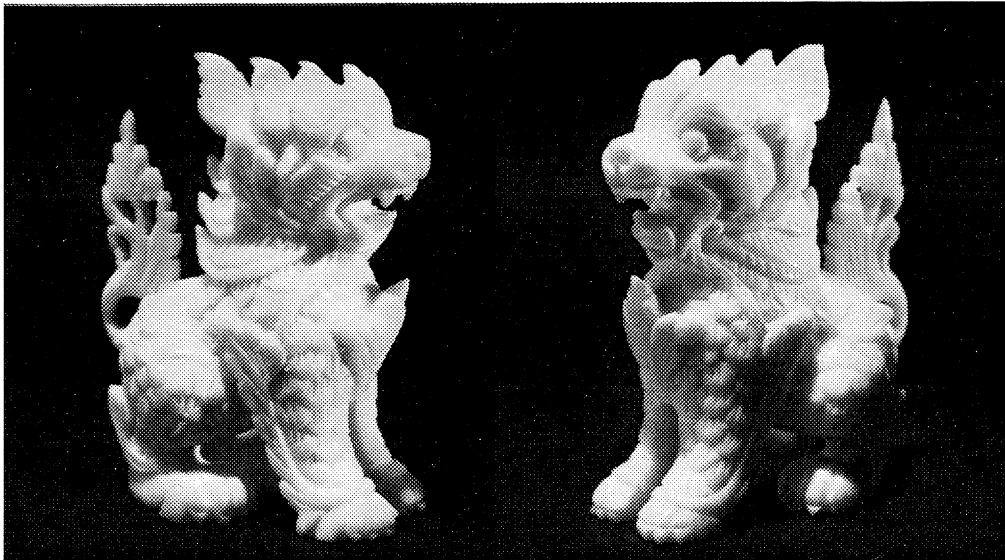

***BULLETIN OF THE
BURMA
STUDIES GROUP***



19th Century Ivory Carving in the Shape of a Chin-the (Mythical Lion)

BULLETIN OF THE BURMA STUDIES GROUP
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Deadline for September issue is July 31, 1999.

BURMA STUDIES GROUP MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Trustees of the Burma Studies Foundation will be held on Friday, 12 March, from 7 to 9 pm.

The Annual Business Meeting of the Burma Studies Group (SEAC/AAS) will be on the same date from 9 - 11 pm.

Both will be held in the Maine Room of the Boston Marriott Hotel, Copley Place.

The John and Lorene Lacey Collection: An exhibition review by Richard M. Cooler

An exciting aspect of the Burma Studies Conference this past fall was the exhibition of Burmese Art recently donated by John Lacey in memory of his wife, Lorene. Although John has been retired from the U.S. Diplomatic Corps for several years now, during his career he was Deputy Chief of Mission to the American Embassy in Burma. It was during this time that he and his wife gathered the impressive items in this collection. It was also during that time in 1974 that I first met the Laceys after arriving in Rangoon as a fledgling scholar to carry out field research on eleventh century Burmese art. To my surprise the Lacey's became enthusiastic supporters throughout my year in Burma.

At our first meeting, both the Laceys suggested numerous contacts who later proved to be instrumental in finding the arcane materials I was seeking. Not leaving anything to chance, however, they insisted that I visit them at home that very night for a small get-together to which several of their

knowledgeable friends had been invited. Little did I know, the Laceys were friends with anyone in Rangoon who was interested in the arts. After arriving at their beautiful home on the shores of Inle Lake, I was amazed to find that the small gathering "chez nous" included all the *glitterati* of Rangoon. I quickly learned that all were assembled to celebrate the opening of an exhibition of oil paintings by the young Burmese Artist, Maung Maung Gyi, and the Laceys had generously offered their home as an exhibition venue. I also quickly realized that the Laceys were important patrons of the arts and mentored aspiring artists in Rangoon where adequate painting supplies and exhibit spaces were practically non-existent.

The Lacey's interest was not confined to the art of Burma but also extended to that of China as well. John had graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Chicago in 1940 with a degree in Oriental Languages and Literature. John and Lorene met in 1934 and following her graduation from the University of Michigan in 1940 they were married. After serving with the Navy's Office of Communications Intelligence as a Japanese language officer in World War II, John entered the United States Foreign Service. The Lacey's had extensive contact with the art of China when John served four terms as American Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao (1960-1964) and as Consul General to Singapore (1964-65). It was when they had settled in Rangoon where John was serving as Deputy Chief of Mission to the U.S. Embassy that we met, which proved to be so fortunate to my research. I have fond memories of returning exhausted from up-country Pagan and being warmly and repeatedly welcomed into their home where I had the pleasure of examining many of the objects in their collection. Lorene

Lacey was particularly interested in the traditional arts of Burma and it was primarily during her many trips throughout Burma that she gathered the pieces in this collection.

I have included below a few short notes to afford those who were unable to attend the conference with a general knowledge and a statement of the significance of the Lacey Collection. Asterisks indicate that the Lacey Collection contains such an item.

Modern Oil Paintings in Burma

Painting in Burma was traditionally confined to murals in Buddhist temples or illustrations in religious texts* that due to their context were almost invariably sacred in content. The creation of oil paintings on canvas, typically depicting secular subjects, has been the result of Burma's exposure to foreign ideas during the nineteenth and especially the twentieth centuries. At the beginning of this century, oil painting on canvas was encouraged by the establishment of a Western art school in Rangoon and by a considerable increase in the number of resident foreigners in the capital, particularly diplomatic personnel who were in need of furnishings for their homes. These foreigners became the logical patrons for the production of oil paintings since the Burmese did not traditionally furnish their homes in this way. The subjects of oil paintings reflect the interests of their foreign patrons - views without traditional religious significance and so common as to be of little interest to the Burman, but, exotic and typically "Burmese" to a foreigner. The oil paintings in this collection are exemplary: the daily vegetable market*, the perpetual planting and transplanting of rice*, endless boats and rafts passing on the river*, boats beached for repair*, and views of religious buildings in which an element of spiritual mystery has been introduced and emphasized.* Although working for foreign patrons in a foreign medium, the Burmese

artists proved themselves masterfully adept at adopting alien styles and creatively adapting them to Burmese subjects.* Though redolent of major western styles, their paintings are never vapid copies of western paintings and a single artist frequently works effectively in several styles. The two stylistically different paintings by U Toe Nwe* as well as by Ko Hla Thein* are excellent examples.

Musical Instruments

The Burmese musical ensemble is believed to have grown out of an ancient Southeast Asian musical tradition that employed bronze idiophones in the form of metal drums, gongs, and xylophones. The Karens of Burma, a distinct ethnic group living primarily in the low mountains along the Thai-Burma border, adopted the use of bronze drums sometime before the 11th century AD and continued their use until 1924. These drums were the Karens' most valuable possession and were played singularly or together to summon rainfall and to summon their kinsmen and ancestor spirits to participate in funerals, raiding parties, and house entering ceremonies. The drum in this collection has three-dimensional animals added to the cylinder, which is a unique feature of the Karen drum type.* This drum is unusual in that, instead of one or three frogs on the tympanum, it has only two. Although an instrument of the animist, hill tribe Karens, these drums have been played in the courts and Buddhist temples of the lowland Burmese since at least the 11th century AD.

The Burmese harp* is a modern example of an instrument type that was used in the classical world of ancient Greece and Rome as well as in India. Today, however, this instrument is still popularly played only in Burma where it has become the national instrument. Each harp has from 13 to 16 strings and is usually played as a solo instrument by a seated musician. The larger version in this collection is played by men; a smaller version is played by women.

The bamboo xylophone (*patala*)* may be played as a solo instrument but is more often part of the basic Burmese gong ensemble that is played for all major festivities, both religious and secular. The Burmese xylophone differs from those in the West in that (1) the bamboo keys are in one row only, not having the western xylophone's accidentals; (2) the *patala*'s scale is approximately diatonic, not chromatic; (3) the *patala* has a hull-like resonator for all keys rather than individual resonators.

The Enlightened Buddha

Depictions of the Buddha's personal enlightenment vastly outnumber representations of all other events in his life including that of his first sermon in which he shared his recently discovered knowledge with all humankind. The multiple images of the Buddha seen on the votive tablet are excellent examples of this peculiarity in which the Buddha is invariably shown seated with legs folded; left hand in his lap, palm upward; right hand on his shin, palm inward with fingers pointing toward the earth (*bhumisparsa mudra*).* This hand gesture is symbolic of his overcoming the last obstacle to enlightenment, self doubt. After years of asceticism and many days' meditation under the *Bodhi* tree, the Buddha began to doubt that his past lives had been sufficiently perfect to warrant attaining enlightenment. This was because he believed in rebirth - a belief that the soul, like energy, can not be created or destroyed, but instead experiences changes only in form. Therefore, the Buddha, like all mankind, had innumerable past lives, all of which would have had to have been lived to perfection if the Buddha was to achieve Nirvana. His difficulty lay in the fact that, like other mortals, he could not remember all his actions in all his former lives. Therefore, he could not be absolutely sure that enlightenment was eminent. By placing his hand on his shin and pointing towards the earth, he summoned

the Earth Goddess to his assistance. Since in his former lives, the Buddha had participated in the common practice of pouring water on the ground to witness each of his meritorious acts, the Earth Goddess was able to wring a "tidal wave" of water from her hair that had accumulated over the Buddha's many previous lifetimes which was proof of his steadfastness and perfection. The Earth Goddess (*Vasundari* - Pali or *Wathundaye* - Burmese) in this collection is a small image of a woman wringing water from the tresses of her hair, which is one of the rare instances where women play an important role in the Buddha's life.* This role, however, is of pivotal importance, because without her witness and assistance the Buddha would not have gained enlightenment.

Since the Buddha's complete enlightenment occurred immediately after "Calling the Earth Goddess to Witness" and since enlightenment takes place within the body without necessarily any outward indication, "Calling the Earth to Witness" has come to be accepted as representing the enlightenment of the Buddha. To enhance this association, the cranial protuberance (*usnisha* = cosmic consciousness) and the enigmatic "smile of enlightenment" were also employed.*

Images of The Buddha seated in *bhumisparsa mudra* have been endlessly replicated in the art of Burma and Southeast Asia because it is a reminder to all mankind that there is a way to end human suffering. Therefore, as such, the creation of every additional image of the Buddha is a meritorious act that improves the donor's *karma*. The multiple images of this event on the clay votive plaque in the collection are evidence of the zeal of an eleventh century donor who created forty images of the Buddha with a single impression of the mould.* Because of the large number of Buddha images, these plaques were thought to be especially efficacious in assuring the ritual

purity and power of a specific site and, therefore, were often placed in underground chambers below the center-most point of the sanctum in a Buddhist building.

In Burma, two devotees frequently appear at the foot of the Buddha's throne and are identified by the Burmese as his two chief disciples, *Mogallana* and *Sariputta*, although their presence at enlightenment is historically (canonically) incorrect.* At the time of enlightenment, all the Buddha's friends had abandoned him and it was not until later that disciples came to learn his newly discovered knowledge. The insistence of the Burmese to place these two figures at the feet of the Buddha, from at least the 11th century onward, may be explained in part by the Burmese belief that Buddhism was introduced into Burma during the Buddha's lifetime by two of his disciples. This serves to strengthen Burmese ties to the purest version of the Buddha's message which is considered to have been pure and without corruption during his lifetime - although none of the several names given to the early Buddhist missionaries to Burma is *Mogallana* or *Sariputta*.

Buddhist Monks and Their Belongings

Most Burmese males are expected to join the monkhood at some time during their lives, if only for a brief time. Boys, usually between ages 8 and 18, enter a monastery as a novice after their ceremonial induction or *Shin Byu*. The entire community is invited to this ceremony which re-enacts the various stages in the Buddha's life up until the "The Great Renunciation." Ordained Buddhist monks are invited to perform the induction ceremony and are given gifts of the few necessities allowed by canonical law. The rules and regulations under which the novice and the monks must live are contained in the *Tripitika*, excerpts from which are recorded within the *Kamawasa**, an especially ornate form of Buddhist manuscript which is produced for use during a *Shin Byu*

ceremony. The text is used to instruct the fledgling novice how to read aloud the Pali language of the *Tripitika* text, which is a required part of the induction ceremony. The manuscript is then presented to the monastery.

Buddhist monks, as part of their vows, renounce the things of this world including all personal property. Their few personal belongings are loaned to them by the monastery. These consist of an alms bowl* (in Burma, with cover and carrier*), three robes*, a belt*, a fan* (in Burma), a staff (in Burma), a rosary (in Burma), a razor, and a drinking cup.* A monk may travel and carry all these items on his person as can be seen in the image of the Burmese monk, *Shin Thiwali**, who is the Burmese patron saint of travel. His image within the home is also thought to prevent domestic fires and theft. In Burma an acceptable, but non-canonical, item a monk may possess is a betel nut canister, because the chewing of betel is considered to be medicinal and health promoting and monks are allowed a few, select herbal remedies. Large, ornate alms bowls are used for the ritual presentation of food by the laity to the monks.* When worn out, all items are returned to the head monk for disposal and discarded monk's robes may be used as the foundation from which to make the pages of a *Kamawasa*.*

Religious Manuscripts and Books

Ancient Buddhist books were engraved in the special Buddhist language, Pali, (or possibly Sanskrit) on specially prepared fronds that had been picked from the talipot palm.* This produced nearly illegible engraved lines which were then made distinct by rubbing each engraved leaf with soot and oil. The leaves were then arranged on a short rod that passed through a small hole in each page. The bundle of pages was then placed between two wooden covers, often bound with a cord, and inserted in a cloth envelope. The long, rectangular shape of the palm leaves determined the shape of a

Buddhist book whose proportions are inverse to those of western books: Buddhist books are much broader than tall, whereas western books are usually more tall than broad. The format of a manuscript made of palm leaves was retained when the *Kamawasa* was created by the Burmese from brass, cloth, ivory, lacquer, and gold leaf.* See "Burmese Monks...." above.

The Shan people of Burma created religious books from a paper made from the cambium of the mulberry shrub.* Although made of paper that is concertina folded, the form of these books conforms to that of a stout palm leaf manuscript. Each accordion folded page is read in succession on one side of the single sheet and then the book is inverted in order to read the succession of folds on the opposite side.

All types of books when not being used were kept in wooden chests to prevent damage from insects, mold, humidity, and light. Several of these chests which contained the most valuable possessions of a monastery are included in this collection.*

Creatures of the Himavanta Forest

In Buddhist cosmology, mythical creatures inhabit the Himavanta Forest that is located on the lower slopes of Mount Meru. When these powerful beings enter the world of man, they are usually benevolent, if treated properly. These creatures include the *Chinthe*, a leonine creature with flaming mane and body, who is a guardian of Buddhism, and today is the national symbol of Burma.* *Chinthes* are ubiquitous in Burmese art and two exquisitely carved ivory examples appear on the cover of this issue of the Bulletin.* The *Manukthiha* is a uniquely Burmese creation that joins the bodies of two lions with the torso and head of a human,* Another composite creature type that combines human with avian characteristics is the *Kinnara** (male) or *Kinnari** (female) who appear frequently in adoring pairs and are considered the "love birds" of the Himavanta

Forest. It is these creatures that are used to adorn the pulleys* that are attached to Burmese looms, which are frequently operated by unmarried girls whose thoughts, when not on weaving, often turn to thoughts of love and their future family - excellence in weaving being a desirable characteristic to attract a husband. An inhabitant of the forest with a normal anatomy is the *Hamsa (Hintha)** or brahmani duck which symbolizes marital fidelity, since this species has a single mate for life. *Hamsas* hold a branch of fructifying foliage in their beak as a symbol of prosperity and fertility .

Lacquerware

Although the wide-scale production of lacquerware did not begin in Burma until relatively recently, probably the 17th century, an extensive number of items, both secular and sacred, continue to be made from this marvelous substance, the only naturally occurring plastic. Lacquerware is created by covering a woven bamboo or wooden armature with multiple coats of lacquer which is produced from the sap of the Lac Tree. Each coat of lacquer must dry completely before an additional coat is applied. The final coat is polished to a high sheen and decoration is usually created by employing one of three methods: lines engraved into the hardened lacquer are filled with lacquer paste of a contrasting color or colors*; a black lacquer body is decorated by the application of gold leaf*; or a design in high relief is formed from lacquer and sawdust that is then inlaid with faux gems and gilded.* Symbols for the eight days of the week (the Burmese divide Wednesday at noon into two days) and for the Zodiac are frequently used on round objects such as serving trays*, and betel nut canisters.* Tiffin carriers are the Burmese equivalent of a picnic basket or "lunch box" which consists of a series of separate containers, one for each

item, stacked atop one another.*

Silver Boxes and Betel

Ingot silver transformed by the repousse technique is one of the oldest methods used in Burma to create art objects and dates back to the ancient Pyu period (c. 200-1000 AD) when it was employed to fashion Buddhist reliquaries. The repousse technique consists of hammering a patty of silver into the desired shape and then using small awls and punches to push the major decorative forms into the thin sheet of silver from the inside of the form. The intricate details of the design are then pushed (chased) into the metal from the outside, hence the term repousse, "repushed." Pitch or tree resin is used to brace the silver sheet while it is being worked. The silver boxes and bowls in this collection were used on sacred occasions when monks were present as well as privately in the home.* The bowls contained water or were used to collect and present religious offerings, whereas the boxes contained nuts from areca palms, leaves of the betel vine, and slaked lime - the ingredients needed to prepare betel quids which were ritually served to guests on ceremonial occasions as well as being chewed daily. The decorations on these objects frequently depict scenes taken from the stories of the former lives of the Buddha known as *Jataka* Tales* or, following a more secular theme, display attractive youth or courting couples.* These designs visually reflect the social custom that betel chewing was also a proper prelude to love making because it relaxed the body and sweetened the breath.

On behalf of the Center for Burma Studies, Northern Illinois University, and the Burma Studies Foundation, I wish to express our gratitude upon receiving the John and Lorene Lacey Collection of Burmese Art - a further extension of their natural and innate generosity which assures that these magnificent items will be displayed and made

available for appreciation and study to all who are interested in the history and expression of Burmese life. All future scholars of Burma will benefit assuredly for this bequest in memory of Lorene.

Remembering Terry: An Appreciation by Sarah Bekker

Only upon returning from the AAS meetings in Boston did I learn the sad news of the death of Jane Terry Bailey, one of our group's earliest Burmese Art enthusiasts. In the early 1960's Terry began working with the Burmese Collection at Denison University, a collection which had been started in the mid-nineteenth century by Northern Baptist Missionaries who studied at Denison prior to leaving for Burma. Their donations were later supplemented by gifts from Burmese students who attended Denison as a result of continuing missionary efforts in Burma. Although Terry's background was in Near Eastern and European Art, she became fascinated with the Burmese arts and crafts. Her enthusiasm was shared by that of Dr. James W. Grimes, a contemporary at Denison, and together they devoted themselves to expanding the emphasis on Buddhist Art at Denison by acquiring additional art objects which was to include a remarkable Pyu image.

Terry and I first met when my husband, Konrad, and I were posted to the American Embassy in Bangkok. She wrote to ask if I could take photographs of the Burmese pieces in the National Museum of Thailand as part of the photographic archive she was developing. This archive which was to become the basis for her syllabus for the teaching of Burmese Art History, which she completed in 1968. I was delighted to help with this project and with others which

subsequently developed.

In early 1969, my husband and I finally returned to the States for a brief time and were able to visit and really get to know the wonderful Baileys and Jim Grimes - as well as others at both Denison University and in Zanesville where the Bailey's lived. Terry proceeded to work busily and happily in Burmese Art and the collection continued to expand through the years from both gifts and purchases. For the Inaugural Exhibition of the Denison University Gallery was on October 3, 1973, Terry proudly included many newly acquired objects that she had helped add to the growing collection.

Also, Terry held a number of special exhibitions of Burmese Art in the years that followed. These were frequently in connection with biennial weekend symposia which she hosted for the Burma Studies Group, a tradition that has been continued by our Burma Studies Center at Northern Illinois University since its' establishment in 1986.

In 1970, she arranged an exhibition of photographs for the Asia Society in New York, "Buddhist Sculpture of Burma", picturing items from the fourth through the nineteenth centuries. She also organized, edited, and distributed the *Burmese Art Newsletter* from the 1960's until 1983.

By this date, Terry was no longer teaching but remained curator Emeritus of the collection at Denison University. Since she lived in Zanesville, a forty-mile drive away from Denison, commuting became increasingly difficult as she struggled with failing eyesight. However, her enthusiasm for things Burmese remained as high as ever. She continued going to meetings and writing papers and especially delighted in the visits of fellow "Burma Wallahs." As time progressed, she had to be driven to Denison but went happily at every opportunity.

After the Colloquium last October at the The Center for Burma Studies in DeKalb, Illinois, Sylvia Lu and I had the great good fortune of seeing Terry yet again at Denison, and spending several hours with her while viewing the collection. She was in a wheelchair, having suffered a serious fall two months earlier, but her spirits were high, her sense of humor intact, and she was positively euphoric to be with beloved friends once again. It is a joy to remember her this way, surrounded by things she treasured in an atmosphere that she herself had created. Dear Terry, we salute you!

**Jane Terry Bailey
and the Study of Burmese Art**
by Richard M. Cooler

The study of Burmese art lost an important friend in the recent death of Jane Terry Bailey, Curator Emeritus of the Burmese Art Collection at Denison University. It was due primarily to Terry's efforts that the collection at Denison prospered, grew, and was frequently exhibited. Without her tireless efforts and boundless enthusiasm much worth saving would have been lost. Her contributions to the study of Burmese art are evidenced in numerous ways: by the collection itself, in her published research, and in the comments and research of others. Many of her contributions have been discussed in previous issues of the *Bulletin of the Burma Studies Group* (See December 1995, No. 56; March 1997, No. 59). The best color photographic coverage of the Denison Collection is found in an article in *Arts of Asia* (Vol.18, no.1, 92-94). However, it is in the composite of Terry's own publications that the collection is most fully documented - particularly in the *Burmese Art Newsletter* which Terry

organized, edited, and published from 1968 until 1983.

Among members of the Burma Studies Group, Terry Bailey will be remembered for her role in creating and nurturing the first important collection of Burmese Art in the United States and as the gracious hostess of the biennial Burma Studies Colloquia that she so enthusiastically and repeatedly held at Denison.

BOOK REVIEWS

Review Essay:

Shwedagon, by U Tun Aung Chain and U Thein Hlaing. Published by Daw Myint Myint, Assistant Deputy Director, Universities Historical Research Centre, Yangon, Myanmar. Yangon, Myanmar: The Universities Press. 1996. US \$6.00

Shwedagon: Symbol of Strength and Serenity, U Aye Cho. Yangon, Myanmar: Yangon City Development Committee, 1997. US \$60.00

One of the more pleasing aspects of Burma's encouragement of tourism is that publications in English pertaining to important monuments by Burmese authors are appearing in bookstores and at pagoda stalls throughout the country. Not surprisingly, the two newest and most interesting focus on the Shwedagon, Burma's most sacred shrine.

The first, by U Tun Aung Chain and U Thein Hlaing, is a slim, soft-cover, handbook-sized publication retailing for \$6.00US. The introduction describes the reason for pagodas according to the Buddhist scriptures and then gives a succinct

account of the legendary founding of the edifice. This occurred because Tapussa and Bhallika, merchants from Lower Burma, encountered the Buddha shortly after his Enlightenment. The Buddha gave them eight sacred hairs which they brought back to Burma and enshrined with great pomp and ceremony in the relic chamber of a pagoda -- the sacred Shwedagon -- built expressly for the purpose. The authors then pick up the historical threads to describe the pagoda's development and its role as a "field of merit," first for Mon royalty and later for monarchs of the Ava and Kon-baung dynasties. Natural and man-made depredations such as fire and earthquakes and desecrations by British forces in 1824 and 1852 are also described. These sections are illustrated by black-and-white archival photographs which, unfortunately, have lost their original sharpness and contrast during the printing process.

The section on architecture discusses the evolution of the pagoda from Indian prototypes such as Sanchi and the Sri Lankan Thuparama Stupa at Anuradhapura. Accompanying this section is a useful fold-out diagram labeling the component parts of the Shwedagon in both English and romanized Burmese. The pagoda's dimensions are also given, along with an explanation of the diverse symbolism of the base, dome, and spire.

Much of the publication is devoted to a description of the pagoda platform with its various shrines, devotional halls, and religious association buildings "jumbled pell-mell with the confusion of tress which grow in the jungle." The majority of structures, built and embellished according to the whims and tastes of individual donors during the heyday of the British regime, display a bewildering array of forms and styles. They offer an unparalleled opportunity to study

the art and architecture of the colonial era, as well as a chance to observe the practices of popular Buddhism. The probable origins of the prevalent architectural forms, the *tazaung* pavilion and the *pyathat* spire, are discussed and the significance of the ubiquitous seated Buddha image in the earth-touching position (*bhumisparsa*) and the popularity of crowned images (*Jambupati*) in Burma are also explained. Wood-carving and glass mosaic, the leading forms of decoration, are also described. However, the pamphlet's explanation regarding the presence and significance of the planetary posts on the pagoda platform according to the Burmese astrological beliefs requires further clarification to be intelligible to foreigners.

With the aid of a numbered ground plan, the authors take the reader on an illustrated circumambulation of the platform. Beginning at the head of the West Stairway and proceeding in a clockwise direction, participants walk around the most significant pavilions and other points of interest. Throughout the "tour" the reader is nurtured on a wealth of fascinating detail about the lives of the donors and the costs of their works of merit.

The authors also make use of the decorative carved screens framing the entrances to various pavilions to retell legends of the Life of the Buddha and of some of his previous existences as related in the *Jataka* tales. Burmese folktales such as the turbulent lives of the Taung-byon brothers (members of the pantheon of the Thirty-seven Nats), related stories of the virtuous Ma Mei U and the misguided Ko Hti Lat, and of Maha Tham-bawa and Culasa Tham-bawa, the blind princes, are also recalled in vivid detail. Half-page color photographs, some of which are a little over-exposed, appear throughout the book and are a most useful aid in identifying the

described scenes.

The other publication reviewed here, *Shwedagon: Symbol of Strength and Serenity*, is a large-format, visually stunning, coffee-table sized volume weighing about five pounds and costing \$60.00US. It was published by the Yangon City Development Committee to commemorate the latest refurbishment of the pagoda by the current regime. The extensive list of credits include, as patrons, Lieutenant-General Kyin Nyunt and U Ko Lay, a nine member editorial advisory board, etc., etc. Where the book was printed was not given.

The first chapter, "Treasure House of our Faith, Culture, and History," records impressions of the Shwedagon by Western visitors such as Ralph Fitch, Michael Symes, Hiram Cox, Meneyev, Scott O'Connor, and Thomas Barber, followed by a list of Burmese literati, past and present, who have recorded their feelings of veneration for the noble monument. The second chapter, accompanied by excellent late nineteenth and early twentieth century archival photographs and line drawings from *The Graphic* and *Illustrated London News*, is devoted to the legendary accounts of the Shwedagon's founding.

Chapters Three and Four describe the refurbishments by former monarchs who, over the centuries, expanded the pagoda and its platform to their present sizes. Sacrilegious acts of the British invading forces during the Anglo-Burmese Wars are recounted in detail, as are the subsequent Burmese resilience and determination to rebuild and restore the symbol of their faith. The dimensions and a description of the component parts of the pagoda are given in Chapter Five, followed by a chapter, "The Crucible of Myanmar's Social Affairs," largely devoted to describing the pagoda as a symbol of resistance to British rule during

the colonial period.

The final and most interesting chapter, in terms of presenting new information, describes the recent large-scale renovations (as well as some figures concerning costs) carried out by the State Law and Order Restoration Committee (SLORC). New construction included a five million *kyat* park in front of the West Entrance, which was endowed with 24 Bodhi trees, a fountain, and a maze to "remind visitors of the illusionary nature of the world . . . and the plight of creatures lost in the round of Samsara." Toward the rear of the northwest quadrant a museum of 28 rooms with numerous dioramas devoted to the Life of the Buddha and his many reincarnations was built. The complex also includes a library to house sacred texts and archival documents pertaining to pagoda donations. Foreign visitors' lounges were also constructed at all the major entrances except the stairway on the North side.

The East and South Stairways were rebuilt and new elevators installed. Expenses for the Eastern renovation came to over 310 million *kyat*. Although figures are not given for the South Stairway, with all the new wood-carving and lacquer work the cost must also have been considerable. The pillars of the West Stairway were regilded and inlaid with new glass mosaic. The pagoda platform was repaved at a cost of 40.8 million *kyat* and the low wall enclosing the planetary posts and oil-lamp stands was refurbished with glazed ceramic *Jataka* plaques from Kyaung-myaung, which entailed the revival of an ancient art.

Because it is primarily a picture book, the text of *Shwedagon: Symbol of Strength and Serenity* is regularly interrupted by numerous photographic spreads which, along with an excessive number of sub-headings, makes reading far from smooth.

Typographical errors also irritate, as do vague captions failing to identify what particular stairway or pavilion is depicted. Captions and typographic errors aside, the photographic spreads are joys to behold. A contingent of talented photographers not only captured the sacred monument in all its moods and nuances from various angles, but also focused on the sensitive portrayal of its many devotees engaged in various acts of homage to their faith.

While critics of the regime may dismiss this showy publication as "an expensive panegyric to SLORC in its quest for legitimacy," the volume creates the all-too-rare opportunity for Burmese photographers to showcase their formidable talents. The average tourist, however, will find the more modest *Shwedagon*, published by the Universities Historical Research Centre, a better buy. It is not only a sound guide to the Shwedagon pagoda platform, but is also a most useful introduction to Burmese folklore. With such a promising start, it is to be hoped that in future various organizations within Burma will find it commercially viable to publish more books in English (and other languages) about other important monuments and different aspects of Burmese culture.

In conclusion, note should be made of one other book on the Shwedagon in the pipeline, titled *Shwedagon - Soul of Myanmar*, by Elizabeth Moore and Win Pe with photographs by Hansjorg Mayer, to be published by River Books, Bangkok, and Thames and Hudson, London. Dr. Elizabeth Moore is Head, Department of Art and Archaeology, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, with close family ties to Burma. U Win Pe is the highly esteemed author of *Shwedagon* (1972, Printing and Publishing Corporation, Rangoon), a book which remains the

standard work on Burma's most sacred monument. This forthcoming publication may well combine the virtues of a comprehensive text with superb photography. We all await further publications about Burma's most sacred monument with great interest.

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The House of Yang. Guardians of an Unknown Frontier, by Yang Li. Sidney: Bookpress, 12/88 Pitt Street, Sidney NSW 2001, 1997. 149 pp., Introduction by Josef Silverstein, preface, glossary, illustrations, maps, biographies, index.

The state of Kokang is only lately and marginally in the popular press, and then because of its opium production and the narcotics trade in the "Golden Triangle" area of Northeast Burma, Thailand, and Laos. It was a small region, composed of some 2,000 square kilometers, with some 80 percent of its population engaged in poppy production, which was introduced in the Nineteenth Century.

There is, however, another important element in Kokang history. For some thirty years since Burmese independence, it has been in revolt against the central government in Rangoon. Its international obscurity should not shroud its strategic importance along the China/Burma border. These importance first arose in connection with the integration into British Burma of an area both previously autonomous and 90 percent ethnically Chinese. More recently, Kokang has become important because of contemporary questions of ethnicity and the sharing of political power in Burma/Myanmar.

This work provides an added and helpful, if necessarily incomplete, perspective on the history and relations of Kokang and its

ruling family, the Yangs, who governed this state from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. As Josef Silverstein points out in his introduction, there have been studies of the Shan, the Karen, the Chin, and the Indians in Burma by members of those groups; this volume helps put Kokang on the ethnic published map. In that sense, this is a useful volume.

It is a labor of love by one of the family. The author, Yang Li, remains virtually anonymous throughout and is neither included in the list of important Yang family members nor in the index. As a set of biographical notes in historical and cultural perspective by one of the family, and the only such volume on this area by one of an extensive, and at various times, powerful clan, it makes no claim to objectivity or balance. That would be a different kind of book, one requiring access to materials not readily available to the author, such as Chinese records, and documents that may be in Rangoon. She does, however, use the historical India Office materials, as well as the usual secondary sources on the region. The volume is in a sense a landmark, for the only other popularly available work on Kokang published in the West was C.Y. Lee, *The Saopha and His Secretary* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Cudahy, 1957). As such, a work on this area was long overdue. Insofar as she has had intimate access to the family, she provides primary materials that may eventually be of use to later scholars.

This volume is not suited as a text, for it has a single perspective that, however important, does not provide sufficient balance on the critical issues of the region, such as narcotics. But it is one worth reading by those specializing in mainland Southeast Asia.

It is therefore a welcome addition to our understanding of the complex problems of frontier areas of that region.

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NEWS ABROAD

The International Conference on Post-Colonial Society and Culture in Southeast Asia was held in Yangon, 16-18 December 1998. Papers read at the Conference include:

R. H. Taylor, (University of Buckingham), "Identities: Local, National' or Global in Southeast Asia."

Charles Macdonald, (IRSEA, France), "A Comparative View of Multiethnicity and the Emergence of National Identity in Southeast Asia."

Withaya Sucharithanarugse, (Chulalongkorn University), "The Search for National Ideologies in Some Southeast Asian Nations."

Shaharil Talib, (University of Malaya), "Malaya/Malaysia 1948-1998 Defining the New State."

Ryuji Okudaira, (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), "Identity, Authenticity and Reputation in the Post Colonial History of Mainland Southeast Asia."

Craig J. Reynolds, (Australian National University), "Identity, Authenticity and reputation in the Post Colonial History of Mainland Southeast Asia"

Symposium in Honour of Professor U Pe Maung Tin (1888-1973)

11-13 September 1998 SOAS, London

This symposium was held in honour of U Pe

Maung Tin. The following papers were delivered at the symposium:

Anna Allott. "U Pe Maung Tin and Khit-san Sa-pe Literary Movement."

U Aung Ko. "Sayagyi U Pe Maung Tin: 'Beloved Father, Beloved Teacher and Understanding of the *Path of Purity*'."

Denise Bernot. "Le Cherver, le Savant et le Pedagogue U Pe Maung Tin: sa Contribution Aux Etudes Birmanes en France."

B. Brac de la Perriere. "Germane Relationship in the *Nat* Cult in the Chronicles."

Tilman Frasch. "Notes on *Dipavamsa*: An Early Publication by Prof U Pe Maung Tin."

E. Guillon. "U Pe Maung Tin and Mon Culture."

Patricia Herbert. "A Bibliographical Approach to Prof. Pe Maung Tin."

Khin Mya Kyu, Dr. "U Pe Maung Tin: Father of Burmese Cultural Heritage."

U Khin. "Buddhas's First Sermons: Benefits of the Translation."

U Kin Maung Lwin. "Buddhist Stupas in Myanmar."

Jacques Leider. "The Portuguese in the Bay of Bengal: New Research on their Presence and Influence in Arakan and Burma."

Dietrich Mahlo. "Early coinage of Myanmar: An Attempt to Throw some Light on the First Millennium AD in Myanmar." (with slides)

U Maung Maung Hein, U. "Sayagyi and I During the Years 1942-45."

Dr Nyi Nyi. "Sayagyi U Pe Maung Tin, the Pioneer Educator of Burma: his Life, Contributions and Achievements."

Archbishop Mya Han. "Pe Maung Tin: The Servant to the Kingdom."

Ryuji Okudaira. "A Serious Problem Caused by Printing of a Burmese Manuscript Richard's Text [1847] *Manugye Dhammathat* Law Book."

U Saw Lwin. "Professor U Pe Maung Tin and Myanmar Literature."

Alan Shaw. "U Pe Maung Tin: A Christian

Life and Teaching of Buddhism.”

Daw Sunda Khin. “Recollections of U Pe Maung Tin and Justice U Chan Htoon.”

Daw Tin Tin Myaing. “Educational Reflections of U Pe Maung Tin.”

U Tin Wai. “‘Bha Bha’ and the History of Burmese Dance.”

The Myanmar Two Millenia Conference Call for Papers

On the eve of Myanmar’s entry into the Third Millennium, the Universities Historical Research Center is organizing the “Myanmar Two Millenia” Conference, to be held in Yangon, 25-27 November 1999.

The intention of the M2M Conference is to examine and assess significant institutions and development in Myanmar state, society, religion and culture over the course of two millenia in order to arrive at an over-arching view of the Myanmar past and an understanding of the dynamics of stability and change in that past.

With the prospect of still more radical change and transformation to come in the Third Millennium, the understanding of the Myanmar past achieved by the M2M Conference is expected to bring about a better preparation to face up to the challenges of the Third Millennium.

Papers are invited for the M2M Conference, titles to be submitted by 30 June 1999, abstracts by 31 August 1999.

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BOOK NEWS IN BRIEF

by Leedom Lefferts

MORE CLASSICS:

Orchid -formerly White Orchid- Press continues to issue a growing catalog of reprints of classic volumes on Burma. While the best way to discover their list is through their web-site: <<http://redfrog.norconnect.no/~wop>>, below is presented a list of publications about Burma taken from that site as of mid-December 1998. Many of volumes are listed as part of their ever-growing series of publications; the following list attempts to pull all of these citations into one location. Descriptive material is taken from the web-site.

Note that many items are not yet published; if an item is without a price, even though it may have an ISBN, it is not yet available. H. K. Kuløy asks that you not order a volume that doesn't have a price.

Mr. Kuløy also noted that Phyre's **History** and Halliday's **Talaing** volume are recent additions; these are not yet cited on the web-site. Orders from North America are invited to use the Orchid press office in Montreal, Canada; Orchid Press also has representatives in Japan and Europe and some volumes are carried in better bookstores (see list at end of this section). (This list is divided into two parts: a) Books already published and b) Books to be published. In each category, publications are listed in the order of their original publication date, earlier ones first.)

A. ORCHID PRESS REPRINTS ALREADY PUBLISHED:

THE BURMESE EMPIRE A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, by Vincenzo Sangermano. 1838, 1885, 1985. vi, 352 pp. Crown 8vo. ISBN 974-8299-38-4 (TP). \$ 23.00.

ROUGH PENCILLINGS OF A ROUGH TRIP TO RANGOON IN 1846. by Colesworthy Grant. 1853, 1995. 112 pp., including numerous pen drawings. Sm. Imperial 8vo. ISBN 974-8299-79-1. \$ 20.00.

The well known Anglo-Indian artist and draftsman Colesworthy Grant made his first visit to Burma in 1846, and this report with his pencil drawings has long been completely unavailable. Less than a decade later, he accompanied the large Phayre mission to Burma and made numerous illustrations for that mission's report, but the present work is among the first with illustrations of Rangoon when it was still a small trading post.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE IRRAWADDY TO MANDALAY AND BHAMO, by Talboys Wheeler. 1871, 1995. 120 pp., six colour plates. ISBN 974-8299-67-8. \$ 16.00.

A little known volume containing an official report on a visit up the Irrawaddy river to Mandalay and Bhamo a decade before that last part of Burma was incorporated in the British empire, and its king exiled to India. Illustrated with contemporary water-colours not in the original edition.

HISTORY OF BURMA, including Burma Proper, Pegu, Taungu, Tennasserim and Arakan: From the earliest time to the end of the first war, by Sir Arthur Phayre. 1883, 1998. xii, 312 pp., maps, illustrations. ISBN 974-8299-00-7. \$ 25.00.

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC BURMESE MISSION FROM THE YEAR 1720 TO 1857, by Paul Ambrose

Bigandet .1887, 1995. vii, 152 pp. Crown 8vo. ISBN 974-8299-75-9 (TP). \$ 16.00.

NOTE ON A TOUR IN BURMA IN MARCH AND APRIL 1892, by F. O. Oertel 1893, 1995. 120 pp., 39 rare photographs. Sm. Imperial 8vo. ISBN 974-8299-73-2. \$ 20.00.

This almost forgotten report on Burma contains a detailed survey of historical sites, and includes photographs not previously reproduced. A rare work not found in most bibliographies on Burma.

AN ENGLISH GIRL'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF BURMAH, by Beth Ellis. 1896, 1997. 240 pp. 1 col. pl. Crown 8vo. ISBN 974-8299-55-4. \$ 35.00.

"What varied opinions we constantly hear, Of our rich Oriental possessions; What a jumble of notions, distorted and queer, From an Englishman's "Indian Impressions!"

THE SOUL OF A PEOPLE, by Harold Fielding Hall. 1898-1911, 1995. vi, 320 pp. Crown 8vo. ISBN 974-8304-17-5 (TP). \$ 18.00.

HORACE IN BURMA, by J. M. Symns. 1910, 1997. 96pp Crown 8vo. ISBN 972-8299-59-7. \$ 25.00. "One of the funniest travel accounts ever written..."

CURRY AND RICE: On Forty Plates or The Ingredients of Social Life at "Our Station" in India, by George Francklin Atkinson. 1911 (Fifth Edition), 1998. xii, 160 pp., 40 col. pl. Crown 4vo. ISBN 974-8299-51-1. \$ 40.00.

THE GENTLEMAN IN THE PARLOUR: A Record of a Journey from Rangoon to Haiphong, by W. Somerset Maugham. 1930, 1995. 280 pp. ISBN 974-8299-58-9. \$ 18.00. . Among the many memorable books on travels in Burma before the Second World War,

Somerset Maugham's leisurely progress from London via Colombo, then up the Irrawaddy to Mandalay and onwards through the then peaceful Shan States to Thailand and Cambodia ranks among the most enjoyable. He was not only a sharp-eyed observer of human nature but writes about his encounters with a good deal of empathy quite uncommon among travel writers of the 1920's.

B. ORCHID PRESS, REPRINTS TO BE PUBLISHED:

SYMES' FIRST EMBASSY TO THE COURT OF AVA IN 1794, by Michael Symes. 1800, 1998/99. xxiv, 504, 26 pl., 1 map. Large post 4to. ISBN 974-8299-77-5 --Pub. date to be announced--

SYMES' SECOND EMBASSY TO THE COURT OF AVA IN 1802, edited with introduction and notes by D. G. E. Hall. 1955, 1998/99. 270 pp., 4 col.pl. Large Post 4to. ISBN 974-8299-78-3 --Publication date to be announced--

These are boxed and sold as a set. Michael Symes' accounts of his two visits to Burma around two hundred years ago remain the most objective and sympathetic of reports by envoys or explorers of the 18th or 19th centuries. Symes was subsequently much maligned not only by his British successors in Burma, except Sir Arthur Phayre, but even by 20th century western historians and writers. D.G.E. Hall sets the record straight in his lengthy introduction to the papers he compiled on Symes' second mission to Amarapura, where King Bodwapaya then reigned.

BURMA: A HANDBOOK OF PRACTICAL INFORMATION, by James George Scott 1906, 1910, 1921, 1998/99. viii, 380 pp., 65 h/t pl., Crown 8vo. --Pub. date to be announced-- ISBN 974-8299-41-4.

THE THIRTY SEVEN NATS. A Phase of Spirit Worship prevailing in Burma. by Richard Cranac Temple. 1906, 1998/99. viii, 130 pp., col.pl., h/t pl., one map. --Pub. date to be announced-- ISBN 974-8299-92-9.

BALLADS OF BURMA, by "Oolay" Illustrated by T. Martin Jones. 1912, 1998-99. xvi, 116 pp., 37 ill. Pub. date to be announced. ISBN 974-8299-32-5.

Uxori Meæ: The World may deem their metre vile, Their language rough, To your bright eyes they brought a smile, It is enough .

BURMESE SKETCHES, by Taw Sein Ko. 1913, 1998/99. xii, 365 pp. Demy 8vo. --Pub. date to be announced-- ISBN 974-8299-39-4.

BRAHMANICAL GODS OF BURMA, a chapter of Indian art and iconography by Niharranjan Ray. 1932, 1998, 100pp, 35 plates --Pub. date to be announced-- ISBN 974-8299-30-9.

SANSKRIT BUDDHISM IN BURMA, by Niharranjan Ray. 1936, 1998/99, 118 pp. --Pub. date to be announced-- ISBN 974-8299-81-3.

THERAVADA BUDDHISM IN BURMA, by Niharranjan Ray. 1946, 1998/99, 306 pp. --Pub. date to be announced-- ISBN 974-8299-87-2.

A study in Indo-Chinese historical and cultural relations from the earliest times to the British conquest.

MORE BOOK NEWS:

ASU Program in Southeast Asian Studies announces the publication of:

An American in Burma, 1930-1942: The Memoirs of Muriel Sue De Gaa Upfill. Tempe: Arizona State University Program in Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph Series Press. Available March 1999; price to be

determined. ISBN 1-881044-05-X.

This memoir by an American woman married to a British insurance representative, provides an evenhanded approach to life in pre-WWII Rangoon. Mrs. Uphill was also important because she purchased the Helmsley Buddha which now resides at Denison College.

Noel F. Singer's article, "Felice Beato" "Burmese Days" (*Arts of Asia*, 1998, 28, 5: 96-107), with several important photographs, notes the lack of attention paid to Beato's life and work in Burma. Singer writes, this period is "the last and perhaps the most successful decades of his life" (pg. 96). The article includes a selected bibliography, with annotations for titles including Beato's photographs.

Burma Gets Chinese Paper

The Burmese Morning Post, the first Chinese-language newspaper in over 30 years, was launched on Wednesday (November 4, 1998) in Burma, according to Chinese residents in Rangoon.

The paper, called *Mian Dien Huo Bao* in Chinese, is published on a weekly basis, but might appear two or three times a week when readership expands. Its primary target is the Chinese community in Burma, which accounts for about one per cent of the population.

In recent years, the number of Chinese visitors from China's southern Yunnan province to Burma has increased, while many Chinese residents of ASEAN countries are also visiting Burma. The paper, whose editor is a Chinese-Burmese woman called Zhen Ling-Zhu, plans to distribute it in some ASEAN countries too, as well as in Canada and the United States.

Residents said the paper seems to

adopt a style and tone similar to other Burmese newspapers, which are tightly controlled by the state. The first edition's lead story was on Burmese leader Gen. Than Shwe and the second lead was on the visit to Shan State of Army Commander-in-Chief Gen. Maung Aye.

The paper, with an initial circulation of 5,000, has 16 pages and concentrates on trade and investment, tourism, culture, social and health issues, and activities of the Chinese community in Burma and overseas. The first edition also contained a large number of advertisements congratulating its launching.
