

*Burma: A Study Guide*. Edited by Ronald A. Morse and Helen L. Loerke. Lanham, Maryland: Wilson Center Press, 1988. Pp. vi, 332.

This three-part volume is a timely and useful book.

The first part (fifty-nine pages) had previously been published as a monograph under the intriguing title *Glimpses of the "White Elephant"*. This is now entitled *Burma Studies Worldwide*, edited by Ronald A. Morse and Helen L. Loerke. It gives brief surveys written by well-known "native" scholars of Burmese studies in nine countries: the USSR, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and Burma. Of these nine surveys, the one on Burmese studies in Burma itself, as noted by the editors, is the sketchiest. Of just two pages, it does not mention any of the significant research work carried out by the Burma Historical Commission (later incorporated with the Research Section of the University of Yangon [Rangoon] History Department), the research in Burmese language and literature of the Burmese Language Commission and the Burmese Department of the University of Yangon and Mandalay or the research work of the Educational Research Bureau, the Archaeological Department, Research Department of the Institutes of Economics, and of Agriculture, the Forest Research Institute, the Central Research Organization, and so on.

There are no country surveys for the People's Republic of China, Thailand, and Singapore, where research work on Burma is also being done, especially at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

In spite of these shortcomings the book is of much use to scholars and researchers interested in Burma, as it is the only recent survey of what research work on Burma is being carried out.

The second and third parts are two bibliographies edited by Anita Hibler and William P. Tuchrello: one on monographs and maps (1,080 items) and the other on periodical articles (1,618 items). They are "Burma: A Selective Guide to Scholarly Resources" (which I will

abbreviate as BSR) and “Burma: A Selective Guide to Periodical Literature (1970–1986)” (abbreviated as BPL).

The pages of these two bibliographies are not numbered, but the items are numbered and the arrangement is by author’s name; or where there is no author or where the authorship is diffuse, by title of the work. There are also subject indexes to each bibliography, which researchers will find useful.

Publications of bibliographies of books and indexes to periodical articles on Burma have been sparse, and none has appeared in recent years apart from Mde D. Bernot’s useful work, *Bibliographie Birmane*, in several volumes, which covers up to about 1970. These two new compilations by Hibler and Tuchrello therefore fill an urgent gap and will be indispensable for researchers working on Burma.

Some irritating drawbacks in the volume are (1) the use of two entirely different transliteration systems; (2) some entries placed under the wrong element of Burmese names; and (3) some typographical errors.

1. In the BSR and the BPL, the Hunterian System of Transliteration (a system used in Burma since British times) and the new Library of Congress Burmese Romanization tables are both used for the transcription of names of Burmese authors. This results in a number of inconsistencies, for example, Than Oo, Tekkatho (BPL item no. 1357), and Than U, Tekkatho (BPL 1366–72) are one and the same author; so too are San Thvan (BSR 866–67) and Than Tun (BSR 978); my name is given as So Kon (BSR 547) and Thaw Kaung (BSR 980); and so on.
2. An entry is often placed under the wrong element of Burmese names, or entered under the prefix or an appellation attached to a Burmese name. I will give a few examples: the Burmese scholar and one-time Minister Dr E Maung’s name is correctly entered as E Maung, U in BSR 356, but wrongly entered as Maung, E in BSR 682; May, Khin San (BSR 689) should have

been entered as Khin San May. Kyaw Win, Manotha (BPL 702) is correct, while Manuttha Kyaw Win (BPL 786–87) is wrong as the entry is placed under the appellation and not the name element. Works by the same author are in this way often split up in different parts of the same bibliography.

The well-known Burmese poet U Wun (pen-name Minthuwun) is entered as Maung, Wun (BPL 812) under the prefix he used as a young man. The same mistake is made in the case of Maung Ye Lwin (BPL 822), which should have been entered as Ye Lwin, Maung.

The prefix and the name element sometimes get mixed up. For example, Maung Thaike, Maung (BPL 817–20) should have been entered as Maung Maung Thaike.

Prefixes (honorifics) used by some of the ethnic groups of Burma are not inverted. For example, Nai Pan Hla, a Mon scholar (BPL 914–25) should have been listed as Pan Hla, Nai; and Sai Sam Tip, a Shan writer (BPL 1113) as Sam Tip, Sai.

3. Lastly, typographical or transcription errors are also prevalent: Kaung Myint, Muang [*sic*] (BPL 619) and Kaung Muint [*sic*], Maung (BPL 620); Htya Aung (BPL 549) should be Htay Aung.

The volume could be improved upon by bringing together U Ne Win's opening and closing speeches during the First Congress of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BPL 426 and 937). Furthermore, there is no reason why Dr Maung Maung's two books (BSR 684 and 686) should not be listed consecutively without being intervened by an item by ex-Brigadier Maung Maung (BSR 685).

Nevertheless, on the whole *Burma: A Study Guide* is an indispensable work for scholars, and an essential reference tool for libraries with Southeast Asian collections. With its main emphasis on research work in the social sciences and the humanities, the two bibliographies cover a wide range of subjects: social issues, minority problems and social unrest, armed conflicts, urbanization, rural conditions and development,

women and youth, population and census, and so on — these being the subjects that interest many researchers on Burma in recent times.

If a new edition is forthcoming, I believe the inadequacies pointed out above are well worth some consideration.

U THAW KAUNG