**Cover:** Detail of the tympanum of the earliest bronze drum in the Burma Art Collection, NIU. End of First Millennium BC. Gift from Richard M. Cooler (BC2001.2.30). Courtesy of the Center for Burma Studies, Northern Illinois University.

**Cover Design:** Jeff Strohm, Northern Illinois University.

The tympanum from an ancient bronze drum presented on the cover of this issue displays four ornamental and symbolic frogs that follow one another in anti-clock-wise rotation. These frogs placed at the four cardinal directions along with the specific geometric designs surrounding the central star indicate that this drum fragment should be classified as *Heger Type I*. It echoes the recent discovery at Wadee of bronze bells with incised motifs that are presented as part of this issue.

The use of bronze drums began in the Yunnan-Vietnam region and were part of the Dong Son civilization (500 BC-300 CE) from whence their use spread broadly to other areas of mainland and island Southeast Asia. Burma has had a long history with this type of musical instrument, recorded since the Bagan period (11th-13th century) in lithic inscriptions as *pam klo*, “Karen drums,” which in recent centuries were made by Shan metal smiths for the Karen. The latest excavations in Upper Burma have unearthed examples of bronze drums likely dating to the First Millennium BC that have simple geometric designs and birds similar to those on this tympanum. (Although the surface of this piece is severely abraded, its motifs can be read from rubbings.) These designs are also similar to those categorized by Calo’Ambra as *Heger Type I* that occur on bronzes from Dian, Yunnan which date to the first millennium BC. The designs found on these musical instruments recently discovered at various sites on the Upper Samon and Chindwin Rivers (such as Myauk Mee Kon, Sin Bo, and Bagan) serve to reinforce Janice Stargardt and Elizabeth Moore’s contention that Upper Burma during the first millennium had important contacts with the Dian culture of Yunnan.

—Catherine Raymond, Curator, Burma Art Collection at Northern Illinois University; and Richard M. Cooler, Former Curator, Burma Art Collection at Northern Illinois University.