

*Burma: An Annotated Bibliographical Guide to International Doctoral Dissertation Research, 1898-1985.* By Frank Joseph Shulman. Lanham: University Press of America and the Wilson Center, 1986. Pp. xviii, 247.

If it is at all possible to characterize the state of Burmese studies today, it would probably be acknowledged that the field is marked by a lack of adequate, current data or information, at least for non-Burmese researchers and scholars because it has not been possible for some time now to engage in library research or field-work in Burma. For this reason, existing studies on Burma seem to reflect the dominance of approaches rather more historical in nature dictated in large part by a dependence on an increasingly familiar body of dated published materials and sources. There are, admittedly, studies which focus on more contemporary issues but their information content, more often than not, leaves much to be desired. It would appear that Burmese studies, outside Burma, continues to be sustained not so much by new primary data but, rather, by scholarly optimism and assiduousness in unearthing that elusive bit of new secondary data.

Shulman's bibliographical guide to doctoral dissertations on Burma between 1898 and 1985 will undoubtedly fuel that optimism and relieve the Burma specialist and others with a general interest in Burma of the tedious and tiring task of tracing and gaining access to largely unpublished works which make up an extremely important part of the body of literature on Burma. It is the first reference guide of its kind, dealing specifically with thesis literature on Burma in the humanities, social sciences, medicine, the professions, and natural sciences.

Compiled over seventeen years, with what must have been considerable, painstaking effort, it is a meticulously designed reference guide which is probably as comprehensive as a guide of this nature could possibly be. The guide has been assembled on the basis of a wide range of relevant publications, extensive correspondence, and visits to American and European libraries. There are 707 entries, consisting of dissertations concerned primarily and secondarily with Burma, most of which are descriptively annotated. The majority of the dissertations listed in the guide were submitted to institutions of higher learning in the United States (338), the USSR (100), and Great Britain (72), with nearly two hundred to institutions in twelve European countries and

Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. It is astonishing to learn, however, that apparently no doctoral dissertations have been submitted to the two main universities in Burma, the University of Rangoon and the University of Mandalay (at least, up to early 1986), a point which Shulman notes on the basis of what may be taken as good authority. For the specialist, there will be much that will be familiar (especially dissertations which have been reworked and published, information which Shulman also provides), but there will in all likelihood also be a surprising amount of material that will be unfamiliar, demanding inspection and investigation.

The entries are listed according to subject, based on their content, and arranged in strict chronological order according to the year in which they were completed or formally accepted by degree-awarding institutions, with cross-references where relevant. The bibliographic controls are excellent and all necessary information and details are provided for each entry including — and this will undoubtedly be much appreciated by the librarian and serious researcher — a statement explaining how a copy of the dissertation may be obtained. Five sets of statistical tables are provided which summarize the data contained in the guide and they are worthy of study in themselves for what they show of the development of Burmese studies as reflected in doctoral research, beginning with the first dissertation submitted in Switzerland in 1898. There are also three indexes (an author index, an index of degree-awarding institutions according to country, and a subject index based on key words in the titles of dissertations) which are extremely useful for rapidly accessing the information contained in the guide.

*Burma: An Annotated Bibliographical Guide to International Doctoral Dissertation Research, 1898-1985* will undoubtedly be regarded as the authority on the thesis literature on Burma and it is a research tool which researchers and scholars interested in Burma, and libraries with respectable Southeast Asian holdings can ill-afford to do without.

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