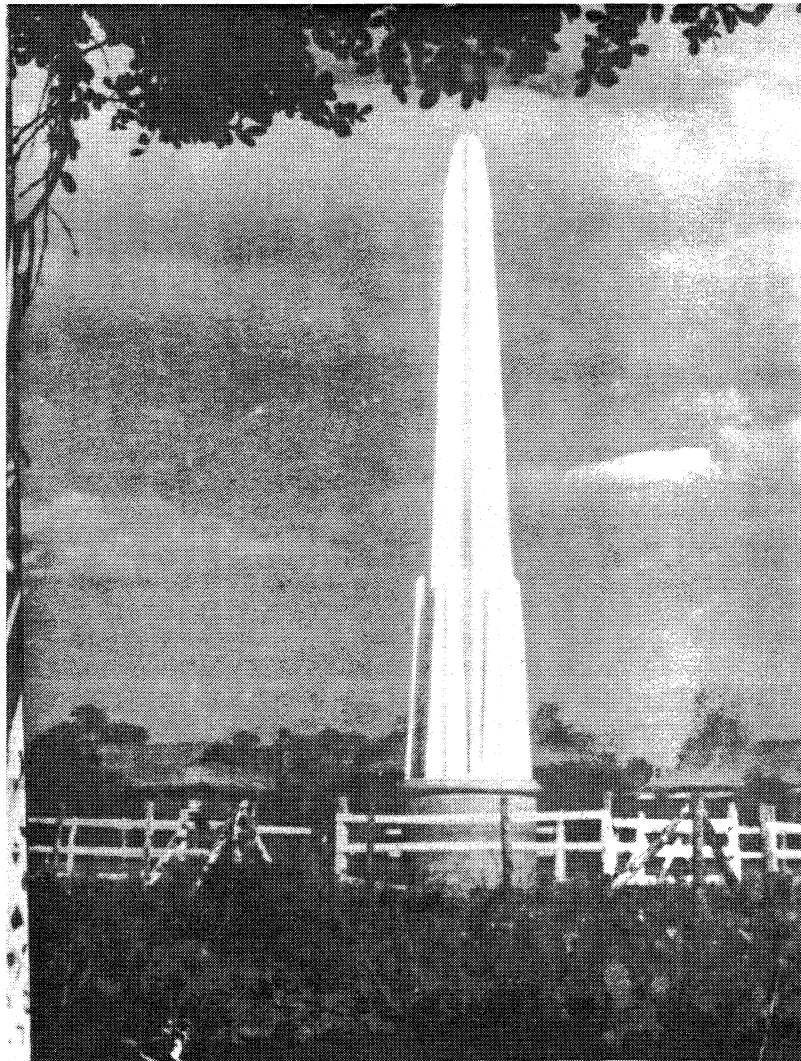

***BULLETIN OF THE
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The Independence Monument at Panglong

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BURMA STUDIES GROUP MEETING

The annual business meeting of the Burma Studies Group was held on Friday, March 23, 2001, from 9:00-11:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago. F. K. Lehman, President called the meeting to order. There was no set agenda. Elections were held for positions in which the incumbent's terms were expiring. F. K. Lehman was re-elected as president, and Ward Keeler and Gustaaf Houtman were elected trustees. There was a long discussion on holding a 2002 Burma Studies Colloquium in Europe or elsewhere. A program committee was elected: Gustaaf Houtman (chair), Ward Keeler and May Kyi Win. The meeting was adjourned at 11 p.m.

PANGLONG: AN INTIMATE PICTURE

By Pe Kin

[This article first appeared in *The Guardian* Newspaper, Saturday supplement, February 12, 1972.]

Much had been written and many claims advanced in connexion with the Panglong Conference. My purpose in writing this article is neither to put the record straight nor to refute any claims, but to present an intimate picture of the many moves and counter - moves that preceded the Conference, influenced its course of deliberations and shaped its final outcome. I undertake this task as one of the prime movers at all stages. But having lost my files and having only my fast fading memory to rely upon, the picture I draw must essentially be in broad outline — except for certain of the vital decisions and some scenes and incidents which had made an indelible impression on me and continue to live vividly

in my memory. I hope that all those who had also had the good fortune of being associated with this historic conference will read the following account with these limitations in mind.

When we talk about the Panglong Conference, people in general think only of the Second Panglong Conference which culminated in the signing of that great historic Agreement, but not of the first held in early 1946 which in its own way was no less historic. To get a picture in depth of that historic Agreement, and the AFPFL's association with it, one must go right back to an equally great and historic gathering — the Shwedagon *Nyilagan* held on the western slopes of the pagoda under the chairmanship of Bogyoke Aung San in January 1946.

The Shwedagon 'Nyilagan'

When I came down from Taunggyi for the said conference Rangoon was already in festive mood. Wherever one went the subject of conversation was the *Nyilagan* and Bogyoke. Soon after my arrival, I contacted Thakin Than Tun who was then Secretary - General of the AFPFL. I had known Thakin Than Tun for several years, having been a class-mate once and later continuing the association at the University of Rangoon when he was in the Teachers' Training College. I called on him at his house in San-chaung. Thakin Than Tun was always a busy man and when I arrived he was in the midst of a meeting. As I waited outside, he came out and greeted me warmly. He then introduced me to some of his colleagues (of whom I can now remember only Thakin Chit). I told him immediately the purpose of my visit, which was to move a resolution on the Frontier Areas at the coming *Nyilagan*. The White Paper on Burma I said was a move by the British to hold on to these areas even if they had to give up what was then known as "Burma Proper". He agreed it was a fitting subject for consideration of the

Nyilagan and asked me to draft a resolution. This I did, if I remember rightly, with the help of Myan-aung U Tin (better known as Bursar U Tin). The draft was further improved by the drafting committee of the AFPFL. It was resolution No. 5 or 6 (I forget which — U Tin Aye thinks it was No. 7) and entitled: “Unification of the Frontier Areas with Burma Proper”.

Resolution adopted by acclaim

The *Nyilagan* opened amidst scenes of high excitement and, of course, expectation. In moving the resolution, I criticised the White Paper as an attempt on the part of the British to continue holding on to the frontier areas not only for imperial strategic reasons but also to perpetuate feudalism in the said areas. If, as the British claimed, the peoples of the frontier areas were not ready for independence after almost a century of their rule how could one be sure, I asked, that they would be ready in another one hundred years’ time? I said it was utter nonsense. We were subjugated together and we must be freed together. The question of unity or otherwise was not for the British to decide but for the peoples of Burma Proper and the Frontier Areas to determine freely among themselves. Political reasons for a united Burma needed no emphasis. They were overwhelming. Similarly, cultural and economic reasons were no less convincing and therefore the exclusion of the frontier areas—which formed a horse-shoe cap over Burma Proper — from an independent Burma could have nothing but the most serious consequences for the future of our people.

The massive affirmative vote (by acclaim) which the conference gave to the resolution proved how conscious the Burmese masses were of the importance of unity among all races in Burma, not to say how ardently they desired it.

U Tin Aye and Shan Youths at the ‘Nyilagan’

U Tin Aye, U Tun Myint, U San Pe and a few others from Taunggyi were in Rangoon at the time attending political classes at Thakin Ba Hein’s house in Myenigon conducted by Thakin Than Tun, Thakin Soe and Thakin Thein Pe (U Thein Pe Myint). They also attended the *Nyilagan* though not as participants; and of course as Shans they took very keen interest in the Resolution. Later, they had a separate meeting with the Executive Committee of the AFPFL to discuss the future of the Shan States. This discussion had an important bearing on the course of events which led to the two Panglong Conferences and the final agreement on unification, as will be seen later.

The First Panglong Conference

Before returning to Taunggyi after the Conference I had further discussions with Thakin Than Tun regarding the forthcoming Panglong Conference (I mean the first) and the importance of getting Bogyoke to it. But to my disappointment he was non-committal and did not appear to be giving any serious thought to it. So, notwithstanding the success I thought I had achieved at the conference in focussing nation-wide attention on the problem of the frontier areas, I left Rangoon with mixed feelings, even somewhat disenchanted. But I got over this initial disappointment quickly and decided to try again. I wrote a lengthy letter to the AFPFL urging it to send a delegation to Panglong; and emphasizing in particular the need for active participation at the Conference in order to fully realize the objective of the Resolution: Unification of Frontier Areas with Burma Proper. I remember vividly writing: “If we fail to participate in this conference we would miss the bus, for the Frontier Administration is active”.

Before posting this letter I got together again with U Tin Aye and others in Taunggyi to compare notes. I learnt then for the first time what had transpired at their meeting in Rangoon with the Executive Committee of the AFPFL — that some of its members did not themselves know how to approach the frontier peoples (especially the politically conscious amongst them, i.e. the youth) and was unconsciously playing into the hands of the imperial power. U Tin Aye told me that these members said at the meeting that since the Shan States were landlocked they had no alternative but to fall in line with Burma Proper. One of them even went to the extent of saying that since the Central Government controlled all communications in the frontier areas, such as Posts and Telegraphs and Railways, they could at any time cut them off and leave the frontier areas limbless.

I was deeply shocked, and further emphasised in my letter to the AFPFL that there was no surer way of antagonizing the frontier peoples than to say that they were landlocked and therefore at the mercy of the Central Government. I urged again the importance of Bogyoke to come to Panglong in order to remove the serious misunderstanding that had been created and reassure the frontier peoples of our solidarity with them.

U Tin Aye and his colleagues also wrote an “open letter to the AFPFL” deploring such attitude. It was published in a Journal and created quite a stir.

AFPFL sends a delegation

I was still brooding over it when I received a letter from the AFPFL advising me that although Bogyoke Aung San would have personally liked to come, unfortunately due to prior engagements in Arakan (I think it was a meeting with U Seinda) he would not be able to do so. Instead, the AFPFL would send a delegation composed of Tha-kin Nu, U Ba Gyan, U Aung Zan Wai and Mahn Ba Khaing.

I confess I was at first a little disappointed with the information. Not because I felt the level of the delegation was low but simply because Bogyoke would not be coming. He was the darling of the masses, hero of the country and everything else. He was in demand for all occasions, big or small. However, I consoled myself that some representation was better than no representation.

The Political Atmosphere in the Shan States

The delegation stayed with me in Taunggyi for a few days during which we had some briefing sessions with U Tin Aye and his colleagues. Mahn Ba Khaing and the other delegates succeeded in restoring the confidence of the Shan Youths in Burmese leaders by repudiating what had been said at their meeting with the Executive Committee. Mahn Ba Khaing was forthright and said that Burma was composed of many racial groups such as Shans, Karens, Kachins and Chins. No single group could dominate the others. They must instead all pull together and respect each other's feelings and sentiments. He reassured the Youths that this was the official policy of the AFPFL and therefore they should entertain no misgivings whatever in this regard.

The gathering storm which threatened the very unification of Burma thus dispelled, we settled down to an appraisal of the prevailing political situation in the Shan States. It was generally accepted that although there was an appreciable degree of political awakening among the younger generation in the Shan States — especially students — the mass in general were still ignorant of the political forces at work around them and accepted the existing social inequalities as inevitable. The hold of feudalism on them was so strong that they were perplexed by the demand for its abolition. In other words, they were not ready for a social revolution. The younger set, quite understandably, were in a hurry and in violent

mood.

We (the AFPFL) were of course in no less hurry — but not for violent social changes whose objectives were not yet well defined, on which there was no consensus in the country and which could not be attained without much turmoil and confusion, but first for the independence of the country which was well within our reach, it was primarily a question of priorities and we felt that under the existing conditions our ultimate goal could be attained more speedily by carrying the Sawbwas with us rather than by provoking an ill-timed revolution against them and thus giving the colonial masters an excuse to delay our freedom. To win the Sawbwas over to our side by persuasion was therefore not a sell-out but simply practical politics. The Sawbwas were, of course, concerned about their own future. It was human. Some measure of compromise was therefore inevitable if we were to achieve our main objective, which was independence for the whole country including the Frontier Areas without bloodshed or delay. It was a question of strategy. We in the AFPFL did not want to perpetuate feudalism any more than the younger set. But we had to put first things first. We then set out on our journey to Panglong, where we were received by Sao Tun Aye (Sawbwa of Thamakhan) who was Master of Ceremonies for the Conference.

U Saw at Panglong

When we arrived at Panglong U Saw was already there together with U Ba Yin (Meiktila). The air was fresh and cool and U Saw in a well-tailored suit looked as if he had just walked out of Savile Row. Brilliant conversationalist that he was, he naturally attracted much attention and was obviously enjoying it. He was still wearing the mantle of Prime Minister and there was no doubt that he meant to be the central figure at the Conference. And he could very well be. He

was full of stories of his political exploits, confrontation with Churchill and his detention in Uganda. As I watched him somewhat fascinated, memories of my student days flashed back to my mind. I thought particularly of that great debate in the Rangoon University Students' Union on the question of separation of Burma from India. U Saw was for the resolution and Dr. Ba Maw and Dr. Ba Han against it. The debate was in English. Given his education and background it was an act of undoubted courage on U Saw's part to accept the challenge of the Doctor brothers, recognised experts in the use of the English language. U Saw for his part performed brilliantly and delighted the audience — not by command of the language but by his quips and stories.

My apprehensions

U Saw was both a colourful and a theatrical personality. His meteoric rise from an obscure back-bencher to Prime Minister within a short span of one parliamentary term was positive proof of his political acumen. Likewise, his taking over of the *Thuriya* newspaper was flawless. I was therefore extremely apprehensive lest by the same abilities he might again dominate the Conference and come away as a hero and saviour in the eyes of the Shans. My sole consolation was that he had not quite woken up to the fact that post-war Burma was no longer the Burma of the thirties when politics was devoid of any clear political philosophy, but of factions and intrigues in which he excelled. Nevertheless, not wanting to leave anything to chance I went to see Sao Tun Aye, the Master of Ceremonies, to discuss the programme for the opening day of the Conference and the tactics we should follow. It might be of interest to know that Sao Tun Aye (a Shan) and I (a Burmese Muslim) are related to one another through the marriage of my father to his aunt. I could therefore talk freely with him on such

matters. My first concern was as to who would be the first speaker. As I suspected, U Saw was listed as the first speaker of the day. I requested for a change and asked for Thakin Nu to be listed first. After some hesitation Sao Tun Aye agreed and I went to bed with the first objective in our overall tactics achieved.

Conference commences

The Conference opened with our views being put forward on the theme of historical unity which had existed among all races of Burma, especially between the Burmese and the Shans, before the British conquest of Burma.

U Saw flops

In the afternoon, it was U Saw's turn to address the conference. All were as eager to listen to him as they were to Thakin Nu. But what an anticlimax it was! His theme was not how we (all the peoples of Burma) must strive together to win the forthcoming battle for independence but how *he* would govern Burma. Talking about the constitution he said: "It is a simple matter. Give me a steno-typist and I will produce any constitution you want in half an hour". How hollow he sounded!

The results of the Conference

As far as I can recollect no resolutions were passed at the conference because it was more of a get-together to exchange views on the shape of things to come than a political meeting like the Shwedagon *Nyilagan* which had just preceded it.

In summing up the results of the conference, I would say that our delegation had paved the way for future co-operation among all the peoples of Burma. It had exploded the myth of "historical animosity" between the Shans and the Burmese and allayed the fears of the Shans to some extent. I say "some" advisedly because to expect total elimination of deep-seated suspicions (however unjustified they might be) of Burmese intentions at a

single meeting was unrealistic. We had awakened the Shans to the realities of post-war Burma and shaken the Sawbwas out of their complacency, which was a principal result of their long entrenched hereditary rights. We had given them something serious to think about. On our side, we appreciated that in view of the high personal stakes involved the Sawbwas would need time to reflect before they could make any firm commitments which would erode their authority over their peoples. The only other control and influence they had known so far were those exercised by the British; but now they would have to share that authority with, if not hand it over to, radical politicians. Voluntary renunciation of power and privilege had never been heard of in Burma at that time. The first such renunciation took place later — in 1960, by General Ne Win. In this situation, much foresight, generosity and patience were called for on the part of the Burmese leaders. This, Bogyoke Aung San possessed in abundance.

We visit Loikaw

When the conference was over, I was able to persuade Thakin Nu to visit Loikaw before returning to Rangoon. Backward as all the states in the frontier regions were the Karenni State (now Kayah) was at the bottom of the list. No Burmese politician had ever set foot, or allowed to set foot, on its soil during the British rule. All the more reason therefore, I thought, why We should go there.

At Loikaw we stayed with U Sein who arranged a public meeting for us in a school. About 300 persons attended the meeting. It was the first time such meeting was held and those who attended it came in their best clothes. It was for them an occasion. We spoke about the artificial barriers which the British had created among all races of Burma and which had brought in its train misunderstanding and suspicion of one

another. Our condemnation of British policy—past, present and future (as contained in the White Paper) — was as vehement and spirited as at Panglong. The audience responded with shocked admiration. Never in the history of the Karenni State had they heard such an attack on the ruling masters. The seed of political consciousness was thus sown in the State.

Among those who showed interest in our visit was U A. Mya Lay, the present Chairman of Kayah State Affairs Council. He was a vivacious person and full of questions during our private discussions. It was clear that he was dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs. He wanted a change—any change, for it could only be for the better. It is therefore pleasing to see the seed which had then been planted and has since sprouted is now flourishing vigorously under his care.

Frontier Areas Affairs Department at AFPFL Headquarters

I now come to the second phase of our efforts to rally the Frontier Areas to the cause of freedom and unity.

It will be recalled that in moving the resolution on Frontier Areas at the Shwedagon *Nyilagan* I said that the independence of Burma without the Frontier Areas would be an empty achievement. It was the official view of the AFPFL and Bogyoke felt strongly about it. He was determined to obtain the association of the Frontier Areas with Burma Proper in one form or another, not only to present a united front to the British but as an added insurance that the new Union of Burma would be a viable State. Towards that end the AFPFL decided to open a separate department for Frontier Areas affairs at its headquarters in Rangoon. I was appointed secretary of that department.

The Birth of the SSPFL

After organising the new department I went up to Taunggyi to discuss our future steps with U Tin Aye, U Tun Myint (Linkhe), U Tun Myint (Taunggyi), U Tun Pe (Banyin), Hkun Htee (Panglong), U Ba Zan, Yebaw Ba Htay (PVO) and others. Out of our discussions was born the Shan States People's Freedom League (SSPFL) with U Tin Aye as President. After establishing its office in a building on the Main Road in Taunggyi, I returned to Rangoon with a promise to obtain all necessary support for its activities.

By that time I was already a member of both the Supreme Council and the Executive Committee of the AFPFL and also of the Burma Muslim Congress. I was therefore fully occupied in Rangoon and had to leave the organisational activities of the SSPFL entirely in the hands of U Tin Aye. He lost no time in establishing branches both in the southern and the northern Shan States.

History Marches On

Events moved fast in Rangoon. Bogyoke was invited to go to London for discussions with the British Government. The Executive Committee of the AFPFL met to discuss the mandate for the delegation.

“Independence Within One Year”

The meeting concluded with the adoption of a resolution to demand independence within one year.

I remember vividly Bogyoke's concluding remarks: “We must now prepare the country for the ultimate in case the demand is not met. And the time is now.”

“Independence within one year” thus became the official demand of the AFPFL.

Bogyoke then left for London with the full support and blessing of the people, leaving Thakin Nu at the helm of affairs here.

Disturbing news from the Frontier Areas

News was then received in Rangoon that the Sawbwas would soon meet in North Hsenwi and that in the meantime the Sawbwas had informed the British Government that Bogyoke represented Burma Proper only, not the Frontier Areas. Thakin Nu and I discussed the import of this move. We agreed that everything possible must be done and every step taken to prevent any discordant note being struck by any section of our people while Bogyoke was presenting Burma's case in London. He said I should go to the Shan States immediately, rally the people behind Bogyoke and also visit Hsenwi to explain our position at the meeting. I pointed out that to go and rally the people would create no problem. But to gatecrash at the meeting in Hsenwi could be improper for us. Whereas we were invited to the Panglong Conference no such invitation had been extended to us this time. After reflecting for a moment Thakin Nu hit upon the idea of a "goodwill mission." He said he would ask Bohmu Aung and Bo Tun Lin to accompany me. Our task would be to visit the Shan States, both north and south, and the Karenni State. For the Kachins he decided on Bo Khin Maung Gale.

The Goodwill Mission to the Frontier Areas

Bo Khin Maung Gale was able to leave for Myitkyina within a day or two. It took us a little longer to organise our trip because it was a more elaborate affair.

I went to see Mr. Leyden of the Frontier Administration in the Secretariat and asked for his assistance in organising the goodwill mission. I requested him firstly to provide us with transport (a station wagon) and secondly, to inform all Frontier officials of our visit. It was ironical that though we were going to the Shan States primarily to undo what the Frontier Administration were doing to keep us apart, we should be asking for their

assistance in arranging the mechanics of our trip. But I found Leyden quite helpful and co-operative. He arranged transport as requested and sent messages to all concerned about our mission.

Press Conference to Explain the Purpose of Our Mission

When all arrangements had been completed Thakin Nu called a press conference at the AFPFL headquarters. I was asked to address it first. I explained the purpose of our mission and requested the press to give us their full cooperation. Thakin Nu then took over and elaborated on my statement further. He expressed the hope that all the peoples of the Frontier Areas would stand united behind Bogyoke in our demand for complete independence. The *form* of future association between the Frontier Areas and Burma was for us to determine by mutual consultation and should not therefore stand in the way of independence.

We leave for the Shan States

All was now set for the journey to the Shan States. The SSPFL had been informed about it. I left Rangoon by train leaving Bohmu Aung and Bo Tun Lin to follow by car and pick me up at Thazi.

On arrival at Taunggyi, we immediately entered into discussions with the leaders of the SSPFL about holding a mass meeting. They had arranged one on the "market day" (which is still held every 5th day, for people from all the surrounding areas assemble at Taunggyi on that day with their wares). This left us one day to spare and we took the opportunity of going to Yawngghwe to call on the Sawbwas. We briefed him on the latest political situation and on Bogyoke's mission to London. He said he would soon be leaving for Hsenwi for the meeting of the Sawbwas and that we would be welcome there.

The Mass Meeting in Taunggyi and the Solidarity Resolution

The mass meeting at Taunggyi was held on the vacant spot opposite the market (which has since been built up). There were about one thousand people. In numbers, it was a comparatively modest gathering but by Shan States standards it was an unprecedented show of political strength. The SSPFL tabled a resolution calling for immediate independence and expressing solidarity with Bogyoke in his mission to London. Bohmu Aung, U Tin Aye, U Ba Zan and I spoke in support of the resolution which was passed by acclamation. After the meeting, the gathering formed itself into a procession and marched along the Main Road to the Residency (now government guest house), shouting slogans. Never in the history of the Shan States had such political demonstration taken place.

The Cable to Bogyoke Aung San

When the procession reached the Posts and Telegraphs Office I dropped out of it and went in to send two identical telegrams — one to Thakin Nu in Rangoon and the other to Bogyoke in London — conveying the gist of the resolution. (I understand this telegram could not be traced now. But U Tin Aye still remembers it. And I having sent it have not the slightest doubt that it was filed at the telegraph office. It was in January 1947 and whoever has control over the records of the AFPFL should be able to trace it.)

We proceed to Loikaw and Pekon

From Taunggyi we went to Loikaw where we discussed Karenni affairs with U Sein, U. A. Mya Lay, Saw Shwe and Saw Thein. U Be (a die-hard) was not at Loikaw at the time. Being an important force to reckon with, we went to Mala to see him lest he felt he had been ignored. But it was of no avail. He continued to be as isolationist as he had always been.

A Secret Mission

Thai Ba Han, the fighting cock, was at Pekon. He was a youngish man with a large following of hard and seasoned fighters. He was a man of great physical courage whose exploits during the resistance against the Japanese were well known in the Karenni State. We had a secret mission for him — to take up arms and hold his area should Bogyoke's mission fail. He reigned supreme all along Thandaung-Toungoo road.

When we arrived at Pekon he was in bed with high fever. Though ill, he was full of enthusiasm and his eyes brightened when we talked about "resistance." All that he would need he said was the signal. We spent the night at his house and left for Taunggyi the next morning.

Other Vists in the Shan States

At Taunggyi we picked up U Tin Aye and left for Hsenwi *via* Panglong where we stopped at Hkun Htee's place for the night.

When we arrived at Hsenwi Yawnghwe Sawbwa was already there and he welcomed us.

The same evening we held discussions with the Sawbwas. On our part we reiterated our policy towards the Frontier Areas as contained in a number of statements made previously (at the Shwedagon *Nyilagan*, Panglong, Loikaw and lastly at the press conference which Thakin Nu held before our departure). The Sawbwas were (as always) cordial and hospitable but they had not yet made up their minds and would not therefore commit themselves politically. They, however, promised to issue a statement "soon". But it was apparent that there was a deeper reason for their hesitancy to commit themselves. It seems that the Sawbwas were toying with the idea of Dominion Status for Burma instead of complete independence — possibly inspired by the Frontier Administration. After Bohmu Aung and I had clarified the position of the

AFPFL in regard to the Frontier Areas we left it to U Tin Aye to talk the Sawbwas out of any thought of Dominion Status and to agree to complete independence. This he successfully did.

Parenthetically I would like to note here how memories function differently with different persons. What remains vividly in U Tin Aye's memory about this visit to Hsenwi was a swim we (including the Sawbwas) had in a beautiful lake nearby after our discussions. I don't remember it at all. What I do remember is our clarification of the position of the AFPFL in regard to the Frontier Areas and U Tin Aye's task of talking the Sawbwas out of their intended demand for Dominion Status. U Tin Aye says he cannot recollect it. Is that really so or is it his usual modesty? We left Hsenwi and stopped at Kyaukme where we addressed a public meeting. Then to Mandalay via Maymyo. At Mandalay we held a press conference at, I think, Ludu U Hla's place.

The Raid on the SSPFL Office

Our party broke up at Thazi. Bohmu Aung and Bo Tun Lin continued their journey to Rangoon while U Tin Aye and I went back to Taunggyi. It was just as well that we did so, for the next day the Resident accompanied by police raided the SSPFL office and took away our files and other office equipment. Ohn Pe, Ba Yee and Ba Htay (PVO) were arrested.

We cabled Thakin Nu about it. In reply he asked me to return to Rangoon immediately, which I did. After meeting him and U Ba Swe I cabled U Tin Aye to come to Rangoon for discussion.

In the meantime I went to see Leyden and asked him for restoration of our files etc., and also to release those arrested. Due no doubt to the progress Bogyoke had achieved in his talks in London by then Leyden acted. The office equipment and files were returned, the charges (whatever they were) dropped and those arrested released.

The Aung San - Attlee Agreement was signed and Mr. Arthur Bottomley's mission announced.

The Second Panglong

The second Panglong conference was now in the offing.

In the midst of the preparation for this conference I fell ill and was admitted to the General Hospital. Thakin Nu, U Tin Aye and Bo Tun Hla came to see me with "get well quick" messages.

I was discharged from the hospital one day before we were due to leave for Panglong. Bogyoke, U Aung Zan Wai, Bo Khin Maung Gale and I flew in one plane and U Tin Tut, Mr. Bottomley and a few others were in the other. At Meiktila motor cars were waiting to take us to Panglong. Bogyoke and I left in one car with myself at the wheel. U Tin Tut and Mr. Bottomley were in another car.

As we drove into Taunggyi thousands of people had already lined up on both sides of the Main Road to welcome Bogyoke. At the market place, where we had held a mass meeting only a few weeks ago, our car was stopped by a surging crowd. They wanted to see *the* Bogyoke. Bogyoke gave them a happy smile as he waved his hand. If Mr. Bottomley who was in the car immediately behind us had any doubts as to Bogyoke's popularity with the people they must have been dispelled then and there. The welcome extended to Bogyoke right in the capital of the Shan States could not have failed to impress even the most sceptical.

One other important spectator whom I remember distinctly was the American Consul-General (I think it was Mr. Packard). He was driving through Taunggyi at the same time to cover the Panglong Conference. He must also have been impressed by the scene because he was unable to move further till we had left the place.

We reached Panglong at about 7 p.m. The

setting this time was different and I didn't have to worry about any one stealing the show. Bogyoke was there in person and would have dimmed any other luminary. Mr. Bottomley, who came with the full prestige and authority of the British Government, could have diverted attention from Bogyoke in the feudal atmosphere of the Shan States, if he was so minded. But Bogyoke reigned supreme in the heart of the people and there was absolutely nothing to be afraid.

The same evening Bogyoke met with the Sawbwas and Kachin and Chin leaders. He briefed them on his visit to London. In spite of the long and tiresome journey he looked fresh and was in a jovial mood. The frontier leaders very considerably let him retire early.

Bogyoke Addresses the Conference

The next day he addressed the formal meeting. Mr. Bottomley was also present. Bogyoke was forthright and down to earth, for it was no longer necessary to dwell on the past. What mattered he said was the future—the immediate future. He stressed that the interests of the frontier peoples did not lie across the borders, whether east or north, as some ill-advised and short-sighted elements had been imagining. The idea he said was ridiculous and fanciful. The future of the frontier peoples was solidly bound up with that of the people from the plains, as it had always been throughout history.

And a Public Meeting

In the afternoon he addressed a public meeting at which he spelled out his vision of a new Burma — how every one must pull his weight to repair the ravages of the last war and build a strong and truly independent Burma.

Bogyoke decides on a Shan as First President

After the meeting Bogyoke told me that he

had been thinking of a Shan as the first President of independent Burma. “Any suggestions?”, he asked. Since apparently he was asking for suggestions as to names, I replied: “Taung-peng Sawbwa would be a good choice.” I had known Taung-peng Sawbwa for some time and had a healthy respect for his modesty and moderate views. He had an impressive personality and his standing among the Sawbwas was good. I had at the same time a personal bias in his favour for another reason. When the Shan States Students' Association was formed in the University of Rangoon, I as Secretary of the Association sent letters to all the Sawbwas apprising them of the fact and asking for their support. Taungpeng was the first to respond congratulating us by telegram and at the same time remitting five hundred kyats with the promise of more.

Bogyoke then asked me to sound him out. I suggested inviting him to lunch. Bogyoke agreed .

We Sound Out Taungpeng

I went to see Taungpeng at his hut. Fortunately, I found him alone and I told him of my errand. His reaction was: “Please leave me alone. I would not like to be a prisoner in Government House. Besides, there are more senior Sawbwas. If it is a Shan that Bogyoke wants then it will be best to leave the choice to the Sawbwas' Council.” With regard to the lunch he said: “Bogyoke is our guest here. I will give the lunch.”

At lunch the only other guest was the Sawbwa of North Hsenwi. He was of the same view as Taungpeng regarding the choice of a president: it should be left to the Sawbwas. And Bogyoke so decided.

The food was good and ample. Bogyoke ate well. On the whole it was an agreeable break from the strain of the past few days.

The Conference continued the next day and we proceeded to consider the substantive

issue of the basis on which the peoples of the frontier areas and of Burma would enter into an association in independent Burma which would endure and wipe out all past misunderstanding and nullify the efforts by the imperial power to keep the two divided. The first move in this direction was made by the Sawbwas and the Kachin leaders.

The Frontier Leaders' Draft

These leaders drew up a draft agreement for consideration of the Conference. It was a long document, but the salient points were:

(1) Sovereign equality on the basis of democratic rights between the Burmese and the Hill Peoples (federal union.)

(2) The Frontier Areas to remain outside the scope of any understanding between the Burmese and the British Government (repudiation of Aung San - Attlee Agreement).

(3) Creation of a Kachin State, including what was then known as Part II Area - Myitkyina and Bhamo districts: and

(4) Right of secession.

Bogyoke's Reaction to the Draft

Bogyoke was prepared to go a long way — a very long way — to meet the aspirations of the frontier peoples. He remained calm and composed even in the face of their disclaimer of his agreement with Attlee. But, as he listened to the impetuous presentation of demands by Yawnghwe Sawbwa and Duwa Zau Lun, he began to feel the lack of any reciprocity on their part, and even a modicum of appreciation of his sincerity. No one had ever tried as hard as he had to win the confidence of the people of the Frontier Areas. He wanted to give them a fair deal — more than a fair deal. But he would not have been human if his feelings had not been affected by the extremely negative attitude of the two “spokesmen” of the hill peoples; the Yawnghwe Sawbwa and Duwa Zau Lun.

He firmly rejected the idea that such extreme and unjustified demands must be entrenched in the agreement, leaving nothing open for further negotiation. He felt pushed and was prepared for a show - down if show- down there must be.

Bogyoke Decides to Return to Rangoon

When the conference recessed for lunch he was a dejected man. He asked me and Bo Tun Hla (his P. A.) to send for the plane. He would return to Rangoon at once, he said. We both looked at each other and said simply: “Yes, Sir.” We asked him to rest and withdrew quietly, to disappear among the crowd at the gambling booths. (In the Shan States no occasion was complete without gambling booths.)

Notwithstanding the risks involved, Bo Tun Hla and I decided to withhold action in regard to summoning the plane. But we spread the news that Bogyoke would be returning home in disgust.

About the same time, bus-loads of students from Taunggyi who were kept in readiness at Mong Pawng by the SSPFL arrived on the scene shouting slogans such as “Down with feudalism,” “We want independence and democratic rights”, “We support Bogyoke” etc., etc.

Repercussion in Conference Circles

The repercussion in the conference circles was immediate. There was much excitement.

I received word that Yawnghwe Sawbwa was looking for me. The screw was on now. When I saw him he was quite excited. I confirmed that Bogyoke had instructed us to send for the plane. Mong Pawng Sawbwa was upset and disturbed. So were the leaders of SSPFL who had been labouring untiringly for agreement. As a matter of fact it was they (U Tin Aye, U Tun Myint of Linkhe, U Tun Myint of Taunggyi, U Ba Zan and others) who had argued day and night with the Sawbwas and

the Duwas and kept them convinced of the sincerity of the present Burmese leaders before Bogyoke arrived at Panglong on February 8, 1947. The deadlock must therefore be broken. I told the Sawbwas that it was up to them. Burma would go according to its programme of “independence within one year,” come what may.

Bogyoke Changes His Mind

When Bo Tun Hla and I got back to the hut Bogyoke was already awake and looked relaxed and rested. We briefed him on what had happened. Though we did not say so in so many words, Bogyoke immediately saw that the atmosphere had changed for the better and asked us whether the plane had been sent for. We replied in the negative, not without some apprehension as to how he would react. “Let it be then,” he said.

The Final Decision and Agreement

The same evening a meeting was held at Bogyoke’s hut to evaluate the situation. Sir Maung Gyi, U Tin Tut, U Aung Zan Wai, Bo Khin Maung Gale and I were present. After listening to the discussions, Bogyoke expressed the view that certain clauses in the draft presented by the Hill Peoples could be redrafted in such a way as to satisfy all the parties concerned. He would ignore the clause disclaiming his leadership as irrelevant to the Conference. The clause on secession could wait till the Constitution was drawn. He would in the prevailing circumstances, accept in principle the existence of autonomous states—if not for other reasons, at least to satisfy the sentiments of the people who had made the demands. He would therefore be prepared to recommend to the Constituent Assembly the desirability of establishing a Kachin State.

At the same time, he said that a clause guaranteeing the fundamental democratic rights of the people must be included. This would off-set any dangers that might arise

from the concessions he was prepared to make. With regard to the immediate representation of the States in the Governor’s Executive Council Bogyoke saw no problem. A Counsellor with full Cabinet rank could be appointed exclusively for Frontier Areas affairs.

A draft agreement embodying the above suggestions was presented to the Conference. After some back-stage negotiations it was approved and signed on February 12, 1947. Panglong had ended. That was the Panglong which created history. That is the Panglong which lives vividly in my memory.

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR CONFERENCE ON BURMA STUDIES

BURMA-MYANMA(R) RESEARCH AND ITS FUTURE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOLARS AND POLICYMAKERS, 6-8 September 2002 (tentative dates, venue t.b.a.) An international conference (first announcement, July 2001)

No academic subjects are in principle beyond consideration, provided that they deal with (a) Burma-Myanmar, even if only indirectly, and (b) include at least a reflection, however brief, on how the quality of research on the topic addressed can be raised in future, and what needs to be put in place to help achieve this.

The following panels are currently under consideration:

- (1) Diplomacy: the Nature of Dialogue and Reconciliation
- (2) Research, Education and Human Resource Management
- (3) Ethnic Diversity
- (4) Environment, Resource Management and Development

- (5) Burma-Myanmar in the World: Refugees, migrants and the Diaspora
- (6) The Economy
- (7) Law and the Constitution
- (8) State and Society
- (9) Language and Linguistics
- (10) Literatures, Oral History and Popular Culture
- (11) Media Representations of Burma
- (12) Art, Archaeology and the Tourism Industry
- (13) Gender and Identity
- (14) Health and HIV
- (15) Religions and Religious Experience
- (16) History

The best-known repeat conferences are the annual Yangon University Historical Research Centre conference and the biennial conference by the Burma Studies Group in DeKalb every even year. Only the latter is 'open,' taking proposals from academics worldwide. Outside these, the last major one-off open international academic conference took place in Berlin in April 1993 at which 17 papers were given.

These conferences, and the publications that arose from them, are extremely valuable. However, they do not substitute for an event that brings together a large number of specialist scholars addressing the breadth of scholarship on Burma the way, for example, the Thai Studies Conference does every three years. Given the increased volume in academic studies over the last two decades, it is an opportune moment to start thinking about pooling academic expertise internationally and bring fresh academic perspectives into the public domain.

This particular conference proposal started off as an attempt to secure greater international participation into the DeKalb conference. Since considerable interest has been expressed by academics outside the USA, the Burma

Studies Foundation Trustees have kindly agreed to open up the 2002 conference so that it can become an international collaborative event. It is an opportunity to demonstrate the breadth of current scholarship across all fields of study internationally.

There has been little or no outlet for new scholarship since the country opened up in 1988 after a long period of closure. There has therefore been little opportunity for a new generation of young scholars to present their findings. Also, scholarship by Burmese-Myanma(r) nationals has been underrepresented internationally. The conference aims to: (i) bring on-stream scholarship not in the public eye before, and in particular of Burmese-Myanma(r) scholars and of young academics; (ii) foster wherever possible constructive dialogue between scholars from Burma-Myanmar and from the international community; (iii) to avoid myopia in Burma studies, encourage fresh comparative perspectives with other countries in transition, including ASEAN and Eastern Europe; (iv) strive for publication of proceedings from the conference. Currently the venue and dates are open. A decision is anticipated by end September 2001. Initial expressions of interest have been received from: Amsterdam, Gothenborg and Champaign, Illinois, U.S.A. Cheap or subsidized accommodation and accessibility from a major international airport are major considerations in choice of venue.

Though first and foremost an academic conference, proposals are also entertained for: (i) presentation of policy papers; (ii) for funding agencies and NGOs to meet academics; and (iii) to establish a more enduring international structure that permits co-ordination of regular international academic exchanges on Burma-Myanmar, including the production of a database, an

international directory of contacts, the organization of conferences and publications.

Deadline for submission of abstracts: March, 1, 2002. However, if you are in need of a transport subsidy, we need your abstract in by 15 January 2002, together with an estimate of the lowest-cost fare. To propose papers for individual panels, a venue for hosting and/or funding, please contact: Gustaaf Houtman, Editor *Anthropology Today*, Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5BT, United Kingdom, email: gustaafhoutman@uk2.net, telephone +44-(0)20-7394 6927, fax +44-(0)20-7394 8392. Participants from the Nordic countries are advised to also take up contact with Per Lundberg at per.lundberg@sant.gu.se.

Conference website: <http://www.therai.org.uk/anthcal/myanmarburma2002.html>

A conference registration form will be placed on the web at the end of the year.

NEWS IN THE U.S.

WORKSHOPS FOCUS ON BURMA AND BEYOND

MILITARIES IN DEMOCRATIC REFORM PROCESSES

Mary Callahan, Political Science-UW

On May 4-5, scholars from around the world participated in the Workshop on Militaries in Democratic Reform Processes. Experts on military affairs in Asia, Europe, Central America and South America presented analyses of how democratic civilian supremacy over militaries has been negotiated (or not), carried out (or not) and sustained (or not). Over the two-day discussions, workshop participants discussed the paths that military and political reform has taken in quite varied

settings.

Participants will revise their papers for inclusion in an edited volume. Overall the analysis is intended to contribute to important international debates regarding democracy promotion and statecraft programs in transitional societies throughout the world.

In particular, the workshop stressed the necessity of examining militaries as political institutions that participate in reform processes in ways that affect the sustainability of democratic reform. With the exception of the literature on Spain and Latin America, most studies of postauthoritarian transitions have ignored the militaries, even in countries where militaries remain alarmingly well-equipped to carry out anti-democratic activities, particularly given their histories of direct governance, practices of political repression, and capacities for surveillance over social forces.

The edited volume will include four sets of case studies. One set – on Argentina, Spain and possibly South Korea – will examine how civilian supremacy over militaries has been secured alongside the consolidation of political reform. A second set – on Indonesia and Guatemala – will analyze the ongoing negotiations and struggles over military roles in states moving away from direct military rule. A third set of case studies – on the Philippines and Poland – will examine cases in which militaries previously under explicit civilian control (under an authoritarian regime) have expanded into more adventurous political activities in the transition era. A final set of case studies – on Burma and Pakistan – will analyze cases where democratic reform has stalled and military dominance seems firmly entrenched. The workshop was funded by the International Studies Center at the Jackson School of International Studies, the Institute for Global and Regional Security Studies, and the Henry M. Jackson Foundation.

THE NEW WORLD OF CORPORATE
ACCOUNTABILITY

Sara Van Fleet
Assistant Director, SEAC-UW

The University of Washington Southeast Asia Center, together with Global Source Education, hosted a half-day workshop for educators and the public on Saturday, May 5 entitled "The New World of Corporate Accountability, With Special Focus on the Case of Unocal in Burma." The workshop brought together some of the nation's leading experts on issues of corporate accountability, on the experience of Unocal in Burma, and on the implications of the groundbreaking lawsuit against Unocal in US courts. Among the speakers were Lyuba Zarsky, Director of the Globalization and Governance Program of the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development, Christina Fink, author of "Living Silence: Burma Under Military Rule" (2001, Zed Books), Michael Thacher, from the Unocal Corporation, and Anita Ramasastry, a UW law professor. The four-hour program was followed by discussions between local secondary school educators regarding the most effective approaches of incorporating issues of globalization, human and labor rights and transnational corporate practices into the secondary school classroom.

NEWS ABROAD

Gustaaf Houtman was appointed European representative trustee on the Burma Studies Foundation for a five-year term in October 2000 and he will organize the next Burma Studies Conference. He is Editor of *Anthropology Today* and deputy director of the Royal Anthropological Institute. He will be visiting research professor at the Department

of Anthropology, Muenster, Germany (October 2002-January 2003), where he works with an interdisciplinary workgroup on the theme 'Cultural Diversity and the Construction of the Polity in Southeast Asia. Continuity, Discontinuity, and Transformation'. He will also be visiting research professor at the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies/Anthropology Department, Goteborg University, Sweden (March 2002 - February 2003), where he will pursue his research on Burma and help develop Burma research facilities in the Nordic countries. He can be reached at: gustaafhoutman@uk2.net.

The Art & Archaeology of Burma
The Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Australia
Saturday, August 11, 2001

Sylvia Fraser-Lu, Washington. A Lacquered History of the Kings of Pagan: an illustrated Glass Palace Chronicle
Bob Hudson, University of Sydney. Homeware, Builders' Hardware, Religious Supplies and Bonboniere: the function of the medieval Otein Taung pottery mounds at Bagan
Don Hein, Deakin University. Emergence of Myanmar's Glazed Ceramic History: some current evidence
Charlotte Galloway, Australian National University. Buddhist Imagery of the Bagan Period: iconography and text
Alexandra Green, SOAS, London University. Power, Felicity and Piety: Buddhist narrative in Burmese wall paintings of the 18th century.
Pamela Gutman - to be launched by Jackie Menzies, Head Curator of Asian Art, The Art Gallery of New South Wales. Burma's Lost Kingdoms: Splendours of Arakan.

CONFERENCE: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

We are glad to announce the holding of a Conference “**Texts and Contexts in Southeast Asia**” to be held in Yangon from 12 to 14 December 2001. The Conference provides a wonderful opportunity for participating in a discussion of current scholarship on aspects of Southeast Asian history with a special emphasis on Myanmar and for meeting with international and Myanmar scholars in an atmosphere of warm hospitality.

Registration fee for the Conference is US\$ 150 (in Foreign Exchange Certificates) payable after arrival in Yangon. The registration to be made before 17 November 2001 with the provision of the following particulars: Name, Position, Affiliation, Address, Fax and E-mail address. Accommodation for participants is being arranged at two hotels (with free transportation to the Conference venue):

Summit Parkview Hotel located near the People’s Park and Shwedagon Pagoda at rates of US\$ 35 (single) and US\$ 40 (double) and the **Central Hotel** in a downtown location close to Bogyoke Market at a rate of US\$ 20 (twin).

If you would like us to make a reservation for you at one of these hotels please let us know before 17 November 2001. Also please let us have the date of your arrival in Yangon and the flight number so that we can meet you at the airport.

These are some of the papers which will be presented at the Conference:

- Aung Thwin - Rama Zat: Text and Dramatic Presentation
- Michael A. Aung-Thwin - The Legend That Was Lower Burma
- V. Balambal - Relevance of Ramayana in the Modern Age

- Aurore Candier - France through Myanmar Eyes: Commentaries on Kinwun Mingyi’s Paris Diary
- Michael W. Charney - Reading Yakhine Minthami Eigyin as a Fifteenth-century Historical Document
- Catherine Diamond - Personal Texts and Public Contexts: Maturation and Political Upheaval in Lloyd Fernando’s *Scorpion Orchid* and Robert Yeo’s *The Singapore Trilogy*
- Thomas Engelbert - The Vietnamese “Tale of the Golden Turtle” in a Southeast Asian Context
- Neil A. Englehart - Representing Civilization: King Chulalongkorn’s Accounts of His European Travels, 1897 and 1907
- Annemarie Esche - War and Peace in Myanmar Literature of the 20th Century
- Helen James - Adoniram Judson and the First Anglo-Burmese War: Creation of a Missionary Discourse in Pre-colonial Burma
- Stephen Lee Keck - Text and Context: Another Look at *Burmese Days*
- Khin Aye - Buddhavamsa and Myanmar Literature
- Khin Khin Ma - Myanmar Queens in Historical and Literary Texts
- Khin Maung Nyunt - Historical Writings of U Po Kya
- Ursula Lies - The Verse Novel Truyen Kieu: Remarks on the Subject of Ethics and Moral Standards
- John N. Miksic - The Manjusri Inscripton of Candi Sewu, Saka 714/ A.D 792
- Elizabeth Moore - Texts in New Contexts: Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe Today
- Myo Myint – Prince Mekkhara and Dictionary in English and Burmese
- Ohno Toru - The Main Versions of the Ramayana in Southeast Asia
- Ryuji Okudaira - Political Ideas of Eighteenth Century Myanmar Seen in the Manugye Dhammathat
- T. R. Sareen - The Nature of Colonial

Archives for the Study of Southeast Asia
- Sunait Chutintaranond - Historical Texts on Thai-Myanmar Relations
- Than Tun - Estimation of Various Publications by the Myanmar Historical Commission
- Than Htut & Thaw Kaung - Some Myanmar Historical Texts and their Historical Fiction
- Thet Tun - The Writings of J. S. Furnivall
- Tin Lwin - Date of the Saddaniti
- Tun Aung Chain - The Mingun Bell Inscription: The King as Dhammaraja

Universities Historical Research Centre
Amara Hall, Yangon University Campus
Yangon 11041, Myanmar
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E.mail: uhrc@mptmail.net.mm

ALPHABET GETS ISO APPROVAL

Myanmar characters will be included in international computer font codes for the first time, and moves are now afoot to lobby for the script's inclusion in the next version of Microsoft Word. The Myanmar alphabet of characters has been certified as ISO 10646 Unicode Standard Version 3.0 by the International Standards Organization (ISO). The outcome is the result of three year work by a group of IT professionals, linguists, literature experts and historians. The group's achievement, and its consequences were detailed at a seminar on the ISO Unicode in Yangon last week organized by the IT standardization committee of the e-National Taskforce and sponsored by KMD Computer Centre. (Myanmar Times, July 16 - 22, 2001)

SAVING THE SACRED BELL

A sacred bell, stuck at the bottom of

Myanmar's Irrawaddy River for nearly 400 years, could now be recovered. An English marine biologist has agreed to undertake the project to recover the Dhammazedhi bell, which once stood in Rangoon's holiest shrine, the Shwedagon pagoda. The bell is made of gold, silver and bronze and encrusted with emeralds and sapphires. It's said to be the biggest ever made, reportedly weighing 300 tons. One of Burma's most sacred religious relics, it is believed that its restoration in the pagoda will bring good fortune back to Myanmar.

The bell was originally uprooted from the Shwedagon pagoda by Portuguese traders in 1608, but it sank into the Irrawaddy as the thieves shipped it on a raft. The Portuguese suffered for their bungled looting - the whole garrison was killed in an attack by angry Burmese, and records suggest the Portuguese leader died a slow death on bamboo stakes. Recovering the bell will require lifting it from the river bed with a crane, and constructing a special railway to carry it up the hill to the pagoda. Some pro-democracy campaigners say the salvage operation might be misconstrued as an endorsement by the international community of Myanmar's military dictatorship, and should wait until talks with the regime have progressed or until such time as a democratic government is in place. (January 31, 2001.)

NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

A new international airport is now in operation in Mandalay, Myanmar (Burma). Mandalay International Airport began services on Sunday, September 17, 2000. The new airport is located at Tada U township, about 30km (19 miles) southwest of Mandalay. It cost over US\$150 million to build and will handle modern Boeing 747 400s,

accommodating around three million passengers a year. Mandalay International is Myanmar's second international airport, after Yangon Airport. Myanmar now has 26 international air routes passing through its territory.

BOOK NEWS

Myth and History in the Historiography of Early Burma, by Michael Aung-Thwin. Athens, OH: University Press, 1998 made CHOICE's outstanding academic books of 1999.

The Making of Modern Burma, on CD-ROM by Michael Aung-Thwin is available for Macs now, and by the end of summer, for Windows. It is an interactive CD-ROM with 11 chapters of text on prehistory, history, literature, religion, politics, social life, with links to slides, maps, and charts. It has over a dozen maps and hundreds of pictures, with Burmese harp in the background. The price is \$25. It's available at Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Moore Hall, 1890 East West Road, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI 96822. Email is: cseas@hawaii.edu

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