast Asia Fellowship Program. She is working towards a masters degree with "museum orientation." It is perhaps relevant to remark here that she is the only Burmese participating in the Ford programme.

### NDPL Fellow in Burmese at Hawaii

Prof. D. Haigh Roop of the Dept. of Indo-Pacific Languages, University of Hawaii, has under his tutelage a student who may be the first and only such student in the country. He is the recipient of a National Defence Language fellowship for Burmese. The student is Gregg J. Kinkley of Champaign, Ill. who took his B.A. (Honors) in linguistics at Indiana University last May. He worked on Burmese syntax with me for some time. So Congratulations to Hawaii and to the master and disciple alike. Mr. Kinkley expects to follow a programme of studies featuring Sino-Tibetan linguistics, with primary focus on Burmese.

### A sad note

Prof. Jane Terry Bailey of Denison University informed us in her publication, the BURMESE ART NEWSLETTER, of the passing of Mrs. Zelma Graham and Miss Helen K. Hunt. Mrs. Graham, many of us will recall, was the very spirit of the USIS in Rangoon during the 50's and 60's. Miss Hunt, I am told, was principal of the Colgate Memorial High School in Maymyo for many years. Friends of Burma will receive this news with a special sense of loss.

### Kachin Dictionary finished

My primary preoccupation for the last 5 years, the Kachin-English dictionary, is now finished. It contains about 18,000 entries with appendices on kinship, grammar, weights and measures and cosmology. Although certain technical points relating to format of printing remain to be settled, it seems certain that the dictionary will be published. The U.S. Government is seeing to that.

### News about the News.

We have been receiving a steady stream of requests for the Burma Study Group News. Two years ago, this newsletter began under most modest circumstances with about 40 names in the roster. I even footed the bill for the entire production then - hence the modest trappings. Now, an updated mailing list consists of about 100 names and requests have even come from Japan. Through certain members on the diplomatic staff at the U.S. Embassy, Rangoon, we even reach Burma. The change in cosmetics of this issue of the News is part of the reorganisation we are trying to affect in order that delays may be avoided, and that readable quality may be obtained. The process of dittoeing is no longer feasible with this kind of readership. The price we must pay includes poring over the smaller print of Xerox reproduced copies. In the very near future we hope to be able to use a standard letter-head with Burmese motif. Meanwhile, we also hope that you enjoy the result of these little stirrings behind the News desk. Normally, the editor of the News, working with the Chairman of the Burma Studies Group, Prof. F.K. Lehman, gathers together material for an issue of the news and types this on ditto masters. These masters are then sent to SEARC office when copies are run off, collated and addressed for mailing. Since SEARC office has always been understaffed, the procedure entails inevitable delay. The whole process has been quite cumbersome that way. Now, we will change things a bit by having the News editor do everything as regards production and SEARC will refund the legitimate expenses. This issue is the first trial given this new idea.

### Papers, letters, etc.

Among the various items of mail addressed to the News are two interesting papers; one, entitled "Some forgotten scholarship on Burma: a bibliographical note" by Prof. Oliver B. Pollak of the Department of History, University of Nebraska at Omaha; and two, a paper on "Education and Nation Building in the Union of Burma" by Dr. Robert C. Harcherek of the Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh. If you are interested in obtaining copies of these papers you may write to Prof. Pollak at his Department at the University of Nebraska, P.O. Box 688, Omaha, Neb. 68101, and you can reach Mr. Harcherek at 5639 Hampton Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa., 53706. We received many requests for back issues of the news; please address these requests to SEARC office. (see next item)



#### SEARC Office moved.

In case you have not noted it, the SEARC Office has moved from Lane Hall, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, to Chicago at Box 17, 5828 South University Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637. Ms. Marta Nicholas has replaced Myrna Adkins who resigned. Prof. Paul Wheatley, who replaced Pete Becker as Chairman of the Southeast Asia Regional Council is at the University of Chicago. Both he and Ms. Nicholas can be reached at (312) 324-1099.

While at it I might as well go on and give you the addresses of the Burma Studies Group people. Prof. F.K. Lehman, Chairman of the Group is at the Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill. 61801; his office telephone number is (217) 333-0801. The Burma Studies Group News is edited and publication arrangements made by me at 718 East University St., Bloomington, Ind. 47401. Burma Studies Group affairs, suggestions as regards activities, meetings, etc. should be sent to Prof. Lehman. Material intended for the News should be sent to me. My telephone number is (812) 336-1983.

#### Kachin appointed Burmese Ambassador

Duwa La Wom, formerly M.P. from Bhamo, then a member of the Kachin State Revolutionary Council, has been appointed Burmese Ambassador to Israel. By way of information, Mr. La Wom is my mother's brother. He is the second Kachin to have received the honour of this appointment. During the middle 60's, Sama Duwa Sinwa Nawng was Burmese Ambassador to the Peoples' Republic of China.

#### A Baby girl for Carl and Ching Wen Taylor

Carl and Ching Wen Taylor announced the arrival on May 30, 1975 of May Tran Taylor. May Tran was born on February 17, 1975 in Saigon. Carl spent four years in Burma and was the American Consul in Mandalay from 1970 to 1972. Returning back to the U.S. in 1974, Carl is currently Congressional Fellow on Capitol Hill. However, the blame is on me for the lateness of news items such as this and others.

#### Come to Toronto

The 1976 Annual Meeting of the AAS will be held at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Canada from March 19-21. I should think that a nice Burma Studies Group meeting is in order. A dinner meeting or a lunch meeting, how's that? I recall the Boston meeting two years ago as being an extremely pleasant one. So come to Toronto.

#### Burmese students have started to come again.

In the fall of 1962, a group of six scholarship students were sent from Burma to the U.S. for studies. Since then there has been neither influx nor trickle of students from Burma. Recently, there are signs that a few students at a time are again being sent now. I mentioned earlier that Sally Tun Thein is attending the University of Michigan. In addition, there is U Pe Maung Thein who is studying soy beans at the University of Illinois. I met one at M.I.T. not long ago. I don't remember who but somebody told me that the University of California also has one student. What with the newsmen and dancers and musicians, it is practically a flurry now, compared to what things have been like for almost a decade since 1962. One wishes to hope that these are signs heralding a new and welcome decade, maybe?

#### Clearing House

We at the News (Kris Lehman and myself) would be quite willing to serve as a sort of clearing house for Burma studies related news, questions, calls for help, etc. If there is anything that readers wish to be brought up such as availability of papers, questions relating to published material and where these might be located, necessary data for your work, etc., this could be included in the News in order that those in a position to provide answers might oblige accordingly. We would also like to know what Burma-related activities you are doing these days. So please keep in touch

Plant your own pe:daun.shei

Do you know that yard-long beans (pe:daun.shei) grows quite readily and productively, even in the limestone soil around here in Bloomington? Some of you may feel that a diet of Burmese food is preferable to a steady offering of hotdogs and hamburgers. The problem in such undertaking lies likely in the availability of foodstuff to make plausible Burmese food. We can be grateful that most chain groceries now carry fresh ginger, and with luck you can even get fresh coriander leaves, chili pepper, bean sprouts, etc. Well, one still can't get yard-long beans, Indian mustard, vegetable gourds, bitter gourd and winter melon unless one lives close enough to a city with a Chinatown. For me, Chicago with its Chinatown means five or more hours of driving. So I've learned to grow many of these right in my backyard. The easiest to grow are the mustard and the long beans. Start early, soon after any danger of frost is past. Don't choke the plants with water. The long beans just product faithfully all summer long, clear into October. The Indian mustard does even better - you can get this from late April to late November. Pick leaves rather than pull plants. They'll just keep growing. North American pests have yet to develop a liking for these, and good eating to you.

And so, with a note about Burmese food, we conclude this issue of the News. It is likely that there will be another issue before March, 1976. However, this still does not mean that I'll see most of you in person until Toronto.

La Raw Maran  
Burma Studies Group News

# Historic castles shake, tumble

By MaungTin Mya  
Rangoon, Burma

Two strong earthquakes rocked Burma and some areas in the Gulf of California on July 8, 1975. The quakes were reportedly caused by the eruption of a Hawaiian volcano which had been dormant for the last 25 years.

Though no serious damage was reported in the Gulf of California area; the earthquake, which registered 8 on the Modified Mercalli Scale, virtually demolished the highly-treasured collection of ancient architectural pieces in Burma. Two waves of tremors rippled through Pagan in the central Burma, reducing hundreds of ancient monuments to rubble and defacing many more with ugly cracks. The most fortunate buildings escaped with only their spires toppled.

The earliest kingdom of Pagan was founded in the 9th Century A.D., according to British historian Gordon Luce. It attained its height under King Anawrahta (1014 to 1077 A.D.), who built irrigation networks in the Central Dry Zone, introduced Buddhism to the people and presided over foreign trade with China, Ceylon, India and Indochina.

Pagan was a power to reckon with in Southeast Asia from mid-11th Century to the end of the 13th Century A.D. The kings, their ministers and common people built

pagodas, monasteries, temples and numerous religious monuments of all descriptions to give expression to their new-found religious faith. Popular tradition has it that even widows built pagodas in the golden days of Pagan.

The ancient monuments of Pagan standing on 16 square miles on the east bank of the Irrawaddy in the central Burma have been a major tourist attraction comparable to the famous Angkor Watt of Cambodia. The sweeping devastation at Pagan of an ancient citadel of exquisite cultural relics was a national tragedy little noticed by most of the outside world.

The following are some eyewitness accounts of the tragedy.

On the evening of Tuesday, July 8, J. Bone, an English-born archaeologist who lives in Pagan most of the year, was returning from a local soccer match. He was cycling past the Gawdawpalm, a 180-foot-high temple built at the turn of the 13th Century. The temple was a short distance from the Thiripyitsaya Hotel, which caters to foreign tourists.

First, Bone heard a loud roar like the sound of breakers rushing up the beach. Then his bicycle wobbled as the earth rose and fell like the waves in the water. By the side of the road an old Burmese woman, crouching low on the ground, beat the earth with her palms and screamed repeatedly,



The day before July 8, 1975, the 14-foot bulbous stupa (a memorial shrine) King Thaungthugyi of Pagan (10th century A.D.) stood regally in its place, untouched by nature.

"Be quiet, be quiet, O Great Earth!"

Bone watched as, one by one, the great temples and pagodas burst open in a series of explosions, and their stucco exteriors poured down their sides like water. It took about 10 minutes for the reddish clouds of brick and dust to clear.

Foreign tourists, who had just returned from a tour of the temples, were relaxing noisily in the lobby of the Thiripyitsaya Hotel. Many were waiting for their turn in the shower rooms.

Dr. Thomas Yugas, an American professor, was returning from a two-year teaching assignment in Taipei, accompanied by his wife and two young female post-graduate students. They had stopped in Burma for a visit to Pagan. The professor poured himself a glass of scotch and took it into the shower.

A young West German named Wurlidzer, was toying with his Super-8 movie camera. He still had about half the reel unexposed. The group was returning to Rangoon the next morning -- he might as well finish off the reel, he thought, and strode out of the hotel, with the movie camera slung over his shoulder.

The earthquake hit Pagan at 6:38 p.m. The cottage-sized Thiripyitsaya rocked like a small boat tossed about by big waves. The walls shook violently, tossing liquor bottles off the bar and stockery about the kitchen.

The breaking glass and the unnerving made a terrifying cacaphony.

Everyone in the lounge ran out street. Bathroom doors banged as their occupants rushed out, hastily with towels around their waists.

As they excitedly exchanged about the quake, women tourists, another wave of horrified shrieks.

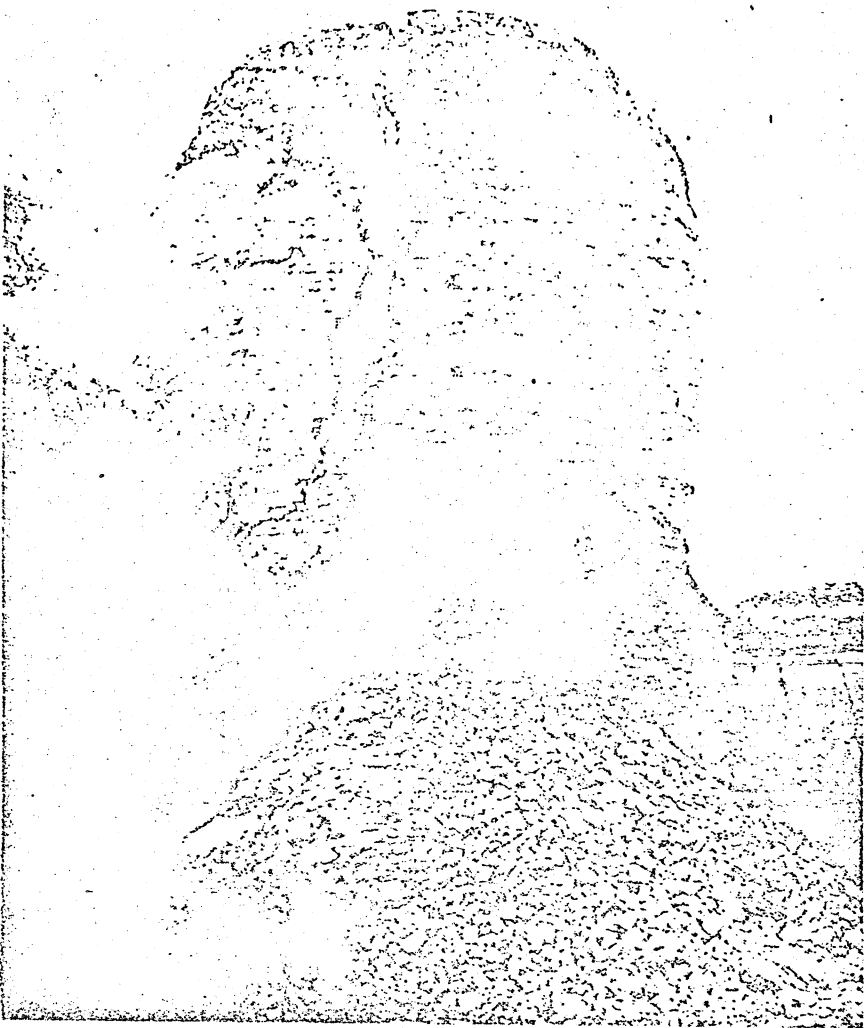
Dr. Yugas came out with his glass in hand and an uncomfortable smile on his face -- the smile being the only he was wearing.

"You see," he explained later extremely terrified by the quake. "I choice between the towel and glass, might be my last drink, I though decided on the latter."

Just then Wurlidzer came in back jauntily, singing a martial tune top of his lungs. He took Mrs. Th elderly tour leader of his group, by and whirled her round in a waltz step.

With a look of triumph he puzzled fellow tourists the following He said he was shooting film 11th Century Manuha Temple at My It was built by the captive King Ma Thalon; the capital of Mon Kingdom south of Burma, and what is now Mo in modern Burma.

The temple had an upper terrace central stupa, a memorial



But a single, short blast rocked the structure, splitting it down the center just seconds after the July 8 quake struck.

# Quake startles Pagan tourists

surrounded by small stupas on the edges of the terrace. The lower terrace contains a giant central image of seated Buddha.

Suddenly Wurlidzer wobbled and stumbled forward. There was a loud roar and the earth rose and fell under his feet. He saw the small stupas on the upper terrace of Manuha toppling over one by one. It was an earthquake!

Wurlidzer told the other tourists that he aimed the camera at the temple and pulled the lever. The ancient structure appeared at first whole in his viewfinder. His camera whirred steadily as the small stupas began to fall. Keeping his finger firmly on the lever, and trying to steady himself, he watched in the viewfinder as the entire structure of the upper terrace began to crumble and sink. In one explosion it dropped and disappeared into the fault below, sending up red dust for a while. The lower terrace was now filled entirely with brickbat. The giant Buddha had been buried from view.

Mrs. Tichy listened with interest and then ran to her room for her own camera and snapped away at the newly-damaged edifices around Thiripiytsaya.

Her pictures were published by the Rangoon newspapers the next day.

"I felt as if I was back in Vietnam, right at the center of the bombardment," recalled Mrs. Tichy, a veteran of tourist spots in the region. "It was such a shattering experience. I don't want to go through it again in my life," said one of the young women

accompanying Dr. Yuhas.

The damage to Pagan was staggering. An obscure Burmese history book records that the last damage to Pagan temples was done by Genghis Khan's armies at the turn of the 13th Century. Since then they had been standing more or less in the same condition, with only minor repairs.

Byyaya Pagoda (the name was derived from its gourd-like shape), an 11th Century piece standing on the brink of the wall of the Irrawaddy at the approach to Pagan, toppled into the river leaving only loose bricks and mortar at the spot which had been its foundation.

The Ananda Temple, regarded as the most elegant architectural showpiece of Pagan, built by King Kyanzittha in 1091 A.D. and one of the few which remained in its original condition, lost its stupa spire, and some statues in the interior lost their limbs.

The Nga-kywe-nadaung Pagoda, a massive cylindrical structure about 43 feet high, not counting its upper portion, was split in two by a gaping crack wide enough to see through. Tradition attributes it to King Taungthugyi of the 10th Century A.D.

The Mimalaung Kyaung Temple, built on an elevated base by King Narapatisithu in the 11th Century, folded like a house of cards.

The glowing white Gawlawpala 180 feet above ground level, lost its spire and corner stupas on the terraces. It now looks

like a man without a head: where once the soaring spire stood there remained only bloody stump with broad streaks of red tears streaming down the body.

The Thatbyinnyu Temple, the highest temple in Pagan at 201 feet above ground level, is now defaced by huge cracks in its massive walls wide enough for two men to walk through side by side.

The famous Shwizigon Pagoda, which was started by Anawrahta and completed by his successor Ryansittha in the second half of the 11th Century, had its spire tilted.

Its bell-shaped body is covered with veins of thin cracks.

Hundreds of square feet of exquisite frescoes peeled from the walls of Lewka Hteikpau and Ananda Temples as Upaki ordination hall.

Elderly residents of Pagan could not remember an earthquake of comparable intensity during their lifetimes - nor had they heard anything of the like from their ancestors. The quake also caused extensive damage to many ancient pagodas in various other central Burma towns.

However, it did no damage to the residential buildings and no serious casualties were reported.

The loss of Pagan, nevertheless, was too much for the residents of the little Thiripiytsaya village to the south. Some persons there went out of their minds.

KolPon Cho, 30, who went to see the

damaged Lawkananda Temple outside the village after the quake, lapsed into a fit of hysteria. "Look, fires . . . beautiful fires. Beautiful girls . . . have never seen them before. Oh, help me, help me. Have mercy. . ." Others described similar visions.

The sweeping devastation of ancient cultural monuments in Pagan was a staggering loss to the nation. It was also a loss to those all over the world who love the mute testimony of ancient civilizations. Pagan has been a major tourist attraction in Southeast Asia - comparable to the famed Angkor Wall of Cambodia.

It was a hard blow, especially at a time when the country is grappling with economic difficulties. Restoration of the monuments to the pre-quake condition is out of the question due to the enormous sums of money that would be needed. There are hundreds of monuments affected - to restore a single monument would require perhaps millions of dollars.

The government has rightly decided to concentrate on conservation committees appointed for the purpose are already working out steps to preserve the monuments as they are. Voluntary donations are pouring in.

To all appearances, the nation is determined to meet the challenge, within its capabilities. The people are determined to give Pagan another lease on life.

# Maung Tin Mya

## Rangoon, Burma

By MAUNG TIN MYA

Rangoon, Burma

Rangoon, the capital of Burma, was once a cosmopolitan city composed of at least five major communities with different linguistic and cultural peculiarities existing peacefully side by side. Each community had its own newspaper(s), places of worship, restaurants and schools — and all had their own cemeteries.

The largest and most visible ethnic group — besides the Burmese, of course — were the Chinese. They were concentrated in one part of West Rangoon which was known as Chinatown. As in all other Chinatowns of the Western World, the Chinese entrepreneurs ran restaurants, shops, stores and vice dens.

THERE WERE half a dozen Chinese newspapers, half belonging to the Red China groups and the other half to the Nationalist groups. The Chinese had their own schools and dozens of Joss Houses.

The next most visible group was the Indians, which contained the most diversity, economically as well as ethnically. Most Indians were brought to Burma for cheap labor at the turn of the 20th Century by the British, who wanted to colonize the unexploited, fertile lands in the Irrawaddy delta. In the following decades, these Indians were joined by money lenders and businessmen.

The area around Sule Pagoda in downtown Rangoon thus became predominantly Indian (and Pakistani after the separation of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan). There were Tamilian dailies and Tamilian movie houses. The Tamilians had their own red-and-white striped temples all over the city while the Muslims among the Indians (later to become the Pakistanis) had their own mosques. Most Indians other than Tamilians spoke Hindi or Urdu. Mogul Street was known for the Indian

eating places which offered hot, spicy Oriental food.

THEN CAME the Europeans, mostly English, who were not as conspicuous. They hid behind their office cubicles or in the segregated clubs. They had Christian churches of different denominations all over Rangoon and one exclusive yachting club.

It is true that many European and American cities also have these communities living side by side. Some cities in America even have a greater diversity of nationalities. None, however, can boast of as many different religious structures as can Rangoon. Temples, Chinese Joss Houses and Burmese Buddhist Pagodas are scattered throughout Rangoon. There are still 20 or more Tamilian temples, twice as many mosques, no less churches and about three scores of Chinese Joss Houses. What is more, each community has one or more cemeteries exclusively for its own departing members.



THE REVOLUTIONARY government which came to power in 1962 nationalized private big businesses in 1964 and imposed restrictions on foreigners in the country. Since then hundreds of thousands of foreigners have left Burma for good. But they left behind the proof that they had once lived in peace and harmony with other communities in Rangoon — the place where they discovered harmony in diversity.

# Christoph Schoenicke

## Frankfurt, Germany

By CHRISTOPH SCHOENICKE  
Frankfurt, Germany

I do not come to praise the United States, but neither do I want to condemn her. I want to try to find a clue to a phenomenon which might have a rather strong influence on world policy. I am speaking about anti-Americanism.

In some countries, American embassies and consulates are attacked and sometimes even seized. In outrageous demonstrations the United States is held responsible for all the evils of the world. American Presidents and politicians can sometimes only travel to allied

weakness which they have never overcome.

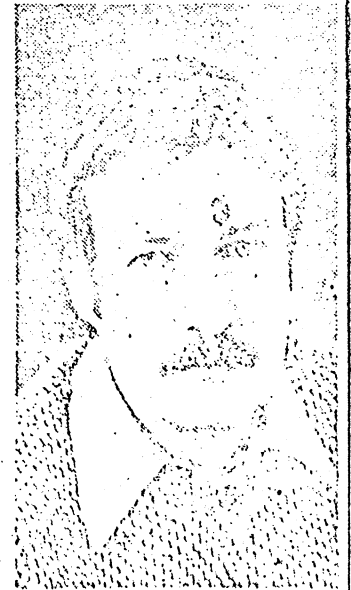
The new power on the world stage has gained considerable influence in a rather short time. The United States came forward with self-confidence, based on its economic strength — and sometimes neglected the rules of diplomacy. More and more the U.S. got involved in the affairs of other nations.

With faith in the morality of its actions, the U.S. joined France, Great Britain and the Soviet Union to conquer fascism and barbarism in Europe in World War II. Certainly this is not the motive for today's anti-

between moral and/or ethical ideals — on which American policy is based, and its actual policy.

OFTEN THE THE U.S. maintained and defended a zone of influence in another country which lacked respect for freedom and democracy, as those terras are defined in the west.

In Europe, the U.S. supported the Greek fascist military dictators, admittedly to the advantage of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Meanwhile, Greece has gone back to a democratic form of government. But for some



In the American political

# U Hla Tun

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Daily Herald-Telephone, Bloomington  
Indiana

## Rangoon, Burma

By HLA TUN  
Rangoon, Burma

The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma lies in Southeast Asia, bordered by Bangladesh and India on the northwest, China on the northeast, Laos and Thailand on the southeast, the Andaman sea and the Bay of Bengal on the south and southwest.

According to the basic principles of the new Burmese Constitutions, the goal of the state is to establish a Socialist society and economic system. On the Burmese path to Socialism, the constitutions state that the existing educational system will have to be transformed into a system based on Socialistic moral values. Science will be given precedence in education. This transformation is being made.

In 1964, the government introduced the New System of Education for both basic and higher education. The chief aim of the new educational system is to provide basic education to all citizens to make them into productive mental and physical workers of good health and character. Suitable vocational education will be provided at the appropriate stages, science will be given priority and a firm foundation will be built for higher education. The ultimate goal is to provide compulsory basic education up to the middle stage.

**BASIC EDUCATION** is divided into three stages: primary, middle and high. The four years after kindergarten constitute the primary stage. Children enter this stage at the age of 6. Another four years of

middle school follows the primary stage. After the eighth standard, students are channeled into either science or arts. After two years of high school (the tenth standard), students take a matriculation examination. If successful, science students go on to the science classes in the University or to the professional scientific institutes. Art students go on to arts classes in the University or to the professional institutes in the arts.

The educational target is to bring basic education within the reach of all. In regard to higher education, only those who have enough potential and industriousness to benefit from it will be especially encouraged.

**IN ORDER** to equate education with livelihood, new professional institutes have been established. There are now three medical institutes, an institute of technology, an institute of agriculture, a veterinary institute, an economic institute, an institute of education and an institute of dentistry. There is also a special department for paramedical education, and a department for post-graduate medical education.

The institutes for higher education are not all located in Rangoon. Mandalay has an arts and science university and a medical institute and Pyinamana has an agricultural institute. There are colleges in Moulmein, Bassein, Magwe in central Burma, Taunggyi on the Shan tableland and Myitkyina in the far north.

A workers' college in Rangoon provides an opportunity for workers desiring higher education.

**THE INSTITUTES** of higher education are governed by their own administrative council and academic body. A central council and a central academic body are located at the Department of Higher Education.

Because of the various national races in Burma, there is an academy in Sagaing for the development of national groups to provide education and training for the youth of the national races who are dedicated to the service of their peoples.

In addition to the professional institutes of higher education, there are various establishments which provide vocational education, such as agricultural high schools, industrial schools, teacher training establishments, junior agricultural institutes and junior technical institutes. Special evening classes are also provided at the institutes.

**THERE IS A** special school of weaving at Amarapura near Mandalay, state schools of fine arts, drama and music at Rangoon and Mandalay, and a school of journalism at Rangoon.

Most technical departments of government provide in-service training and apprentice classes. A Foreign Language Institute offers courses in Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese and Russian.



The school system prevailing in the countryside assures Burma a high rate of literacy, estimated at about 60 per cent. But anything less than complete literacy is unacceptable in the construction of a socialist democratic nation. As a result, a literacy movement has been under way since 1965. Effort is concentrated on districts selected annually.

**THE LITERACY** campaign takes the form of a mass movement with people of all strata taking part and the main burden of teaching being born by student volunteers from the high schools and institutes of higher education. The movement has been extended to many villages, townships and districts.

Burma's literacy movement received international recognition with the Mohamed Reza Pahlavi Prize for 1971. Due to the literacy campaign, there remain very few illiterate Burmese people, only about one million out of a total population of 30 million.

## Annie Simamora

### Jakarta, Indonesia

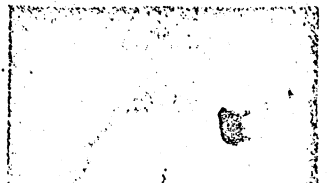
By ANNIE B. SIMAMORA  
Jakarta, Indonesia

Long before the fall of In-

volvement with American bases in the country. The same with the Philippines, Malaysia

Rujaratnam's proposed departure.

PRESIDENT FERDINAND



"The comic saga. n has ad off

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