



# BURMA STUDIES GROUP



## NEWSLETTER



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#1 March 23, 1973

Bloomington, Indiana, 47401

### An Apology

About a year ago, during the AAS Annual Meetings in New York City, I accepted the responsibility to try to produce a Burma Studies Group Newsletter, which, it was then hoped, would appear at least every now and then. The rest, of course, is history judging from the fact that this is the first issue. I had seriously thought about doing the newsletter when summer came along soon after, and I became lost amidst the labyrinthine wings of M.I.T.'s Speech Communication and Linguistics Departments.

At the end of summer 1972, I returned to Indiana with renewed resolutions to do the newsletter; however, before the month of August was fully over, I was once again doing fancy footwork. This time I was in the act of trying to shimmy through seven courses that were there to teach. I am still teaching seven courses, but it is Spring again and perhaps the time has come to get on the move.

Since apologies have a way of really getting nothing done, I am offering mine with the skeleton of the first Burma Studies Group Newsletter. It appears that I shall have part-time student assistance in clearing my desktop. And so, perhaps, we can now have our own newsletter. In other words, I think that I can back it from here on.

And here's wishing you a very happy Burmese New Year.

### A Request

The idea behind this newsletter is to share those pieces of news that concern "Burma Studies" in one manner or another. I should be most appreciative if you can send whatever items of interest that you may have, either to Ms. Ellen VanDernoot at 130 Lane Hall, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104, or directly to me.

As of now, our Chairperson John Badgley has not instructed me to place strict embargo on any particular category of material. Thus, it appears to be quite alright if I track down and insert the best recipe for Burmese balachaung--assuming that enough people want it. So then, keep those cards and letters coming.

## TWO FULBRIGHT GRANTEES GOING TO BURMA

We have received the fantastic news that two American scholars will go to Burma this summer under the Fulbright program. Prof. Richard M. Cooler of Northern Illinois University and Prof. Robert Garcia of the University of Washington, Seattle, will soon have the privilege to study in Burma. Mr. Cooler's special interest and work have been in the area of Southeast Asian fine art, while Mr. Garcia is in music. I am unable to say what the expected duration of stay in Burma is to be. Whatever the terms, our best wishes will surely go with these gentlemen.

## U Thein Swe Leaving AAS for Northwestern

U Thein Swe, who has been associated with the AAS head quarters as its editor of bibliography for the past several years is leaving for Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. He will take up his new position as Librarian of Social Sciences, it is learned.

## A Request from John Badgley

The Chairman of the Burma Studies Group seeks feed-back response from the members of the group to the draft proposal as regards Burmese studies in the U.S. This proposal was earlier mailed to all members by Ellen Vandervoort, SEARC Coordinator. The basic issue is the problem of developing a general Burmese studies program in the US in a manner which assures its continued inclusion in the Southeast Asian Studies programs here and to open and maintain channels of contact and collaboration with scholars in Burma. John would appreciate hearing your ideas at the meeting in Chicago.

## Spiro and Lehman on Burmese Kinship

We have just learned that Profs. Melford Spiro of the UC-San Diego and F.K. Lehman of the University of Illinois-Urbana are preparing a book on the Burmese kinship system. Mr. Ward Carow, a graduate student working with Dr. Lehman will be the third member of the team. This should fulfill a long standing need felt by students of Burmese society.

## Kachin Dictionary Nearing Completion

A project to revise, expand, and improve the phonetic representation of Dr. Ols Hanson's Kachin Dictionary (1906) is nearing completion at Bloomington, Indiana. This project was started by me about four years ago when I became impressed with the fact that the absence of tonal marks and the glottal stop has made it practically impossible for a non-native to use it. The new edition will contain the much needed reforms plus about 7,000 additional words and a grammatical outline. The target date for completion is the end of summer, 1973.

### Burmese Language and Linguistics

A recent report by the SEARC reveals that Burmese language instruction in the US appears to be surviving, but by a thread. The report (Programs in Southeast Asian Studies, 1972; SEARC, AAS) shows Cornell, Hawaii, Illinois and Michigan as having at least some arrangement for Burmese language instruction. In an earlier communication from Tom Geting's Language Resources Committee, Hawaii, Illinois and the Foreign Service Institute were indicated as having regular programs. In terms of enrollment, Hawaii and Illinois reported 3 with 8 being the figure for the FSI.

Due to entirely unfortunate but inevitable circumstances, our own program at Indiana was not reported for inclusion in either survey. Hence this brief digression. We have 7 students at the first year level, 2 at the second year level, and 2 at the third year level. This gives us a total of 11, after losing one through graduation to Kris Lehman at Illinois. All these students are undergraduates majoring in linguistics. Many thanks to U Khin of the FSI for sending us the newspapers and other material.

It appears that Tibeto-Burman Linguistics courses are now taught at four schools in the US; the University of California at Berkeley (Prof. J.A. Matisoff), Cornell University (Prof. R.B. Jones), the University of Illinois-Urbana (Prof. F.K. Lehman) and at Indiana University-Bloomington, taught by me.

So that R. Shafer and S. Wolfenden - wherever they are, and Paul Benedict may rejoice, we have news of two undergraduate linguistic majors at Indiana who are studying Chinese, Burmese and soon, Tibetan. Sino-Tibetan linguistics cannot be too far away for them.

### Disappearing NEFL Funds and Burmese

The news of the virtually certain termination of intensive summer programs featuring Burmese at Hawaii and Michigan may be old hat to many of you. The truly lamentable fact is that this summer could have witnessed the first occasion when as many as ten fellowships would have been given to students of Burmese. It appears that there will be none.

Recently, a meeting organized by Robin Wilson of the headquarters of the Committee for Institutional Cooperation (for the non-initiate, that's the Big Ten schools plus the University of Chicago) was held at O'Hare Airport to consider the possibility of working out alternatives to the expected jeopardy in SEAN language programs due to federal budget cuts. The idea was to try to coordinate course offerings among the member schools so that the costly and possibly quite unnecessary overlappings may be eliminated.

Burmese language programs were discovered to be somewhat different. For instance, those presently teaching the language within the CIC member schools were doing so as overload and for the love of the language. Thus, it was not costing the institutions anything. Accordingly, it was granted amnesty from the impending reorganization. F.K. Lehman, A.L. Becker and myself represented the interest of Burmese at the meeting.

Betty Morse in Bloomington

Betty Morse, who with her family spent many years among the Lisu and Rawang Kachin in the northern fringes of Kachin State, is now a graduate student in Folklore and research assistant in the Folklore Archives. She is transcribing the incredible tape collection which she herself shared in gathering in the field.

See You in Chicago

I wish to join John Badgley in hoping that we shall see you in Chicago in another week. The Burma Studies Group meeting is at Private Dining Room #7, Third Floor, at 9:30 am. See you there.

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The Burma Studies Group Newsletter

La Raw Maran  
editor

and assisted by Gregg Kinkley, Holly Shankle, and Lynn Calvin. Mailing address: Dept. of Linguistics, Lindley Hall 401, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, 47401