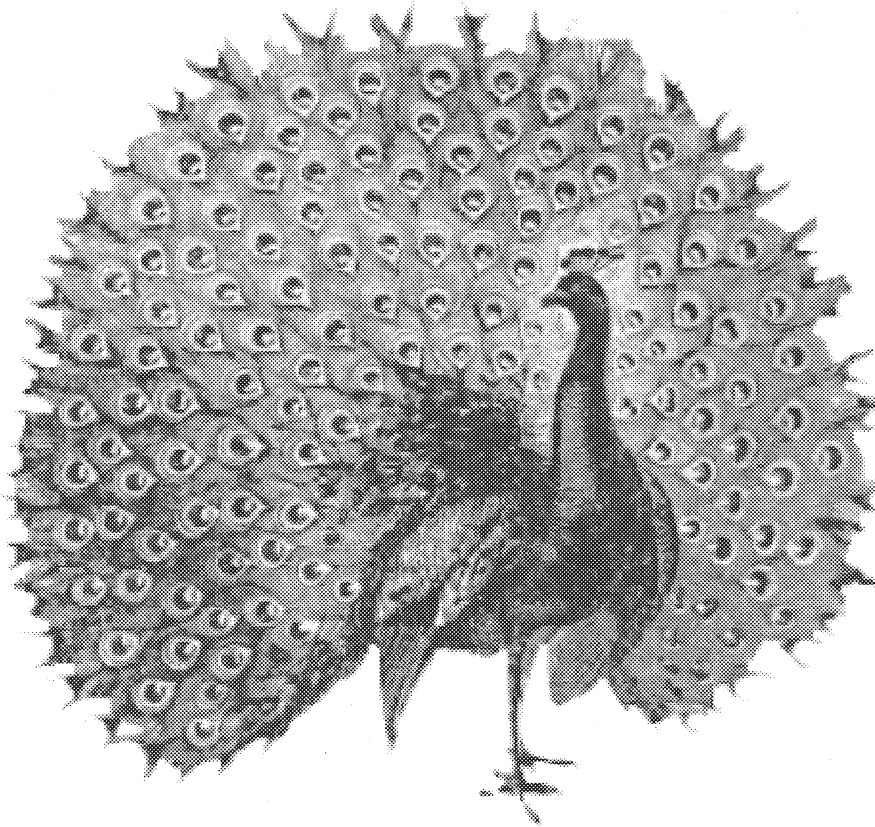


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***BULLETIN OF THE  
BURMA  
STUDIES GROUP***

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*Number 67*

*March 2001*

**BULLETIN OF THE BURMA STUDIES GROUP**  
**Southeast Asia Council**  
**Association for Asian Studies**  
**Number 67, March 2001**

**Editor**

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

**Subscription Manager**

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

**Book Review Editor**

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

**Subscription rates includes new**

**Journal of Burma Studies:**  
Two issues: March and September.  
Individuals: \$25.00  
Institutions: \$25.00

For 2001, make check payable to  
The Center for Burma Studies  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, IL 60115-2854

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**Deadline for September issue is July 31, 2001**

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## BURMA STUDIES GROUP MEETING

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The annual business meetings of the Burma Studies Foundation Board of Trustees will be held on March 23, Friday at 7-9 p.m., and Burma Studies Group at 9-11 p.m. at Ontario Room at Sheraton Chicago.

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### PEACOCK OVER SUEZ

(1871-73)

by Maung Htin Aung

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[This article was first appeared in the Working People's Daily, October 22, 1974.]

Once in 1871, twice in 1873, the gold and green Peacock Banner of the Kings of Burma flew proudly from the masts of a ship steaming slowly along the Suez Canal, which had been opened only in 1870. The two ships involved were His Burmese Majesty's *S S Setkyar Yinbyan* ("Celestial Flying Vehicle") and P. Henderson Company's *S.S. Tenasserim*. The circumstances were as follows:

Henderson Company in about 1860 suddenly discovered Burma. They ran a line of sailing ships from the United Kingdom to New Zealand, but as New Zealand at that time had no exports, the ships had to make their long voyage round the Cape of Good Hope to Scotland with their holds empty of cargo. So as an experiment one or two touched in at Rangoon, and found cargoes of rice and teak waiting to be sent to the United Kingdom. Soon all their ships were touching in at Rangoon and the venture proved so lucrative that in 1868, four of the ships were fitted with special bow-ports, to expedite the loading of teak logs. In 1870 when the Suez Canal was nearing completion, Henderson

Company ordered three steam-ships to be built, with the project of introducing the first direct service between UK and Rangoon via the Suez Canal, while its sailing ships continued to sail round the Cape of Good Hope. The first of those steamers, *Tenasserim* was launched in June 1871, and it had a gross tonnage of 1840 and was valued at £17,625. (Dorothy Liard's *Paddy Henderson, 1834-1961*. Glasgow, Scotland: G. Outram, 1961.) King Mindon also had the same idea of inaugurating a direct steamer service to UK but with his limited resources he could order only one ship and that merely with a gross tonnage of 677. It was also launched about the same time as the *Tenasserim*, and was given the name *Setkyar Yinbyan*, The London Times of November 30, 1871 stated that the ship was built by Messers Palmer of Yarrow under instruction of Messers Edmund Jones and Company, agents in England of the King of Burma. The news item continued:

"This is the first steamer which had gone direct from London to Rangoon via Suez Canal. It is a screw steamer of fine model, 217 feet by 26 feet beam, of 18 feet depth of hold. Her engines are compound surface condensing of 120 HP nominal, equal 600 HP effective. She is laden with machinery and stores for the Burmese Government, and is designed for permanent employment. She is expected to make the runs to Rangoon in 35 days, and is commanded by Captain CL Brown, and all her officers were wearing Burmese uniform."

The same newspaper of June 6, 1872 reporting Kinwun Mingyi's arrival at Dover on the previous day on *Setkyar Yinbyan*, stated that although all the officers were British, all the members of the crew were Burmese. The Lloyds register of 1872 described the ship as an "iron steamer", official number 67292 built at Yarrow in 1871 with gross tonnage of 677 and net tonnage of 409. The length was 217.8 feet,

breadth 26.0 feet, depth 16.6 feet, with 120 HP engines, and “sold to a foreigner”.

Poor Kinwun Mingyi was able to use the *Setkyar Yinbyan* only at Calaise. Although the royal ship arrived in Rangoon before *Tenasserim* did, the British Chief Commissioner placed all kinds of difficulties in the way, so as to prevent the first Burmese Embassy to the Court of St. James's from leaving Rangoon. The ship was searched again and again for contraband, Edmund Jones who had travelled on the ship was threatened with arrest, and finally, he was ordered to pay a heavy fine for carrying on the ship a cannon, in spite of the fact that all ships at that time carried cannons for self defence. Edmund Jones promptly paid the fine, still the British refused to permit the ship to leave. In despair, on March 23, 1872 Kinwun Mingyi and his embassy boarded the *Tenasserim* just as it was making ready to sail. The Captain, although British, welcomed Kinwun Mingyi, and as the ship slowly steamed out of Rangoon harbour, he flew the Peacock Flag from the mast, along with the Union Jack. The port commissioner ordered the captain to stop the ship and remain in the harbour for another day, but the latter giving the excuse he could not afford to pay additional port dues, steamed on. The Chief Commissioner released the royal ship when he realised that the bird had flown on a British ship, and Captain Brown sailed away at full speed. However, as Kinwun Mingyi left the *Tenasserim* at Brindizi, the royal ship proceeded to Calaise to await the arrival of Kinwun Mingyi by train from Paris (For further details please see Kinwun Mingyi's *London Diary*).

The project of running a line of steam-ships between Rangoon and UK ports, envisaged by Henderson Company and King Mindon was economically sound, and was doubtless based on the statistics of trade between Burma and UK.

The following table given in a booklet

issued by the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, an offshoot of Henderson Company in 1872, (and quoted in Dorothy Liard), illustrated the expansion of Burmese trade from 1868 to 1872, from which year there would be a rapid and further expansion following the opening of the Suez Canal.

#### Exports from Rangoon to UK

| Year                                |     | Teak    | Cutch  | Rice   | Cotton      |
|-------------------------------------|-----|---------|--------|--------|-------------|
|                                     |     | Tons    | Tons   | Tons   | Tons        |
| 1868                                | ... | 181,000 | 21,000 | 8,000  | 97          |
| 1869                                | ... | 213,000 | 31,000 | 9,000  | 2,600       |
| 1870                                | ... | 200,000 | 25,000 | 10,000 | 3,000       |
| 1871                                | ... | 246,000 | 26,000 | 7,000  | 4,600       |
| 1872                                | ... | 268,000 | 17,000 | 5,600  | 5,900       |
| (First 7 months)                    |     |         |        |        |             |
| Value of Imports to Rangoon, 1870   |     | ...     | ...    | ...    | £ 3,615,554 |
| Value of Exports from Rangoon, 1870 |     | ...     | ...    | ...    | £ 3,603,698 |

The above table could not have included the tonnage of rice exported to India, specially during times of famine. I may also note here that the average time taken by a sailing ship from Rangoon to reach UK was 100 days, as it had to round the Cape of Good Hope.

But King Mindon, unlike the Henderson company, did not have the wealth of all Scotland behind him and he was not able to buy any more ocean going ships. Moreover, Rangoon was a hostile harbour to his ships, and there was sure to be search after search for contrabands, and port charges would have made him bankrupt. The death of Edmund Jones of cholera on May 2, 1873, the very day Kinwun Mingyi's embassy arrived back at the Golden City must have disheartened the King. So the good ship *Setkyar Yinbyan* never made another voyage overseas, proudly flying the Peacock Flag. Captain Brown must have taken the royal ship to Mandalay with great skill and devotion, for the British Residential Journal mentioned its presence at Mandalay in 1874. Captain Brown

himself returned to London in May 1874 via Paris, where he called on Kinwun Mingyi who was there on his second embassy to France. (Kinwun Mingyi's *Paris Diary*). *SS Tenasserim* also was ill fated. It made only one more voyage to Rangoon as it was wrecked on the east African coast on its homeward journey. It was carrying a cargo of rice and cotton, six passengers, one of whom was an American missionary Dr Cushing, and forty-five crew including a stewardess. Gangs of Somalis came out in boats and looted the ship. Seeing for the first time a white woman in the person of the stewardess they wanted to carry her off and she had to be guarded by an officer with a loaded revolver. It is a pity that Kinwun Mingyi did not mention her in his *Diary*. A middle-aged spinster, she must have been quite tough to have dared to sail the ocean, the only woman member of the crew. The captain in his report suggested that she was not quite a beauty, but she valued her maidenly modesty enough to make the third officer promise that he would shoot her dead if the Somalis succeeded in taking her away from his protection. Fortunately, another ship came by and rescued all the passengers and crew (Dorothy Liard, pp. 99-100). Doubtless, the crew were given berths in other Henderson ships and the stewardess must have often remembered how she narrowly escaped from "a fate worse than death". As to Dr Cushing, he returned to Rangoon in course of time and none the worse for his adventure, he opened a school which was later to bear his name.

Kinwun Mingyi was as ill-starred as the two ships were. Notwithstanding the tumultuous welcome accorded to him by the people of Dover his visit to England was full of disappointments. He had a humiliating experience at Windsor Castle. Her Gracious Imperial Majesty, Queen Victoria proved to me

more "imperial" than "gracious", because she insisted that Kinwun Mingyi and his three deputy envoys crawl on their knees as they approached her on her throne, while the lords and ladies present and the two English members of his entourage, Major McMahon and Edmund Jones stood and watched (*Letters of Queen Victoria* Second Series). Kinwun Mingyi was not on the royal ship as it passed through the Suez Canal on its return voyage for he had remained on in France negotiating a commercial treaty. On his way to France on his second embassy, he did not travel on "Henderson liner, but instead went to Singapore on a British India ship and then proceeded to Marseilles on a Peninsular and Orient boat, which of course did not fly the Peacock Flag in his honour. His embassies to London and Paris proved to be utter failures, and on his return he became a sad and controversial figure at the Burmese Court. So, although he did not realise it at the time, even as the guns from the high cliffs of Dover thundered 19 times in salute to him and the Peacock Flag as the royal ship approached the shores of England, Kinwun Mingyi's sun of glory had begun to set and his moon of happiness had begun to wane.

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## NEWS FROM THE U.S.

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### Conference Review

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The Biennial Burma Studies Conference of the  
Burma Studies Group October 13-15,  
2000 Northern Illinois University,  
De Kalb, IL., U.S.A.

Sponsored by The Burma Studies Foundation,  
The Center for Burma Studies, The Center for  
Southeast Asia Studies and the Graduate School

of Northern Illinois University, DeKalb.

Over 80 scholars and interested persons from all over the world participated in this event. Although there was no specific theme, the call for papers brought forth a wide range of interesting topics, which were grouped into a number of panels moderated members of the Burma Studies Group well versed in the material presented.

After welcoming remarks by Dr. Richard Cooler, Director of the Burma Studies Center, the conference got underway with a panel entitled: 'Foreigners and Foreign Relations.' Wil Dijk (University of Leiden) in her paper 'The Structure of the VOC-Burma Trade in the Seventeenth Century', noted that textiles for commoners dominated the largely profitable trade which was terminated in 1679 in response to economic and political conditions elsewhere. Marilyn Longmuir (University of Queensland) in 'The Two Faces of Fritz Noetling: Chronicler and Despoiler', argued that this pioneer geologist's reputation as a looter of art objects has been exaggerated. Hans Bernd Zoellner (University of Hamburg) in his paper 'Friedrich Nietzsche in Burma. A contribution towards the Study of Occidentalism', discussed Nietzsche's likely contribution to the Dobama and Thakin pre-independence movements.

'The Environment' panel was opened by Michael Charney (National University of Singapore) who in 'Burmese on the Move in the Domestic Economy: Change and Continuity in Cart and Wagon Transportation Technologies in Colonial Burma', concluded that despite the 19th century development of railways, carts continued to increase. Carol Stock (Indiana University) in 'Current Forestry and Logging Issues in the Light of the Recent Cease-fire and Peace Agreements between the Ethnic Minorities and the Government' noted that logging was indeed increasing and more needed

to be done in terms of forest management and conservation. Ardeth Maung (University of Wisconsin) in 'The prospect of Agriculture in Myanmar, and the Impact of Horizontal and Vertical Coordination over the Execution of Summer Paddies (1992 to the present)', described the major impediments to successful outcomes in the current government administrative structure.

The second day opened with a panel 'Modernization and Myanmarfication'. Kei Nemoto (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) set the stage by explaining a recurring theme in Burmese history of split versus national unity in his paper 'Party Politics versus National Politics in Burma—Discourse, Analysis and Historical Background'. Janet Philip (Deakin University Australia) showed how the current regime was subverting Buddhism for their own ends in 'Nation Building and the Appropriation of Buddhism in Contemporary Burma: The State Peace and Development Council's (SPDC) Propaganda Campaigns'. Ward Keeler (University of Texas) in 'Courtly Music in a Conflicted State' noted that the regime was also intent on reviving certain classical genre songs for a similar purpose. Gustaaf Houtman (Royal Anthropological Institute, London) in 'Myanmarfication: the Role of Burma's Myanmar Culture Policy in Forging National Unity', described how the SPDC was attempting to 'write out' Aung San Su Kyi (and the contributions of her father) by emphasizing 'national culture' and equating it with 'restoring civilization', law and national unity. In the 'Cultures, Traditions and the Legal Profession' panel which followed, Benedicte Brac de la Perrier (Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, Paris) described the similarities between Nat and Buddhist practices in 'A Comparative Analysis of Burmese Consecration Rituals' while Alla Burman

(Hebrew University of Jerusalem) examined a recurring theme in Burmese literature, that of 'Brother and Sister within a Context of Burmese Traditonal Culture'. U Myint Zan (Deakin University, Australia) in 'Woe Unto You Lawyers: The Legal Profession in Early 17th Century Burma: Translation, Analysis and Commentary on Three Royal Orders Issued by King Anaukpetlun on 23 June 1607 showed that the role of lawyers in litigation was well developed at that time. U Tun Myint (Indiana University) in 'Evolution of Law and the Legal Concept in Burma: Challenges at the Transition', compared changes which took place following the imposition of colonial rule and changes going on today. Michael Martin (Independent Scholar) concluded with a practitioner's 'Glimpse into the Burmese Martial Arts'.

The first of two Art panels led off with Alexandra Green (SOAS University of London) explaining 'The Relationship Between Word and Image in 17th & 18th Century Burmese Wall Painting', followed by April Tin Tiny Aye (Temple University) who described the importance of 'Two Painted Parabaik Manuscripts in the Collections of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania'. Richard Cooler (Northern Illinois University) in 'Configuring the Nats at Pagan During the Reign of King Kyanzittha(1084-1111 AD)' suggested that the certain effigies at the Shwei-zigon could be those of directional Nats rather than members of the official pantheon. Richard Blurton (British Museum) gave participants the opportunity to view his institution's fine collection of Buddha statues in 'Crowned Images in Burma: Variety and Meaning'. Sylvia Fraser-Lu (independent scholar) described a unique weaving activity in 'Stemming from the Lotus: Sacred Robes for Buddhist Monks'.

The first panel on the closing day, 'Ethnic Nationalism, Global Communications and

Censorship, opened with Aye Chan (Bard College, Simon's Rock) describing the interplay of the drug trade and politics in 'Wa Ethnic Nationalism and the Drug Trade in Burma'. Lisa Brooten (Ohio University) described how ethnic minority exiles on the Thai-Burmese border were making use of the internet to acquire information and disseminate ideas in 'Global Communications /Local Conceptions: New Technologies and the Public Sphere among the Burmese in Thailand'. Her paper was read by Tamara Ho(UCLA). Jennifer Leehey (University of Washington) in 'Censorship and the Burmese Political Imagination' described how people negotiate everyday life under a repressive regime.

The program concluded with a Linguistics panel where Justin Watkins (SOAS, University of London) described his some of the problems in attempting to record the 'Phonetic and Phonology of Paletwa Kumi Chin language'. Julian Wheatley (MIT), with the help of a video, described 'The Practices by which Relatively Uneducated People Learn Burmese-Pali Text' while San San Hnin Tun (Cornell University) shared some 'Film-based Interactive Multimedia Language Learning Material.' Alice Vittrant (LACITO-CNRS Paris), described the use of 'A Tense-Aspect-Mood System to Analyze the Burmese Verbal Phrase'.

Ralph Isaacs (formerly British Council) at a pre-conference luncheon described the 'Lacquer Art of the Intha People' and as an after-dinner speaker he offered a behind the scenes look at 'Burma and the Art of Lacquer: Visions from a Golden Land—an Exhibition at the British Museum'. Another dinner concluded with a harp and dance performance by Christopher Miller and Anom Kusumasari, followed by a video by Elaine Koretsky 'The Burmese Festival of Paper Fire Balloons'. Many of the papers presented are to appear in future issues of the

'Journal of Burma Studies.', published by Northern Illinois University.

Written by: Sylvia Fraser-Lu (Program Chair)  
[sylvialu@his.com](mailto:sylvialu@his.com)

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## NEWS ABROAD

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Symposium on  
the Art and Archaeology of Burma  
Art Gallery of New South Wales  
11 August 2001.

The Asian Art Society of Australia has organised a Symposium on the Art and Archaeology of Burma to be held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales on 11 August 2001. Speakers will include Sylvia Fraser-Lu on Lacquer illustration, Bob Hudson on his recent excavations at Pagan, Alexandra Green on painting traditions, Charlotte Galloway on Pagan sculpture and Don Hein on his ceramics excavations.

Inquiries to Pamela Gutman at  
[pamela.gutman@rrt.gov.au](mailto:pamela.gutman@rrt.gov.au)

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Conference on Views and Visions in the  
Literary Heritage of Southeast Asia  
18-20 December 2000  
Yangon, Myanmar

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Eighteen papers were presented for three days, covering a range of topics. The papers will be published in the near future. The order of presentations is as follow.

Keynote Speech: Similarities and Diversities in  
Southeast Asian Literature, by Annemarie  
Esche

'Maung Lu Aye' Stories 'Theikpan Maung Wa'  
Sein Tin and his new Myanmar literature,  
by Yuri Takahashi

Biographical Writings in Myanmar in the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Century, by Than Htut & Thaw Kaung

Early Myanmar myths and history as revised by  
the minorities, by Francois Robinne

Changes of the Role which the *Dhammathat*  
(Law Book) has been playing in Myanmar  
History, by Ryuji Okudaira

Chiangmai and Ayuddhaya in Myanmar  
Literature (1548-1614): The Myanmar At-  
titude towards Ancient Thai Cities, by Saw  
Tun

Heroes and Heroines in Bagan-Period Myanmar  
and Early Classic Java, by John N. Miksic

A Few Notes on Traditional Myanmar Economic  
Views and Values and Their Implications,  
by Tin Soe

Malay Historiography and Literary Activities in  
the 19<sup>th</sup> century: A Case Study of Raja Ali  
Haji of Pulau Penyengat, Riau, by Arbaiyah  
Mohd Noor

The role of Jatakas in Myanmar Literature, by  
Khin Aye

Lord Curzon, Historic Preservation and the  
Problem of the Myanmar Past, by Stephen  
Lee Keck

Memory and Hearings in Malaysia and  
Singapore: The Memoirs of Sybil Kathigasu  
and Elizabeth Choy, by P. Lim Pui Huen

A Love Story from a Shan Paper Scroll, by Sai  
Aung Tan

The Wisdom in the Sundanese Manuscript, by  
Nina Herlina Lubis & Taufik Abdullah

Role of Popular Literature in Thai Society, by  
Withaya Sucharithanaraugse

U Pe Maung Tin: The Pioneer Educator of  
Myanmar Literary Heritage, by Tin Tin  
Myaing

Indian Culture in South East Asia, by V.  
Balambal



The Reflection of Folk tales on Chin Society,  
by Aye Aye Ngun  
Historical Literature in Northern Sri Lanka, by  
Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam  
The Study of Chinese Envoys to Myanmar in  
the Reign of King Bagyidag, by Win  
Sing to the Dawn: Tradition and Change in the  
Fiction in English by Singapore Women, by  
Koh Tai Ann  
Myanmar and Indonesia: Inspirations for  
Japanese Novels since World War II,  
Dorothy Guyot  
Suriyothai in the Context of Thai-Myanmar  
History and Historical Perception, by  
Sunait Chutintaranond

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Conference on New Research in the Art  
and Archaeology of Burma  
17-18 June 2000,  
SOAS, University of London.  
Organisers: British Museum & SOAS.

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Moore, Elizabeth. "Defining Myanmar  
Prehistory: Settlement in the Chindwin and  
Samon River Regions."  
Guy, John. "Buddhist Merit-Making and  
Surrogate Pilgrimage in Early Burma."  
Hudson, Bob. "Recent Archaeological  
Discoveries at Bagan."  
Stadtner, Donald. "The Enigma of the Mingun  
Plaques."  
Fraser-Lu, Sylvia. "Problems and Prospects for  
the Preservation of Wooden Monasteries in  
Burma."  
Sadan, Mandy. "The Evolution of the Modern  
Symbolism of Kachin Manau Posts."  
Brac de la Perriere, Benedicte. "The Statues in  
the 37 Nat Cult."  
Scaddan, Joanna. "The Finding of the  
Photographs of Max and Bertha Ferrars."

Isaacs, Ralph. "Inscriptions Found on Various  
Types of Burmese Lacquerware."  
Weigelt, Uta. "The Scherman-Collection of Bur-  
mese Yun Lacquerware."  
Herbert, Patricia. "Burmese Cosmology  
Manuscripts."  
Green, Alexandra. "Narrative Modes in 17<sup>th</sup> and  
18<sup>th</sup> Century Burmese Wall Paintings."  
Blurton, Richard. "Burmese Sculpture in the  
Collection of the British Museum."  
Galloway, Charlotte. "Relating text and Image  
in Burmese Buddhist Art."  
Conway, Susan. "Eastern Shan Textiles."  
Dudley, Sandra. "Forms of 'Traditional' Dress  
from the Kayah (Karenni) State."

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## BOOK REVIEW

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*Among Insurgents: Walking through Burma*, by  
Shelby Tucker. London & New York: Radcliffe  
Press, 2000. ISBN: 1860645291

This book is a rare treat. An elegant account  
of an eccentric quest for adventure that took its  
author on foot – his (blistered) own and the  
occasional elephants' – from the border of China  
into and across the remote Kachin hill country  
of northern Burma to India (and nearly three  
months' incommunicado detention on suspicion  
of espionage.) In recent years I had come across  
Shelby Tucker, a white-haired American  
gentleman of benign countenance and laconic  
asides, at Burma gatherings of the type that only  
London can muster: an assortment of old  
colonial hands, Burma scholars, journalists and  
'experts' of all vintages, refugees and exiles,  
diplomats, and even members of old Shan  
*sawbwa* families. Anyone, in short, whose life  
had been touched, whether by birthright or  
serendipity, by the magic of Burma. All I knew  
about Shelby Tucker was that he'd once "done

some walking in Burma". One assumed this must have been as a fresh-faced college boy in the mid to late 1950s – a time when Western scholars and travel writers could live and roam in Burma comparatively freely – and before Ne Win's military coup sealed off the country to the outside world for decades.

The publication of *Among Insurgents* revealed instantly just how wrong this assumption was. For there on the book's dust jacket is a picture of the same smiling white-haired American, now clad in jungle fatigues – in fact in the uniform of the Kachin Independence Army – and causally holding a M16 assault rifle in the midst of a KIA jungle camp. At the age of 53, Tucker had decided to realise his long-held dream of walking across northern Burma, knowing "as though instinctively that among the Kachin I would be utterly content". In January 1989, pausing only to recruit, at his anxious wife's insistence, a young, strapping 6 ft 4 in ex-Swedish Army officer (whom he'd met on a train in China) as travelling companion, Tucker set off from Dali to hitch a truck ride to the Burma border, some 270 miles to the south. Somehow, Tucker and Larsson, unconvincingly (you only have to look at the photo in the book!) "disguised" as Dai tribesmen in blue Mao jackets, straw hats and surgical masks – the first truck driver couldn't stop laughing at the sight of them – managed to bluff their way through a dozen Chinese checkpoints and into Burma. Coming across some young boys bathing naked in a sulphurous spring in a jungle clearing, Tucker convivially leaps into the pool to join them and, upon belatedly spotting their red-starred Chinese army uniforms and Kalashnikovs lying on the rocks, with feigned nonchalance greets them in English, while hastily putting his clothes back on. In fact they had encountered units of the Communist Party of Burma's northern

command and were escorted to its headquarters at Möng Ko. Here begins the first of many interrogative exchanges as puzzled insurgent commanders (and later Indian intelligence officials) struggle to grasp why a middle-aged unknown writer of unpublished books – the most recent rejoicing in the title of *The Last Banana* – should be walking across Burma just for "adventure". Later, when his desperately worried wife in search of advice contacted Michael Aris (the late husband of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi), telling him that Shelby had gone to Burma because "he thought it might be fun", Dr. Aris responded gravely: "Burma is not about fun".

Indeed not. Tucker's "adventure" courted mishap and disaster and that he and Larsson reached the Patkai divide safely some three arduous months later is to the credit of the Kachin Independence Army to whom the bemused CPB wisely passed them on. The KIA gave them Kachin names – Tucker's being Baw Hpraw Gum ("hoary-headed eldest son") – kitted them out in KIA uniform, and escorted them from KIA GHQ at Pajau Bum by an amazing and tortuous 600 mile route that, skirting enemy Burma Army units and landmines, took them first northwards crossing the Nmai Hka and Mali Hka rivers to 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade HQ, then west to 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade HQ, then far north to the Chaukan Pass into the leech-infested Hidden Valley and mountain peaks of the Pataki range and Arunachal Pradesh, an area of India closed to foreigners. Tucker's choice of a Swedish travelling companion was felicitous since it so happened that the Kachins retained fond memories of Ola Hanson, a missionary and scholar who lived from 1890 to 1928 in Kachinland, and of the Swedish journalist Bertil Lintner who traversed the country from west to east in 1985. Tucker is engagingly frank about his squabbles with Mats Larsson and the stress

and physical ordeals of the journey. He has a true writer's ear for dialogue and records some hilarious exchanges, none more so than those with his Indian captors when his legal training is put to good use.

The Kachins are the real heroes of this book and Tucker has admirably fulfilled his promise to his courteous and patient Kachin hosts who told him "No one ever comes here... Everyone ignores us... We want you to tell the truth". Tucker took this to heart and en route learnt a great deal of Jinghpaw and delighted in gleaning information on Kachin customs and beliefs as well as on the intricacies of Burmese politics and the opium question. Interwoven with Tucker's stylish and humorous chronicle, is an informative account of Kachin history and culture, and a lucid exposition of the complex subject of Burma's troubled political history and decades of civil war and suffering. *Among Insurgents* may be Tucker's first published book, but one predicts that this (self-styled) dilettante will have more to say on the subject of Burma in years to come.

Patricia Herbert, London, U.K.

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Compiled by May Kyi Win

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