

SONG AND DANCE ENSEMBLE

OF

**BURMA**



1960.

PHOTO BY G. L. H. AVE.







*U Ba Sein,*

*Leader of the Cultural Mission from the Union of Burma to the Peoples' Republic of China and Democratic Republic of Vietnam is Secretary to the Government of the Union of Burma, Ministries of Union Culture, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs.*

Burmese music and dancing arose out of primitive religious rituals as in other countries. Society developed, civilization expanded, and contact with the Hindus and Chinese gave new ideas, but the native element always dominated, and the music and dancing remained essentially Burmese.

The first recorded instance of the existence of Burmese music dates back to 800 A.D.

In 800—2 A.D., 35 Burmese artistes of Old Prome (Srikettara) visited Hsian-Fu, the capital of the Chinese Empire, and the Emperor of China was entertained to Burmese music and dancing.

According to Chinese accounts, the Burmese “sang songs containing Sanskrit Words and went through spelling dances lining up in a pattern which read “Nanchao sends holy music!”

Po-Chu-i, the Chinese poet records this in one of his songs.

Music from the land of P'iao, music from the land of P'iao.  
Brought hither from the ocean's south west corner,  
Yung Ch'iang's son, Shunant'o,  
Has come with an offering of southern tunes to fete the  
new year.

Our Emperor has taken his seat in the courtyard of the  
palace.

He does not press his cap strings to his ears, he is listening  
to you!

At the first blast of the jewelled shell, their matted locks  
grow crisp.

At one blow from their copper gong their painted limbs  
leap.

Pearl streams glitter as they twist, as though the stars were  
shaken in the sky,

Flowery crowns nod and whirl, with the motion of dragon  
or snake.



*U Win Maung, Secretary to the Burmese Cultural Mission, is Assistant Secretary to the Government of the Union of Burma, Ministry of Union Culture.*

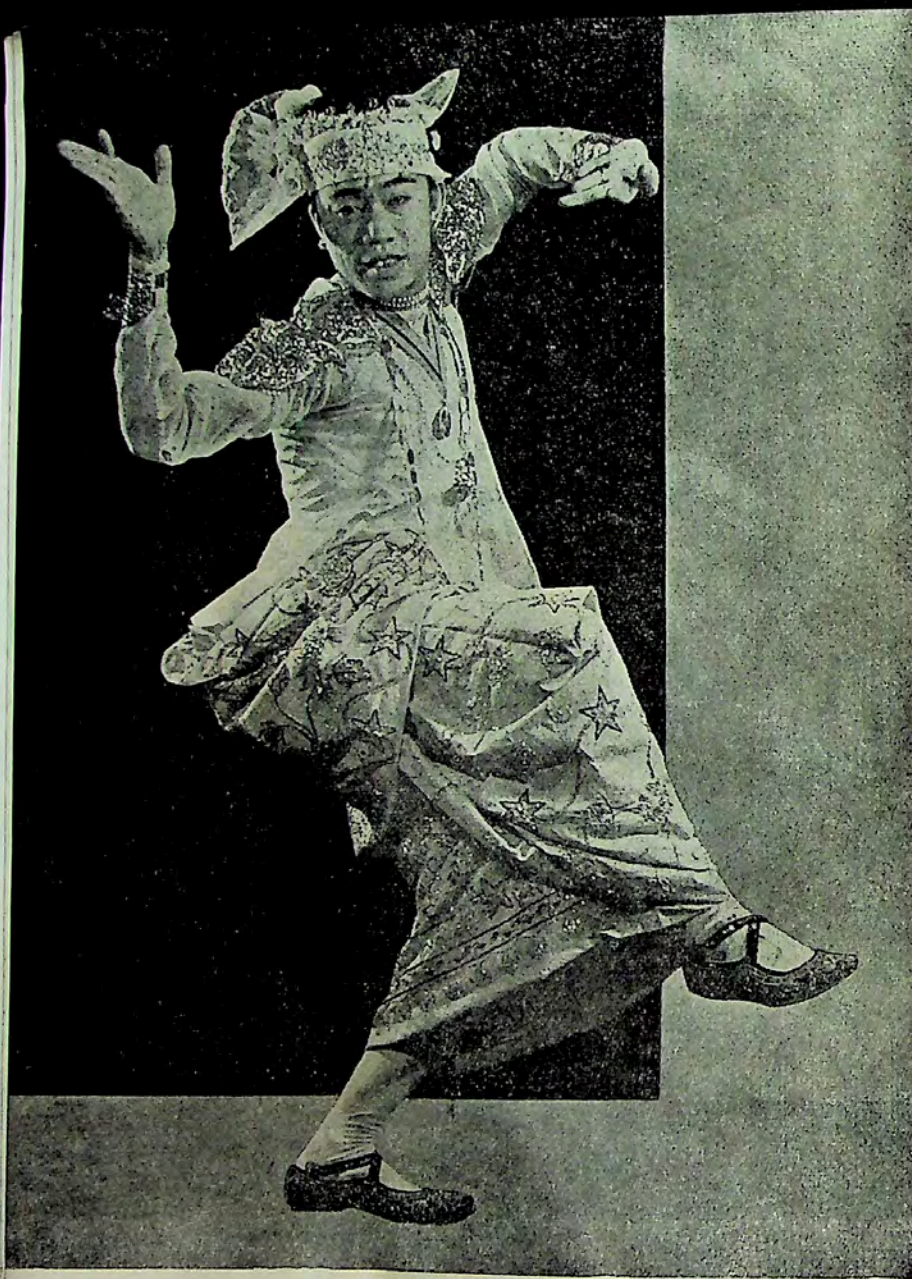


*U Sein Nyun, member of the Burmese Cultural Mission, is Principal of the State School of Fine Arts, Music and Drama, Mandalay.*



*Kenneth Sein, son of the late Wunna Kyaw Htin U Po Sein, the greatest personality in Burmese dancing is one of the leading artistes of the country.*





*Shweman Tin Maung,  
A leading dancer of Burma. After twenty  
years of stage-career, Shweman Tin Maung is  
an accomplished artiste.*

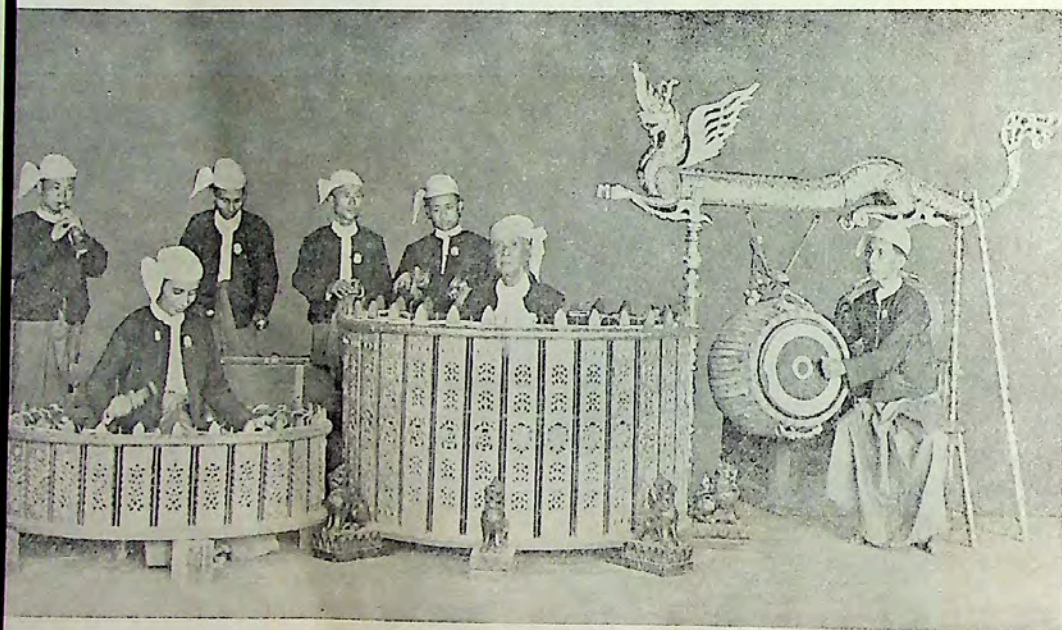
*Sein Aung Min,  
one of the leading dancers in Burma. He has  
over twenty years of dancing fame.*







*U Myat Kyaw, Assistant Stage Director of the Cultural Mission is Manager of the State Cultural Troupe.*

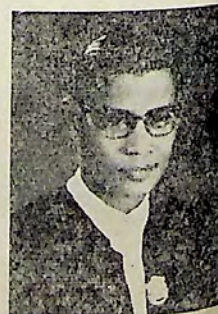


The State Orchestra. (Nainggandaw Saing)  
All authentic Burmese musical instruments such as, drums cricle ( pat-waing ), gongs circle ( kyi-waing ), gongs chime ( maung-waing ), large oboe (hne-gyi), small oboe ( hne galay ), cymbals ( lingwin ), bass drums ( chauk - lon - pat ), big double headed drum (pat-ma), small double-headed drum (sakhun), bells (than-lwin) and clapper (walat-kok), are contained in the Saing. In Burmese music, Saing is the most important art and it must be explained as the most important form of Burmese Culture.

*U Sein Chit Tee, member of the Burmese State Orchestra.*



*U Kyi, Pianist.*



The advent of Yoke-thay or Yoke Son Thabin or the marionette or puppet show to ascribed to the latter half of the 18th Century and the origin to U Thaw, Minister for Royal Entertainment at the Court of King Singu.

A traditional marionette show has 28 figures comprising 2 nat votaresses, a horse, 2 elephants, (black and white), a tiger, a monkey, a parrot, 2 ogres, a yogi, 4 ministers, a king, a prince, 2 prince regents, an astrologer, a hermit, an old woman and 2 clowns. Some shows have more figures, but the traditional company of marionette is one of 28 figures only.







Ozi dance- (Burmese Pot Drum Dance) or Burmese Calypso.

The most popular Burmese Folk Dance as old as the villages. No Burmese village exists without an Ozi dancer. Ozi drum is accompanied by Cymbals, Clappers, and witty songs sung by a group of young men. Ozi dance is performed on all happy occasions.



*Burmese Solo Dance  
by  
Ma Thein Win.*



*Artistes of the Ministry  
of Union Culture.*







*Marionette Dance.*



*Kennara dance by Ma Ngwe Ya.  
(Dance of the mythical bird.)*



*Maung Kyin Sein and  
Ma Thein Win,  
Burmese Duet Dance.*



*Ma Hla Hla, in Oil Lamp Dance.*

Since Burma is an agricultural country, we have pastoral and occupational songs to make work easier or for sheer enjoyment. Thus the planters' songs relate to rice, the seasons and agricultural pastimes. There are also rice-pounding songs. It was in this way that *bonshe* (Long Drum) music came into being.

*Cultivators' Yein-Group Dancing of Cultivators.*



*Burmese Solo Dance  
by  
Daw Khin Sein.*





*Mya Mya Kywe  
and  
Mya Mya Aye  
singing "Song of Friendship"*



*Competition between two couples  
in duet dance.*

*L. to R: Nwe Nwe Kyi, Shwe-  
man Tin Maung, Mya Talay,  
Aung Than Tin.*



*Two male dancers showing their  
skill to a belle.*

*L. to R: Shweman Tin Maung,  
Nwe Nwe Kyi, and Mya Talay.*





*A modern Burmese play depicting "Love is an Evil."*

The Government of the Union of Burma had achieved commendable progress in the promotion of the dramatic art of the country. Two State Schools of Music and Drama in Rangoon and Mandalay, under the direct control of the Ministry of Union Culture have been able to provide many of the leading dancers and musicians for the various Cultural Missions, which the Union of Burma has sent to Thailand in March 1955, and to the Peoples Republic of China in September of the same year, and to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia in November 1956.



# SCENES OF BURMA

