COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION
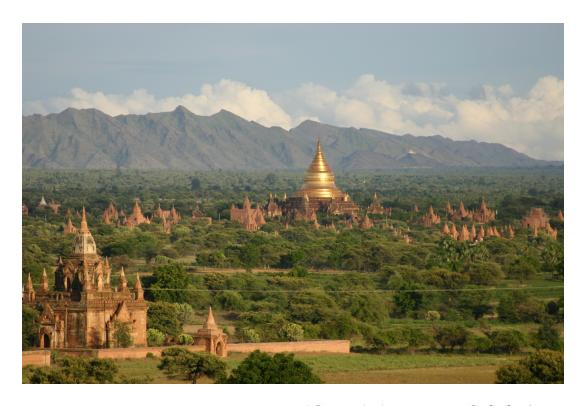
13 – 15 JULY 2006
GRAND PLAZA PARKROYAL HOTEL, SINGAPORE

ORGANISED AND SUPPORTED BY:

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ISEAS

COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION

The Asia Research Institute (ARI), the National University of Singapore's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) & the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) are pleased to announce that the biennial International Burma Studies Conference which will convene in Singapore on July 13-15, 2006. This session's theme, "Communities of Interpretation", seeks to recognize and explore the various ways in which the idea of Myanmar/Burma has come to be epistemologically understood in contemporary times. The field of Burma Studies and the knowledge that supports it has been produced through a variety of historical, economic, cultural, and political contexts, each adding important and sometimes competing ways of thinking about what has and what has not come to define Myanmar/Burma. Within these contexts, communities of interpreters have all contributed to its representation by imagining it through key issues, questions, paradigms, agendas, institutions and themes, effectively shaping the way in which we have interpreted and constructed the Myanmar/Burma we know today. We hope to investigate not what constitutes "Burmeseness" but rather how it has come to be known through those who write about, build, lead, criticize, sculpt, resist, perform in and travel to Burma. In doing, so this conference seeks to embrace intellectual and phenomenological diversity by exploring the Communities of Interpretation that have contributed to the conceptualizing of Myanmar/Burma.

Participants have been asked to consider the ways in which Myanmar/Burma has come to be known, produced, and understood through history, anthropology, politics, economics, sociology, art, religion, popular culture, media, and literature. Specifically, we encouraged panels and papers that explore how communities---scholars, colonial administrators, missionaries, politicians, artists, writers, students, musicians, villages, kings, leaders, ethnic groups and nations---have shaped multiple images of Burma/Myanmar that often reflect particular perceptions of the Burmese past, the present, and its possible futures. The conference organizers have welcomed presentations that rigorously investigate the nature of these communities, the basis for these linkages and their overall role in the fashioning of Burma/Myanmar. The list of functioning panels will hopefully reflect some of the diverse and interesting ways in which Burma has come to be understood by interpretive communities throughout the world.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

CONFERENCE VENUE

Grand Plaza Parkroyal Hotel
10 Coleman Street, Singapore 179809
Tel: (65) 6336 3456 Fax: (65) 6339 9311

SECRETARIAT / REGISTRATION COUNTER LEVEL 2

Please collect your conference kit and name badge at the Secretariat / Registration Counter. The badge must be worn at all times to gain entry to sessions and functions.

CONFERENCE SITE PLAN

Opening Ceremony / Plenary Sessions	Level 2, Grand Ballroom
Breakout Sessions	Level 2, Grand Ballroom I & II, Canning Room & Connaught Room
Secretariat / Speaker Preparation Area / Internet Station	Level 2, Foyer
Tea Breaks / Book Displays / Message Boards	Level 2, Foyer

Kindly check the Message Board regularly for updates or announcements. Messages for fellow delegates may also be posted here.

BOOK DISPLAYS

Book displays will be located at Level 2, Foyer.

13 & 14 July 2006   10:00am – 5:00pm

SESSION ETIQUETTE

As a courtesy to the presenters and participants, please switch off (or put to silent mode) all beeping devices (mobile phones, pagers etc) during all sessions.

CONTACT DETAILS

Asia Research Institute
National University of Singapore
AS7, Shaw Foundation Building
Level 4, 5 Arts Link
Singapore 117570
Tel: 6516 8787
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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time	12 JULY 2006 (WEDNESDAY)			
17:00–19:00	**PRE-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION** Venue: Level 2 Foyer			

Time	13 JULY 2006 (THURSDAY)			
08:00–09:00	**REGISTRATION** Venue: Foyer, Level 2 *(light refreshments will be served)*			
09:00-09:30	**OPENING CEREMONY** Venue: Ballroom, Level 2			
09:30-11:30	**PLENARY** **COMMUNITIES OF INTEPRETATION** by *U Chit Hlaing, Robert Taylor, Juliane Schober, Michael Aung-Thwin*			
11:30–13:00	**LUNCH** (Level 1)			
13:00-14:30	**SESSION 1**			

	BALLROOM I	BALLROOM II	CANNING	CONNAUGHT
	PANEL 1 **Culture and Society in Myanmar**	**PANEL 2** **Religion and the Making of Myanmar**	**PANEL 3** **Gender and Power: Political and Social Change in the Status of Burmese Women**	**PANEL 4** **Ancient Myanmar as Early Community**
	Chairperson: Robert Taylor	Chairperson: Guy Lubeigt	Chairperson: Christina Fink	Chairperson: Elizabeth Moore
	Popular Culture and Politics in Myanmar by *Thein Gi*	State, Sangha and Citizen Images of Burma: Interpretations of Unity (1962 – 2004) by *Guy Lubeigt*	For Sale by *Khin Mar Mar Kyi*	The Valley Civilizations of Pre- and Proto Historic Myanmar by *Elizabeth Moore / Win Maung*
	Some Changes in Myanmar Literature after 1988 by *Pe Myint*	After Life Symbolism and Burmanization among the Muslims of Myanmar by *Benedicte Brac de la Perriere*	Pathological State-Building: The Case of Burma and Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls by *Heather Rae*	Kyauk Saga: The First Real Capital of Bagan by *Win Maung*
	Modernity and Post-Modernity in Myanmar Literature by *Maung Maung San*	The Rituals in the Burmese Religion by *Jean Berlie*	Negotiating Justice and Global Identity Politics: Burmese Women Dissidents-in-Exile and Their 'Rape as a Weapon of War' Campaign by *Mary O'Kane*	A Technical Chronology for Pyu Gold and Bead Ornamenrs by *Terence Tan*
		Before the YMBA: Burmese Colonial Society and the Promotion of the Sasana by *Alicia Turner*	The Multiple Impacts on Civil War on Karen Gender Relations by *Christina Fink*	

| 14:30–15:00 | **TEA BREAK** (Level 2, Foyer) | | | |

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time	13 JULY 2006 (THURSDAY)			
15:00-16:30	**SESSION 2**			
	BALLROOM I	BALLROOM II	CANNING	CONNAUGHT
	PANEL 5 **Democracy and the Construction of Myanmar / Burma**	**PANEL 6** **Inscribing Tradition: Literature, Text and Translation**	**PANEL 7** **Shaping Burma through Popular Culture**	**PANEL 8** **Typifying Myanmar: Ethnicity, Minorities and the Periphery**
	Chairperson: David Steinberg	Chairperson: Lena Khor	Chairperson: Catherine Diamond	Chairperson: Aye Chan
	The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Overseas Burmese Pro-Democracy Movement by *Win Min*	Politics in the Paratext: The Political Effects of Cultural Artifacts inPascal Khoo Thwe's *From the Land of Green Ghosts* by *Lena Khor*	Findings from Bagyi Aung Soe's Late Works: An Unwonted Union of the Sacred and Avant-Grade by *Yin Ker*	Shan Noises, Accented Voice: Consuming and Re-defining Shan Ethnic Identity through Songs by *Amporn Jiratikorn*
	The State of the Myanmar Pro-Democracy Movement by *Toe Zaw Latt*	A Japanese to Myanmar Machine Translation System by *Hla Hla Htay*	Issues in Contemporary Culture by *Maxe Fisher*	Burma-India Border: Folk Migrations (1784 – 1948) by *Aye Chan*
	Myanmar's Democratic Movement and ASEAN Response by *Rajeshkar*	Burmese Yazawin and Thai Oral History by *Walter Strach*	Performance Ecology: Vanishing Species on the Myanmar Stages by *Catherine Diamond*	Challenges of the Ethnic Politic: Federalism an Answer? By *Saw Mya Sandy*
	Karen Nationalist Communities: Diversity and Unity by *Ashley South*	Why Aung San is not the Author of the Blue Print by *Gustaaf Houtman*	Gender Trouble: Performing Gender in Contemporary Myanmar by *Khin Mar Mar Kyi*	

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time	13 JULY 2006 (THURSDAY)			
16:30-18:00	**SESSION 3**			
	PANEL 9 **Representing Burma through Politics: The Media Community**	**PANEL 10** **Constructing the Social in Myanmar Studies**	**PANEL 11** **Society and Community in Myanmar**	**PANEL 12** **Fashioning the Foreign: Diplomatic Relations and the Image of Myanmar**
	Chairperson: Khin Zaw Win	Chairperson: Kyaw Win	Chairperson: Sean Turnell	Chairperson: Maung Aung Myoe
	The Activist Media and Myanmar Politics by *Aung Zaw*	Healing the Nations's Wounds: Collaborative Relationships around Health Programming in Myanmar by *Rachel Safman*	The Nature and Patterns of Remittance Flows from Burmese Workers in Thailand by *Sean Turnell*	Indo-Myanmar Relations in the Era of Pipeline Diplomacy by *Marie Lall*
	Pragmatism – Idealism and the Role of the Media to Promote Political Consciousness to Myanmar by *Nay Win Maung*	HIV / AIDS Problem in Myanmar by *Myint Myint Khin*	Remittances for Social Reproduction: The Case of Burmese Nurses in Singapore by *Mika Toyota*	Myanmar and ASEAN by *Maung Aung Myoe*
	Burmese Media-in-exile: Challenging the US Model by *Lisa Brooten*	Epidemincs and Outbreaks: Health Governance and Humanitarian Aid in Myanmar / Burma by *Bridget Welsh*	Rural Poverty Assessment in Myanmar by *Dolly Kyaw & Jayant K. Routray*	Understanding of Myanmar-Thailand Relations: Structural Development from 19th to Late 20th Centuries as the Essential Root Problems by *Pinitbhand Paribatra*
18:30	**Gather at the hotel lobby for bus transfer to dinner venue**			
19:30	**DINNER @ Tepak Sireh (73 Sultan Gate)**			

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time	14 JULY 2006 (FRIDAY)			
08:00–08:30	**REGISTRATION** Venue: Foyer, Level 2 *(light refreshments will be served)*			
08:30–10:00	**SESSION 4**			
	BALLROOM I	**BALLROOM II**	**CANNING**	**CONNAUGHT**
	PANEL 13 **Interpreting Myanmar as its Traditional Culture**	**PANEL 14** **National Reconciliation and the Construction of Myanmar / Burma**	**PANEL 15** **The Myanmar Historical Commission as Interpretive Community**	
	Chairperson: Ward Keeler	Chairperson: David Steinberg	Chairperson: Michael Aung-Thwin	
	Developments in Burmese Theatre Music by *Ward Keeler*	National Security vs Regime Security: Prospects of National Reconciliation by *Kyaw Nyunt*	Palm-Leaf Manuscript Record of a Mission Sent by the Myanmar King to the Chinese Emperor in mid-18th Century by *Thaw Kaung*	
	Aspiring to the Diatonic Just Scale: U Khin Zaw's Construction of Burmese Music Theory by *Gavin Douglas*	Problems with the National Reconciliation Process in Burma by *Aung Naing Oo*	The Origin of Myanmar Tatmadaw by *Hla Shain*	
	The Formation of Genre in Burmese Classical Songs – With Special Reference to the 'Alaik' Technique by *Sayuri Inoue*	Peace Negotiation in Myanmar by *Saboi Jum*	Generational Gap in Myanmar by *Thet Tun*	
	Spirit Worship in Myanmar by *Ma Thanegi*			
10:00–10:30	**TEA BREAK** (Level 2 Foyer)			

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time	14 JULY 2006 (FRIDAY)			
10:30–12:00	**SESSION 5**			
	PANEL 16 **The Shan Village in Peripheral Burma: Perspectives on Conflict, Community and Change**	**PANEL 17** **Interpreting Civil Society as Myanmar**	**PANEL 18** **Communities of Archaeology and the Fashioning of Early Burma**	
	Chairperson: David Mathieson	Chairperson: Tin Maung Maung Than	Chairperson: John Miksic	
	Tradition and Revolution in a Shan Village by *David Mathieson*	Building an Interest Group in Myanmar by *Tin Maung Thann*	The Rock Carvings at Padaw by *Bob Hudson*	
	The Commodification of Displacement: The Diasporic Experience of Shan Migrant Communities Along the Burmese-Thai Border by *Aranya Siriphon*	Building a Social Welfare Organization in Myanmar by *Ja Nan*	The Southern Dry Zone of Burma, 10th to 13th Century: An Archaeological Perspective by *Shah Alam*	
	Shan Villages in Burmese Peripheral Vision by *Nicholas Farrelly*	Building a Funeral Association in Myanmar by *Kyaw San Myint*	The Mrauk U Palace Excavations by *Nyein Lwin*	
	Shan Practices at the Thai-Burma Border by *Jane Ferguson*			
12:00–13:30	**LUNCH** (Free & Easy)			

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time	14 JULY 2006 (FRIDAY)			
13:30–15:00	SESSION 6			
	PANEL 19 **Simple Beliefs and Uniform Truths: Questioning the Historical Reconstruction of Burma Pasts**	**PANEL 20** **Myanmar through its Economy**	**PANEL 21** **The Marginal Mons in their Diasporic Process: The Case of a Mon Community in Sanghlaburi, Thailand**	**PANEL 22** **Communities of Interpretation within the Historiography of Myanmar**
	Chairperson: Jacques Leider	Chairperson: Tin Maung Maung Than	Chairperson: Cholthira Satyawadhna	Chairperson: Geoff Wade
	Arakan's Place in the Theravada World: Between Burma, Sri Lanka, and 19th Century Perspectives on the Sasana by *Jacques Leider*	The State of the Economy in Myanmar by *Tin Maung Maung Than*	The Mons in Sangkhlaburi and their Self Determination by *Cholthira Satyawadhna*	Post Prince Damrong Historical Scholarship concerning Pre-Modern Thai-Burmese Warfare: A Reappraisal by *Pamaree Surakiat*
	A 200 Year Silence: How the Burmese Have Been Removed from Northern Thai History by *Justin McDaniel*	Economic Practices in Upper Myanmar by *Ye Myat Thu*	Glossaries and Local Wisdom Literatures Translated from Mon Manuscript to Thai Language by *Bussaba Prapasapong*	From Cakravartin to Minsaw: Charting the Chaing Interpretations of Anawrahta's Kingship by *Goh Geok Yian*
	From Ava to Mandalay: Towards Charting the Development of Burmese Yazawin Traditions by *Alexey Kirichenko*	Trans-Border Trade by the Migrant Yunnanese between Burma and Thailand (1962 – 1988) by *Wen-Chin Chang*	Mon Nationalism and the Invention of Tradtion: The Case of Mons in their Diasporic Communities by *Juajan Wongpolganan*	Mian' in the History of the Yuan Dynasty by *Geoff Wade*
	Towards a Norm of Burmese Kingship: The Concept of Raza-Dhamma in Five Konbaung Period Texts by *Aurore Candier*	by *Maung Myint*	No Country, No Home: The Tragic Story of a Mon Community by *Paphatsaun Thianpanya*	DGE Hall and His Critics: Personal Observations on Burmese Historiography in the 1960s by *Reynaldo Ileto*
	Changing Images of Gender in Myanmar Romantic Fiction by *Georg Noack*			
15:00–15:30	**TEA BREAK** (Level 2 Foyer)			

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time	14 JULY 2006 (FRIDAY)			
15:30–17:00	**SESSION 7**			
	PANEL 23 **Movies, Museums & the Media: Representing Myanmar**	**PANEL 24** **The Politics of Identity and the Category of Community in Burma**	**PANEL 25** **Burmese Linguistics and Languages of Burma**	**PANEL 26** **Education in Myanmar**
	Chairperson: Tin Maung Maung Than	Chairperson: Ken Maclean	Chairperson: Justin Watkins	Chairperson: Khin Zaw Win
	Photo-Ethnography and Representing Myanmar by *Carl Hefner*	Paradox of Ethnicity: The Ethnic Groups of Burma as Communities of Interpretation by *François Robinne*	The Voicing Rules in Burmese: An Analysis of the Findings of Two Bama Scholars By *Saw Tun*	Seeking Synergy in Approaches to Poverty and Education by *Khin Zaw Win*
	A Diamond in the Golden Land: The Legacy of the Great Po Sein by *Glenn Short*	Deterritorializing Burma: Metahistories of Memory and Identity in India's North East by *Prasenjit Biswas*	Relevance of Studying Myanmar Language and Culture: A Study in South Asian Perspective by *Swapna Bhattacharya*	Education in Myanmar (Vocation-Oriented Approach) by *Kyaw Ni Khin*
	IT Demonstration of Trpitika by *Ye Myat Thi*	Categories Out of Place: Internally Displaced Persons and Ethnic Indifference in Contemporary Burma by *Ken Maclean*	Teaching and Preserving Indigenous Languages in Burma (Myanmar): An Observation of the Language Programs at the University of Development for National Races / People, Ywa-Thit-Kyi by *Phyu Phyu Win*	Civil Society – A Patch for Burma's Welfare System by *Jasmin Lorch*
	A Bo Min Ghaung Temple by *Niklas Foxeus*	Reconstructing a Chinese Identity in Burmese Chinese by *Yuan Jianwei*	The SOAS Wa Dictionary Project: Lexicograrphy for a Divided Language by *Justin Watkins*	
			The Performance of Poetic Literature in Shan Communities: Suppression and Survival by *Jotika Khur-Yearn*	
17:00	**END OF DAY TWO**			

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time	15 JULY 2006 (SATURDAY)			
08.00–08:30	**REGISTRATION** Venue: Foyer, Level 2 *(light refreshments will be served)*			
08:30-11:00	**SESSION 8**			
	BALLROOM I	**BALLROOM II**	**CANNING**	**CONNAUGHT**
	PANEL 27 **Environment and Community in Myanmar**		**PANEL 28** **Health and History: Looking for Healing in Contemporary Burma / Myanmar**	**PANEL 29** **Nagani**
	Chairperson: Khin Zaw Win		Chairperson: Monique Skidmore	Chairperson: Hans-Bernd Zöllner
	A Writer's Perspective of Environmental Problems in Myanmar by Tin Tin Win (*Ma Ju*)		Fighting Smallpox: British Doctors and Inoculators in Colonial Burma by *Atsuko Naono*	by *Hans-Bernd Zöllner*
	Performance Assessment in Myanmar by *Win Myo Thu*		Death, Disease and Diet in the Prisons of Colonial Burma by *Ian Brown*	Translation of Political Terms and Concepts into Burmese with reference to Nagani Publications by *Tin Hlaing*
	NEP Projects in Myanmar by *Tin Aung Moe*		The Village of Time: Illness and Healing in Rural Burma / Myanmar by *Monique Skidmore*	by *Bo Bo Lansin*
			Health and Medicine in a 'Peripheral Situation': WA Views on Disease and Healing by *Magnus Fiskesjö*	Emergence of Socialist Economic Literature in Myanmar / Burma by *Khin Maung Nyo*
			Weikza Beliefs and Healing: Payawga and Prevention Rituals for Disease and Disaster by *Keiko Tosa*	
			Contemporary Syncretic Fertility Management at the Border of Burma – 1980 to Present by *Suzanne Belton*	
11:00-12:00	**CLOSING PLENARY** **CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN MYANMAR** by *David Steinberg, Robert Taylor, Mary Callahan, Vicky Bowman and Kyaw Win* Venue: Ballroom, Level 2			
12:00	**TEA BREAK** (Level 2 Foyer)			
13:00	**END OF CONFERENCE**			

COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION

PANEL 1:

CULTURE AND SOCIETY
IN MYANMAR

Some Changes in Myanmar Literature After 1988

Pe Myint

Since 1988, there have been significant changes in the various aspects of Myanmar literature. The present day Myanmar writings are quite different from the ones written and read before. This paper does not hope to reveal all the changes that occurred in Myanmar literature during the last 18 years, but an attempt has been to present the changes in the interests, ideas and opinions of Myanmar writers in that period.

Myanmar writers, for several decades before 1988, had been deeply influenced by leftist ideology. Most of the writers followed the literary theories of realism and socialist realism as their guidelines, while the critics used two sets of criteria: a flexible literary scale and a strict political scale, to gauge the merits of a writers work.

After 1988, leftist literary theories and the political scale of the critics are no longer talked about in Myanmar literary circles. Until now, it is difficult to determine exactly what will fill the vacuum left behind by the leftist ideology. However, during the recent years certain ideas and opinions prevailing in the outer world have seized the interest of Myanmar people. Some of these ideas will form in the minds of Myanmar writers beliefs, convictions and inspirations with which to create their own writings which are to form the mainstream Myanmar literature of tomorrow.

PANEL 2:

RELIGION AND
THE MAKING OF MYANMAR

State, Sangha and Citizen Images of Burma: Interpretations of Unity (1962-2004)

Guy Lubeigt
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
Laboratoire PRODIG-CNRS (Paris-Sorbonne)

The international image of Burma as a pariah state, generally condemned for its repeated violences against its citizens, contrasts sharply with the benevolent Buddhist Heaven claimed by the military regime which is technically and financially supporting Buddhist missions around the world. Since 1962 State and Sangha relationships went through several phases during which their relations were going from reticent to distant and from tension to cooperation. For the Buddhist citizen who has been living since his youngest age with the idea that the Buddhism he practices within Burma is a united religion unifying the country, the ups and downs of such conflictual /amicable relations between the State and the Sangha may have been difficult to follow. The build up of extended links between the hierarchy ruling a newly unified Sangha and the military, contrasts with the few connections between the simple monk and the regime. Meanwhile the Burmese Buddhist community, while suffering at the hands of the junta, likes to project outside a benevolent image of a generous country united by Buddhism. This wish of the faithful suits perfectly the image of Land of Pagodas that the military want to show on the international scene. Consequently these communities, each having their own interpretation of the unity necessary to the country, have a sort of schizophrenic attitude in front of the same reality. The aim of this paper is to investigate, for the last four decades, the origine of these interpretations, their nature, and the evolution of the relationship developped between the Military, the Sangha and the Citizens.

After Life Symbolism and Burmanization among the Muslims of Myanmar

Bénédicte Brac de la Perrière
Centre Asie du Sud-Est (CNRS-EHESS, Paris), France

The aim of this paper is to delineate the notion of ritual in Burmese and to see whether it fits the notion as it has emerged from the ritual studies community of interpretation. This will be done mainly by the analysis of three terms commonly associated with events that we would recognize as rituals: a khan a na, pwè and yoya.

The Rituals in the Burmese Religion

Jean Berlie

Muslims constitute a complex minority in Myanmar constituting more than four percent of the total population of the country.

The Muslims of "Indian" origin (meaning from Bangladesh, India, or Pakistan) are the most numerous. In Arakan (called Rakhine State at present) they are called Rohingyas, and they speak a Bengali dialect. Panthays from Yunnan, Burmese Muslims *stricto sensu* (Zerbadees) and other Muslim groups of Myanmar are smaller minorities. As a minority in Myanmar, they should follow the *Da'wah* (means "call" in Arabic, invitation of dialogue, or any action in deeds which leads to bringing together Muslims and non-Muslims). Dialogue is the best way to ensure good relations with the Burman majority, but there is no dialogue if both sides do not agree to it.

Koranic teaching and symbolism play a crucial role for the vast majority of orthodox Muslims who believe that after death everybody will be judged by God. The Koranic reference to the immortality of the soul and references to the resurrection of the body is the norm. However, there is no belief in rebirth, which is intrinsic to Buddhist doctrine.

Burmanisation has played a crucial role in Myanmar over the last twenty years. In 1981, eighty percent of all those of primary school age were attending government schools. The question is to what degree has the Burmese education system, which is heavily imbued with Buddhist, currently influences the beliefs of Muslims. This Burmese education and the disappearance of private schools teaching Indian languages has contributed to sharp reduction in the number of Urdu speakers in the generations below the age of forty. In contrast, in Arakan, many Muslim children are not allowed to join government schools. What is the influence of this Burmanisation on the Islamic belief of the Muslims in the different regions of Myanmar?

This paper, which is based on fieldwork in various parts of Myanmar, will investigate whether exist different types of secular education between Arakan and the other states of Myanmar gives a different anti-Buddhist approach among Muslims concerning the symbolic belief in reincarnation rejected by Islam

Before the YMBA:
Burmese Colonial Society and the Promotion of the Sasana

Alicia Turner
University of Chicago, USA

May, 2006 was the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) yet despite the celebration the organization receives for its role in early Burmese nationalism, very little has been written about the cultural and social context out of which the YMBA emerged. In my research into early twentieth century Buddhist movements in Burma, I noted that all of the secondary sources present the origins of the YMBA in almost identical fashion. They tell of the YMBA emerging as the first notable and national organization out of a very limited number of earlier Buddhist organizations, presenting the efforts of the YMBA as only nominally Buddhist, using the cover of Buddhism to pursue its nationalist ends. This description struck me as odd not only because it was reproduced almost verbatim in so many sources but because it stood contrary to the primary source materials I was reading.

While the YMBA eventually became the largest and most famous organization in Burma, the period from the early 1890s to 1910 saw the creation of dozens of Buddhist organizations throughout Burma. Together these Buddhist lay people created a massive movement for the revival of Buddhism in Burma which took as its primary task not nationalism but the preservation and promotion of the sasana. In this paper I want to explore briefly two different communities of interpretation: the twentieth century scholarship that has presented Buddhist activities of this period as a cover for nationalist organizing and the early twentieth century Buddhist organizations themselves that transformed the role of laity in promoting the sasana.

PANEL 3:

GENDER AND POWER: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF BURMESE WOMEN

For Sale

Khin Mar Mar Kyi
Australia

Human trafficking is a human rights issue, as trafficking includes gross violations of basic human rights including destroying of human dignity as well as exploitation from one human being to another human being, which could include rape, torture, threats, forced labor and even murder. Asian women and children have become the major victims, with 225,000 per annum sold for both service and labor. Among them, Burma, a highly militarized regime, is 'a major source for international trafficking in the sex trade' (Amnesty International 2003; Independent Task Force 2003).

In my paper, I will discuss how economic and political power imbalances in Burma contribute to a form of modern-day slave trade that illustrates gender power relations are crucial to understanding the nature of trafficking.

Pathological State Building:
The Case of Burma & Sexual Violence against Women and Girls

Heather Rae
Australian National University, Australia

A range of reports testify to the Tatmadaw's widespread and systematic use of sexual violence against women and girls in Burma as part of the state's attempts to pacify ethnic minority groups. This paper investigates the role such practices play in strategies of state-building and national identity construction. Such practices continue, even though they have come to be widely recognized as illegitimate, and criminal, as it can be argued that such systematic sexual violence may constitute crimes against humanity, war crimes and, in some cases, genocide. Thus this is an inquiry into what I term 'pathological homogenisation' as a means of state-buildingwith all its contradictions, inhumanity and inevitable incapacity to achieve 'unity'. The paper investigates the ideas of state sovereignty and national unity espoused by the ruling regime and the links between such ideas and the systematic use of violence, including sexual violence, against women and girls. Drawing on the case of systematic sexual violence in the former Yugoslavia for purposes of comparison, the paper also considers the dissonance such policies create between the regime's claims to legitimacy and international standards of legitimate statehood.

Negotiating Justice and Global Identity Politics: Burmese Women Dissidents-in-Exile and their 'Rape as a Weapon of War' Campaign

Mary O'Kane
Monash University, Australia

Reports released by women dissidents exiled from Burma documenting the use of rape as a weapon of war in Burma have attracted international attention and increased women activists' participation in global political forums. From this process, two representations of Burmese women – that of victim/survivor of rape and political activist – are emerging to contradict and challenge the Burmese military's idealised representation of Burmese women in international society. However, these emerging representations operate in tension with each other while relating in complex ways to the image of Aung San Suu Kyi as an international symbol of repressed democracy. Through analysing their 'Rape as a Weapon of War' campaign, this paper illustrates how these women dissidents have been required to prioritise the issue of rape and frame their political campaigns to 'fit' dominant issues circulating in contemporary international human rights discourse. It explores what it means for them to negotiate multiple, conflicting and politicised representations of their identity in their own communities and in the international sphere.

The Multiple Impacts of Civil War on Karen Gender Relations

Christina Fink
Kalamazoo College, Thailand

This paper explores some of the direct and indirect impacts of the civil war in Karen State on gender relations in Karen communities. It is divided into three parts. The first part discusses how the civil war has vastly increased the stresses and dangers girls and women face; yet, it has also propelled women into positions of leadership in civil war areas. The second part considers how a reinvented Karen Women's Organization has promoted women's rights and leadership, but that the leadership positions women have gained will not be retained unless there is a fundamental change of attitude among both men and women in the civil war areas. The third part explores the challenges Karen women activists face in promoting their agenda, as the more they push for women's rights, the more they can be accused of distracting attention from the nationalist struggle. At the same time, while recognizing the importance of developing solidarity with other Burmese women's organizations, historical conflicts and cultural differences between some of the ethnic groups make the development of a shared sense of sisterhood a challenge in itself.

COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION 2006

PANEL 4:

ANCIENT MYANMAR AS EARLY COMMUNITY

The Valley Civilizations of Pre- and Proto-Historic Myanmar

Elizabeth Moore & Win Maung
University of London, UK

Much of Myanmar drains into the network of the Ayeyarwaddy (Irradwaddy), but major river valleys branch out to all regions of the country. In recent years, documentation of Neolithic habitation at sites in Upper and Lower Myanmar provides the foundation for the emergence of metal technologies and walled sites. Within Upper Myanmar, bronze-iron finds illustrate links to Yunnan while in Lower Myanmar, affinities are seen to Neolithic, Bronze and Dvaravati sites around the Gulf of Thailand. The paper presents the geographical classification of the valley civilizations with examples of finds from sites in the northern and southern regions of the country.

Kyauk Saga: The First Real Capital of Bagan

Win Maung

Kyauk Saga (Thiripyitssaya) is listed in several chronicles as one of the 19 Pyu root villages at Bagan. Sometimes said to have been the second capital, with the first at Yonhlut to the southeast, the paper suggests that excavated structures at Yonhlut may have been a meeting hall with the legendary first capital located at Kyauk Saga, near the present Lokananda temple. The paper discusses evidence including its walled form, finger-marked bricks, Gupta-type images of the Buddha and new finds from 2005 survey undertaken by the author.

Gold and Beads: The Samon Legacy in Pyu Ornaments

Terence Tan
University of Historical Research Committee, Myanmar

Gold ornaments and stone beads highlight two linked but separate developments of the various 'Pyu groups' in Myanmar during the first millennium AD. The stone beads are often called Pyu, but in fact appear to be a legacy of earlier cultures extending south of Mandalay along the Samon valley and north to Halin. One of the most abundant artefacts of the Samon bronze-iron cultures are finely polished semi-precious stone beads. The Samon cultures are related to the Dian of Yunnan, a pattern not seen in the South Asia oriented Pyu gold artefacts. This appropriation of the Samon stone beads may highlight an intrusive authority over 'indigenous' population groups.

PANEL 5:

DEMOCRACY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MYANMAR / BURMA

Burmese Pro-democracy Exile Movement: Impact and Challenges

Win Min
Chiang Mai University, Thailand

The Burmese exile pro-democracy movement, born after the regime's crushing of country-wide demonstrations in 1988, has played an important role in shaping ideas for future state-building in Burma. This paper will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the exile movement, as well as the challenges ahead. The movement has helped to draw increasing international attention to Burma and has made progress in bridging differences between majority Burmans and ethnic minority groups. The movement has also helped the development of civil society groups in ethnic controlled areas, empowering grassroots people to have a say in the issues which affect their lives. However, the exile movement, in combination with inside movement, has failed to bring democracy and a federal system to Burma after almost 18 years. The movement still lacks a common strategy and has often been divided. In addition, the nature of many of the pro-democracy organizations remains rigid and top-down, limiting their ability to adapt to changing situations. The challenge ahead is for the exile movement to be able to maintain its relevance to political developments in the country.

The Moral Dimension and the Challenge of Pragmatism in Burma/Myanmar's Democracy Movement

Toe Zaw Latt
Vahu Development Institute, Thailand

This presentation considers the role of morality and pragmatism in influencing pro-democracy stakeholders and their political strategies both inside Burma/ Myanmar and in exiled Burmese communities around the globe. It builds an analysis of key political stakeholder groups' strategies and actions. These strategies draw from a common principle of democracy but are initially determined by a moral position. For example, the NLD constructs themselves as politically 'legitimate' based on the outcome of the 1990 elections, while the Ethnic nationalities groups draw political legitimacy from the notion of federalism. A moralistic approach fails to address the practical need for a transitional strategy and over emphasizes liberal democratic models, strategies and political approaches which work best in a stable political climate. Clearly Burma does not have such a domestic politic climate.

Interestingly, there has been a tentative shift away from the confines that the moral approach places on stakeholders in the movement to a more relativistic approach steeped in more realist notions of power and political engagement. The 2006 NLD Union Day statement for example can be seen as such an initiative. The NLD, in the statement offered to confer a measure of legitimacy and *de-jure* power to the SPDC. This can be considered the most significant mainstream shift from 'moralistic' to more 'pragmatic' politics to date in the pro-democracy moment. A range of other initiatives and strategies are considered through this same analytical lens from mainstream and alternative political groupings both in and out of Burma.

I argue that this tentative shift is not very popular amongst the mainstream democracy movement because of the lack of 'process vision'- the step by step, practical developments that are required to achieve democratic change. Others refer to this process as political transition. One of the key obstacles in this process is interpreting what democracy in the Burmese context may look like. This paper suggests that it may be more beneficial for the movement to focus on transitional strategies based on a pragmatic approach to achieving change rather than one focused primarily on democratization as a priority. The lack of a process vision in all parts of the movement poses a great challenge to achieving permanent change.

'Myanmar's Democratic Movement and ASEAN Response'

Rajeshkhar
Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University, India

The proposed paper would be an attempt to explore and analyze the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) response towards the ongoing restoration of democratic movement in Myanmar. It becomes important to analyze the ASEAN response on Myanmar's Democratic Movement after Myanmar's military government decision to relinquish its turn to be the Chair of ASEAN in 2006 at ASEAN Foreign Ministers summit in July 2005 held at Vientiane. In recent years with the establishment of pressure groups like – ALTSEAN Burma (Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma) and ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Caucus on Myanmar (AIPMC) in Kula Lumpur in November 2004 by elected parliamentarians from ASEAN member countries such as –Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Cambodia, it is important to analyze that how ASEAN is responding to its commitment of Article 2 (C) of "Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another" declared in *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* at Bali in 24th February, 1976.

When Myanmar was admitted into ASEAN in July 1997 with the support of Mahathir Mohammad of Malaysia, the hopes were raised that the ASEAN's *'way of life'* and its *'constructive engagement policy'* would reform the ruling military junta towards the realization of democracy. However despite the long years from 1997 and the pressure from world powers like USA, UK etc. within ASEAN as a *dialogue partner* and other inter-continental regional forums like ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) and efforts of UN Special Rapporteur with ASEAN leaders, the democracy is yet to be realized in Myanmar. In this background the proposed paper would try to evaluate that whether the military junta's response towards democracy in Myanmar is flippant or real with the fledge ling progress of National Convention since January 9, 1993 in the light of her ASEAN membership and before?

Karen Nationalist Communities: Diversity and Unity

Ashley South
Thailand

This paper is a work-in-progress; it will form a chapter in a forthcoming book: *States of Conflict: Ethnic Politics in Burma Since 1988* [Routledge]. The author makes no claims to academic rigor.

The paper explores how the terms 'Burma' and 'Myanmar' are understood and used among Karen communities in and from the country. It analyzes how different actors have mobilized support around (sometimes competing) notions of Karen ethno-nationalism, and how these concepts and processes have been perceived - and sometimes legitimized - by outsiders. The paper concludes by sketching the outlines of a consociational approach to Karen 'unity in diversity'.

Diversity

The terms 'Karen', and 'Karenni' and 'Kachin', are constructions - based on cultural cores (or *ethnie*), which are composed of both traditional and modern elements, including ideas of ethnicity introduced during the colonial period. Since before Burmese independence, elites have sought to mobilize political support around competing ideas of 'Karen-ness'. The most well-known ethno-nationalist projects have been those emerging from western-oriented, mostly Christian-led, S'ghaw-speaking communities.

For many observers and supporters, the militarized nation-building project of the Karen National Union (KNU) is the only authentic expression of Karen nationalism in Burma. The paper explores the roles of international agencies in legitimizing the KNU's version of Karen nationalism.

The paper argues that, while the KNU is a key political actor (with perhaps a unique role to play), it represents only one strand of Karen nationalism. The paper sketches some competing expressions of ethno-nationalism, many of which emanate from Buddhist and/or other, subaltern sections of the community. These projects (including millenarian sects) have generally not been granted legitimacy by outsiders, as they are not framed within the 'rational-bureaucratic' discourse favored by political analysis.

Another set of competing ideas of Karen nationalism are associated with the 'union Karen' perspective, adopted by elites who - unlike the KNU and its predecessors - have sought an accommodation with the militarized state in Burma, rather than challenging its foundations. A related set of issues focuses on strategy. For 57 years, the KNU has pursued a policy of armed conflict with the government (with intermittent - but largely unsuccessful - peace talks). Particularly since the fall of the KNU headquarters in 1995, other elements within the nationalist community - including breakaway ex-KNU factions - have sought to pursue political and social agendas from 'within the legal fold.

The fragmentation of the insurgent movement notwithstanding, the last few years have seen an expansion and deepening of contacts and debate between Karen

elites - and within Karen civil society more broadly - including across the 'front-lines' of armed conflict. However, most outside observers still focus only on the military-political situation in the borderlands, rather than on various community development and civil society capacity-building initiatives undertaken by Karen groups 'inside' the country. In part, this distortion is due to lack of access to Karen communities 'inside' Burma; in part, it reflects ideological assumptions regarding the legitimacy of certain actors and strategies.

Unity in Diversity

Meanwhile, calls for unity among and between different sectors of the diverse Karen community remain widespread, and heartfelt. But what kind of unity, and how?

Since the mid-nineteenth century, various actors have attempted to impose a homogenous idea of 'Karen-ness', and a monolithic political unity, upon this diverse society. (Notions of a homogenous and militant pan-Karen - or pan-Kachin - identity are also fostered in the diaspora, among refugee communities and on the internet.) Such attempts to impose leadership have sometimes amounted to forms of 'internal colonization', mostly on the part of S'ghaw-speaking, Christian elites - which have in turn spurred rebellions, such as that of Democratic Kayin Buddhist Army.

The author is sympathetic to the deeply-held aspirations to self-determination of many members of the Karen and other ethnic nationality/minority communities in Burma. However, history has proved the quest for 'Karen unity', under the leadership of single elite grouping, to be illusive - and perhaps illusory. In contrast to efforts to establish a single Karen identity and political leadership, a consociational approach to social and political diversity within the Karen community would accept the segmented nature of this 'plural' society as a starting point - and seek to make a virtue out of this necessity.

Rather than trying to change Karen political society, and re-form its norms and values, a consociational approach would aim to work with elites, to build models of cooperation within and between different sectors of the community. The diversity of Karen society may then become its strength, rather than a source of perceived weakness.

PANEL 6:

INSCRIBING TRADITION: LITERATURE, TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Politics in the Paratext: The Political Effects of Cultural Artifacts in Pascal Khoo Thwe's *From the Land of Green Ghosts*

Lena Khor
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From the Land of Green Ghosts: A Burmese Odyssey (hereafter referred to in brief as *Green Ghosts*) tells the story of Burma's second independence struggle in 1988 through the life of a Padaung, Pascal Khoo Thwe. Reviewers have characterized the work as a quaint East-meets-West, coming-of-age success story, a reception that Susan Tridgell argues overlooks the political nature of the memoir. The cultural preoccupation of these reviews echoes Susanna Egan's concern that the genre of "global autobiography" "travels well but is not necessarily received as important" (Tridgell 80). In other words, Western readers perceive life narratives like Khoo Thwe's as cultural curiosities, not political manifestoes.

This paper seeks to bridge the divide identified by Tridgell and Egan between culture and politics by reading the cultural aspects of *Green Ghosts* as having political effects and accomplishing political ends. This paper will argue that the apparently simple cultural curiosities in *Green Ghosts* like the Western literary references can carry deeper political significance. It is important to distill the political from the cultural because neglecting to do so dismisses the political weight that works of "global autobiography" like *Green Ghosts* could potentially hold.

A Japanese-to-Myanmar Machine Translation System

Hla Hla Htay
University of Hyderabad, India

While the recent advances in information and communication technologies have, substantially reduced the barriers of space and time, language remains a formidable barrier in the age of globalization.

Translation is a key technology to make information stored in one language available to use of the other languages without the need to learn new languages. With increasing human costs, plummeting machine costs, and developments in language technologies, automatic translation has emerged as a promising alternative to manual translation.

Compared to other major languages of the world, relating less work has been done in Myanmar. Given the close relation Myanmar has with Japan, Japanese-Myanmar translation would go a long way in strengthening the relationship with our neighbors and friends. Myanmar and Japanese share many similarities and hence this is also a natural first choice. In this paper, we describe a prototype Japanese-Myanmar machine translation system we have developed.

This system is based on syntactic parsing and pattern matching. After dictionary lookup and parsing, target language sentence is generated using stored pattern. Final output is generated after checking for verb and tense agreement. The dictionary has more than 5000 entries and 44 POS tags are used. The database includes 27 sentence patterns. The whole system has been implemented in Visual Basic and Microsoft Access on Microsoft Windows Platform. A user friendly GUI is included. The system is designed to be extensible.

One of the major challenges in MT is Word Sense Disambiguation: word has multiple senses and the correct sense of word will have to be identified in given context. Further work is to develop a WSD system.

Why Aung San is not the Author the Blue Print

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Royal Anthropological Institute, UK

Aung San is still widely credited today with having devised the plans that prepared for the Japanese occupation of Burma in the form of the 'Blue Prin for Burma', a document commonly cited to justify one-party rule. While Aung San cooperated with the Japanese between November 1940 and 1 August 1944, here I argue why the assumption, still widely asserted, that Aung San was himself the author of the Blue Print document, should be rescinded. Also, I draw attention to how this document proved useful in justifying the centralization of the economy and one-party rule after 1962. The continued use of what are purported as Aung San's communications dating from the Japanese occupation period suggests that wartime politics continues to exercise an important influence even after 1962 in the form of a legacy of communications attributed to Aung San that does not pass scrutiny.

PANEL 7:

SHAPING BURMA THROUGH POPULAR CULTURE

Findings from Bagyi Aung Soe's Late Works:
An Unwonted Union of the Sacred and the Avant-garde?

Yin Ker
Paris- Sorbonne (Paris IV), France

Illustrator for magazines since Independence and pioneer of modern art in Myanmar, Bagyi Aung Soe (1924-1990) made extensive references to Buddhist teachings and mystical practices during the last decade of his life. Works from this period – both illustrations and private creations – reflect precepts commonly held by contemporary Myanmese Buddhists. They bear the influence of concentration (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*), and echo the arguments and instruments of the indigenous *weikza-lan*, as well as of Tantra which is fairly unknown in Myanmar today. His assimilation of sacred knowledge went beyond the graphic reproduction of symbols, charms and chants. He transposed his spiritual aspirations and experiences into his artistic mission statement and applied their practical methods to the act of creation. The fundamental nature of these images is intensely spiritual and Buddhist; they represent an intimate aspect of Myanmese cultural identity. However, due to their largely non-figurative mode of representation which recalls 20th century Western painting rather than classical Myanmese drawing – the widely accepted idiom for religious art, their significance has been overlooked, even underrated, by readers and artists alike. Aung Soe's notes suggest that he did not intend his works to be instruments of proselytism. Neither were they designed as mere tributes to the religious landscape. This paper first explores how the spiritual and the artistic serve each other – as intended by the artist – before questioning the reception, the "second lives" of these images: what do local responses suggest about contemporary Myanmese religious sentiment and visual sensibility, as interpreted by a foreign art historian conditioned by alternative contexts and insights?

Issues in Contemporary Culture

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The city is dark; humming with generators and flickering with candles, more than the year before. bars have been forced to close earlier this year, but still the streets are electric with activity. everything happens on the streets or so it would seem. There is an invisible tension to survival witnessed daily on the streets of Burma. It is the conflict in Burmese life between the structure imposed and the fluidity of the spirit. Nowhere did this juxtaposition seem more aptly expressed than within the arts and the regionalism of the artefact.

Modernist ideals of painting and sculpture are still taught in art schools not merely as foundation studies but as practise, acceptable within the structure. Life drawing, colour studies, landscape painting, still life, clay figure modelling and bronze casting of busts don the classrooms not studios. Even the methodology of instruction is a structure. In contemporary western culture, these seemingly dated forms of expression are disappearing within art schools. The studio is now often a classroom full of students facing their computer monitors digitally editing their electronic creations as the boundaries between art and technology dissolve. They strive to represent the sensorial potency of an idea in mediums that are strictly visual, thereby devoid of the very thing being expressed. Burma, by contrast, is a culture severed from leading edge technology and from the contemporary of art and design or so I originally and naively thought as I too fell momentarily into the façade of the structure.

Performance Art is an ephemeral act of expression in the immediacy of its meaning, akin to the intensity experienced on the streets of Burma, the theatre of life. The humanness of this experience is inherent within the spirit of the Burmese. It is thrilling, daunting and exciting as it is powerful and overwhelming to a westerner such as myself. The concurrence is between dated modernist ideals of sculpture and painting reflecting the impact of the imposing political structure and contemporary Burmese performance art reflecting the essence and issues of life in Burma. There is little that exists between these either in art or in life.

As a contemporary art form, performance art is the ideal medium to express the potency of the issues and circumstances of life in Burma which are always the content of every performative artwork. Does the existence of performance art derive from Burmese cultural history of the a-nyeint pwe, from the endless everyday interactions of people on the streets or as an affordable, expressive and shared response to the structure? I believe it is all of these possibilities and, as one Burmese performance artist stated, it allowed him to viscerally express what he thought and what he felt in the moment to avoid the eyes of the structure.

And yet, by economics, politics and propaganda, the performative in the making of the artefact promoted by the military as iconic and representational of its culture speaks as another media of expression unacknowledged within the culture, treasured by naïve tourists, and upheld as a form of labour enslavement and propaganda.

This paper will endeavour to explore current visual arts as defined beyond standardized definitions, creatively interpreted to discuss contemporary media in its similarities and contrasts within performance based themes.

Performance Ecology:
Vanishing Species on the Burma/Myanmar Stages

Catherine Diamond
Soochow University, Taipei

Darwin stipulated that the continuation of a species depended upon the survival of the fittest, not necessarily the strongest. Species of performing arts, too, depend upon adaptation techniques to survive the globalizing tendencies that are attenuating the spectator-performer bond in local habitats that previously supported artists and reinforced communal identity. The performing arts in Burma/Myanmar over the past century have demonstrated a variety of adaptation strategies, some have succeeded, while others have failed to the virtual demise of a genre. Those that have managed to survive are now facing new and greater challenges than ever before, and several major troupes have succumbed.

The once sovereign marionette troupes (*yoke-thay*) that were favored in the Mandalay court have almost disappeared, now performing mostly for tourists and being sponsored by foreign embassies. The troupes of *anyeint* dancers, who performed in the court of the last Burmese king, Thibaw (1885) and joined up with musicians and comedians to entertain wealthy merchants, and participate in town celebrations, are now on the wane. The *zat pwes*, the all-night entertainments put on as major attractions for pagoda anniversary festivals and which include classical dance, traditional and modern songs, modern and traditional spoken dramas, musical dramas, now rely primarily on the popularity of the 'stage show,' Burmese renditions of international pop songs. Theatres that in the 1970s featured popular locally written scripts are gone and no literary writers compose for the stage anymore. Many once-famous *yoke-thay*, *anyeint pwe*, and *zat pwe* troupes have folded, while others continue to exist in very difficult political and financial circumstances. This paper relates the vicissitudes of the Burmese cultural environment and the strategies adopted by various troupes, examining why some have failed and others have managed to survive.

Gender Trouble: Performing Gender in contemporary Myanmar

Ma Khin Mar Mar Kyi
Australia

'No one with eyes in his head could resist', George Orwell once remarked in his *Burmese Days* as he enjoyed *pwe in* colonial Burma (Orwell: 1935: 101)*.* Traditional performance of *Pwe* or *Anyeit* or Zat-pwe are sponsored not only by the royals but also commoners to celebrate their success, happyness or sadness at harvest time, *ahlu* merit-making ceremony , or *pongyipyan* when their sayadaw died . Such performances are according to Judith Butler, a feminist theorist, a reflection, acceptance, or action of how male and female, or masculinity or femininity, has been accepted, performed and acted based on their own culture (1990). In my paper, I will analysis how newly state sponsored performances and performativity, and through such gendering practices and practicing of gender in *pwe,* may help us to understand how gender identity is a construced processes in contemporary Burma.

PANEL 8:

TYPIFYING MYANMAR: ETHNICITY, MINORITIES AND THE PERIPHERY

Shan Noises, Singing with an accent: Consuming and Re-defining Shan Identity through Songs

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The paper examines how ethnic Shan singers utilize Burmese language to re-define their own ethnic identity, in the process helping to construct Shan's place in Burmese national imaginary. The paper focuses on the songs of two Shan artists, Sai Htee Saing and Sai Sai Mao. Sung in Burmese for three decades, both have gained nation-wide popularity and become two of the most famous singers in Burma's music industry. While performing in Burmese to cater Burmese speaking audience, their songs often reflect life in Shan state, introducing listeners in lower Burma to Shan culture. The paper consists of two parts. The first part discusses the dynamics of self-fashioning, examining what kinds of symbols are used to perform or portray Shan "selves," and how the idea of ethnic identity is constructed by these two Shan artists. The second part investigates the audience reception, exploring its consumption: who is the audience and whose interests does such a self-fashioning form serve? The paper aims to be a study of both self-fashioning and the consumption of it. Through participant observation, interviews with audience and the singers, my study seeks to illuminate how such self-fashioning and listening practices reveal complex relations between ethnicity and popular construction of identity.

Challenges of the Ethnic Politic Federalism and Answer?

Saw Mya Sandy
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For the case of Myanmar, some sensitive minorities and complex opposition groups suggest federalism as a compromise though some still demands for the secession or self-determination or more autonomy. It is because the federalism is one of the key elements of debates and discussions about democratization, decentralization, individual rights protection, and minority community guarantees. The federalist ferment is very much a searching reaction against the era of highly centralised nation-states which so often proved to be internally oppressive and externally aggressive. Federalism has, for many decades, been seen an answer to the challenges posed by multi-ethnic societies the world over. In some cases, the idea has worked, while in others it manifestly has not (see Iyer, April 2002). In Europe, there are success stories of federalism as well as of failed cases. The Federal Germany, Belgium that has become formally federal; Spain's post-fascist state is quasi-federal; and Austria sustains its federal system, remains a robust federation with a newly revised constitution. Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, Spain, and India are all characterized by linguistic, ethnic, and other forms of fragmentation, but their federal systems offer them the means for managing some of the leading problems associated with extensive pluralism. These successes are countered partly, however, with the failure, or potential failure of several other European federations. Thus, Czechoslovakia is now two countries, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Yugoslavia experienced traumatic disintegration into a shadow of its former self, and with a new federal arrangement, Bosnia-Herzegovina, having been carved out of former Yugoslav territory and now under western military guarantees. In Asia, India has sustained its federal 'Union of States' for more than 50 years, but Pakistan, again experiencing military rule, has had considerable difficulty building federalism and democracy. Hence here with this paper, I shall answer the question, if federalism is the answer to Myanmar ethnic problems.

PANEL 9:

REPRESENTING BURMA THROUGH POLITICS: THE MEDIA COMMUNITY

Pragmatism- Idealism and the role of media to promote political consciousness in Myanmar

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Myanmar Partners Think Tank Group (Living Color), Myanmar

There has been many arguments whether if the political consciousness of Burmese people at large is declining or not, among the scholars interested in Myanmar. Even though Myanmar does not have a civil society of an international context, in order to promote the political consciousness amongst it, there are a lot of elements which are considered to be part of the components of civil society that has created some track records of establishment of political consciousness during the 1988 uprising. These elements are still baring a lot of the role of the so called civil society under current military regime, but the political consciousness of the Burmese people at large seem declining during the previous eighteen years according to some random survey results. Again, the fact of the matter in regards to that existing political consciousness is that it is being so much idealistic.

Burmese Media-in-exile: Challenging the US model

Lisa Brooten
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This research focuses on the situation facing journalists from Burma (Myanmar) living in exile in Thailand in order to explore the consequences of political violence on the development of indigenous journalism in a multi-ethnic state and on representations of indigenous peoples. Debates about the role of media in situations of political violence call into question whether journalists should focus on "objective" reporting by representing "the facts," or should instead facilitate conflict resolution by representing the needs and concerns of the various parties to the conflict. Yet contributions to this debate assume that journalists are outsiders to the communities in conflict, an assumption that is increasingly problematic as aid agencies increase their funding for media development and journalism training in conflicted areas.

Drawing on data gathered from participant observation and in-depth interviews with journalists in Thailand and along the border between Thailand and Burma, this research examines how Burmese journalists in exile are struggling to develop a context-appropriate model for media development. It explores their efforts to adequately address the need to deal with disagreement and difference in a context of political violence and to challenge stereotypical representations of violent conflict in ways that better represent the needs of peoples indigenous to the conflict areas. The research calls into question the relevance of the dominant US approach to "objective" journalism. In this often dangerous context, the definition of concepts such as "unity," "media independence," and "censorship" must be seen as provisional and contested, given the various pressures brought to bear on journalists. The model of journalism arising organically in this context is influenced by the recent surge in foreign funding for journalism training, yet borrows elements of both the normative, objective model and the model of peace journalism. The inappropriate nature of imported journalistic ideologies, however, suggests the need for both a more complex model of media development and a challenge to stereotypical media representations in such complicated and conflictual contexts.

PANEL 10:

CONSTRUCTING THE SOCIAL IN MYANMAR STUDIES

Healing the Nation's Wounds: Collaborative Relationships around Health Programming in Myanmar

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National University of Singapore, Singapore

This paper examines health policy making and programming in contemporary Myanmar, focusing in particular how both humanitarian and trans-national concerns compel a level of sub- and international collaboration around health issues in Myanmar which is almost non-existent in other areas of government activity. The paper takes the example of HIV/AIDS programming, a focus of intense scholarly and media scrutiny both within Myanmar and beyond. It examines how the logistical and economic necessities of HIV/AIDS related interventions become a catalyst for dialogue and cooperation among groups including government ministries, non-governmental organizations, ceasefire groups, commercial actors, community level associations and coalitions, bi-lateral and multilateral consortia and funding bodies and UN organizations. The author argues that health may serve as a model for constructive engagement – internally as well as internationally – which transcends entrenched interests and hostilities and allows for capacity building and meaningful activity on the ground. In the absence of such collaborative efforts, it is argued, the future of the Myanmar economy and the people who are sustained by it may be irreparably harmed.

PANEL 11:

SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY IN MYANMAR

The Nature and Patterns of Remittance Flows from Burmese Workers in Thailand

Sean Turnell
Macquarie University, Australia

Burma set out upon the path of reforming its financial system in 1990. It has not been an easy journey since. A quickly emerging private banking sector seemed to augur well, but its fragility was cruelly exposed in a financial crisis in 2002 that brought the economy to a virtual standstill. Whilst there has been something of a recovery since, recurring crises and dramas, many of which seem to occur at the behest of the Burmese authorities themselves, have laid waste to former hopes.

Burma's poor economic performance is well documented. Less well examined, however, is the disproportionately prominent role that periodic crises in the country's financial sector have played in its economic malaise. From the land alienation of the colonial era, the failure of cooperatives, the descent into socialist financial repression, the episodic demonetisations, to the recent and looming failures of today, Burma's monetary and financial disasters have been drivers of its decline. This presentation will examine the key episodes in Burma's financial history from the colonial era, to the present failures and the promise of microfinance. Will the latter be Burma's last, best chance?

Remittances for Social Reproduction: The Case of Burmese Nurses in Singapore

Mika Toyota
National University of Singapore, Singapore

It is estimated that there are currently about 30,000 Burmese working and living in Singapore. The earlier migrants were mainly professionals such as doctors, engineers and technicians, and some of them have lived in Singapore for over twenty years and become permanent residents. Since January 1995 when a Singapore-Myanmar government agreement regarding contract care workers was signed, the number of nurses from Myanmar has been on the rise. The 'health attendants' and 'nursing aides' migrate to Singapore on two-year contracts which are renewable for up to four years if the employer wishes. After this, another two-year extension is possible with permission from the Singaporean Ministry of Manpower, but no further extension is permitted unless the migrant obtains the Singapore nurse certificate. The majority of those care workers are tertiary-educated single females, which reflects the non-marriage trend in Myanmar. The percentage of tertiary-educated females remaining single in Myanmar is 41.3 percent at age 35-44 and 34.1 percent at age 45-54.

This paper suggests that remittances have significant value not only for those who receive them but also for those who send them, the care workers. There are two types of remittances: the forced and the voluntary. The Myanmar military regime requires all Myanmar citizens overseas to pay 10 per cent of their salaries to the Myanmar embassies in the receiving countries, which is enforced through the control of passports. This paper focuses on the voluntary remittances and their significance for social reproduction for the migrants themselves. A large part of the voluntary remittances are sent back to support the education of siblings, care for the elderly, as donations to temples, or to support ordination rituals of younger male relatives. By doing so, the ideology of women as nurturing mothers in the Buddhist value system is sustained and reconfigured despite their unmarried status and the fact that they are far away from home. Thus, by extending the concept of 'global chain of care', this paper argues that while these Burmese migrant nurses are employed to care for the elderly and sick abroad, at the same time it enables them to symbolically practice "mothering" roles for the people in the home country without actually getting married.

The findings are based on my questionnaire survey data (n= 153) and the semi-structured in-depth interviews with Burmese care workers in Singapore. (Jan-June 2006)

Rural Poverty Assessment in Myanmar

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This study assesses the rural poverty with various dimensions such as income/consumption, health, education, and empowerment in the Dry Zone of Myanmar. A household survey, covering 220 male and female-headed households has been conducted in six selected sample villages. The consumption poverty indicators of headcount ratio, poverty gap, and square poverty gap indices reveal that the female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households in terms of food deficiency and overall poverty when household size adjustment was made. The regression analysis indicates that gender of head, family size, land holding size, degraded land, capital investment, numbers of crop grown, frequency of visiting the doctor, frequency of trainings attendance, and access to electricity are highly influenced on the rural poverty. The complementary finding of Participatory Assessment (women and men focus group discussion and wealth ranking) provides higher relative poverty estimates of rural households. Poverty assessment and targeting poverty alleviation programs should be carefully designed with multi-dimensions of poverty that would increase effectiveness in enhancing income and consumption levels, access to rural social services, and empowerment of rural households especially headed by the female.

PANEL 12:

FASHIONING THE FOREIGN: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND THE IMAGE OF MYANMAR

Indo-Myanmar relations in the era of pipeline diplomacy

Marie Lall
University of London, UK

Myanmar has been the one neighbour traditionally not featuring in the literature of Indian foreign policy. In part this was due to the non-existence of relations between the two countries for many decades as India held on to an outdated model of Nehruvian ideals in some aspects of its foreign policy formulation. Recent research however has pointed towards a shift in Indo-Burmese relations. This paper will analyse the reasons for such a shift placing them in the larger context of the reframing of India's foreign policy objectives under the BJP led NDA government in the late 1990s.

The paper will argue that the primary aim for such a shift was economic, as India moved away from Nehruvian ideals and reassessed its position globally and regionally, putting economic relations at the centre of its foreign policy formulation. This paper will also argue that the BJP government saw improving Indo-Myanmar relations as an intrinsic part of its policy vis-à-vis the North Eastern States and their decades of anti Indian insurgency.

This paper will also look at the geopolitics of energy and how energy has started to play a major role in international relations in South Asia. It will then describe India's energy needs, focusing in particular on gas which has lead to India's pipeline diplomacy and an increasing interest in relations with nations rich in gas and oil.

The paper concludes that India has been set on a new foreign policy path by the BJP and that an assessment of the current Congress led government shows no signs in returning to its Nehruvian roots.

Understanding of Myanmar-Thailand Relations:
Structural Development from 19th to Late 20th Centuries as the Essential Root of Problems

Pinitbhand Paribatra
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For long, the relationship between Myanmar and Thailand has always been relying on tensions and problems. Generally, there are several reasons to explain why such conflicts occurred, i.e. drug problems, border intrusion, illegal migration or even Myanmar government's ethnic politics. This paper rather attempts to give a new assumption. It proposes that, while those issues are indisputably causes of the number of conflicts between the two states, the distinction since the process of nation-building of the two countries seems to be fundamentally among all causes. The paper gives a comparative study between the history of Myanmar and that of Thailand from the late 19th to the late 20th century. It presents that both countries are similar as both had primitively been superpowers of the region and later on encountered the arrival of westerners, who brought both to the world of capitalism through ties of trade and commerce. Nevertheless, the paths of the two nations had been diverse since the late 19th century from the fact that Myanmar was colonized, while Thailand could retain her independence. As a result, because of the political interruption and dislocation in Myanmar, civil war and insurgencies paved the way for the military to make a coup under the flag of socialism. On the contrary, national unity gave a chance for Thailand to boost her economy under the flag of capitalism. It concludes that these provided political and economic discrepancies between two states which resulted in many current problems since the end of Cold War.

COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION 2006

PANEL 13:

INTERPRETING MYANMAR AS ITS TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Developments in Burmese Theatre Music

Ward Keeler

Nowhere does Burma's curious, paradoxical and inconsistent response to the modern world appear more clearly than in developments in its theatre music over the past several decades. In the past, the puppet theatre and za' genres each had their own rich musical traditions. These derived from and adapted classical music to stories, playing on associations to song texts and prior performances in order to comment on moments on stage. These practices have been largely supplanted in recent years, as an eclectic ensemble of Burmese and Western instruments have come to accompany performances with popular music familiar not from theatrical sources but from the mass media. The evocative power of the older music, based on intertextual references, is sacrificed in favor of the evocative power--familiar to Westerners and others the world over--of pop music linked to moments in one's own life. Theatre music is transformed in this way from a rarefied genre to a much more accessible and popular one, considered more appropriate to a changing society.

Aspiring to the diatonic just scale: U Khin Zaw's Construction of Burmese Music Theory

Gavin Douglas
University of North Carolina, USA

In the 1940s and 50s, as director of the Burma Broadcasting Service, U Khin Zaw led the charge to uplift the status of Burmese court music through his attempts to develop a systematic theory of the tradition. Educated in the United Kingdom in the 1930s, U Khin Zaw published in both English and Burmese on Burmese culture. Central to his mission was the valorization of Burmese traditional music on par with other internationally recognized world traditions and to establish a body of literature through which the foreigner could understand the tradition.

The post-1962 military dictatorship stalled the realization of his goals of a unified music theory yet his writings provide insights into the foundations of academic musicology (ethnomusicology?) and music theory in Burma and also of the role of music in post-colonial nation building strategies. U Khin Zaw's writings walk a fine line between assessing the properties of the Burmese system on their own terms and defending it as an evolving tradition developing along the lines of Western art music and aspiring towards an even tempered scale system. This paper will elucidate some of the key elements and tensions of U Khin Zaw's Burmese/Western theoretical fusion and contextualize this scholarship within the troublesome post-war years of Burma.

The Formation of Genre in Burmese Classical Songs – With Special Reference to the '*Alaik*' Technique

Sayuri Inoue
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This paper examines how genres of Burmese classical songs were formed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based on an analysis of a song-creating technique. The conventional literature on Burmese classical songs examines the themes, musical theory or political aspects of the songs. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research with respect to the creation of these songs, including their lyrics and melodies. In Burma, classical song anthologies are seemed to be one of the 'traditions'. In addition no studies have attempted to clarify the relationship between the songs in such anthologies. I intend to show that songs are not composed individually but in relation with other works. Moreover, based on the song-creating techniques, I intend to provide the history of the creation in song anthologies. Song anthologies are not only a list of songs, but they also provide the history of the creation of these songs. The genres of classical songs diversified in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when a majority of these works were composed. Numerous songs, in which new lyrics are written for existing melodies (or whose creating technique involves borrowing and quoting from other works), were written during this period. In the Burmese language, such songs are known as '*Alaik*' of old songs. The word '*Alaik*' means 'melody'. Although this technique has few references, I consider it to be the most important technique in the composition of Burmese classical songs. While an artistic work is generally expected to be remarkably unique in contemporary times, the composition of Burmese classical songs required the knowledge of old songs and the ability to borrow from the old songs, and to reshape or arrange them. This technique is similar to the '*honkadori*' technique in Japanese *Haiku* and poetry, which involves quoting or borrowing from famous works and can be appreciated by the people who possess basic knowledge of poetry. I will focus on the lyrics and melodies of '*Alaik*' songs and their originals. This paper ends by suggesting the Burmese concept of a 'creative' act.

Spirit Worship in Myanmar

Ma Thanegi

Spirit worship has a long history in Myanmar's culture and their popularity has not waned with modernization. It exists side by side with Buddhism and it is fascinating to see how the animists ensure that they do not face conflicts with the largely Buddhist society. This is possible through the way the mediums insist that the Spirits are devout Buddhists as well as the presence of celestials and supernatural beings in Buddhist lore. However, there is a distinct difference between the two types, sometimes misunderstood by western scholars as they all go by one name: Nat.

The worship of the 37 Lords and Ladies as the deities are called is in some ways similar to the entertainment of traditional theatre. The rituals are neither solemn nor gloomy on the tune of Midnight Mass of devil worships etc. of some sects of the west. There are strict rituals for ceremonies both private and public but mostly it is performed with music, dance and feasting.

The role of Spirit worship has not diminished but in the open market society it has new roles not only as means of getting higher profits through the favour of these gods but as a feast one could enjoy with friends and clients.

COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION 2006

PANEL 15:

THE MYANMAR HISTORICAL COMMISSION AS INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY

Palm-leaf Manuscript Record of a Mission Sent by the Myanmar King to the Chinese Emperor in mid-18th Century

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Myanmar Historical Commission, Myanmar

In 1983 the author of this paper bought an extremely rare palm-leaf manuscript recording in Myanmar language, a detailed record of a Diplomatic Mission sent by the Myanmar King Maha Dhamma Yazar Dipati (r.1733-1752) to the Chinese (Manchu) Qianlong Emperor (r.1736-1795). This is the only record, which has survived on palm-leaves, giving details of a Myanmar Mission to China, one of a number sent at various periods of Myanmar history.

The paper gives details about the manuscript and the historical data found in the text: (1) the arrival of a bogus Chinese Mission at Innwa (Ava) led by Aye Thu Yei (Wu Shang-hsien), a Chinese entrepreneur (leader of silver miners) and also a political leader of the Wa region on the Myanmar-China frontier, of how the Myanmar King sent a return mission in *Sakarac* 1111 (AD 1750) to China led by Minister Thiri Kyaw Htin and Aye Thu Yei; (2) A detailed Itinerary of the Journey giving the distances between post-stages; (3) Text of the Myanmar King's letter to the Chinese Emperor; (4) Presents sent including ten elephants, eight for the Emperor and two for the Empress, the Queen Mother; (5) Descriptions of the Chinese Court and ceremonies; (6) Letter and Presents sent back by the Chinese Emperor and several other interesting information useful for obtaining historical data and understanding Myanmar-China relations at the end of the Nyaung-yan Period (c 1600-1752), the Restored Toungoo Dynasty, established by the Prince of Nyaung-yan, a younger son of the great King Bayinnaung (1551-1581).

Some of the historical information found in the Myanmar palm-leaf manuscript record has now been verified from research carried out with Chinese records by Mr. Chen Yi-sein (retired Advisor on Chinese Sources, Myanmar Historical Commission, died 2005) and Dr. Sylvie Pasquet (CNRS, Paris). They have also discovered what was thought to be one of the letters sent by the Myanmar King with the Envoys on this Diplomatic Mission; a "Royal Letter" on a silver (or tin?) plate, shaped like a palm-leaf. It was probably for the Empress, the Queen Mother of the Qianlong Emperor. The silver (or tin?) plate letter, now preserved in the National Palace Museum in Tapei, Taiwan, could have been written in Yunnan, or near the Myanmar frontier by a Shan Sawbwa and Aye Thu Yei.

The paper concludes with comments on the identity and role of Aye Thu Yei, or Wu Shang-hsein, the self-appointed Emissary, the nature of the Myanmar-China relationship through intermediaries and interpreters in Yunnan, of how the Chinese leaders of the Wa people on the frontier played an important role in interpreting and facilitating this relationship.

The Genesis of a National Army:
The Burma Independence Army

U Hla Shain
Myanmar Historical Commission, Myanmar

Since the time Myanmar became a British colony, the Myanmar people had resented the rule of the country by foreigners. Myanmar had been a proud and independent nation but due to the circumstances of that time, she was compelled to acquiesce in the rule of the British for the time being, after a few years of futile revolt and uprising.

Nationalist sentiments which had lain low for about a decade began to rear its head at the beginning of the 20th century. Myanmar nationals drew their inspirations from the Indian National Congress movements for home-rule. Further more, the defeat of the western power by Japan had destroyed the myth of the "invincibility of the west".

Some western educated youths, enamoured with liberal ideas established the YMBA, styled on the YMCA, ostensibly to work for social and religious reforms. After Wilson's 14 point programme which highlighted the right of self-determination for all the people of the world the YMBA transformed itself into the GCBA which agitated for political reforms and home-rule. Constitutional methods were employed to that end but the British raj procrastinated which fomented impatience on the part of the Myanmar nationalists.

The 'Dohbama Asiayone' (Thakin party) took a more radical approach in the movement for independence. It drew its inspirations from the I.R.A. Sinn Fein movement. Jose Laureal and Michael Collins were their role-models. The Thakins also studied leftist literature which further inflamed the nationalist spirit to an all time high.

When WWII broke out, the revolutionary Thakins took the opportunity to demand on the British for a promise to grant independence to the country in exchange for cooperation and support to the British war effort. The latter however stepped up punitive measures to suppress the Thakins. Finally, the fiery Thakins resolved to seek outside help to fight the British by force of arms.

Meanwhile, Japan had been making a close study of Myanmar political situation. The 'Burma Road' had been a thorn in the side of the Japanese. Japan's initial aim was to enlist support of the Thakins and other revolutionary elements to engage in covert activities to disrupt the traffic on the Burma Road. But later on Japan pledged to forge an army to fight the British.

The B.I.A. with the Thirty Comrades as its nucleus was formed in Thailand under the sponsorship of the Minami Kikan on 26th December 1941.

Thus for the first time in history, a national army was created composed of all ethnic races of Myanmar. Even several Mons, Shans and Burmans who had taken up resident in Thailand came to join the ranks of the B.I.A.

Thus in opposition to the army that had existed before 1942 which was composed of mercenaries and so-called collaborators, a true national army was ingested to liberate and defend their territory from foreign rule and incursions. This national army is now widely considered to be the institutional forerunner of the present day "Tatmadaw".

PANEL 16:

THE SHAN VILLAGE IN PERIPHERAL BURMA: PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT, COMMUNITY AND CHANGE

Tradition and Revolution in a Shan Village

David Mathieson
Australian National University, Australia

The fifty year civil war in the Shan State has been extremely disruptive to traditional Shan village composition. Conflict, forced relocation and migration have increased the mobility of people throughout the Shan Sate and along the Thailand-Burma border. New communities have emerged as a result, many in border enclaves, with some of them under the control of anti-government insurgents. This paper looks at one village on the border, inside Shan State, formed as a result of conflict and development and which is under the control of the Shan State Army-South, and composed of rural and urban Shan, Akha, Lahu and other Shan State nationalities.

How do villagers live in these new spaces under insurgent control? How much of their everyday life is conditioned and controlled by insurgent administration? How is a 'revolutionary village' different from a 'Shan village'? By looking at ritual and ceremony, I aim to explore the tensions and cooperation between ethnic groups and a 'shadow state' that seeks to recreate the patterns of village life under an administration that promotes 'Shan' nationalism. By looking at ceremony, such as the Akha New Rice Festival, and the performance of villager and soldier roles, we can discern a shared notion of tradition and resistance in these new spaces of the 'Shan village'.

The Commoditization of Displacement: The Diasporic Experience of Shan Migrant Communities along the Burmese-Thai Border

Aranya Siriphon
Chiang Mai University, Thailand

This anthropological examination of Shan migrant communities focuses on laborers who live and work in northern Thai orchards along the Burmese-Thai border. For economic and political reasons these displaced Shan have fled Burma. They now survive as both legal and illegal migrant workers in this sensitive and contested border zone. While ethnic violence and exploitation continues within Burma, negative images and portrayals of Burmese migrants have gained a stronger hold on the Thai psyche. This has led to the Thai public's acceptance of the government's unstable labor policies and increasingly strict controls on cross-border movement. At the same time, Thai businesses demand cheap labor to ensure their profitability. In the border field site that is the focus of this study, it is agricultural businesses—especially longan and orange orchards—that have successfully expanded their operations using Shan migrant labor.

After tracing the experiences and issues faced by Shan displaced communities, this paper proposes to examine the 'commoditization of displacement'. This is the result of power processes at the points where nation-states, capitalism and ethnicity intersect. The intersection of these power processes can be illustrated through the lived experience of the Shan workers in orchards along this border. Their socio-cultural practices, events such as the "door-opening" religious festival, and the historical construction of the Nareasuan King, all contribute to a revitalized conception of village and place. Their experiences illustrate some of the difficulties faced by Shan villagers as their status in the region is compromised on the margins of both Burma and Thailand.

Shan Villages in Burmese Peripheral Vision

Nicholas Farrelly
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Burma's multi-ethnic border regions retain many challenges for the nation-state's majority Burmese population. Throughout the country's periphery, plans for national integration and greater political unity have often been answered by robust local resistance. The control asserted and enforced by central Burmese authority has led to much discontent and bloodshed. Within this environment of opposition and strife, Burmese voices have increasingly sought to assert their mandate in areas—like the Shan State, in the country's north-east—that have been traditionally dominated by other ethnic groups.

Drawing on vernacular language material, this paper seeks to examine Burmese ethnological visions of their country's Shan periphery. Such inter-communal descriptions help clarify how Shan villages—the places where most Shan live— have been seen through Burmese eyes. Burmese visions of the periphery and of their neighbor's economic, political and social organizations seek to define the Shan village on Burmese terms. Those terms—which have also led to such misery in some Shan villages—are part of a broader and sometimes very awkward Burmese engagement with the country's rural periphery.

In clarifying a range of Burmese perspectives on Shan village organization, the interpretative legitimacy of such commentary and analysis is questioned. The diversity of these Burmese perspectives can help better define the major inter-ethnic relationship influencing contemporary Shan life. By asking difficult questions of the Burmese language material, hopefully *the Shan village*—and its varied and troubling recent history—is brought into much sharper focus.

The Global Village in Shanland: Global Industries, National Media, and Shan Practice at the Thai-Burma Border

Jane Ferguson
Cornell University, USA

While some media theorists and political pundits laud the information age as providing the infrastructure for a "global village" of consumer media awareness, the ethnographic method, in general, still requires knowledge predicated on face-to-face interaction and local language fluency. The ethnographic terrain of the Shan State provides a dynamic case-in-point to such inquiries; while local ethnography is essential to understanding ethnic nationalities which are likely to be left out of dominant print and electronic media, some groups, including the Shan, have shown an increasing interest in producing their own popular media. Based on ethnographic research carried out in a Shan community in the Thai-Burma borderlands, this paper will examine the ways in which popular culture practices, from production to distribution and consumption, interrogate conceptions of local culture, information flows, and the nation.

PANEL 17:

INTERPRETING CIVIL SOCIETY AS MYANMAR

Current Role of MFF in Enhancing Civil Society in Myanmar

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Myanmar Fisheries Federation, Myanmar

For recent years (from 1988) under this government by the outside world, civil society in Myanmar / Burma has almost non existence after long ruled of socialist system. It has long been recognized that individuals and communities choose to associate and meet their needs for goods and services through institutions other than states, markets or households in Myanmar informally or semi-formal ways. But most of them are non profit cultural or religious associations. Especially during socialist era, apart from the state organized interest groups and civil society style organizations, third sector in Myanmar had hindered. After 1988 by the so called system changed, some interest groups have been emerged i.e. Business Chambers. Myanmar Fisheries Federation MFF has been established for that reason at the beginning but eventually the MFF has evolved up to the active civil society in Myanmar third sector. In this paper some vital facts about MFF were presented as general information i.e. How MFF as private sector non-profit organization organized, self-governing and legal position, non-profit distribution and voluntary nature of the members for the activities were briefly described. Distinctiveness of MFF was her role in policy development, advocacy process, capacity building, technology acquisition and institutional strengthening from the other so called civil societies in Myanmar. This was described with comprehensive examples regarding enhancing civil society in Myanmar with her limited resources with rich political will.

PANEL 18:

COMMUNITIES OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE FASHIONING OF EARLY BURMA

The Rock Carvings at Padaw

Bob Hudson
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In the 19th century, Forchhammer drew and described a group of rock carvings at Padaw, a site 16 kilometres south of Mrauk-u, in Arakan. In "*Antiquities of Arakan*" he linked together the individual carvings, of boats, animals and human figures, in a narrative of a battle between invaders and locals, which remained the received interpretation of the site. In 2005, the author and Pamela Gutman became the first westerners to visit Padaw for many years, after a military camp that had kept foreigners from going into the area was moved elsewhere. Detailed rubbings and new digital drawings of the rock pictures show that Forchhammer's sketches were inaccurate, and demonstrate that the "narrative" interpretation of this fascinating group of carvings is no longer tenable. The site seems to have been a quarry during the Mrauk-u period, and quarry workers might be suspected to have created the rock-cut figures. However there is a considerable stylistic gap between unfinished or abandoned religious pieces scattered around the site and the cluster of folk carvings. While Forchhammer's widely cited interpretation can be safely abandoned, we must therefore resist the urge to draw quick conclusions.

The Southern Dry Zone of Burma, 10th to 13th Century: An Archaeological Perspective

Shah Alam Zaini
University of Hawaii, USA

Early urbanisation and urbanism in the Dry Zone of Burma during this period has largely been equated with the rise and decline of the various political entities in the Dry Zone – the Pyu and Burman kingdoms. This view is based on the prevailing historical narrative, and the aims of Burmese archaeology: to fill gaps in the early chapters of Burmese history and to correlate its pre- and proto-historic period with its known periods. Recent field research in Sriksetra has yielded data that allows for a possible alternative perspective on urbanism in the southern Dry Zone during the Pagan period. This was a period when the kingdom of Pagan was considered to have been the dominant polity in the Dry Zone, the political core having shifted to the central Dry Zone. Sriksetra was still a major urban centre in the Pagan period. While it is evident from the data that Pagan was the dominant political and military entity in the Dry Zone, Sriksetra may have retained a relatively high degree of social and economic autonomy. The continuing importance of Sriksetra as an urban centre, however, becomes more apparent when one examines the geographical location of the site. Sriksetra is in a strategic location at the southern entrance to the Dry Zone. Trade and exchange was important even for an agrarian kingdom.

The Mrauk U Palace Excavations

Nyein Lwin

The palace at Mrauk-u is a complex walled in stone and brick, sitting in the middle of a city that was renowned for its artificial lakes, moats and canals, and for the extensive stone, brick and earth walls which surrounded it. The palace site has seen a number of extensions and additions during the 15th-18th century Mrauk-u period. Archaeologist Nyein Lwin has excavated and explored a number of sites in Mrauk-u, including the palace. He will give some details of his work on the palace site, and describe the structures and artifacts found there.

PANEL 19:

SIMPLE BELIEFS AND UNIFORM TRUTHS: QUESTIONING THE HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF BURMA PASTS

Arakan's Imagined Place in the Theravada World: Between Burma, Sri Lanka and Nineteenth Century Perspectives on the Continuity of the Sasana

Jacques Leider
SEAMEO Centre for History and Tradition, Myanmar

The pre-colonial Burmese chronicle writing of the Konbaung period has not only formatted for a long time our reading of Burmese history. Texts produced at that time have also produced a certain vision of the history of Buddhism in Burma. Taking a critical approach, there is an urgent need to contextualize what are mostly programmatic interpretations and representations of that history. This paper illustrates by an example how, in Burmese historiography, the matter of historical writing is a malleable substance that is variously used and adapted to particular ideological needs. It will make, on the other hand, a contribution to the study of inner-monastic debates in the nineteenth century.

Analyzing and contextualizing an Arakanese text of 1872 that claims to establish Arakan's major contribution to the continuity of the sasana in Sri Lanka (!), the paper will also pay attention to the challenges that Arakanese Buddhism had to cope with after 1785.

From Ava to Mandalay: Towards Charting the Development of Burmese Yazawin Traditions

Alexey Kirichenko
Moscow State University, Russia

For more than a century Burmese chronicles of kings (*yazawin*) are used by historians but besides a number of synoptical articles no major study of them have been undertaken so far. Though the data contained in the most well-known of these chronicles are considered reliable after circa 1500 and provided a timeline of events for almost every research on precolonial history of Myanmar we still have a very vague understanding of their textual nature and conditions in which these sources were produced, foundations on which they were constructed, and messages they carried.

The paper analyses the corpus of Burmese *yazawins* and similar narrative sources which are inseparably linked with *yazawins* and were instrumental in the development of *yazawin* traditions. Based on archival and textological research carried out for a number of years both on published and unpublished sources it addresses the issues of typology and genealogy of *yazawins*, reconstruction of their development in terms of scope, structure, information content, conceptual focus, and function. The paper challenges some common historiographic stereotypes as regards *yazawins* as a whole and the nature of individual sources in particular and argues for identification of a number of *yazawin* traditions which developed alongside and influenced each other but nevertheless represented a kind of distinct entities with the overall corpus. The role of several royal cities (mainly Ava, Taungngu, and Pagan) and their elites in the production of *yazawins* is explored. Development of *yazawin* traditions is analysed both as a kind of established textual activity with its own dynamics and a function of changes in the organization of power, overall textual culture and worldview of communities which produced these texts. Finally, a number of tasks which should be urgently addressed by researchers in the field is suggested. All in all, the paper is conceived as a contribution towards the textology and hermeneutics of Burmese narrative sources and history of ideas in Myanmar in general.

A 200 Year Silence: How the Burmese have been removed from Northern Thai Buddhist History

Justin McDaniel
University of California, USA

Historians have largely ignored the Burmese Period of Northern Thai history. In general, Burmese influence has been written out of normative Thai history. When discussed, the Burmese invasion of Northern Thailand in the 1550s is often described as ushering in a period of decline in Buddhism after its "Golden Age" from 1400-1550. However, manuscripts, inscriptions, and literary evidence suggest that this was not a period of serious decline and, in fact, the teaching of Buddhism survived and in many cases thrived under Burmese rule. I explore the available evidence and suggest new ways of looking at Buddhist history and development in the region from 1550-1893.

Towards a Norm of Burmese Kingship? The Concept of Raza-dhamma in Five Konbaung-Period Texts

Aurore Candier
EHESS, France

My objective is to study the concept of raza-dhamma (kingship and the rules of royal conduct) in five significant texts of the "middle and late Konbaung period" (1824-1878): the Razaw-wada-kyan written by the Monrwe hsayadaw from 1827 to 1832; the Dhammaw-padetha-kyan written in 1829 by Maha-dhamma-thinkyan, former Maung Htaung hsayadaw and thathanabaing of king Bodawhpaya; the Raza-thewaka-dipani-kyan written twenty years later by the third Maung Htaung hsayadaw; the Raza-dhamma-thingaha-kyan finished by a high official, Hpo Hlaing, in 1878. These four texts may be considered as treatises of political philosophy. The Hman-hnan maha-raza-win-daw-kyi, the great royal chronicle compiled in 1829 laid the groundwork for these works by connecting the royal succession to the original myth of Mahathammata intimately linked to the notion of raza-dhamma. While scholars have limited hitherto their perspectives to the raza-dhamma as they can be traced in early Konbaung sources, this paper will attempt a more systematic approach tracing the evolution of a commentarial genre that broadened the concept of raza-dhamma. In the context of this development of nineteenth century political thinking, the emergence of a norm of kingship is of particular interest and will be closely examined.

Changing Images of Gender in Myanmar Romantic Fiction

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Romantic fiction has, been a very popular genre in Myanmar since the earliest days of mass literature. Love, as a universal theme of human existence, moves and captures readers here like anywhere in the world. The roles played in the usual set of two or three actors are, however, strongly determined by the author's view of society, and as will be shown in this paper, by his position in the literary field (as used by Bourdieu) and his relationship to the field of politics at the time of writing.

This is to be examined exemplarily in four very popular romantic novels from Myanmar.

Two of the authors Tekkatho Hpone Naing and Ma Sanda both were in government service at the time of writing and have been closely associated with nationalist politics. In their work they present an idealised vision of Myanmar culture and gender roles, the deviation from which – especially by female actors – leads to disaster.

The other two authors chosen, Ju and Min Lu were occupied in the private economy and have a rather distanced relationship with official politics, both suffering more or less severe repressions. Their presentation of Myanmar social values, and "traditional" gender imageries is satirical or openly critic, asking for change and the rethinking of tradition.

This, besides depending partially on the individual biographies of the authors, is symptomatic for large parts of the literary scene in Myanmar since the early eighties: Turning the back on officially propagated nationalist ideology, looking more critically at ones own society and asking for change. At the core lies the quest for a modernisation of Myanmar society that is perceived as a threat by those who fear change and as a necessity by those who are not satisfied with the current situation in the country. Still, however, there is much "very Myanmar" in the approaches and styles of authors like Ju and Min Lu.

PANEL 20:

MYANMAR THROUGH IT'S ECONOMY

A Way of Life: Trans-border Trade among Migrant Yunnanese between Thailand and Burma, 1960s-1980s

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This paper aims to investigate the transborder trade undertaken by the migrant Yunnanese between Burma and Thailand during the Burmese socialist regime ruled by General Ne Wen. During this period, the consumption demands of Burmese society were primarily met by the black market linked to the underground border trade. Natural resources and raw materials, such as rice, teak, cattle, antiques, hides, ivory, opium, and jade stones were smuggled out to neighboring countries from the areas controlled by rebel groups, and in return daily consumer items and weaponry were smuggled into Burma. Mule caravans transported most goods. Ethnic militias imposed taxes on the contraband and used the money for meeting army expenses. Thailand, a market-oriented country, was the major partner in the illegal trade with Burma. More than half of all the smuggled goods were imported from there.

In these trading activities, the migrant Yunnanese dispersed in northern Thailand and upper Burma had played a dominant role, in connection with Yunnanese and other ethnic militias. Their trading networks had constituted a "popular realm" paralleled to the regimes of Burma and Thailand. On the one hand it availed an informal power in opposition to these state powers, but on the other hand, it integrated the state apparatuses of Burma and Thailand for their operation.

This paper adopts a transborder perspective that focuses on the issue of connectivity of interacting forces for the examination of the economic livelihood of migrant Yunnanese. It suggests that the activity space of this Yunnanese popular realm was not defined by borderlines but by connectivity. In terms of political economy, it did not restrict to the narrow strips of the Thai-Burmese border zones, but extended to a wide stretch of borderlands covering northern Thailand, the Shan and Kachin states of Burma. In addition, its fluidity corresponds to the concept of "procedure landscape" used by Sturgeon (2005), which stresses attention to process instead of a fixed point of time, and also to that of "diasporic activity space" termed by Ma (2003), that emphasizes human agency and connectivity.

PANEL 21:

THE MARGINAL MONS IN THEIR DIASPORIC PROCESS: THE CASE OF A MON COMMUNITY IN SANGHLABURI, THAILAND

The Mons in Sangkhlaburi and their Self-Determination

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Rangsit University, Thailand

Various forms of violent acts only speak of larger problems facing Thailand: problems of unequal political rights, unequal economic distribution, and a 'democracy of interests', all leading to human and community rights violations while threatening the traditional Buddhist way of life. Thailand as a plural society with various marginal ethnic groups needs to develop the ability to compete in the global economy, while preserving the rights of its people – essentially, a true, working democracy, and people's participation. Consequently, some marginal ethnic grass-root groups, including the Mon community in Sangkhlaburi, have begun organizing to claim petty rights in everyday life through public forums, public hearings, and struggles for public space, etc. This trend of small-scale demands by marginal groups of people sharing a similar problem has gradually expanded and in the future, will result in a wider and stronger public political space and a more participatory democracy. The continued violation of human rights in Thailand partly results from the unbalanced structure of society which shapes policy-making, the distribution of the national budget, and laws and regulations of all kinds. The challenge for Thai society at present, and in crisis, is to develop the ability to compete in the liberal economic system on the one hand, while on the other hand preserving the rights of the people, especially those whose rights are most vulnerable in a competitive environment. What is needed is a truly participatory democracy which respects the dignity of humanity and which provides space for people to choose their own way of life. A new paradigm of thought in policy making is needed to unify the multi-nationalities of Thailand. People's participation, *self-determination* and a *self-autonomous region* may be the answer. Because Thailand is an extremely diverse nation, *'self-determination as national strategy'* in accordance with the Thai Constitution (1997), would bind peoples of difference together. The right strategy would stabilize 'Buddhism at risk', bring back the 'smiles' to all ethnic citizens of Thailand, including the Mon community in Sangkhlaburi, at the Thai-Myanmar border. Such a *paradigm shift* in policy making and national strategy, would allow the people of the region(s) in crisis themselves to transform their local communities and region(s) to become a *constitutionalized self-autonomous region*, in accordance with the United Nations' policy towards indigenous communities. The **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** (drafted at its 11th Session, 2004), may be considered seriously as an alternative to solve the unrest ethnic conflicts in Thailand in the coming phase and the years to come.

Glossaries and Local Wisdom Literatures Translated from Mon Manuscripts into Thai Language

Bussaba Prapasapong
Ministry of Education, Thailand

The objective of this research was to gather vocabularies of various categories including plants, animals, diseases, herbs and healing that have been written in many documents in the forms of palm leaf manuscripts, diaries and other reproduced documents. The researcher also selected Mon literatures and translated them into Thai. Most of the documents under this study were listed in the research that was submitted to the Ministry of the Education of Thailand in 2001. These documents have been kept in Mon temples and some of them belong to the Mons and their descendants who have dwelled the central region of Thailand as the private properties. This research will be used as a guideline for the study of the indigenous knowledge of the Mons in Thailand. The content of the research is divided into six parts, namely: Part 1: Introduction; Part 2: Local wisdom of Mon language and the root of Mon culture; Part 3: Indigenous knowledge in the Mons' daily life; Part 4: Mon-Thai glossaries by the Ministry of Education; Part 5: Mon literature, ancient medicinal recipes by various sources which were translated into Thai; and Part 6: Summary and Suggestion. The elaborated information will provide a rich context of the Mon wisdom evidently shown in their written archives found in Thailand.

Mon Nationalism and the Invention of Traditions:
The Case of the Mons in their Diasporic Communities.

Juajan Wongpolganan
Thammasat University,Thailand

The purpose of this research is to study and analyze the invention of Mon traditions by making use of Eric Hobsbawm's concept on the invented traditions. From my intensive field investigation and my serious study of archival records, it is evidently shown that there have been valid solidarities among the Mons themselves, both in their homeland and their diasporic communities overseas. I propose that the Mons have invented various forms of new traditions like national costumes, national flag, national anthem, and national day, etc. in their transforming process of struggle for survival and their social movement to maintain and reconstruct their ethnic identities. However, in order to be not to jump into any conclusion, concrete evidences which are available in my field sites will be well-chosen and elaborated to support my application. It is hoped that the issue which is brought to discussion will richly contribute to my careful intensive PhD research.

PANEL 21: THE MARGINAL MONS IN THEIR DIASPORIC PROCESS: THE CASE OF A MON COMMUNITY IN SANGHLABURI, THAILAND

No Country, No Home: The Tragic Story of A Mon Community

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Wangka Village is a Mon community in Sangkhlaburi District, a Thai-Burmese border town of Kanchanaburi Province, western Thailand. Most of the villagers, approximately 6,000, are Mon ethnic refugees from Burma who had migrated group by group since 1949, and established the village in 1953 under the leadership of Rev. Uttama, a Mon monk from Ye.

The Wangka Village is situated in the land granted by Thai government to Rev. Uttama for building a monastery, Wat Wangwiwekaram, so he will look after the monastery and the Mon community as well. Rev. Uttama is highly respected by Mon, Karen and Thai peoples both laymen and officials for his generosity and ability to help any trouble asked for. The monasteries, schools and hospital in Sangkhlaburi were built under his patronage. General Thai public also regards him as respectable meditation master.

The turmoil of civil war in Burma after General Ne Win seized the power in Rangoon in 1962, increased the number of refugees to the village. After the Mon nationalist group, the New Mon State Party (NMSP), had moved to The Three Pagodas Pass as it strong hold, Sangkhlaburi became flourished as border trade center with Burma under the control of Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA), the armed force of NMSP. The Wangka villagers had a strong tied with the party.

For over 50 years of living in Thailand, and two generations of people, the Wangka villagers still have the status of 'illegal immigrant,' not even as 'refugee,' because Thailand never acknowledge the status. Around 4,000 villagers who came into Thailand before 1966 are issued 'pink card' and called 'Burmese national displaced person', another 2,000 who came in after 1966 received 'orange card' and called 'Burmese national illegal immigrant.' They can live and work only in the area of Sangkhlaburi district and must ask for permission to go outside the district.

The second generation of the villagers now aged around 40 and under, they were born in Thailand and educated from Thai schools in Sangkhlaburi. They speak Thai fluently and as clearly as Thai people. The lack of citizenship means the lack of the rights to live as Thai people. They cannot own land, to further their education, to seek better fortune outside the restricted area. They also come under the mercy of Thai officials who may ask to check their cards and permissions; to cause troubles for monetary and material benefits.

Their situation is worsen by the weakening health of Rev. Uttama, now over 90, who is the only hope for the villagers. If without him, the land of the monastery and the village will return to Thai officials and the villagers have no place to go. They cannot go to Burma because they were born in Thailand, they cannot live in Thailand because they are not Thai citizen.

PANEL 22:

COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION WITHIN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MYANMAR

Post-Prince Damrong Historical Scholarship Concerning Pre-modern Thai-Burmese Warfare: A Reappraisal

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The history of pre-modern Thai-Burmese warfare has never been outdated and insignificant. Politically, it has been utilized to construct Thai nationalism in diverse degrees. Culturally, it is one of the most fascinating Thai popular histories continually presented by various kinds of mass media. Scholarly, it is essential for understanding the development of mainland Southeast Asian polities. Prince Damrong's monumental work—*Our Wars with the Burmese* marked an important milestone in the historical scholarship on this subject. His bible-liked treatise has generally been expanded by those of mainstream. Meanwhile, it has been argued against and deconstructed by a number of prominent Thai and foreign scholars. The paper examines the progress and limitations of the post-Prince Damrong historical researches as well as proposes a new historical interpretation of the pre-modern Thai-Burmese warfare.

The post-Prince Damrong scholarship has made considerable progress in terms of historical approach, interpretation, and source materials. Notwithstanding, theirs remain some crucial limitations. Firstly, the subject is mainly treated within a Thai-centric analytical framework. Secondly, very few studied the connection of political, economic and/or social conditions to military operation integrally. Thirdly, the scope of analysis has mostly been confined to either specific battle or particular period. Finally, these limitations lead to the static treatment of its nature of conflict and to the neglect of a critical dynamic throughout the whole series of warfare. Dealing with the unexplored issues requires more in-depth studies of the connection of pre-modern Thai-Burmese warfare to the growth and development of Burmese states; the first Toungoo empire, the restored Toungoo empire and the early Konbaung empire, respectively.

From Cakravartin to Minsaw:
Charting the Changing Interpretations of Anawrahta's Kingship

Goh Geok Yian
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One of the important goals of historiographers is to chart changing perceptions of historical figures and events. These changes sometimes result from actions taken by indigenous scribes who perceived a need to alter the representation of historical personages. In a corpus of texts, King Anawrahta of Bagan (1044-77) became an important trope for the Buddhist *cakravartin*, a generic "universal monarch." He is characterized as a powerful Buddhist monarch in 15th- and 16th-century northern Thai chronicles, and in Burmese chronicles, mainly of the 18th and 19th centuries. However the Burmese texts differ from the Thai chronicles in that they appear to present a somewhat ambiguous assessment of the 11th-century king. Contrary to the belief of most scholars, Burmese chronicles can be read as critical texts. This paper will show that the mythologization and subsequent demythologization of Anawrahta in the chronicles is indicative of the development of a critical mind within the scribal vocation. Anawrahta's passage from glory to demise possesses elements of the central theme of *hubris* in Greek tragedy. The evolution of alternative representations of semi-historical figures in Burma thus follows a cross-cultural pattern. By characterizing Anawrahta as a transnational Buddhist *cakravartin*, these texts reveal the interconnections which linked Burma, Thailand, and Sri Lanka as important nodes of a Theravada Buddhist *oikoumene*.

'Mian' in the History of the Yuan Dynasty

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Chinese texts have long been useful adjuncts in constructing the histories of polities located in areas which are today parts of Burma. In that they were created in and for a polity with very different cultural and political exigencies, the Chinese texts provide an alternative way of looking at the discrete events and players depicted in Burmese histories. And yet, for diverse reasons, many of the relevant Chinese works remain poorly or completely untapped. One of the key texts in this regard is the "Account of Mian" contained within the *Yuan Shi* or "History of the Yuan Dynasty". This is the first major historical account of the Mian polity -- earlier Chinese texts having referred only to Bu-gan (Bagan).

The account of Mian contained in the *Yuan Shi* -- a history which was compiled in the late 14th century under the subsequent Ming dynasty – extends in time from 1272 until 1302 and provides an overview of the Mongol interactions with the Burman polity at Bagan, including the military attack on that polity. It also elucidates some of the relations which the Burmans had with their neighbours.

This paper proposes to present this text in English translation and discuss the historical events portrayed from a comparative historical perspective.

DGE Hall and His Critics: Personal Observations on Burmese Historiography in the 1960s

Reynaldo Ileto
National University of Singapore, Singapore

Daniel George Edward Hall is known as the "father of Southeast Asian history" and his 1955 textbook is still required reading in some schools today. As one of Hall's last students in the late sixties, I came to know him, not just as the legendary "father" of the field, but also as a former British colonial civil servant in Burma and a pioneer in Burma Studies. Hall's meta-narrative of Southeast Asian history was, as one would expect, shaped by his experience being in, and studying, Burma. Less apparent is my observation of Hall engaged in academic combat with at least two other scholars, Maung Htin Aung and Manuel Sarkisyanz, who represent other streams in the field of study. I argue that Southeast Asian historiography today bears the imprint not just of its purported "father" but also of his interactions with his critics. My reflections are not of an expert on Burma/Myanmar but of a historian of the Philippines. Arguably these are very different places, but I shall discuss some striking similarities I have noticed between their historiographies.

PANEL 23:

MOVIES, MUSEUMS & THE MEDIA: REPRESENTING MYANMAR

Photo-Ethnography and Representing Myanmar

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Photography, defined as the collection of images with cameras, is always an interpretive endeavor. To be of utility as ethnographic and historical research the collection of visual imagery must be informed by an ethnographic perspective. Documentation or the collection of images, whether still or motion, is a form of "thick description" and as a medium rich in symbolic content, can be utilized to enable the viewer to enter the "world of meanings" of the native culture. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the visual ethnographer/anthropologist to use visual methods as a meaningful methodology to expand and amplify his/her observational potential, and to create a visual narrative that takes into consideration or perhaps is in alignment with the native/insider's point of view. In order to assist in the continued ethnography of the cultural traditions of Burma, researchers need to consider embracing strategies that will enhance efforts to create an informed body of visual ethnography.

Within these contexts, communities of interpreters have all contributed to its representation by imagining it through key issues, questions, paradigms, agendas, institutions and themes, effectively shaping the way in which we have interpreted and constructed the Myanmar/Burma we know today. We hope to investigate not what constitutes "Burmeseness" but rather how it has come to be known through those who write about, build, lead, criticize, sculpt, resist, perform in and travel to Burma. In doing, so this conference seeks to embrace intellectual and phenomenological diversity by exploring the Communities of Interpretation that have contributed to the conceptualizing of Myanmar/Burma.

Participants have been asked to consider the ways in which Myanmar/Burma has come to be known, produced, and understood through history, anthropology, politics, economics, sociology, art, religion, popular culture, media, and literature. Specifically, we encouraged panels and papers that explore how communities---scholars, colonial administrators, missionaries, politicians, artists, writers, students, musicians, villages, kings, leaders, ethnic groups and nations---have shaped multiple images of Burma/Myanmar that often reflect particular perceptions of the Burmese past, the present, and its possible futures. The conference organizers have welcomed presentations that rigorously investigate the nature of these communities, the basis for these linkages and their overall role in the fashioning of Burma/Myanmar. The list of functioning panels will hopefully reflect some of the diverse and interesting ways in which Burma has come to be understood by interpretive communities throughout the world.

A Diamond in the Golden Land: The Legacy of the Great Po Sein

Glenn Short

To make a documentary is, it seems, to give something of yourself and receive a great deal more in return. In the course of this effort to document the legacy of Po Sein I have received more than great deal, and most of what came to me was largely unexpected. Typically, however, all of it came with that grace and generosity that the West knows as "Burmese".

What was unexpected was that not only did I, strictly by chance, come to meet and be befriended by one of the great personalities and talents of Myanmar, Amy Po Sein, but I also inadvertently stumbled on the fascinating story of one of those great men of that country, actually any country, who was historically larger than life. That in turn led me to the larger group of keepers of the classical dance tradition in Myanmar. These are dedicated people, many of them performers, many more teachers and scholars. A few are talented professionals but by far the vast majority are average citizens passionately committed to the essential creative center of Myanmar culture. They are in sum, a huge segment of Myanmar society devoted to the Art of Classical Performance and its preservation in purity.

My interest in Myanmar dance grew after witnessing a performance of the Marionette Dance in Mandalay. Filled with curiosity and questions, the next year a chance meeting with Amy before one of her troop's performances in Yangon was the beginning of a friendship and a journey of learning which has taken me into the performance world of the nation as well the offices of the national government.

Without exception, I have been enthusiastically encouraged and helped in my effort everywhere. From cab drivers to ministry officials, all have met my insistence and Western brusqueness with typical Myanmar politeness, hospitality and grace.

Much of my research ended up "on the cutting room floor" by the necessity of time constraints. But people like Amy and U Aung Thwin, the renowned professor of culture at the National Culture University, who spent many private hours with me explaining the intricacies and evolution of Myanmar dance in his home in Yangon, and the Director of the National Museum and the Head of the University Library and the ever-patient and erudite U Kyaw Win, of the Ministry of Culture who always made himself available whenever I "dropped in" unannounced for a visit on my many trips to Myanmar, were all absolutely essential invaluable sources of information and encouragement in my quest and, of course, are nowhere to be seen in the resulting video. Truly a shame. For they are indicative of the passion that Po Sein and his art inspires in all of Myanmar.

Everywhere you go in Myanmar, I discovered, Po Sein is famous, his aura like Babe Ruth in the States. Not like Brittany or Madonna. Absolutely not! He is a revered national hero, not a transient popular phenomenon. And as I progressed in my research I came to understand why. Quite simply, and obviously, Myanmar is not the West. Nor for that matter is it the rest of Asia. It is a nation steeped in the values of the Buddha and the place of the individual in that sphere of cultural and religious values. As a Westerner this meant that I had to learn to discard my Western orientation to some extent and begin to see Myanmar as a local would. To understand why it is more important in Myanmar to place your gold on the domes of your temples than fill your national treasuries to overflowing.

With the hegemony of Western values and the loss of its uniqueness, all this will change as Myanmar becomes increasingly integrated in the world at large, as surely it will with time. As Myanmar will lose its heterogeneity, the World will become a poorer place.

So with this prospect, I wanted Western audiences to come to know these industrious and truly unique people and to see them humanistically. To see them for their gifts and their contribution to the world at large. For they are an important part of the greater community of Man. If I accomplished that then this is my gift to the people of Myanmar for their many gifts to me.

A Bo Min Ghaung Temple

Niklas Foxeus
Stockholm University, Sweden

The veneration of the *weizza* Bo Min Ghaung is widespread in Burma today. Many pagodas have a small chapel containing images of the *weizzas* Bo Min Ghaung and Bo Bo Aung. Even though many other *weizzas* are revered in Burma today, these two undoubtedly appear to be the most popular.

The aim of this paper is first to present material — mainly photographs and interviews — collected from a spacious and elaborate *weizza* temple dedicated to Bo Min Ghaung in Upper Burma, and then to draw a few tentative conclusions. On the basis of this material, the continuity of certain salient themes in the symbolism (images, statues, architecture etc) legends, views of history and so on within certain *weizza* and *htwek-yap-pauk* traditions on Bo Min Ghaung will be discussed. In particular, the themes of millenarianism and various features pertaining to Burmese kingship are discussed.

It will thereby be shown not only that there is a certain homogeneity in spite of the manifoldness of and differences between these *weizza* traditions, and the conflation of various religious traditions in Burma – such as "normative" Buddhism, "mystical"/"esoteric" Buddhism, the *nat* cults, and the various arts belonging to *lawki pyinnya*, that is, the sphere of mundane knowledge comprising alchemy (*eggiyat*), numerological diagrams (*in*s), astrology (*bedin*), mantras (*mandaya*) etc — but also how influential views of the past and the future are produced within a religious community in contemporary Burma.

The manifold *weizza* and *htwek-yap-pauk* traditions have been persistent phenomena in Burma's history (though it is still not clear how far back in time they reach). They have had a great impact in the past and continue to do so today. In spite of a certain amount of repression during recent decades, they will, in all probability, also have some future impact on various sectors of society as well.

The cult groups representing and upholding these traditions, which are founded and led by charismatic spiritual leaders (*bodaw*s, *yathay*s, *hpongyi*s, *hsaya*s), are communities that have produced a certain form of knowledge and set of religious conceptions that nourish hopes and expectations for the future, and that are intrinsically Burmese.

During the colonial and early postcolonial era, Bo Min Ghaung was believed to be — or to have been — the coming world emperor (Burmese *sakyamin*; Pali *cakkavattin*). Moreover, it was believed that Bo Min Ghaung was a *bodhisatta* who would become a *buddha* in the future — either Buddha Arimetteyya (Pali Metteyya) or Buddha Rama. Although the latter belief is not held at the present temple, it is suggested in this paper that Bo Min Ghaung is not believed to be a "terrestrial" world emperor as was formerly thought, but rather some kind of spiritual world emperor (*sakyamin*), and that this slight shift in the conception may have been the result of changed socio-political conditions in the country. Hypothetically, it is also assumed that this conceptual shift might be interpreted as a domestication of the world emperor (*sakyamin*) concept.

PANEL 24:

THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY AND THE CATEGORY OF COMMUNITY IN BURMA

Paradox of Ethnicity in Burma: The Ethnic Groups of Burma as Communities of Interpretation

François Robinne

This paper is an ethno-historic contribution to the question of ethnicity in Burma. While National Convention tries to set up the foundations of a new Constitution, one's has to fear that it will be in the continuity of the two first ethnic-based Constitutions with their dramatic consequences. Considering examples taken mostly in the Kachin and Shan State of Burma – but enlarged to a more global comparative approach – the paper will discuss three main paradox emerging from the study of interethnic relationships. The first paradox is based on the notion of "ethnolinguistic" according to which a social organisation appears tacity as the continuity of the linguistic critera: examples a-contrario are taken among the different linguistic families present in Burma; The second paradox is the notion of "ethnic categories" according to which ethnic groups are independent entities: examples on contrary are given through the concept of "chains of societies"; The third paradox is the usage or the word "ethnic": two levels of analyse set aside that difficulty by considering, first, at a national level, the emergence of ethnic categories through the influence of the Central Power, and, second, at a regional level, the transethnic spaces developed between village networks and partnerships.

Deterritorializing Burma:
Metahistories of Memory and Identity in India's North East

Prasenjit Biswas
North Eastern Hill University, India

Where national identity acts as a normalizing and domesticating agency, deterritorialized, diasporic and un-recognized alterity of groups of people who signify a Burmese origin and yet stay out of Burma are the left out 'subjects' of Burmese history. They embody a self-same subjectivity without being the subjects of a 'national' history. The example of tribes and communities like Lushai Zo inhabiting Mizoram in India and Paites in Manipur share a common history of descent with Tedims, who inhabit the Chin Hills and Chindwin valley of Western side of Burma. Linguists and Anthropologists like Grierson and Lehman classify them as Kuki-Chin family of tribes. The difference between them and the Indians as well as the Burmese are now spelt out in their self-descriptions, while undeniably they are included within the territories of either Burma or India. As subjects of a national history, they are ethnically and culturally different. Their self-descriptions bring back a memory of migration and inter-clan relations that simultaneously produces and resists an identity, disclosed in their social boundaries drawn across political boundaries. Especially when social boundaries drawn through memories conflict with the political boundaries, it results into an experience of deterritorialization. This experience gives rise several 'forms of knowledge' that tells a us the history of how they have been historicized within the territory. The paper shall present a few such metahistorical episodes that tally with their contemporary self-descriptions to signify that 'people without a history' or those whose histories are erased often possess a rich metahistory that produces a different kind of synthesis between present and past.

The clash between Thadou-Kukis and Zomi-Paites in Manipur brought out the difference over descent between Kuki-Chin and Zo origins. Kuki-Naga clash also based itself upon the memory of distinct ethnic origins. Increasing ethnic and communitarian differentiation within Kuki-Chin group itself has resulted into production of multiple political and social identities, who essentially contest symbolic claims over past. It is in this situation that such contests deterritorialize a Burmese past and fails to re-territorialize themselves within the political boundary of Indian nation-state.

Categories Out of Place: Internally Displaced Persons and Ethnic Indifference in Contemporary Burma

Ken MacLean
Emory University, USA

By definition "internally displaced persons" (IDPs) possess neither the full rights of citizens nor the legal protections of refugees. Yet, because IDPs still reside inside sovereign state spaces, political as well as humanitarian forms of intervention by international actors are extremely difficult if not impossible. These tensions appear explicitly in ongoing efforts to address the needs of the more than half-million people living in hiding or in relocation camps controlled by the Tatmadaw in eastern Burma. This figure does not include IDPs located along other border areas or those people, predominantly Burmans, displaced by development projects and state policies in the central regions of the country. Taken together, IDPs form an emergent community, one that paradoxically erases ethnic differences at some moments and reinscribes them at others. To this end, the paper focuses on the increasingly sophisticated strategies used by community-based organizations and international non-governmental organizations to portray IDPs to others. The representational strategies used in reports that document the problems confronting IDPs in Burma will be critically explored with the following questions in mind. First, in what ways do statistical techniques identify and enumerate different sub-categories of IDPs and do they effectively challenge ethnic-based definitions of identity? Second, how do photographic images visually distinguish these different kinds of IDPs from one another and from refugees? Finally, how are personal testimonies strategically deployed in the reports to demonstrate common patterns of trauma across ethnic divisions? These techniques, while a product of immense suffering, offer the possibility of a trans-ethnic future.

Reconstructing a Chinese Identity in Burmese Chinese

Yuan Jianwei
University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

This paper will examine how Burmese Chinese reconstruct their Chinese identity in Contemporary Burma. Since the early Song Dynasty, Chinese immigrants had migrated overland to Burma and today there existed a sizeable community of Burmese Chinese in Mandalay, Yangoon and other cities. This paper will focus on how the Burmese Chinese reconstruct their cultural identity through the various social institutions that they established: Ancestral Halls, Chinese Temples, Clan Associations and Chinese schools. It will also explore how various Chinese dialect communities namely the Fujianese, Cantonese and Yunanese work together to revive Putonghua and Putonghua education within the various Chinese communities.

PANEL 25:

BURMESE LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES OF BURMA

The Voice Rules in Burmese: An Analysis of the Findings of Two Bama Scholars

U Saw Tun
Northern Illinois University, UK

One of the problems in learning Burmese is achieving the skill of pronouncing certain consonants at the word level correctly as voiced even though they are written with their voiceless counterparts. Maung Tun Tint is the first Bama scholar who has ever done systematic research on the voicing rules in Burmese in his Master's Thesis from Mandalay University in 1971. Maung Tha Noe is the second scholar who has articulated his concern in his recent writings about the disregard of voicing rules by some contemporary speakers including the Bama people themselves. This paper presents an analysis of their findings along with the presenter's perspective on the issue.

Relevance of Studying Myanmar Language and Culture:
A Study in South Asian Perspective

Swapna Bhattacharya
Calcutta University, India

In Northeastern India and Southeastern Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma) meet what we call the Indian subcontinent. As we all know, these two regions are unique in which they are distinct from the mainland; the people largely migrated from Myanmar in not so distant past and speak Sino-Tibetan languages. I will focus on three aspects: the course of the migration of some of the tribes, for example the Khamtis and Singphos of the state of Arunachal Pradesh of India (bordering Myanmar), deriving their origin from the great Shan race and the Kachins, respectively. This part also includes the story of the migration of some of the Hill tribes of present Bangladesh living in the area called Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Special reference will be made to the Chakmas and the Marmas of CHT. The second aspect to be dealt is how the kinship terminologies from Myanmar language were borrowed in the vocabulary of these tribes. The third aspect to be dealt with, is the word-borrowing in general from the Myanmar language in these languages. This part will also address the origin of the scripts of these tribes and the influence of Myanmar script on them. Lastly, the author of the present paper will go into the influence of Myanmar model of Buddhism on these tribes which also practice Buddhism. Thus, the paper has both, a historical as well as linguistic approach, and ultimately aims at highlighting the relevance of studying Myanmar language and Myanmar culture for the scholars of India, or for that matter, South Asia as a whole.

Teaching and Preserving Indigenous Languages in Burma (Myanmar): An Observation of the Language Programs at the University of Develoment for National Races/People, Ywa-Thit-Kyi

Phyu Phyu Win
University of Mandalay, Myanmar

Other Indigenous Languages such as Shan,Kayah etc.have felt the domination of Burma(Myanmar)language to the extent that slowly and surely the number of people speaking them is diminishing.Some sadly are nearly extinct.But at the above university an attampt is being made to teach languages other than Burma(Myanmar)that are used/spoken in this country such as Kachin,Kayah,Sakaw Kayin,Po Kayin,Chin and Shan.Opened in 1990-91 with students attending for four years mostly destined to be teachers at primary to highshool levels in rual/outlying areas this university has now added Mon and Yakhine to the above languages in its curriculum.All courses taught are by native speakers of the respective languages,and the materials used have been developed by the staff themselves.As the students will be posted to the outlying districts communication in Indigenous language is the objective.The characteristics of the languages programs are as follows:

1. 4 skills training from an elementary level

2. The syllabi of all language programs are coordinated as much as possible

3. Apart from language cultural aspects such as the traditions,song,dance and music are included as part of the programs

This presentation will cover aspects such as: to what extent have the language programs/policy been effective?What can be done to make the programs move effective in the future?And an overview of the governmental policy in implementing these programs.

The SOAS Wa Dictionary Project:
Lexicography for a Divided Language

Justin Watkins
University of London, UK

Wa is a Mon-Khmer language spoken by about one million people along the border between the Chinese province of Yunnan and the Shan State of Burma/Myanmar. The AHRB-funded SOAS Wa Dictionary Project is in year two of a three-year effort to compile a Wa language corpus and a Wa-Burmese-Chinese-English Dictionary based on that corpus, in both Internet and print versions.

This presentation will describe the background, goals, methods, and progress to date of the project. We will highlight the lexicographical problems which arise because Wa is a "divided language". One third of contemporary Wa speakers are orientated culturally, politically, economically, and orthographically towards China and secular Chinese culture, the other two thirds towards Burmese/Myanmar Christian culture.

The division affects regional dialect variation, orthography, language standardization, and language-education policy. I will give examples of the variation and demonstrate how our data structures have attempted to cope with it. We will also refer to traditional lexicographic issues such as polysemy and descriptivism vs. prescriptivism in the Wa context.

The Performance of Poetic Literature in Shan Communities: Suppression and Survival

Jotika Khur-Yearn
University of London, UK

Today, most of the Shans, who call themselves 'Tai,' inhabit the 'Shan State', North-East of the Union of Myanmar/Burma, although there are also some groups of Shan inhabitants scattered throughout other parts of Myanmar, Assam of India, southern China and northern Thailand.

In terms of language, culture and literature, the Shans still maintain their distinct identity from the Burman ethnic majority as well as from other ethnic groups, in spite of the oppression of the Burmese government. Most of Shan poetic texts are preserved in the form of manuscripts.

The tradition of Shan Buddhist literature has played an important role among the Shan Buddhists for centuries. Almost all Shan Buddhist works of literatures were composed in poetic style and were prepared for reading aloud to an audience. In my presentation, I explore the tradition of reading and listening to poetic literature as one of the common practices among the Shan folks.

In addition, I shall look at the threat to this tradition of Shan Buddhism by Burmese authorities. In many instances, the traditional way of performing Shan culture and literature has been interfered with by the Burmese authorities. In my presentation, I shall give examples and recent evidence of how Shan Buddhism has been threatened.

The aim of this presentation is to bring an awareness of Shan culture and literature to the world of academic studies.

PANEL 26:

EDUCATION IN MYANMAR

Seeking Synergy in Approaches to Poverty and Education

Khin Zaw Win

The unholy dyad of inadequate education and poverty has been stalking Myanmar for decades. Although impressive gains in education have been made apparent in recent years, there are worrisome trends which need to be looked at openly.

Currently the intertwined issues of education and poverty form part of the economic and social sectors which are under severe pressure and threat from many sides. One could say that these sectors are under siege. Although the country is now open to foreign investment, sadly the investment that predominates now is that of the country being invested all round by foreign punitive and restrictive measures resulting in political and economic isolation. What is happening now and what could happen in the near future will have an all-too-critical bearing on the country's fortunes for the rest of the 21st century.

Myanmar's position and ranking may not be as bad as the worse-off countries, even those in Asia. But then Myanmar is a country that does not need to be in that kind of category – the least-developed countries for example. It so happens that poor decisions in both economic development and education planning are having a cumulative effect. Education is a sector which has a long lead-up time, both upwards as well as down.

Looking at the social functions of education – the grand social objectives – which consist of national integrity, economic growth and eradication of poverty, it is readily apparent that the latter two have fared rather badly. There are unhappy indications that poverty is standing its ground. Per-capita income as well as income gaps are causes for much concern. With a large informal sector and shadow economy, the actual GDP is hard to arrive at.

Education has now become more accessible, and at the same time it costs more, depending on the student's (that is, the family's) ability to pay.Within the predominant state education system itself, there is wide variation in quality and standards. With the revival of private schools up to secondary level, a multi-tier system has also formally emerged.

An important Education Sector Survey was done in 1992. It was then that the alarming enrollment, dropout and completion rates were made known. As a consequence a huge effort was made to remedy the situation. There are phenomenal gains in the number of schools, colleges and universities, as well as in enrollment and faculty members (although for instance an intake rate of 96.5% is hard to reconcile with reality). At the same time there has not been a corresponding achievement in terms of learning outcomes.

In studying the **determinants of educational outcomes**, it can be seen that poverty can have an effect at every level:

Individual — early childhood nutrition and stimulation
Household — household income, parents' education
Community — roads, transport, water, electricity, telecommunications
Early child development (ECD), nutrition, health care, job market
Education system — Formal
Non-formal education, ECD, literacy, health and nutrition
Government — fiscal, budget share of education, macroeconomic policy, economic growth, labour market, trade policies, foreign investment

Besides early education, poverty needs to be attacked from other fronts too – nutrition, health, and psychosocial stimulation.

It is necessary to target women, especially underprivileged women, ethnic nationalities in underserved areas, out-of-school youth and primary school dropouts.

Civil society – education is present in many NGO programmes but in one recent survey it is surprising that few NGOs thought they might have an impact on education in the future, and also that poor or marginalized people were mentioned as primary beneficiaries by less than half the NGOs surveyed.

There are also estimated to be 214,000 community-based organizations (CBOs) in the country, and 26% of those surveyed are working in education. The survey mentioned earlier also shows surprising results with regard to CBOs. When the poorest households in different communities were surveyed, only 10% reported having received assistance from a CBO in the past year. And when the providers were cited, the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and village Peace and Development Councils came out on top. Since daily labour was the main income earner for these families, the attendant mobility may have been one factor in the difficulty that organizations would have in reaching the poor. However the survey stated that it was likely the CBOs and other organizations did not make an effort to direct their assistance to the poorest households.

Present vehicles – not only are they within the realm of the possible, but they are also sustainable and amenable to scaling up:-
Religious-based e.g. the monastic primary schools, which have been accepting children of families that cannot afford to send them to regular schools; Maternal and child care programmes and facilities; NFE can be combined with health and environmental education; Part-time (e.g. evening classes) NFE initiatives.

These approaches should not an endless series of plans and numbers but aimed at adding substance and producing real outcomes, one of which would be breaking the self-perpetuating cycle of poverty.

Education in Myanmar (Vocation-oriented Approach)

Kyaw Ni Khin

This article is a descriptive study of the vocational training framework required in Myanmar as part of the overall human resource development strategy to support the country's long-term economic development and to raise awareness of what needs to be done to improve the training and education sector. Through case studies of non-governmental training and educational organizations, both profit-oriented and not-for-profit, a patchwork of schools and training centres offering alternative education from pre-school to tertiary levels emerges, filling the gaping holes in the national education system either exploiting its inherent structural weaknesses and inadequacies for the business motive or for altruistic reasons.

Data gathered from individual interviews with samples representative of the three major stakeholders, namely, Employer, Educator (Private, Public) and Students provides a cross-sectional prism on the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to prepare the students for the current and future job market on the one hand, and on the other hand, to better understand the motivations, expectations and aspirations of these students.

Our research findings revealed that job entrants fresh out of school need considerable time to make the transition from school to employment resulting from a combination of deficient basic employability (technical or vocational) skills and a lack of "life" skills. The time to adapt is also a function of the corporate culture and management style of the employer. In short, Myanmar students must develop the communication skills, analytical skills, and ability to synthesize information for problem solving or use of applied knowledge.

From the technical education perspective, the absence of a national vocational framework means functional skills are not certifiable across the country to meet employment standards let alone be benchmarked against international standards for overseas employment. This is compounded by the students' ignorance of the alternative foreign education programmes offered in Myanmar and the employment market (local and overseas) leading to unrealistic expectations and disillusionment – hence the need for mentoring, career guidance and counselling.

This study aimed to provide insights into the issues and challenges, with respect to vocational education, confronting all the stakeholders in the nation building effort. Rather than supplant the basic education system - the sole responsibility of the Government - vocational training should complement general education to create the human resource base of vital job-related knowledge, skills and attitudes not only as a route to employment but also as a progression to further study in the mainstream national education system.

The effects of globalization are pervasive and Myanmar is not spared as it continues with the adoption of market-oriented economic systems. If Myanmar is to catch up with its ASEAN neighbours in terms of economic development and integrate into the ASEAN and global economic grid, undoubtedly, creation and nurturing of its human capital to underpin this effort is imperative. However, ultimately, education must be geared towards national interests, as dictated by the country's political, economic and social objectives.

With the plight of the education sector highlighted, this study concludes with a call for technical assistance to develop vocational education in Myanmar given the country's limited resources and current allocation of foreign aid through non-governmental organisations' (NGOs) to primarily healthcare and environmental protection and as well as other forms of humanitarian aid.

Civil Society - a Patch for Burma's Welfare System

Jasmin Lorch
Albert Ludwigs University, Germany

Civil society groups fill some of the gaps that exist in Burma's welfare system. They address basic needs, which the central state is unable or unwilling to tackle. To study civil society developments in the authoritarian context of Burma I favour an analytical approach. In this sense, there are multiple examples of civil society groups such as registered charities and developmental NGOs, but also informal community groups and faith-based organisations.

Civil Society Actors in Burma's Welfare Sector

Some local community groups have set up humanitarian self-help initiatives in sectors concerned with basic needs like food and health care. Another example of civil society action in the welfare sector is funeral help associations. The Buddhist *Sangha* enjoys a measurable scope of action, which enables it to offer essential educational services that the state fails to provide. Parent teacher associations (PTAs) have been mushrooming in recent years. In some ceasefire areas civil society initiatives in the sectors of culture and literature have been flourishing. In predominantly Christian areas churches and church-related organisations help promote local languages and conduct education programmes. Churches run bible schools or send teachers to volunteer in communities.

Research conducted and envisaged

The findings outlined in this proposal mainly rest upon my ten weeks of research in Burma and Thailand in summer 2004. I am still in contact with staff of UN organisations and international NGOs working in Burma whom I can contact for further information. My thematic paper would focus on an in-depth analysis of the following questions:

- How can civil society emerge under authoritarian rule?
- What are the *constraints* and what are the *enabling factors* that could potentially create a suitable environment for civil society activities in the welfare sector?
- What room for manoeuvre do civil society actors have?
- What kind of external support do civil society actors need? What kind of international engagement is counterproductive?

PANEL 27:

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY IN MYANMAR

Performance Assessment in Myanmar

U Win Myo Thu

As one of the flagship programs of GMS summit in 2002, the ADB's funded project of Environmental Performance Assessment and Strategic Environment Framework (SEF II) was implemented in Greater Mekong Sub-regional member countries of China, Myanmar, Lao, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam during the period from January, 2003 to April, 2006. For first time in taking retrospective look and self-critics as far as environmental management is concerned, Myanmar set up a national coordination committee (NCC) comprising of 21 Government agencies in order to implement the national activities of the SEF II project. Through three national workshops, several working sessions, case studies and information exchange among the government agencies, seven environmental concerns (namely; Forest Resource, Threat to Biological Diversity, Land Degradation, Water Resource, Inadequate Solid Waste Management, Mobile Source Air Pollution and Climate Change) were prioritized for examining the existing sectoral policies and environmental management. Environmental indicators, which could be the best described of the nature of underlying Pressure, State and Response (P-S-R) factors and their interrelationship that were influencing on dynamic changes of each environmental concern, were developed for analyzing of the effectiveness of these policies and level of environmental management.

In brief, higher environmental deterioration of forest, biodiversity and land degradation were obviously observed and current level of performance on these concerns was just on average with limited progress indicating the insufficiency in improving these natural resources on sustainable use basic. Managing water resource for safe drinking water supply and irrigation was seemingly better with improved coverage and increased budget in recent years, however, higher population increase than the pace of implementation and performance efficiency were still major hindrances for better management. Policy inadequacy, technology improvement and intermittent performance were main issues to be addressed in effective urban solid waste management. Available data also suggested that there was a potential threat on public health in major city like Yangon by increased air pollutants from mobile sources while there were serious lacks of national policy, ambient air quality standard and skill in controlling air pollution. At global average, per capita emission level of green house gases (GHGs) was low in Myanmar but gradually it was increasing due to land use change and steady decline of forest as a sink of GHGs. Myanmar is signatory to many international conventions and agreement for global collaboration in Biodiversity conservation and Climate Change, however, it is largely failed to undertake the necessary measures in compliance with these official bindings. It is also common in lacks of political will, adequate resource allocation and efficient institutions for enforcing existing policies, laws and economic instruments in cultivating desirable public behavior toward environmentally sound economic development. Privatization and promoting participatory decision making process are found to be key elements in policy integration for better environmental management at upstream and downstream level. Amongst many other

recommendations, approval on the existing draft of national environmental law and establishment of Environmental Resource Center (ERC) are crucial and urgently needed for strengthening the mechanism for information sharing, raising environmental advocacy and public awareness and capacity building of existing environmental agencies.

Environmental Conservation and Management Projects in Myanmar: Capacity Building, Cooperation and Implementation Projects

Tin Aung Moe

Myanmar is one of the countries which have rich natural resources, favorable climate and different ecosystems. Culturally, Myanmar is home for many ethnic groups and having diverse livelihoods and by virtue of strategic location, Myanmar forms a bridge between the peoples and cultures of South and Southeast Asia Sub-regions. Geopolitically, Myanmar exists between two mega countries, China and India, facing challenges on natural resources demands and markets.

United Nations Agencies and International Organizations as well as Non-Governmental Organizations are playing different roles in different sectors to assist in Myanmar's efforts in eradicating the poverty, conserving the nature, preserving the culture and securing the livelihood against the challenges that globally facing nowadays.

On Environment aspect, the highlights are international cooperation and participation in the regional projects. Since Myanma traditional environment and natural resources conservation practices are well renowned, these projects on environment sectors enhanced and harmonized the existing capacity and open the new windows for the outlook.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other Intergovernmental, International agencies are working together with national institutions to address the different environment issues. Many small and medium scale projects have been formulated and implemented. Myanmar Agenda 21 has been formulated with the consultation and participation of different stakeholders in the country considering the strength and weakness of the existing national capacity.

For policy level development, "Strategic Environment Framework for Greater Mekong Subregion (SEF-GMS) projects" (Phase – I and II) was implemented to prioritize the national and subregional threats and national level strategy and policy development toward those issues.

At the technical Level, "Subregional Environmental Management and Information Systems (SEMIS) projects" (Phases – I and II) were implemented to address the scientific and technical level data and information gaps and to enhance capacity for data generation and data management for environment sector. The Environmental National Spatial Data Infrastructure (ENSDI) was introduced along with these projects and data sharing mechanism was proposed across the units, across the agencies and across the countries.

Other on-going projects are "National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) project" to assist Myanmar to fulfill the requirements to the International Conventions. At the pilot and local scale, "Urban Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment of Yangon City Project" is implementing with the national agencies.

At the national level, "National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSDS) Project" is on the way to address the capacity building aspect of the country to achieve the MDG.

PANEL 28:

HEALTH AND HISTORY: LOOKING FOR HEALING IN CONTEMPORARY BURMA / MYANMAR

Fighting Smallpox: British Doctors and Inoculators in Colonial Burma

Atsuko Naono

This paper will examine some of the ways in which the colonial government attempted to bring about effective vaccination operations in Burma by focusing on the complexity of its relational development with the indigenous vaccinators. From the beginning of government vaccination efforts in Burma, the British used non-Burmese vaccinators to support the British civil surgeons. In the years that followed, as British vaccination efforts also began to target the indigenous population, the indigenization of the vaccination staff was viewed as a possibly necessary and maximally inexpensive means of obtaining more cooperation from the general population. By relying increasingly on the indigenous vaccination staff, whom the colonial medical authorities believed they needed to check and recheck, however, British civil and medical authorities set up an elaborate administrative machinery that repeatedly failed, but nonetheless continued to grow. As a result, although vaccination operations increased in the early twentieth century to a level unimagined in the nineteenth century, the sheer size of the new operations ensured that problems and obstacles also dramatically increased. At a time when Britain was facing popular resistance in other ways from the Burmese, the British vaccination establishment in Burma began to lose confidence in the eventual success of the vaccination program. Failing to train Burmese in vaccination, from the 1920s, they began to recognize the need to mobilize traditional Burmese medical practitioners for the vaccination program.

Death, Disease and Diet in the Prisons of Colonial Burma

Ian Brown
School of Oriental and African Studies, UK

The reports on prison administration in colonial Burma, published annually from the mid-1860s through to the beginning of the 1940s, gave perhaps more attention to the incidence of disease among the inmate population and to prison death rates than to any other single issue. This paper explores the reasons for that focus, the nature of the prison administration's interest, and the impact on conditions in Burma's prisons through the colonial period. In broad terms, over the five decades from 1890 to 1940, the prison death rate in Burma was cut by more than half, although it was not until towards the end of the period that the reduction became secure. The paper examines in detail mortality from dysentery and diarrhea, smallpox, cholera, plague, malaria, pneumonia, and tuberculosis, and the interventions by the prison administration to reduce it. It also examines the inmates' diet over this period, and the ways in which it was determined by the prison authorities.

The Village of Time:
Illness and Healing in Rural Burma/Myanmar

Monique Skidmore
Australian National University, Australia

This double session looks at the profound changes that occurred to medical beliefs, practices, and help-seeking behaviors with the advent of British colonialism. In the first session we look back at the historical period to understand how the practices and understandings of medicine were interpreted by Burmese healers. The presenters explore British discourses and actions oriented to curbing epidemics in both rural and urban areas as well as the links between health and disease in colonial institutions. In the second session we seek to understand how this colonial encounter has affected the current system of medical beliefs and practices. The presenters discuss the patterns of resort used by rural and urban Burmese and the conceptual frameworks in which these health practices are embedded.

Health and Medicine in a 'Peripheral Situation': WA Views on Disease and Healing

Magnus Fiskesjö,
Cornell University, USA

This paper argues for historical explanations for present-day views of the Wa of the Burma-China borderlands regarding diseases and their cures. The paper aims to explain the reluctance of the Wa to embrace modern medicine by placing such reluctance into the specific historical context of Wa culture. I explore these issues in the light of the frustrations and failures of certain Chinese socialist-era attempts to bring healthpractices and medicine to Chinese-ruled Wa areas, set against the background of some important aspects of Wa views of health, disease and death.

Weikza Beliefs and Healing: Payawga and Prevention Rituals for Disease and Disaster

Keiko Tosa
Tokyo University, Japan

While the belief systems of Weikza and Gaing have attracted the attention of scholars of Burmese religion, the healing activities of gaing members are also very important for Burmese people, although this aspect of their practices is less well described in the ethnographic literature. In rural areas, most gaing members engage in indigenous medical practices. They hold a wide knowledge of healing systems, such as Beindaw (herbal medicine), alchemy, astrology, the art of preparing charms (in) and so on. This contrasts with urban gaing, where most of the gaing members earn their lives from other professions and usually do not engage in medical treatment. However, urban gaing still attach importance to initiating gaing members into the knowledge of diseae and various healing arts which, as they believe, the founder or weikza left for the benfit of the members. Among them, most important might be the remedy of "payawga", which, originally came from the Pali 'payoga' (to influence), meaning a disease caused by kawei (sorcery) or an 'auklan saya' ("Master of the Under Path"). In this paper I focus upon the activities of gaing members in Yangon, describing the annual ritual of a gaing held with the aim of preventing disease and disaster. I show how patients are diagnosed as sufferers of payawga and how they come to accept this diagnosis. Finally, I consider the context in which diagnoses of payawga are raised in contemporary Burma.

Contemporary Syncretic Fertility Management at the Border of Burma – 1980 to Present

Suzanne Belton
Charles Darwin University, Australia

In December 2005 Dr Cynthia Maung and I published the report **Working Our Way Back Home: Fertility and pregnancy loss on the Thai-Burma border**. The report outlines the culture of abortion prevalent in the Union of Myanmar and in an area of Thailand where many Burmese people live and work as refugees or migrant workers. We systematically defined pregnancy loss and fertility regulation from various cultural standpoints, and analysed the meaning and outcomes for women's lives and the Thai and informal Burmese health systems in Tak Province, Thailand.

Women from mainly Burman and Karen backgrounds explained their personal situation, their lack of reproductive health knowledge and influence in relationships, their attempts to regulate their fertility to help their families and their experience of state and family violence while living in Thailand.

We identified a lack of reproductive health rights, a desire to space and limit the number of children, poor quality family planning and post-abortion care services, lack of access to reliable and safe health care, violence, fear of arrest and worker exploitation, as factors contributing to the high levels of unsafe abortion. This is set in a part of SE Asia characterised by conflict, insecurity and human rights abuses.

PANEL 29:

NAGANI

Translation of Political Terms and Concepts into Burmese with reference to Nagani Publications

Tin Hlaing
Myanmar

The Nagani (Red Dragon) Book Club founded by Thakin Nu and his colleagues constitute an important entity in Burma's struggle for independence. Active in the period 1937-41, it took Victor Gollancz' Leftist Book Club and produced at cheap costs books in Burmese language on various subjects, but with emphasis on politics and international relations. This paper presents a study of the translation, mainly from English, of political terms and concepts in Burmese. It is important that since the fall of its monarchy in 1885, Burma had had no political system of its own; and almost simultaneously with Nagani activities, there had been a new political system just emerging. It was the pseudo-democratic, parliamentary system of Government arising from the Westminster-made Government of Burma Act, 1935. This new form of government, along with the independence movement reinforced by leftist ideologies introduced a number of new political terms and concepts, which have to be adapted to, and adopted by the Burmese people. In this respect, the Nagani literature provides a rich source of terms and concepts. They include terms for parties and institutions, idelogies and education and general. It is interesting to see how the same word, or concept had been translated in various ways, how consensus was reached in some cases. We discuss the quality of translation from the point of view of their acceptance and continued use, or their extinction. For this purpose, we have paid special attention to the works of important political leaders, including among others Thakin Nu, Thakin Soe, Thakin Than Tun, Thakin Thein Pe etc. who were all left leaning, as well as a few classical politicians and famous writers.

Emergence of Socialist Economic Literature in Myanmar/Burma

Khin Maung Nyo
Myanmar

Thakin leaders of the radical Burmese rationalist movement of the 1930's, the Dobama Asī-ayon, learned their Marx and Lenin within the international communist texts of British writers like John Strachey and the theoretic of the British Communist Party, R. Palme Dutt. English-language Marxist books first became easily available to Burmese nationalists only after Dr. Thein Maung returned in 1932 from the London Burma Round Table Conference. U Tun Pe, a journalist, also purchased and distributed the books recommended by Pandit Nehru in his Impressions of Soviet Russia. Other English language leftist books found their way into the hands of young nationalists via J.S. Furnivall"s Burma Book Club.

Marxist writings in the Burmese language became readily available only after 1937, when the Nagani Book Club was founded by Thakin Nu and others as a publishing house and the writings of radical young writers.

British police officials were much concerned about the spread of Marxist ideas after the formation of the Nagani Book Club. They attempted to get the government to ban Communist literature .However, in February 1938 the ban on Datt's World Politics 1918-36 and Strachey's Theory and Practice of Socialism was lifted.

Most newly independent countries are inclined toward some form of socialism and that this represents a radical departure from their old practices. They need the state's direction of the economy to force the pace of development, and the distrust private business because they associate capitalism with their period of colonial exploitation.

As such, socialist literature in Myanmar become rooted as a result of international and national political climate, Myanmar cultural background and value system. This short paper endeavor to explore those factors which make Burma fertile ground for Socialism.

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