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Arts of Asia

May-June 1971

Burma's Treasure House – Ancient Pagan

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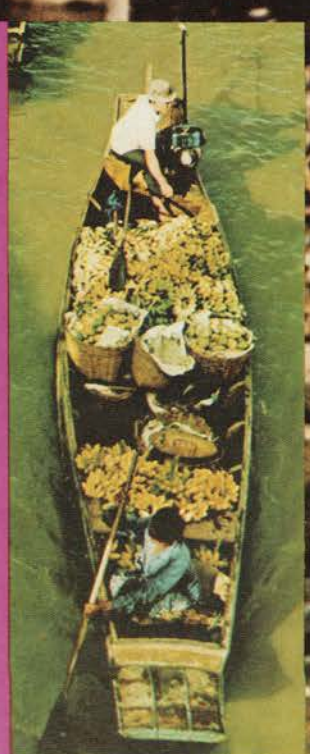

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Arts of Asia

May-June 1971

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Cover: A 60-foot long Buddha reclines in a vaulted brick chamber behind the Shwesandaw Pagoda in Pagan. Its head and right arm point to the North, the position assumed by the Gautama when he lay dying between two sal trees in India.

Contributors

U KHIN ZAW, B.A., F.L.A., the son of a practising musician, is a former director of the Burma Broadcasting Service and a Fellow of the Library Association. While Librarian of Rangoon University he made researches into Burmese music and literary forms. Under the pseudonym K he writes poetry and musical criticism regularly for the Rangoon Guardian magazine. His autobiography *Burma in My Lifetime* appeared in 1956–57.

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JOHN K. T. MA read economics at London University. A management accountant, he is the only Chinese member of Sotheby's London staff.

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Contents

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Editorial

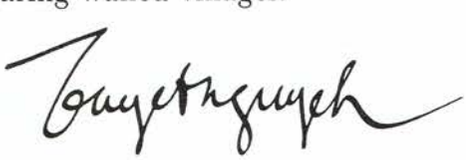
Arts of Asia is designed for the collector, art student, connoisseur and investor. Many of our articles—we do not say all—will interest all four categories of reader.

However we have received a rather critical letter in this connexion, which heads the adjoining correspondence column. The writer, Mr J. H. Brinckmann, whose complimentary remarks about our first issue we greatly appreciate, expresses reservations about the contents of the second. Music he just concedes as a suitable subject for *Arts of Asia,* but not photography. His view, which is by no means a new one, appears to revive in a sense the "is the photographer a true artist?" debate which dates back to the 19th century; though photographs of that period are now so eagerly sought by collectors for their artistic as much as for their documentary value that the argument would appear settled for ever.

I make no apologies either for my report on the Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo. This display was surely both topical and comprehensive, and a unique opportunity to compare the prints of Asian artists with those of their Western counterparts. A prize-winning set of Japanese prints appeared on the front of the magazine, besides those within the covers.

Burma is the country most prominently featured in this issue...Pagan's ancient stupas and pagodas, the regalia of kings and princes, and the work of Burmese artists today. In addition no less than three articles are designed for collectors, with connoisseurs of Chinese bronzes particularly well catered for. The story on Theo Schoon, an unusual artist brought up in Indonesia, was written during his recent stay in Hong Kong to study Chinese jade carving.

Singapore and Thailand will provide the main subjects of our July-August issue. Three articles will describe the city-state's museum and art galleries, the paintings of a local batik artist and the collection of a connoisseur of Chinese teapots and inkstones, with some remarks on their use. Others will feature the work of Praphan Srisouta, a rising young Thai artist, Christian netsuke and the architecture of Hong Kong's fast disappearing walled villages.



TUYET NGUYET
Publisher & Editor

CORRESPONDENCE

Congratulations on your bold initiative! An English-language publication "for collectors, connoisseurs and investors" was indeed necessary, and the first number certainly lived up to expectations. It covered Asian art and did it well.

I am not sure if the same can be said for the second number. In addition to fine and appropriate articles in the field of Asian art, you have this time included contributions on a largely non-Asian print exhibition, on music, and on photography. In my opinion, these three articles fall outside the editorial policy stated in your first number. One may argue about the music article, but photography—for all its undisputed artistic achievements—certainly is not a subject for a magazine devoted to the "collector and connoisseur". As for the report on the Tokyo Biennial, only 3 of the 14 photographs showed prints made in Asia.

Pray stray no further!

J.H. BRINCKMANN
5|7 Nishi-Ochiai 4-chome,
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 161, Japan.

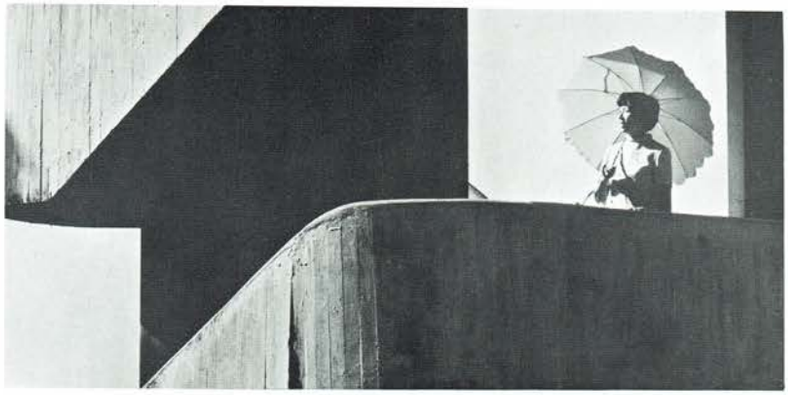
This magazine is very interesting and will serve as a valuable reading material and reference to our students and faculty; hence we are placing a one-year subscription. . . .

MRS ESPERANZA A. STA. CRUZ,
University Librarian,
The Philippine Women's University,
Taft Avenue, Manila, Philippines.

I read with great interest the article on Chinnery which I think was excellent. I particularly like the little sketches in the margin.

It was also gratifying that you avoided the usual tale that he had run away to India to escape from his wife, although you stated as a fact that he had left his wife and children in Ireland, but painters of the period went to India and stayed a very long time. Zoffany for instance, stayed in India for 15 years. It was very difficult at that time to get a passage by any East India Company ship, especially to India and Chinnery himself was originally turned down. They were averse to giving passages to painters and others who did not serve the East India Company. Chinnery, however, did succeed in getting his wife and two children out to India, although the union was not a success.

DR. J.R. JONES,
3 Abermor Court,
15 May Road, Hong Kong.



Light Pattern by C.M. Leung MBE, Hon. FPSHK, APSHK, ARPS

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF HONG KONG

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Objects Of The Society

The Photographic Society of Hong Kong was founded in 1937 to promote and improve photography and its applications, facilitate the exchange of information and ideas in all branches of the art, and accord opportunities to members to learn, study, discuss and compete for awards and arouse interest in deeper photographic research.

To ensure that the above mentioned objects are best achieved, the Society is open to all persons agreeing to its rules and who make application for admission as members.

The PSHK is the President of the Federation of Asian Photographic Art for 1970–1972. The Congress of the FAPA will take place in different Asian countries once every two years. The PSHK is also the Hong Kong official member of the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique which is an UNESCO organization with its headquarters in Switzerland.

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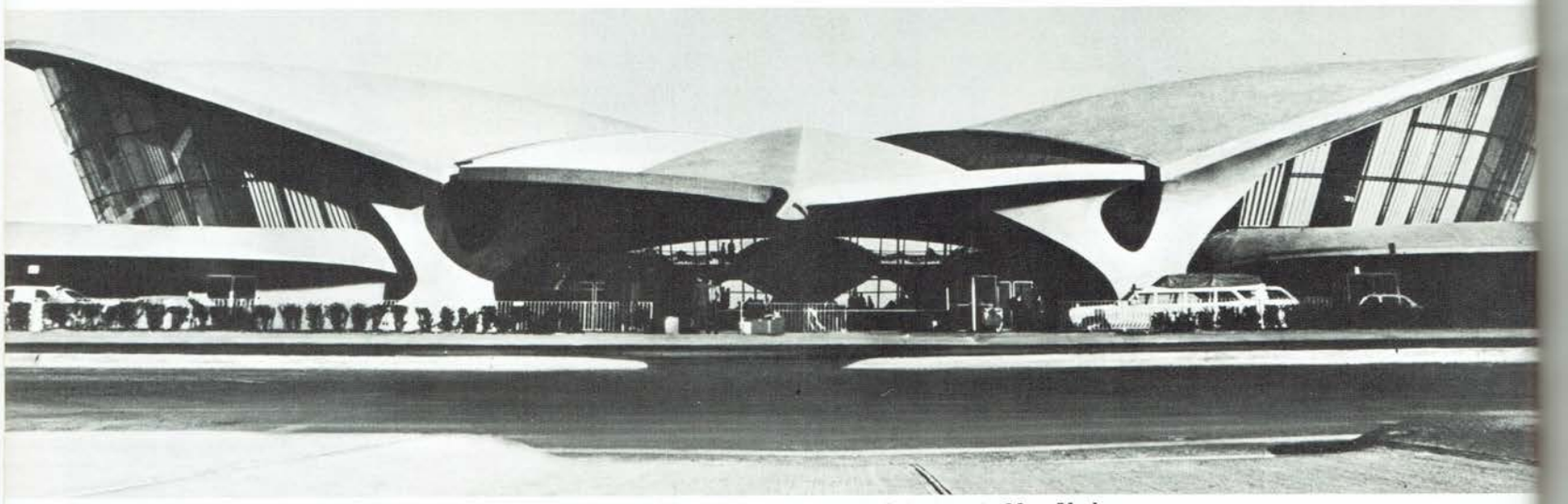

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Dancers in the Field (detail)
by U Ba Moe
91 × 30 cm.
Tempera on cloth

THE GUIDED BRUSH

Tuyet Nguyet

The latest Burma Arts and Sculpture Exhibition was held in the Envoy Hall, Rangoon, from December 20 to January 4 last, and received 60,000 visitors. Competitions had previously been held in Rangoon and other towns, and from the works entered the Burma Art and Sculpture Council selected for the main exhibition about 1,000 pictures (chiefly oils, but some watercolours, ink drawings and others) and 75 sculptures. Most of the work was priced at Kts 250–500 (about US $50–100 at official rates) and Kts 40,000 worth was sold, some of it to the Ministry of Culture for display in the National Gallery at 26, Phayre Street.

Works exhibited had to be original and not previously shown, and to "elevate the arts of Burma and promote Socialist culture". Any work of a tendency contrary to Burmese Socialism, or calculated to foster nationalism or discontentment among the various races of the country was banned. Entries were judged on the basis of their "ideas, educational value, topicality and colour". These exhibitions, it is said, generate much new interest and encourage new artists. The latest one was not perhaps the best to date, but it revealed considerable development in Burmese painting since the previous exhibition, held in 1968, and improvement in some respects.

Of the exhibitors, three whose work caught the eye were U Ba Moe, U Maung Kyaw and U Hla Myaing. U Ba Moe is a professional artist trained in the traditional ways of Burmese painting. Born at Budalin town, Monywa district, in 1913, he first studied drawing under the guidance of his father, himself an artist. Then, from the age of sixteen, he was taught by two well known artists from Mandalay, U Aye and his son U Saw Maung, painting in outline on stretched cloth and filling in with subdued colour. From these masters he also learnt to mix his own colours, using chalks and earths and tree gums. Thus black was obtained from wood and oil smoke, white from zinc oxide and blue from copper sulphate.

At the age of twenty he set up a studio and began a professional career as an artist in Monywa. In 1945 he was employed as an artist in the Psychology Division of S.E.A.C.

at Calcutta, but returned to Burma at the end of 1946 and joined the Directorate of Information, where he has remained to this day.

After 1920, he says, rich Burmese gradually ceased to patronise painters, while the traditional local materials became harder to obtain. Around 1925 moreover many exhibitions of pictures arrived from Europe, prompting local artists to turn to Western styles. U Ba Moe is one of the few Burmese artists who has retained the old skills, working with equal facility and charm in both manners. Painting some twenty pictures of all sizes yearly, he reckons that his output has already exceeded a thousand. In 1963 the Government commissioned an immense painting for display at the Independence Day celebrations. Much of his support indeed comes from the Government, which employs him to paint historical subjects. Foreign embassies also commission pictures from him, and a 91 x 30 cm. watercolour of royal dancers and musicians performing before the King was sold to America for Kts 350 in 1967, and a 65x51 cm. painting in traditional style entitled *Old Duet Dance* to West Germany for Kts 200 in 1968.

U Ba Moe is considerably more lively and inventive than most of the older generation of Burmese painters, and notably good in composition. He had six oils on display.

U Maung Kyaw, a middle aged art master from Moulmein, is little known in Rangoon. He is primarily a copyist, specialising in pencil drawings of the court of old Mandalay, of which he showed six. His portraits of princes and ministers have a naive character perhaps due to the quality of the original photographs, though distinguished by minute accuracy. His architectural drawings both provide an interesting historical record and contain a brilliant wealth of detail. You could almost build the Shwe Kyaung from his delineation of it.

The work of U Hla Myaing stood out among the massed dancers, weaving girls and rural scenes as an attempt at something new in Burma. His technique however is traditional, though remarkably skilful. The son of a Karen peasant farmer, he was born at Taritakong village near the Siamese border in 1943. He began drawing in childhood, using charcoal, chalks and a slate pencil. From the age of ten he lived in a monastery, receiving a good classical Burmese education and continuing to draw, mostly views of the monastery buildings, and later pencil portraits of the inmates. The monks liked his drawings and kept some of them.

After eight years he left the monastery with no vows taken, and six years later came to Rangoon. He now lives in the Alone quarter as an ordinary workman in the No. 4 Sawmill, earning only Kts 82 a month, a small sum but enough, he says, for an unmarried man. Nevertheless he suffers from the fact that a painting of the size he prefers represents a considerable outlay. The materials alone may cost Kts 100 and are often hard to come by. Paint is very expensive in Burma, and old or damaged materials must sometimes be used as the import of such things as wood panels and hardboard is restricted.

U Hla Myaing is a completely self-taught artist. He started painting only three or four years ago, when he came to Rangoon, from watercolour portraits going on to oils. His first style was formed from illustrations he saw in books, mainly of the work of old masters such as Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo, and at the 1968 Exhibition he made his first sale, an impressionist painting called *Artist at Work*. The title would suggest a self-portrait, but the work was in fact done from imagination.

His second—and present—style has been largely influenced by the surrealist school, Dali and others, which he has seen illustrated in such foreign magazines as Time, Life and Newsweek. His technique no doubt was acquired from books also. First he paints the board with a white priming coat and then draws on this in pencil, followed by up to ten

Tournament Before the King
by U Ba Moe
91 × 30 cm.
Tempera on cloth

Sending Children from the Village to be Monks
by U Ba Moe
66 × 40 cm.
Oil on plywood

Village Festival
by U Ba Moe
52 × 40 cm.
Watercolour

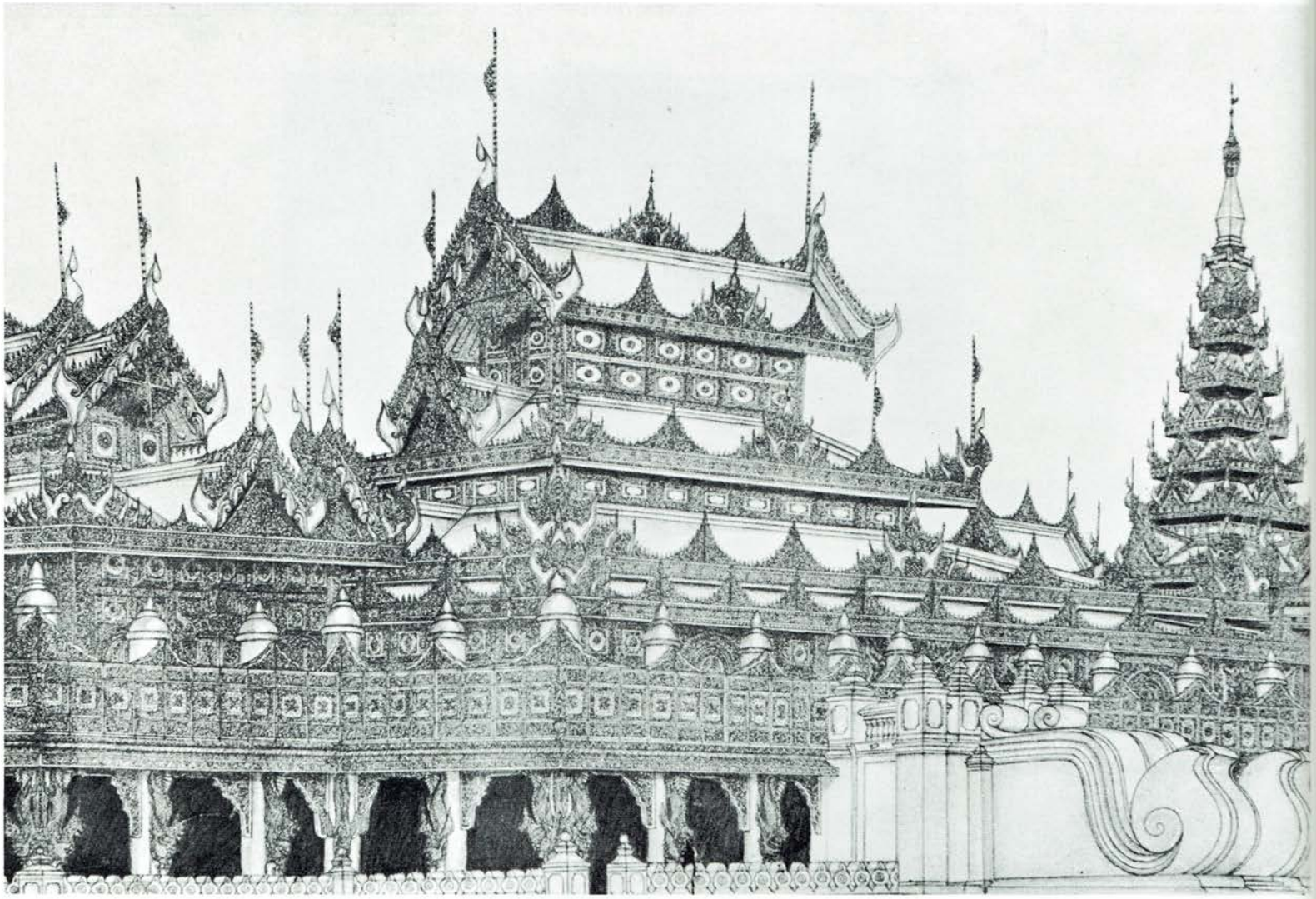
Mother and Baby
by U Ba Moe
65 × 51 cm.
Oil on plywood

Old Duet Dance
by U Ba Moe
65 × 51 cm.
Oil on plywood

U Ba Moe with
his painting
The Shwekyaung
Oil on plywood

Princess (detail)
by U Maung Kyaw
35 × 26 cm.
Pencil drawing

Secretary to the King
by U Maung Kyaw
38 × 25 cm.
Pencil drawing



The Shwekyaung
by U Maung Kyaw
51 × 36 cm.
Pencil drawing

coats of oil paint mixed thinly with turpentine and linseed oil and finished with copal varnish. Working in this slow and smoothly finished technique in the evenings, weekends and holidays, he manages to complete some ten paintings a year.

At the Exhibition two of the four works by him were sold and all aroused interest. Each one conveys a moral more or less explicit. *Burmese Treasures* shows a trunk of teak wood from which emerges a girl (imaginary) who is seated on a slab of jade and draped with pearls; no doubt the girl herself is also considered one of the treasures depicted. *Helpful Friends* is a paradigm of Burmese agriculture: the bullock, the farmer's friend, is framed by symbols of rice in various forms, and munches rice stalks. The *Effect of Temptation* illustrates the disastrous consequences of promiscuity: "I am very afraid of disease. Many of my friends are womanisers, and I wish to show them the dangers of their way of life". As the worker can no longer use his hammer, its shaft has started to sprout and its head to melt. A snake appears behind the girl (who here again is not a model, but a stereotype from the artist's imagination). Not surprisingly, this painting remained unsold. *Let's Choose the Right Path* is another work in this mood: on the left are children and fruit representing life, on the right a monster in the shape of an atomic explosion, and death.

The Envoy Hall, an unimposing structure of temporary character, makes a far from ideal picture gallery, but the general impression made by the Exhibition would probably have been much the same in any surroundings. The respected artists in Burma today are mostly academics, some very skilful but generally dated and unoriginal and lacking in vitality. These exhibited serried rows of neo-impressionist paintings in muddy colours and some excessively watery watercolours.

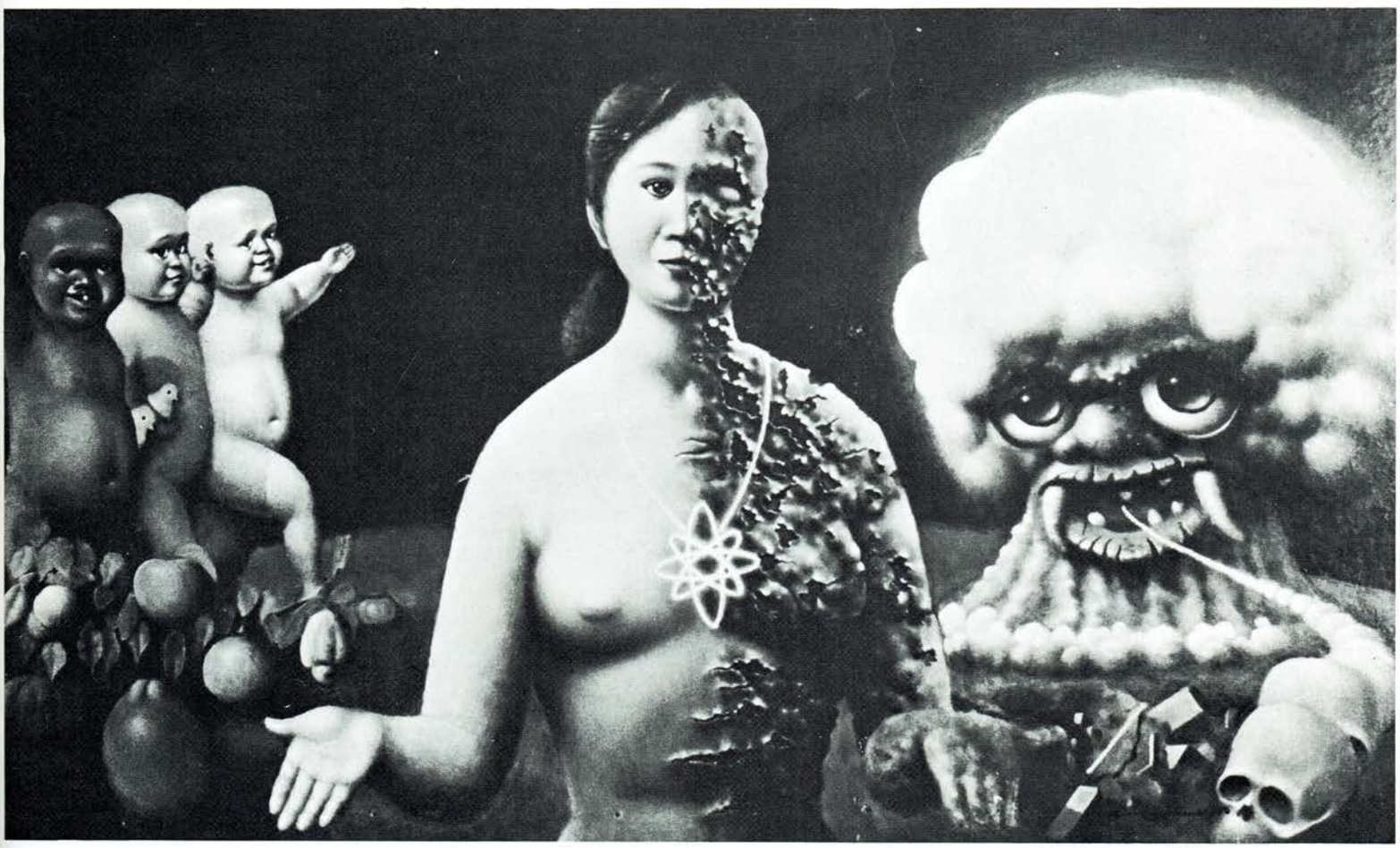
The terms of the Exhibition might seem to preclude originality. In fact a distinctively Socialist message was hardly anywhere in evidence, but the paintings tended to fall into clearly defined styles or categories: the joys and achievements of rural life, the monuments style (chiefly views of Pagan), the dancers and musicians style and the photographic style, mainly for portraiture. Monks for some reason seemed to inspire the best work in painting and sculpture, often of a remarkable realism which in one instance went so far as to involve draping a portrait bust in a monk's yellow robe.

On the other hand no-one seemed to be excluded for originality, and indeed works on the "original" side seemed to be selling better than the others. One sensed endeavouring to emerge a younger generation of artists who were trying to do something new, but without the necessary *milieu*. However in the artistic field at least, Burma is much less a closed country than one would think, though Burmese artists perhaps have a feeling of isolation. The exhibitors were in general very open and friendly, and apparently anxious to restore contacts with the outside world.

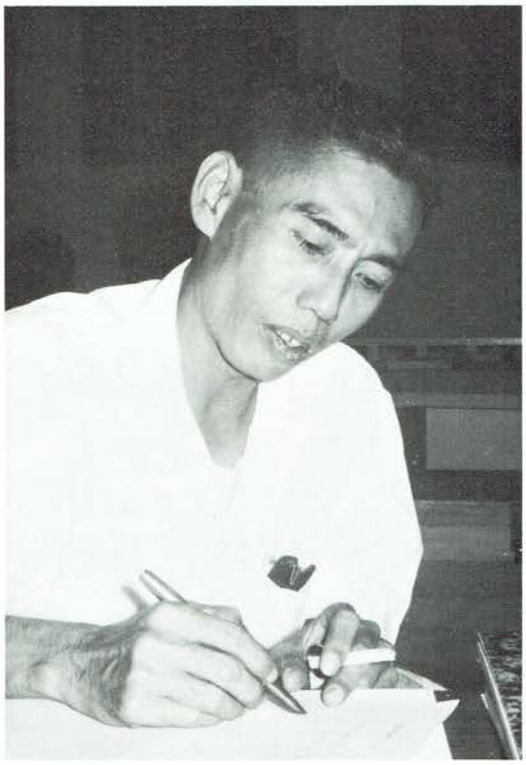
Let's Choose the Right Path
by U Hla Myaing
122 × 61 cm.
Oil on hardboard

U Hla Myaing
at the exhibition

Helpful Friends, by U Hla Myaing
61 × 46 cm.
Oil on hardboard.



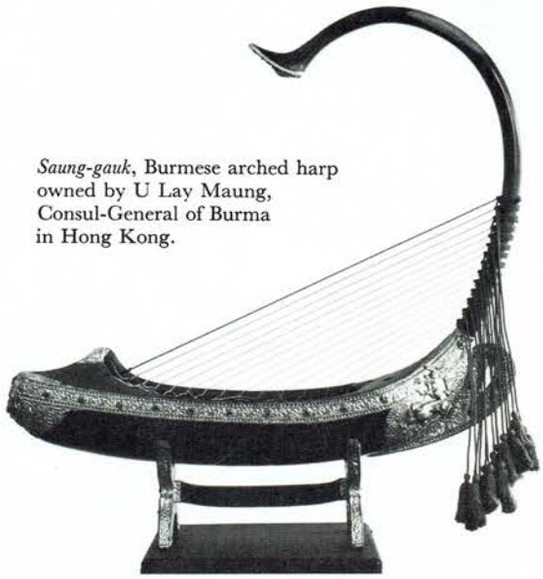
The Effect of Temptation (detail)
by U Ba Moe
76 × 56 cm.
Oil on plywood



U Kyaw Sun, a political cartoonist, is General Secretary of the Burma Art and Sculpture Council Central Committee

The Music of Oboe and Drums

Dr Dale A. Craig



Saung-gauk, Burmese arched harp owned by U Lay Maung, Consul-General of Burma in Hong Kong.

An enchanting feature of Burma is that it still offers an alternative to Western-style living. Traditional values have remained strong through years of foreign domination. Most of the people are devout Theravada Buddhists and depend upon their rice-fields for sustenance. Since they have always been fond of the theatre, the modern cinema has strong appeal; but the indigenous theatre and dancing remain popular also, bound up as they are with the major events of each person's life.

As in Bali, celebrations involving music, dancing and theatre absorb a good deal of everyone's time and energy. There is a *pwe*, or play, to commemorate a man's birth, his entrance into and departure from the monastery, his marriage, his recent achievements, his harvests, and his death.

The plays were formerly given in the open air, if possible across the street from the celebrant's residence, and no admission fee was charged. But the English brought with them the ideas of an enclosed theatre and admission prices, and these are now customary in the cities. The orchestra for these plays is a unique one, with an impact wholly its own. I will here describe not only the instruments of this orchestra but a few others used in the classical music of Burma.

Kyey-waing player. The man in centre rear holds a *hne* without bell

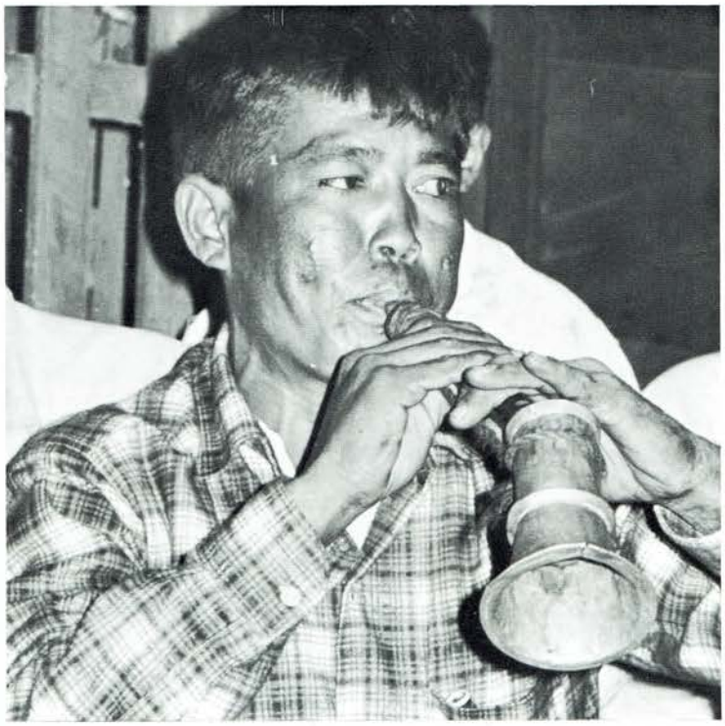
Burmese music derives from that of India, China, and various Southeast Asian countries, most foreign influences having come by way of Thailand. Nevertheless it has long been completely distinct from that of Burma's three neighbours. Although basically Indian drums are used, for example, the idea of mounting twenty-one of them in an ornamental, circular frame seems to be wholly native to Burma. This drum-circle, called the *pat-waing*, is the central feature in the Burmese orchestra, itself called the *saing-waing;* attention focuses upon the *pat-waing* not only because of its size but also because the drum-circle player is the most skilled and experienced virtuoso in the orchestra.

Until recently in Europe the strings were the principal section of the orchestra, followed by wind instruments and then percussion. But in twentieth-century European music first winds have dominated, then percussion, so that in much recent music the relative importance of the three sections is reversed: percussion receives the most attention, then winds, and then strings. In Southeast Asian orchestras this has for many centuries been the usual hierarchy of instrumental groupings, and Burmese instruments can conveniently be considered in this order.

The percussion instruments of the *saing-waing* are classified as *kyey* (pronounced "jay"), the bronze or brass metallophones, *tha-ye* or leather (membranophones); and *let-kok*, struck instruments (idiophones). *Kyey* includes the various gongs and cymbals, *tha-ye* designates the drums, and *let-kok* the wood-block and clappers.

The *kyey-waing* or gong-circle is second in importance only to the *pat-waing*. Nineteen bossed gongs are arranged in a low, highly decorated frame, the player sitting in the centre. U Kin Zaw, the noted Burmese poet and musicologist, lists the pitches as 2½ octaves from a low F but apparently does not designate which F or provide cycles per second or tuning ratio statistics. The beaters used with the *kyey-waing* were formerly made of soft wood in the shape of a bowling-pin but

Playing the *hne*, an important wind instrument



A large *moung* is struck at the funeral of a monk

are now disc-shaped with leather covering. The disc beaters produce a more clearly defined tone but it is harder to strike the central boss at the correct angle with them.

The *pat-waing* and *kyey-waing* players play the same melody in the simultaneous variation (technically known as heterophony or polyphonic stratification) so common to Southeast Asian ensembles. In the higher regions of the melody the gong-player damps the small gongs so that their brilliance will not obscure the sound of the high drums. The gong-player presents the melody more straightforwardly than the drum-player, who is more at liberty to improvise and provide accentuation and impetus for the ensemble.

While the drums and other instruments of the *saing-waing* are tuning to the fixed pitches of the gongs before a performance, the *kyey-waing* player, while providing tuning-pitches, will at times break into elaborate improvised preludes based on those pitches, and he descends through the entire gamut until the drums are all tuned.

The gongs of the *kyey-waing* are themselves tuned by filling the hollow of the bosses with a mixture of lead filings and beeswax; the more is added, the flatter the pitch becomes. The gongs are held in place by cords, and the frame on which they are suspended is decorated with lacquered gold and precious stones.

Third in importance among the percussion instruments after the *pat-waing* and *kyey-waing* is the gong-rectangle, called *moung-saing* or *kyey-naung*. Its function is to supply principal tones of the melody, and its music is therefore simpler than that of the *kyey-waing;* a similar hierarchy of functions among instruments exists in much Southeast Asian music, from Thailand to Bali. The *moung-saing* has seventeen gongs arranged before the player in three rectangular frames. Larger gongs, called simply *moung*, are also used at important points in the musical structure.

The most prominent member of the *tha-ye* class of percussion instruments is of course the *pat-waing*. This unique set of twenty-one drums in graduated sizes in an opulent, high, circular frame dominates the orchestra both visually and musically, and listeners take great delight in the dazzling speed and precision with which the drums are played. Their range is three octaves. The *pat-waing* enjoys a friendly rivalry with the oboe (*hne*), and the two are often used simultaneously or antiphonally.

Actors at a *pwe* staged in celebration of Independence Day

The *pat-waing* drums and other Burmese drums are tuned in the same manner as Indian drums. A dough of boiled rice and wood ash is spread into a thin, flat disc which sticks onto the head of the drum; the more of this mixture is added, the lower the pitch. Another set of drums, termed *chauk-lone-pat,* marks off the larger sections of the musical structure and supplies rhythmic patterns. It contains five separate small drums called simply *pat* and a large one, the *pat-ma.* Like the drums of the *pat-waing,* they are tuned in one of four modes.

The *let-kok,* or struck instruments, include the long bamboo clappers *(wa)* which provide a steady beat and, in this form, may be peculiar to Burma. The wood block is also called *wa.* The player of the little bells (*see,* called *ching* in Thailand) or little cymbals *(than-lwin)* is responsible for introducing tempo changes into the music. Larger cymbals known as *ya-gwin* are also used.

A harmonic and melodic percussion instrument which fits into none of these Burmese categories is the *pattala,* the bamboo xylophone. Twenty-four tuned bamboo slats are suspended over a sounding-box. Their sound is mellow and lovely, like that of the *ranat-ek* of Thailand. The *pattala* is usually used in rippling melodic passages but sometimes interjects two-note chords of perfect fourths or fifths or even dissonances such as sevenths and ninths. These latter are used at crucial points to urge the music forward or provide greater intensity. The *pattala* is tuned in the almost equidistant seven-tone scale of Thailand.

The winds of the Burmese orchestra are known as *ley.* The *hne* is the most important of the two main wind instruments. It is played with a large bell dangling from the end *(hne-gyi)* or with a small bell or no bell at all *(hne-lay).* The *hne* is very similar to the Chinese *so-na* in construction and sound. The only other wind instrument in the classical orchestra is the *pa-lwey,* an end-blown flute of the recorder (fipple) type.

These are the instruments of the standard percussion-and-winds Burmese orchestra, some of which are illustrated in Curt Sachs' The Rise of Music in the Ancient World.

The singer's voice dominates the total sound of this ensemble. The instruments play the same melody simultaneously, each person performing his own variant according to the capabilities and character of his instrument. The grand melody flows onward, each note

The *pa-lawey,* a flute of the recorder type

Moung-saing, or gong rectangle, with *pat-waing* drum-circle

Dancers of the *Shwe Man Tahbin* opera group

receiving an individual timbre and attack, according to the instruments which use that note in their improvisations. One note may be delivered with the dry "thump" of one of the *pat-waing* drums; another may have the shimmering resonance of the *moung-saing* and *kyey-waing* and at the same time the sharp definition of the *pattala;* still another might be expressed in the shrill wail of the *hne*. The resultant texture, in terms of timbre, is no different in principle from that of the sophisticated music of Anton Webern, the noted twentieth-century composer and developer of "total serialisation".

The singer uses "natural" voice and introduces countless ornaments and expressive glides and swells into the basic line. But the singing, although often breaking into short melismas, is much closer to recitative than Indian singing, and not so virtuosic.

The stringed instruments are known as *kyo*. The European violin *(ta-yaw)*, the psaltery *(don-min)* and the crocodile-shaped zither *(mi-gyaun*, played only in South Burma) are often encountered, but the most revered of all is the *saung-gauk,* the classical arched harp.

The construction and tuning of the Burmese harp have been described in detail by Muriel C. Williamson. It is "a rare survivor of the arched harps of the third millennium B.C." The old classical songs *(bwe)* sung with harp accompaniment are unforgettable and haunting. They give an eerie sense, at least to a Westerner, of somehow transporting the listener into the company of a chanting bard at some point in the remote past.

Chauk-lone-pat player with his drums

The virtuosity of the singer and harp player is extraordinary. The harp technique in the Burmese classical masterpieces equals that to be found anywhere, including the compositions by Ravel and Debussy for the modern harp. The expressiveness of the singer is enormously affecting as pure music, even when one does not understand Burmese, and the songs ought to be as carefully preserved and studied as the *lieder* of Schubert and Wolf.

Everything about the *saung-gauk,* from the search for an ideally curved and shaped root of the *acacia catechu* tree for its arch to the technique of tuning it, is intricate and special. The body of the *saung-gauk* is made from *padauk* heartwood. After this is hollowed out and carved into the correct shape, the arch is fitted into it together with a string anchor bar. Then deer skin is stretched across the top, leaving some of the anchor bar exposed. Later the skin is perforated with four sound-holes.

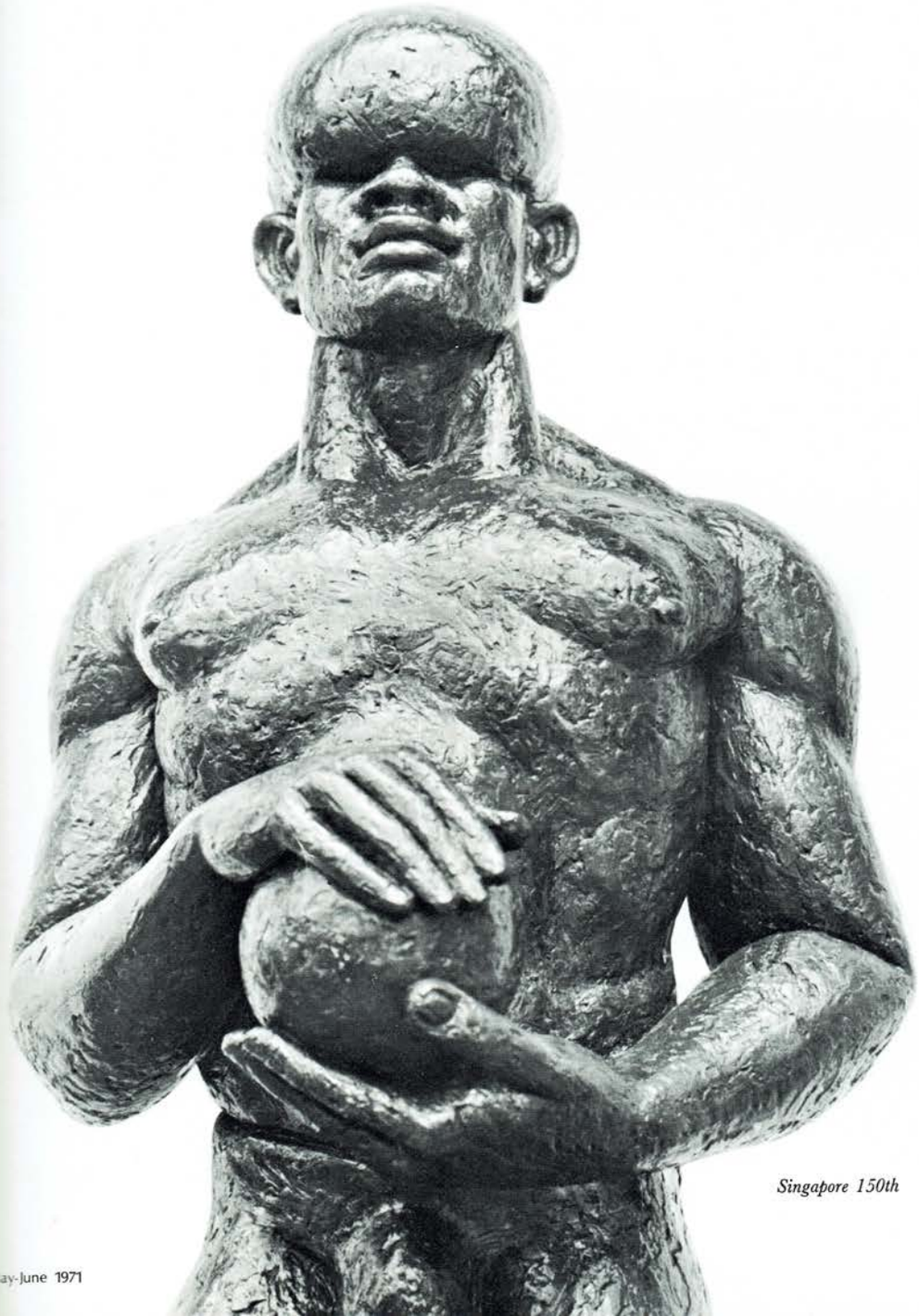
The fourteen strings are tied to the string anchor bar and pulled up to the arch, the upper ends passing through tuning loops which are twisted around and up the arch to raise the pitch; decorative tassels hang from these. Such a method of tuning is somewhat reminiscent of that for the Chinese zither *(gu-ch'in),* and as for the *gu-ch'in* the *saung-gauk* strings are now often made of nylon rather than twisted silk as formerly. The whole of the harp is heavily lacquered and decorated with gold leaf and precious stones before the strings receive their final installation.

The arched harp is regarded as a sacred object in Burma, and must always be treated with respect. This is illustrated by the custom among some harp-makers of holding a short *nat-pwe,* or spirit-play, to propitiate the spirits *(nats)* resident in the harp, when the sound-holes are cut in the skin. A similar custom is followed among the people of the Karen and Kayah states, in the East of Burma. Some of the villages still use the brass-head drums, probably Chinese in origin, called *pha-see.* They prime the drum gradually, beginning at the edges softly and working up the volume, so the *nats* within will not be offended by too sudden an awakening.

This reminds us of the rich field of regional Burmese folk music, a subject which, like song-types and specific styles of classical music, is out of the range of this article. Those interested in this rewarding subject can obtain recordings from the Ministry of Union Culture in Rangoon. English notes by U Khin Zaw are included, together with illustrations of some of the various instruments.

Ng Eng Teng, Potter and Patriot

Ilsa Sharp



Singapore 150th

An English art instructor once warned an overseas ceramics student that his pots would collapse during firing if they did not conform to one of a few "classical" shapes. The student persisted with his "wrong" shape just to prove his point. Sure enough, the pots held together, and the instructor fell silent.

The student was Ng Eng Teng, a Singaporean sculptor and potter. Now aged 37 he is still the same—stubborn. "It's up to us" he maintains, "to stretch the limits of possibility as far as they will go. Certain shapes in ceramic sculpture are very tricky, but I'm always trying them out. It's the exploration, the challenge, the difficulty that I like".

Bound, tortured men, saddened women and pleading children—why are Eng Teng's sculptured figures so tragic? "Usually I don't like to reveal the reason", he says. "I lost four or five years at one time because I had a serious illness. Now, you know, time is my only enemy, because I didn't have the early working period I had planned for. The unhappiness is reflected in my sculpture. I just want to make people aware of misery and poverty, not to impose my values on them."

Just as he refused to bow to convention at the art college, so he conquered illness and family opposition to his artistic career. As a schoolboy he could not wait to do his art homework, but to get his way, he had to fight family prejudice: "They wanted me to earn a living as an architect, which I would have hated. I had a great time, I remember, fighting them—not literally, but educating them and trying to make them see my point of view. At first, my parents tried to tell me what art should be like, and they always compared it with cinema hoardings! I expect

One of the series
Tragedy of War

this is the idea of many Singaporeans. Later on my work obtained recognition and I participated in exhibitions and sometimes got my name in the papers, so they changed their minds."

In his youth Eng Teng started as a trainee teacher, but then fell ill. Later an introduction to the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore's only art college, came through a British Council art course. But after a year at the Academy, he fell ill again and left for the beautiful East coast of West Malaysia to convalesce with his uncle, a doctor.

At Kuala Trengganu he discovered beauty but, technically inexperienced, could not capture it in his art. His health improved, he rushed back to complete his three-year course at the Academy, and European artist friends introduced him to sculpture and pottery at a time when Singapore had no ceramic artists.

With little prospect of artistic growth or challenge in Singapore, Eng Teng decided to go to the North Staffordshire College of Technology ceramics school near Stoke-on-Trent in the English "Potteries" area. Here he did one and a half years of intensive ceramics training, mainly in industrial pottery, and attended all the evening classes he fancied. Graduating in 1962, he went on to the Farnham School of Art, Surrey, where he delighted in the freedom to pick his own classes and make his own timetable, and concentrated on studio pottery and ceramic sculpture.

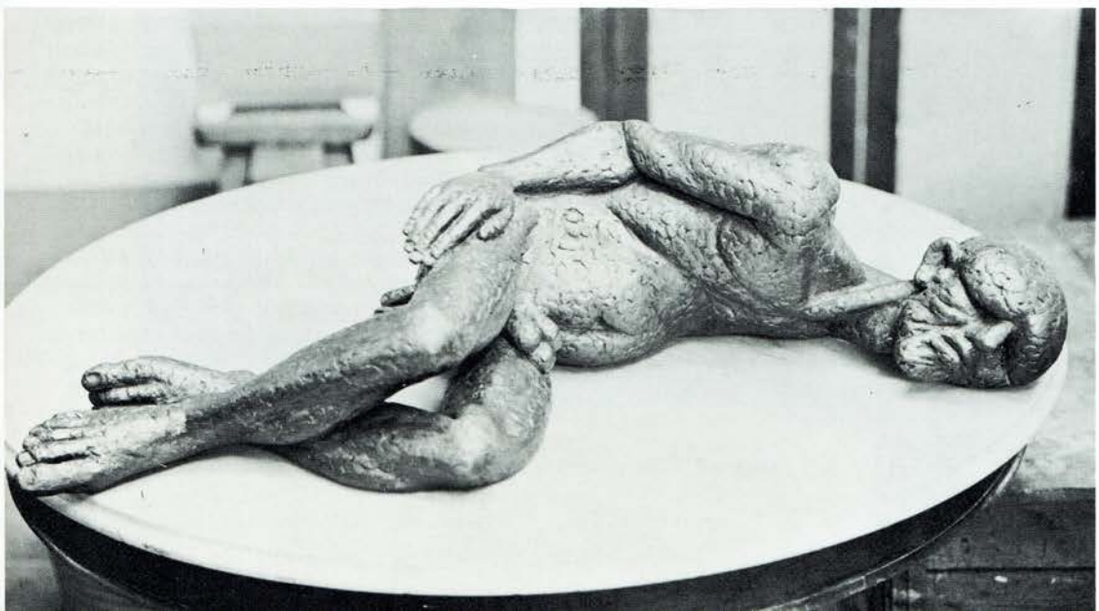
Freedom became important to Eng Teng: "The freedom of English student life influenced my work greatly. In Nanyang Academy we had very few discussions, though that may have been due to dialect barriers. In England, we asked questions like 'What am I?', questions we had never thought of before. You can learn a lot from a question like that if you sit down and think about it."

After two years in England, he was invited to work in the Carrigaline Pottery Company factory in County Cork, Ireland. Becoming the first resident designer for this 32 year-old enterprise, he designed and set up a whole design studio in 1964, complete with a darkroom for silk screen transfer techniques.

In 1966 he returned to Singapore to rejoin his family and with great hopes of part-time teaching work at Nanyang Academy, having heard persistent appeals from Singapore for foreign-trained artists to come home and serve the country. But he was forced down to earth with a bump—there were no teaching vacancies and the Academy showed little interest in his ideas. The move cost Eng Teng two jobless years but, undaunted as ever, he worked away at the equipment of what is now his US $5,000 studio and earned pocket money by giving private tuition. If his family had not let him use their home rent-free, he might never have survived as an artist.

It was during this difficult period that Eng Teng built his most treasured possession, his gas kiln. With some help from a Public Utilities Board gas engineer, he worked for two months building a four-foot-tall kiln brick by brick. It had to be a gas kiln because Eng Teng insisted on a reduction atmosphere for his experiments. The famous "bull's-

One of a *Bondage* or *Captive* series



Freedom is important to Ng Eng Teng

blood red" for example comes from reduction with copper oxide. An electric kiln makes success a certainty but it lacks excitement and scope for creative flair. Reduction is always a chancy process, he says: "You may open the kiln and find the whole lot stuck together or just collapsed."

Eng Teng's kiln has three burners on each side. The heat goes up the sides and is then reflected from the dome-shaped roof down to the bottom, where flues conduct it out of the kiln by a chimney at the back. This is called the "down-draught" method, and ensures a more even temperature at the top and bottom of the kiln.

Gas kilns are tedious to use. For every moment of the firing, Eng Teng has to be there to read the pyrometer and regulate the burners, listen to the sound of the gas and watch the colour of the flames. And then there is the expense. Eng Teng's kiln cost him US $1,300, using Singapore-made refractory bricks. He has an electric kiln as well, for less demanding work.

The kiln finished, Eng Teng took up an unlikely job—Visual Aid Officer at the International Planned Parenthood Federation of Southeast Asia, whose headquarters are at Singapore. He felt the problems dealt with at the Federation were in line with his sculptural subjects. But after two and a half years he became a full-time ceramic artist. By then he had built up a considerable reputation in Singapore through exhibitions and commission jobs. Now he is a leading figure in the local art world, which is starved of good ceramic work.

He had not wasted his time at the Feder-

A Gift of Love — the swollen shape is a development from pottery

Do We Look Down? Ciment Fondu Cast Relief

ation: "The Federation work gave me more insight into the lives of less fortunate people and the international problems of hunger, disease and poverty. My subject matter is international, not limited to Singapore. We are all guarded by society, bound by social and personal fetters, as my work tries to show".

Eng Teng's products are solid and heavy. He is best known locally for his "swollen" women and his bound men. The woman shape came to him after studying pottery in England. It is basically a tribute to the strength and grace of the archetypal pot shape, rather than a portrayal of pregnancy or fertility, as some interpret it.

"The shape was also influenced by the fact that in England you see hardly any bare bodies; they are all wrapped up against the cold and all you see is this swollen shape and a little hand sticking out. Whereas in Singapore, you see lots of people in singlets and shorts".

Plain symbolism is an important element in Eng Teng's work. Some might find it overdone, but it means a lot to him and probably to other Singaporeans. This is typified in one of his biggest commissioned pieces, which was installed in the Eussoff Girls' College, Singapore University, in commemoration of Singapore's 150th anniversary in 1969. Four female figures represent the four races of Singapore, one carrying a torch to symbolise education. They are all floating and rising up in enlightenment, explains Eng Teng, towards a sun symbol which also stands for the universe, or outer space.

Eng Teng has just finished a four-foot-tall commission for Singapore's new Esso refinery. The base of this piece represents an oil storage tank, on which relief images stand for aspects of the local economy, such as a ship's funnel for the harbour, factory chimneys for industry and other images for housing estates and transport. There are also symbols of Singapore's "garden city" image—a seagull for clean air and trees for the greenery Singaporeans are cultivating somewhat frenetically at the behest of an environment-conscious government. Four trunk-like structures represent the four races, culminating in a tree or blossom-like shape for the blooming of Singapore—this also bears an unfortunate resemblance to a nuclear "mushroom."

The total fee for this work was about US $1,700. It represents over two month's effort. When I saw it, the artist was nursing it like a baby, peeping at it from time to time and checking for contraction. The full-size clay model I saw was to be cast in concrete for the final product.

Was this piece a little too close for comfort to political art, approaching "social realism"? Eng Teng defended himself: "I admit I am very proud of my country, but I am not consciously working towards social realism or nationalistic art. For me the things symbolised on the Esso commission—which Esso has christened 'Battles and Tubes' I don't know why!—are existing facts."

Nonetheless Eng Teng's entirely voluntary espousal of Singapore state dogma seems a significant pointer to the future of Singapore art. Another example of this style, though finer than the Esso piece, is his male figure for Singapore's 150th anniversary in 1969. He meant the figure to stand for Singapore's predominantly youthful citizens, rugged and holding the pearl of the future in their hands —the figure in fact holds a large sphere. But he was disappointed in his hope that the government might buy the piece, despite its

The artist wedges some potting clay

Full clay model of the commission *Battles and Tubes*

Expectant Mother No. 2 an example of Ng Eng Teng's ceramic sculpture

Reclination — variant on the woman theme

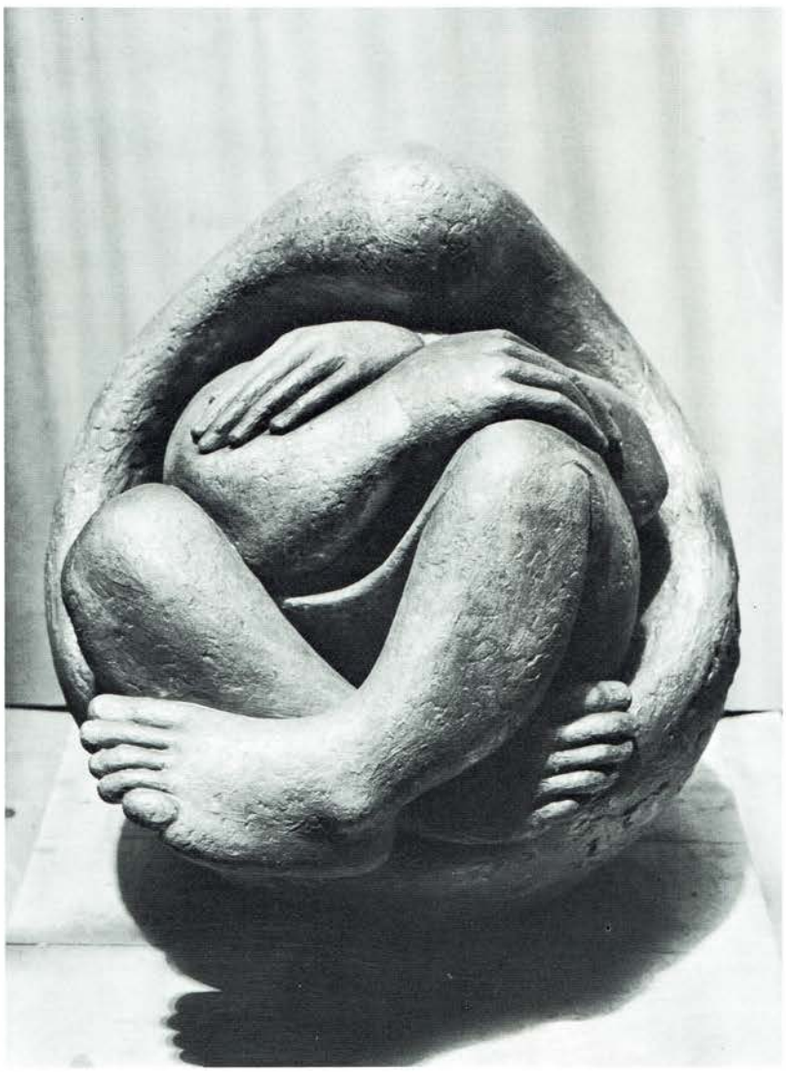
patriotic theme. For all his patriotic devotion, Eng Teng complains of the lack of government support for Singaporean artists and the lack of a good art college, art museum or art gallery.

Eng Teng believes that even sculpture can be for the home as well as for big corporations or the state. He was delighted that at his last exhibition, in November 1970, over half the sculpture-buyers were local people, a reversal of earlier trends. He sold seventeen major sculptures, at prices ranging from US $73 to US $466 and 80% of his pots, at US $60 and upwards.

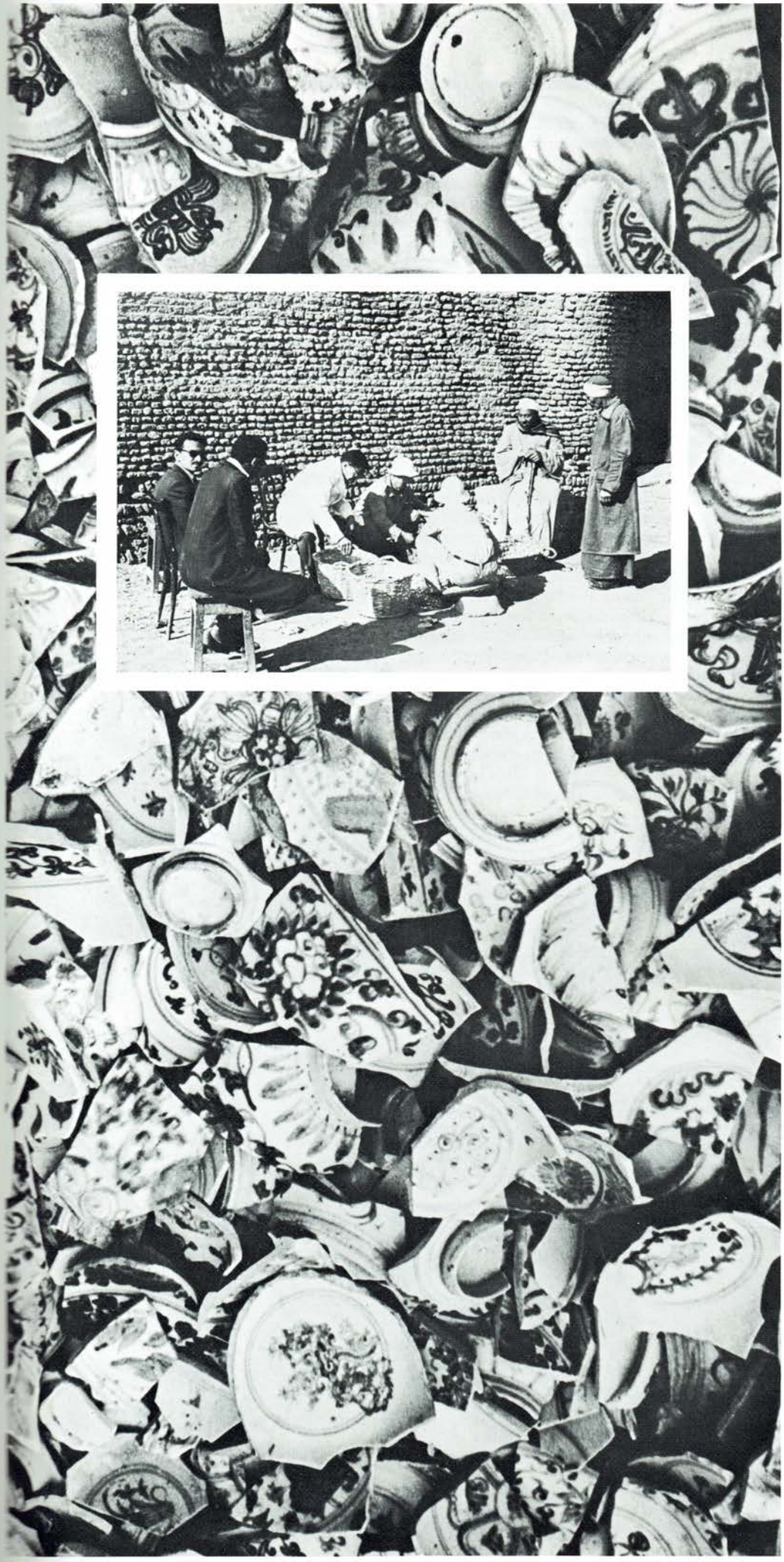
But commissions are the life-blood of Singapore art. Eng Teng does portrait busts for individuals at US $233–333 each. On the other hand small-scale mass-produced copies of some of his "woman" pots may sell in local galleries and curio shops at US $3–5 each, but he doubts if the tourist will go for this unusual shape.

As for the future, he would like to do more pots. "I'm very interested in free shapes, more ornamental than functional — shape for shape's sake. Not many people respect a pot as a pot. A pot has been something subservient, something to use. I want to make pots people admire, rather than just use".

He also wants to pursue his tortured "Tragedy of War" and "Bondage" sculptural themes, as well as his "Creation of Eve" series of sculptures, which show Eve unfolding in stages out of a sphere-shape. "That's my idea of creation", says Eng Teng. The "Mother and Child" theme is attractive to him also, though he himself may never marry on account of his poor health. That is a sacrifice he has accepted. "Anyway, would I be able to divide my attention properly between my family and art?"



Creation of Eve a form emerging from a sphere



ONE MAN'S GALLERY

'Collector'

There are about as many ways to start a collection as there are kinds of people. For instance the Locsins (the subject of a book review in this issue) made their own definitive collection of the export wares found in the Philippines during a period of only three years, but for them time was more important than money.

For Sazo Idemitsu however things have been rather different. At first, as a young university student, son of a farmer, he was armed mainly with taste and perception and very little else. But even then he was able to acquire for what seem ridiculously small sums today many ink paintings of the master Gibon Sengai (1750–1837), Zen works now acknowledged to be among the finest. Indeed it has been said that Idemitsu "created" Sengai, so little was the witty monk appreciated previously.

Today the 86-year old collector is one of Japan's most powerful tycoons. An oil magnate and founder of the great company that bears his name, money is surely now the least of his problems. A decade ago his collection already numbered several thousand pieces, and it became essential to find a suitable setting for them. According to the administrator of the collection, Takashi Eto, the number is now well over 5,000; the exact figure will not be known until the compiling of a catalogue is completed.

In 1965 Yoshiro Taniguchi, an imaginative Japanese architect with an international reputation, was commissioned to create a

Finds from Fustat, Cairo.
(Inset) Members of the first Idemitsu Archaeological Mission

gallery of a new type, where not only could the exhibits be seen to best advantage by the public, but be easily available to the expert for close study and handling.

Taniguchi's solution, though not on a large scale, for his gallery occupies something under 3,000 sq. ft. of floor space, is a triumph for the senses. In the first place it has an unconventional location on the 9th floor of the Imperial Theatre Building. Here the visitor, perhaps for the first time in his stay in Tokyo, can completely forget the city's maddening traffic. Then space, a traditional Japanese space, envelops the exhibits—in sharp contrast with the appallingly overcrowded and dusty display of a superb Japanese collection in the Tokyo National Museum's old buildings.

Larger exhibits that can safely fend for themselves are allowed open displays in the impressive entrance lobby. Other large pieces, too rare or fragile to risk the uninvited touch, shelter behind deep vitrines stretching from wall to wall or in island cases. Many of the smaller pieces find homes in breast-high glass-topped cabinets—a practical solution adopted by many Japanese museums, which also makes available much useful storage space beneath. Without exception the exhibits are superbly lit and wherever possible, and especially in the research library and rest area, advantage is taken of the Gallery's splendid panoramic view of the Imperial Palace gardens.

A perfectionist and expert in his own field, Idemitsu gathered around his project the finest specialists available. These highly qualified salaried advisers visit the Gallery several days a week, and in return the Gallery furthers their researches and publishes their books. Four works by advisers have already been published in the Idemitsu Art Gallery series, and one by an outside expert. Two more art books are at present in production, one by the American Professor Plummer and another, on Koraton ware, by an expert living in Kyoto. Some of these books, and many beautifully produced slides and reproductions, can be bought quite reasonably in a small shop adjoining the gallery lobby.

Professor Fujio Koyama, the doyen of the Idemitsu's advisers, is Japan's, and possibly the world's, leading ceramic historian, besides being an active potter and an untiring teacher. He also advises the Nezu Museum, in Tokyo, and the Gotu and Hatakeya art galleries, is Professor of Ceramics at Wako University and previously lectured in the Tokyo Art University. The very reverse of a stuffy academic, he has been known to enliven overlong official banquets by spirited renderings of nursery rhymes, in English.

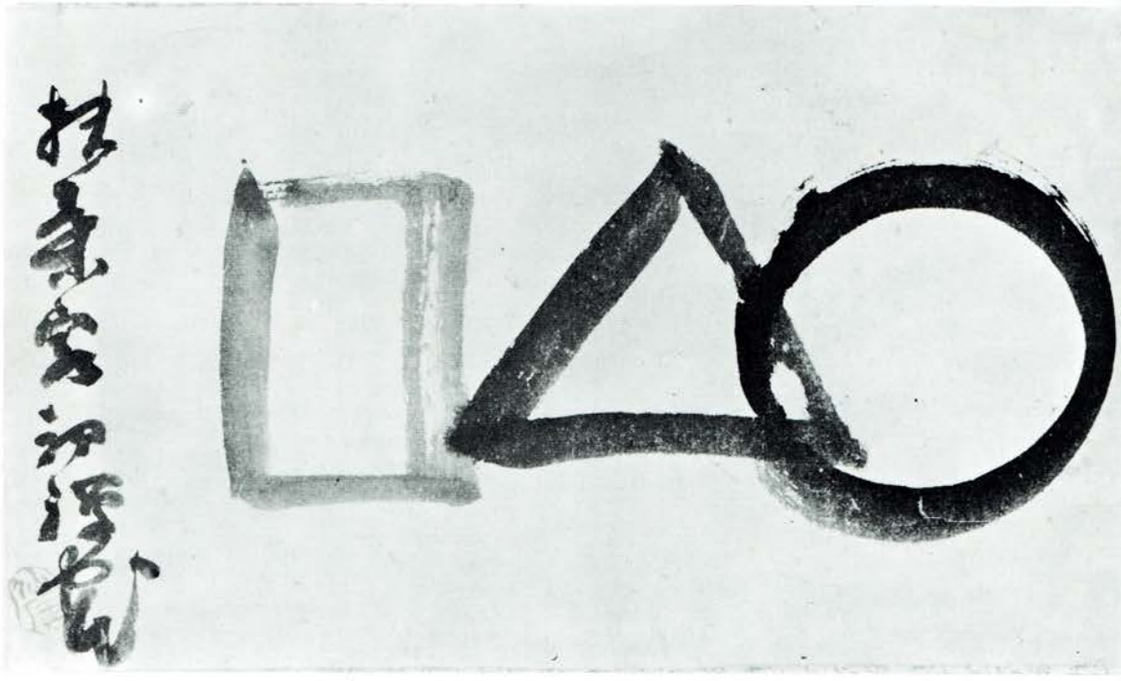
The son of a businessman from Okayama Prefecture, he only discovered that he wanted to become a potter after graduating at the age of 22 from Tokyo Commercial University. He went on to study for a year under the Kyoto master potter Zoruku and then began to make pottery on his own account, while reading all the works on old pottery he could lay his hands on in libraries. He also served on the staff of the Institute of Oriental Ceramics in Tokyo, and edited the quarterly magazine *Toji*. The Institute was totally destroyed towards the end of World War II, and copies of *Toji* are now much sought after.

Before the war the energetic professor had already travelled widely in Manchuria, Mongolia and China, first making his name as a scholar in 1940, when he discovered the site of Ting ware in Hopei, some thirty miles from Tientsin. He has since returned to China twice, in 1965 and 1967. In addition to the places usually open to foreigners he was allowed to visit Ching-te Chen, where he found the population grown to three times its pre-war total and the kilns thriving.

In 1964 he led the first Idemitsu Archaeological Mission to the Middle East, staying at Fustat in the southern suburbs of Cairo, which in the ninth century was a centre of Islamic culture. At the end of the twelfth century Fustat was burnt down, and survived only as a small village of potters, most of it becoming a dumping ground for refuse from Cairo.

A million or so potsherds are said to have been excavated there since the beginning of this century, and deposited in a warehouse in the centre of the site. Besides the local and Persian remains, nearly ten thousand Chinese potsherds have been found, dating from the Tang to the Ching dynasties, and Professor Koyama's group was unable to complete the work of research and classification in a single visit. A second Idemitsu mission was later sent to Fustat in 1966 under Tsugio Mikami, a Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University who

Professor Koyama



advises the Gallery on Persian art, though his main speciality is Korean art history.

From all his varied travels in China, Japan, Korea and the Middle East the indefatigable Professor has brought back for the Idemitsu over 200,000 potsherds, and these form one of the most interesting displays of the collection, with strong emphasis on chronology and comparison between art styles. After studying cabinets of potsherds and photographs of excavation sites, the visitor can cross the room to examine a wide range of ceramic wares including some from Europe.

A prolific writer, Fujio Koyama, now 71 years of age, has over 50 books and 300 articles to his credit. His best known work, *Ancient Ceramics of Asia*, has been translated into many languages, including English, French, German and Italian, and has an introduction by the late poet and connoisseur Sir Herbert Read. A good friend of Sazo Idemitsu, Read also wrote the preface to the catalogue of his travelling collection of seventy pictures and ten earthenware works by Sengai when they were shown in Europe for the first time in 1960.

"It is difficult", writes Sir Herbert, "to find a European parallel for Sengai. The lowliness of his subject matter and the fluidity of his line may remind us of some of Daumier's drawings or etchings, his satirical point of view and the swiftness of his notations sometimes suggest the Caprichos of Goya. But neither of these great artists has the variety of Sengai".

If the renowned art critic tended to overemphasise the brilliance of Sengai's draughtsmanship and calligraphy—in face of the scrolls in the Sengai room at the back of the Gallery one's initial reaction is of some disappointment—there is no doubt of the monk's deep understanding of Zen. Especially famous is his conception of the Universe, in which, it is said, "the circle represents the infinite, which is the basis of all beings. But the infinite in itself is formless. We humans, endowed with sense and intellect, demand tangible forms. Hence a triangle doubled. This doubling process goes on infinitely and so we have the 'ten thousand things', that is, the Universe".

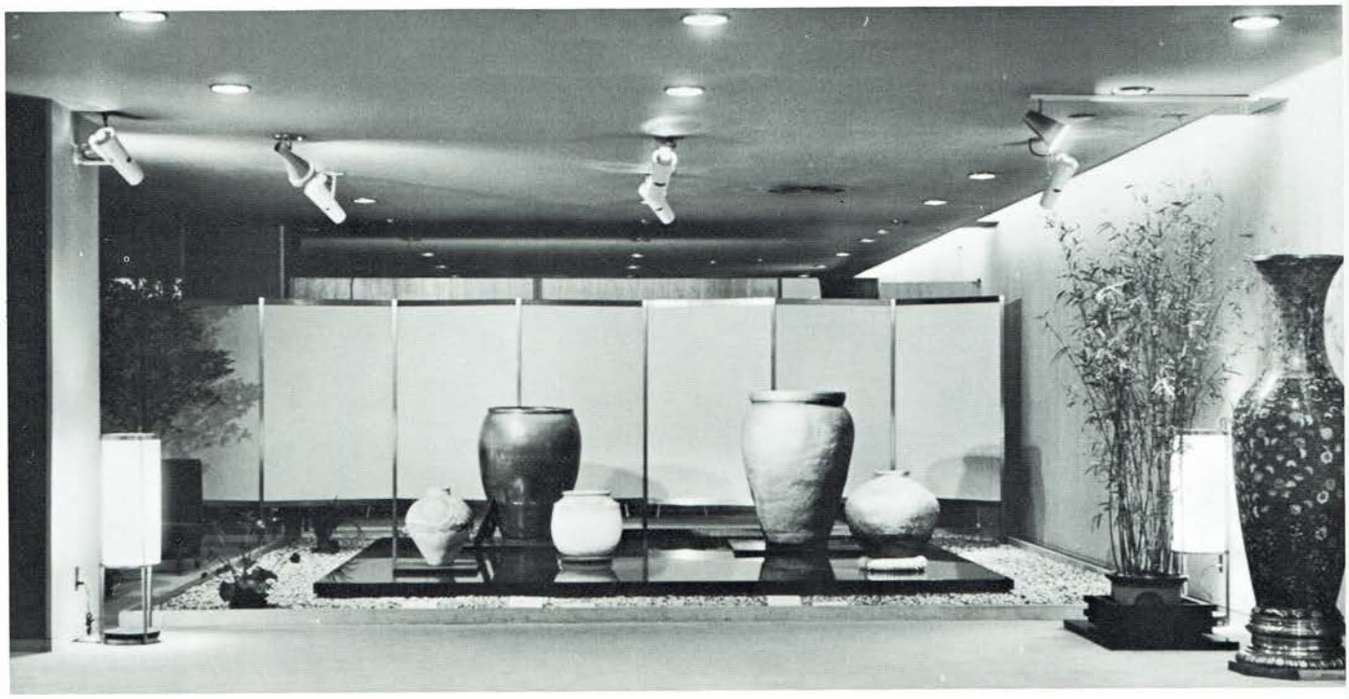
Unlike his great predecessor Hakuin, Sengai did relatively few pictures of Bodhidharma, the "classic" subject of Zen painting. The inscription on the one illustrated here expresses the wish that those who trust in learning and those who pursue Zen enlightenment—like Bodhidharma himself, who left the home land of Buddhism for China—might perceive the merit of each other's position.

Undoubtedly the non-specialist will be more impressed by the exhibits in the main room of the collection, leading immediately from the lobby. Here are displayed superb pieces of unsurpassed technical skill. In island cabinets in the centre of the room, blue and white Ming porcelains of incredible size and tomb figures of the Tang dynasty are dominated by an even larger Han dynasty pavilion

Buji or Muji is the Japanese reading of the two characters by Sengai appearing below. They mean literally "no business" or "no event" or "all quiet". The connotation is "free from anxiety or fear", and the words have been further interpreted to mean "freedom from possession by work and freedom from the self". When you are at work or bent on accomplishing something, continues the lesson, have no thought of self or of anything except the business of the moment. Let the work do its own work in fact. When you are not working, just rest. Be master not only of the work but of yourself, and more particularly aim at the Zen freedom from the self. "Be like a piece of wood or stone with human consciousness", says one Zen adept, a state which has also been described as one of unconscious consciousness or conscious unconsciousness.

From left: Sengai's interpretation of *Kwannon (Goddess of Mercy)*, *The Universe*, and *Daruma (Bodhidharma)*

The chronological display room; cabinets store potsherds. Large comparative jars appear in the entrance hall



over five feet high. This towers impressively over all the other pieces and may truly be considered a masterpiece. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Fogg Museum at Cambridge have similar Han towered pavilions of three or four storeys, green-glazed with a silver sheen.

Among other excellent burial pieces are an interesting Tang camel and a horse. A considerable quantity of these Ming Ch'i, or spirit vessels, are now held in both public and private collections in Japan. Not only were the Japanese in a unique position to acquire such things during their occupation of large areas of China, but many also seem to have made their way to Japan through Hong Kong in the early 1950's.

The Gallery's collection of Chinese ceramics is one of the largest in Japan. There is a fair quantity of neolithic "painted" pottery and later earthenware, a large collection of Tang three-colour pottery, and from the Five Dynasties some extremely rare Yueh celadon. The Northern Sung dynasty is represented by items from the Ting, Yao and Chin kilns, and among the Southern Sung pieces Kuan ware, Lung Chuan celadon and Temmoku ware are well in evidence. Much of the Gallery's blue and white consists of pieces from the Yuan and early Ming dynasties, and its overglaze enamelled Ching porcelains are without exception very fine.

Besides Karatsu ware, its central feature, the Japanese ceramic collection includes pieces from the Kakiemon, Iro-Nabeshima, Takatori, Satsuma, Utsutsagawa and other kilns in Kyushu, from Hagi, Izumo, Bizen and Tamba in Chugoku (southern Honshu), generations of Rahu ware—tea-ceremony articles in this ware have been made by a single family in Kyoto for fourteen generations—pieces by the great seventeenth and eighteenth century Kyoto potters Ninsei and Ogata Kenzan, and others from Mino, Iga and elsewhere. Some specimens of the Japanese ceramic collection are displayed along one side of the main exhibition room, notably Sometsuke (blue and white wares) and Gosu Aka-e, porcelains with underglaze decorations in cobalt and bright overglaze designs in red and green.

The Idemitsu also has a small number of Korean ceramics, some representative specimens of prehistoric Iranian earthenware figures and vessels, including several famous pieces in the form of animals, much fine Islamic pottery, a large collection of Sassanian and Islamic glass and some magnificent early Chinese bronzes. All in all, a staggering collection to be amassed by one man, however long the period or vast the resources devoted to it.

Flat bowl, Shonzui ware
Blue and white, late Ming
dynasty. Diam. 36.5 cm.

Jar with open-work design and *fa-hua* glazes, Ming dynasty. Ht. 47.5 cm. and a vase in shape of a bronze *tsun*, Wan-li period Ht. 74.0 cm.

Bronze *kuei*
Chou dynasty.
Ht. 21.8 cm.

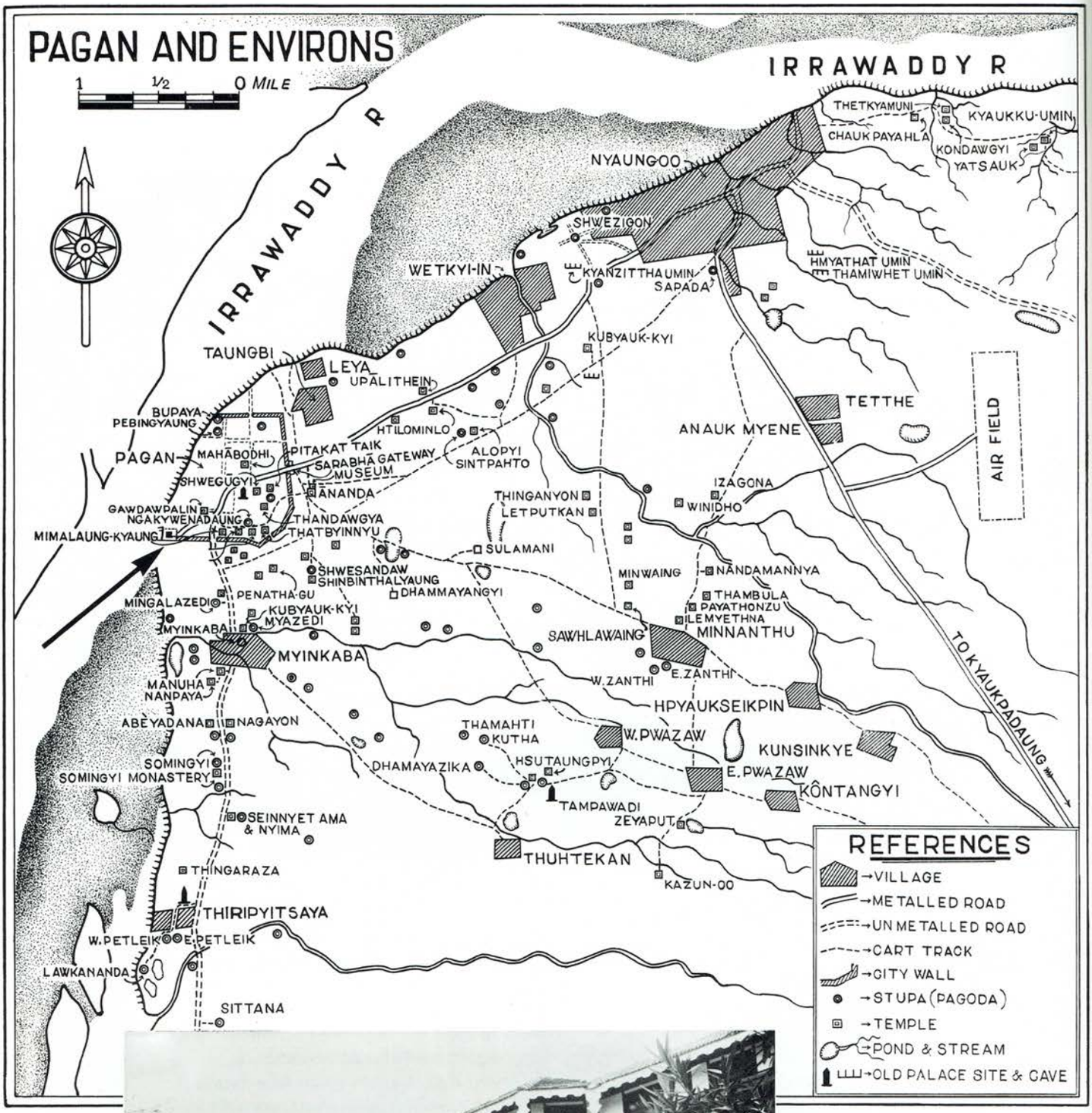
Horse Ht. 79.0 cm.

Bronze *kuang*, a ceremonial wine vessel. Yin dynasty.
Ht. 31.5 cm.

Tomb figures with three-colour glazes, Tang dynasty.
Camel Ht. 83.8 cm.

Poem by U Khin Zaw illustrated by Paw Oo Thet

O Buddha,
Thou teachest that pain is suffering;
Birth, old-age, disease and death are sufferings;
Thy word is Truth; I worship Thee.
Thou teachest besides that attachment is suffering;
To dote on a load of flesh is foolish and vain;
Flesh is perishable, disease, decay and death attend it;
All compounded things are impermanent, ephemeral;
Love, passion, affection—fetters all,
Fires that turn to bitter ashes,
Love is suffering . . .
Buddha, I do not think so;
I do not believe that love is suffering.
Thou'rt all wise, and therefore
My error must abysmal be;
Yet I hold that to love,
If suffering, is delicious suffering.
O Buddha, I dote on a load of flesh
Its infirmities notwithstanding,
And my doting never gives me peace;
Thy teaching gives me peace; I want not peace;
I thirst for the torture of the body on the rack of love;
And thy teaching gives not this.
Tranquillity, to me, is unproductive. Yet Thou sayest,
"Attain equanimity, all desires and passions subdued."
Lord, is it natural?
Why have we different genders
With genetic paraphernalia then?
I needs must be as Nature planned, Lord,
While I worship Thee.
Ah Unassailable! Tell me Thy secret;
How to stifle the urge of affection
And regard the beloved unperturbed.
My heart is vulnerable when love assails it.
I lack Thy will, impassiveness, equanimity,
To withstand the sweet assaults of tenderness.
Dear Lord, I revere Thy Word,
But shall I therefore make my heart as stone
To the gentle plaints of true affection?
Peace unbroken, to me, is ennui;
Repose is dreary unless it follows toil;
A quiet sea, serene and lovely, after storms
Is better far than everlasting calm.
I shall know the wicked sweets of love,
The luxury of fondness, the acme of passion,
The depth of love's despair;
Let jealousy and anger burn my heart,
Let loneliness and longing chill it too . . .
When, at last, the forces of the blood are spent,
The fires of youth turned to cold dead ashes, then,
Chastened and full of sorrow,
I shall limp to Thee, Lord,
My refuge be Thy broad, compassionate breast.



The Government Rest House (left and arrowed above), close to the junction of the original palace walls with the Irrawaddy river. It provides the only accommodation for visitors at present

Burma's Treasure House —Ancient Pagan

Derrick Tin Nyunt & Stephen Markbreiter

The great ruins of Pagan tell the story of the impact of Theravada Buddhism on the Burmese people. Theravada (Hinayana) is the purest form of the great religion which originated in North India in the fifth century B.C. and the main credit for the diffusion of the Buddha's doctrine abroad goes to the great king Ashoka (273–232 B.C.), who ruled most of the Indian subcontinent. Ashoka sent out missionaries in all directions and some may have reached the old sea port of Thaton in Lower Burma, if Mon chronicles can be believed.

The earliest peoples of which there is record in Burma are the Mons, in the far south, speaking a language related to Cambodian, and the Pyus, in the rest of the country, who spoke a language of the Tibeto-Burmese family. Though the Pyus are now extinct as a race, a certain number of their remains have been found, which indicate that they were at least partly Buddhist and had had long contacts with India. From archaeological traces and ancient Chinese annals we know that they were farmers, mainly cultivating rice. Their capital was Thayekettaya, whose ruins are at the present village of Hmawza, near the old city of Prome. Fragments of the Pali canon of Buddhism, dating from around 500 A.D., have been found here. Farther north, near Taungdwingyi, the Pyus had a city called Peikthanomyo, "Vishnu city". The ruling class when these cities were founded was probably of Indian race or at least of Hindu religion, initiates perhaps of Brahmanic cults imported from India's east coast.

The decisive factor in Burma's religious development seems to have been the rise in the fifth century A.D. of the great Hinayana Buddhist centre at Conjeeveram in South India, under the commentator Dhammapala. Ancient Mon writings frequently mention Dhammapala and Conjeeveram, and the writing of the early Mon inscriptions resembles the Pallava script used in South India; some authorities moreover have derived the word "Talaing", the Burmese name for the Mons, from Telengana in Eastern India. It seems likely that the mass of the people became Hinayana Buddhist, though their religion was mingled with Mahayana and Hindu elements and indigenous spirit-worship. Further north however the proto-Burmese had fallen under the influence of a priesthood called the Ari, who practised a debased Tantric Mahayanism obtained from Tibet or Bengal.

While the Mons, a "polite and jovial people" as one Chinese writer described them, were building a high civilisation in Lower Burma—Suvarnabhumi, the "Golden Land"—the proto-Burmese were infiltrating into the north. Burmese chronicles contain a list of some forty Kings who reigned at Pagan from Thammudarit (107–152 A.D.), the supposed founder of the city, to Anawrahta (1044–77), who created its greatness. In fact the early history of Pagan is very obscure, which is not surprising as it was at best a minor principality. The incoming Burmese probably profited from the destruction of the Pyu Kingdom in upper Burma at the hands of Nanchao, a largely Lolo kingdom in what is now Yunnan. Thereafter the Burmese absorbed the Pyus, whose language was similar to their own, and called their new domain Tambadipa, the "Land of Copper".

The Mons meanwhile were erecting some fine monuments and producing a good deal of distinguished sculpture, drawing their artistic tradition mainly from late Gupta sources in North India. Mon influence on the rising city of Pagan subsequently became enormous. Anawrahta apparently saw in the Hinayana Buddhism of the Mons precisely the civilising and unifying force that his new kingdom needed. The story goes that he sent a courteous request to the Mon king of Thaton for a supply of priests and scriptures through which to teach his people. This petition being rejected with contumely, he attacked Thaton, seized the king and carried him off to Pagan with all his priests and scriptures, loaded on thirty-two white elephants.

He also found a willing helper in the person of Shin Arahan, the son of a Thaton Brahmin converted to Buddhism and filled with missionary zeal. Shin Arahan and his helpers broke the power of the Ari, though there are many signs in the temples of Pagan that their influence lingered on, and established Hinayana Buddhism as the religion of the Burmese, which it remains to this day.

In a short period Pagan became a great administrative, cultural and commercial centre, with merchants and travellers arriving from distant lands. It was surrounded by rice fields and timber, for the climate was then much wetter than it is now, and Burmese armies kept the necessary fighting to the kingdom's frontiers. Thus Pagan could style itself Arimaddanapura, "the city that tramples down its foes".

Mon architects also were imported from Thaton to turn the clayey soil of the region (excellent for brick making) into the great buildings of Anawrahta and his successors, and Pagan, now the centre of a large kingdom with an outlet to the sea, became perhaps the greatest city in Indochina in its day. A glorious period of construction began, which lasted over 250 years and saw some 5,000 buildings erected over an area of nearly 240 square miles in the neighbourhood of the city.

Like so much of Burmese history, the building of Pagan starts with a legend. Anawrahta had killed his foster brother and predecessor, Sokkate. While in a state of bitter remorse for this deed he received a visit from Thagyamin, King of the Spirits, who instructed him to build pagodas, cave-monasteries, dams and canals. Though some of the remains of Pagan are earlier, it was Anawrahta who inaugurated the great era of building. Construction of the Shwezigon Pagoda, one of the brightest jewels in the city's treasure house, began in 1059, and it was unfinished when Anawrahta died in 1077, on the horns of a wild buffalo.

The location of the Shwezigon, a quarter of a mile from the Irra-

Chinthes guard the northern entrance to the Shwezigon Pagoda

waddy and now half way between the airfield and the Government Rest House (called the Circuit House), was chosen by the spirits or by fate. According to the story, the sacred tooth of the Buddha that the stupa was destined to contain was encased in a jewelled shrine and attached to the back of a white elephant. The beast was encouraged to roam freely, and obviously knowing his business he stopped on the only high ground for miles around. Although only a slight rise, the site was evidently awkward enough to confer merit, for the Burmese build their stupas on hill tops on the theory that the value of an act increases with its difficulty.

The Shwezigon is greatly venerated by all Burmese Buddhists. Its stupa is no mere landscape embellishment to please the eye, but a perpetual offering and a reminder of Nirvana, the goal of human striving. Donations continue, and new shrines and pavilions are always under construction. Access to the pagoda is through lengthy arcades roofed in this century and providing attractive vistas and a rendezvous for many cheroot, lacquerware and trinket sellers. At the head of the eastern arcade, overshadowed by fearsome *chinthes* guarding the precinct portal, stand small buildings topped by cupolas. These house two square stone pillars with Mon inscriptions dedicated by King Kyanzittha (1084–1113) who completed the stupa.

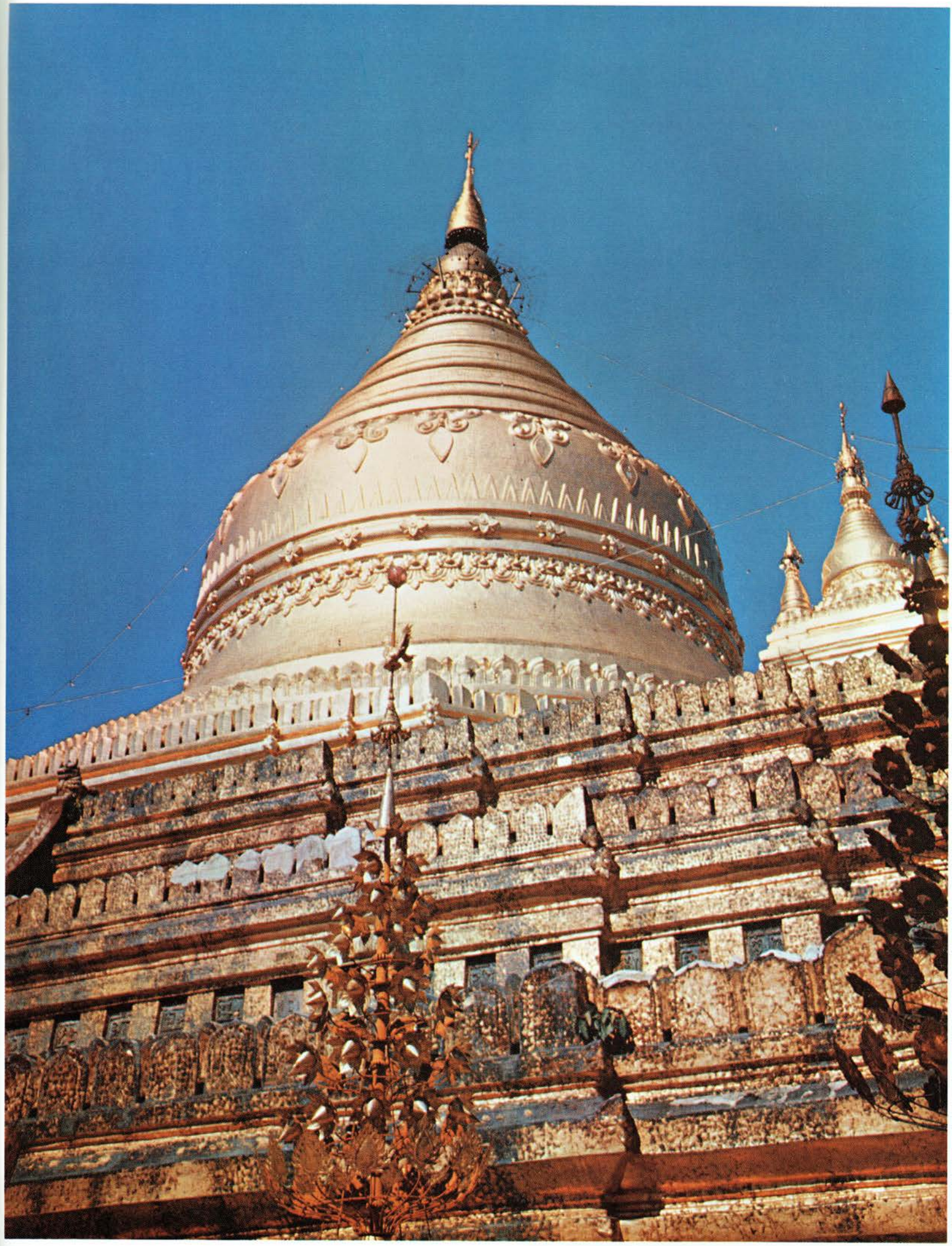
Stupa symbolism, which derives from India, allows a certain freedom of interpretation. The setting can be considered suggestive of a burial mound. The pyramid of three or five terraces perhaps recalls the sacred world mountain Meru, which towers between heaven and earth. Lesser stupas at the corners may be interpreted as the peaks encircling the main mountain. Surrounding sculptures of fabulous animals and spirits are intended to terrify evil-doers and comfort the good. The sides of the terraces are adorned with terracotta plaques to instruct the pious, relating in relief the Jataka stories of the Buddha's birth and incarnations. So that they may be more easily read, steps ascend steeply the centres of the terrace mountain on its four sides, sometimes balustraded with nagas or water spirits in the form of dragons.

Above its three terraces the Shwezigon's shimmering dome tapers gracefully in a series of mouldings to a final crown and umbrella. It has been suggested that this pagoda also played a positive role in Anawrahta's work of religious reformation, serving to attract to Hinayana Buddhism a people who still worshipped 37 nats (spirits) whose home was the summit of Mount Popa, some thirty miles to the southeast. A unique instance in Burmese architecture, the Pagoda enceinte contains images of these nats so arranged that they seem to do homage to the Buddha, represented by the stupa itself, which replaces Mount Popa. Anawrahta said, it is related, "Men will not come for the new faith. Let them come and worship their old gods, and they will be gradually won over to the Buddha's law". But possibly the great King miscalculated, for nat-worship is still very much part of the Burmese scene.

Besides nats, the stupa enclosure contains many shrines housing figures of Buddhas, worshippers, Buddha feet and other religious symbols. Some of the lesser shrines are capped with the elaborately fretted wooden towers typical of 19th century Mandalay, and others with their own miniature stupa domes.

Images in the Shwezigon precinct arranged to pay homage to the Buddha

The shimmering dome of the Shwezigon towers over three terraces adorned with terracotta plaques



The Sapada Pagoda, built in Sinhalese style

Two of Pagan's smaller stupas are chiefly of interest for their attractive position. The Bupaya, rising picturesquely above crenellated terraces on the river bank a mile to the north of the Circuit House, probably dates from the reign of a usurper called Nyaung U (931–964), who was a follower of the Ari. Its form somewhat resembles that of a Tibetan *chorten*. The Lawkananda Pagoda, three miles south of the Circuit House, was built at the same time as the Shwezigon to house another tooth of the Buddha. A white, elongated dome surmounting a wide, elevated platform, it once served as a landmark for the ships arriving from Ceylon, Arakan and the Mon country, and provides an excellent view of the river life.

A short distance from the Lawkananda Pagoda, the East and West Petleik, two 11th century stupas standing side by side, show evidence of Sinhalese influence. Only fifty years ago both were in a state of ruin. When the debris was cleared away a whole series of terracotta plaques was recovered depicting scenes from the Jataka tales. These have recently been realigned along old and new walls under new roofs, since the original vaulted roofs had largely collapsed, and can now be inspected at close quarters.

The Sapada Pagoda, on the way to the Shwezigon from the airfield, is another stupa built on the model of a Sinhalese shrine, with a cubical relic chamber above the bell. Sapada, a monk who had been ordained in Ceylon, founded a sect at Pagan on his return to Burma.

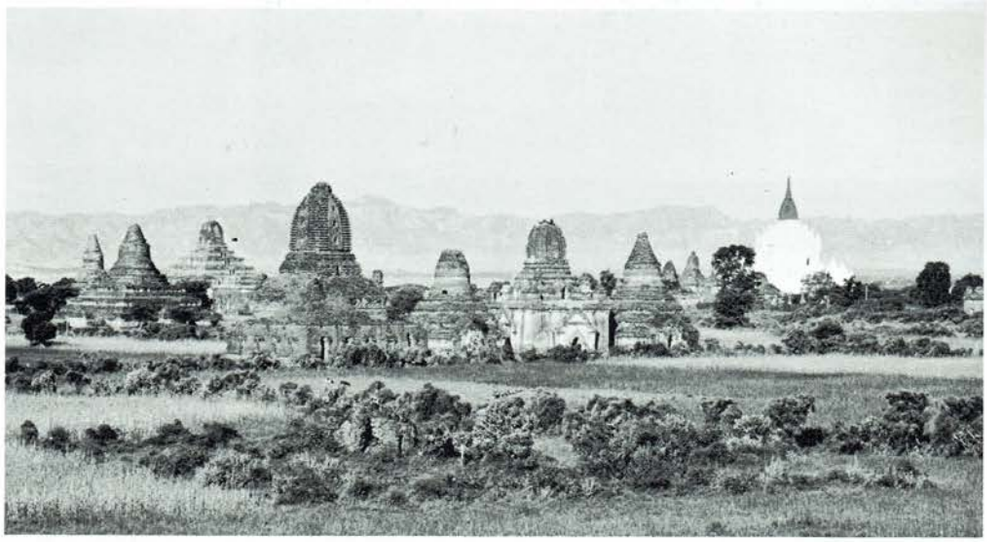
The Shwesandaw Pagoda, a mile to the west of the Circuit House, was the first stupa built by King Anawrahta after his conquest of Thaton in A.D. 1057. The extremely steep steps, cut in very narrow brickwork, of at least the lowest three of this stupa's five terraces are worth daring for the superb panoramic view they provide of the plain's monuments.

Its dome is said to cover some hairs of the Buddha, and within the stupa precincts his recumbent image lies enshrined in a long, low, brick shelter. The solid, five feet thick walls of this building are pierced on the long sides by flamboyant arched doorways. Inside the dimly lit chamber the 60 feet long cream coloured image lies on its right side flanking a vaulted corridor, its head to the North, in the position Gautama assumed when he lay dying between two sal trees at Kunisara.

The interior walls are frescoed with flowering palm fronds. On the sides of the narrow corridor behind the Buddha small niches, now empty, probably held statues telling his story. Incense sticks and money offerings lying near the impressive figure show that the shrine is still venerated.

The Shwesandaw's acquiline reclining image makes an interesting comparison with the slightly earlier Buddhas in the Manuha Temple, a fortress-like structure on the way to the East and West Petleik, built by the captive King of Thaton in A.D. 1059. In the Manuha an awkward over-sized gilded Buddha sits narrowly enclosed in an alcove on the east side, approached through a late pavilion sheltering a large gilded incense burner. A white reclining Buddha, roughly drawn, occupies the whole of the rear of the building, stretched the length of a cell chamber suggesting the donor's captivity.

Pagan's iconography of the Buddha is borrowed from India, and shows him in three main positions: lying on his right side; cross-legged with the tips of his right hand touching the earth, and standing, either with hands together and the palms exposed, or with the right hand raised. The Ananda Temple houses a multitude of the last two

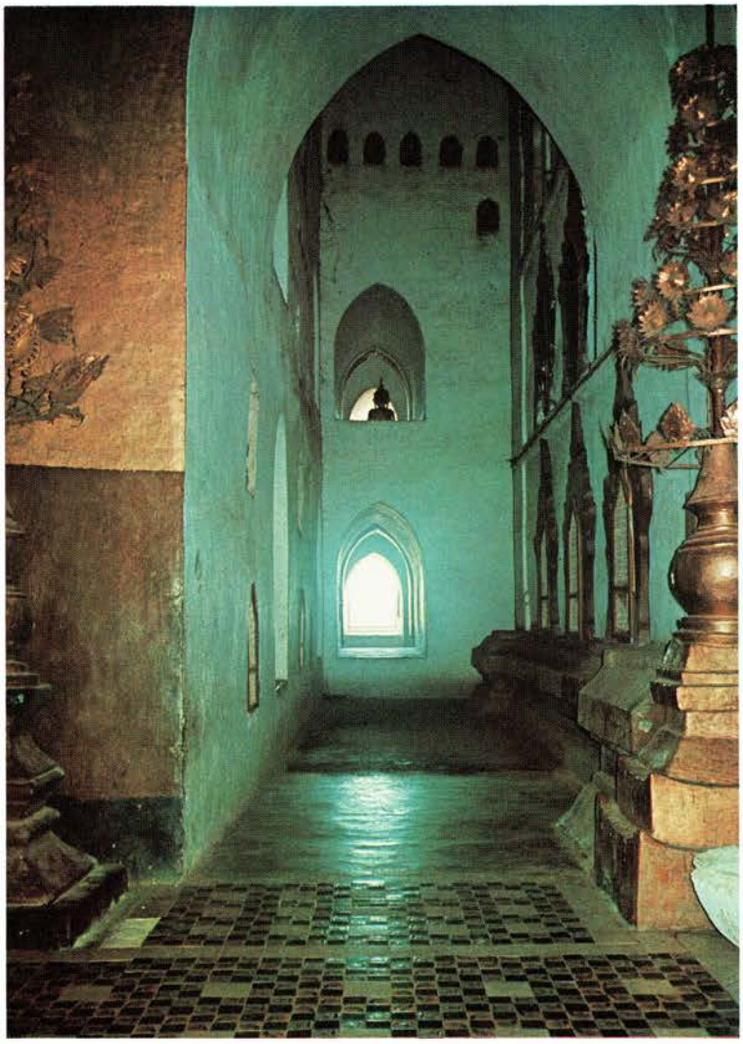


Pagan's shrines and stupas, seen from the terrace of the Shwesandaw Pagoda

The seated Buddha in the Manuha Temple, built by a captive King of Thaton

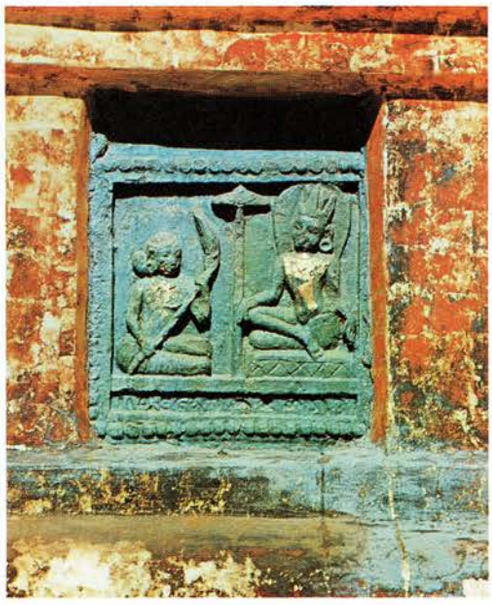
Terracotta plaques, Petleik Pagoda

The Manuha Temple, a square prison-like structure

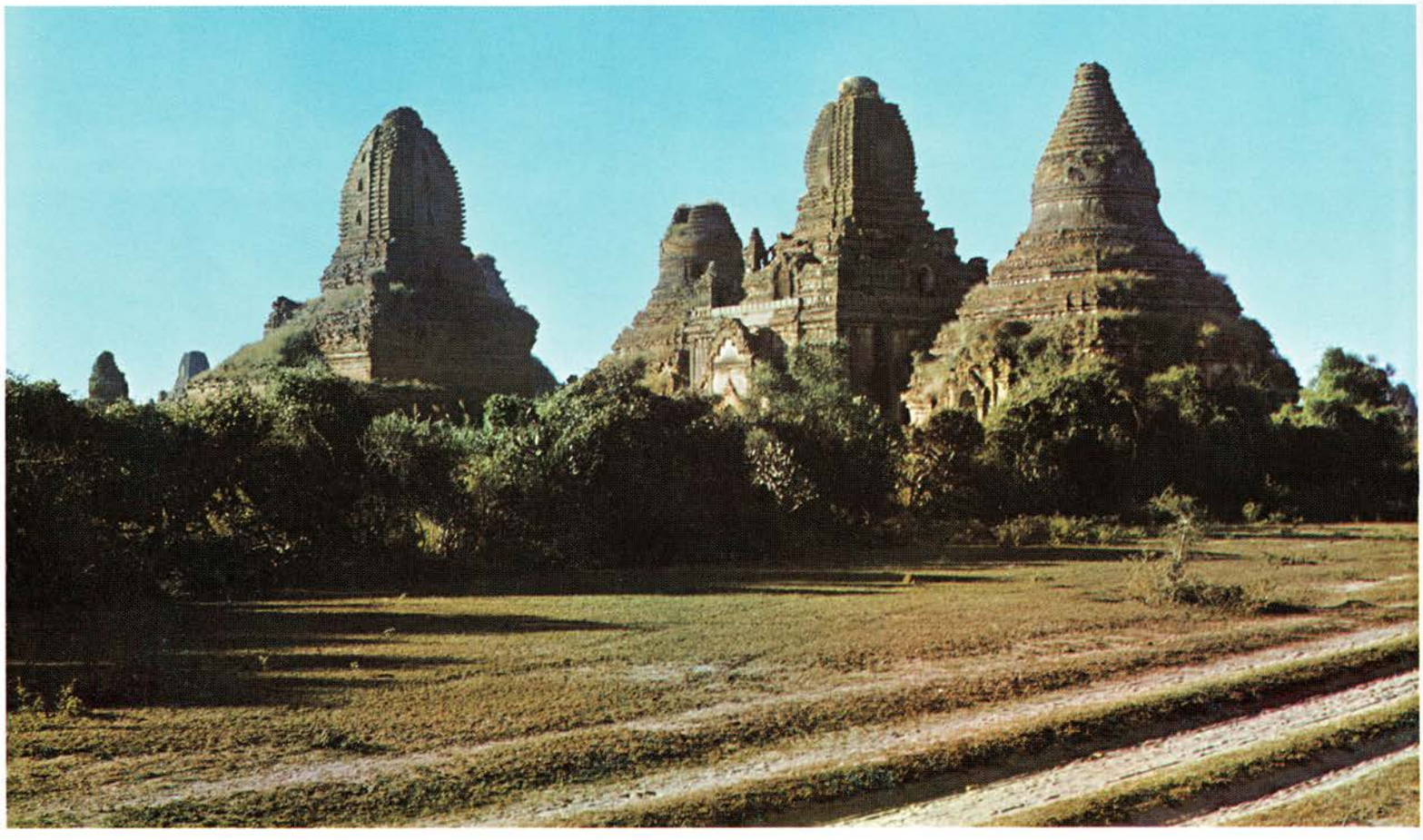


High vaulted passages of the Ananda Temple are lined with niches

To instruct the faithful, terracotta plaques tell the Buddha story



Temples and pagodas at Myinkaba, south of the walled city



The Ananda Temple rises in unrestrained exuberance above Pagan's landscape

categories of image.

The building of the Ananda Temple has its own intriguing legend. King Kyanzittha, struck with the deportment of eight Indian monks begging for alms outside his palace, fed them and asked from where they had come. They answered that they were *Arhats* who had come flying from the Nandamula Grotto on Mount Gandhamadana, a Himalayan fairy land. When they supported their description by conjuring up an apparition of the grotto the King determined to reproduce it on a large scale in masonry outside his palace. Whatever the truth in this legend, the magic of the Ananda Temple is there to be experienced. The temple stands just outside the line of the old palace walls, perhaps a mile from the Circuit House and south of the Sarabha gateway, the oldest part of the City that remains.

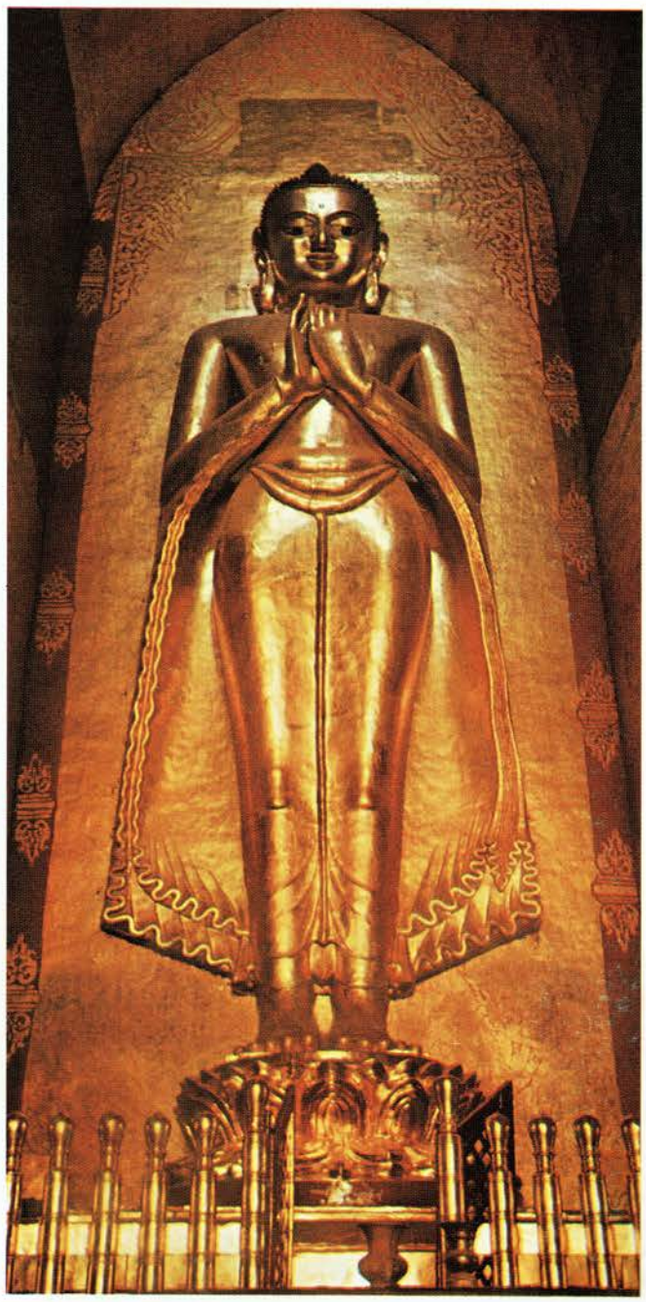
Stupas, rounded pagodas of the Shwezigon type, as we have seen, are essentially solid structures designed to contain a relic or mark a sacred spot. More often than not they also tell the Buddha story on the outside. Sanctuaries on the other hand, the temples of the Ananda type we have now come to, are hollow vaulted buildings generally square in plan but sometimes with projecting porches and vestibules. Images in niches in internal corridors and chapels set around a square central core tell the Buddha story. Above rise terraces and receding roofs terminating in a *sikhara*, a cragged spire representing a mountain, with a stupa and umbrella for finial.

The Ananda attracts many pilgrims. On festival days bamboo stands erected all along the dusty avenue that leads from the Sarabha gateway are packed with crowds. Loudspeakers relay Buddhist chants as carts and lorries roll by, concealed under elaborate dragons and demons or Buddha boats complete with paddlers. On other days bus loads of holiday makers from Mandalay, tourist guides in ancient but still serviceable jeeps and villagers in their pony traps pull up beside the temple. Here coffee and tea, or coconut drinks and barbecued foods, can be consumed under thatch roofed shelters, and religious figures moulded in clay are laid in the sun to dry.

The high, white wall that encloses the temple is carved with a continuous relief band of stupas and has portals on all four sides giving access to the interior. The North, East and West entrances are linked to the temple's porches by arched and pedimented arcades of a vaguely Venetian style, an evocation reinforced by the sheer mass of plastered brickwork which rises in a baroque exuberance of crenellated terraces, flamboyant arches, smaller sikharas and stupas, spirits and protective beasts to the final pinnacle.

The podium of the temple is embellished with terracottas telling the Jataka stories. Similar plaques line the upper terraces, which can be mounted outside by rickety wooden stairs. Both plaques and corner stones were once coated with gold and glittered in the sun, but are now either in a very weathered condition or covered with a thick blanket of plaster. A more contemporary and appealing version of the Jataka stories is told in the western arcade just before you reach the temple porch. Automata installed in cases depicting the settings of the tales are made to gyrate to the music of internal hurdy-gurdies when a

Standing Buddha in the Ananda sanctuary



donation is made. At the same time a large bell hanging between two posts in the adjoining courtyard is struck with a mallet. Bystanders hearing the sound are notified of the action, merit is achieved and shared, and all are edified. Resting on lotus pedestals in the West porch are two giant carved impressions of feet. From constant washing of the stones most of the 108 identifying marks of a Buddha listed in the Pali commentaries have been worn away.

As the visitor penetrates further into the dimly-lit cave of the sanctuary, its symmetrical, web-like plan is soon lost sight of. The main mass of the masonry, over 150 feet square even without the porches, is tunnelled by two vaulted and eight feet wide passages running parallel with each other and the sides of the temple and linking the main axes. The sides of the passages, or ambulatories, are lined with niches from floor to ceiling, diminishing in size towards the top where they are little more than tokens. The lower niches contain the most memorable seated Buddha figures, though unfortunately for the spectator those nearest the floor have been closed in with wire mesh doors. (In many of the lesser temples of Pagan even small, portable Buddhas are left completely unprotected; let us hope this will not have to change as the temples become more frequented by tourists). Ambulatories and their images are bathed in a soft subdued light from arched openings carved in the outer masonry.

Sunk into the central 65 feet square sanctuary core four Buddha figures 31 feet high stand on lotus thrones, in shrines facing out to the porticos. Only the statues facing north and south are original, and these are backed by walls covered with deep blue glass mosaics. The images are dramatically lit by clerestory lighting from above and worshippers bring their children to pray at the foot of the thrones, before gilded railings.

Large seated Buddha images are enshrined in their own porticoed chapels in the temple precinct. The oldest and finest of these, a sandstone, crowned and decorated Buddha in the earth-touching position, is typical of the Pagan period but seems not to have been previously illustrated.

The Mon played a great part in forming the Burmese style. Their buildings had simple plans with dark interior corridors lit by fretted windows, mural paintings on walls and vaults, and radiating blocks forming ogival arches. The Ananda represents an intermediate development leading to the imposing Burmese style temples of the 12th century.

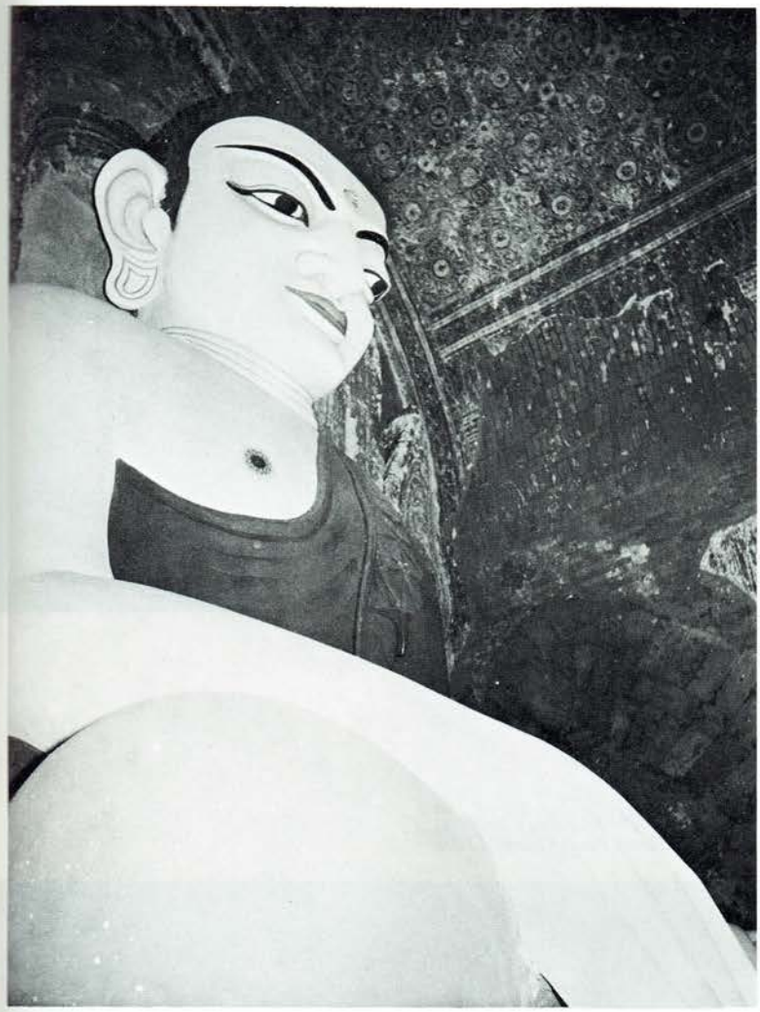
The Shwegugyi, a typical "Burmese" temple standing on a high brick platform, was built by King Alaungsithu in A.D. 1131. Its history is recorded on two stone slabs in its interior. Many remarkable stucco carvings remain on its arch pediments, plinth and mouldings; on other monuments, like the Ananda, these embellishments have largely disappeared beneath late paint and plaster. Such damage was first inflicted in the 18th century during restorations sponsored by a Prince Governor of the city. The original plaster work of Pagan is very thin, but extremely hard and stone-like. It was compounded of the usual lime and sand but mixed with a glue made from boiling buffalo and ox hides with a type of molasses. The masonry is extremely fine—a king of Pagan is said to have threatened his builders with death if a needle could be inserted between one brick and another. The bricks were cut and rubbed very smooth, and laid with little or no mortar.

Another temple in the Burmese style, the Thatbyinnyu, was built by Alaungsithu in the middle of the 12th century. It stands just within the palace wall, 500 yards west of the Ananda. Rising to a height of over 200 feet, it tops all other Pagan buildings. Its plan, a square with four porches, is not unlike the Ananda's, but only the eastern porch projects considerably. It has two main storeys set one behind the other, each crowned with terraces ornamented with parapets and small corner stupas. The Buddha image is on the second floor, and like the main staircase and entrance hall faces East.

The Sulamani temple, built by Narapatisithu in A.D. 1183 about one mile southeast of the Ananda, resembles the Thatbyinnyu temple but with statues of Buddhas on both upper and lower storeys. A few traces of the original frescoes remain on this temple's vaulting. The outside courtyard wall is set with stone binders in the brickwork and is well finished. Close by the Circuit House stands another temple of similar type, the Gawdawpalin, built by Narapatisithu to pay homage to his ancestors. It is over 180 feet high with an elongated sikhara and finial stupa, and with Buddha images on the ground floor only.

The Gawdawpalin Temple, near the Rest House

Crowned Buddha enshrined in the Ananda courtyard



Seated Buddha in the Htilominlo Temple. Walls are frescoed

Monks' cells behind the Ordination Hall and Htilominlo

The temples we see today were only the nucleus of a monastic complex of chapels, cells, libraries, study centres and dwellings for the people. Many of these buildings were of wood or bamboo and, like the palaces, have disappeared leaving few traces. Donations of slaves, cows and land were made to each temple as it was founded, several hundred slaves to each large temple with perhaps 100 hectares of land to every fifty of them. However this was not slavery in the usual sense, as the "slaves" were paid for their services.

Poor people willingly joined in the construction work, so sharing in the meritorious deeds of the wealthy. Once the monuments were completed the King, a Queen or the royal ministers would distribute clothing, gold and silver. There is even an inscribed stone recording that one minister gave an artist four elephants as a reward for painting the four faces of a temple sanctuary. No ordinary man would be allowed to keep such an aristocratic gift, but the elephants could be sold back to another minister for money or its equivalent.

The Kyanzittha Umin, built close by the Shwezigon and probably at the same time, is a cave monastery, half hewn out of the hillside. Its narrow corridors and tiny cells receive little daylight, but the watchman will bring candles to light up the interesting late frescoes, probably dating to the Mongol period, which depict Mongol-featured officers and soldiers.

The Htilominlo lies south of the road between the Kyanzittha Umin and the Sarabha Gateway, and was built in 1211 A.D. by King Nantaungmya. This is one of the greatest of the double-storeyed Burmese style temples. The square central pillar of masonry that supports the terraces has four well-preserved Buddhas on the ground floor facing the cardinal points and flanked on each side by empty niches. The interior walls are frescoed, some with minatory inscriptions, and many fine plaster carvings remain on the exterior. It is worth crossing the road from here to the Upali Thein, or Ordination Hall, a small rectangular edifice with a roof ornamented with battlements in imitation of wooden architecture. Above ground and just behind are some typical monastic cells enclosed in thick brick walls.

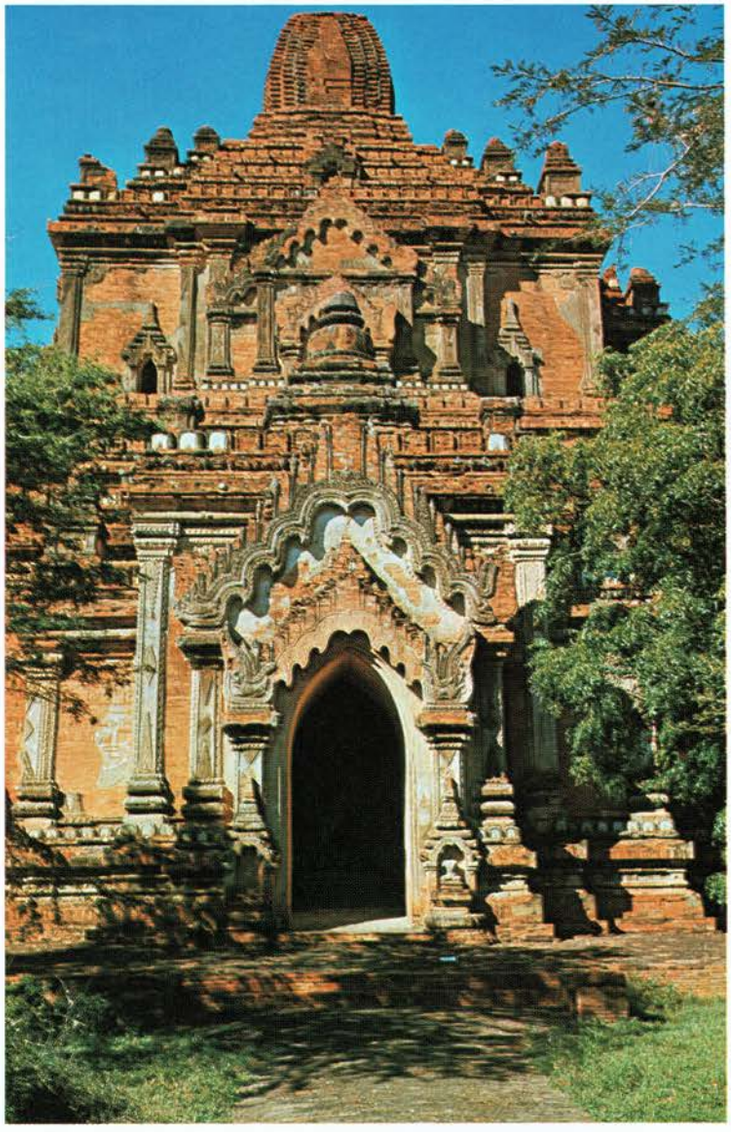
Some pagodas fall into no larger categories. Kyanzittha sent two missions to India to repair the temple at Bodh Gaya in Bihar, and rebuild its pinnacle, the work beginning in 1079 and taking seven years. The Burmese learnt much from this experience, and finally a more or less exact replica, the Mahabodhi Pagoda, was built by Nantaungmya within the walls of Pagan in the early 13th century. Its outstanding feature is a tall pyramidal spire with a slim stupa for finial. The whole spire is covered with niches holding small seated Buddhas and ornamented with panels and mouldings. An extremely narrow staircase set in the wall leads up to the roof.

The Payathonzu, a mile and a half southeast of the Sulamani Temple, is one of the farthest temples from the Circuit House and makes an interesting walk through cultivated fields. Founded in the late 13th century, it consists of three distinct square temples, each with its own sikhara and joined together by two short vaulted corridors. The walls of the corridors and the vaults are painted with some of the best preserved frescoes in Pagan of a Mahayanist and Tantric character. Each shrine contains a pedestal, but the images are missing and perhaps were never installed, as the building of the temple may have been interrupted by the Mongol invasion.

The splendour of the Pagan dynasty ended with its sixth King, Narathihapate (1254–87). His fall was foreshadowed in a prophecy concerning his great work, the Mingalazedi Pagoda, which stands half way between the Manuha Temple and the Circuit House. It is unusual in that the stupas at the corners of each of its three terraces take the form of a Kalasa pot, an ornamental vase. "When this Pagoda is finished", ran the prophecy, "the Kingdom of Pagan will be shattered to dust". The King—a despot who in fact had no zeal for religion—abandoned the work. The Buddhist primate upbraided him, saying that this life is transitory at best, and that Pagan would not endure for ever if the Pagoda were left unfinished. Impressed by the argument the King resumed the work. Three years after it was completed the kingdom was invaded by the grandson of Kublai Khan and the prophecy was fulfilled.

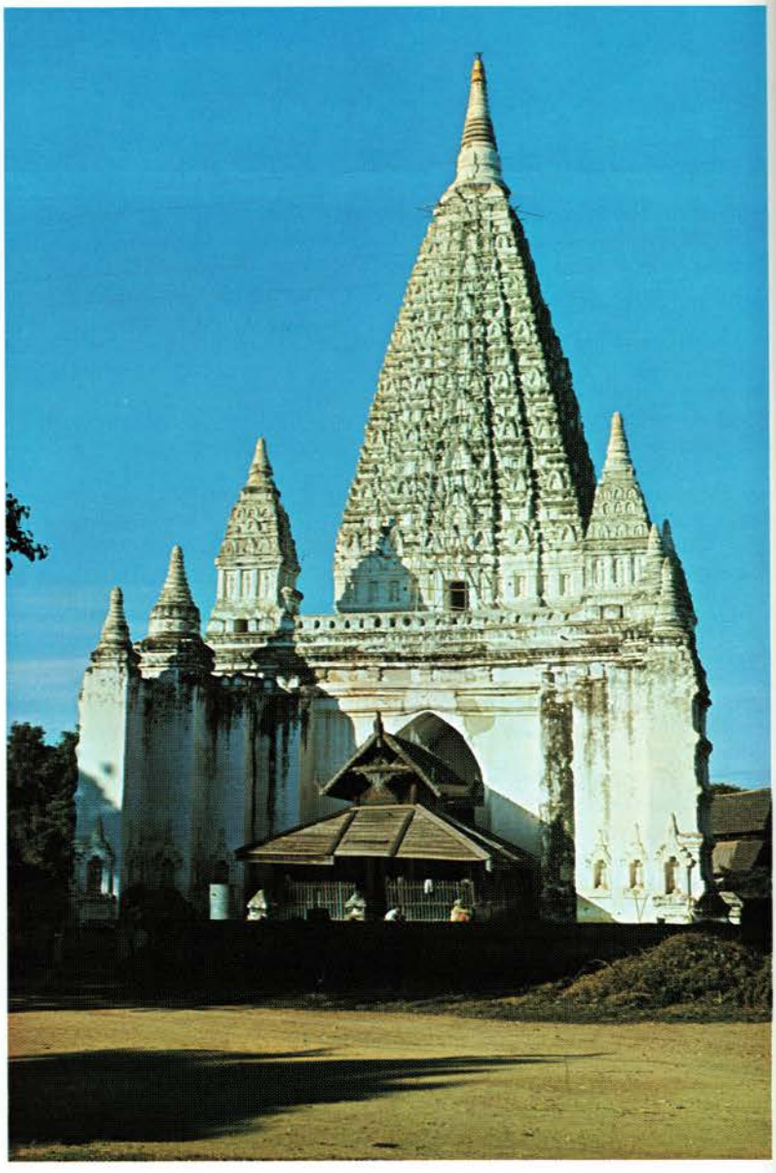
King Narathihapate dismantled many of Pagan's buildings to raise forts with their materials before fleeing south. Others are thought to have been despoiled by the invaders or in time fell into decay. Much later the monuments were extensively copied and the arts of painting and wood carving flourished, but Burmese architecture was unable to recapture the power of the Pagan period.

The Thatbyinnyu Temple,
and a stupa no
longer plastered



Original plaster can be examined
on the flamboyant arches and
pilasters of the Htilominlo Temple

The Mahabodhi Pagoda, a replica
of the temple at Bodh Gaya in Bihar



JADE MAN DOWN UNDER

ROBIN ASHLEY

Many visitors to Hong Kong have admired the jade jewellery and sculpture to be seen in scores of shop windows; only one perhaps has come to study the technique of Chinese jade carving. Mr Theo Schoon, himself a jade-worker, came up earlier this year on a trip financed by the Queen Elizabeth Art Council of New Zealand, which wants to improve the quality of New Zealand jade souvenirs. In Hong Kong he was a conspicuous figure by reason of the jade ornaments he wears. "They make grand conversational openings", said he, "and a marvellous introduction into the Chinese jade world".

Born at Keboemen in Java, the son of a civil servant, Mr Schoon went to study painting at Rotterdam at the age of sixteen and fell under the influence of the German Bauhaus movement, then in its first vigour: "In the library we saw some publications of the Bauhaus, though the Faculty frowned on it. Unfortunately I could not switch to a training at the Bauhaus—I wonder if I would have been accepted? Nevertheless I acquired the Bauhaus approach to design, and when I go astray I can always refresh myself by going back to the Bauhaus discipline".

Odd as it may seem, Theo Schoon also found that the Bauhaus offered him a pass-key to the study of Maori art, though not until he had been at it for thirty years: "The two interacted in a way I can hardly unravel. Anyway they have finally come together in my design methods for jade, and enabled me to produce something unique". Another influence was that of Indonesian culture, already so strong, he says, as to set up a constant conflict between Eastern and Western concepts of art in his mind. Admiring the "incisive and analytical" approach of the West, he yet felt that European ignorance of Eastern art rendered his academic training essentially provincial.

He came home with "a vague intention of painting the Javanese and Balinese dance, of which I had an intimate knowledge". In 1938 he moved to New Zealand with his family, where "surveying the local art scene I wanted no part in it". His Oriental background and interests at once led him to Maori art as a field for study. He studied Maori wood-carving, tattooing and the art of gourd-growing—of old the Maori decorated cultivated gourds with tattoo patterns — trying to recover the forgotten meaning behind the surviving knowledge of old artistic techniques and always practising the craft himself so far as possible.

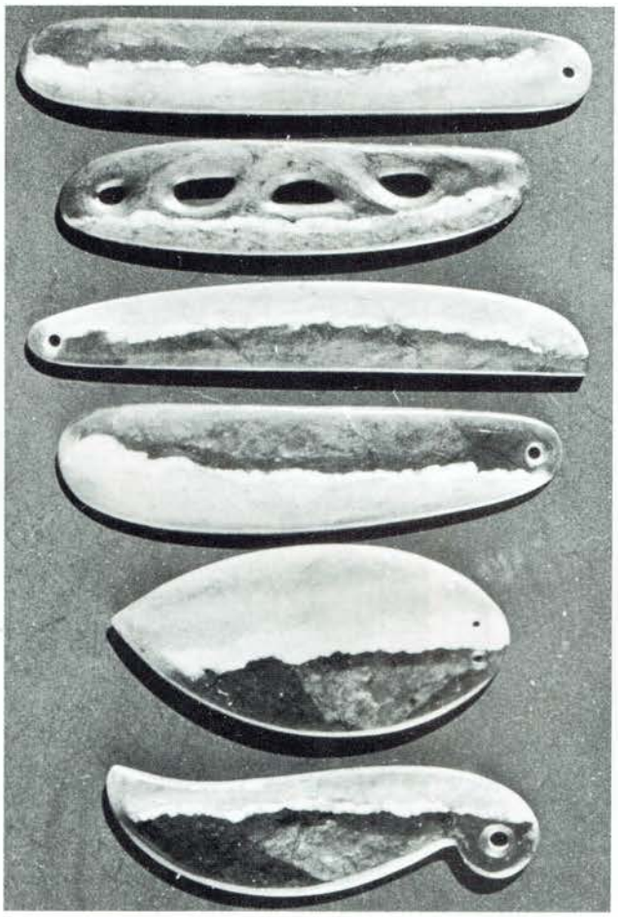
Tikis were buried with Maori dead

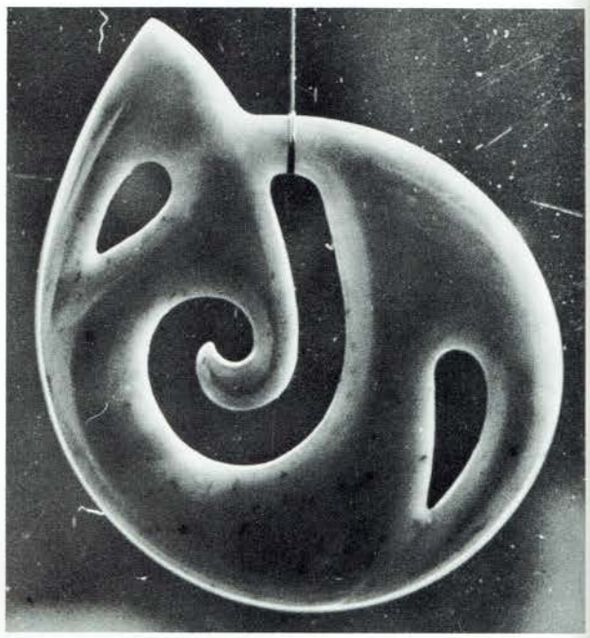
He then discovered that the early Maori rock drawings had never been fully explored or recorded, and became so obsessed with their importance that even after renouncing a small subsidy granted for the task by a museum he continued it by working as a labourer in the districts he wanted to investigate. For five of the nine years he spent in this way he became "a happy cave man", learning how to survive from rabbiters and deer-stalkers and finding that "a good place to stay was also likely to be a good place for drawings".

During his wanderings he came to the thermal area around Rotorua, the most visited and photographed part of the country: "The tourist areas are badly damaged by vandals, but off the beaten track you still find places that have never been interfered with, where the beauty of thermal structures and colours created by boiling water is unbelievable —a sort of natural abstract art.

Carved jade stones showing natural markings and influence of abstract art

More ambitious work of a distinctive New Zealand quality





Emblem of the Queen Elizabeth Art Council

Photographs of metal or chemical structures under a miscroscope open up a whole new world of wonders. The thermal area offers a similar sort of revelation—my photographic collection of these structures and textures and colour combinations is quite something".

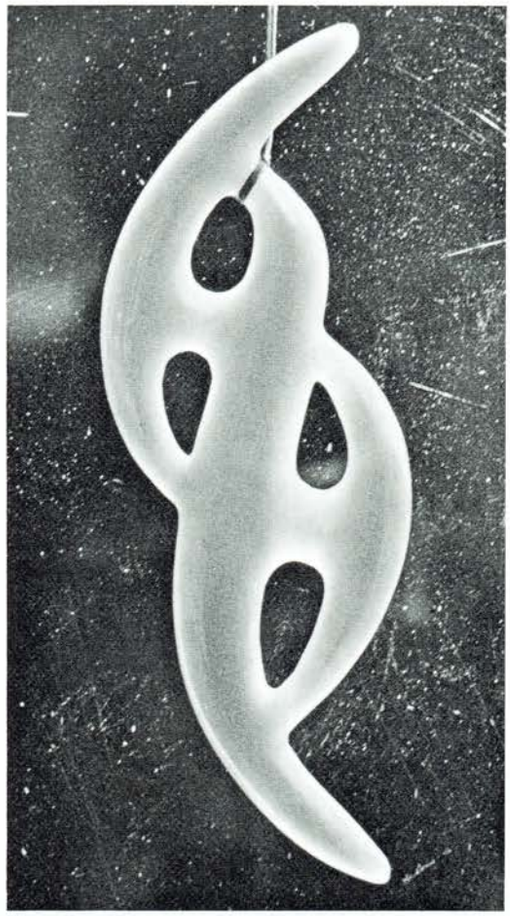
Finally the artist came to what is now the main interest of his life, the study and practice of jade carving. Here even the technical knowledge was gone. Nevertheless he was able, copying old Maori pieces by "unfair means"—since modern drilling tools and abrasives are far more effective than anything the Maori used—to rediscover the old techniques and systems of design.

The first British settlers in New Zealand, he explains, failed to see that the local stone called by a Maori term meaning "greenstone" was really jade. It was however recognised for what it was by the early Chinese gold miners, since the jade and the gold were found in the same area. The British miners did not even bother to remove the lumps of jade they found in the gold dredgers' conveyor belts, but the Chinese collected it as a sideline for a single firm which resold large quantities of it absurdly cheap in Germany (from where some of it returned to New Zealand in the form of mass-produced souvenirs for the tourist trade).

When the gold ran out the Chinese miners took all the jade they could back home with them, some later returning to retrieve masses of jade they remembered from their gold prospecting days. Then, about ten years ago, some descendants of the gold miners staked claims on the former gold territory, and the tailings left by the dredgers have been raked over and upturned by bulldozers. Most of the largest pieces come from the upper reaches of four rivers in South Island, well away from the roads; some are so large they must be sawn up on the spot and the fragments removed by helicopter. The big firm of mining claim owners which Mr Schoon works for has made arrangements for use of the helicopters owned by the Forestry Service, and times its operations to just before their arrival.

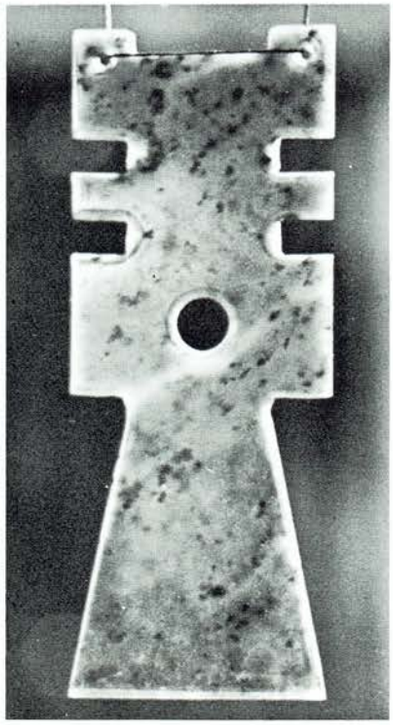
What passes in New Zealand for top quality jade, is translucent but dark compared with Burmese jadeite. It is almost unobtainable because the jade mining firm has a virtual monopoly of it, but is the only type the local jewellers will accept "being unsophisticated and unaware of the uses of the many other varieties". However they are so short of this that they must resort to the services of an enterprising band of "jade poachers"—rock climbers, local farmers and others. They have also invented a process whereby they crush jade, embed it in plastic and sell it under a "new-fangled name" in gold settings.

But the pale, grayish-green stone the Maori call *inanga*, "whitebait," is "an exquisite colour and comes in many forms from mottled and marbled to a very translucent shade of grayish green which resembles some Khotan nephrite". This jade, which is what Mr Schoon mainly works in, is very cheap and he has spent all his savings to form a stockpile of it, and hopes one day to use this as material for sculpture. It is also greatly prized by the Hong Kong jade dealers, who buy what they can of it despite a New Zealand government embargo on the export of raw jade, and in Japan. Some is smuggled out to Japan in cargoes of scrap iron, or by Japanese fishing boats which take it on board outside the three-mile limit.



Maori and Bauhaus art combined in a pendant

Irritated with the poor quality of contemporary New Zealand design in jade, Theo Schoon started a correspondence with the jade firm, which had begun to create its own jade jewellery. "I thought it was time they had a designer", he says. "Besides, it was the only way I could obtain good quality jade for my experiments". When, finally, he was employed by the firm he could no longer design in complete freedom. "Now I had to produce a range of designs that would sell. But I intended to maintain a reasonable artistic standard also, and



Contrasting approach to a similar theme

build up from there. So I set out to produce two types of ornament, one immediately acceptable and one more ambitious"—both with a distinctive New Zealand quality, in which Maori and Bauhaus influences were combined.

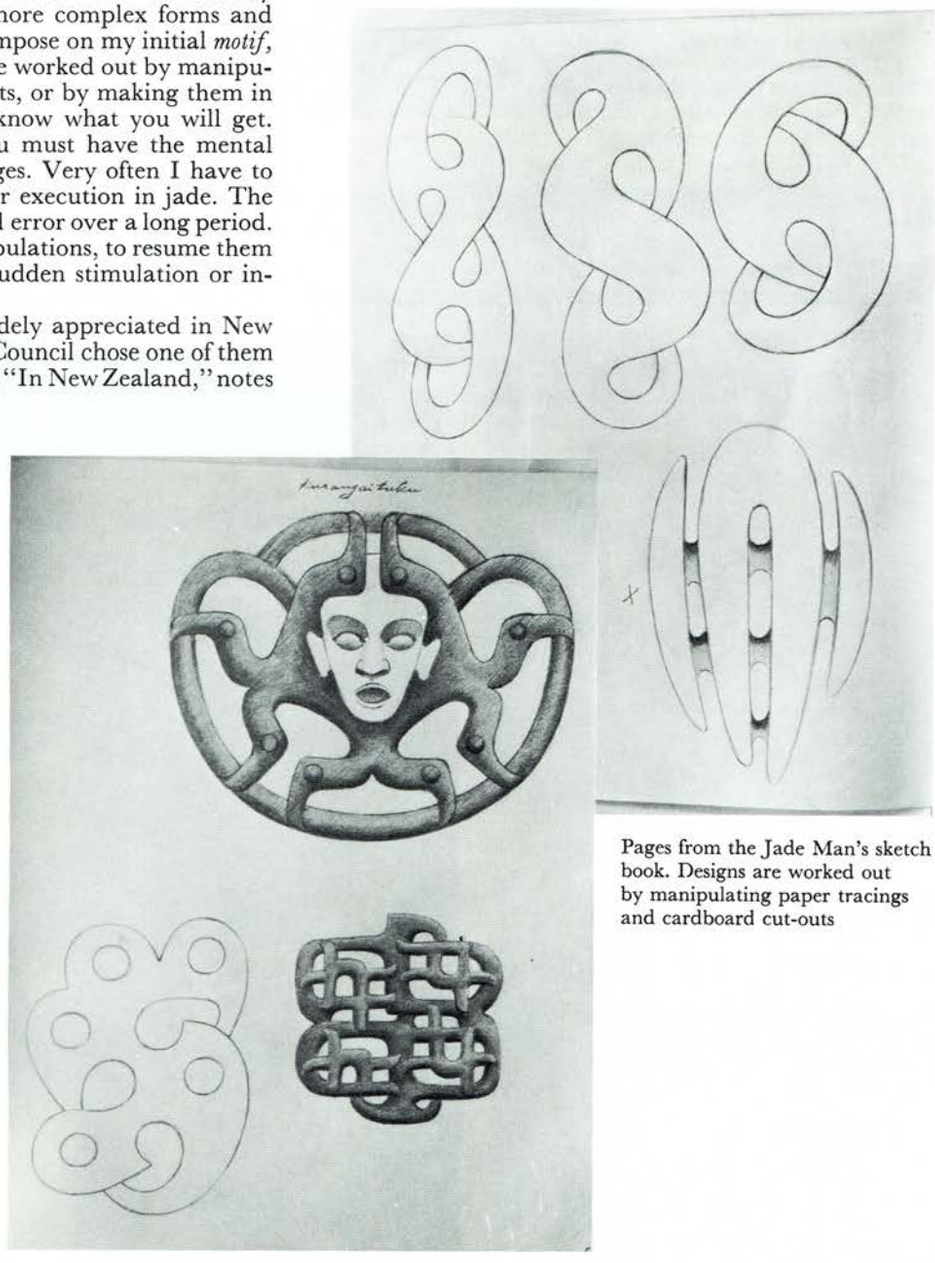
There is also a small community of jade workers twelve miles north of Greymouth: "Considering the state of New Zealand public taste this group is hardly entitled to exist. In fact it could not exist if its members did not consider the whole job as a hobby. Being fairly independent they can indulge in this sort of thing." One of them, called Peter Hewson, had acquired from Schoon a knowledge of the principles of Maori design, and then began to work on his own, "evolving a remarkable style of designing with a strong Maori flavour". He had also supplied a few young craftsmen with ideas about jade-working, and these went on, "with New Zealand ingenuity" to find ways to overcome the mechanical and technical problems involved, using primitive, shoe-string machinery.

"As a result", he recalls with a smile, "I found I had created my own worst rivals, artistically speaking, though I had an immediate sense of affinity with this group, which was doing what I had always wanted to see done in New Zealand, and producing work of remarkable beauty and maturity. They however had old feuds with the jade firm over jade territory, and a law suit in respect of one claim, so for them I was on the side of the enemy. In the end I was able to dispel their suspicions and they became my close friends. I hope that eventually a larger group can develop which will give New Zealand a tradition of jade-working".

Mr Schoon's designs are based on a "theme and variations" approach. "You start with the simplest and most elementary shape, and allow it to evolve from itself more complex forms and patterns. The more severe the limitations I impose on my initial *motif*, the better the design will be. Such designs are worked out by manipulation of paper tracings or cardboard cut-outs, or by making them in multiple versions in plasticine. You never know what you will get. Some of it is good and some bad, and you must have the mental alertness to see when something good emerges. Very often I have to rework such ideas to make them suitable for execution in jade. The design of many pieces is the result of trial and error over a long period. In fear of going stale I drop many such manipulations, to resume them when some aspect of the pattern provides sudden stimulation or inspiration".

The designs so arrived at may not be widely appreciated in New Zealand—though the Queen Elizabeth Art Council chose one of them as an emblem—but they were in Hong Kong. "In New Zealand," notes the artist, "I would never have dared to think that anything I had made could possibly be of any calibre compared with what the Chinese had produced. But I was astonished to find that jade work of any artistic standard is not being done in Hong Kong any more, by the confession of the Chinese dealers themselves, who have their own jade-carving workshops. The only good jade I saw was at least a hundred years old. On the other hand Cat Street has a truly amazing concentration of ancient jade pieces. Some of the jade dealers have minds which run only on what they can sell; others are collectors who really love the things they own. One man on Cat Street had a treasure trove of incredible proportions; and to find such a man surprised and delighted by my work, and recognise at least some of the effort that had gone into it, was about the highest compliment I had received".

Mr Schoon disclaims any Chinese inspiration: "I can only appreciate Chinese jade on its own terms and according to the laws behind this form of art as determined by the Chinese. It is the Chinese technique that I worship". The whole shape and concept of a Chinese design is in fact determined by symbolism, a procedure entirely foreign to his search for pure, abstract form and an art with no representation or meaning in it whatever. The form of his pieces is at least partly dictated by practical considerations, as they are made to be worn, but they also have a strong sculptural element. The Bauhaus influence appears in their simplified form and lack of decoration, a characteristic which perhaps reduces their commercial appeal, though like all the best jades, they flatter the sense of touch as well as of sight.



Pages from the Jade Man's sketch book. Designs are worked out by manipulating paper tracings and cardboard cut-outs

Bronze *tsung*, Yin dynasty. Ht. 30.5 cm. Coll. Idemitsu Art Gallery

Ageless Chinese Bronzes

Richard Sun

Ritual food vessel, *ting*, decorated with *t'aoh-t'ieh* masks in relief. Probably Western Chou. Ht. 20.3 cm., width 16.5 cm. Author's Shanghai collection

Among Chinese antiques and works of art perhaps the most fascinating are the bronzes. Long before Chinese bronzes became museum pieces, they were national treasures of kings and emperors. The earliest mention of bronzes in Chinese history, or rather legend, refers to a time perhaps around 2600 B.C. when the Yellow Emperor, having won a resounding victory over the northern invaders on the battlefield of Chu Lu, some 200 miles north of present-day Peking, and having captured and executed the tribal chief Chih Yu, had a three-legged bronze cauldron cast to celebrate the event.

Another well-known story concerns the nine tripods of Great Yü. While Yü was Chancellor in the court of Emperor Yao, around 2000 B.C., a great deluge wrought havoc in the land of the nine provinces. Yü was ordered by the Emperor to regulate the waters. For nine years he toiled with the people around the country, digging canals to divert the waters to the sea and so absorbed in his work that he did not enter his home though he passed by it three times. Profoundly impressed by Yü's ability and devotion, Yao made him his successor. To express their gratitude, the Governors of the nine provinces brought to the new Emperor, Great Yü, a mass of rare and precious copper ore from which nine huge tripods were made, each bearing the emblem of a province. These became symbols of great virtue and imperial power, and were handed down from generation to generation as national treasures, until the downfall of the Chou Dynasty, in 249 B.C. Knowing that the Chin ruler, the conqueror, had long coveted the nine bronzes, which constituted the main reason for his invasion, the fleeing Chou Emperor sank them into a great lake. They were never recovered, though succeeding Emperors made more than one salvage attempt.

The Chin Dynasty lasted only from 249 to 206 B.C. It was a time of turmoil, and virtually no outstanding bronzes of the period have come down to us. As for the legendary bronzes of remote antiquity described above, there is no evidence to prove their actual existence. The term "Chinese bronze" has been reserved by connoisseurs and experts to denote vessels, weapons, musical instruments and tools made during the Shang and Chou Dynasties (1766–249 B.C.) of an alloy of copper and tin, and highly artistic in design and superbly skilled in execution.

Of course, bronzes were made in every dynasty, but Shang and Chou bronzes attained such a high standard of artistry that they form a class of their own. Moreover characteristics shared by the Shang and

Bronze *ting*, Yin dynasty. Ht. 24.7 cm. Coll. Idemitsu Art Gallery

Chou bronzes are not found in those of subsequent periods. When these magnificent pieces were first introduced to Western scholars early in the twentieth century, it was difficult for them to believe that such works of art came from a period of Chinese history whose splendours had been considered entirely legendary. However scientific excavation started by the Academia Sinica in 1928 at the site of An-Yang, together with archaeological research, established beyond doubt the period of the Shang bronzes. Besides bronzes, jades, ivories, pottery and stone ware were also discovered. In fact, most of the bronze objects were modelled on objects made of stone and jade.

In the Shang and Chou periods bronze casting was a semi-governmental undertaking, for only the Emperor could mobilise the necessary skilled labour and raw materials. It is remarkable that today, even with all the scientific knowledge available to a modern foundry, the workmanship of the Shang and Chou bronzes remains unsurpassed.

Many of the excavated Shang and Chou bronzes bear inscriptions, which have become important sources of historical information. Those on early Shang bronzes are quite simple, usually of only one or a few characters recording the family name of the owner or the maker. In the later Shang and Chou periods, the inscriptions commemorated significant accomplishments, appointment of officials or the distribution of land. From these we learn that the Shang rulers were the owners of the nation's land, and that grants of land were made to meritorious officials. These rulers were great hunters and heavy drinkers, as evidenced by the types and inscriptions of their bronzes. One of the Chou bronzes was inscribed in such a way as to attribute the downfall of the Shang rulers to their indulgence in strong drink, and carried a warning to the Chou people not to make the same mistake.

After the Chou dynasty the art of bronze making went into a decline. Even though cast to celebrate purely temporal events, the old bronzes had always performed an important ritual function, to contain food and wine for ancestor-worship for instance. But during the Warring States period (403–249 B.C.) people lost touch with the old Chinese religious traditions; moreover the this-worldly teaching of Confucius began to make headway. Ritual vessels therefore were no longer made with the same painstaking effort as during the Shang and Chou dynasties. Decorative patterns changed, human and animal figures or scenes of hunting and fighting replacing the old motifs. However decorative patterns of silver and gold inlay were popular features of the bronzes of the period.

The Former Han Dynasty (207 B.C.–25 A.D.) saw a big increase in the use of iron, while bronze began to lose the glamour of being the only metal available. The period was one in which the art of glazed pottery was highly developed, and a great many bronze vases were made, modelled after pottery vases. Some of the bronze objects were gilded with gold leaf, conveying an impression of magnificent opulence. Many of the bronze mirrors also of the Han and Tang Dynasties, famous for their beautiful and delicate designs, were gilded or silver-plated.

During the Sung Dynasty (960–1279 A.D.) a number of Shang bronzes were unearthed. At the same time many imitations were made, not to be passed off as real ancient bronzes but to be recognised as copies of Shang styles and designs, which can be easily distinguished from original Shang bronzes. In the Hsuan-teh (1426–35) reign of the Ming Dynasty incense burners made of copper, and very often decorated with gold splashes, are famous for their high precision metal work, and in the Ching-tai (1450–57) reign cloisonné became popular. However none of the post-Chou bronzes are called bronzes by collectors, but are known as Han vases, Sung replicas, Hsuan-teh incense burners, Ching-tai cloisonné etc.

Various kinds of animal pattern were used for decoration on the Shang and Chou bronzes, but the most widely used motif was the *t'ao-t'ieh* mask. The *t'ao-t'ieh* was described as a gluttonous monster which fed on human beings, with the head of a tiger, the eyes of a warrior and the horns of a buffalo. Thus in one creature were combined the qualities of swiftness, intrepidity and strength. Other popular decorative patterns were the dragon and the spiral line, which represented the ancient Chinese character for thunder cloud. All three, appearing in highly stylised patterns, were symbols through which the people of ancient China expressed their fear of the unknown and their admiration of the superhuman.

Surviving specimens of Shang and Chou bronzes are extremely few, for in the first place copper and tin were scarce in ancient times. Moreover the bronze objects, especially the fine pieces, had to be processed one at a time, whereas the ceramics could be baked in one kiln by the hundred.

Copper was alloyed with tin to give strength. According to the Chinese book *Kao Kung Chi*, the proportions of the amalgamation were determined by the hardness of the bronze required. Bells and cooking vessels required six parts of copper and one part of tin; sharp weapons, five parts of copper and one of tin; heavy weapons, four parts of copper and one of tin; wine vessels and cups, three parts of copper and one of tin; great swords, two parts of copper and one of tin; arrow-heads (which were usually irrecoverable), three parts of copper and two of tin; mirrors, one part of copper and one of tin. However, tests made on ancient bronzes do not confirm these proportions.

Frequent floods in the Yellow River region, where most of the ancient bronzes were made, took their toll. But apart from natural calamities large scale destruction of bronze pieces was carried out by the first Chin Emperor who, in order to guard against insurrections, decreed that all bronze weapons, vessels, and other objects throughout the country should become national property and be transported to his new capital, Hsien Yang. There they were melted down and cast into twelve huge bronze statues, each thirty feet high and thousands of of pounds in weight, which were placed in the Emperor's palace. Such was the people's hatred of his régime that within a year of his death they revolted, using sharpened bamboo poles as spears, and set the palace on fire. It burned for three months, and the twelve statues were melted beyond recognition.

During the troubled times towards the end of the Chin dynasty, bronze pieces were often hidden in caves, which were then sealed up. Subsequently the owners were unable to recover them, or could not identify the spot, so that the bronzes stood for centuries on stone tables exposed to the surrounding air and moisture. In course of time they suffered a process of oxidation which transformed the metal into something like stone and made it as brittle as ceramic.

Other pieces were buried in tombs, from which they have been recovered encrusted with the dirt of ages. They must then be soaked in hot water and cleaned with bamboo instruments, for metal would damage the bronze or the patina. On genuine bronzes this may be of several colours—brownish or blackish green, grey-green (the majority) or lacquer black, according to the nature of the chemical elements in the soil. Sometimes also parts of the patina may be crimson or coral

colour from iron and other minerals contained in the earth, which forms a decorative contrast with the green patina elsewhere. The Peking cleaners of bronzes are artists in their own line and know what to leave and what to remove. Thus they may remove some of the patina to expose an inscription or other detail, but in such a way as to secure an overall decorative effect.

As for any type of work of art, the only way to identify genuine bronzes is by observing typical specimens over and over again. Imitations are plentiful. In Honan province, where the ancient bronzes were excavated, professional fakers made copies which were then buried underground for their sons and grandsons to "discover". As the imitation of old bronzes was not at first illegal, the perpetrators perhaps thought of it as a legitimate business.

These fakes were well-made and artificially patinised, and sometimes could deceive the trained eye. Modern fakes, on the other hand, are easy to recognise from the lack of painstaking workmanship in the representation of the exquisite designs found on the originals, and in the polishing and grinding of the cast object. However skilful the imitation, by close scrutiny the expert can detect the difference in alloys, in patinas, in artistic quality and in the inscriptions.

In fact very few fakers troubled to use copper and tin alloy to cast their imitation bronzes. Fakes were usually made of copper or brass. The oxidation effect cannot be faked, but acid or caustic soda may be used to produce a "patina". Caustic soda gives a blueish tinge which some genuine bronzes have also. Red paint may be used to simulate a red patina. Many Western collectors test the red part by burning with a candle or cigarette lighter; if it is paint, the surface changes colour. But this precaution is really unnecessary. Oil paint has a smooth surface, while the genuine red patina is formed of small particles. Under a ten-power magnifying glass the difference in texture is quite obvious. Sometimes however red paint may be put on a genuine piece to improve its appearance.

But the hardest thing to fake is the inscription. On the genuine bronzes this feature was the work of master calligraphers, but very few people nowadays have the technical skill—not to mention the artistic gifts—required to imitate this. After all, the faker wants a quick profit, he cannot spend years practising the ancient scripts. Thus faked inscriptions, like forged signatures, can usually be quite easily detected, though Westerners without training in Chinese calligraphy may find it more difficult.

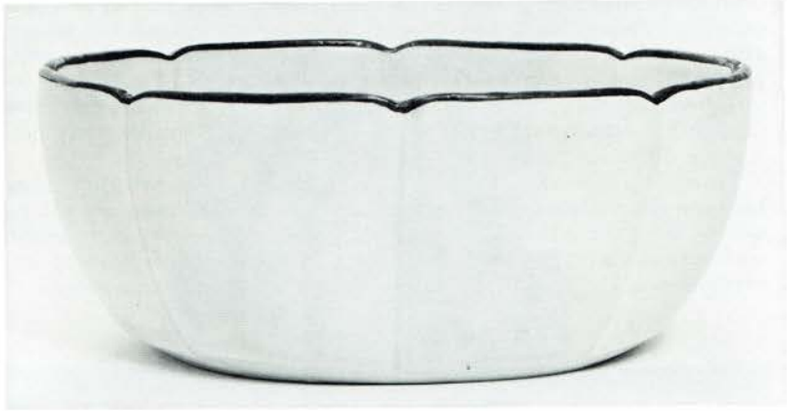
Finally, there is always that intangible difference in artistic quality between the authentic and the fake bronze. When the two are placed side by side, the well-trained eye can make the necessary comparison without difficulty, but such an accomplishment requires both an appreciation of the beautiful and practice in studious observation.

Covered ritual wine vessel, *yu*, Shang dynasty. Ht. 19.0 cm., width 14.0 cm. Author's Shanghai collection

Covered rectangular wine vessel, *hu*, Shang dynasty. Ht. 25.4 cm., width 12.7 cm. Author's Shanghai collection

News from Sotheby's

John K. T. Ma



Ting-Yao basin,
Ht. 3½ in., width 8¾ in.
Sung dynasty
US$117,600

Tang glazed pottery jar
Ht. 10 in., width 10¼ in.
US$67,200

The uniformly impeccable quality in evidence at a sale of Chinese bronzes, ceramics and works of art held on 2nd March, 1971, and the offer of some items of exceptional rarity, accounted for the grand total of £316,223 (US $758,935) realised, a world record for a one-day sale of Oriental works of art at Sotheby's, London.

A Sung dynasty Ting-Yao basin, 3½ in. high and 8¾ in. wide, made £49,000 (US $117,600). This splendid basin, of a rare fluted shape, has a glaze of a creamy tint. The interior carving, with a tree peony spray in the centre, is superbly done.

Two auction records were broken. A large Tang glazed pottery jar, 10in. high and 10¼ in. wide, went for £28,000 (US $67,200). This was the most expensive piece of Tang pottery ever sold. Similar but slightly smaller jars, also with a pattern of lozenges outlined in green and orange, are in the National Museum at Tokyo.

The day's second highest price, £44,000 (US $105,600), also established an auction record, this time for Ming blue and white porcelain. The piece, an early 15th century stemcup, 8¾ in. high, was bought by an anonymous Japanese collector, acting through agents in London.

A notable early Ming cup, 3¼ in. in diameter and enamelled with a cock, a hen and three chicks, realised £14,000 (US $33,600). An instructive price increase was registered by a Ming blue and yellow dish with a diameter of 11½ in. This piece had been sold at Sotheby's in 1960 for £1,050 (US $2,940). Now it fetched £6,500 (US $15,600)—art investors take note.

A particularly well potted Tang blue glazed jar, 7 in. high, made £8,500 (US $20,400). A Shang dynasty bronze-covered ritual vessel, *fang yi*, 8¾ in. high, went for £7,500 (US $18,000). This price, definitely on the low side, was largely determined by the fact that *fang yi* have appeared rather often in the auction rooms recently.

Ming blue and white stemcup
Ht. 8¾ in., 15th century
US$105,600

Cup enamelled with cock, hen and chicks
Diam. 3¼ in., early Ming
US$33,600

CHARLOTTE HORSTMAN'S MING FURNITURE

Stephen Markbreiter

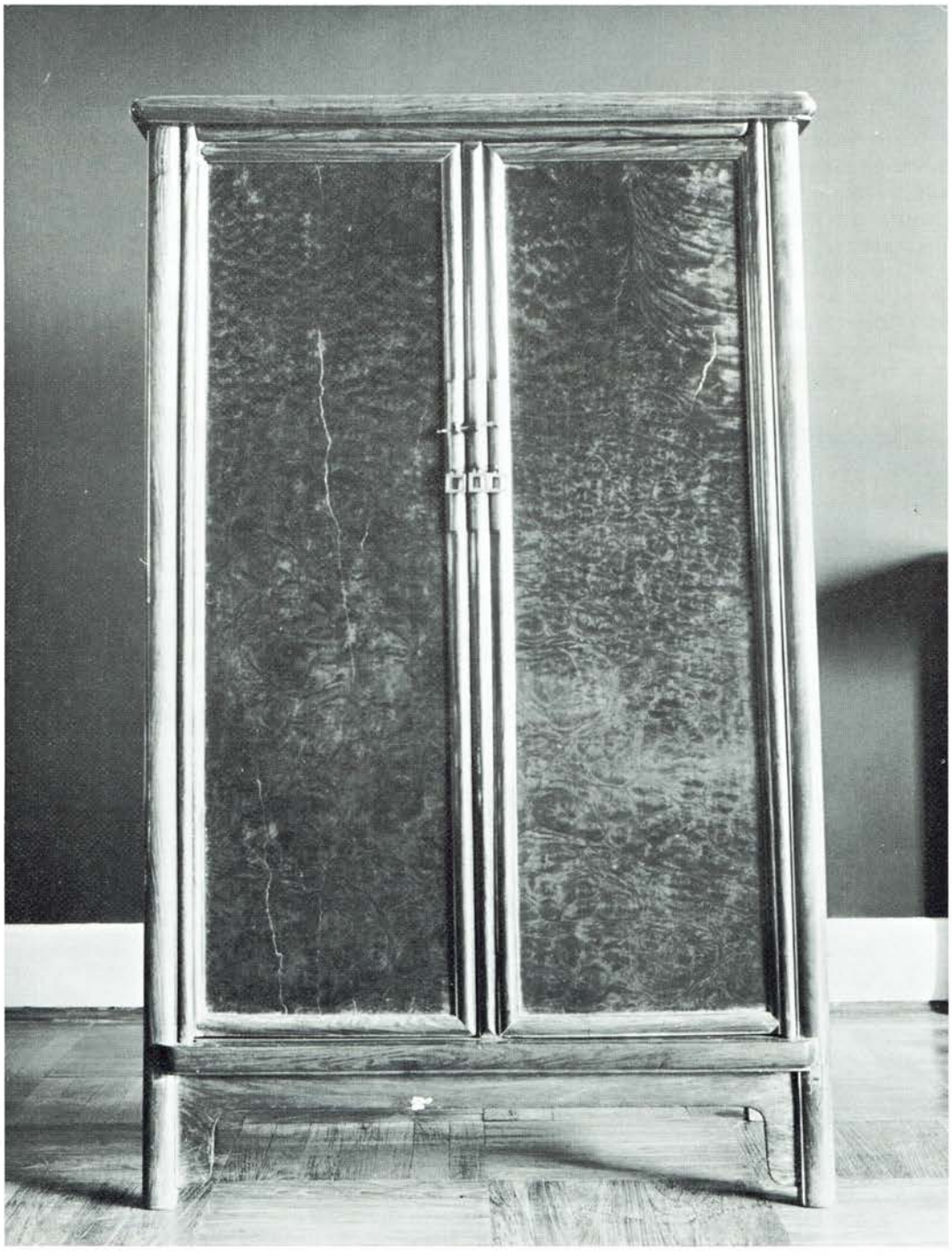
It was entirely due to a small group of Westerners, mainly from the Diplomatic Corps, that the last remnants were saved of the simple and refined furniture of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Charlotte Horstman, a talented member of the group who went on to a successful career as interior decorator and furniture manufacturer in both contemporary and historical styles, remembers that Chinese culture was something she felt very deeply from her earliest childhood.

"Grandfather was in the Chinese diplomatic service and took my father, his only son, to Europe when he was sixteen. That was how father came to marry my mother, a German girl. At home we spoke only German. My father, though not my mother, liked to read the German poets, and to tell the truth I have never really learnt to speak Mandarin properly. But I did start to read about China, and sit around with intellectuals who were interested in China, from a very early age".

Charlotte Horstman was born in Berlin and returned to Asia with her father when she was 2½ years old, growing up in Peking, Shansi and Shantung. Her father was connected with the Bank of China, and as a young girl she enjoyed the privileged life of the leisured classes then normal on the Mainland. She recalls travelling in a mule

The entrance hall of Mrs Horstman's apartment. The altar table is one of her own factory's facsimile pieces

Ming splayed leg cupboard discovered lined with old newspaper in Peking



cart to picnics in mountain temples. . . . Her grandfather's marvellous house in Soochow . . . Moon festivals on the houseboat, with another boat in tow for the kitchen and servants . . . and long lazy summers spent in pavilioned gardens.

She started to collect Ming furniture when she was still under twenty—a curious taste one would have thought for a young girl of her background in those days. All the rage then, and in fact the only Chinese furniture known to the West, were the heavily carved, exuberant and bizarre Ching palace pieces, inlaid with mother-of-pearl or richly lacquered, ornate furniture, inconvenient and lacking in any particular refinement.

However her father, who had a somewhat Victorian taste, loved these display pieces and delighted in showing off the workmanship of those he acquired. He would write to a friend in Canton to send him specimens he coveted of the fussily elaborate southern furniture, with heavily carved legs, entwined dragons and chair backs and table tops set with marble, ivory, semi-precious stones and even gold and jade. Since the reign of Chien Lung (1736–95), Chinese taste in such matters had without doubt degenerated badly, largely owing to the rise of a wealthy new merchant class which admired showy, laboured craftsmanship, often inspired by ivory carving.

Ming furniture on the other hand has little or no carving and a minimum of adornment, its beauty lying in the use of fine woods, the carefully considered details, the positioning of locks, hinges and handle plates and the proportions, but all this true refinement was unappreciated under the late Ching dynasty. The woods then most admired were *tzu-tan*, literally "purple sandal-wood" and sometimes called "blackwood", and *wu-mu*, an ebony especially effective for inlay work. Both of these woods are extremely dark in colour, while much of the best and now most highly prized Ming furniture is made of *huang hua-li*, a wood resembling a light-coloured rosewood. From a very early date this wood was imported from Indochina and the Philippines,

Mrs Horstman sits on the "opium bed" that dominates her living room

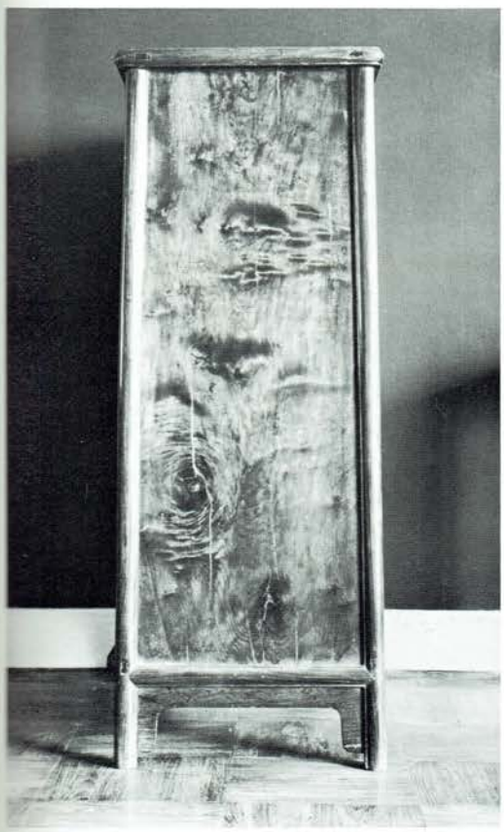
probably in exchange for porcelain, tea and silk—a barter trade which can be traced back to the 13th–14th centuries.

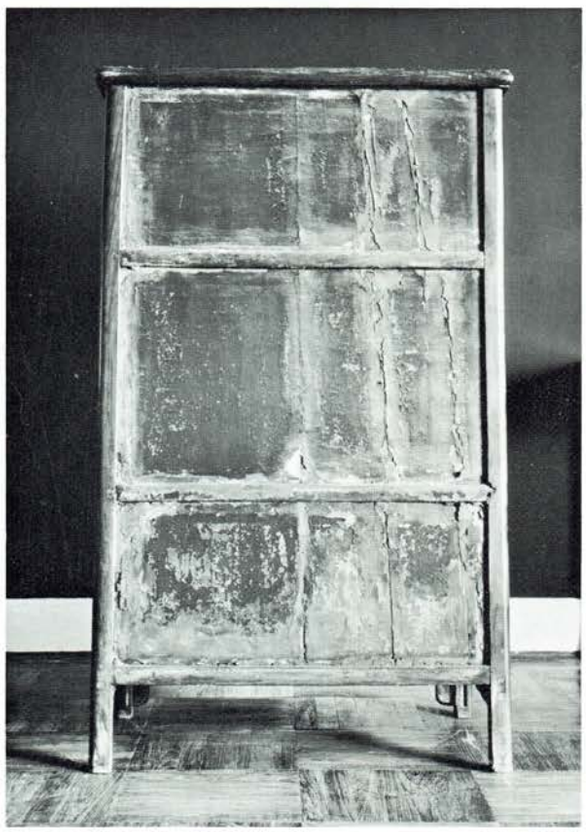
So a great deal of Ming furniture was stained black, painted over or relegated to the servants' quarters. But many Ming pieces which were dark when bought recovered their beauty once the later finish had been sandpapered away and waxing with a clear polish had brought out the true nature of the grain.

Charlotte Horstman was lucky to be allowed to bring some of these restored pieces with her when she left China in 1951. "I lived the last five years of my stay in Peking in a small but very beautiful part of a 16th century palace. When it became time to go I did not even have the money to pack up and send away some of my things, and others were much too big. Besides I never thought I would again have a house large enough to contain them. So I regretfully sold most of them back to the Government for a fair price. However I did manage to take with me 14 or 15 pieces, including some of the last *huang hua-li* furniture allowed out of the country". Most of these she still has about her in the elegant Hong Kong apartment, overlooking Kowloon and the harbour, where she made her home after a short stay in Bangkok.

Splay leg cupboards are among the oldest of Chinese furniture types, their subtle taper, developed from the use of bamboo and frame and panel construction, making an excellent complement to the trabeated architecture which formed their original setting. They were made and displayed in pairs in the household, placed either close together, the projecting tops covering the same area as the splayed legs, or some distance apart with a side table or ornamental stand between.

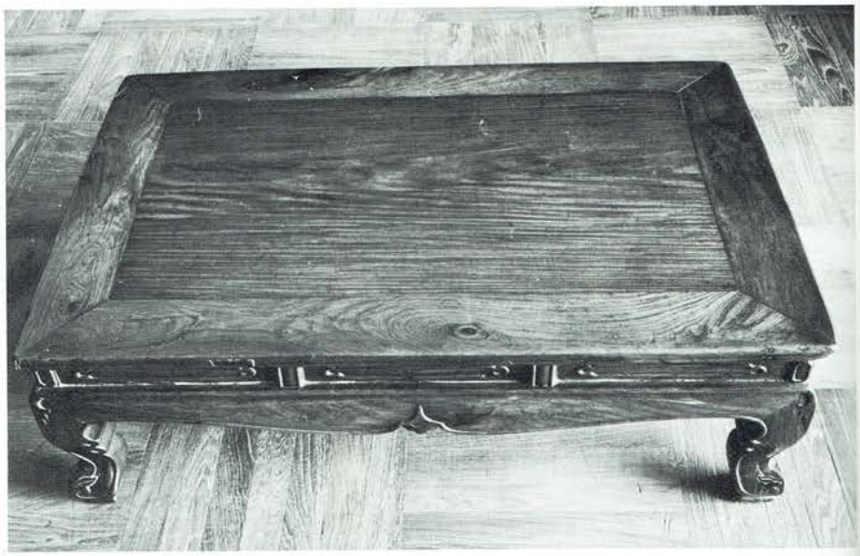
The keen collector discovered her pair of cupboards in the kitchen of a Peking art dealer. "They were absurdly run down then," she says, and in a shaky condition, being very old and fitted together only with wooden dowels without glue. Inside they were covered with horrible old newspaper and outside they were dark and dirty, so that the beauty of the woods could not be seen. Now the rounded and tapered legs, bracketed baseboard, door





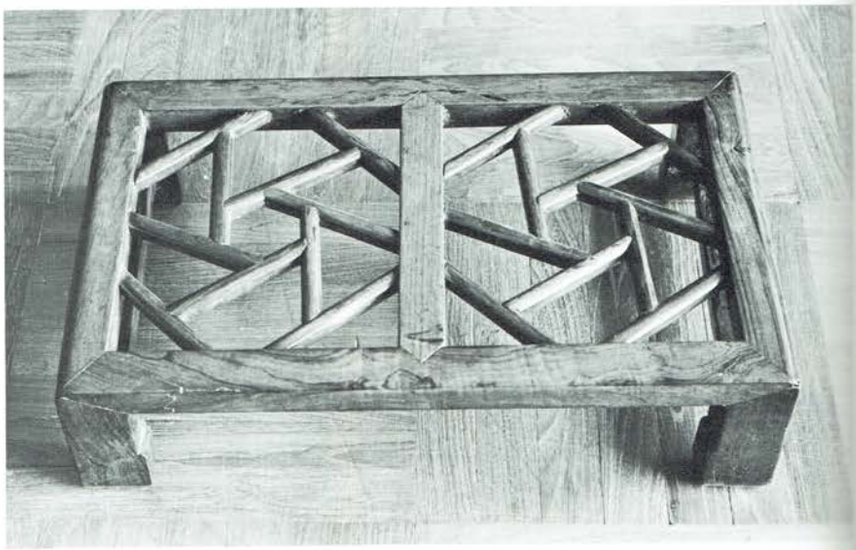
Side of cupboard is also splayed and back is covered with black lacquered cloth

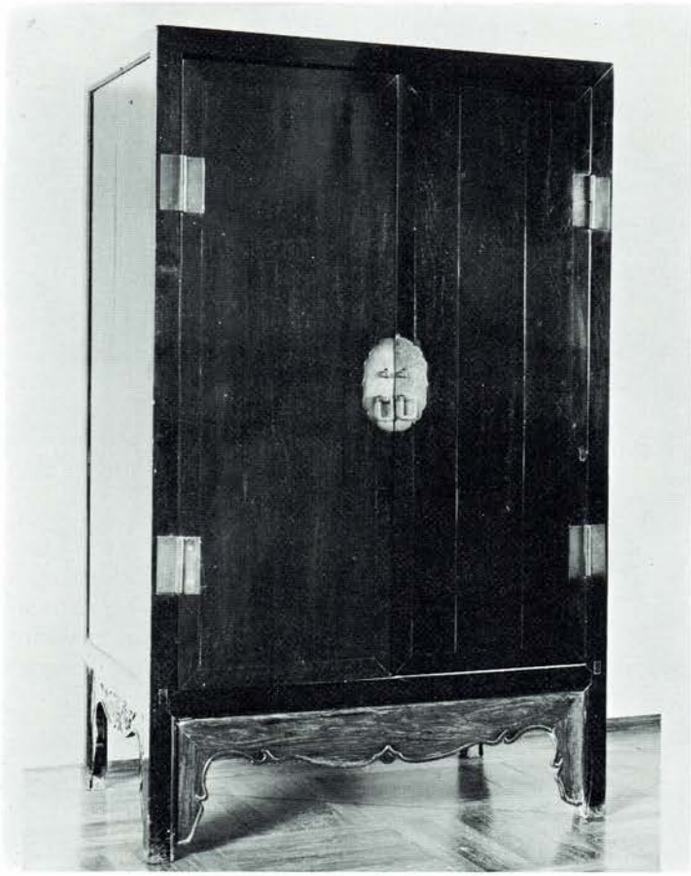
The platform of the sturdy bed is covered with "Taiwan" matting



Cabriole legs of the *k'ang* table suggest a rather late Ming origin

K'ang footstool kept feet dry above cold, uncarpeted and damp floors





A Ming square cased cabinet of lustrous *tzu-tan* "purple sandal-wood"

sill and framing and the top are revealed as rosewood, highly waxed and gleaming. The doors, which swing on dowels in sockets and are removable, have tortoiseshell coloured panels of *hua-mu*, a burl rootwood.

A delicately moulded central batten between the doors can also be removed as it is tenoned and slots loosely into mortices in the top and the sill. Aesthetically rather than geometrically centered yellow coloured mounts on the central batten and the adjoining door frames have drop handles and hasps held firmly together by the pin of the traditional Chinese padlock. These cupboards are most likely of pre-17th century workmanship, as is strongly implied by the protective cloth linings formerly concealed behind the newspapers. Now these linings are seen to have been lacquered, a delicate coral colour on the inside and black on the outside.

The *k'ang*, a heated brick platform, or a bed built into an alcove were the most popular forms of bed in the cold north of China, while the free-standing bed with a canopy for privacy and protection from insects was more popular in the warmer south. That being so Charlotte Horstman's four-square wooden *K'ang* with no canopy, and said to have been used as an opium bed, could more properly be described as a couch. Sturdy as any house, it would have been quite adequate, one would imagine, to support a mandarin and more than one member of his family on its massive "horse hoof" legs.

Framing is out of 6 in. by 1½ in. *huang hua-li* members, beaded to follow a graceful inward curvature down to the foot and returning on the opposite edge. The bed platform, raised 18 in. above the floor, is composed of four strong and wide bed boards on roughly wrought bearers, and covered with fine bamboo matting. Mrs Horstman remembers sleeping, as a young girl, on just such imported "Taiwan" matting—a name by which it was also known in the Ming dynasty. The head and side boards of the platform, 11 in. and 9 in. high respectively and 1 in. thick, are easily removable.

Couches of this type were once the most prominent feature of the reception room. As well as for reclining they made pleasant formal seats for a host to entertain an honoured guest. *K'ang* cupboards, long low chests, held quilts and bolsters, and *k'ang* tables, which now make excellent small coffee tables, supported tea pot and tea cups, at the same time very properly dividing the couch into two. The foot stool that goes with it, a necessity in a cold damp climate where floors were sparsely carpeted, is fretted with ½ in. slightly rounded *hua-li* battens and is of the period, but the owner's *k'ang* table, though perhaps Ming, is certainly later as indicated by the more elaborate cabriole legs.

Stools were used more than chairs by the family, as they still are in the more popular Chinese restaurants and the homes of the people. They take up less space and are easy to move and less formal than the chairs reserved for the senior citizens. Charlotte Horstman has two square stools in her living room with cane seats, low stretchers, and seat and legs connected with quarter circle yokes, following a very ancient form of construction. They would appear an inch or so low for comfort, at only 16 inches, but could have been used with a pad or served as stands or small tables.

The expert owner considers a pair of Ming cabinets made of the true *tzu-tan*, a lustrous and slightly scented wood now possibly extinct, among her most precious possessions. They consist of square cases with flush door panels and sides on the outside, the natural velvety beauty of the black wood being relieved only by the handsome outlines of the lock plates and the ornamental front apron. These cabinets stand 50 in. high, 32 in. wide and 20 in. deep, and their condition is in keeping with their considerable age.

An active interior decorator, Mrs Horstman keeps her eyes open in the Asian and European markets for fine pieces of furniture for her clients and to replace those she left behind. At one time Hong Kong dealers had a few unappreciated and under-valued items of Ming furniture—they preferred calligraphy, bronzes, jade and porcelains, considering furniture as no more than a craft—but in the last ten years no more furniture has been allowed out from the Mainland. Charlotte Horstman bought her last three Ming pieces in Hong Kong in 1956. A pair of side tables bought then, made of split reed applied to a wooden base and with black lacquered tops, rattan legs and the original bronze feet are the earliest pieces in her collection, and probably the rarest also.

Every ancestral hall has its altar table, sometimes of formidable proportions, to carry the sets of five altar pieces and heavy sacrificial offerings. To a lesser extent every household has its own private shrine, with its table against the rear wall of the main apartment and flanked by "wings", calligraphic scrolls bearing maxims on correct and moral behaviour. Charlotte Horstman's altar table is

an excellent example. Undoubtedly genuine Ming, little or no attention—this is characteristic—was paid to the underside, which no-one was expected to see. It shows a development of the trestle type of construction, with a plain top some 6 feet long and 1½ foot deep (so as not to encroach too much on the living area) framed all round and with a scrolled apron under the front. The table is just under 32 in. high, and its paired front and back legs are joined high up by two stretchers. The legs are slightly fluted and equipped with a curious fringe just above the foot.

All sorts of small chests and cupboards were made for special purposes. Some followed recognised patterns, though others may have been individually designed to order. A neat and easily transportable little writing table in Mrs Horstman's possession has three narrow drawers, specially made to hold a scholar's seal, brushes and ink sticks. This delightfully simple table has only a small narrow moulding for decoration, following the soffit of the top and curving at the junction with the legs. Still another rosewood piece, a classic example of perfect proportions, is a pretty carrying case with side handles. The doors are flush, and a narrow scalloped base, flat hinges and simple lock plates hardly disturb the pure geometric shape. Cases like this were made with internal shelves or drawers according to their particular function as dressing cases, jewellery boxes or medicine chests.

How can one learn to date Chinese furniture? Charlotte Horstman's advice is in agreement with other expert opinions: first train the eye to appreciate line, style and proportions. Study the books on the subject. *Chinese Domestic Furniture* by Gustave Ecke and *Chinese Household Furniture* by George N. Kates are both recommended. Woodcut illustrations from early Chinese novels also provide guidance. Visit museums wherever possible when you travel. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London has several good pieces, and the Kansas City Museum the largest collection in America. Get to know the timber used. China has been deforested for centuries and wood was largely imported. Some woods are extinct and cannot be copied. Expect Ming furniture to be heavy, with thick legs. It was made with simple tools and only heavy pieces can survive in any kind of condition. Most important of all, acquire an eye for the skill of the craftsman. Like all fine art, this takes time to reveal itself.

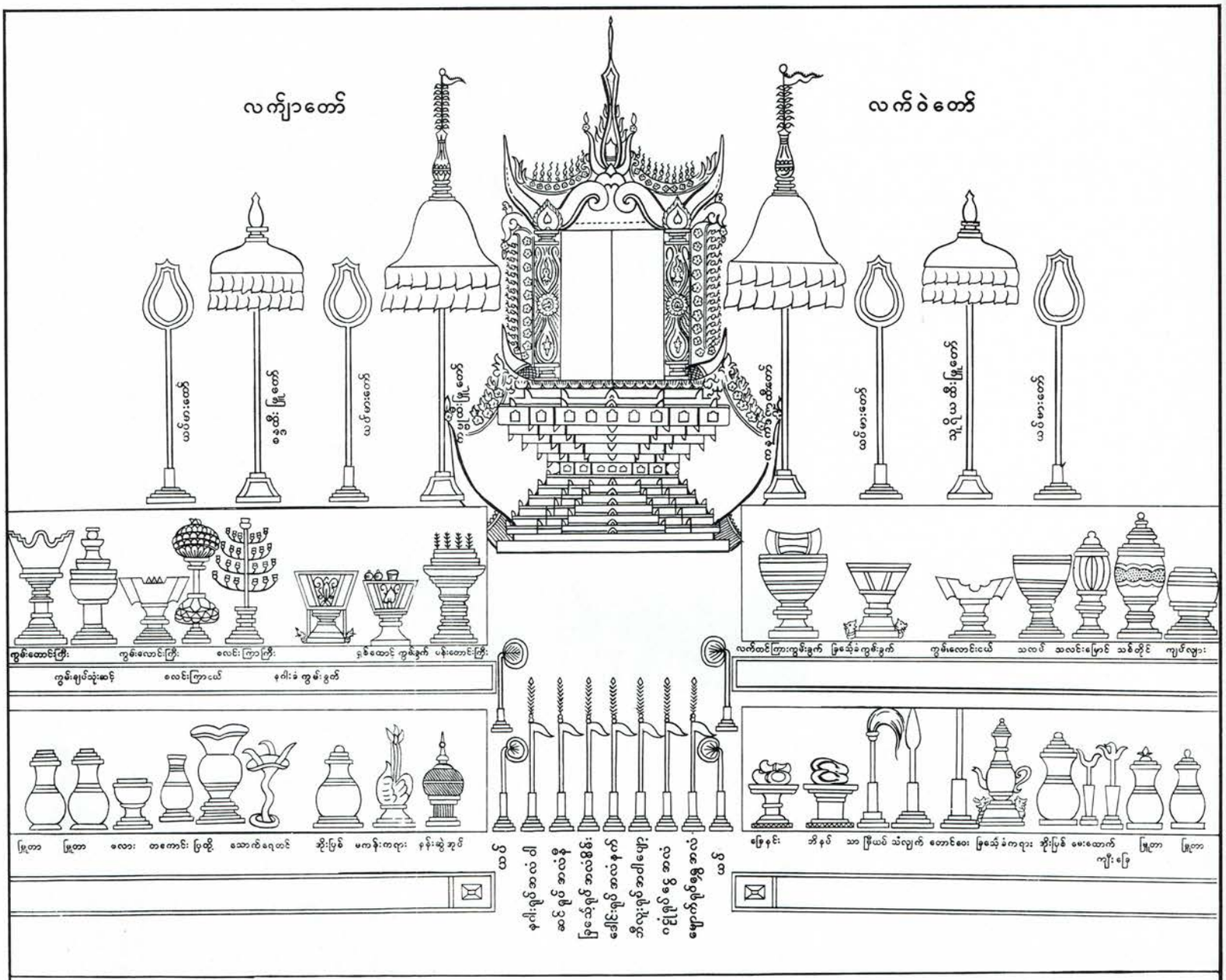
A simple rosewood carrying case probably used as a jewellery box

A neat scholar's writing desk designed to stand on a table

Imported timbers and traditional Chinese tools and craftsmanship, backed by modern machinery, produce Ming-style furniture in the Charlotte Horstman factory in Kowloon

Relics of Royal Mandalay

Humphrey Jones



Royal Right Hand

Umbrellas-Tibyudaw— Royal White Umbrella

Kambu Tibyudaw (Pali Kampa (?) trembling)

Sinda Tibyudaw (Pali chanda, moon)

Kambu Tibyudaw Thamogda Zalingaw (P Kampa, plus samuddachhalanga (?) ocean of six qualities)

Withagyo Tibyudaw (P Visakrum for Visvakarma, the celestial architect-vide ante, Vol XXVII) p 325

Large Fans:

Yamadaw, Great Royal fan

Yamadaw, Great Royal Fan

Regalia of 1188 BE (AD 1826):

Begin top row nearest to Throne.

Pandaung gyi, Great Flower vase.

Kadaung Kungwet, Betel box (with a glass and two bowls).

Nagagan Kungwet, Dragon Betal Box.

Salingya-gyi, Great Candelabra.

Salingya-nge, Pickled tea Bowl.

Kunlaung-gyi, Betel box (with packets of betel).

Kungyat Thonzin, Three tray Betel box.

Kundaung-gyi, Great Betel bowl.

Second Line

Nanswe-ok, Pickled tea Bowl

Magangaya, Begging-bowl (P Makara, Capricon)

Obyit, Water vessel

Thaukye-tin, Water pot stand

Pyado, Scent box

Tagaung, Water vessel

Pala, Golden bowl

Regalia of 1227 BE (AD 1865)

Myuda, Flower pot

Myuda, Flower pot

Centre

Mingandaw—The Royal Throne

Fans:

Yat, Fan

Yat, Fan

Yat, Fan

Yat, Fan

Flags-Alan-(Yok, Emblem):

Myaukyok Shweniyaung alan: Gold Monkey

Galongyok Ngwelan: Silver, Eagle (P Garuda)

Baluyok Awabyau alan: Pale yellow, Demon

Daungyok Alan-net: Black, Peacock

Chintheyok Alanzeng: Green, Lion

Sinyok Alan-ni: Red, Elephant

Nagayok Alanwa: Yellow, Dragon

Royal Left Hand

Umbrellas-Tibyudaw—Royal White Umbrella.

Kanekkadan Tibyudaw (P Kanaka, Gold)

Thuriya Tibyudaw (P Suriya, Sun)

Paduma Tibyudaw (P paduma, lotus)

Thamudi Tibyudaw (P samuti (?) uplifted)

Large Fans:

Yamadaw, Great Royal Fan

Yamadaw, Great Royal Fan

Regalia of 1188 BE (AD 1826):

Begin top row nearest to Throne.

Letingya Kungwet, Pillow and Arm rest

Chinthegan Kungwet, Lion Betel box

Kunlaungage, Small Betel Box (with packet of betel)

Thalat, Begging Bowl

Thalin myaung, Fruit and Food Vessel

Thit-taing, Pot for the nyaungbin (Bodhi) tree

Kyat-sha, Rice bowl

Second Line

Khyenin, Stand for the Queen's shoes

Panat, Stand for the Kings' shoes

Thamyiyat, Yak's tail Fan

Than-hlet, Silver Spear

Taungwe, Sceptre

Chintheganka ya, Lion tea pot

Obyit, Water vessel

Medauk, Chin rest

Tidandagyi Khyelingaw, Clothes stand (P tidanda-chahalanga, the three staves of the six qualities.

Regalia of 1227 BE (AD 1865):

Myuda, Flower vase

Myuda, Flower vase

(*From Sir R C Temple's "Notes on a Collection of Regalia of the Kings of Burma of the Alompra Dynasty"—'Indian Antiquary' Nov 1902*)

For all its reputation, the city of Mandalay belongs to a twilight period of Burmese history. Yet it was splendid in its day—the final fling, it might be said, of traditional Southeast Asian civilisation. Founded in 1857 by Mindon, the last king of Burma but one, it remained the country's capital for twenty-nine years only. Mindon, in many ways an enlightened monarch, yet allowed fifty-two persons to be buried alive under his new citadel, so that their spirits should rout all attackers. Under his successor, Thibaw, pandemonium set in. At this time an English official could be seized and threatened with instant crucifixion for failing to subscribe to the national lottery, which supplied much of the government revenue. Bloodshed in fact was the main feature of Thibaw's rule.

In the British period Mandalay became what it is today, a sleepy provincial town which had lost most of its *raison d'être*, and the citadel was converted into premises for civil servants and a garrison. Largely restored to its former state at the behest of Lord Curzon, it was then almost destroyed, apparently by British bombing and shelling, in March 1945. (These details come mainly from Golden Earth by Norman Lewis, Land of the Crested Lion by Ethel Mannin and Mandalay the Golden by E.C.V. Foucar, all of which can be warmly recommended to armchair travellers. There is also a detailed guide-book, with many photographs and plans, to Mandalay as it was before the last war. It was reprinted in 1963 and can be obtained from the Sabe Beikman Bookshop on Merchant Street, Rangoon.)

Little now remains of the original buildings but elaborately crenellated walls, six miles round, and some fragments of banister and staircase. "From the model of the city which exists it must have been," says Miss Mannin, "with its tiered wooden roofs, gilded and lacquered and intricately carved, the golden spires of monastery and palace, the ornate watch towers like small pagodas along the walls, reflected in the moat, a dream of beauty". Perhaps the most striking relics of these wonders are now on show in the National Museum at Rangoon, in the form of the royal regalia.

All the valuables found in the royal palace when it fell to the British troops were purloined one way or another. The British army, it is said, sold some of them by auction on the spot and assigned some for disposal to Truda and Co. of Mandalay, Ching Taik and Co. of Rangoon, Hamilton and Co. of Calcutta and Butterfield and Swire of Hong Kong.

However every article that had anything in the way of jewellery in it was sent to England for examination and evaluation, together with some exceptionally precious articles destined for presentation to Queen Victoria and the future King Edward VII. Thus three cases of

The ceremonial Lion Throne of the last Burmese kings

The National Museum at Rangoon, final home of the Regalia

regalia were shipped to Liverpool and from there went first to the India Store Department, Lambeth, and then to the Political Department of the India Office. Here they were examined on July 23, 1886, and a committee was formed to catalogue the articles and consider methods of disposal. It was aided by a Mr Streeter and a Mr Alfred Phillips, both well known jewellers.

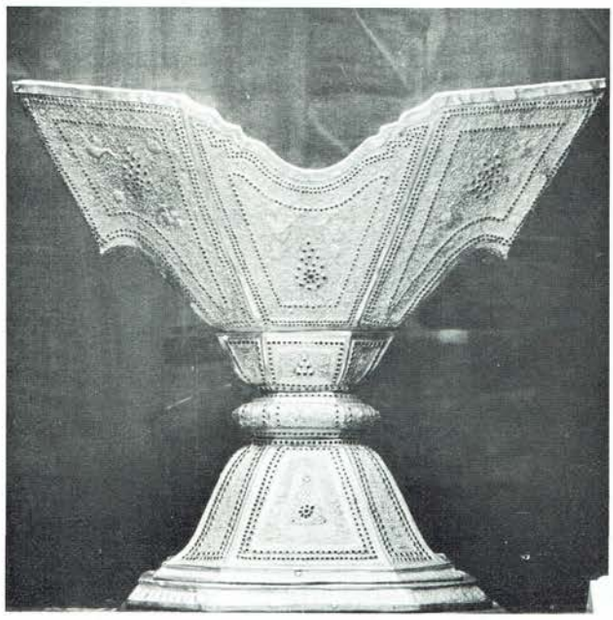
Meanwhile most of the regalia was placed on view at a Colonial and Indian Exhibition, some articles, it seems, being sold and others eventually melted down for bullion. The rest was handed over to the Victoria and Albert Museum, Mr Phillips estimating the value of these articles at £21,190–10–0.

From time to time King Thibaw and his family appealed for the return of their property. On June 24, 1886 Fanshaw, Political Officer to Thibaw at Ratnagiri in India, where he was now in exile, informed the Viceroy that "with reference to the list of property forwarded herewith, he (Thibaw) states that the property was made over to Col. Sladen to keep for him as he was afraid of losing it during the journey, and he also states that Col. Sladen promised him that the property would be returned to him when he wanted it. He wrote some time ago and requested that the property might be sent back to him, but an answer was received that the property could not be found. He hopes that His Excellency the Governor-General will see fit to issue an order for the property to be returned".

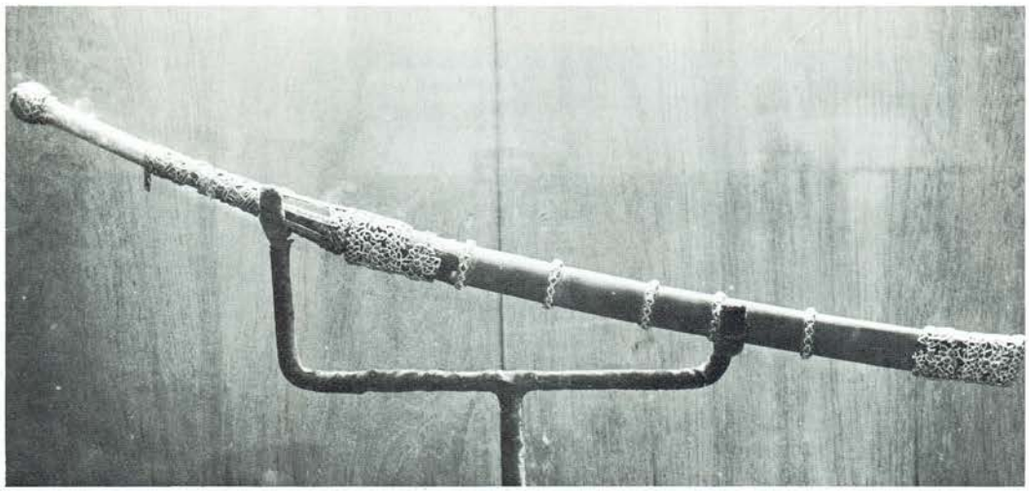
On August 20, 1887, the Dowager Queen Sinbyumashin wrote to the Viceroy praying that "the property I left behind in Mandalay be restored to me." Then in December 1911 Thibaw wrote to King George V, in India for his Coronation Durbar: "My precious ruby ring was taken. A great portion of my private diamonds was also taken by Col. Sladen, who said that he would like to keep them for safe custody and promised to return them to me afterwards, which was never done".

Seven direct descendants of Thibaw later petitioned Queen Elizabeth II, stating that "Your memorialists have come across a case in the Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, Vol. IV, page 848 where it is mentioned that the sale of 'much valuable and curious loot and property found in the palace and city of Mandalay' realised about Rs 900,000 (£60,000). Though articles and curious properties found in the Palace at Mandalay could be assumed as 'loot' or 'war booty', jewelleries entrusted for safe custody to a responsible British Colonel and Liaison Officer of Her Britannic Majesty's Government could not and cannot by standards of civilised nations be classed as such. It is therefore only fair and just that those articles be restored or a reasonable compensation be paid to your memorialists as heirs to King Thibaw".

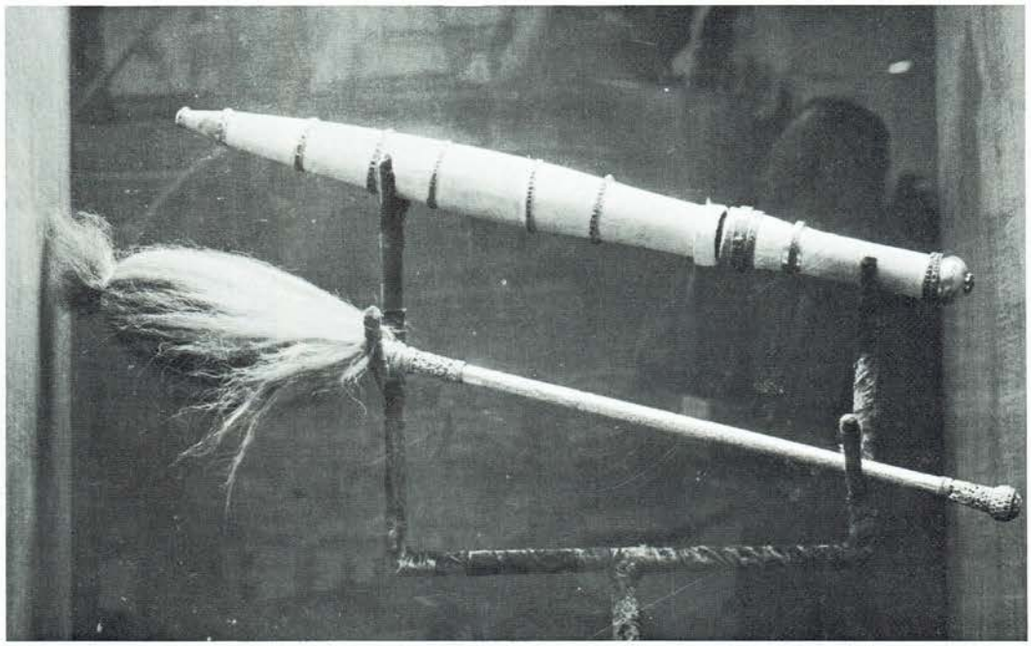
In 1959 Dr Yi Yi and Daw Kyan, Research Officers of the Burma Historical Commission, located some items of the regalia in the Victoria and Albert Museum, but this development did not help the heirs apparently. At a ceremony in the Foreign Office on November 11, 1964, General Ne Win, Chairman of Burma's Revolutionary Council, took over from Mr Patrick Gordon Walker, Foreign Secretary in the new Labour Government, the most im-



An ornate receptacle of thin gold plates and two ewers



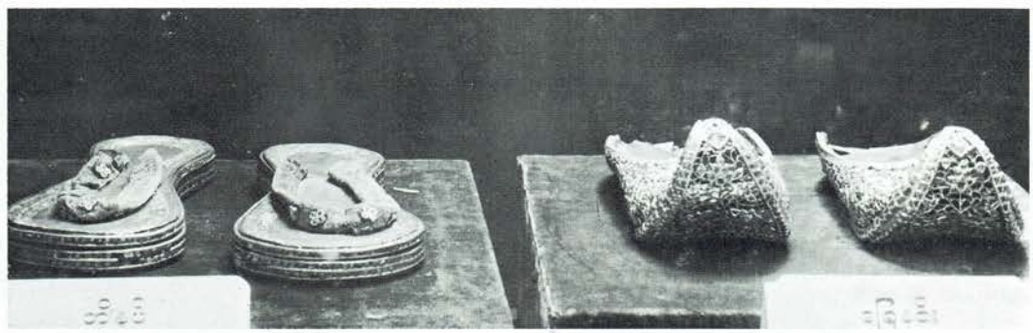
Covered vessel in the shape of a *hintha*, a sacred goose



TOP: A wooden sword hilt overlaid with rubies. The blade is damascened

CENTRE: The *thanlyet* with a yak-tail fly whisk

BOTTOM: Open-work gold slippers and a pair of sandals



portant item in the collection. This was the *thanlyet,* a dagger said to have belonged to King Alaungpaya (1752–60), founder of Burma's last dynasty, and now handed over as a symbol of the return of the whole regalia and "as a gesture of Britain's good will towards and friendship with the people and Government of Burma."

In Rangoon the *thanlyet* was kept at the Office of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council. Thirteen more pieces of the regalia arrived in December 1964 and the remainder, to the number of some 130 pieces, in July 1965, and for lack of museum facilities were kept in a former bank building on Merchant Street. From here they were transferred to the building of a nationalised bank on Pansodan Street, which now serves as the National Museum. Formerly housed in the Jubilee Hall on Signal Pagoda Road, this was reopened on its present site in February last year, with the regalia occupying the whole of the ground floor. The Curator, Daw Nyunt Han, has an office in a corner of the building, on the ground floor.

Immediately opposite the main entrance to the Museum stands the Burmese King's Lion Throne, which once stood in the Hall of Audience—styled the Centre of the Universe—in Mandalay palace. It is in fact a towering, gilded portal, which the King and his Chief Queen reached from behind through a sliding door of gilt iron lattice work, to seat themselves on a couch. Its base is formed of two lotuses, the upper inverted above the lower in the pattern of an altar supporting a Buddha image. Where the lotuses meet is a narrow band recessed with niches, and a somewhat larger one above it. These niches once held small figures of lions, and two large lions stood below the Throne at each side. The door-jambs and lintel are adorned with 32 *devas*—"angels"—and in the centre of the lintel sits a deity called Sakka, as protector and adviser. At the bottom and top of each jamb is a *Lokapala* or Guardian of the World, each of whom has charge of one of the four points of the compass, and circular panels in the centre of the jambs display a peacock and a rabbit, symbols of the sun and moon respectively.

The Lion Throne was last occupied by King Thibaw and his ferocious Queen Supayalat on November 28, 1885, when the kingdom was surrendered to the British in the person of Col. Edward Sladen. The regalia are now exhibited round it in two semicircles of showcases, twenty-two facing inward toward the Throne and twenty-two outward. Almost every item is of pure, soft gold encrusted with superb pigeon's blood rubies, the whole effect being one of magnificent sumptuousness.

The first showcase on the visitor's left as he enters the "inner circle" displays a solid gold salver 23¼ in. in diameter. The flat rim is reeded and set with diamonds to form a design of lotus petals, and the centre with the nine-stone ornament called *nauratan*. Then comes a fine large bowl with five rows of rubies at the rim. The third case contains a water bottle 15½ in. high and ornamented with three bands of rubies, together with two conical covers 18 in. high, of gold decorated with open work and set with rubies and diamonds.

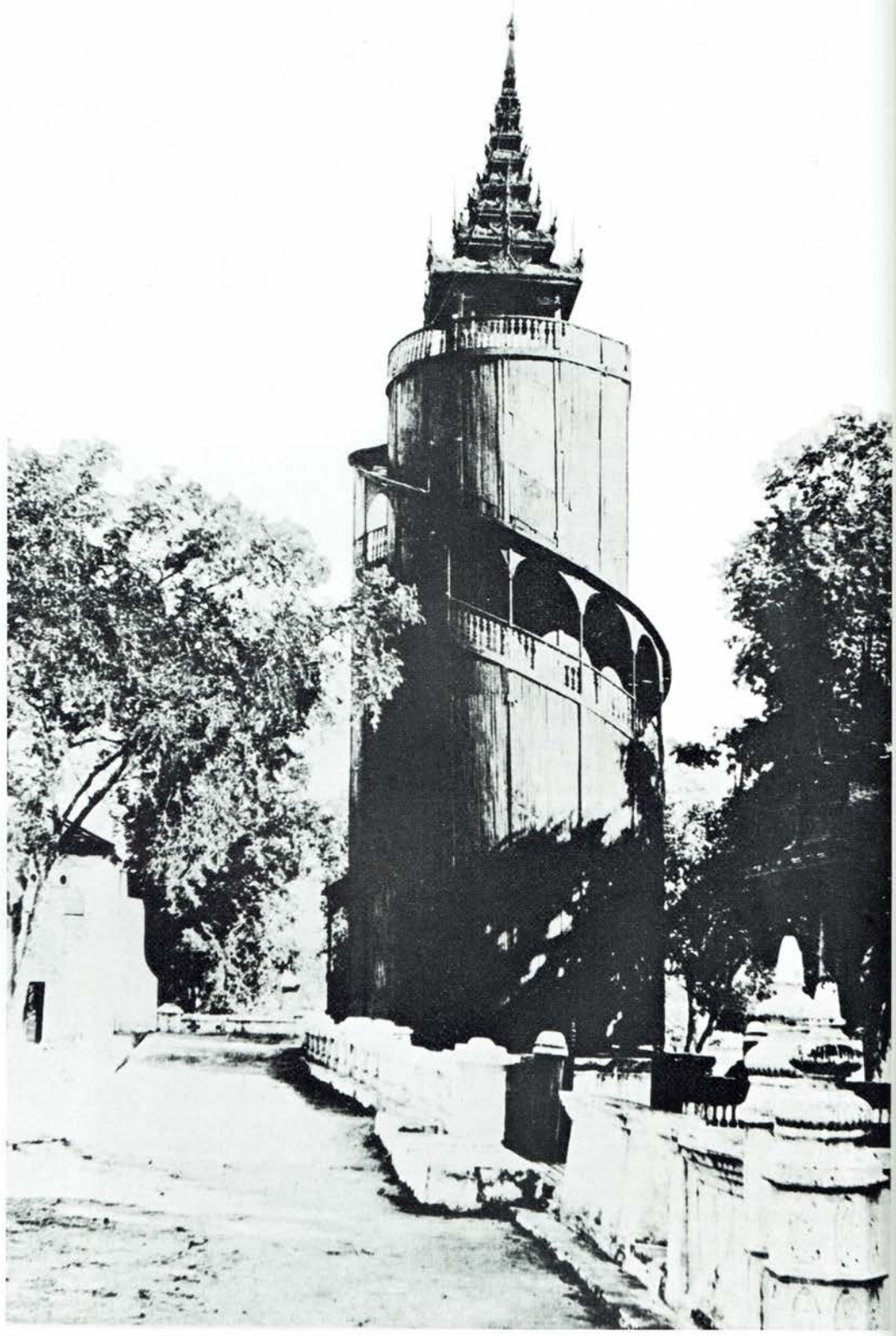
Next is an impressive golden stand mounted on forty-two miniature columns of thin gold plate, 11 in. high and 12¼ in. in diameter at the top, which has a gadrooned edge. The same case contains a conch shell partly covered with thin gold plate and set with a *nauratan*. In the fifth case is a stand of thin gold plate on a richly lacquered core chased with leaf ornaments and arabesques, and in the sixth a remarkable ewer in the form of a crayfish, of gold repoussé and over two feet high.

Continuing his clockwise course, the visitor now comes to a magnificent circular receptacle of gold filigree set with precious stones and on a stand composed of sixteen columns, the whole being over 15 in. high and the receptacle 11¼ in. in diameter. The eighth showcase contains a pair of fans in the form of palm leaves, of wood overlaid with gold (somewhat damaged), and the ninth a boat-shaped receptacle, of thin gold plates, chased and formerly set with rubies, and mounted on a structure of wood. It is 17 in. high, 24 in. long and 11 in. wide.

Then come a gem-studded vessel, 16 in. high, with a cover, in the form of a *hintha* or sacred goose, and a betel box with a cover, adorned with jewelled open work and supported by four stylised *nagas*. In the twelfth case stands a brilliant octagonal receptacle, chased and repoussé-ed and mounted on a wooden base. Many of the rubies with which it was set are now missing and the bowl itself is slightly crushed and lopsided. The thirteenth case contains a receptacle over 30 in. high and 20 in. in diameter, set with small uncut rubies and decorated in low relief, and with three silver foil pendants suspended from the upper portion.

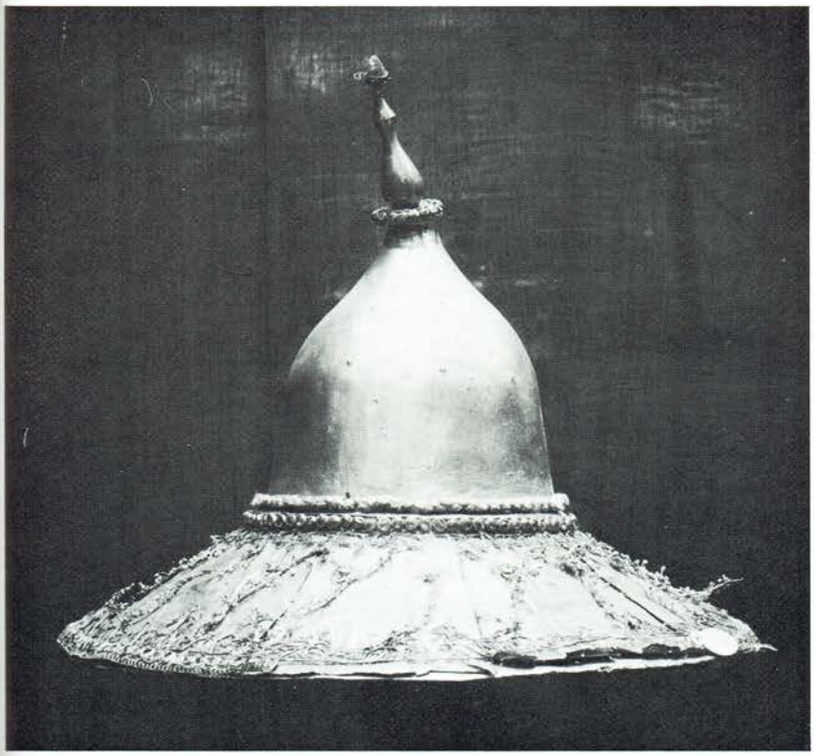
So far the objects exhibited are those that were normally placed on the right hand of the royal person, though sometimes the article hieratically required in a certain position is missing and has been replaced by another. A note in the particular case indicates such substitution. Next come those placed on his left hand, and firstly a pair of slippers and of sandals, the former of open-work set with various gems and the latter chased and set with rubies. The soles are of silver plates attached by rivets and the ankle straps of crimson velvet with rosettes of rubies set in gold. Then comes the *thanlyet*, a steel blade with a hilt and sheath of wood covered with cream-coloured velvet and decorated with bands of gold set with uncut rubies. With it is a yak-tail fly-whisk, mounted on a handle of wood encased in gold and set with rubies and the *nauratan*.

The next case holds two golden ewers, one decorated with bands set with precious stones and the other with open work, settings for the insertion of gems being left open. Then comes another *hintha* vessel with cover and stand, chased and decorated with filigree work and inlaid with imitation emeralds, many of



The Palace watch tower

Headdresses
of thin
gold plate on
a cloth base



An old royal
costume of
great elaboration

A golden receptacle
set with rubies,
upper portion perforated

Audience halls and central spire of the Palace

which are missing, followed by a magnificent (?) amber *hintha* vessel on a gilt-wood stand. The eyes were formerly jewelled, and the cover is damaged and a portion missing.

The nineteenth case contains an elaborately chased and jewelled vessel of thin gold plate some 19 in. high, 10 in. wide and 7¼ in. long, mounted on a core of lac and wood. Most of the rubies are now missing. In the twentieth stands a golden receptacle set with bands of rubies and the upper portion perforated; the stand, mounted on wood and lac, is decorated with the twelve signs of the zodiac. After this comes a semi-oviform urn, fluted in low relief and decorated with bands of small uncut rubies, on a foot of wood covered with gold. Finally, the last case of the inner circle contains yet another ruby-studded receptacle with cover, some 17 in. high, 16 in. long and 10½ in. wide, and decorated with repoussé scroll and applied cone motifs and bosses.

Most of the objects in the inner circle of showcases are receptacles of different sorts. The remaining exhibits are of less intrinsic importance but more varied and perhaps more appealing to the non-specialist. Turning left to move anti-clockwise round the outer circle, the visitor first encounters a *kalat* or stand for a salver, of wood carved and gilded and set with rubies. Then come a beautiful gold *salwa* or shoulder belt, two cases containing small utensils, notably a lime-box for betel-preparation and a spittoon, no doubt for the residue, and a variety of swords and daggers (outer circle cases 5 to 10). Case 11 contains a cone-shaped hand-mirror, followed by two of betel-boxes, a white satin umbrella embroidered with tinsel and set with imitation pearls and stones, and a horoscope-holder of gold netting set with rubies and *nauratan* ornaments. Inside are horoscopes written on palm leaves.

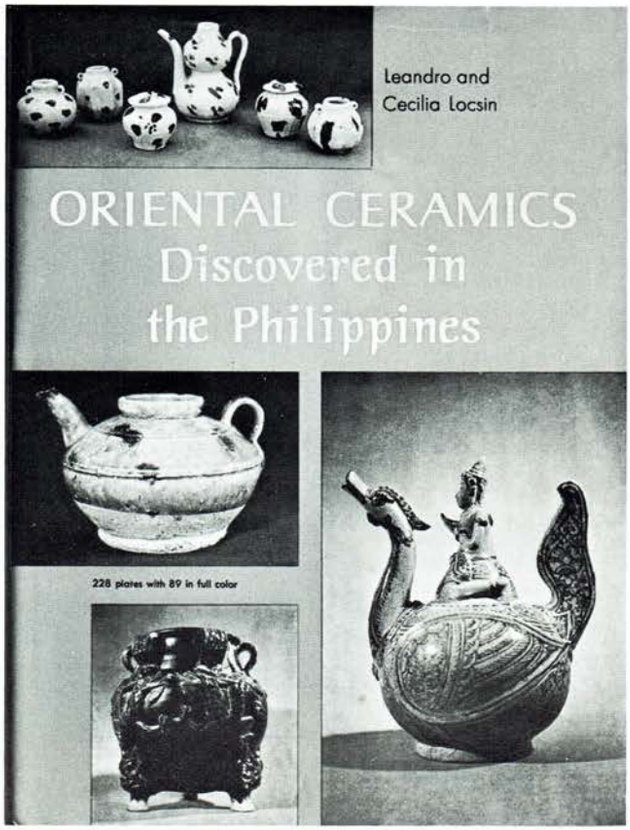
Case 16 displays a gold plaque ornamented with rubies and inscribed with the title of an unidentified Royal White Elephant. The last six cases of the outer circle all display gold, ruby-ornamented plaques used by Burmese royalty. Notable among these are a plaque inscribed with the title assumed by King Mindon at his second consecration in the year 1236 of the Burmese Era (1874) and a plaque inscribed with the form and order for the ceremony of the taking over of the city of Mandalay by King Thibaw on Tuesday, the 4th day after the full moon of the month of *Tabaung* in B.E. 1241. Case 22 contains two plaques of King Bodawpaya (1782–1819), inscribed with the form and order for ceremonies of consecration in B.E. 1145 and 1146.

Other showcases are arranged in anti-clockwise numbering round the walls of the exhibition room. Cases 1 to 10 contain royal costumes and accoutrements, the costumes almost too elaborate for the most extravagant pantomime. An outstanding item is a royal head-dress of thin gold open-work wound round a cloth base of silver and gold thread on a linen warp and ornamented with gold, beetles' wings and precious stones. A stage (numbered 11) exhibits some items of royal furniture, including a cupboard, chair and large woven mat of silver, with two palanquins in front. Also displayed along the back wall of the exhibition hall is a fine collection of photographs of the vanished palace buildings.

Rangoon is largely of 19th and 20th century date, with few notable monuments except the Shwedagon and Sule pagodas. Moreover foreigners can only travel outside it by air. All in all, the National Museum probably gives a much better idea of the former glories of Burma than does anything else in the city, or in Mandalay itself for that matter. The Museum is only 200 yards from the Strand Hotel, and so an obvious objective for even the most casual sightseer. It also makes a popular visit for the local inhabitants.

Book Review

Oriental Ceramics Discovered in the Philippines, *by Leandro and Cecilia Locsin. Charles E. Tuttle Co. US* $22.50

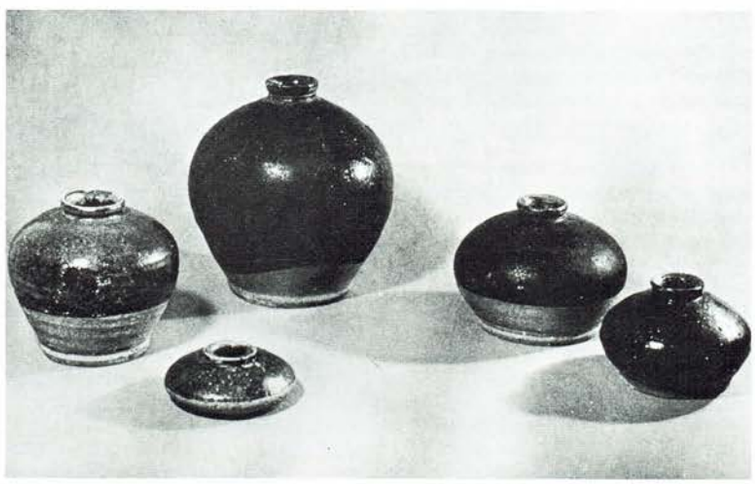


For years Filipino children playing after a rain storm have gathered up quaintly shaped, strangely fashioned "tea sets", sometimes intact but often broken. These always attract the attention of their elders and usually fetch a few pesos. In Indonesia the picks and shovels of plantation workers often uncover ancient graves and burial sites, revealing huge quantities of ceramics and pottery long out of style. All these remains have one factor in common: they are of ancient Chinese origin, some dating back over 900 years.

As early as the Tang dynasty Chinese seafarers and merchants had ventured into the South Seas to buy and sell. Their descendants later stopped off and settled, in the process introducing their leisurely and nonchalant hosts to their superior culture and craftsmanship. By the 12th century, settlements of Chinese already existed in various parts of Southeast Asia, and by the 15th century Chinese communities abroad had become a familiar and accepted fact. The things these Chinese brought with them were buried with them when they died—rough stoneware plates and bowls, gleaming Lung Chuan celadons, delicate Ching Pai objects from the hands of Sung craftsmen, early blue-and-white porcelains. And all this is the subject of the Locsins' book.

Being enormously wealthy the Locsins can indulge their love of art without limitation. Leandro Locsin is one of Manila's best-known architects, and his home in Forbes Park is unique in a community of very "special" people. The Locsin home has been built, by himself, with the specific purpose of housing his collection of 4,000 pieces, mostly Chinese export wares found in the Philippines and all collected within three years. The Locsins had long bought *objets d'art* of various kinds, but in 1961 they had their first encounter with Chinese ceramics and became almost immediately committed and addicted to pottery. So dedicated did they become to the study of export wares that in five years they had emerged among the world's foremost experts on the subject.

Their fabulous collection reposes in the gallery-basement of their home. Some of it consists of pieces they have personally excavated from sites in Batangas, Laguna and Santa Ana in Manila. These take pride of place in their gallery which is divided into sub-galleries, each devoted to a



Two "inflated" or "blown-up" jarlets and three simple squat jarlets covered with brown-black glaze

specific display. There are also treasures the authors have purchased, all recovered from various parts of the Philippines, including heirloom pieces obtained from the Muslims of Mindanao, the tribesmen of Palawan and other islands in the archipelago.

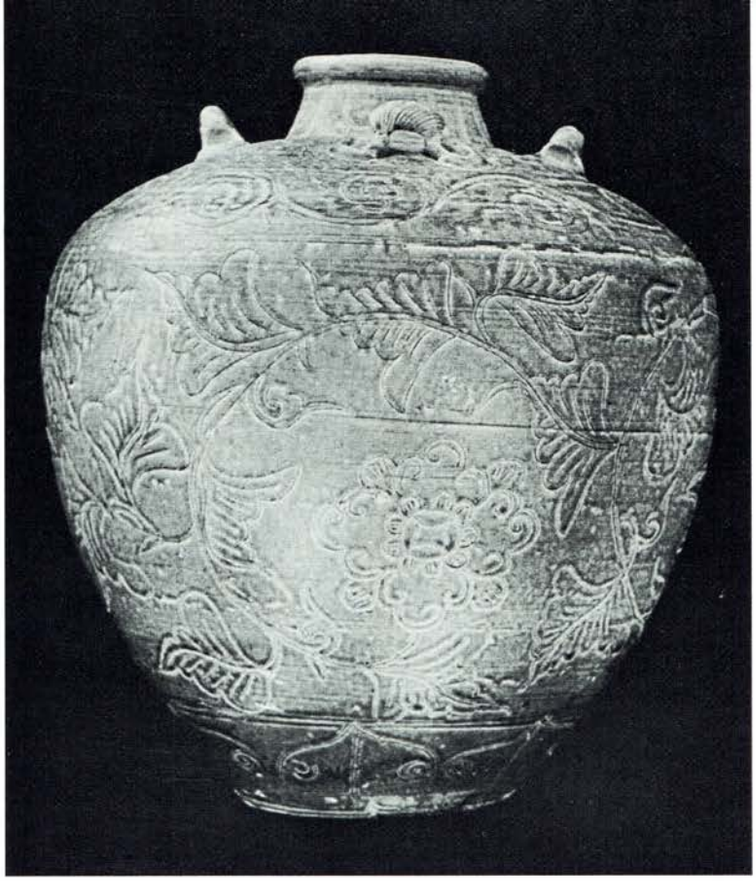
Their book, first published in 1967, now appears in a bigger edition with much new material. In it the Locsins first of all graphically record the thrill and excitement of their initial excavations at Santa Ana, which yielded the bulk of their treasures. The account of these diggings in itself is one of exciting adventure, of heartbreaks and disappointments, of bizarre humour and of final triumph and fulfilment. Santa Ana yielded 1,513 pieces mostly dating to between the 11th and 14th centuries, and some possibly to the Tang dynasty. This work, of prodigious detail and scholarship, draws upon most of the world's authorities on the subject. In their Philipine excavations however the Locsins relied largely on the works of two eminent scholars who have studied ceramics in the area for over fifty years—Dr H. Otley Beyer and Dr Robert B. Fox.

Their first diggings, in May 1961, were not particularly memorable except as providing the stimulus and encouragement that helped them succeed eventually. Less than thirty pieces, many irreparably smashed, were found, a mixed lot of wares from China, Siam and Annam. But four days later at another site they dug up their first Sung piece, a blue-and-white. They were ready then for Santa Ana.

In Spanish days this part of modern Manila was a suburb of the city proper, and even before the Spanish came it was a bustling community, known as the Kingdom of Sapa. The Pasig River washed Santa Ana on three sides, flowing into Manila Bay; hence the facility with which the Chinese seafarers reached the heart of the old city. The area had been worked over by Otley Beyer years earlier. Indeed the old scholar's writings had inspired the Locsins, and that they finally unearthed their treasure in such volume says much for the Professor's ground work.

The Locsin diggings began on September 6, 1961 and within a month they had excavated nearly forty graves. They write: "The relative depths of the graves excavated varied considerably from a mere 0.3 meter to 2.3 meters, which made the inadvertent breaking of a piece while digging all too easy. At no time was there a fixed pattern to guide the workmen, and each hole was excavated to the clay or water level. Care was taken not to stop exploring a hole even after one grave had been uncovered."

The pieces, they discovered, were generally arranged around and over the head of the interred corpse, plates being placed over the face, over the ribs, alongside the hands and feet, and over the shoulders. Metal implements were, in most cases, found near the right hand. In one grave "The potteries consisted exclusively of monochrome pieces of which 111 were brown wares, 78 celadons, 52 grey-glazed wares, 18 creamish white wares, four lead-glazed wares, one Ching Pai piece and other assorted wares including seven earthenwares. The 12 artifacts consisted of shell bracelets, spindle whorls, metal implements, and net sinkers. Not one example of blue-and-white was ever found together with the skeletal remains in this particular area."



Ochre-glazed jar with truncated neck and ropelike handles. Ht. 48 cm. Yuan or early Ming

Over 300 pieces were recovered from these graves, but the Locsins' first moment of elation came on November 15, when they opened the grave of a child and found 36 pieces including some Ching Pai wares and some celadon jarlets. They unearthed 96 graves before knocking off for Christmas, and in resumed digging from January to May they found 82 more, all under now built-up areas where homes and backyards and gardens and alleys concealed more graves and treasures. Hence the Locsins' problems did not end with the finding of the wares and keeping them from being broken.

"Controversies arose over the right to this and the other alley. To keep the peace and to ensure that the greatest area possible could be explored, it was decided that we should credit the wares to the person whose fence was nearest the skeleton. The resulting situation was rather comic. Mang Inyong (the foreman) would measure the distance between the skull and the adjacent property and that between the tip of the toe and the other property and then decide who was nearest. If the torso were under the Carcomo garden and the legs and feet in the alley and if more of the skeleton were under the garden, even if the wares were located around the skull, the purchase price had to be shared with the users of the alley."

Altogether the Locsins covered 6,000 square meters on the Santa Ana site and some of the most significant pieces were recovered here including 29 blue-and-whites, many intact and the rest restorable.

A brief historical background precedes the Santa Ana account, but together they take up only 50 pages of the 250-page volume. The bulk of the book is devoted to a faithful recording and cataloguing of the Locsin Collection, and this is where its value is outstanding. The volume is handsomely produced and presented; the illustrations are excellent, and the colour plates faithfully depict such pieces as the Ching Pai, the blue-and-whites, the celadons and the ochre-glazed and spotted wares.

In the commentaries which accompany each piece illustrated, giving full data on it, the authors advance some very pertinent arguments against entrenched beliefs concerning export porcelains. Some of the more interesting points they make are that contrary to what many experts say, not only rough and crude stuff came to the Philippines; Ching Pai wares were not too fragile for export; those arriving in the Philippines were not necessarily the same as those traded in Japan and Korea in the Orient, and Iran, Turkey and Egypt westward, and blue-and-whites were made in South China during the Southern Sung period (1127 to 1279).

By and large, *Oriental Ceramics* is a book for the scholar, the connoissseur, and the researcher in Chinese export porcelain. However the authors also write for the common or amateur collector, who will find this volume an invaluable primer.

Alan Castro

Rare polychrome export dish, diam. 20.6 cm., of the Ming dynasty, and a blue and white ovoid bottle with two ears, ht. 8.4 cm., Yuan dynasty or earlier

Curio Notes

Japanning is an English imitation of Oriental lacquer work, the chief constituents of the process being paint, gold-dust and varnish. The designing of japanned articles commonly lacks the spontaneity and artistic feeling of genuine Oriental work, though displaying a quaintness and naivety of its own. On the other hand good quality japanning mellows attractively with age, whereas lacquer becomes dark and sombre. Consequently japanned work is, if anything, more popular among Westerners.

I D L of Lane Crawford House, Hong Kong, have a fully documented pair of scarlet japanned cabinets on stands. The firm believe they were made in 1710–20 by Giles Grendey, one of London's most famous furniture makers. Until 1935 they were in the possession of a family living in northern Spain. They then came to England and were sold to Viscount Kemsley, to join his famous collection at Dropmore Hall. Originally they were accompanied by a pair of pier glasses, similar in design, and 24 chairs, the latter perhaps made independently. The late R.W. Symonds, a noted authority on English furniture, described the quality of this suite of furniture as "superb"; possibly it was made as an English gift to a Spanish grandee.

The background of English japanned cabinets, unlike the Oriental lacquer work, is of various colours. At the period of this pair the English generally preferred black, but scarlet was the favourite colour for articles to be exported to Spain and Portugal. In craftsmanship, material and construction these specimens represent the best English cabinet work.

The carcase of the cabinets, with the gilt stands and the cresting, are of deal, and the drawer linings and cabinet doors of oak. Both sides of these doors and the sides of the cabinets and the drawer fronts are veneered, probably with lime wood, so as to give a perfectly finished surface as foundation for the japanning. The brasswork of the hinges, lock plates and handles is engraved and carefully finished and the gilt stands decorated with finely wrought gesso work.

Above all, the japanned decoration is of the highest possible quality, the flower and bird design of Chinese style being well thought out and drawn and the surface highly polished, while the brilliant scarlet of the background shows no fading or darkening with age. Going for HK$200,000 the pair.

BUDDHA HEADS

Wooden Buddha heads of high marketable quality have become extremely rare in Hongkong over the past five years. T.S. Tung of Dynasty Arts can be congratulated on tracking down a large and impressive wooden head of a male Buddha from the Sui Dynasty.

The 54 in. tall carving was brought to Macao from Mainland China some thirty years ago, and to Hong Kong eighteen years ago. It is of camphor wood, which still emits a slight fragance, with a high chignon in different wood inserted. The hair style resembles that of some Tung Huang cave images. Originally the carving seems to have been covered with a thin coat of plaster, perhaps mixed with tung oil, and it was painted, the face white, the hair and pupils of the eyes black and the lips and diadem red, but these colours have now largely disappeared.

Owing to its considerable age the wood is cracked in several places, and the central figure of the three carved figures on the diadem is

headless. But the face is distinguished by a delicate and enigmatic half smile and well proportioned slanted eyes. US$18,000 is the asking price for this unique item.

BRONZES

S. H. Chan Arts and Jewellery Co. (*Mezzanine Shop M-14, Mandarin Hotel Building*) has recently acquired two outstanding Chinese bronzes from a Japanese collector, and still attractively packed in wooden Japanese boxes. One is a Shang (1766–1122 B.C.) incense burner, $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. high including the handles and 5 in. in diameter, and in fair condition. A good deal of incrustation has been left, but the band of "phoenix-wing" ornament round the body of the vessel has been picked out in black ink. Price US$2,200.

The other acquisition, a Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 219) covered wine container (*yu*), like the incense burner, is said to come from Loyang. This piece of elegant, simple shape, 8 in. high and 5 in. in diameter, with a plain band in relief round the middle and the handle in the form of two dragons is in fine condition. It has been carefully cleaned to expose the best patina, though some incrustation has been left. Price US$1,700.

T. Y. King & Sons (*4, West Arcade, Alexandra House, Hong Kong*) offer for sale three attractive small bronze animal figures. The most expensive (at US$2,500) represents a bird preening its feathers, 3 in. long, with a reddish patina and inlaid with silver. Two holes pierce the body, probably for attachment to the shaft of a halberd (*ko*). This piece comes from Sian, and may be of the Warring States period. A standing horse, $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. high, also from Sian, and of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 219) has a dark green patina with some incrustation, and is holed in one place. Price US$1,500. The oldest of the three pieces, and cheapest at US$1,200, is a reclining animal, perhaps a goat, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. long and with a reddish patina. The body is ornamented with sharp C-scrolls in high relief and one eye is still inlaid with crystal.

Dynasty Arts (*16, Hanoi Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong*) claim that their unusual early Chou (1122–256 B.C.) bronze wine vessel (*chia*) from Honan, is typically Shang in style. It is 13 in. high and $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter at the mouth. There is a *t'ao-t'ieh* mask on the handle, and under the handle an engraving of a man holding what is perhaps an implement for scattering seed, with a short inscription. Otherwise the piece bears only simple band ornament.

The vessel, greenish in colour and in excellent condition, was excavated in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century, as it has been cleaned of its incrustation to the considerable degree favoured by Chinese collectors at that time. This piece was obtained some fifteen years ago in Hong Kong. The asking price is US$15,000.

Forbidden City (*112 Prince's Building, Hong Kong*) has a fine Sung dynasty copy of a Chou period covered wine vessel (*fu*), $12\frac{1}{2}$ in. high and 9 in. at its greatest width. The ornament is very sharp and detailed, with deer heads on the handles and an inscription inside the cover. This piece was obtained from a company in Peking many years ago, and was bought from a Hong Kong collector last year. The price is HK$9,000.

Another beautiful Sung copy of a Chou dynasty (1122–255 B.C.) covered wine vessel (*fu*), 17 in. high by 10 in. wide was displayed at Kieme Chang (*17 Ashley Road, 1st floor, Kowloon, Hong Kong*). The handle is ornamented with deer's heads, and a broad band of ornament at the top is decorated with animals' head masks and stylised dragons. Another band with stylised dragons runs round the foot. Going for HK$ 10,000, a price which includes an extremely fine antique blackwood stand.

Wing Hing Co. (*136 Hollywood Road, Hong Kong*) has an attractive Ming copy of a vase-shaped Tsin dynasty (221–207 B.C.) vessel, 8 in. high and $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, and with ring handles ornamented with lion heads for only HK$700. Four bands run round the body, the top one bearing an inscription, the second a cloud design, the third a pattern of deer and birds and the last a pattern of ocean-waves.

Very different in style is a bronze pagoda 31 in. high, offered by Ming Dynasty (*104 Prince's Building, Hong Kong*) for HK$2,000. It was made as a temple offering. Not much over 100 years old, the pagoda stands square in the manner adopted by the Japanese, but the detachable high finial bearing nine stylised umbrellas is purely Chinese. The pagoda was cast in sections and hollow, with doors which swing on dowels. The wood and bamboo panelling of each storey and the surrounding railings are carefully observed.

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