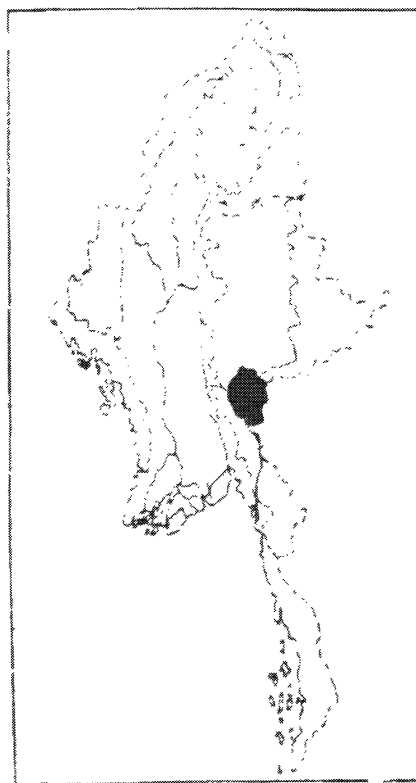


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***BULLETIN OF THE  
BURMA  
STUDIES GROUP***

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**Kayah State, Myanmar**

**BULLETIN OF THE BURMA STUDIES GROUP**  
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**Deadline for September issue is July 31, 2000.**

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## BURMA STUDIES GROUP MEETING

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The Annual Meeting of the Trustees of the Burma Studies Foundation will be held on Friday, 10 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 Brittany Room of the Town and Country Resort Hotel, San Diego.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF KAYAH STATE

by  
Byuha Khin

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(Reprinted from *The Working People's Daily* (Rangoon, Burma) Union Day Supplement; February 12, 1972.)

Karenni State or the Land of the Red Karens was the name under which we now know as Kayah State was known not so very long ago. With no precise knowledge of the names of the races that lived in and about this area, both Burmese and foreigners alike had found it easier to distinguish one race from the other by the colour of their clothes and had called them Red Karens, White Karens Black Karens or Striped Karens as the case may be. This is borne out by the fact that the syllable *ni* in the word Karenni is pure Burmese for the colour red.

It was only on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1951 the new name "*Kayah*" was adopted.

Anthropological findings show that all the indigenous races of Burma are of Mongoloid stock hailing originally from the Mongolian plateau of Central Asia. For reasons of increase in their numbers, scarcity of food due to vagaries of the weather and the oppression of the weak by the stronger, many of them had ventured south to seek greener pastures. The regions where each migratory group finally chose to settle down were naturally of diverse geographical and climatic conditions and separated from one another by immense distances. Accordingly, each little group developed its own peculiar language, mode of dress, habits, customs and mores. But the fact remains that they are all actually kith and kin of the same basic ethnic group with the same blood flowing in their veins.

The Kayahs who were formerly called Karennis are by far the most numerous and live all over the state. The Kayam and the Yin-baw are to be found in Dimawso township; the Manu Manaw and the Bre in Phruso township; the Yang-Talai predominately in Pa-saung township; and the Keko and the Keba in Loikaw and Dimawso townships. Even so, they understand one another's language to some extent.

Here we present a brief history of the Kayah State as written by writer Byuha Khin in 1949 which was recently re-published in "Historical documents concerning the Kayah State" published by the Information Department of the Kayah State Council. The original name of the article was "A Brief History of the Land of the Karenni."

To this day, pagodas and other religious edifices along with the techniques of manufacturing the Pa-si metal drum and Yun lacquer-ware as well as other cultural pursuits which have survived bear witness to the fact that over a thousand years ago, this region was under the sway of the Yun people. But when the Yun dynasties gave out and they had to leave, the Karenni chiefs stepped in their place and ruled the land.

According to the Upper Burma Gazetteer by Sir George Scott, "the separation seems to have come in the time of the fifth Chief of Bawlake, called Po Byu Hla. In his reign a Talaing, called Maung Pon, said to be of royal blood, came up to Bawlake and settled there, and seems rapidly to have acquired great influence. Po Byu Hla came to the conclusion that it was not good for two rulers to remain in the same village, and therefore made Maung Pon go and take charge of country east of the Pawn chaung. This the Talaing did (calling his area Gandarawadi and building palace in Saw-lon) and assumed the title of Papaw-gyi. Eastern Karenni has been a separate State since then.

Although the vast territory ruled by Bawlake was subsequently divided into Gandarawadi, Bawlake, Kye-bo-gyi, Naung-pale, Nanmekon and Ngwe-daung entirely through Bawlake's own generosity, all taken together form a distinct entity known as the Karenni State to this day.

### Language

While they speak Karenni among themselves, Shan and Burmese vocabularies are current in matters of trade. Official language however has

always been Burmese since the old days.

### Religion

It is obvious that the predominant religion is Buddhism from the 34,000 who follow that faith. There are some 26,000 animists, 10,000 Christians and 500 of other religions.

Just as animism still survives among many Buddhists in Burma proper, so also in the Karenni State with the result that it is the second most popular religion there.

Judging from the many religious stupas built by the Yun kings to be found in the State, Buddhism must have been there for many years.

In the days of Sawlapaw Gyi, Prince of Gandarawadi, one U Siri had spared no pains to entreat King Mindon, the Convenor of the Fifth Buddhist Synod, to spread the faith in the land of the Karenni. Accordingly, with the purest of intentions, the King not only sent five images of the Buddha such as were kept at the prows of royal barges as well as versions of the Tripitikas inscribed on palm leaves in letters of gold but also arranged for a monk of Shan origin who had been staying in the royal city and who was well versed in Buddhist scriptures to proceed to Gandarawadi to propagate the teachings of Buddha.

Hence the establishment of Siri-taw or Thiri City after the name of its founder U Siri (Karenni siri-thiri; taw-city) now known as Loikaw as the centre of the new mission. To this day there is a huge column of teak finished in gold and with an inscription at the top: "City of Gandarawadi" at that place to mark the occasion.

## Cultural Heritage

At the height of their power, the Yun chieftains held sway not only throughout the land of the Karenni but also as far as Yawnghwe in the southern Shan States. The ancient ruins of pagodas all the way from Ngwedaung right up to Yawnghwe have yielded a good deal of evidence of their culture in the form of brass inscriptions, brass pottery and clay-pipes which had once been enshrined in them.

The arts of weaving into flexible shapes the different patterns of lacquerware, etching designs and inlaying them with gold, laying glass-mosaic, gilding, lacquering and similar skills were practiced in Ngwedaung in those days. Moreover, the manufacture of brass and silver-ware seems to have flourished a great deal in old Ngwedaung as may be seen from extant bells and gongs of leading bullocks of cattle caravans and brass ornamental neck-hoops still being worn by some Paduang women and prized even in the west.

In addition, the following passage on Page 315 of the Upper Burma Gazetteer is a quotation from the diary of one Mr. O'Reily in 1864 on the manufacture in Ngwedaung of Pa-si, the black brass ceremonial drum, one of the accoutrements of the Burmese court; "The Red Karen women weave their own clothing, as well as the breeches of the men and cotton blankets which they use. The most characteristic manufacture of Karenni is that of the Pa-si, or Karen metal drum...The industry is confined to Ngwedaung." He also went on to describe the weaving of Ngwedaung slingbags as well as the large-scale manufacture of stick-lac in Loikaw. (This is the very Ngwedaung so famous on the

Burmese stage as the abode of the mythological Keinnaya celestial beings in the episode of the Return of Dwe Mai Naw to Ngwedaung. It is only 9 miles to the south of Loikaw.)

The reason for molding Pa-si drums was due to the fact that in the land of the Karenni, there was much dependence on elephants for the extensive timber extraction work. In accordance with the old saying: "Rains come when frogs croak; fish rise when rains come; elephants draw when floods come; timber comes when elephants draw; and the land prospers when timber comes". Right in the centre of the Pa-si drum there is etched a design of the rising sun surrounded by successive rings of fish, molluscs and stars. Small reproductions of frogs are attached at even distances on the outer rim of the drum's surface singly, in twos or in threes one above another. On one side of the drum there is attached the reproductions of one, two or three elephants. Pa-si casting is no longer done and its price has risen with growing scarcity.

Mr. O'Reily has written under a separate heading of "Slavery" that the Karenni were extremely savage and inhuman; that they raided and plundered hamlets on their borders and took slaves; that they considered that they had a prescriptive right to seize and take into slavery White Karens more so than Shans and Taungthus; and that they not only made slaves of those they seized but also sold them like so many cattle through the Yun tribes for servitude in Siam. (Apart from whether this is true or otherwise, is it not such as would cause enmity among the citizens of the country and likely to incense the White

Karens against their neighbours?)

In spite of the Karenni State being a land of mountains, forests, ravines and depressions, there are many arable areas in the basins of the Balu chaung, Tha-bet chaung, Pawn chaung, Tu chaung and the river Salween. Particularly in Loikaw and Ngwedaung-Naung-Pal and Kyebo-gyi, there are signs of cultivation of previous days which leave no doubt whatsoever that once upon a time the area supported as many as a million and a half inhabitants.

According to old inhabitants, the region had been so denuded of vegetation as a result of clearing for cultivation that fast-growing saplings such as *nyaung* and *thit-ka doe* had had to be planted to maintain the supply of firewood. It is said that there were not even enough bamboos or plants left for the purpose of fencing that pieces of rock had had to be used instead. There is ample evidence of such fencing in the old sites of past towns and villages.

Along the Balu chaung, although there is irrigation by means of bamboo-tube water wheels, cultivation is negligible because of the inadequacy of water supply. However, with the introduction of a proper irrigation system in the near future, there is every possibility that not only those areas which were formerly cultivated but also virgin land would be brought under cultivation.

In the region where Maung Maung Phone had once founded his capital, the land is still fertile and green with cultivation. Though hoary with age, the royal residency of Sawlon lies in ruins, its magnificent teak columns still stand dignified in their golden splendour. The

area certainly needs fresh planning and rejuvenation.

As regards minerals, in Papada Thelawadi or Bawlake as it is known now, the production of zinc, tin and wolfram from Mawchi mines need no elaboration. Similarly there are many more mineral resources including an emerald mine the like of which there are so few in the world. The Sawlapaw emerald, which is so popular in Burma is found in Nam Mun mines of Gandarawadi. But as they have not been worked for a long time, they are choked with forest growth and the work of rehabilitation is not to be underestimated.

The Karenni were as highly civilized as their land was rich in natural resources. In affairs of state also, they were close allies of Burma proper through out the dyanastiecs of Ava, Shwebo, Amarapura and Mandalay. They participated in the incursions of Bayinnaung and Alaungpaya into Siam for instance. When Prince Myingun fled the Burmese court, the *Sawbwa* of Kye-bo-gyi gave him sanctuary and provided him with all the necessary royal amenities. He also assisted him later on to go across the border to Cambodia. Even at the time of the fall of Mandalay to the British, Kyemmong Sawlawi, nephew of the great *sawbwa Sawlapaw*, was at the palace learning the official language and practices of the Burmese court and undergoing training in military affairs.

Sawlapaw Gyi tried repeatedly to repulse the British but had to finally give up as he could not match either forces or arms with the enemy. So, after handing over authority to his ministers, he fled the country in the company of U Siri, the founder of Loikaw, and crossed the

Salween to the east bank heading for Siam. Kyemmong Sawlawi then became the myosa of Gandarawadi by election at a convocation of chieftains. This met with the approval of the British military representatives and as a result he was later raised to the status of a *sawbwa* by the Delhi government.

Buddhism greatly flourished in the reign of this *sawbwa*. The stupas, pagodas, monasteries, wells, water storage-tanks, bridges and rest-houses of teak and zinc-roofing at camping sites were built in his time still remain to remind us of his great devotion to religion. He sent for architects and builders from Mandalay and had religious edifices built in Sawlon, Ywa-thit and Loikaw at a cost of five lakh kyats per unit. Such was his devotion. Considering all those vestiges of a past glory, there is not the slightest doubt that prior to the arrival of the colonizing British capitalist blood-suckers, the Karenni state was a populous and prosperous land with a high degree of civilization and culture in addition to a religion which was all embracing and up-lifting.

### Exports

Mr. H. Jackson, Deputy Conservator of Forests, had estimated the amount of forest produce then available and had mentioned the vast extent of forest land in Karenni State on Page 311 of the Upper Burma Gazetteer. Forest produce was the main stay of the state's income. According to him: "No matter how many logs are extracted annually from the forests on the east bank of the Salween in Gandarawadi, there is no likelihood of injury to the forest capital. Logs are floated down the Salween to Moulmein.

Apart from teak, there also grow *pyinkado*, *thitkado*, *in*, *thit-ya*, *in-gyin*, pine and other species of trees in those forests."

Insects for the production of stick-lae are grafted on branches of the *pauk*, the *gyo* and *nyaung* trees as in the past but the industry is developing. Similarly there is increase in the boiling of crutch.

Cotton cloth is woven for home consumption only although Shan bags of silk and cotton mixed are woven in Ngwedaung and sent all over Burma proper.

Tin, zinc, wolfram and antimony are being exported to the west in large quantities from Mawchi Mines.

### Imports

The state has to depend on Burma for the supply of salt, *nga pi*, textiles and household goods which come in through Moulmein, Toungoo, Shwenyaung and Yawghwe.

### Prospects

Previous cultivation in Loikaw, Ngwedaung, Naung-Pale, Nanmekon and Kyebo-gyi had to be discontinued owing to drought in Moby area. The reason for lack of water is probably the same as in Pagan. Scientists say that in Pagan, the forests disappeared as a result of extensive felling of trees for firewood to make bricks required for the building of numerous pagodas there. In these places also forests disappeared as a result of indiscriminate clearing of land for taungya and rice cultivation. But in the vicinity of these places, there are many streams springs and brooks from which water might be channelled to irrigate the old plots of cultivation. There are also

numerous depressions where water might be stored by means of bunds and dams for irrigation purposes. Priority will have to be given to the construction of irrigation works in future plans for rehabilitation. If that is done there will be more rice available than necessary for home consumption.

In the many depressions and valleys, there are streams and patches of water with plenty of lush green grass growing around them to be able to support large herds of cattle. In these low-lying areas, plants that thrive in water such as jute might be planted.

In the higher regions, tea, coffee, pepper and such plants as would easily grow in these areas might be grown even for export.

The cultivation of betel-leaves, betel-nuts, tobacco, coconuts, sugarcane and fruit trees in Sawlon, Ywa-thit and similar areas might be further encouraged.

The hot springs might be inspected for their mineral content and used as spas for therapeutic purposes.

It might prove worth while to reopen the Nan Mun Emerald mines and to work it with modern machinery.

Sixteen miles from Loikaw, the Lawpita waterfall has a drop of 600 feet. The force of the water might be harnessed for a hydro-electric plant which may well generate enough power to supply the whole of Burma.

Lastly, a mineral that could be of great importance to the Union, iron, might be won from smelting the inexhaustible supply of iron-ore, whole mountains of which exist near Ywa-thit on the west of the Salween. Chemical analysis has shown that the iron content

of the ore is 60 per cent and that the best steel might be made from it. The hydro-electric power plant mentioned above would be most convenient for the smelting works.

### Political awakening

Although in name the Karenni states were independent, the ruling *Sawbwaws* were bound by the terms of the Sanads granted by the British, and as such were mere puppets. The *Sawbwa* of Gandarawadi, for instance, was controlled by the following 12 conditions:-

- (1) To pay a tribute of K 5,000 annually with effect from the First January 1889 to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1893 with the amount of the tribute being subject to revision thereafter.
- (2) To abstain from communication with States in or outside British India and to address the Chief commissioner through the Superintendent of the Shan States should the necessary arise for such communication.
- (3) To accept and act upon any advice that may be given by the Chief Commissioner of Burma, either in respect of the internal affairs of Gandarawadi or Eastern Karenni or in respect of its relations with other states.
- (4) To govern the people living within Gandarawadi according to their custom and to refrain from oppressing them in any manner.
- (5) To maintain order within the territory of Gandarawadi and keep open the trade routes; to pay such compensation as the



- Superintendent of the Shan States may fix should traders or caravans be attacked with the said territory.
- (6) To keep an agent at the headquarters of the Superintendent of the Shan States if the latter should so desire to keep him informed concerning the condition of Gandarawadi.
  - (7) To submit to the Superintendent of the Shan States any dispute arising connected with any part of the Shan States and to abide by the latter's decision; to pay such compensation as the Superintendent of the Shan States may fix should any inhabitant of Gandarawadi commit raids on any place outside the limits of that territory.
  - (8) To provide land free of cost should the Government of India wish at any time to make a railway through any part of Gandarawadi and to help as much as possible.
  - (9) Not to permit the transportation into Burma proper from Gandarawadi any opium, spirits or fermented liquor and other articles liable to customs or excise duty except in accordance with the rules prescribed for the payment of such duties.
  - (10) To aid officers of the British government who pursue criminals into Gandarawadi and to deliver such criminals to them.
  - (11) To refrain from exercising any jurisdiction over any British subject who commits a criminal offence within Gandarawadi and to refer the case to the Superintendent of the Shan States for orders.

- (12) To refrain from employing or retaining in the service of Gandarawadi State any one who is not a subject of that state without the consent of the Chief Commissioner.

Bound by so many restrictions, the people of Karenni State, like the proverbial little frog at the bottom of a well, were not only bereft of opportunities for educational and economic development but were also exploited by timber firms like Foucar's McGregor's and Bombay Burma to such an extent that they were reduced practically to starvation level and as a result became extremely poor in health.

Thus it came to pass that in addition to poorer people having to suffer, the condition of those big merchants who had once worked the forests with herds of elephants also deteriorated. It was truly a case of "the king in the south not being able to help the king in the north" as the saying goes.

But then, those who had seen and studied conditions in Burma proper and abroad could do little to improve the lot of the masses. While waiting for a suitable opportunity, World War II broke out and much suffering was experienced. When the British gave way to the Japanese, it became another case of "placating the *nat* for fear of the tiger and finding the *nat* even worse than the tiger". It was only when the Resistance movement against the Japanese came about that they could participate in driving out the Japanese at the risk of losing their lives. Thence onwards, their bravery and patriotism have been proved beyond the slightest doubt.

## The Agreement of 1875

In accordance with the request of His Excellency the Viceroy of India that Western Karennee should be allowed to remain separate and independent, His Majesty the King of Burma, taking into consideration the great friendship existing between the two great countries and the desire that the friendship may be lasting and permanent, agrees that no sovereignty or governing authority of any description shall be exercised or claimed in Western Karennee and His Excellency the Kin-Woon Mengyee, Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the part of His Majesty the King of Burma, and the Honourable Sir Douglas Forsyth, CB KCBI, envoy on the part of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, execute the following agreement:-

“It is hereby agreed between the British and Burmese Government that the state Karennee shall remain separate and independent, and that no sovereignty or governing body of any description shall be claimed or exercised over that State.

Whereunto we have on this day, the 21<sup>st</sup> day of June 1875 corresponding with the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the Waning moon of Nayoung 1237 BE, affixed our seals and signature.”

Seal. (Sd) TD Forsyth. Seal (Sd) Kin-Woon Mengyee.

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Conference on Burma Studies  
will be held  
October 12-15, 2000  
Center for Burma Studies  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, Illinois

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## LIST OF ABSTRACTS SUBMITTED FOR THE BURMA STUDIES CONFERENCE

(as of 21 February, 2000 in the order they were received)

1. *“Courtly Music in a Conflicted State,”* by Ward Keeler (University of Texas)
2. *“The Relationship between Word and Image in 17th and 18th Century Burmese Wallpaintings,”* by Alexandra Green (School of Oriental and African Studies)
3. *“A Glimpse into the Burmese Martial Arts,”* by Michael Martin (no affiliation)
4. *“Burmese on the Move in the Domestic Economy: Change and Continuity in Cart and Wagon Transportation Technologies in Colonial Burma,”* by Michael Charney (National University of Singapore)
5. *“Inscriptions on Burmese Lacquerware: Messages Sent Within a Culture,”* by Ralph Isaacs (Formerly British Council)
6. *“The prospect of Agriculture in Myanmar, and the Impact of Horizontal*

*and Vertical Coordination over the Execution of Summer Paddies (1992 to Present),*” by Ardeth Maung (University of Wisconsin)

7. *“Burma-Yunnan Relations in the Seventeenth Century,”* by Ms. Wil O Dijk (Ph.D. candidate at Leiden University)

8. *“Buddhist Votive Imagery from Burma: Shan Miniature Metal Sculpture,”* by Pattratorn Chirapravati (Asst. Curator SE Asian Art Asian Art Museum of San Francisco)

9. Monique Skidmore (University of Melbourne)

10. *“The Two Faces of Fritz Noetling: Chronicler and Despoiler,”* by Marilyn Longmuir (University of Queensland?)

11. *“Friedrich Nietzsche in Burma. A Contribution Towards the Study of Occidentalism,”* by Hans-Bernd Zoellner (Hamburg University)

12. *“A Theme of Brother and Sister within a Context of Burmese Traditional Culture,”* by Alla Burman (Dept. Indian, Iranian and Armenian Studies, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

13. *“A Comparative Analysis of Burmese Consecration Rituals,”* by Benedicte Brac de la Perrier (Research Fellow, National Center for Scientific Research, Southeast Asia and Austronesia World Team)

14. *“Celebration, Affirmation and*

*Change: A ‘Traditional’ Festival in a Karenni Refugee Camp,”* by Sandra Dudley (Jesus College, Oxford)

15. \* *“Of Consumption, Confessions, Matrimonial Promises/Faults and Parallel Wives: Role of Original Texts, Interpretation, Ideology and Policy in Pre and Post-1962 Burmese Case Law,”* by U Myint Zan (Deakin University, Australia) \* *“An Analysis of Three Royal Orders with a View of Discerning The Existence and Mode of Function of the Burmese Legal Profession in the early 17th Century.”* (He has offered 2 papers for consideration)

16. *“Nation Building and the Appropriation of Buddhism in Contemporary Burma: The State Peace and Development Council’s Propaganda Campaigns,”* by Janette Philip (Deakin University, Australia)

17. *“The Ne Win Doctrine: A Systematic Campaign of Hatred,”* by Vum Son (Chin Activist?)

18. *“Party Politics (‘pati nain-nganyei’) Versus National Politics (‘amyoudha nain-nganyei’) in Burma-Discourse, Analysis, and Historical Background,”* by Kei Nemoto (ILCAA Associate Professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

19. *“Global Communications/Local Conceptions: New Technologies and the Public Sphere among the Burmese in Thailand,”* by Lisa Brooten (Ph.D. Candidate School of Telecommunications, Ohio University)

20. "Prince Inang (Siamese Prince Inao)", by Lieu Cao Thi (Documentaliste Bibliotheque Asie du Sud-Est, Universite de Provence)

21. "Burmese in the US: 'Home Politics' and Migration," by Edith Bowles (Former Coordinator of Jesuit Refugee Service in Bangkok)

22. "Two Painted Parabaik Manuscripts in the Collections of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania," by April Tin Tin Aye (Temple University)

23. 'Myanmarfication': The Role of Burma's Myanmar Culture Policy in Forging National Unity, by Gustaaf Houtman (Editorial Consultant *Anthropology Today*)

#### OTHER POSSIBILITIES

1. Charlotte Reith has expressed an interest in doing a paper on one of Burma's small potteries

2. Helen Poe has expressed an interest in describing some of the recently acquired *parabaiks* at the Library of Congress.

3. Sylvia Fraser Lu, if in short of papers, she could perhaps do one on lotus stem weaving entitled "Stemming from the Lotus: Sacred Robes for Buddhist Monks." She plans to go to Burma at the tail-end of the rainy season next September for further observations.

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#### BOOK REVIEWS

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Stadtner, Donald M., ed. *The Art of Burma, New Studies*. Mumbai, India: Marg Publications, 1999. \$100. ISBN: 8185026440.

In the nearly forty years since the military take-over of Burma, there have been few opportunities for scholars, Burmese or non-Burmese, to devote themselves to the art and architecture of this remarkable country. That makes the present volume doubly welcome. Marg's previous publication on Burmese art was in 1956, still in the glow of Independence for both India and Burma, and still at a time when archaeology was actively pursued in Burma.

The auspiciously appropriate nine chapters with nine different authors covers a wide range of topics. It begins with John Guy's survey of the art of the early peoples of Burma, the Pyu and the Mon. He pulls together in a helpful fashion the discoveries to date, relating them to contemporaneous Chinese documents. Unfortunately, there is still little evidence of Mon sculpture in Burma, probably due simply to the lack of excavation of Mon sites. This is in marked contrast to neighboring Thailand where excavations have yielded quantities of early Mon sculpture.

Depictions of Vishnu in Burma is the subject of the second article. Written by Pamela Gutman, it gives early Pyu and Mon examples as well as references to the Arakanese, her special interest. Influences on later Burmese royal

customs are noted as well.

The next article, by Claudine Bautze-Pieron, discusses the *andagu* stelae, the fine-grained pyrophyllite plaques that typically show a centrally seated Buddha image surrounded by significant scenes from his life. These are found in quantity in Burma, but also in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, and Tibet. Bautze-Pieron hypothesizes an origin in India with continuation of production in Burma in the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, Hiram Woodward's most recent work on the same subject ("The Indian Roots of the 'Burmese' Life-of-the-Buddha Plaques", in *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 5, Journal of the Institute of Silk Road Studies, Kamakura, 1997-98, pp. 395-408) was apparently not available when this article was prepared. Further research is called for.

Donald Stadtner's article on Pagan bronzes, primarily of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, is next. As this volume is an Indian publication, connections with Indian art and history are considered throughout the text. Stadtner, the editor, is also the author of the thoughtful foreword, which pulls these varied contributions together. In this article Stadtner points out that while the "Pala style" is more typical for Pagan's metal images than for the stone images, the metal content of Pagan bronzes is similar to bronzes from Yunnan rather than from eastern India. The problem of dating Pagan bronzes can only be solved by more examples becoming available—fortunately, three previously unpublished bronzes are presented here.

The most dramatic article in the

volume is the fifth, "The Vaults and Arches of Pagan", by Pierre Pichard. It concerns those lofty spaces so breathtaking in the temples of Pagan. Antecedents in India are few and less than half the size of those at Pagan. The vaults of the Pagan temples are a technological wonder, more amazing because some of the earliest temples enclose the widest spaces. Pichard points out how vaulting techniques in Pagan differed from those in Europe where a strong binding mortar was used with horizontally laid bricks. The lime mortar of Pagan was used for plastering, not for binding. A simple clay mortar was used with strong wedge-shaped bricks, often laid vertically rather than horizontally. Often double or even triple vaults were built, sometimes with a space above left open as a "relieving vault". This article with its spectacular photographs is a major contribution to our appreciation of the architects of Pagan.

The remaining four articles cover widely disparate material. Article six, by Pratapaditya Pal, presents the two cloth paintings of early Pagan discovered in the 1980's and restored by Italian artisans under UNESCO auspices. Pal points out stylistic parallels with manuscript painting from Bihar and Bengal and finds the style of the cloth paintings similar to Pagan eleventh-century mural paintings. He also explores parallels with Nepal and Tibet.

Patricia Herbert's interesting article on Burmese court manuscripts covers the nineteenth century development of manuscript painting, including depictions of events involving Royal Merit-Making. Religious and

cosmological illustrated manuscripts are still produced, but now historical events with processions and celebrations were recorded. Particularly enchanting is the illustration of the “second royal donation at Kyauk-Myaung . . . (1853). The King made an offering by setting afloat on the river more than 100,000 oil lamps costing in all 1,000 *kyats*”.

The next article, the eighth, by T. Richard Blurton, is entitled, “Scarlet, Gold and Black: The Lacquer Traditions of Burma”. It gives a brief history of lacquer-making in Burma, describes the techniques of production, and illustrates some of the main types. Blurton expresses hope that past lack of interest in Burmese studies will be partially redressed by the major exhibition and catalog of Burmese lacquer at The British Museum, opening October 1999.

Finally, the ninth article, “Burmese Jewellery from the V and A” is presented by Choodamani Nandagopal. The examples illustrated and discussed are from the nineteenth century and are divided into three groups: ruby encrusted articles, articles of gold filagree, and miscellaneous. The most historically interesting is the gold pectoral cross set with rubies which King Mindon had made for Robert Milman, the Bishop of Calcutta, in 1870 A.D. A beautiful object, it also attests to the vivid and tolerant interest of King Mindon in other religious traditions. Personal jewellery, ceremonial jewellery (such as the carefully wrought *salwè*, “shoulder belt”, worn as a sign of nobility), and items as varied as gold boxes, ruby-inlaid pots and bowls, all show the great skill of Burmese craftsmen.

This volume adds substantially to the

published material on Burmese arts, yet it leaves the reader wishing for much more. There are so many areas worthy of study, with researchers eager to work in the field. Let us hope that opportunities will open up soon.

Sarah M. Bekker  
Arlington, Virginia

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Marshall, Harry Ignatius. *The Karen of Burma: A Study in Anthropology and Ethnology*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press. 1997 (orig. 1922). \$27.50: ISBN: 974-8496-86-4.

At the turn of the 1900's, Harry Marshall traveled to Burma to missionize among the Karen. Although the exact number of years he lived among them is unclear, Marshall spent enough time with the Karen to build an extensive knowledge of their way of life, particularly of the Sgaw in the rural areas of eastern Burma. Publishing his ethnography in 1922, Marshall drew both from his experiences and from written sources, mostly missionary, dating back to the mid-1800s. His purposes for writing were two-fold: first, he saw the book as a “by-product of the great missionary enterprise” (p. xiv), and, second, he visualized it as part of the creation of a pan-Karen movement, pulling together the diverse peoples generally seen as falling under the “Karen” ethnic label.

While Marshall's Baptist agenda is apparent, particularly in his treatment of Karen religion (8 chapters), overall his book is well balanced and informative. (Most of his information on animist Karen rites comes from secondary sources rather than through observation.)

His writing, although dense, is detailed, informative, and still useful today in understanding changing Karen culture and history. Marshall tends to write in the ethnographic present, requiring the reader to figure out which elements of Karen cultural traditions remain in the year 2000 and which might have evolved or vanished. Nevertheless, he provides one of the few sources on the Karen of Burma that gives such a detailed and relatively unbiased picture of their life. It works well in conjunction with Jonathan Falla's (1991) *True Love and Bartholomew* (a more recent presentation on the Karen life and the revolution in southern Burma). My main complaint concerns Marshall's frequent reference to "primitive" and "backward" Karen, although this was commonplace in ethnographies at the time.

Having spent several months among the Karen in the southern Tenneserrim Division, I read with fascination Marshall's accounts of stories of which I had heard bits and pieces from some of the older people with whom I lived. For example, he provides clear descriptions and explanations of the symbolism of Karen bronze drums. The importance of this instrument today is apparent through its centrality on the flag of the Karen National Union; despite being produced by Shan for Karen the bronze drum has become an icon of Karen unity and culture in their struggle against the Burmese central government. Marshall's account of the drums offers understanding of the historical relations among the various peoples throughout the region and can be extrapolated to provide insights into the development of

a Karen identity by current revolutionaries.

Similarly, Marshall enumerates many aspects of Karen culture and life that still influence the lives of the mostly Christian Karen revolutionaries whom I know. The values of family relationships, generosity, hospitality, and poetry are explained in detail in Marshall's sections on domestic life (with chapters on the Karen village-house, food, agriculture, hunting, cloth and basketry as well as the bronze drum), social life (including social conditions, laws, warfare, music, and life cycle events), and religious life (examining non-Christian beliefs and practices, including religious conceptions, supernatural and mythical beings, sacrifices and offerings, Mount "Thaw Thai" religious cults, magic, divination, and tabu). A discussion of Karen Buddhists, who far outnumber Christian Karen even today, is missing.

Marshall makes frequent references to Karen relations with the Burmans in several different sections of the book. The roots of the tensions that exist between these two peoples can be seen in his account, stemming from political motivations as well as cultural identities.

His version of history gives insight into the conflicts; tensions are far older than 1949, the date of the origin of the Karen revolution.

Politics aside, Marshall's book also contains numerous black and white photographs of Karen life. Besides illustrating the descriptions in the text, the photographs are an invaluable record of the Karen early in the 1900's. They record both "traditional" (pre-Christian, in Marshall's terms) life and some of the

changes the Karen faced as they encountered Christian missionaries, when some converted. Throughout the book, pictures of Karen Christians, military officers, and school children offer intriguing comparisons with those of non-Christians. While Marshall over-emphasizes the extent of Christianity among the Karen and makes only general acknowledgment of different Karen groups, his use of photographs indirectly presents the diversity among the peoples who are grouped under the Karen name.

Taken in this light, Marshall's book is a good record of turn-of-the-1900's Karen life, culture, and diversity. Because the Burmese government has allowed few foreigners access to the Karen, especially in rural areas, since 1962, Marshall's account is a useful historical source, placed within its own historical context of British colonialism and Christian missionaries.

Sue Darlington  
Hampshire College

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Smith, Martin *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London and New York: Zed Books (dist. in USA by St. Martin's Press), Dhaka: The University Press, Bangkok: White Lotus. 1999. (hb) \$69.95: ISBN: 1-85649-659-7; (pb) \$29.95: ISBN 1-85649-660-0.

Nine years ago the original edition of this book appeared and was instantly acclaimed. It filled a void in the literature on Burma and suddenly made the interested public aware of the indigenous minorities and their struggles to find a permanent and peaceful place in the polity and society of Burma. The

book's strength reflected the research efforts of the author, who spent years traveling through the hills and border areas where more than a third of the nation's population lived. Through these travels he gained the kind of knowledge necessary to write both in depth and with understanding of the various people who populated the region, their leaders, political, and social institutions, and the ways in which they interacted both with one another and the world beyond.

In 1993 the publisher issued a second impression "with minor revisions". Smith used that edition to bring the narrative and analysis beyond the national election of 1990, the personnel and policy changes in the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in 1992, and the failed military campaign against the Karen in that same year. These additions were minor and largely intended to bring the account up to date.

With the even newer present revised and updated edition, Smith has made an important contribution to his study by adding a new final chapter. In this he incorporates new field research which brought him again in contact with the ethnic leaders and peoples. This final chapter carries forward his account of the struggles of these ethnic peoples to win an acceptable peace which would end the wars which have ground them down and destroyed much of their land and societies. As he makes their struggles come alive with an economy of words, he continues to provide the information and detail necessary to support the level of analysis which made the original editions of his book a "must read" for anyone wishing to understand Burmese politics.



The new concluding chapter looks at the last decade from three perspectives--the opposition to the military rulers, led by Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; the military ruling cliques, the SLORC from 1988 to 1997 and the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) from 1997 to the present; and the ethnic minorities. It traces each through the decade and concludes by joining the three in a discussion of their interaction.

There are no easy answers to the problems of Burma. Smith tries to give clarity to complexity, to separate the leading personalities and the movements they lead, and to note opportunities taken and missed. This book was outstanding when it was first published in 1991. This new edition continues the same high standards which set the original version apart from other studies. The final chapter which reviews the military rule of the 1990's is good enough to stand alone as one of the best analyses and descriptions of the period available in any book or periodical anywhere in the world. All who study, write about, or make policy toward Burma must read this excellent essay if they want a road map to lead them through the past and to point out the unlaidd roads to the future. We are all in debt to Smith for having added to our limited understanding of the people and policies of Burma.

Josef Silverstein  
Princeton, New Jersey

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#### Book Notes

Ivanoff, Jacques *Moken: Sea-Gypsies of the Andaman Sea, Post-war Chronicles*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 11/2 Si 58 Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok 10250,

Bulletin of the Burma Studies Group

Thailand, ISBN: 974-8496-65-1. White Lotus, Cheney, ISBN 1-879155-68-1.

This book comprises four sections by various contributors: a discussion of the "Virtue of Exotic Ethnology" by Jacques Ivanoff; an account of interaction with the Moken by his father, Pierre Ivanoff; correspondence between Pierre Ivanoff and F. N. Cholmeley, a mining engineer working in Burma in 1946-7; and finally a discussion by Jaques Ivanoff on nomads and acculturation.

The discussion of Moken culture is coloured by what Ivanoff refers to as "the entire exotic adventure." The book is anecdotal and lacks the focus which would have made it a more useful text. It does, however, contain interesting details of use to researchers, particularly regarding fishing and traditional boats and on the role of Chinese traders and their economic interaction with the Moken. The volume also includes a valuable photographic record of the Moken, with examples spanning a hundred years of maritime adaptation along the Burmese coast.

Pamela Rogers  
Hong Kong

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#### NEWS ABROAD

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"Conference on Glazed Ceramics of Southeast Asia: Their History, Technology and Traditions." Emphasizes the development and exchange of glazed ceramic culture and kiln technology," September 20-22, 1999: National Museum of Pagan, Myanmar: Tel: +95-01-220721; Fax:

March 2000 / 15

227274

Speakers include:

“Origins of Styles of Early Glazed Ceramics Produced in Myanmar,” by Virginia DeCroco

“Glazed Exterior Decoration of Bagan Temples,” by Than Tun

“Excavation of Lagumbyee Kiln,” by Daw Aye Aye Thin et al

“Glazed Ceramics from the Excavation of Kanbawza Thadi Palace Site,” by U Thein Lwin

“Archaeological Report on a Shipwreck off Malaysia,” by Roxanna Brown

“Glazed Ceramics Produced in Cambodia and Northeastern Thailand During the Angkor Period,” by Dawn Rooney

“Ancient Ceramics and Glazed Kilns at Pagan,” by U Aung Kyaing

“Myanmar Ceramics Discovered in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Archaeological Sites in Singapore and Sumatra,” by John Miksic

“Nandi at Ananda Temple,” by Waldemas Sailer

“Defining Southeast Asian Ceramic Traditions: Some Technological Questions,” by Don Hein

“The Ancient Glaze Kiln Sites in Myanmar,” by Myo Thant Tyn

“Excavation of Myaung Mya Kiln Group No. 1,” by U Myo Min Kyaw et al

“Preliminary EDXRF Analysis of Myanmar Glazed Samples,” by U Htun Hlaing & Tun Khin

“Thai and Vietnamese Ceramics Imported in Angkor,” by Marie Dupoizat

“Glazed Plaques In and Around Pinya Era,” by Aung Bo

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“Myanmar Two Millennia Conference” was held at the International Business Centre, Yangon on December 15-17, 1999.

Speakers include:

“Features of the Theravada Buddhist State Structure with Special Reference to the Muddha Beiktheik or Supreme Coronation,” Ceremonies Observed by King Badon, by Ryuji Okudaira.

“Prophecy and Planets: Forms of Legitimation of the Royal City in Myanmar,” by Tun Aung Chain.

“Ritual Continuity and Stylistic Change in Pagoda Consecration and Renovation,” by Elizabeth Moore.

“Cities in Ancient Burma: Orthogenetic or Heterogenetic?,” John N. Miksic.

“The King of Free Rabbit Island: A G.I.S.-Based Archaeological Approach to Myanmar’s Medieval Capital, Bagan,” by Bob Hudson.

“Changing Times-Changing Visions: The Evolution of the Buddha Image in Myanmar,” by Charlotte Galloway.

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“An Inscribed Buddha Image of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century,” by Pamela Gutman.

“Asterix and Caesar in Burma/Myanmar: Some Remarks on the Historiography on Burma in the Global Age,” by Hans-Bernd Zollner.

“Legal Framework on Private Sector Development in Myanmar Economy,” by Daw Than Nwe  
“Population of Myanmar During the Second Millenium,” by Khin San Myint.

“Sino-Myanmar Trade Relations in the Ming Period (1368-1644),” by Daw Win.

“Sino-Myanmar Relations in the Nyaung-Yan Period (1600-1752),” by Margaret Wong.

“Breakthrough in the Study of Prehistory of Myanmar,” by San Nyein.

“Impact of British Colonialism on Chin Culture (1896-1948),” by Aye Aye Ngun.

“The Fabrication of Ethnicity and Colonial Polity East of the Salween,” by M. Rujaya Abhakorn.

“Traditions and Modernity in the Mergui Archipelago. Aquataic Populations: Prospectives and Challenges in the Third Millennium,” by Jacques Ivanoff.

“Between China and the Japanese: Wartime Affairs in Kokang State and the Failure of the Spiers Mission,” by Paul H. Kratoska.

“Myanmar, Britain and the British Commonwealth, 1947-1956,” by Stephen Ashton.

“Political, Economic and Social Elites of Myanmar in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and their Interactions,” by U Thet Tun.

“Mimicking a Developmental State: Myanmar’s Industrialization Effort (1948-1962),” by Tin Maung Maung Than.

“Constructing Southeast Asia in the 21st Century: From *Mandalas* to World Cities,” by Kwa Chong Guan.

“Building Strength, Bridging Violence,” by John Badgley.

“Changing Insights from Myanmar Novels,” by Khin Khin Ma.

“The Discourse of Emphasis: Scene Selection and Duration in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Wallpaintings from Myanmar,” by Alexandra Green.

“History of Myanmar Traditional Choreography,” by U Aung Thwin.

“The Relationship of Pwe Performance to its Popular Base in the Age of Hollywood’s Titanic,” by Catherine Diamond.

“In Quest of the Entrepot Ports of Mergui-Tenasserim Between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.,” by Michael Jacq-Hergoualc’h.

“The Kingdom of Arakan from the Dutch Sources in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century,” by

Catherine Raymond.

“Suphankanlaya in the Contexts of Thai-Myanmar Relations,” by Sunait Chutintaranond.

“The Career of Sir Charles Edward Bernard in Burma (Myanmar),” by Hla Thein.

“The Tikas on the Four Nikayas and their Myanmar and Sinhala Sources,” by Primoz Pecenko,

“State, Samgha and Laity during the Nyaungyan Period,” by Than Htut,

“History of Myanmar Culture,” by Than Tun,

“The Enigma of the Mingun Pagoda: Is the Pagoda Really Unfinished?” by Donald M. Stadtner,

“Multii-Ethnic Myanmar and the Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” by Sai Aung Tun.

“Myanmar Women: Towards a New Millennium,” by Daw Khin Aye Win.

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## THE MYANMAR TIMES

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Yangon, Feb.17: Burma's military government which maintains tight control over its media, has surprisingly allowed the launch of the country's first privately-owned English language newspaper edited by a foreigner.

The Myanmar Times a weekly whose editor-in-chief is Ross Dunkley, hit the streets this week. The tabloid paper, printed in four colors, on high-quality imported paper, looked more breezy than existing publications. A Burma government spokesman said that the government had no involvement in new paper, except to give it permission to publish. "Actually, this new project is launched by the private sector working with Australian firm," he said.

He declined to identify the Australian firm. Complimentary copies of the nation's second English language daily were being distributed through a local book store. The paper joins a host of government-run weekly journals, two Burma-language and one English-language newspaper, The New Light of Myanmar, to be published and circulated in Burma. The new tabloid is owned by a joint venture between local and foreign partners, called Myanmar Consolidated Media Co Ltd. In a front page announcement, The Myanmar Times said; "Welcome to the MT. The joint venture journal, The Myanmar Times is first major step in aiming to broaden the world's perspective on Myanmar. The publication is a private truly, free press in the nation for more then three decades."

Editor-in Chief Dunkley said: "I am optimistic about the future of this journal. It is aimed at white collar audience and 60-70 percent of its readership will comprise Myanmar people." He also declined to name the Australian investor in the joint venture owning the newspaper. Mr. Dunkley was previously involved in Vietnam's government owned Vietnam Investment

Review. The paper's publisher U Than Naing was not available for comment.

A staff member of firm told Reuters that the paper would be priced at \$2-a hefty sum by Burma standards when compared with 35 Kyats for other journals and newspaper now in circulation with government approval. He said the owners hoped to sell about 5,000 copies weekly in Burma and abroad.

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Compiled by May Kyi Win

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**In Memoriam: Muriel Coghill  
Williamson**

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Muriel Coghill Williamson, the first Western scholar to achieve extensive knowledge of the Burmese arched harp, died September 24 in Gainesville, Florida. She was born in 1910 in Granville, Ohio and received a bachelor arts degree from Denison University and a bachelor of music degree from Yale University. She was an accomplished pianist and taught piano for a number of years in Gainesville, Florida.

Muriel learned to play the harp and transcribed a number of classical songs during the years 1958-62 when she and her husband lived in Mandalay. Her teacher, Daw Khin May, was staff harpist at the State School of Music and Drama in Mandalay and a former student of the last court harpist, Deiwa-einda U Maung Maung Gyi.

Upon her return to this country, Muriel continued to correspond with Burmese musicians and scholars, and she published a number of papers on the construction of the harp, Burmese harpists, and classical songs. In 1977-78, she received a grant from the Council of Learned Societies to continue her scholarly work with Laurence Picken at



Cambridge University.

Her energetic interest in the Burmese culture will be remembered by her friends, both here and in Burma. The classical song transcriptions and recordings she made in Burma have been donated to the Center for Burma Studies.

Robert M. Williamson