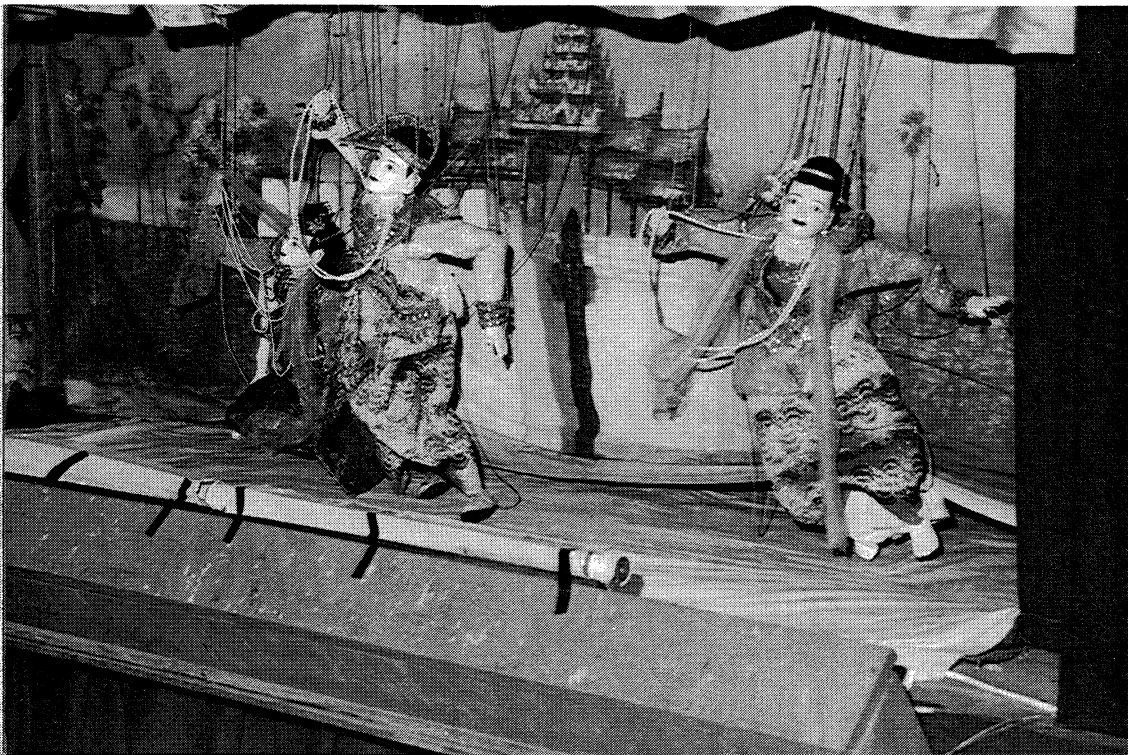

***BULLETIN OF THE
BURMA
STUDIES GROUP***



Myanmar Marionettes

Number 62

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Editor

May Kyi Win
Southeast Asia Collection
Northern Illinois University Libraries
DeKalb, IL 60115-2854
Tel: (815) 753-1809
Fax: (815) 753-2003
e-mail: mwin@niu.edu

Subscription Manager

Richard Cooler
The Center for Burma Studies
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115-2854
Tel: (815) 753-0512
Fax: (815) 753-1651
e-mail: rcooler@niu.edu
<http://www.niu.edu/acad/burma/index.html>

Book Review Editor

Leedom Lefferts
Department of Anthropology
Drew University
Madison, NJ 07940-4000
Tel: (202) 547-4868
e-mail: lleffert@drew.edu

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Deadline for March issue is January 31, 1999.

BURMA STUDIES GROUP MEETING

A business meeting of the Burma Studies Group was held on Friday, March 27, 1998, from 9:00-11:00 p.m. at the Hilton and Towers Hotel in Washington, D.C. F. K. Lehman, Chair, called the meeting to order. There was no set agenda. The statutory annual Elections were held for officers. F. K. Lehman was re-elected as Chair. Mary P. Callahan and Tun Kyaw Nyein were elected as executive committee members.

Kris Lehman discussed the up coming Burma Studies Conference (Colloquium). It will be held at Northern Illinois University on October 2-4. An announcement of the Conference and a Call for Papers have already been sent out. The tentative program was passed among the scholars present.

There is so far no panel on ethnic groups on the program. Maureen Aung-Thwin will try to work out something on this topic for the Conference. Some of our Netherlands colleagues are especially interested in materials on Burmese ethnic groups, and Maureen is going to invite some of them to the Conference.

The Southeast Asia Council (SEAC) of AAS is going to support a project on compiling a bibliography of translations of fictions from SEA vernacular languages. We are invited to suggest materials from Burma.

New business: There was a reception on Saturday to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Association and of Burmese independence. There it was publicly announced that the Burma Studies Foundation, with which our Studies Group is closely linked, have just set up a fund intended to assist teaching and graduate work in humanities and social science concerning Burma; the reception was not a

fund raising activity, but those attending were invited to consider contributing at some time in the near future.

This matter was brought to our attention at our business meeting and considered by us at some length. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

MYANMAR MARIONETTES

By Naing Yee Mar
Mandalay Marionette Theater

Myanmar marionette theatre (Yoke Thay) - once a highly esteemed royal pastime - is a show not merely of stringed wooden dolls, but of life-like human substitutes. It is in fact, wooden marionettes manipulated by means of strings. They could dance like subtle choreographers.

The Myanmar puppet still holds its own national characteristics and the original Myanmar tradition as it includes all the artistic works such as Myanmar dancing and music, scepter, sequin embroidery and painting.

Myanmar puppetry dates back several centuries. It was well established in Myanmar during the Pagan Era, 11th century and records of the arts were made in the fifteen-century. Since then it has trod a dogged track, sinking, time again, into popularity. This process of revival and decline had recurred repeatedly. Puppetry was in great demand at the courts of the Myanmar royalty, especially during the Konbaung era (1820-1885).

In those times of Myanmar Kings, the royalty did not at first allowed human dancers on the stage. That was a great opportunity for lifeless marionette dancers to be on a high level stage above the Royal audience. It was known as Ah- Myint- Tha-Bin which literally means performance on the high level. Female artists were not allowed at that time to present

themselves on stage. Accordingly, male artists who performed as women impersonators were later known as Yoke- Thay- Min- Tha-Mi. The human manipulators and singers were hidden and obliged to perform behind the handrail and the back curtain attached to it.

The 28 puppets were formed to depict the 28 ru-pas (physical forms) which consists of four bu-ta-ru-pas (elements) and 24 u-pa-da-ya-ru-pas (attachments) and mentioned in the Ahbidhamma; the Buddha's teachings embodied in the third basket of Tipitaka.

The puppet sculptors are required to observe the strict rules regarding the choice of the prescribed types of wood for carving particular figures, the prescribed proportion of the figures befitting the roles and human anatomy including sex organs.

The themes of puppet plays were drawn from the ten great lives and the 550 birth stories of Lord Buddha and for historic legends. The ancient Myanmar kings patronized this important branch of Myanmar art with great emphasis. With the demise of Myanmar royalty the art commenced a sharp decline and during pre-war days efforts for its revival were undertaken with meager results.

Nowadays, the old traditional marionette generation has almost faded away. This is simply due to the lack of patronage required during the last few decades. Therefore, it has come to pass that the art of marionette is referred to as a dying art. The same story is applicable to the artists.

For that reason, there is an arrangement of a special Marionette Theatre in Mandalay, the old capital of Myanmar and the centre of Myanmar art and culture. A private team of professional artists has tried to restore this folk art, which was rapidly disappearing with the advance of modern entertainment.

I consider that this show would be of great interest to the audience and also a good

help to give them an idea of ancient Myanmar and Myanmar culture.

It is being organized by two Myanmar women, who were sincerely interested and focussed on the discovery of puppetry since 1986. The first one is Mrs. Ma Ma Naing, who is a daughter of U Thein Naing, the writer of Burmese Puppet Theatre published in Rangoon in 1966. The other one is Mrs. Naing Yee Mar, who was a student of researcher Dr. Tin

Maung Kyi. The aims of his research are to rediscover and preserve Myanmar anatomical science relating to puppets and to help future scholars who opt to preserve and further promote this science.

In the course of private studies of the two founders of the Mandalay Marionettes Theatre, they gradually discovered two puppet players U Pan Aye, 70 years old and U Mya Thwin, 82 years old. They are the former pupils of the Marionette artist Shwe Bo U Thin Maung, one of the remaining descendents of the ancient professionals.

The two female founders of the theatre discovered not only these two old puppet masters but also found out the way the old masters carved, joined, ornamented and strung puppets was an art in itself. The anatomical proportion of puppet of a prince and prince figure, as measured and recorded by U Mya Thwin, are:

- diameter of head around... one span (between thumb and tip of middle finger) plus four fingers
- length of face from center of skull to chin tip... one unit of measure
- seven and a half times unit of measure... height
- half of height... length of hands
- double lengths of hands... height
- height... one cubit (18 inches) plus one span of fingers.

These ratios of anatomical formations of a prince and princess of the royal troupe are so

important they can be memorized by learning the rhyme.

My desire is to give you a memorable glimpse into a dying art, which we hope will once again find its legitimate place in the entertainment world.

BOOK REVIEWS

The End of the First Anglo-Burmese War: The Burmese Chronicle Account of How the 1826 Treaty of Yandabo was Negotiated, by Anna J. Allott. Pp. 87+ii. Illustrations, maps. Burmese with English translation and notes. Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University Press, 1994. ISBN 974-584-954-5. 100 Baht

The Burmese Chronicle of the early 19th century seems to have been written by a committee of scholars working on the basis of the day-to-day records kept by Court diarists. According to Pagan U Tin, the Sa-yin-daik (Records House) in which the records were presumably kept was under the charge of an official known as the Sa-yin-daik-sou who had no authority to open the records on his own motion; this needed a requisition signed by all the Atwin-wuns, the Palace Ministers. It would, therefore have been a matter of some difficulty to falsify these records -- even Queen Suhpayalat failed when she tried to write her elder sister out of the history. The Chronicle must, therefore, be taken as a condensation of a running daily record of events, no doubt colored by the writers' memories of what they had themselves seen and heard.

When dealing with incidents so closely involving national pride, it must have been difficult to reconcile memories, records, and accepted wisdom in a way that would express the historical truth, or most of it, without giving

offence in any quarter that mattered. There must have been many occasions for disagreement between the authors about what should be included and what left out, about what actually did happen, and about how far the story should be compressed. The need to reconcile such differences perhaps explains why forty years elapsed before the Chronicle could be brought past 1821. The difficulty in reconciling these differences may also have led, particularly regarding such sensitive issues as the humiliating defeat of the Burmese kingdom in 1826, to the use of somewhat tortuous language.

It is this section of the Chronicle that Mrs. Allott has selected for her translation and commentary. The precision of her translation commands our profound admiration. While it is all too easy to skim over the surface of a text, gather its meaning, and write down a translation, what is presented to us in this slim volume is a different matter. Here every phrase is considered, given its proper weight, and explained in the commentary. The Burmese text and English translation, with copious notes, are presented, as often as possible, on facing pages. Thus, the volume becomes a text-book for second-year students of Burmese. However, there is a great amount to be learned from it by anyone, myself included, who tries to translate Burmese historical documents.

L. E. Bagshawe
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

A Report on the Location of Burmese Artifacts in Museums, by Terence R. Blackburn. Gartmore, Stirlingshire, UK: Kiscadale, 1994. 80 p. ISBN: 1 870838 91 2

This book is the outcome of a survey, conducted by Terence Blackburn, of museum holdings of artifacts from Burma. The book provides a list of museums contacted, a list of

location of items by artifact type, listings of collections by institution, a bibliography of reference sources used to identify museums to which the survey was sent, and an index of institutions and artifact types.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Blackburn contacted over one thousand museums. The vast majority of these (well over 80%) are in the United Kingdom, including small local authority and regimental museums. The remainder comprises large museums elsewhere in Europe, in North America, Australasia, and a few other places (but barely any in Asia). There appears to be a degree of unpredictability in which non-UK museums Blackburn targeted, and some notable institutions appear to be missing from the survey. There is, for example, no mention of the Denison University Art Gallery in Granville, Ohio, or of a number of the more significant European holdings. It is true, however, as the author himself points out, that some errors and omissions are inevitable in such a large survey. Nevertheless, my own experience (having just carried out, as part of a wider project, a survey of museum holdings textiles [and related objects] from Burma), is that the list of institutions contacted would be more useful for subsequent researchers if it also summarized which museums actually replied, even if in the negative - such information could save a lot of duplication, and stamps, in the future!

Chapter 2 lists some specific artifacts at particular institutions, such as a 'life-like model, with head and arms of wax, of a Burmese lady in her national court dress, correct in every detail', in the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, or a 'model of a Burmese war canoe' in the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada. The listing, for understandable practical reasons, is not comprehensive (it would take a very, very thick volume to list all items in all collections!!), and often a specific artifact mentioned in the list

under, for example, 'Bells', may be the only artifact at a particular institution. Nevertheless, so long as one bears these points in mind, this chapter and the next (listings by institution), make fascinating reading, giving a tantalizing taste of the range of material in different collections. Furthermore, it gives an interesting glimpse into the make-up of different types of collections, allowing one to see that, for example, objects such as bells and gongs, daggers and other weapons - obvious trophy items - are particularly likely to be found in British regimental collections dating from the time of the Anglo-Burmese Wars.

One does wish that the book had been a little better edited and proof-read. Nevertheless, it is a useful starting point for anyone wishing either to conduct their own specialized survey, or simply to learn more about what kinds of objects may be in what kinds of places.

Sandra Dudley
University of Oxford

**Burma Studies Conference
Tentative Program
October 2-4, 1998
Center for Burma Studies
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb,
Illinois**

The John A. Lacey collection of Burmese art, given in memory of Lorene Lacey, will be on display throughout the conference in the Burma Gallery.

Friday, October 2nd

12:00 pm Lunch. Opening Remarks by host, Richard M. Cooler, Director of the Center for Burma Studies.
Commencement Address by James Scott

(Yale University), *NIU Art Museum, 2nd Floor, Altgeld Hall.*

1:30-2:45 pm Panel #1:

History and Anthropology of Burma, *NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall*

Moderator: U Chit Hlaing (F. K. Lehman) (U. of Illinois).

Magnus Fiskesjo (University of Chicago), "A Heritage of Defeat? Wa Autochthony and the 'Displacement' Rituals on the Yunnan-Burma Frontier."

Will Womack (Vanderbilt University), "Inscribing Power: the Tattooing Tradition in Burma."

Maitrii Aung-Thwin (University of Michigan), "Tattoos, Trials, and Traditions: the Construction of Saya San."

U Chit Hlaing (F. K. Lehman) (University of Illinois), "Kayah--Teak, History and Ethnogenesis: a Rebuttal of Nigel Brailey."

2:45-3:00 pm Break

3:00-4:15 pm Panel #2:

Burmese Texts, *NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall*

Moderator: Ed Zehner (Editor, Journal of Burma Studies)

Anna Allott (SOAS), "Burmese Short Stories Today--a Window on Burmese life."

Michael W. Charney (University of Michigan), "Texts, Identities, and Cultural Legacies: 'Rakhaing' and 'Myanma' in Nyaungyan and Konbaung Court Treatises and Chronicles."

Tamara Cynthia Ho (UCLA), "The Past is a Foreign Country: The Poetics and Politics of Displacement in Our Burmese

Days."

Patricia Herbert (Southeast Asia Curator, British Library), "Voices of 1988."

4:15-4:30 pm Break

4:30-5:45 pm Panel #3:

Language and Religion in Burma, *NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall*

Moderator: Julian Wheatley (Cornell University)

Justin Watkins (SOAS), "What is a Weak Glottal Stop? Creaky and Killed Tone in Burmese."

Edward Garrett (UCLA), "On -ko and -ka: Their Use as Focus Markers."

Eugenia Kyaw (Princeton University), "Theravada Buddhism in Burma."

Peter Skilling (Pali Text Society), "Two Buddhas on a Single Throne: Prabhutaratna or Candanabimba?"

6:00-7:00 pm Welcome Reception & Cash Bar. *Sky Room, Holmes Student Center*

7:00-10:00 pm Banquet. Keynote Speaker: James Scott, topic: TBA. *Sky Room, Holmes Student Center*

Saturday, October 3rd

8:00-8:45 am Continental Breakfast. *NIU Art Museum, 2nd Floor Altgeld Hall, Front Door Entrance Only.*

8:45-10:15 am Panel #4:

Burmese History, *NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall*

Moderator: Laichen Sun (University of Michigan)

L.E. Bagshawe (Burma Studies Group), "The Kinwun Min-gyi's Mission to

Europe -1812-1813."
Ryuji Okudaira (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), "The Role of the Dhammathats or Law Books in the Theravada Buddhist State Structure with Special Reference to Manugye."
M. V. Longmuir (University of Queensland, Australia), "Yenangyaung and its Twinza: the Burmese Indigenous Earth-oil Industry Re-examined."
Laichen Sun (University of Michigan), "'China as Father and Burma as Mother:' Sipsong Panna in Sino-Burmese Relations."

10:15-10:30 am Break

10:30-12:00 pm Panel #5:

Modern Burma, *NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall*

Moderator: Gustaaf Houtman (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

Mary Callahan, "Burma: the Lessons of History."

Bruce Matthews (Acadia University, Canada), "A la mode: From SLORC to SPDC, a Change of Public Dress and Perfume!"

Michael Martin (American Bando Association), "Return to Myitkyina."

Jean-Marc Rastorfer (Burma Studies Group), "Reprints or Simple Photocopies?"

Gustaaf Houtman (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), "The Mental Culture of Burmese Crisis Politics: Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy."

12:00-1:15 pm Lunch

1:15-2:45 pm Panel #6:

Class and Economy in Modern Burma, *NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall*

Moderator: Mark Taylor (U.S. State Department)

Tin Maung Maung Than (ISEAS, Singapore), "The Political Economy of Burma's Developmental Failure, 1948-88."

Kei Nemoto (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), "Continuity of Burmese Urban Elites Between the Pre-war Period and the Post-independence Period to 1962."

Richard Gibson (U.S. Foreign Service Officer, Retired) & John Haseman (U.S. Army Officer, Retired), "Opium and Narcotics in Burma: The Social and Economic Implications and Challenges."

Roberta Leung (Nanyang Technology University, Singapore) & Lan Li (Northern Illinois University), "Tourism Development in Myanmar."

3:00-4:45 pm Informal Discussions in Holmes Student Center Lounge Area

6:00-7:00 pm Reception and Cash Bar. *Sky Room, Holmes Student Center*

7:00-9:00 pm Banquet & Presentation: Burmese Puppeteer and Music. *Sky Room, Holmes Student Center.*

Sunday, October 4th

8:00-8:30 am Continental Breakfast, *NIU Art Museum, 2nd Floor Altgeld Hall, Front Door Entrance Only.*

8:30-10:15 am Panel #7: Burmese Arts, *NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall*

Moderator: Will Womack (Vanderbilt University)

Richard Cooler (Director, Center for Burma

Studies), "The Uses of Ambiguous Iconography during the Reign of King Kyanzittha."

Charlotte Reith (Burma Studies Group), "An Almsbowl Village, Burma."

Alexandra Green (SOAS), "Narrative Modes of 17th and Early 18th Century Burmese Wall Paintings: A Preliminary Study."

Gavin Douglas (University of Washington), "Burmese Musical Style and Western Instruments."

10:15-10:30 am Break

10:30-12:00 pm Panel #8:

Women & Gender Issues in Burma, *NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall*

Moderator: Maureen Aung-Thwin (Soros Foundation)

Lipi Ghosh (Calcutta University), "Women-abuse and Trafficking: The Myanmar Situation."

Lisa Brooten (Ohio University), "Women and Change in Burma."

Beverley Drumm (University of London), "Gender and Violence in Discourse on Burma."

1:00 pm Bus leaves from west entrance, Carroll Avenue for O'Hare Airport, Chicago

NEWS ABROAD

Perspective on the Pyu Landscape

In January 1998, a small group of anthropologist, archaeologist, historian, ecologist, and soil scientist of international composition (from Japan, Thailand,

Indonesian, United States, and Myanmar) visited six sites of the ancient Pyu in the Upper Ayeyarwady (Irrawaddy) Basin. Three of these sites had been known since the British time; Srikshetra (also spelled Sri Ksetra, and also known as Thare Khittara, located near Pyay or Prome), Beikthano (also spelled Peikthano, and also known as Vishnu City, or Panhtwa), and Halin-gyi, and the other three, Mongmao, Thegon, and Wadi, were identified more recently by U Aung Myint, who accompanied the group.

Burma Christians: Burma's Anglican Bishops and their Wives Attend the Lambeth Conference in England, UK, July 18th - August 9th 1998.

By Ms. Annie Nason.

The Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops takes place in Canterbury, England UK every 10 years. This year there were 850 Bishops and Archbishops from all over the world, gathered together to study the Bible, have fellowship together and discuss policy and ethical issues of the day. The Conference is not a decision-making body for the Anglican Communion as each Province has a certain autonomy in that area.

The venue was the University of Kent campus. There were facilities for interpreters, however, the group from Burma had to rely upon two ladies who did well to spread themselves between the various study groups, as the level of English needed to enter fully into this kind of event is high, and most of the Burma group had little or no English Language skills, although when asked, they were very enthusiastic about the contents of the programme that they had followed. Much discussion amongst the Burma group themselves ensured that they shared their experiences and were able

to gain a tremendous amount from attending the conference.

There was a programme for the spouses of the Bishops, and also a pre-Lambeth Conference of the Mother's Union World-wide in York, England UK. Here again the Burma group were able to support each other and come away with a rich understanding of the topics covered. They also were able to contribute in no small measure to the event. Indeed, the Mother's Union President of the Sittwe Diocese, Daw Ma Ni and her work in Paletwa, Chin State, was given coverage to the extent of half a page in a Conference Newspaper!

The Lambeth Conference programme covered a lot of issues, which are exercising the minds of Anglicans all over the world. These included, the problems of poverty encountered by the Heavily Indebted Countries; persecution of Christians in certain countries; lack of Human Rights, (Burma was mentioned here); the encouragement of Reconciliation between warring groups world-wide; issues related to gender, sexuality and same-sex partnerships were covered; world poverty and the responsibilities of the richer nations towards the poorer ones discussed and with media coverage too. The Burma group split their time as best they could to cover most study and discussion groups between them.

After the Lambeth Conference was over, the Archbishop of Burma, Andrew Mya Han, and three Bishops from Japan participated in a Peace and Reconciliation event, which involved attending and worshipping at Coventry Cathedral and at Westminster Abbey in London.

The Burma contingent have all departed from England now, and although thoroughly exhausted by their visit - and rather cold! - each one stated how much they were encouraged in their faith and work by

meeting friends from all over the world. They met Bishops from the West, as well as many countries in Africa and South America.

Before the Conference in Canterbury, many Anglican churches and members all over the UK were involved in hosting the overseas delegates. They all felt it was an honour and were delighted to meet their respective visitors and will treasure the memories of their time together.

Religion in Burma - (OMF 1997)

Buddhist	87.8%
Christian (R.Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and other denominations)	6.5%
Muslim	3.8%
Traditional Religion (Animist)	1.1%
Hindu	0.5%
Non-religious / others	0.3%

Facts - Anglicans in Burma 1998

There are said to be upwards of 50,000 Anglicans in Burma today. During the British Colonial period the Anglican Church provided the Army Chaplains for the British Forces. The Diocese of Rangoon was founded as part of the "Province of India, Burma and Ceylon" in 1878. From that time forward various Anglican missionary interests were established and their influence grew. In 1970, the Anglican Province of Myanmar was established, with the same degree of autonomy as all other Provinces in the World-wide Anglican Communion.

The first brick-built Anglican church in Burma was St. Mark's Church, Akyab (now Sittwe). It is in serious need of repair but the Sittwe Diocesan Council wish to restore it if at all possible as it is their Sittwe Diocese Cathedral.

There are 6 Dioceses in the Province of Myanmar. Each Diocese has a Diocesan

Council and is the centre for co-ordinating the work of the Anglican Church in their area. The Dioceses are: Myitkyina, Mandalay, Sittwe, Yangon, Toungoo and Hpa'an. The Bishops of these dioceses, and also the Assistant Bishop of Sittwe attended the Lambeth Conference. Bishop San Si Htay (formerly Assistant Bishop of Rangoon) and the Archbishop, with 8 of the Bishops bringing their wives, completed the party.

Education in the Anglican Set-up in Burma.

The Provincial Theological College is Holy Cross College in Yangon. In November 1997 there were 34 students, working towards degrees. The future of Emanuel Divinity College in Mohnyin is uncertain at this time, but St. John's Bible School in Paletwa offers a 4 year ordination course, and also sets up other short courses for the training of lay man and women for Christian work in the Diocese. This is the case in the other Dioceses too, which all have a system set up for training and study for people like Youth Leaders, Women workers and Evangelists. Some funding is received from various sources abroad, but the Dioceses are encouraged to support their own Christian development projects and training.

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