

Myanmar/Burma in History – Panel 1

1. Kyanzittha's Challenge: Envisioning Myanmar – Sally Bamford, Graduate Student and PhD Candidate, School of Cultural Inquiry, Australian National University

Abstract: One of the ways Myanmar continues to be conceptualised is summed up in the adage "To be Burmese is to be Buddhist", a loaded phrase of uncompromising finality that arguably comes with the tacit understanding that Myanmar Buddhism excludes magical and apotropaic practices, such as making offerings to the nats in order to mediate life's more secular challenges. My own research into nat imagery, and how this has evolved to reflect social, political and cultural change, has led me to consider evidence for the relatively recent construction of Myanmar as a Buddhist nation-state, as seen in the erroneous yet persistent legend of Anawrahta's failed attempt to stamp out nat veneration in the eleventh century. This myth, along with his purported placement of statues of the Thirty-Six Lords, with the addition of Thagyamin (Sakka), in homage to the Buddha on the platform of the Shwezigon Pagoda – thereby forming the pantheon known as the Thirty-Seven Nats – placed the nats securely, and deferentially, within a Buddhist framework.

This paper will consider various attempts to explain the constitution of the Thirty-Seven Nats within this framework, with reference to historical sources and more recent scholarship, before arguing that the inscription commemorating King Kyanzittha's palace consecration ceremony provides convincing evidence for the original constitution of the royal nat pantheon. I will argue the Thirty-Seven Nats were brought together, not in homage to the Buddha, but as powerful – and non-Buddhist – spirits of place, representative of the newly unified kingdom's diverse and far-flung polities; their power harnessed in the unification of the kingdom and its ongoing protection. I will then posit that the makeup of subsequent pantheons of the Thirty-Seven Nats reflected the changing historical boundaries of the kingdom; and consider possible sources for the emergence of the Anawrahta myth.

2. Envisioning the ancient cities of the Pyu: Excavations at Pinle, Upper Myanmar 2009-10 – Elizabeth H. Moore, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
This paper is co-authored with Kyaw Myo Win and Win Maung (Tampawaddy)

Abstract: The paper queries existing conceptualizations that homogenise of the ancient cities of the Tibeto-Burman Pyu groups. Data are primarily drawn from excavation of a brick gate (PL-18, PL-19) and stupa (PL-15) on the eastern side of Pinle Ancient City, a circular walled site with an enclosed area of 14 square kilometres. The site occupies a strategic location at the foot of the Shan Plateau, 8 km southeast of Kume, Myitthar Township, Kyaukse District, Mandalay Division (21°20' N, 96°12' 51" E). Not recorded in Myanmar chronicles, Pinle was noted on aerial photographs by Aung Myint in 1965 and first excavated in 1979. No radiocarbon dates were obtained from the excavations but the stupa is comparatively dated to *circa* the 4th to 7th century CE based on the plan. The stupa utilizes five different brick shapes, one of the most complex masonry profiles seen in Pyu

architecture. The long massive gate structure on the east is unusual in having angled entry wings rather than the usual curved entries of other Pyu sites such as Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra.

Pinle's size, location and architecture as well its absence in chronicle sources highlight the role that Pyu cultures in theorising linear national urban, royal and religious genealogies. When these are assessed instead in the context of material culture and its relationship to the chronicles, the variations are an essential part of the tangible role of these cities in the emergence of urbanism in Upper Myanmar during the first millennium CE.

3. Study of Monasteries in Late Konbaung Era from Architectural Point of View – Nyein Chan Soe, Assistant Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Yaddabon University, Mandalay

Abstract: Since the advent of Buddhism in Myanmar, Myanmar people have attempted to develop their society culturally, economically and aesthetically. On the basis of Buddhism superstructural contexts such as literature, art and architecture, moral codes and laws, etc, have bloomed flowerily and in a full swing. In architectural field, creations and innovations are seen throughout successive eras in Myanmar history i.e, Vishnu, Sriksetra, Halin, Bagan, Pinya, Innwa, Nyaungyan and Konbaung. But through archaeological, historical, Buddhistic and architectural findings there are some degenerations in the field to some extent. What is important is that this development was interrupted by foreign elements and intercourse in Konbaung era. The problem of the paper is that a well – known architect said that such foreign influences make the hindrances in the study of architecture in Myanmar society. This paper sheds light on, however, how foreign influences were adapted, adopted and absorbed into local and native styles through the very driving force of Myanmar society, illustrated here with such five exemplary monasteries in Late Konbaung Era as Akka – Pat monastery, Yaw-Mingyi monastery, Thaka – Wun monastery, Waiyan Sanhlut monastery and Waiyan Aung Mye Wah – Khema monastery in the context of earlier periods of development.

Myanmar/Burma in History – Panel 2

4. The Influence of Western Notion of Boundary on the Making of Myanmar King's Subject in Upper Myanmar after the Second Anglo-Myanmar War (1852) – Myo Oo, HK Research Professor, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Busan University of Foreign Studies

Abstract: This study will explore the influence of western notions of boundary on the making of Myanmar king's subject in upper Myanmar, drawing on the criminal cases occurred in border areas of upper and lower Myanmar. After the Second Anglo-Myanmar War (1852), a new border line had been drawn in central Myanmar. Since then, administrative interactions between upper and lower Myanmar had been initiated and legal offices such as custom and immigration offices and mixed-courts were established. Immediately after the introduction of the new boundary, when criminal cases occurred in the borderline, officials on both sides had firstly distinguished criminals whether he was a Myanmar king's subject or a citizen of British Myanmar. This study will examine how the notion of Myanmar king's subject was historically formed in upper Myanmar after the

Second Anglo-Myanmar War, taking a discourse analysis of *The Catalogue of the Hluttaw Records*, Vol. I and II (Yangon: Yapyi Printing Press, 2011), which has been recorded criminal cases by Myanmar king's officials. The purpose of this research is to deepen the discourse of influence of western notions of boundary on the making of Myanmar king's subject. For this purpose, it pays an attention to a particular context where Myanmar officers' endeavors on the criminal cases took shape and pointed out the importance of the understanding of the making of Myanmar king's subject. Focusing on the criminal cases recorded in *the Catalogue of the Hluttaw Records*, this study broadly argues that the emergence of the boundary between upper and lower Myanmar, incorporated by British into Myanmar and defined by the western perception, had an influence on the making of Myanmar king's subject to some extent.

5. The Creole City in Burma: A History of Burma-Manipur Slave Gathering Warfare and Manipuri Descendants in Modern Myanmar – Bryce Beemer, Visiting Assistant Professor of History, History Department. Colby College, Maine, USA

Abstract: In lightly populated mainland Southeast Asia, people were power and warfare was often dedicated to the capture and relocation of rival population centers. Beginning in 1752, the expansionary Konbaung dynasty in upper Burma sacked and seized many thousands of captives from its neighboring rivals. Significant amongst these was the mountain kingdom of Manipur (now a state in northeast India) that was almost completely depopulated by slave gathering warfare. Today, the Mandalay area of upper Burma is dotted with villages and urban neighborhoods inhabited by descendants of these war captives. This talk will review the history of slave gathering warfare in Southeast Asia and discuss the ways that skilled captives (such as artisans, soldiers and intellectuals) were incorporated into the social hierarchy and could become potent agents for cultural exchange. However, the focus will also be on the present-day religious culture of Manipuri descendants. Manipuri Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhist all participate in hybrid religious practices that both sustain their community identity as non-Burmese, but also reflect the profound processes of assimilation and accommodation of their communities to the cultural world of upper-Burma.

6. Portraying a Statesman: Thakin Ko Daw Hmine - Aung Aung Hlaing, Coordinator for Myanmar, Varieties of Democracy Project (*This paper is co-authored with Hmyar Ni*)

Abstract: Burma has long celebrated the legacy of Thakin Ko Daw Hmine. The Burmese people remember him as a hero of the struggle for Myanmar Independence and attaining peace as well as the unrivaled poet. There are many books on his literature works but there are some biographies works on his life, contribution to Myanmar independence and world peace. The authors investigate the various ways of sketching Thakin Ko Daw Hmine's leadership in anti-colonialism, pre-independence struggle and attempt for global peace based on the existing biography works by Thein Pe Myint coauthoring with Dee Doke U Ba Cho, Ludu Daw Amhar, Maung Tin Shwe and U Aung Mon (Myat Su Mon). This research does not cover the analysis of Thakin Ko Daw Hmine's literature works.

7. The Evolution of the Perceptions of the Irrawaddy River Valley and the Myanmar Territory – Marion Sabrié, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Centre Asia du Sud-Est (CASE), Paris

Abstract: For centuries, Myanmar has been considered the land of the Valley of the Irrawaddy River by the Bamar, the ethnic majority, and also by their successive sovereigns, the British colonizers, the inhabitants of the country and national and international researchers. The river has always given water for irrigation and transportation and fish for food, etc. Today, the perception of the centrality of the River Valley on the Myanmar territory not only belongs to the Bamars, but is shared by the Kachin ethnic tribes who live at the river's sources at the confluence between the N'mai and the Mali Rivers in the northern Kachin State. Based on local interviews made in Myanmar language, my talk will focus on the evolution of the Irrawaddy's role in the national territorial organization, beyond national and international perceptions. Although the central role played by the Irrawaddy River seems to have decreased, the perception of its indispensability and greatness has never been so strong. With the moving of the capital city from Yangon to Naypyidaw (a city settled on the banks of a Sittang River's tributary), is the Sittang Valley becoming competitive or complementary to the Irrawaddy River Valley? Because of the recent democratization process and economic openness of Myanmar, the economic pressure on the Irrawaddy River has never been so strong and its protection has never been so defended by political and intellectual elite, the local riparian inhabitants (Bamars and Kachins) and by the NGOs supporting them. This vision is developed and shared among various discourses such as the "Irrawaddy Appeal" or "Save the Irrawaddy", etc. Myitsone hydro-electrical plant project, situated at the Irrawaddy's sources, embodies the perception gap among stakeholders including the Chinese and Myanmar governments. Beyond the role played by the Irrawaddy River, the question of regional integration is analysed.

Myanmar/Burma in History – Panel 3

8. Murder Charge Against Aung San in 1946: Turning Point of Post-War British Policy towards Burma – Jiang Fan, Lecturer, Guangzhou Administration Institute

Abstract: Aung San was a prominent nationalist leader who struggled for the independence of Burma. After the Second World War, the British Labour Cabinet overthrew the Conservative Cabinet's policy towards Burma in merely more than one year, and one of the reasons leading to it was a murder charge against Aung San. In early 1946, in order to undercut Aung San and AFPFL's political influence, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, the Governor of Burma, accused Aung San of murdering a village headman during the Second World War, and planned to have Aung San arrested. However, the Labour Cabinet worried more about the action's political repercussions in Burma and even India. While discussing the issue, London noticed the military and political crisis in Burma, and the relations between Governor Dorman-Smith and London deteriorated sharply. The Labour Cabinet finally decided to replace the Governor of Burma, and to adjust British policy. The murder charge against Aung San in 1946 was

originally designed to suppress Burmese nationalism, but unexpectedly accelerated the pace of British decolonization in Burma. By examining declassified British official documents, this paper reveals how the murder charge triggered divergence within the British political circle, and how it accelerated the changeover of postwar British policy towards Burma.

9. Politics over Expulsion of Undesirable Chinese: Rangoon Town Police, Chinese Advisory Board and Deportees' Testimonies around the 1910s - Noriyuki Osada, Area Studies Centre, Institute of Developing Economies

Abstract: In the colonial period, Rangoon urban society always embraced vast floating populations because of enormous immigration and emigration. This situation made it difficult for the governing authority to perform police activities at the core of the whole provincial administration (Burma was a province of British India at that time). By the 1910s the Government of Burma and Rangoon Town Police perceived that expulsion of undesirable outsiders was helpful to prevent crime in the city, and began to utilize it heavily in the 1920s. Present paper deals with the early phase of this process.

At the turn of the 20th century, strife between Chinese secret societies intensified in Rangoon and surrounding areas. Expulsion policy was introduced in Burma for the first time as measures to get this Chinese strife under control. On the advice of an officer who was on loan from the Chinese Protectorate of the Strait Settlements, the existing Indian law, the Foreigners Act of 1864, was utilized to expel ringleaders of the strife from the territory of British India. The first instance of expulsion took place in 1909. Immediately after that, the Chinese Advisory Board which consisted of 16 prominent Chinese was organized under the Commissioner of Rangoon Town Police. During the 1910s, the Chinese Advisory Board continued to fill the important role to decide who should be deported. This paper examines how the expulsion policy at this stage functioned by analyzing British colonial documents which includes translated testimonies of Chinese deportees. And it also suggested how the expulsion policy transformed in the 1920s.

10. Requests submitted by Burmese Subordinate Officials in the Late Nineteenth Century: Contents, Format, and their Significance to the Colonial Administration – Takahiro Iwaki, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Chiba University, Japan

Abstract: How did British colonial rule permeate into Burmese local society? How did the Burmese people interpret the colonial administration? In order to consider these questions, this study focuses on the Burmese subordinate officials of British Burma in the late nineteenth century. With the progress of colonial rule, many Burmese were employed as clerks or subordinate officials of various ranks, in the district governmental agencies. These Burmese officials often submitted requests or reports concerning their duties to their superiors, such as deputy commissioners. The National Archives Department of Myanmar has collected many administrative files from the districts of Lower Burma. This study introduces these documents and considers the relationship

between the Burmese subordinate officials and the colonial administration. The investigation of the documents led to two findings. First, many Burmese officials requested in their applications promotions, salary increases, or transfers to other districts when new governmental agencies were established there. They asserted themselves and exerted themselves to pursue profit. These officials were not necessarily dependent on the colonial authority; they pushed the boundaries practically as far as they were allowed. Second, the stylistic form of the applications bears a close resemblance to that of correspondence in the monarchical period. Local hereditary officials, like the *myothugyi*, also submitted documents, called *shaukchet* or *sittan* in Burmese, to the king when requesting an appointment or reappointment. For the Burmese officials, production and submission of colonial administrative reports in the late nineteenth century could be seen as a continuation of a practice from the monarchical period. This suggests that the Burmese officials recognized the power and rule of the British colonial authority as a sort of substitution for that of the Burmese kingdom. In other words, colonial rule had to conform itself to the modes of pre-colonial administration in order to be acceptable to the local society and people.
