12th International Burma Studies Conference: Traditions and Challenges

October 6th – 9th, 2016

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Center for Burma Studies

Table of Contents

Panel 1: Boundary, Bloc and International Politics (Sandburg Auditorium)

1. Amrita Dey, MYANMAR AND GREAT POWER COMPETITION AND COOPERATION IN THE IOR.....11

2. Jovan Cavoski, THE ASIAN SOCIALIST CONFERENCE – BURMA'S AND YUGOSLAVIA'S ATTEMPT AT ESTABLISHING OF AN ALTERNATIVE IDEOLOGICAL MODEL DURING THE COLD WAR 11

3. Michal Lubina, DE-POLITICIZATION AND RE-POLITICIZATION OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE 12

4. Saw Tha Wah, EXPLORING DOMESTIC POLITICAL CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON MYANMAR'S FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR 13

5. Seinenu Thein-Lemelson, FEAR AND SILENCE IN BURMA AND INDONESIA: COMPARING TWO NATIONAL TRAGEDIES AND TWO INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES OF TRAUMA 13

6. Rahul Mishra, MYANMAR'S BORDER TRADE WITH INDIA: A CRITICAL SCRUTINY 14

Panel 2: Race, Rage, Rakhine, Religion, and Rohingya (Regency Room)

1. Bill Davis, TRENDS IN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTHERN RAKHINE STATE BEFORE AND AFTER THE 2012 VIOLENCE 14

2. Nathaniel Gonzalez, INSTITUTIONALIZED INEQUALITY AND THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF BUDDHIST MUSLIM VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR 2012-2014 15

3. Nevada Drollinger-Smith, MONASTIC PRIVILEGE: BUDDHIST MASCULINITIES AND THE 969 MOVEMENT.....15

Panel 3: Music's Cymbals and Symbols (Capitol North)

1. Gavin Douglas, BUDDHIST SOUNDSCAPES: DHAMMA INSTRUMENTS AND DIVINE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS 16

2. Naomi Gingold, WHAT IS 'POLITICS' IN CONTEMPORARY BURMA? A JOURNEY THROUGH THE ACADEMY, BURMESE HIP HOP, AND BURMESE SOCIETY 16

3. Tobiasz Targosz, NEVER MIND THE GENERALS. BURMESE PUNK ROCK SCENE AS A VEHICLE FOR MANIFESTING CHANGING NOTIONS OF BURMESE IDENTITY.....17

4. Heather MacLachlan, BURMESE YOUTH MUSICS AS (MIS)REPRESENTED IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE GLOBAL MEDIA.....17

5. Oradi Inkhong, COMPOSING SOUND IDENTITY IN SHAN LONG DRUM 18

6. Judith Becker, NAT GADAW AS ARI PRIEST? 18

Panel 4: Approaching Colonial History: Social Problems and Culture (Capitol South)

1. Allegra Giovine, A SOUND SEIQ FOR SUCCESS: SELF-HELP AND POPULAR SCIENCE IN BURMESE HANDBOOK CULTURE, C. 1900-1937 19

2. David Baillargeon, "THE COMMONWEALTH OF NAMTU": BRITISH WORLD MINING, FINANCE, AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN SHAN STATES, 1906-1935 19

3. Maitrii Aung-Thwin, RE-VISITING COMMUNITY IN BURMESE AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN History.....20

4. Ritesh Jaiswal, 'DEPRESSION' POLITICS AND BURMESE NATIONALISM: REPERCUSSIONS OF GLOBAL EVENTS ON THE INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN BURMA (C. 1930-40) 20

5. Sally Bamford, BURMA'S NATS AND THE BRITISH RAJ 21

Panel 5: Labor, Investment, and the Economy (Hunt Room)

1. Georg Winterberger, LOOKING FOR INNOVATION IN LIVELIHOOD. A CASE STUDY IN MAWLAMYINE 22

2. Koji Kubo, WHY DOES INFORMAL TRADING OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE PERSIST IN MYANMAR? EVIDENCE FROM A SURVEY OF EXPORTERS AND IMPORTERS 22

3. Thomas Rhoden, BURMESE LABORERS VS REFUGEES: FALSE NARRATIVES ON THE THAILAND-MYANMAR BORDER 23

4. Lindsay Stubbs, RAILWAYS IN SHAN STATE....23

5. Jorg Schendel, ECONOMIC THEORY AND BURMESE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT 24

6. Martin Michalon, PAGODAS AND BEYOND: THE NEW FACE OF DOMESTIC TOURISM IN MYANMAR 24

Panel 6: Languages, Linguistics and Social Issues (Sandburg Auditorium)

1. Patrick McCormick, RETHINKING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN BURMA....25

2. San San Hnin Tun, TRADITIONS AND CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH BURMESE GRAMMAR 25

3. Justin Watkins, AN INVESTIGATION OF THE /S/ VS. /SH/ DISTINCTION BURMESE....26

4. Chu May Paing, LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION AMONG FIRST GENERATION BURMESE CARETAKERS AND SECOND GENERATION BURMESE CHILDREN IN ELMHURST, NEW YORK: IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICES 27

5. Nathan Waxman, DO LIMITATIONS IN THE BURMESE LANGUAGE IMPEDE MYANMAR'S INCORPORATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLITICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION FROM ABROAD?....27

Panel 7: Ethnic Nationalists, Monasteries, and Intellectuals Create Schools where Government Failed, Organized by Dorothy Guyot **(Regency Room)**

1. Marie Lall and Ashley South, SCHOOLING AND CONFLICT: ETHNIC EDUCATION AND MOTHER TONGUE-BASED TEACHING IN MYANMAR 28

2. Dorothy Guyot, Nang Mao Ceng Cett, and Wint Myat Thu, SCHOOLS POPPING UP LIKE MUSHROOMS: AN ACADEMY, A CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, AND NUNNERY....29

3. Kyle Anderson, PARAMI UNIVERSITY: A COMING LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE 29

Panel 8: Ethnic Shanthologies (Capitol North)

1. Catherine Raymond, BEYOND THE GLASS OF WAT CHONG KLANG AT MAE HONG SON. RESEARCH ON THE ORIGIN OF THE BURMESE REVERSE GLASS PAINTING TRADITION....30

2. Nicola Tannenbaum, VESSANTARA IN MAEHONGSON....30

3. John Hartmann, WHO ARE THE SHAN?....31

4. Nancy Eberhardt, BUDDHISM ON THE BORDER: CHANGING PRACTICE IN RURAL MAE HONG SON31

5. Susan Conway, TEXTILES AND PROTECTION: SHAN AND LAN NA 32

Panel 9: Society, Participation, and Representation (Capitol South)

1. Andy Buschmann, MEANINGFUL LIBERALIZATION OR LIBERALIZED AUTOCRACY? AN EMPIRICAL VIEW ON CIVIL LIBERTIES IN MYANMAR'S TRANSITION 32

2. Myat The Thitsar, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR STRENGTHENING STATES AND REGIONS PARLIAMENTS IN MYANMAR....33

3. Saittawut Yutthaworakool, BUDDHIST NATIONALISM IN DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION OF MYANMAR: A POLITICAL QUEST FOR TATMADAW'S POWER LEGITIMACY 33

4. Sarah Bouchat, CAREERS AND CAUSES: PARTICIPATION IN MYANMAR'S LEGISLATURE....34

5. Vanlal Pari, SUU KYI AND DEMOCRACY IN MYANMAR'S POLITICAL TRANSITION 34

Panel 10: Political Transition and the 2015 Election (Hunt Room)

1. Tong Lei, ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM IN BURMA 35

2. Kirsten Taylor, ELECTIONS IN KACHIN STATE 35

3. Matthew Walton and Nyi Nyi Kyaw, BUDDHISM IN MYANMAR'S 2015 ELECTIONS: CHARTING BOUNDARIES AND CONTESTATION OF THE MONASTIC VOCATION....36

4. Nay Yan Oo, A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOR IN MYANMAR....36

5. Paul Sarno, THE 2015 ELECTION IN MYANMAR 37

Panel 11: Under the Radar: Social Taboos, Social Fringes and Unofficial Histories (Sandburg Auditorium)

1. Hnin Su Mon, SEX WORK, BEYOND THE CHOICES: AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FEMALE SEX WORKERS IN YANGON, MYANMAR....38

2. Sonu Trivedi, MYANMAR ON MOVE... LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP AND A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE!....38

3. Thinn Thinn, THE GENDER ROLE DIFFERENCE OF NICKNAMES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND MYANMAR STUDENTS....39

4. Diana Kim, MORALLY WRECKED: THE BUREAUCRATIC ORIGINS OF OPIUM PROHIBITION IN BRITISH BURMA, 1870-1900....39

5. Tani Sebro, NECROMOBILITY/CHOREOMOBILITY: DANCE, DEATH AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE THAI–BURMA BORDER-ZONE....39

6. Luke Corbin, BEER SIGNS AT THE ဘီယာဆိုင်....40

Panel 12: Ethno-Nationalism and Political Tensions (Regency Room)

1. Mikael Gravers and Annika Pohl Harrison, RELIGION AND POLITICS IN MYANMAR: CREATING COMMUNAL SECURITY OR CONFLICT INTERFACES?....41

2. Aye Min Thant, DESTROYING THE UNIMAGINABLE: RELIGIOUS GENOCIDE IN BURMA....41

3. Beiyin Deng, THE CONCEALED ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN BUDDHIST COMMUNITIES: THE STRUCTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN BURMA AND STUDIES OF BURMESE BUDDHISM....42

Panel 13: The Role of Media in Burma/Myanmar's Pro-democracy Movement, from 1988 to 2015: Past Contributions and New Challenges Post-Transition. Organized by Seinenu Thein-Lemelson **(Capitol North)**

1. Kyaw Zwa Moe, PRISMS OF FREE SPEECH, PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE: BEHIND BARS AND ACROSS THE NEWS IN BURMA/MYANMAR....43

2. Ma Thida, CONTEMPLATING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A PEOPLE UNDER A LONG DICTATORSHIP THROUGH ANALYSES OF THEIR ART AND WRITINGS....43

3. Seinenu Thein-Lemelson, PANZAGAR OR A COERCIVE HARMONY? CONTEMPLATING 27 YEARS OF RAISED CONSCIOUSNESS AND BURMA'S SHIFT FROM DIRECT TO INDIRECT CONTROL IN THE POST-TRANSITION PERIOD....44

4. Nay Phone Latt, OPPRESSION AND HATE SPEECH AS THREATS TO FREEDOM....44

5. Penelope Edwards (discussant)

Panel 14: Ritual Places in Myanmar, Organized by Jason Carbine **(Capitol South)**

1. Bénédicte Brac de la Perrière, RITUAL AND PLACE IN BURMA 45

2. Alexandra Kaloyanides, STRANGE SHRINES: THE COMBINATORY RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AT MARILLA BAKER INGALLS' BURMESE BAPTIST MISSION 45

3. Jason Carbine, THE KALYANI INSCRIPTIONS AND SIMA: BORDERS CREATED AND PROTECTED.....46

4. Will Womack, ZWEGABIN: EXILE, RETURN, PILGRIMAGE, AND NARRATIVES OF SACRED PLACE IN KAREN STATE.....46

5. Maitrii Aung-Thwin (discussant)

Panel 15a: Political Transition: Internal Arena and External Relations (Part 1) Organized by Chenyang Li **(Hunt Room)**

1. Khin Zaw Win, NEW CENTRE-PERIPHERY DYNAMICS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS.....47

2. Chenyang Li, THE TREND OF POLITICAL TRANSITION IN MYANMAR BEYOND 2015.....47

3. Jianxun Kong, MYANMAR'S PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY.....48

4. Zhi Liu, MYANMAR-INDIA INTENSE RELATIONS: REASONS AND TRENDS.....48

Panel 15b: Political Transition: Internal Arena and External Relations (Part 2) Organized by Chenyang Li **(Hunt Room)**

1. Andrzej Bolesta, CHINA'S IMPACT ON BURMA'S TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT.....49

2. Shenrong Luo, RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND MYANMAR 49

3. Xianghui Zhu, THE DECISION-MAKING OF MYITSONE DAM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS 50

Panel 16: Local Politics and Justice in Myanmar (Sandburg Auditorium)

1. Gerard McCarthy, SELF-RELIANCE CITIZENSHIP AND THE BUSINESS OF WELFARE IN POST-SOCIALIST MYANMAR 50

2. Stephen Huard, WHAT IS LOCAL POLITICS IN BURMESE HEARTLAND? AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF VILLAGE HEADMAN' (S)ELECTION IN MYANMAR CENTRAL DRYLANDS.....51

3. Helene Maria Kyed and Myat The Thitsar, EVERYDAY JUSTICE AND PLURAL AUTHORITIES: INSIGHTS FROM KAREN STATE.....51

4. Matthew Koo, FROM INSURGENCY TO GOVERNANCE: THE INTERNATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF REBEL ADMINISTRATION IN
MYANMAR'S MULTIPARTY CIVIL WAR 52

5. Eric McAuliffe, WRITING RACE AND CRAFTING POWER IN COLONIAL BURMA.....52

Panel 17: Religion, Orthodoxy and Folklore (Regency Room)

1. Friedlind Riedel, HUMAN NONHUMANS. NATS AND THEIR MEDIAL FIGURATIONS.....53

2. Robert Sterken, MONKS IN POLITICS: ESTABLISHING A RELIGION IN BURMA.....53

3. Ward Keeler, THE TRAFFIC IN HIERARCHY 54

Panel 18: Religiosity, Identity and Democracy in Burma Organized by Khin Mar Mar Kyi **(Regency Room)**

1. Ye Myint Win, A FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND THE ANTI-MUSLIM SENTIMENT AND HATE SPEECH IN MYANMAR.....54

2. Khin Mar Mar Kyi, RELIGIOSITY, GENDER IDENTITY AND DEMOCRATISATION IN BURMA/MYANMAR 55

Panel 19: 'Burma and the West:' Two Recent Books, organized by Kenton Clymer **(Capitol North)**

1. Kenton Clymer, REFLECTIONS ON UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH BURMA/MYANMAR SINCE 1945.....55

2. Tamara Ho, ROMANCING HUMAN RIGHTS: GENDER, INTIMACY, AND POWER BETWEEN BURMA AND THE WEST.....55

3. Tharaphi Than (Discussant)

Panel 20: Mapping the ineffable and the charting of spatial narratives in Pre-Modern Burma, organized by Francois Tainturier **(Capitol South)**

1. Lilian Handlin, SPACE, REAL AND MORE THAN REAL, IN 13TH CENTURY PAGAN.....57

2. Patrick Pranke, BURMA'S BUDDHIST GEOGRAPHY: A BRIEF HISTORY OF SPACE IN A CHANGING BUDDHIST LANDSCAPE.....57

3. Tin Naing Win, MYANMAR TRADITIONAL CARTOGRAPHY: COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF PRE-MODERN INDIGENOUS MAPS 58

4. Francois Tainturier, MANDALAY'S BODHI-TREE OR THE COALESCING TRAJECTORIES, SACRED AND MUNDANE, OF A RELIC OF THE BUDDHA.....58

Panel 21 Social Issues and Education: Histories, Policies and Progress (Sandburg Auditorium)

1. Khin Lay Maung, BURMA CHALLENGES SOCIOLOGY IN 2016 59

2. Madlen Krüger, PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS OTHER THROUGH THE LENSES OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE GROUPS IN YANGON 60

3. Moodjalin Sudcharoen, TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN FROM BURMA: EDUCATION, LANGUAGE POLICY, AND MULTICULTURALISM IN THAILAND 60

4. Nang Kyi Phyu Aung Cho, THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON LEADING CHANGES AND MANAGING PEOPLE 61

5. Rosalie Metro, THE 2014-15 STUDENT PROTESTS IN BURMA: THE UNIVERSITY AS A MICROCOSM OF SOCIETY.....61

Panel 22: Visual Culture, Relics and Tools: Approaching Objects of Study

1. Jella Fink, THREADS RUNNING THROUGH A NATION – NEGOTIATIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT IN CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE CRAFTSMANSHIP IN MYANMAR 62

2. Ni Ni Khet, INVESTIGATING METAL OBJECTS AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE KONBAUNG PERIOD: SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS.....63

3. Sherry Harlacher, “NATIVE LIFE ALONG THE BURMA-YUNNAN FRONTIER:” TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHS AND TRAVEL ACCOUNTS OF FREDERIC WILLIAM CAREY 63

4. Sylvia Lu, QUINTESSENTIALLY BURMESE? TEXTILES PATTERNED WITH GEOMETRIC BLOCKDESIGNS 64

Panel 23: Environmental Issues, Biodiversity, and Poor People's Movements

1. Debby Chan, MISSING THE TARGET: INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST THE SHWE PIPELINES 64

2. Elliott Prasse-Freeman, TRAPPED IN MOBILITY: SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF DISPOSSESSION, DISPLACEMENT, DETERRITORIALIZATION, AND DEVALORIZATION OF PEASANTS AND POOR PEOPLE IN CONTEMPORARY MYANMAR.....65

3. Kevin Woods, “LEGACY LANDSCAPES” OF WAR, RESOURCES AND ARMED CONFLICTS IN A BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION HOTSPOT IN SOUTHEASTERN MYANMAR.....66

4. Kevin Fitzsimmons & Jean McLain, DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE IN MYANMAR 66

Panel 24: Historical and Literary Narratives

1. Georg Noack, NATSHINNAUNG: ROMANTIC MASTER POET, TRAGIC KING – AND TRAITOR?.....67

2. Pavan Malreddy, NARRATING BURMA: BEYOND NATIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY.....67

3. Ba Eddié Win, MENTALITY OF THE "TATMADAW" THROUGH THE LIVING HISTORY.....68

4. Lisa Brooten, DVB MULTIMEDIA GROUP AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FAIR COMPETITION AND DIVERSE MEDIA CONTENT IN MYANMAR'S TRANSITION 68

Panel 25a: Identity, Buddhist or Otherwise (part 1) Organized by Pyi Kyaw and Gustaaf Houtman **(Capitol South)**

1. Gustaaf Houtman, HOW BUDDHIST ARE BUDDHISTS? RITES OF PASSAGE AND THE BEIKTHEIK SAYA 69

2. Pyi Kyaw, AUTHENTICITY AND ADAPTATION: RESPONSES OF THE BURMESE SANGHA TO DIMINISHING BUDDHIST IDENTITY AMONGST YOUNGER GENERATIONS IN THE DIASPORA 69

3. Dhammika Herath, NEGOTIATING TENSIONS - BUDDHISTS IN MYANMAR AND SRI LANKA 70

Panel 25b: Identity, Buddhist or Otherwise (part 2) Organized by Pyi Kyaw and Gustaaf Houtman **(Capitol South)**

4. Justine Chambers, RECLAIMING A MORAL LIFE: PLONG KAREN BUDDHIST IMAGINARIES AT THE BASE OF MOUNT ZWEGABIN 70

5. Matt Schissler, "MORE THAN YOUR HUSBAND": MIXED-MARRIAGE CONTROVERSIES IN BURMA .71

6. Tamas Wells, MYANMAR'S DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT AND THE CONTEST OVER 'REAL' BUDDHIST TEACHING.....71

7. Ven. Ashin Janaka, DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS ON THE BUDDHA'S PATH: THE POSTHUMOUS TRIAL OF SHIN UKKAṬṬHA BEFORE THE STATE SAṄGHAMAHĀNĀYAKA COMMITTEE OF MYANMAR 72

Panel 26: Visual Art, Heritage and Preservation (Regency Room)

1. Richard Cooler, A BUDDHA IMAGE FOR EXORCISM.....72

2. Win Tut Kyaw, TRACING A BA BO MIN GAUNG TODAY 73

3. Yin Ker, DOCUMENTATION, DISSEMINATION & TRANSMISSION: AN OPEN-ACCESS DATABASE OF BAGYI AUNG SOE'S ILLUSTRATIONS.....73

Panel 27: Electoral Structures and Political Representation (Capitol North)

1. Chit Win, THE INSTITUTIONAL INHERITANCE OF MYANMAR'S LEGISLATURE (2011-16).....74

2. Renaud Egreteau, WESTMINSTER LEGACIES, BURMESE SYMBOLS: REDISCOVERING PARLIAMENTARY RITUALS IN MYANMAR.....74

3. Van Tran, WINNING ELECTORAL SUPPORT FROM ETHNIC COMMUNITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL PARTIES FROM BURMA'S 2015 ELECTIONS.....75

Panel 28: Assessing Burma's Armed Conflicts Organized by John Buchanan **(Hunt Room)**

1. John Buchanan, BEYOND RANGOON AND THE 1962 COUP: A DECENTERED APPROACH TO ARMED CONFLICTS IN BURMA.....76

2. David Mathieson, FUELING RESISTANCE AND REBEL RECRUITMENT: NARRATIVES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BURMA'S CIVIL WAR.....76

3. Kevin Woods, GEOGRAPHIES OF MICRO-POLITICS IN KACHIN STATE: WAR, DISPLACEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT.....77

4. Paul Staniland, ARMED POLITICS IN BURMA/MYANMAR AND BEYOND.....78

Panel 29: Reconstruction, Social Transformation and Development (Regency Room)

1. Richard Tucker, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF WORLD WAR II IN BURMA.....78

2. Rachel Kallus, THE NAMSANG RESETTLEMENT PLAN: INTEGRATED RURAL/REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS FRONTIER TERRITORIAL POLITICS IN 1950S BURMA.....79

Panel 30: Traditions and Challenges: Exploring Religious Communities through Narrative Organized by Elizabeth Rhoads **(Capitol North)**

1. Elizabeth Rhoads, FROM TEXTILES TO CHALK TO PROPERTY: A SURTI MUSLIM ENTREPRENEUR AFTER NE WIN.....79

2. Alicia Turner, MOBILE BUDDHISTS FROM THE MARGINS: COSMOPOLITAN INTERACTIONS IN COLONIAL YANGON.....80

3. Courtney Wittekind, TALKING TRANSITION: SPIRITUAL, SPECTRAL, AND SPECULATIVE NARRATIVES OF SOUTHERN SHAN STATE.....80

Panel 31: Democratic Transition and Ethno-Religious Minorities in Myanmar Organized by Ardeth Maung Thawnghmung **(Sandburg Auditorium)**

1. Alexandre Pelletier, DEMOCRACY AND SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS: CHINESE INDONESIAN AND BURMESE MUSLIMS IN POST-TRANSITION MYANMAR AND INDONESIA....81

2. Ardeth Maung Thawnghmung, DEMOCRACY, ETHNICITY, AND CONVERGING AREAS OF AUTHORITY IN CONTEMPORARY MYANMAR....81

3. Jacques Bertrand, ETHNIC ARMED GROUPS AND THE "NATIONAL" CEASE-FIRE: CONVERGING INTERESTS?....82

4. Mollie Pepper, ETHNIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND ARMED CONFLICT IN BURMA....82

Panel 32: On the Margins: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in Burma/Myanmar Organized by Katrina Chludzinski **(Ellingtons's)**

1. Katrina Chludzinski, IDENTITY FORMATION AND DECOLONIZATION: THE POLITICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF ANGLO-BURMAN IDENTITIES IN THE 1940S....83

2. Trude Jacobsen, WOMEN IN THE RANGOON LUNATIC ASYLUM, 1875 – 1935....83

3. Nicole Loring, OVERCOMING BARRIERS: MYANMAR'S RECENT ELECTIONS AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION....84

Panel 33: Disease, Public Health and Policy (Hunt Room)

1. Bill Davis, HEALTH SYSTEM CONVERGENCE TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE, PRIMARY HEALTH SYSTEM IN BURMA: PERSPECTIVES OF ETHNIC AND COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS (ECHOS) OF EASTERN BURMA....84

2. Juan Luo, WHY RECOGNITION MATTERS? HEALTH AID PARTNERSHIP ACROSS THE MYANMAR-CHINA BORDER....85

3. Salai Biak Za Lian Ching, MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY RENDITION TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY PROFESSIONAL CHIN-HAKHA <> ENGLISH INTERPRETERS....85

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7

PANEL ONE: Boundary, Bloc, and International Politics

Sandburg Auditorium

MYANMAR AND GREAT POWER COMPETITION AND COOPERATION IN THE IOR

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While most scholars believe that Myanmar will not stray from its long held foreign policy of non-alignment and neutralism and will look to supplement its alignment with China with a growing network of other international and regional powers, namely the United States, European Union (EU), Japan and India, the present paper is an attempt to examine the unanticipated 'strategic triangle' beginning to emerge among Washington, Beijing and New Delhi in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), indicating prospects of real contest of status and legitimacy on the one hand, vis-à-vis areas of cooperation and collective coexistence on the other hand. Although China's strategic perspectives have been mostly land-focused with little evidence that Beijing is pursuing a strategy of sea control in the Indian Ocean. A strategy that would be well beyond China's capabilities, particularly in view of its considerable geostrategic disadvantages in the region, besides its naval objective being overwhelmingly focused on the Taiwan Strait and the Western Pacific, the IO being second in its order of priority in its larger maritime goals/objectives. That said, given the economic interdependence of most of these powers, none can deal with the other in the manner the US contained Soviet Union during the Cold War, turning the Indian Ocean into a healthy area of competition and opening scopes of collective cooperation in combating non-conventional threats disrupting smooth flow of maritime trade, culture and ideas across this region.

THE ASIAN SOCIALIST CONFERENCE – BURMA'S AND YUGOSLAVIA'S ATTEMPT AT ESTABLISHING OF AN ALTERNATIVE IDEOLOGICAL MODEL DURING THE COLD WAR

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During the Cold War period many of the post-colonial nations sought to find a third way for the economic and social development of their respective societies, seeking foreign policy independence and equality in world affairs, as well as trying to set up an alternative ideological system to the existing bloc divisions. One of these organizations was the Asian Socialist Conference (ASC), established by the socialist parties of leading Asian nonaligned states: Burma, India, and Indonesia, but also closely supported by Yugoslavia, the communist renegade from the Soviet bloc who sought his own path of constructing a socialist society. Even though the ASC was not a very successful attempt, due to the later weakness of socialist parties, it did play an important role in shaping of an alternative and autonomous political identity of Burma, Yugoslavia, and the nonaligned

world.

This paper is based on newly declassified archival materials coming from the Myanmar (National Archives of Myanmar, Myanmar Historical Commission), Yugoslav/Serbian (Archives of Yugoslavia, Diplomatic Archives of the Serbian Foreign Ministry), and Indian archives (National Archives of India, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library), as well as on relevant publications about the ASC that were published during the 1950s. Since this specific topic has not seen much international elaboration due to the obvious lack of important archival sources, this paper will analyze the phenomenon of the ASC from the perspective of its founders, as well as from Yugoslavia, the only non-Asian country fully accepted as an equal member of this international organization.

DE-POLITICIZATION AND RE-POLITICIZATION OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE

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Before 2012: "Burma's Jean of Arc", "new Gandhi", "female bodhisattva", or even "world's conscience". Now: "Burma's Mugabe", a "prisoner of conscience that turned into a politician" who is "shamefully" and "inexcusably" silent on human rights issues. The Western discourse on Aung San Suu Kyi made a spectacular U-turn in the last few years. First came "de-politicization" – until 2011 Suu Kyi's Western image was stripped of the political aspects and depicted using "beauty vs. beast" cliché instead. After 2011, or more precisely 2012, "re-politicization" came, with intense criticism based on the notion of Suu Kyi "becoming" a politician instead of human rights activist. By invoking famous Hegel's triad, it all may be described as a "thesis" (unquestioned admiration and support) which turned into "antithesis" (equally hyperbolized criticism). Both are correct to some extent, but are extreme at the same time. What is needed here is a "synthesis," an outlook combining both these visions. Based on Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches, declarations, memoirs, texts, and my personal interviews with her, I would like to propose a new approach. This approach is based on one crucial assumption that Suu Kyi has always been a politician. She didn't "become" one in 2011. On the contrary, from the very beginning in August 1988 she behaved as a politician and not a moral icon and prisoner of conscience. Her commitment to democracy and nonviolence has been always authentic but at the same time she has ruled her party in the autocratic way and has been ambivalent toward ethnic minorities. Her ideological stance evolved in accordance with the changing political situation. Her choices and her actions, therefore, must therefore be judged from a political perspective (not a moral one or other). By removing the moral dimension, the question is less about her being good/bad and focuses on her as an astute politician.

EXPLORING DOMESTIC POLITICAL CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON MYANMAR'S FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR

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The behavior of Myanmar's foreign policy since 2011 has been determined by its domestic political conditions and challenges. The reasons Myanmar employs diplomatic foreign policy and aims to cooperate for foreign aids are based on the impetus of domestic political challenges. This paper explores the domestic sources that drive Myanmar's international behavior. The study delves into the following research questions: What are the impacts of Myanmar's domestic political challenges on foreign policy behaviors? How are the behaviors related to the challenges? Relying on primary data, and anchored fundamentally on the "state level analysis" from Pre-theory as a framework of analysis, the paper suggests that there are two domestic political challenges determine how Myanmar behaves in its external environment. First, the challenges of democratization, which push Myanmar to pursue "look-around policy" in order to seek opportunities which will smoothen democratic transition and national reconciliation. Second, the challenges of security, which force Myanmar to establish new alliances with the purpose of securing energy resources, enforcing peace and fostering regional stability. After elaborating these matters, the paper concludes with two contributions. First contribution is the linkage between domestics and foreign policy behavior of Myanmar, which is lacking in the literature of Myanmar international studies. Second contribution is the future implication of Myanmar's foreign policy from the domestic perspective.

FEAR AND SILENCE IN BURMA AND INDONESIA: COMPARING TWO NATIONAL TRAGEDIES AND TWO INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES OF TRAUMA

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There is a growing literature indicating that individuals often respond to traumatic experience with resilience, yet it is not clear what specific factors facilitate recovery. In particular, it has been challenging to identify the larger historical, structural, political, and cultural factors that predict individual outcome. The paper examines two historic national tragedies in Southeast Asia: one in Burma, the other in Indonesia. The paper describes a comparative case analysis of two individuals—one Burmese, one Indonesian—who underwent significant traumas that were part of historically situated political atrocities (the 1988 Uprising and subsequent massacres in Burma and the 1965 mass killings in Indonesia). The paper identifies several key factors that contribute to resilient and positive individual outcome on the part of the Burmese subject/actor, including social support; a sense of coherence; a sense of meaning and purpose; a high sense of agency; continued communication with the larger community (a lack of silence); an ability to self-regulate through goal-setting; and cultural explanatory models that support a productive engagement with fear. The two case studies illuminate how the social and political landscape, following traumatic events, can be shaped to allow victims of trauma to thrive, rather than recede into silence. The paper concludes by remarking on how, despite the better outcome of the

Burmese subject and even with seemingly rapid progress towards an open society, a long-term strategy is needed to ensure that an environment, where survivors of trauma feel safe coming forward with their stories, is maintained in Burma.

MYANMAR'S BORDER TRADE WITH INDIA: A CRITICAL SCRUTINY

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Informal trade between Myanmar and India is not a new phenomenon. For centuries, traders from Myanmar and India conducted business travelling across thousands of miles. However, after Myanmar achieved independence, its border trade ties with India reduced significantly due to ethnic unrests and cross-border insurgencies. In recent times, Myanmar and India formalised their border trade through the India-Myanmar Border Trade Agreement in 1994. However, in the past two decades, Myanmar-India border trade volume has remained insignificant in comparison to Myanmar's border trade with its other two neighbours-China and Thailand. This is despite the fact that today there are three land customs stations each from Myanmar and Indian side along the border viz., India's Nampong (Arunanchal Pradesh), Moreh (Manipur), Zokhawthar (Mizoram); and Pan Suang, Tamu and Rih in Myanmar. Two major perspectives explain low volume of Myanmar-India border trade: First perspective underscores that the low level of cross-border trade is due to Myanmar and Indian government's excessively security-centric approach, which has made trade a subsidiary of security situation. The second perspective revolves around the idea that low level of border trade is due to unfavourable trading climate, lack of enough connectivity, and lack of innovative trade practices. This paper analyses Myanmar's border trade with India in the light of these perspectives and assesses the current state of play. It also compares Myanmar's border trade with China and Thailand and highlights the best practices that Myanmar and India could jointly implement to increase the volume of their bilateral border trade.

PANEL TWO: Race, Rage, Rakhine, Religion, and Rohingya

Regency Room

TRENDS IN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTHERN RAKHINE STATE BEFORE AND AFTER THE 2012 VIOLENCE

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Anti-Muslim violence rocked Rakhine state in 2012, displacing over 100,000 people into camps that have captured the spotlight of human rights reporting and humanitarian action in western Myanmar. What is often overlooked by these reports and interventions is the plight of nearly 1,000,000 people living in villages a few hundred miles north of the IDP camps in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships. State-sponsored human rights

abuses continue to be widespread in these areas. This paper presents results of a mixed-methods study with Muslim Rohingya migrants Buddhist Rakhine people that describe a pattern of abuses in Northern Rakhine state.

INSTITUTIONALIZED INEQUALITY AND THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF BUDDHIST MUSLIM VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR 2012-2014

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On May 28th, 2012 three Rohingya Muslim men in the Yanbye Township of the Rakhine State in Myanmar were accused of raping and murdering a Rakhine Buddhist woman. This incident sparked a series of communal conflicts that spread throughout the country over the next two years. The conflicts led to over 240 deaths and the displacement of an estimated 140,000 people. Buddhist Muslim conflict is not new in Myanmar. Sporadic incidents of violence have occurred between members of these two groups at least since British colonial rule (e.g. Yangon riots in 1938, Mandalay riots in 1948, Sittwe riots in 2001). Existing theories of communal violence do well at explaining particular incidents of violence (e.g. Olzak, 1992), but they are unable to explain the recurrent nature of communal violence. This paper uses geo-coded data of the communal violence between 2012-2014 along with census data and historical evidence of communal violence to argue that the recurrent nature of violence is primarily due to differences in how ethnic group hierarchies have been institutionalized across different regions. Drawing on recent developments in race/ethnicity studies and on group threat theory (Brubaker 2002), this paper argues that the divergent institutionalization of hierarchies across the country explains the spatial distribution of communal conflict between 2012 and 2014.

MONASTIC PRIVILEGE: BUDDHIST MASCULINITIES AND THE 969 MOVEMENT

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This paper is a gendered reading of Burma's nationalist 969 Movement and aims to intervene in Orientalist tropes of the pacifist, self-effacing, non-political Buddhist monk, and seeks to place Burma's current ethno-nationalist religious violence into historical context. Drawing on Burma's political history from pre-colonial Buddhist polity to British colonial rule, independence, and Burma's socialist and military governments, this paper briefly places Burma's contemporary anti-Muslim riots against a historical backdrop of British divide-and-rule policy, nationalist political monks, and continually fostered attitudes of xenophobia and fear toward outsiders through the Socialist and military governments. The remainder of the paper is devoted to the argument that monastic supporters of the movement draw on this history of xenophobia in their rhetoric of the Muslim male as violent, rapacious, hyper-sexualized, and greedy. In deploying this rhetoric, these monks construct a hegemonic masculinity predicated on controlled sexuality and reproduction. This hegemonic masculinity operates such that Buddhist monastic privilege is retained in Burmese society.

PANEL THREE: Music's Cymbals and Symbols

Capitol North

BUDDHIST SOUNDSCAPES: DHAMMA INSTRUMENTS AND DIVINE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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Participation in musical events in the Theravada Buddhist world is deemed inappropriate for devout laity and for those who have taken monastic vows. Scholars of Theravada musics have reinforced this rhetorical divide between the sonic practice of monks and the art and popular music of the secular world by highlighting the seventh Buddhist precept that implores monks "to abstain from dancing, singing, and music." Despite this divide, Buddhist monasteries and pagodas in Myanmar tend to be very noisy places that contain a wide variety of layered bells, gongs, chants, and prayers sculpting the sonic environment. This study examines the soundscape of Buddhist social space and argues that these sounds are essential to understanding the lived practice of Buddhism. I will begin with the construction of gongs, bells, and a variety of dhamma (dharma) instruments in a blacksmith community of southern Mandalay. Following these instruments to the pagoda and the monastery, I will show how they are used to mark the acquisition and the distribution of kammic (karmic) merit and in the cultivation of particular states of mind, or what the Buddha referred to as the Brahma Viharas, the divine dwelling places of the mind. This presentation will include a variety of audio and video examples and interviews with blacksmiths and Buddhist monks.

WHAT IS 'POLITICS' IN CONTEMPORARY BURMA? A JOURNEY THROUGH THE ACADEMY, BURMESE HIP HOP, AND BURMESE SOCIETY

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In this paper, I examine aspects of 'politics' and the political as related to contemporary Burma. First, I address how the political situation has narrowed the scope of questions and topics researchers (and journalists) typically explore. In other words, because of recent political history, there has been a tendency for researchers of contemporary Burma to focus on topics and stories of an overtly political nature: governmental politics, the fallout from the politics of a harsh regime, or (an overemphasis on or sometimes glamorized) resistance to them. Because of that predilection, certain topics which on the surface have not seemed blatantly political, have been overlooked in the literature or misrepresented. I then show how the definition of politics and the political in Burma is different than in the outside world. Through participant observation and interviews with

popular musical artists, broadened to include Burmese citizens across the spectrum, I build up and present a theory of what politics and the political means in Burma, and why probing the difference between local and external interpretations is important for any research on modern Burma.

NEVER MIND THE GENERALS. BURMESE PUNK ROCK SCENE AS A VEHICLE FOR MANIFESTING CHANGING NOTIONS OF BURMESE IDENTITY

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Music has proven to be both mutable and transcultural, it easily crosses political borders and brings people together. Music has the power to reflect our inherent cultural symbolism through collective gesture, emotional experience, group empathy and sound. Music also encourages political movements, reinterprets history and helps us deal with traumatic experiences from our past. Music can also be understood as a form of social consciousness. The examples of political movements that debuted as musical ones, and went on to alter our socio-political reality, are many. In the case of Myanmar, Punk Rock has retained its power to both shock, and organize, on a political level. For Skum, lead singer of Burmese Crust Punk band Kultureshock, politics and music have always been entwined. Burmese punk rockers stand against Buddhist monks from the 969 movement and their persecution of Muslims. In Myanmar the local Punk Rock scene gives a contrasting view of Burmese youth culture. Punk collectives stand against the former military regime's cultural policy, which recognized liberal ideologies and "globalization" as the main threats to Burmese identity. Before 2010 the Burmese Punk Rock movement went fully underground when the military government attempted to forcefully eradicate many foreign influences. Nowadays, the Burmese Punk Rock scene works to revise discourse on Burmese youth identity by opposing racism, ethnic hatred and xenophobic nationalism. This paper is based on participant observation data on the local Punk Rock scene in Myanmar, gathered between 2014 and 2016.

BURMESE YOUTH MUSICS AS (MIS)REPRESENTED IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE GLOBAL MEDIA

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During the past five years, English-language journalists have published a number of articles about popular music in Burma, almost all of them focusing on newly-established Yangon-based bands which perform youth music such as punk and heavy metal. These articles have been published in global media outlets such as Newsweek, the Huffington Post, and the New York Times, and have been widely circulated on the internet. In this presentation I will argue that recent media reports about Burmese popular music contain numerous inaccuracies, including serious errors of fact regarding the history of censorship and the creation of own tunes, or original rock songs. These inaccuracies arise in part because free-lance journalists working on small budgets spend very little time in Yangon to investigate their stories. But more importantly, the authors of these media reports are dedicated to representing Burmese punk and metal musicians as heroic resisters of oppression and

agents of emancipation. They are committed to a metanarrative which insists that these youth music scenes are the locus of progressive politics. These journalists begin their reporting by looking for "resistance," and in Burmese punk and heavy metal, they find it, even if this means ignoring or distorting the nuanced realities of life on the ground in Yangon. This presentation is based on a forthcoming article in Metal Music Studies.

COMPOSING SOUND IDENTITY IN SHAN LONG DRUM

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This paper explores the construction of identity of Shan migrants from Burma in Chiang Mai Province, northern Thailand through their music, specifically focusing on puje drum, a Shan long drum that is generally played in Shan religious and cultural festivals. Puje drum plays a vital role in creating sounds that distinguish the Shan from other ethnic groups. The drum sounds also evoke memories of place, which remind Shan migrants of their motherland. Apart from signaling Shan-ness, puje drum performances are also defined by the Shan migrants as a part of Thai-Lanna (northern Thai) culture. As ethnographic evidence shows, the similarities between Shan and northern Thai languages and cultures create the perception that they are ethnic kin or cousins. However, Shan migrants still have experienced discrimination and exploitation. They are treated as "aliens" who serve as low-wage and lower-skilled laborers by the Thai. This complex and contradictory relationship between the Shan and the Thai has profoundly affected how Shan migrants construct their identity. On the one hand, Shan migrant identity as represented through music could signify an attempt at assimilating with the host land; meanwhile, the acknowledgement of cultural borders could also create feelings of alienation and antagonism to some extent. This study seeks to answer how Shan migrants perform their music to construct their identity in ways that negotiate subjugating discourses in the host land. Ultimately, this paper will provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of migrant identity constructions in a transnational context.

NAT GADAW AS ARI PRIEST?

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The Burmese nat pwe, spirit-worshipping ceremonies, always include a spirit medium, usually a male transvestite. The tradition of male transvestites as ritual specialists is venerable in Southeast Asia, but has, with modernity, declined dramatically. The Burmese tradition, is, in this sense, an anachronism. I suspect that the nat gadaw, the ritual specialist who presides at a nat pwe, represents a present-day remnant of the former Tantric Ari priesthood of Myanmar. The Tantric special valuation of persons of ambiguous gender, the Shiva/Shakti formulation, derives from ancient practices of Tantric Buddhism and Tantric Shaivism, formerly practiced widely in Southeast Asia. The much-denigrated Ari priests of medieval Pagan were Buddhist monks of the Tantric faith who were eventually superseded by Theravada traditions. Tantric faiths proposed that the unification of male and female energies lends special potency to an individual. Thus transvestite males, especially those who are ritual specialists, can claim extraordinary spiritual power and are uniquely appropriate

as nat gadaw. I suspect that medieval Ari priests are the distant forerunners, the ancestral models, for contemporary nat gadaw.

PANEL FOUR: Approaching Colonial History: Social Problems and Culture

Capitol South

A SOUND SEIQ FOR SUCCESS: SELF-HELP AND POPULAR SCIENCE IN BURMESE HANDBOOK CULTURE, C. 1900-1937

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You can't buy success at the store, but if you want to cultivate bravery, patience, confidence, wisdom, and health, Maung E Maung's little book will teach you how use the powers of your subconscious (အိပ်မွေ့၏အစွမ်း), and more. Or so he told his readers in his 1916 The Way to Success (အောင်မြင်ခြင်းလမ်းညွှန်) — just one of the dozens of guidebooks published by Burmese business gurus in the early decades of the twentieth century. This talk considers a wider genre of self-help and its particular manifestations in the Burmese book market, where the self-help text targeted audiences eager to learn new expert methods in the pursuit of worldly achievement. Who was the "successful Burmese entrepreneur," and how did the authors selling success arrange a varied set of knowledge practices for popular consumption? This talk explores the sciences of seiq (mind) that feature in the Burmese self-help text and begins to probe the relationship between the "modern" self-help book and alternative practices intended to guide fortune-making in the secular world.

"THE COMMONWEALTH OF NAMTU": BRITISH WORLD MINING, FINANCE, AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN SHAN STATES, 1906-1935

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This essay analyzes the overlap between economic development, business networks, and governance in British Burma between 1906 and 1935. In particular, my project focuses on the Burma Corporation, a transnational mining corporation founded by the future US President Herbert Hoover, whose operations were located in a remote area of Burma's Northern Shan States. I argue that this company, which by the 1920s had become one of the largest industrial mining enterprises in the world, provides a unique vantage point to explore the complexity of Britain's Empire during the early twentieth century. Founded and managed by white foreigners from the United States, Canada, and Australia, and primarily staffed by migrant laborers from China and India, my essay asks how an international commercial firm like the Burma Corporation was able to fashion a

cosmopolitan city on the edge of Britain's Empire and become an agent of the colonial state. Connected to Britain through a common racial and cultural heritage as well as a commitment to western models of political economy, I argue that foreign commercial agents and experts – particularly Americans, but also Germans, Italians, and Australians - were crucial to Britain's colonial project in Burma, taking on the role of colonizer in areas where the state was weak. In doing so, my essay brings into question the character of colonial governance, the uniformity of the "British" Empire, and the nature of the state in colonial Burma during this period.

RE-VISITING COMMUNITY IN BURMESE AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN History

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The shadow of the nation continues to linger in the historiography of Myanmar despite concerted efforts to displace its privileged position. With few exceptions, domestic scholars continue to promote histories of the nation that privilege a unified past that often understates the variation and alternative experiences of minorities across time and space. In some respects, these histories act as primary texts to the contemporary nation-building initiatives that frame their production. In contrast, area-studies researchers, often writing from afar, favor perspectives that transcend these political, cultural, and epistemological boundaries of the nation. Reorienting their histories to recover the histories of peripheral and marginal groups, these works also direct their gaze to settings that transcend, complicate, or resist the integrative fixtures of the nation-state. How might scholars of Southeast Asia address the continuing importance of the nation while taking into account transnational variances, processes, and identities that have historically characterized the region? This paper explores the viability of "community" as a category through which a history of Myanmar/Southeast Asia might be written. In broad strokes, it proposes that a history of community provides a useful framework that charts the development of polities in the region, recognizes the processes that contributed to the formation of different social groups, and acknowledges the various ways affiliation to these solidarities were expressed in the Southeast Asian past. Drawing upon case examples from the region and Myanmar, this paper examines how Southeast Asia's cultural and political experiences can be examined historically through the story of community formation.

'DEPRESSION' POLITICS AND BURMESE NATIONALISM: REPERCUSSIONS OF GLOBAL EVENTS ON THE INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN BURMA (C. 1930-40)

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British annexation of Burma by the late nineteenth century was marked by radical transformation, in India's primordial ties with Burma, not only in the quantification and content of emigrants but also in the pattern and system of their emigration and employment which now came to be largely informally regulated through networks of Maistry intermediaries. The significance of colonial Burma can be measured by the fact that it

emerged as the largest recipient of Indian migrants, accounting approximately 15 million, vis-à-vis any other colony during the century 1830s-1930s. The advent of British rule and the 'free' flow or more precisely unregulated immigration of Indians created Burmese resentments which had social, cultural and economic overtones, for example, the tensions between Buddhist Bamars and Indian (Chittagonian/Rohingya) Muslims over marriage, religion and occupational competition which continues till the contemporary period; increasing collaboration of Indians with the British administration, police, army, military etc. However, these sentiments were subdued by the rising global demand for Burmese rice and lack of complementary workforce in the urban spaces to the agricultural Burmans. By 1930-40s Burmese antagonism effervesced to more intensified and complex forms. The paper seeks to analyze the repercussions of the world events of 1930s-40s¬ like Global Depression of 1930, World War II, Japanese occupation of Burma and British re-occupation as well as the role played by the newly constructed political and economic nationalism in Burma, press and propaganda on recasting the relationship between Indian immigrants and natives of Burma, Indian mobility, the Maistry system and the political identity of Burma in the 1930-40s.

BURMA'S NATS AND THE BRITISH RAJ

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"For Hna-medaw Taung-gyi Shin Nat-mi. Stand is a black elephant with a bilu above. Above that the nat-mi stands upright with complete regalia. Right side hand. Thumb with forefinger. Holds a chezu fruit held close to chest style. Left side hand. Put down alongside her body style." At 3.00pm on the second day of the waxing moon of the month of Nattaw, ME 1196 (1834 CE), an unknown person copied a treatise titled Inventory of the Thirty-Seven Min Nat, quoted above. A copy of this treatise on European paper forms part of a document now included in the Cambridge University Library's collection of the papers of Colonel Henry Burney, the British Resident to the Inwa Court between 1830 and 1837. After Burney, Sir Richard Carnac Temple and the second Baron Wynford also acquired texts and illustrations of Burma's nats that are now housed in different institutions in England. My examination of these primary sources on the making of nat figures reveals that while an iconographic canon for imagery of the nats was in place by at least the early 1800s, adherence to the canonical forms was fading by the end of that century as colonial rule took hold. My paper will examine these sources in relation to Temple's well-known publication, The Thirty-Seven Nats, demonstrating how influential Temple's work was in framing the way many of the nats are portrayed in art today.

PANEL FIVE: Labor, Investment, and the Economy

Hunt Room

LOOKING FOR INNOVATION IN LIVELIHOOD. A CASE STUDY IN MAWLAMYINE

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By mid of 2016, I will have finished my 10-month research on livelihood strategies in Mawlamyaing. I am doing a case study research on the level of households. I want to understand how livelihood decisions are taken by an investigation on literally everything what the members of a household are doing to making their living. People tell me about their means of income, about their expenses, but also about their plans, their dreams, and their setbacks. Then, I try to understand, how people decide to act and why they choose the strategy they follow. First findings show that people follow known paths, e.g. they choose to establish businesses they know from their relatives, friends, or neighbors. If one establishes a new business, we can assume that he or she has connection to a person, who is doing the same business. Innovation and creativity are not found in new business ideas but in establishing new relationships which will allow new businesses.
In addition to outlining first findings, I intend to give an insight into my empirical field research at the conference: How does Mawlamyaing looks like through the eyes of its inhabitants? What are the people's challenges? And what do they tell us about their traditions, struggles, and dreams?

WHY DOES INFORMAL TRADING OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE PERSIST IN MYANMAR? EVIDENCE FROM A SURVEY OF EXPORTERS AND IMPORTERS

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During two and a half decades of administrative controls on foreign exchange and trade, the informal market for foreign exchange developed in Myanmar. Although policy reforms since 2011 established formal channels for foreign exchange trading, the informal market persists, exacerbating the volatility of exchange rate in the reform period. Based on the questionnaire survey of 230 firms with stratified sampling of exporters and importers, we first quantify the prevalence of the informal foreign exchange market. Furthermore, by identifying the characteristics of firms that continue informal foreign exchange trading, we shed light on root causes of the prevalence of informal market. Major findings from the survey are as follows. First, 60 percent of sampled exporters strictly remained in the informal market, and so did 52 percent of sampled importers. Second, larger and foreign-invested exporters were more likely to move to the formal market compared with smaller and local exporters. Third, unexpectedly, operational length of firms was not associated with their likelihood of informal market trading. Therefore, we would argue that firms' choice of currency conversion

methods is dependent more on their current attributes such as the size of business, rather than their track records of informal transactions.

BURMESE LABORERS VS REFUGEES: FALSE NARRATIVES ON THE THAILAND-MYANMAR BORDER

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This presentation seeks to explore the overlap in lived experiences, as well as conditions of causation, for current migrants from Myanmar to Thailand. As part of a larger dissertation research project on Burmese migration into Thailand, this presentation is taken from one chapter on the contemporary patterns and outcomes of Burmese migration. An argument is advanced that the supposed binary narrative of Burmese refugees being wholly distinct in identification and causal progression from Burmese laborers is false. Supporting empirical data, both qualitative (n of 30) and quantitative (n of 4,000), will be presented. More often than is supposed, being able to identify who is a "refugee" and who is a "laborer" is much more difficult than that argued by at least the following three areas or disciplines of study: contemporary migration policy analysis, international refugee and labor law, and any humanitarian or NGO-type study. We learn that any narrative that focuses on whether the migrant from Myanmar was "forced" or came "voluntarily"—whether the migrant is of a "political" or "economical" nature—misses the point entirely. The danger is that, if we continue to view every new instance of migration as something fundamentally new to be studied in order to provide some sense of self-respect or empowerment or faux solidarity to the next victim involved, we are only really blinding ourselves to the relevant facts in order to sleep better for one more night. Whatever the ethics or morals or self-loathing, yet collective, sense of Western guilt behind the refugee-vs-laborer binary narrative, they are squarely at odds with on-the-ground empirics.

RAILWAYS IN SHAN STATE

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There are two major railway lines in Shan State, the largest of Burma's administrative regions. The first starts at Mandalay, crossing into Shan State after Pyin Oo Lwin and going to the railhead at Lashio. A second starts at Thazi, and passes through Kalaw to go to Shwenyaung, a popular destination for tourists travelling to Inle Lake. This second line continues north to a railhead at Lawksawk, the site of a Defence Forces academy. Shwenyaung was once connected to Taunggyi by a rail line, now long since abandoned. There is another line, isolated from the rest of the network, which runs from Taunggyi to Kakku, then on to Namsang and Mong Nai. The line is only usable as far as Thee. A line from Mong Nai to Kengtung, known as the Shan State Railway, was announced with much fanfare in 2009 but construction was abandoned soon after it started. This paper will discuss the need for the immediate rebuilding of the line from Shwenyaung to Taunggyi, and in the longer term a line linking Taunggyi to Kengtung. The National League for Democracy won only 40% of the vote in Shan

State in the 2015 national election. The new government could create much political goodwill for itself by rebuilding the line from Shwenyaung to Taunggyi (about 22 miles); by improving the road from Taunggyi to Kengtung (a distance of 281 miles); and in the longer term building a railway of quality from Taunggyi to Kengtung. This paper draws on fieldwork conducted in Shan State in 2013 and 2016.

ECONOMIC THEORY AND BURMESE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

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Recent economic theory has been focusing on the importance of "institutions" as the crucial factor propelling economic growth and development. The protection of property, the rule of law, and other aspects of safety, security, and stability are cited as indispensable for the transformation into an industrial society. Pre-colonial Southeast Asia, including Burma, is seen as lacking those features and thus being incapable of developing capitalism—whereas the introduction of colonial law opens the doors to new modes of trade and production. This paper intends to scrutinize some aspects of "institutional economics" from the perspective of area studies and to set them against alternative models of explanation, such as taking the distribution of factors of production ("factor endowment"). Further, I shall examine select episodes of Burmese economic history--precolonial, colonial, and independence--to test the theories in greater detail.

PAGODAS AND BEYOND: THE NEW FACE OF DOMESTIC TOURISM IN MYANMAR

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Domestic tourism in Southeast Asia has long remained a kind of blind spot of tourism studies, more keen on focusing on international - and mainly Western - visitors. Although things have recently changed, with pioneer studies about Vietnam, China or India, no in-depth survey has been led on Myanmar yet. All along our presentation, we will try to show that domestic tourism is a relevant lens to understand the current transition in Myanmar, with its rapid pace of change, and its complex blend of sometimes not-so-old "tradition" and not-so-new "modernity." We will introduce the dynamic geography of domestic tourism at a national scale, with its historical highlights and its new destinations, and their fast-changing flows of visitors. We will also try to show the specificities of Myanmar tourism, still very closely linked to pilgrimages, and how this model and the visitors' practices have changed recently under the influence of globalization. We will then analyze the Myanmar tourists themselves to better grasp their profiles and to underscore how exotic their own country can be for them. Lastly, we will focus on the Inle Lake Region to sketch a local geography of domestic tourism and to draw a comparison between international and domestic visitors' practices.

PANEL SIX: Languages, linguistics and social issues

Sandburg Auditorium

RETHINKING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN BURMA

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A central classificatory assumption the British brought to Burma was that language and ethnic group were the same. Against this enduring equation is the complexity of ethnic identities based also on religion, geographical location, ecological niche, or political affiliation. Current ethnic identifications individuate groups into discrete, bound categories which can obscure historically close interactions between sets of communities. Dialects of Burmese (Tavoyan, Intha, and Rakhaing-Marma) are made up of populations who tend to view themselves as having separate, non-Burman linguistic and ethnic identities. Each of these communities is peripheral to central Burmese, being cut off geographically and surrounded by speakers of unrelated languages. The effects of long-term contact with surrounding languages – in some cases, no evidence of replication in syntax, in other cases, changes in phonology – suggest that speakers of surrounding communities have assimilated towards the dialects. Despite their identification as non-Burmans, the dialect speaking communities stand in a similar relationship to their neighbors as does standard Burmese to other languages of the country. This linguistic situation raises the question, at what point have the various identities and identifications emerged? Did the emergence of "the Burmans" through a process of "ethnolingualism" simultaneously mark the emergence of the dialect speakers as separate communities? What does this process reveal about the emergence of other ethnic categories in Burma?

TRADITIONS AND CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH BURMESE GRAMMAR

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It goes without saying that in learning a language, one must inarguably learn its grammar, which is in essence a description of how that language is structured. That said, in descriptive grammars, the description – from what is included to how explanations are presented – varies from one work to another, depending on the time, the writer and the approach adopted. And yet they are all dealing with the same reality of Burmese language, and therefore certainly share common key features. Based on this premise, our paper will first present a rough inventory of features of Burmese language that are consistently treated in existing reference grammars. Next, we will discuss certain features that remain unexplained or insufficiently described in the eyes of the learner, as reflected in their mistakes and questions during the learning process. Such features will then be compared with observations of particularities of Burmese language that frequently surfaced in translation work. Furthermore, taking into consideration that Burmese is a language in which spoken and written Burmese are

two distinct registers which seem like two different languages to novice learners, the issue of spoken Burmese and its place in reference grammars will also be addressed, highlighting advantages of corpus-based studies in identifying key features of spoken Burmese, but not without raising (new) challenges. It is our objective to generate feedback from the participants, which would be an important contribution to the preparation of future reference materials for all those who work with Burmese language, learners and researchers alike.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE /S/ VS. /SH/ DISTINCTION BURMESE

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For many Burmese learners, the phonological opposition of unaspirated and aspirated voiceless alveolar sibilant is a thing of wonder. The contrast appears in very few languages: just 3 (along with Karen and Mazahua) out of the 451 languages in the UPSID database have the phoneme /sh/. For Burmese speakers, obviously, the contrast between sá-lòun and s'á -lein is simply part of the sound system of their language and they don't give it a second thought. The lexicon contains amply minimal pairs distinguished on the basis of the s / sh contrast.

sa 'writing' sha 'hungry'
si 'line up' shi 'oil'
su 'bulge' shu 'boil'
The contrast is also deployed as part of the regular distinction between transitive and intransitive verb pairs in Burmese and closely related languages.

Transitive/aspirated Intransitive / unaspirated

initial kh, sh, ch, th, ph initial k, s, c, t, p
shouʔ 'tear (sth)' souʔ 'be torn'

This paper is a response to informally gathered comments that the s vs sh contrast is disappearing in Burmese. Some assume either that only older speakers maintain a clear discinction, or that young people don't make the distinction any more. The paper investigates /s/ and /sh/ in the speech of a large number of Burmese speakers to establish, if any, the social groups or other factors which may be associated with the loss of the contrast. Firstly, we look at the phonetic and acoustic correlates of the pronunciation of the two sounds in a variety of contexts in which the distinction is contrastive or not. The acoustic investigation is focused initially on the coordination of voice onset with the release of the fricative, the spectral profile and rise time of the fricative, and formant transitions in adjacent vowels. It is planned to use data selected from the continuum of variation found in the acoustic study to present to Burmese speakers in a perception study to determine the extent to which speakers are able to perceive the difference between the two sounds in the speech of Burmese speakers for whom the difference seems clear. Finally, a summary of qualitative data is presented. Burmese speakers who participated in the study were all asked if they are aware of the contrast, and what they think about the prospect of its demise, and whether or not they feel it is clearly reflected in their own speech.

LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION AMONG FIRST GENERATION BURMESE CARETAKERS AND SECOND GENERATION BURMESE CHILDREN IN ELMHURST, NEW YORK: IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICES

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Considering the close relation between culture and language, researchers have been paying attention to heritage language maintenance (HLM) and the language shift among immigrants in the U.S. While there is a rising number of research on HLM among East Asian immigrants from various viewpoints, there have been very few research done on Southeast Asian minority HLM. The purpose of this project is to fill the gap of research done on HLM by shedding the light on one of those minority immigrant groups in the U.S. This linguistic-anthropological project explores not only the patterns of language socialization among first generation Burmese caretakers (parents and other extensive family members) but also observes the ideologies and practices towards Burmese HLM among second generation Burmese children. As a participant-observer, I partake in at least six natural conversations of two Burmese immigrant families (4 first generation Burmese caretakers and 3 second generation Burmese children). Participants are also interviewed for their language ideologies and practices towards Burmese HLM. These qualitative data are examined to see how first generation Burmese caretakers and second generation Burmese children interact with each other through languages (Burmese and English) in their daily encounters and how these patterns of language socialization affects Burmese HLM in these families.

DO LIMITATIONS IN THE BURMESE LANGUAGE IMPEDE MYANMAR'S INCORPORATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLITICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION FROM ABROAD?

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So concludes the New York Times in a June 19,2015 feature article by former South East Asia Bureau Chief Thomas Fuller, "Those Who Would Remake Myanmar Find That Words Fail Them". To what extent in this arguably journalistic hyperbole accurate? Undeniably Myanmar or, at least, its government had been isolated from outside (particularly western) influence for several decades, during which a technological revolution transformed much of the world from Bangalore to Palo Alto. Nonetheless, since at least the Pagan era, the Burmese language has adopted and incorporated loan words and concepts from languages adjacent and distant, resulting in an immensely rich lexicon of naturalized words and concepts ranging from puppet government ရုပ်သေးအစိုးရ /jou' thei: asou: ja./ subway train, မြေအောက်ရထား /mjei au' ratha/ through flag အလံ /alan/. We will attempt an objective assessment of the claim that the Burmese language, as opposed to a medley of other factors ranging from economic to educational, limits Myanmar's assimilation of technological, political and legal concepts from abroad. Finally, we will examine the 2015 adoption by the

လွှတ်တော် /hlu' to/ of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disability မသန်စွမ်းဆိုင်ရာဥပဒေ ma than sun: hsain ja/ and 2016 issues of Internet Journal, အင်တာနက်ဂျာနယ် / to examine the incorporation from abroad of concepts ranging from "special education system for the disabled", မသန်စွမ်းအထူးပညာရေးစနစ် /ma than sun: ahtu: pjin nja jei: sani´/ to "virtual reality" ဖန်ဆင်းကမ္ဘာ /hpan zin: gəba/ (extraordinarily created world).

PANEL SEVEN: Ethnic Nationalists, Monasteries, and Intellectuals Create Schools where Government Failed

Regency Room

SCHOOLING AND CONFLICT: ETHNIC EDUCATION AND MOTHER TONGUE-BASED TEACHING IN MYANMAR

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This paper is based on a report published by The Asia Foundation (South and Lall 2016), and a subsequent Policy Brief. We examine education reform in Myanmar, in the context of the peace process and broader political transition. We describe and analyse mother tongue-based (MTB) teaching in state and non-government schools: what languages are used in classrooms, whether ethnic languages are used as the medium of instruction or taught as separate subjects, and the relationship between various types of schools in the country, particularly those administered by the government and by Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs). We do this through case studies of education in Kachin and Mon States, together with some coverage of the situation in Karen areas and elsewhere. The military government that held power between 1962 and 2011 was closely identified with the Burman ethnic majority. During this period, Burmese (Bama saga) became the sole language of governance and education, with ethnic nationality languages suppressed and marginalised. The 'Burmanisation' of state and society has constituted one of the primary grievances of ethnic nationalities, which have mobilized minority communities to resist militarized central government authority, in the context of the world's most protracted armed conflict. In partnership with ethnic civil society, key EAGs have developed MTB education systems to serve ethnic communities in their own language, and preserve their culture, literature, and traditions. We argue that in order for the current peace process in Myanmar to be successful and sustainable, issues of language and education should be key agenda items for multi-stakeholder political negotiations.

SCHOOLS POPPING UP LIKE MUSHROOMS: AN ACADEMY, A CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, AND NUNNERY

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In Myanmar the hunger of parents for better education for their children than they had received under the Ne Win government has been immense. The three case studies focus on schools that aimed to achieve more profound learning goals than do the government schools. In 2002, General Than Shwe required the closing of all private schools at the end of the academic year, so that the Ministry of Education could control them by choosing which ones to register. However, in January 2003 General Khin Nyunt postponed indefinitely this draconian command in order to deal with one crisis at a time – the bank crisis. Private schools continued to pop up. One, a key step forward occurred in 2006 when Ko Tar (Dr. Thant Lwin Maung) founded Lumbini Academy to provide a science-based education in Burmese and English. Parents previously had to choose between their children losing their heritage by attending English medium schools or missing out on quality English language education. Two, to deal with the government's banning of local languages, Shans returned form Thailand and Shan intellectuals founded Kaw Dai to educate Shan high school graduates in their language, history, active citizenship, and environmental protection. Each year fifty students learn together while doing all the work of maintaining their camp near Kali, a remote town in the south of Shan State. Then the most talented receive a year's global education in Yangon. The graduates of camp and Yangon staff a Shan K-8 school now educating 300. A few study abroad before returning to serve their people. Three, for children whose families are too poor or too remote to attend government school, the Ministry of Religion had registered 1,300 monasteries to offer elementary education. However, they taught the government curriculum through rote recitation. By contrast, the new networks called the Center for the Promotion of Monastic Education and the Socially Engaged Monastic Schools empower monks, nuns and their head teachers to provide a well-rounded education. A nunnery in Lashio, Sasana Hitakari, exemplifies the networks' aims to foster critical thinking, self-awareness, and life-skills through giving community service. In sum, the three schools examined here break with tradition in order to provide education needed for the democracy that Myanmar may become.

PARAMI UNIVERSITY: A COMING LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

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In summer 2016, the new NLD government will undertake the colossal task of attempting to produce a new comprehensive national education law. With over two decades of unregulated growth in the private and for-profit higher education sectors, lawmakers now face the challenge of incorporating non-State institutions into its future legislation and strategic missions. In collaboration with educational entrepreneurs in Myanmar, this paper seeks to document and interpret the rise and deployment of "liberal education" and related discourses in Yangon throughout the private education market. The results of this study will be used to identify current

market trends in education in Myanmar as well as to propose potential areas of ideological contention and growth.

PANEL EIGHT: Ethnic Shantologies

Capitol North

BEYOND THE GLASS OF WAT CHONG KLANG AT MAE HONG SON. RESEARCH ON THE ORIGIN OF THE BURMESE REVERSE GLASS PAINTING TRADITION

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In the hill city of Mae Hong Son along the Thai-Burmese border in Northeast Thailand, a unique treasure has been adorning three of the internal walls of Wat Chong Klan: a nineteenth century Shan Buddhist temple. It comprises nearly two hundred individual reverse glass paintings depicting the story of Prince Vessantara and the Life of the Buddha: still in-situ there since the mid 19th century, when according to local legends, the city was created and the temple was erected. Likewise, local legend attributes the provenance of these reverse glass paintings as from Mandalay: as largely confirmed by more than hundred short captions and numbers identifying the scenes in nineteenth century Burmese style. Once very popular, this art form originating from Europe, carefully layering pigment on panes of glass—the backs of which were then made opaque—played a considerable role in the inter-Asian trade: both between Europeans and Asian courts, and between China and India. This paper will present the result of my continuing research conducted in 2014 and 2015 in Thailand and Burma, which did explore first the interactions with Chinese diaspora artisans spreading this tradition throughout South and Southeast Asia for use as religious iconography. And more recently led towards exploring their role within the Dutch East India Company in seeking favor with the Siamese court as early as the seventeenth century.

VESSANTARA IN MAEHONGSON

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The Vessantara Jataka is a hot topic these days: one book on the scrolls associated with the retelling of the Vessantara Jataka came out in 2013; an edited volume analyzing this jataka in Nepal and mainland Southeast Asia came out this year, and a single authored Vessantara in Thailand is due out later this year. The reading and performing of the Vessantara Jataka is often part of the annual ceremonial cycle throughout this region. The best known representation of the Vessantara Jataka in Maehongson is in the Chong Klang temple in Maehongson Town where this story is recounted in a series of reverse glass paintings from Burma. This is almost the only representation of the Vessanatara Jataka in the capital district; I've seen a few of the pictures

from this jataka in the temple in Mawk Tsam Pe community temple. I know of only instance when the Vessanara story was celebrated in Maehongson and this was done in Mawk Tsam Pe in 1985. A northern Thai family sponsored it and the celebration did not include the of the community and then it was spoken of as the offering of one thousands – candles, small lights, etc. Vessantara does not seem to be in Maehongson. One could just dismiss this as further evidence of the heretical nature of Shan Buddhism (Leach 1954; repeated in Scott 2013). But this is no explanation. Here I suggest another way of thinking about Shan Buddhism and the Vessantara Jataka drawing on the maze festival.

WHO ARE THE SHAN?

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This PowerPoint presentation, prepared with the assistance of Nay Yan Oo, is primarily a linguistic geography of Tai groups collectively called "Shan" in a vast area covering northern Burma and spillover areas in Yunnan and northern Thailand. Much of the focus will be on the influence of geographical features and boundaries, chief of which is the Salween River. The Salween demarcates not only speech differences but scribal traditions as well. Illustrations from written texts reveal a marked influence of Burmese on the written literatures west of the Salween. To the east, the Kheun centered on Kengtung and the Tai Lue of Chiang Rung, lie along an axis of a common culture, the foundation of which is language and literature. Literature is heavily influenced by "Buddhism" in sacred texts on the one hand and oral performances derivative of themes borrowed from folklore and the Buddhist canon on the other. Past and present Burmese incursions, military and commercial, have meant changes in the the Shan language map, in particular the Shan west of the Salween. The city of Kengtung, however, is a shining example where strong Tai identity and culture has been fortified by centuries of relative insulation from both the Burmese and Thai (Siamese) military. Thai armies of Rama III and Rama IV failed in their several attempts.

BUDDHISM ON THE BORDER: CHANGING PRACTICE IN RURAL MAE HONG SON

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Much of the recent literature on contemporary Buddhism has focused on new large scale, often urban-based institutions and social movements that have become popular with large segments of the middle class. But smaller, less dramatic changes in Buddhist practice are also being taken up in the countryside by farmers and others who live in circumstances that are drastically different from the urban middle class. These include changes in the way local, village-wide rituals are performed, changes in how lay ascetics observe the rainy season retreat, and a new interest in practicing meditation by those (especially women) who have not yet joined this group. Are the changes in rural areas simply an “urban lite” version of new Buddhist practices that are slowly making their way to the periphery? Or do they represent phenomena that must be understood on their own terms, despite outward similarities to practices elsewhere? In this paper, I explore some recent

changes in Buddhist practice in Mae Hong Son province near the Thai-Burma border, and raise questions about how best to interpret their significance.

TEXTILES AND PROTECTION: SHAN AND LAN NA

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Supernatural formulae are often thought of in terms of ritual and ritual chanting. This paper examines tangible images taken from a group of cotton textiles imbued with magic power through the intervention of monks and lay *sala* (shaman). *Sala* draw on the iconography of Buddhism, spirit religion, astrology and cosmology and the power of nature combined with incantations and spells written in local Tai scripts.

PANEL NINE: Society, Participation, and Representation

Capitol South

MEANINGFUL LIBERALIZATION OR LIBERALIZED AUTOCRACY? AN EMPIRICAL VIEW ON CIVIL LIBERTIES IN MYANMAR'S TRANSITION

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Myanmar is in a top-down transition. Since the first civilian president Thein Sein took office after decades of repressive military rule in 2011, several far-reaching reforms had been implemented. These reforms have paved the way for a widely free and fair election and resulted in a landslide victory for the National League for Democracy in late 2015. Despite all notable changes the country has witnessed so far, many obstacles, such as the military's effective veto power in Parliament, have stayed unaltered, raising doubts about Myanmar's democratic future. This study applies a quantitative approach for evaluating Myanmar's so-far transition. Following the three stages model of democratic transition, Myanmar's transition is predominantly described as "liberalization", whereby the exercise of civil liberties is indicated by protest assemblies as a reliable proxy. This work uses a self-created protest database, filled with data collected with a protest event analysis from online newspaper resources. The dataset* contents are from the most visible forms of assembly (demonstrations, protest marches, and strikes). It can be shown that Myanmar has indeed gone through a meaningful liberalization process. Civil liberties were de facto relaxed and the application of formal and informal institutions of suppression has significantly decreased. Nevertheless, are laws protecting and granting civil liberties, still not on an international standard.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR STRENGTHENING STATES AND REGIONS PARLIAMENTS IN MYANMAR

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States and Regions Parliaments (the local legislatures), which are part of the sub-national governmental institutions in Myanmar, are formed in 2011, following the 2010 General Elections, and they are new institutions for a historically centralized country like Myanmar. Although these institutions are significant federal entities, less attention has been paid for their strengthening. In Nov 2015 right after the General Election 2015, EMReF began the Performance Analysis on States and Regions Parliaments, realizing that it is very fundamental to learn the current performance status of these 14 local legislative institutions and find concrete evidences over challenges and opportunities in order for strengthening them. According to the initial findings, the study identified significant structural, geo-political and personal determinants posing as both barriers and opportunities for the institutional building of all States and Regions Parliaments. The publication of the paper and the policy recommendations for political leaders and policy makers will be convened in early July 2016. Sharing key findings of the study and recommendations in the international academic community which has special interest and put efforts in the democratization process of Myanmar, EMReF do believe, will bring significant attention and practical efforts towards strengthening these federal entities.

BUDDHIST NATIONALISM IN DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION OF MYANMAR: A POLITICAL QUEST FOR TATMADAW'S POWER LEGITIMACY

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Recent violent clashes in Myanmar between Buddhists as majority against other religious minorities emphasize the revival Buddhist nationalism in this country where cultural attachment between Bamar ethnicity and Buddhism had been promoted by state since the Kingdom era. During the colonization period, Buddhist nationalism was deeply injected as a state's political tool to protect their territory and sense of being Bamar, which later encouraged the grass root organizations to become an important anti-British movement under political-cultural implication. In the post-colonial period, the debate over Buddhism as state religion has been considered as a political matter played by the tatmadaw and pongyis in order to overcome difficulties in peaceful transition to "disciplined democracy" such as role of activist pongyis and rise of NLD counterpart. Therefore, power legitimacy is determined through the revival of Buddhist nationalism under two major means – legality and movement, and two major actors – state authorities and civil societies. These actors somehow mutually interact so that they could impose their influence well with the external rise of Islam which increases internal fear of Muslim Rohingyas. A series of religious protection laws and tensions are implemented to ensure religious and ethnic superiorities. This presentation aims to explore the historical development of Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar, and the way it has been politicized by the tatmadaw. Additionally, it would like to find out whether the politicization of Buddhist nationalism obstructs the process of democratic reforms.

CAREERS AND CAUSES: PARTICIPATION IN MYANMAR'S LEGISLATURE

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What motivates participation in Myanmar's authoritarian legislature? Recent arguments that authoritarian institutions mitigate risks to regime stability through information and cooptation do not adequately explain variation in engagement by legislators selected into these institutions. In this paper, I evaluate whether and when Myanmar's MPs participate in legislative sessions as a function of policy preferences and career concerns. This participation reveals information to the ruling party about legislators' preferences, and is thus costly but potentially rewarding: legislators may make career gains if they align with the regime, or may make policy gains by exploiting opportunities for change from the status quo. I test this argument using unique data including legislator characteristics and parliamentary participation from the Open Myanmar Institute. My empirical results indicate a dual process of nonparticipation in legislative sessions: some legislators are "coopted," but others lack sufficiently strong policy preferences or expertise to engage. Beyond assessing legislative behavior amid Myanmar's transition, these findings have implications for understanding dictators' incentives to establish legislatures, as well as the potential for policy reform given Myanmar's current institutions.

SUU KYI AND DEMOCRACY IN MYANMAR'S POLITICAL TRANSITION

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Discussion on Myanmar's politics cannot do without a mention of Suu Kyi especially when democracy is being focussed. For a long time, Suu Kyi bore the hope and aspiration of establishing a democracy in Myanmar, so much so that in concern with western governments, she occupies a central position when policies are undertaken by these governments towards the country. This attitude of outside governments has been clearly evident throughout the military rule and even after their retreat from active politics. It is well known of the role of Suu Kyi on being the icon of Myanmar's democracy in the past but what has aroused more interested is how her roles, both in the domestic politics of the country as well as internationally, have evolved in these recent years of Myanmar's transition. Taking these issues at hand, the paper will examine:

a. How Suu Kyi's role in promoting democracy in the country changed with the change in the political system of the country.

b.The developments of Suu Kyi's influence on Myanmar's foreign relations during this period of transition.

Though the paper's intent is to focus on Myanmar's recent transition, a brief trace of the political history of the country will be made to bring clarity to the issues to be discussed on this paper.

PANEL TEN: Political Transition and the 2015 Election

Hunt Room

ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM IN BURMA

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A proposal about the nationwide adoption of a proportional representation electoral system (PR) has been in existence since Burma's 2010 general election. However, since the 2015 general election, the proposal has aroused a hot debate among parliamentarians who either embrace or reject it. This paper intends to address why some ethnic minority parties in Burma oppose nationwide adoption of PR that is traditionally believed as the platform of a broader political participation. This paper is elaborated in the following sequence. Part I is an introduction. Part II reviews theories for building a framework for examining how electoral systems affect the attitudes of Burma's ethnic minority parties toward PR, contending that PR arouses distinctive responses via the party system. Part III focuses on the politicization of ethnic minority populations (ethnopoliticization) in Burma. Parts IV examine Burma's party system institutionalization on two dimensions (party institutionalization and party organizations), along with their interactions with the geographic concentration and the politicization of ethnic minorities, to explain ethnic parties' attitudinal distinction in regard to PR. Part V concludes that the party system that interacts with territorial concentration and the politicization of the ethnic minorities affects the interests of ethnic minority parties of Burma differently, leading to the parties' distinctive attitudes toward PR's nationwide adoption.

ELECTIONS IN KACHIN STATE

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On 8 November 2015, Myanmar went to the polls to choose its first democratically elected government since 1960. The recently formed Union Election Commission (UEC) accepted international assistance and for the first time allowed international observers relatively unfettered access to the vote. The author of this paper was a short term election observer in Kachin State, working with the Australian based Australia Myanmar Election Observer Mission, and spent limited time observing advance voting, the November 8 poll and subsequent count. My colleague and I spoke to UEC officials, polling officers and other election monitors. We witnessed some irregularities in votes polled on military bases and polling stations on the fringes of the state, but by and large the election was deemed to be free and fair, notwithstanding structural issues. Kachin State, which has a long history of fighting for autonomy, voted strongly in favour of the Bamar dominated NLD as did many other ethnic minority areas. Returning to Kachin State two weeks after the election, on a different visa, I spoke to many other people including political party representatives from across the spectrum, religious leaders and

IDPs about the election results and their implications. This paper will describe the election process as witnessed in Kachin State, before, during and after polling day and offer some analysis into the results.

BUDDHISM IN MYANMAR'S 2015 ELECTIONS: CHARTING BOUNDARIES AND CONTESTATION OF THE MONASTIC VOCATION

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Myanmar's 2015 elections marked a return to a common pattern in the country, where religious actors and religious rhetoric played a prominent role. While the NLD's stunning electoral victory served to temporarily inhibit the rising popularity and influence of Buddhist groups such as MaBaTha, parts of the group's political platform remain salient in the country's politics because they continue to resonate with much of the population. But commonly-applied labels such as "Buddhist nationalist" do not accurately or adequately describe MaBaTha and its variously-oriented political and religious projects. In fact, despite a pre-election situation that superficially seemed as if the ruling party and monastic authorities were fully in support of the organization and its activities, challenges and contestation were occurring at multiple levels, especially in relation to common concepts and ideas. One of the most obvious is the nebulous "national community" but MaBaTha rhetoric and actions also significantly challenged strongly held beliefs about the monastic vocation and the role of religion in the public sphere. While following other scholars who have pointed out the ways in which these common concepts and ideas are dynamic, subject to contestation, and situated within particular political and historical contexts, this paper seeks to further describe the nature of the boundaries within which that contestation occurs. That is, although MaBaTha monks might be seeking to normalize certain monastic political behavior, they are compelled to justify their actions in particular ways and in response to particular norms already embedded and accepted within the monastic vocation.

A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOR IN MYANMAR

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In free and fair elections, how do the Burmese people make their electoral choices? What possible factors influence individuals' voting decisions? To understand these research questions, the author has analyzed past election results, conducted interviews with political experts, and most importantly, gathered data from voters in Myanmar. This paper argues that the personality of party leaders and voters' desire to reject authoritarian rules play a critical role in shaping voters' minds. In the medium term, however, voting decisions will most likely be based on ethnic identity and party attachment. Policy issues will be less influential in the short term, but as seen in other mature democracies, voters will pay more attention to them as Myanmar's democracy develops.

THE 2015 ELECTION IN MYANMAR

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The first nation-wide “free and fair” election in Myanmar since 1990 presented unique challenges on every level to all those who participated. Based on my personal observation of the campaigns and the election, this paper will explore the history of Burmese elections, present constitutional setting, regulatory regimen, principal contesting political parties, shifting schedule, voting list controversy, particular problems of preparation for polling, persuasion techniques employed by the parties, advance voting process, election day procedures and results (victors and vanquished) on both the national and regional levels. I will also discuss the role and functions of the domestic and international official observers and the media. Next, I will profile and recount in depth the particular visions and strategies of three candidates representing different political parties. I will end with the efforts to organize the transition to an entirely new government, the divergent attitudes of the political parties to the National League for Democracy’s plan to staff the government and the results thereof.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

PANEL ELEVEN: Under the Radar: Social Taboos, Social Fringes and Unofficial Histories

Sandburg Auditorium

SEX WORK, BEYOND THE CHOICES: AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FEMALE SEX WORKERS IN YANGON, MYANMAR

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This is an exploratory, ethnographic study of female sex workers in Yangon, Myanmar. I show that neither the victimization nor empowerment discourses are sufficient to analyze situations of female sex workers in Yangon, Myanmar. There are two parts in my argument. First, I provide vignettes of sex establishments and different ways of organizing sex work. Then I discuss the influence of establishments, at institutional level, on how the women perceive their work places, how the women present their bodies, and the variance of risk perception among the women. Secondly, I underscore the main reasons why the women engage in sex connection, and how they intertwined with other contributing factors such as social network, filial obligations, limited opportunities for decent paying jobs, and limited education attainment. I concluded the paper with some reflection on strengths and limitations of the study and recommendations for future studies.

MYANMAR ON MOVE... LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP AND A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE!

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Having undergone transition from authoritarianism to democracy in 2010, Myanmar's 'disciplined' democracy is on move since the first free and fair democratic elections in 2015 held after a gap of six decades. However, in its current phase of transition, on the one hand it is facing the daunting task of rebuilding its institutions, while on the other, forces of the past remain powerful which demands a delicate balancing and thoughtful compromises both, from the wielders of past regime and the present leadership. Under this background the Paper argues that this compromise between the two echoes a unique 'love-hate' relationship and a 'marriage of convenience' by both—the military and the NLD to retain their control over authority in Myanmar respectively. New Government in Myanmar remains deeply entangled amidst the tussle between the hardliners and soft-liners in the authority. This is visible both in the military as well as the democratic camp. The complicated and delicate relationship between the military and Aung San Suu Kyi has been the bedrock of

the current reform process in Myanmar. Notwithstanding the reform initiatives, army still wields enormous influence over Myanmar's institutions. Demilitarising politics and sending military 'back to the barracks' is the foremost challenge for the new Government which requires consistent effort and perseverance. In view of the growing centre-periphery contestations, the issue of ethnic reconciliation, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding remains crucial for post-conflict security and stability in Myanmar. Economic reconstruction added with growing internal urge for economic recovery in recent years and financial stability and security is going to be a significant challenge of change for Myanmar. Amidst the widening 'majority-minority' divide in recent times, democratic consolidation is going to be a test for the new Government. Given the limited political role which Aung San Suu Kyi is expected to play according to the Constitution (theoretically) and deep skepticism existing towards the political institutions which are still largely dominated by the military, she needs to take calculated steps in this democratic reengineering and restructuring.

THE GENDER ROLE DIFFERENCE OF NICKNAMES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND MYANMAR STUDENTS

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The purpose of the study is to understand the gender role difference between American culture and Asian culture through nicknames. There were 90 participants between the ages of 18 to 25. Determining whether the nicknames were masculine or feminine, Phillips (1990)'s method was used for American nicknames. For Asian nicknames, there were no specific methods so the method was used from own experiences. According to research, Myanmar had more masculine nicknames compared to the United States. Although patriarchy was dominant in Myanmar, women from Myanmar did not want to change their last name. In future study, it will be better if research papers from Myanmar are updated.

MORALLY WRECKED: THE BUREAUCRATIC ORIGINS OF OPIUM PROHIBITION IN BRITISH BURMA, 1870-1900

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In 1894, Burma under British rule became the first European colony in Southeast Asia to officially ban opium consumption. Prohibition was a novel development, not least as it began at a time when colonial knowledge of opium's dangers for "natives" was yet tenuous and empires still defended the commercial life of as a peculiar source of "Asiatic" revenue. What explains Burma's early turn against opium? This paper argues that colonial administrators on the ground are central to understanding this shift. My focus is upon how officials on the ground conceptualized opium problems and their commonplace philosophies on vice. Occupied with banal, everyday tasks of bureaucratic management, these actors developed situated explanations of what threatened local order—what dangers, what challenges, what wickedness marred the colonial world. Local administrators were weak actors with surprisingly strong powers, I contend, as they influenced the nature of anti-opium

reforms through the production of such on-site knowledge. Using evidence from public records and private writings of officials from the Burma Commission, Excise, and Financial Departments in Burma from the 1870s until the 1900s, I trace both the anxieties aroused by perceived problems of illicit opium markets and vice crime, and the economic realities that constituted their material basis.

NECROMOBILITY/CHOREOMOBILITY: DANCE, DEATH AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE THAI–BURMA BORDER-ZONE

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Studies of migration have long centered on the movements of the living, this paper however, attends to the ritual, performatic and rhythmic mobilities arising in death and in the after-life, namely necromobilities and choreomobilities. Through the work of dance ethnography amongst displaced Tai (Shan) peoples who have fled from the world's longest ongoing civil war in the Shan State of Burma, and have settled in Northern Thailand, the author invites the possibility of an ethnochoreology of dance, death and displacement in the border-zone. This paper analyzes the death-event of a high-profile Tai monk, as well as other deaths in the border-zone, and argues, that for mobile subjects, ritual performance and acts of merit making forge a sense of ethnic, religious and national devotion while in exile, as well as the possibility of improved mobility in the afterlife. The mobilities, praxes and performances that a death inheres, sets into motion an assemblage of movements that range from the precariously mundane – travelling through military checkpoints as an undocumented migrant, to the ecstatically sublime – the communal ritual work of bringing the dead to the funeral pyre. Through a discussion of the kinds of necromobilities and choreomobilities made possible by a Tai death-event, this chapter suggests that in the context of migrancy, war and violence, as well as within the cosmology of Tai Buddhism, the death-event reveals a larger political project for Tai peoples – that of forging a nation while in exile through the work of ritual, performance and merit-making.

BEER SIGNS AT THE ဘီယာဆိုင်

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Urban Yangon, as Myanmar's richest and most populous city, is at the vanguard of the fast-paced and considerable social and political changes taking place in the country today. This paper, based on several weeks' fieldwork in suburban Yangon, argues that the city's ubiquitous public drinking space, the beer shop (ဘီယာဆိုင်), is reflecting this change - politically, economically and in particular, socially. The beer shop is part of Yangon's distinct drinking culture and provides avenues for celebration, consideration and identity formation through inebriation. However, these avenues are circumscribed by gender norms - and the putative role of the beer shop remains debated in public discourses surrounding masculinity, morality and modernity. In this way while drinking norms may be undergoing change in the Myanmar of 2016, some debates remain the same.

PANEL TWELVE: Ethno-Nationalism and Political Tensions

Regency Room

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN MYANMAR: CREATING COMMUNAL SECURITY OR CONFLICT INTERFACES?

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In February 2016, Ma Ba Tha (Association for Protection of Race & Religion), represented by monk U Wirathu, received a price in Thailand for being "an outstanding Buddhist peace organization". This is somewhat in contradiction with U Wirathu's fervent anti-Muslim rhetoric and activities. Further, in July 2015, supporters of Ma Ba Tha formed a political party named the National Development Party with nationalism and religion being the key issues. The party has firm anti-NLD stance, and supported U Thein Sein and USDP before election. The main aim of the party is to secure that NLD does not change the Race and Religion Law package enacted in August 2015, as well as safeguard religion, i.e. Buddhism, and nationalism. Our paper discusses the background of the recent conflicts between Ma Ba Tha and Muslim communities, and gives examples on how these affect justice provision and communal security in a Muslim-Buddhist mixed area in Mon State. We argue that in order to understand why Buddhism has become politicized, and sometimes even aggressively anti-Muslim and anti-Christian, we have to consider the role nationalism and religion plays in Myanmar's history, and in the recent political transition. Buddhist monks are important spiritual advisers, mediators and also justice providers and compensating for a corrupt legal system. Thus, the paper will provide an insight into the historical combination of nationalism and Buddhism, the origin of the anti-Muslim movement, as well as the role of the monk in Myanmar society.

DESTROYING THE UNIMAGINABLE: RELIGIOUS GENOCIDE IN BURMA

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Questions of identity and belonging are particularly important in the day to day lives of those living in Myanmar. Nowhere is the importance of this question clearer than in the case of the Rohingya people. Examining the rhetoric and violence levied against the Rohingya reveals a unique level of hatred based not on their otherness, but rather on their insistence of their belonging. In other words, the Rohingya are not facing persecution for being kala, they are facing persecution for refusing to confess to their otherness. To argue their status is due to their marginal position at the intersection of ethnicity and religious affiliation is to misunderstand the source of the very genuine, if completely misguided, fear felt the Buddhist majority of the citizenry of a Muslim takeover of the nation, and the subsequent and inevitable fall of Buddhism. The Rohingya are targeted not simply for being Muslims, or members of an ethnic minority group, but rather for claiming the indigeneity of

their identity. It is this claim, above all, that ensures the need for their eradication, for it is this claim that undermines the place Burma occupies in Buddhist cosmology for most Burmese people. In order for any proposed solutions to the Rohingya genocide to be successful or effective, this fundamental issue must first be understood.

THE CONCEALED ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN BUDDHIST COMMUNITIES: THE STRUCTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN BURMA AND STUDIES OF BURMESE BUDDHISM

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The diversity created within Burmese people through the construction of ethnic identity and tensions engendered among different ethnic groups during British rule has lasting influences on Burmese politics up till present. Nonetheless, there exists a simplified and misleading equation between Buddhists/monks and Burman people, and this unavoidably conceals the complicated ethnic composition of the Buddhist community, especially the Buddhist sangha, in Burma. This article seeks to unveil the vital elements contributing to the formation of such simplified descriptions. Both the Buddhist nationalist movements and the political construction of an “ethnocratic” nation dominated by Burman culture as the norm of national identity are included. In addition, the restricted access to certain regions in Burma during the past few decades have resulted in limited academic resources of certain Buddhist communities and traditions. It should be emphasized that the failure to recognize the existing ethnic complexity of Buddhist communities and the Burmese sangha reinforces the portrayal of them as uniform and helps to strengthen the hegemonic position of Burman culture. Therefore, this article insists that the concept of Burmese Buddhism is a concept where power struggles take place. Only when we complete an examination of this mechanism can we attain a better understanding of different teachings, practices, discourses on social problems and monastic education systems while they are all under the same category as Burmese Buddhism.

PANEL THIRTEEN: The Role of Media in Burma/Myanmar's Pro-democracy Movement, from 1988 to 2015: Past Contributions and New Challenges Post-Transition

Capitol North

PRISMS OF FREE SPEECH, PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE: BEHIND BARS AND ACROSS THE NEWS IN BURMA/MYANMAR

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On 1 April 2016, Burma's newly elected civilian government takes office, marking a new chapter in Burmese history. From 1962 to 2011, decades of military rule stifled free expression through the brutal repression of protest, the imprisonment and torture of activists, and the closure of universities. But the urge to speak and the desire to both uncover and voice the truth remained irrepressible. Where some political prisoners improvised writing materials inside their cells, others found a voice in exile. Linking personal anecdotes and professional reflections with broader societal-level political analyses, I will consider the following: What role did journalists and student activists play in Burma's transition from military to civilian government? What challenges do Burmese journalists face today, given an increasing and at times unquestioning public reliance on unverified social media, for news? How did journalists and other political actors unaffiliated with the military, through peaceful pursuit of their professions help bring about change and how have they helped to rebuild the country during this transition? And, finally, I will consider the journey of the 88 Generation (those students, intellectuals and activists who rose up against the oppressive regime and were cut down with brute force on 8.8.88 by the junta) from their days as student activists to their role in present-day Burma, where over one hundred former political prisoners are now elected MPs and taking part in the cabinet and administration of the newly elected civilian government.

CONTEMPLATING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A PEOPLE UNDER A LONG DICTATORSHIP THROUGH ANALYSES OF THEIR ART AND WRITINGS

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The long dictatorship in Burma/Myanmar has caused an entrenched fear amongst ordinary citizens, with some becoming, what I would describe as, "fierce." Fierce individuals do not exact revenge on those who caused harm to them but on either weak individuals or minority populations—who cannot retaliate. These acts of revenge are caused by a continued fear of dictators and their brutal governance. It is my assertion that not every writer or media personnel can escape from this cycle of behavior since state censorship and brutality

was used for decades. Fear not only made people fierce in terms of their behavior but also in their way of thinking and the expression of those thoughts. In my paper, I will unpack and analyze the cyclical nature of fear, ferocity, and revenge as embodied in art and writing. I will end by discussing the impact of the military dictatorship on the psychology of the Burmese, emphasizing how it is even more malignant and long-term than would be predicted.

PANZAGAR OR A COERCIVE HARMONY? CONTEMPLATING 27 YEARS OF RAISED CONSCIOUSNESS AND BURMA'S SHIFT FROM DIRECT TO INDIRECT CONTROL IN THE POST-TRANSITION PERIOD

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The broader thesis that will be furthered by this paper is that whereas the period before 2011 in Burma was characterized by direct authoritarian rule with explicit, easily identifiable encroachments on personal and collective freedom, including the freedom of expression; the post-period transition is characterized by indirect forms of control and encroachments upon the freedom of thought (a colonization of the mind) that can potentially lead to what Nader (1990; 1993; 1995) has referred to as a "coercive harmony". The paper will describe not only the role of journalists, intellectuals, and artists within Burma as contributing to an overall counter-hegemonic stance from 1988 to 2011, but it will also describe the largely unrecognized, peaceful undertakings of media personnel in the larger Burmese diasporic community that likewise allowed for a quarter century of sustained action towards a democratic future. The paper will also draw broader regional comparisons between pre and post-transition Burma and post-New Order Indonesia. In the Indonesian case, similar atrocities were committed, but there was a general silence on the part of the media and an internalization of state-sanctioned narratives on the part of the public. In Burma, in contrast, dissidents, survivors, and the general populace largely did not recapitulate or internalize state sponsored narratives about 1988, 2007, or the years under military rule. Yet, in the post-transition landscape of Burma, where perpetrators and dissidents are often in the same social and public spaces, and whereby pro-military elites have gained access to educational opportunities, legitimizing spaces, and the ear of international interlocutors in unprecedented numbers, the spectra of a coercive harmony, rather than a genuine democracy, looms larger than ever.

OPPRESSION AND HATE SPEECH AS THREATS TO FREEDOM

Nay Phone Latt

During the Saffron Revolution, I was one of the first to use the internet and blogging as both a tool for expression, as well as a means through which to further democracy. Recently, however, individuals who can be characterized as racist and extremist, have been utilizing the same tools, including social networking sites such as Facebook, to provoke violence and encourage individuals to rally around extremism and engage in discriminatory acts. This paper will be used to dissect the notion of "freedom of expression" and whether that freedom includes the right to insult one another, to instigate violence, bully, and spread hatred (sometimes

towards entire groups of individuals). The broader thesis I would like to further is that it is not only strict oppression on the part of the government and military that can be a threat to freedom of expression; hate speech can also ultimately become a threat to freedom expression in Burma. I will elaborate on each of these ideas by drawing on my own journey from internet blogger and dissident to prisoner of conscience to becoming a member of parliament in the newly elected government. I will also discuss the campaign that we began in Burma in relation to hate speech at the height of the communal riots known as Panzagar or "Flower Talk."

PANEL FOURTEEN: Ritual Places in Myanmar

Capitol South

RITUAL AND PLACE IN BURMA

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Spatial determinations of Burmese rituals will be examined in this paper through data drawn from inquiries on spirit (nat) and weikza worship. Situations in which rituals are located in makeshift settings, ephemeral in essence, will be contrasted with those established places hosting rituals, whether uni-vocational as are sanctuaries devoted to a spirit in its place of origin, or multi-vocational as are religiously complex pilgrimage centers such as Mt Popa. The specific way to build in ritual efficiency spatially will be highlighted through looking at how the numinous presence is manifested, secured or dealt with in these different cases and on what sort of distinct ontologies it relies. To show these spatial determinations of rituals will also help to locate different religiosities in the whole encompassing Burmese religious field.

STRANGE SHRINES: THE COMBINATORY RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AT MARILLA BAKER INGALLS' BURMESE BAPTIST MISSION

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This paper examines the unusual Baptist mission station in Thonze, in operation in the late nineteenth-century. This station at the edge of the Tharawaddi District was run by Marilla Baker Ingalls, an American Baptist missionary to Burma from 1851–1902. By the time of her death in Burma at the age of 75, Ingalls had developed a reputation in the Baptist community as one of the most successful Baptist evangelists among Burmese Buddhists. To understand the extraordinary dynamic at Ingalls' Christian community, this paper examines interactions that centered on two prominent objects: a life-sized dog statue that Ingalls kept chained at the edge of her property and a massive banyan tree covered with biblical illustrations, photographs, and American print advertisements. Ingalls claimed that the dog she called "America" helped her teach about the folly of idol worship and that she had converted her tree from a nat shrine into a place to post Christian messages. But an

examination of the food and flower offering practices and theological debates inspired by both objects suggests that the local community used these objects for a combination of traditional Burmese rituals and new Christian practices. This paper's exploration of this particular Baptist mission station raises larger questions about the legacy of the American Baptist mission to Burma and the changing religious landscape of nineteenth-century Burma.

THE KALYANI INSCRIPTIONS AND SIMA: BORDERS CREATED AND PROTECTED

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The famed fifteenth century Kalyani Inscriptions and still religiously active Kalyani Sima in Lower Myanmar place us at the heart of the dynamics involved in the local and transregional spatial spread of Buddhist cultures. Inscribed under the direction of King Dhammazedi, the Inscriptions coalesce around two topics. Part monastic treatise, the Inscriptions deal with the legalistic minutia of a sima-sammuti, the official rite, carried out by monks, of determining a sima (a sima is a traditionally consecrated boundary for the place within which Theravada monastic ordinations and related ecclesiastical acts are ritually performed). Simultaneously also part blueprint for the physical, sacred Kalyani Sima or Kalyani Ordination Hall, the Inscriptions highlight, so to speak, the tying together of Buddhist cultures and lands in Sihaladipa (Sri Lanka) and Ramannadesa (a mythic area related to what is now lower Myanmar) through the use of a particular kind of space (i.e., a sima) ultimately associated with waters where the Buddha is believed to have bathed. The paper discusses how the Inscriptions abound with concerns about creating borders and protecting them, in relation to such topics as lineage, monastic law, lay law, political powers, the cosmos, Sasana (religion), and nirvana. The paper closes with a brief set of comments that address the continued efforts to rebuild the Kalyani Sima itself, most recently under Prime Minister U Nu in the 1950s whose efforts were situated within the context of confronting what were deemed destructive communist forces.

ZWEGABIN: EXILE, RETURN, PILGRIMAGE, AND NARRATIVES OF SACRED PLACE IN KAREN STATE

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Mt. Zwegabin, near Pa-an in Karen State, is surmounted by an historic hair relic pagoda, and surrounded by a number of religious communities, including sangha Buddists, meditation sects, nat shrines, and Baptist Christians. The mountain is a focus of chiliastic expectations, whether for Maitreya or Messiah, as well as a place of pilgrimage for worshippers and tourists alike. An examination of religious and political narratives about the mountain show marked themes of exile, return, and hopeful expectation. This paper demonstrates links between these narratives and the role of Zwegabin in the public imagination up to and including the current process of national peace and reconciliation in Karen State.

PANEL FIFTEEN (PART I & II): Political transition: internal arena and external relations

Hunt Room

NEW CENTRE-PERIPHERY DYNAMICS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

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Following the elections of November 2015 and the installation of a National League for Democracy government in April this year, there has been consolidation of power at the centre. Although the Union Solidarity and Development Party suffered a sharp reversal, the military institution continues to be stable and enjoys a comfortable relationship with the NLD leadership. The new government is setting the stage for the "21st Century Panglong Conference" which will discuss peace arrangements as well as the postwar configuration including much-awaited federalism. If the situation appears satisfactory and promising, a deeper appraisal reveals a rather different picture. The overwhelming victory of the NLD at the polls has meant that there is a diminished opposition. Ethnic and religious minority representation in parliament has been reduced. It is encouraging that all ethnic armed organizations will be invited to the Panglong conference but other political parties and civil society are being side-lined. At the same time, armed conflict is continuing. The old concept of Bamar against non-Bamar is neither accurate nor tenable anymore; it is now more of those who are amenable and those who are not. A united ethnic armed front does not exist, and the ethnic party alliances are loose and weak. In a new development, ethnic CSOs are being co-opted and divided. There have been armed clashed between EAOs over territory, which could augur a spate of territorial disputes in the lead up to federalism (which itself is a contested topic). The inclination is towards concentration of power in both the central government and military, accompanied by a campaign to weaken and fragment whatever opposition there is. Decentralization, inclusiveness and a leveling out have not been seen to any extent. Domestic and international efforts to 'revive democracy' – laudable as they are – have resulted in this predicament. There is an urgent need to institute balance and provide alternatives in the present politically-fragile setting.

THE TREND OF POLITICAL TRANSITION IN MYANMAR BEYOND 2015

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The 2015 General Election marked a milestone to the political transition in Myanmar, which was initiated in 1988. First of all, the process of General Election in October 1988 was, to a great extent, with justice, freedom and transparency. Secondly, NLD's overwhelming victory in the 2015 historic election was endorsed by the military group and the incumbent USDP, leading to smooth exchange of the ruling power to NLD party. So far, this can be counted as the only successful case since the outbreak of Arab Spring. Thirdly, the new NLD

government performs fairly well for the first three months and thus its 100 Days Plan is quite effective. The NLD government also kept good connection and interaction with the military group and USDP over the past three months. Nevertheless, the it also faces a variety of challenges, and there are many uncertainties before the country has become a successful model of political transition for the developing world

MYANMAR'S PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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By using 2015 Myanmar General Social Survey (MGSS) quantitative data, this paper attempts to investigate Myanmar public perception of China from a cross-country comparative perspective. The comparisons are twofold: an inter-group comparison by demographic factors of Myanmar population, and a comparison of Myanmar's public perceptions between China, the U.S.A, Japan and India. The results suggest that the overall Myanmar's perception of China is not as negative as many analysts worried. It is true that they are more favorable to the U.S.A and Japan than China as expected, but their perception of China seemed to be more favorable at the time of survey (i.e. late 2015) compared to that of the previous years even though we don't have comparable data in this respect. As to the variation by demographic factors, there is no statistically significant distinctions on their perception of China between different social groups in terms of sex, age, educational level, and region/state.

MYANMAR-INDIA INTENSE RELATIONS: REASONS AND TRENDS

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In the context of Myanmar's political transition, economic reform and foreign policy adjustment, Myanmar-India bilateral relation witnesses a new era of development. Over the past several years, the two countries have intensified bilateral relations with high-rank exchange visits and has upgraded cooperation in the fields of economy, security and cultural exchange. Although the two countries have different accounts in intensifying bilateral relations, it is clear that both sides concern common interest in geopolitics, economy, energy and security. for India, its Look East Policy, energy supply and national security are tightly engaged with Myanmar's cooperation whereas, for Myanmar, its economic growth, balance of power policy and maintenance of national security also needs India's positive reaction and cooperation.

CHINA'S IMPACT ON BURMA'S TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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During the times of Western sanctions on the military junta in Burma, China – one of the biggest and most dynamic economies in the world – became an attractive political and economic partner. Despite a history of difficult bilateral relations, by the time the regime in NayPyiTaw commenced political transformation in 2011 and accelerated economic reforms, China was Burma's main investor and trading partner and thus Beijing exercised extensive influence on the Burmese military regime. However, there is another, equally important but nevertheless implicit and less examined impact, which, perhaps unintentionally, China has had on Burma. That is, Burma has extensively utilized China's model of post-socialist economic transformation and development in its own reform trajectory. This paper argues that, in addition to trade and investment cooperation, which are perceived as main factors defining Burma-China relations, and despite the differences in political reforms, Burma has followed China's model of transformation and development. This model can be framed within the concept of Post-Socialist Developmental State. The imitating is illustrated by a gradual approach to systemic changes and is visible in the details of Burma's industrial policy, trade and investment policy and the financial system. Burma's authorities have targeted a vast array of industrial sectors for development, relied on companies affiliated with the regime, opened up gradually for international trade, attracted foreign investment by establishing special zones and kept the financial sector closed.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND MYANMAR

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Myanmar is the important neighbor of China, and harmony maintains the mainstream in Sino-Myanmar relations for more than 2000 years. Myanmar is one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China and established formal diplomatic relations with China. Except a short period of unpleasantness from 1967 to 1970, they have been keeping a good neighborly and friendly relations for the rest of time. Since 1988, no matter how Myanmar's political situation changes, China adheres to the five principles of peaceful coexistence and good neighborly and friendly policy, strictly not interfering its internal affairs, and Myanmar attaches great importance to the development of Myanmar-Sino relations as well. Hence, after entering the 21st century, the two countries cooperate broadly in politics, economy, military and culture, and have made great achievement. In 2011, with U Thein Sein's political transition, the ingrained issues appear, and Sino-Myanmar relations encounter an unprecedented impact. In spite of that, Sino- Myanmar relations never halts. In 2011, China becomes Myanmar's first strategic partnership. Thein Sein government supports Chinese OBOR strategy and leads Myanmar to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. At present, China still owns the biggest foreign investment towards Myanmar. Although the new NLD government has come to power, the basic elements that affect Sino- Myanmar relations still not change a lot. Based on the consideration of geopolitics and geo-economics, Sino- Myanmar relations will continue to move forward in the future.

THE DECISION-MAKING OF MYITSONE DAM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

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In September 2011, the six-month- old government of President U Thein Sein surprised many observers of Myanmar by announcing the suspension of the 3,600 MW Myitsone dam project. In March 2016, four months following the landslide victory of NLD in the general election, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said China would resolve the Myitsone problem peacefully with the Myanmar side. Myitsone offers a number of important additional insights, beginning, most obviously, with the inadequacy of narrowly framed legal agreements to reduce political risks. However, it would be mistaken to think of Myitsone as destined to fail. The Myitsone case shows how Myanmar needs a better water resource regime in the Irrawaddy basin.

PANEL SIXTEEN: Local Politics and Justice in Myanmar

Sandburg Auditorium

SELF-RELIANCE CITIZENSHIP AND THE BUSINESS OF WELFARE IN POST-SOCIALIST MYANMAR

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Philanthropy and compassionate social action are widely regarded as the most important traits of virtuous citizens in contemporary Myanmar. Yet the notion that citizens should provide care and public goods for each other is not an inevitable consequence of the long-term absence of the Myanmar state in spheres of social welfare. In this paper I argue that Myanmar's expansive self-reliance culture derives from decades of deliberate cultivation by Myanmar's military regime, particularly with the transition to capitalism in the 1990s. Based on 15 months of field research in provincial Myanmar in 2015 and 2016, I explore the role that businesspeople and traders were not just permitted but also encouraged to play as patrons of community based welfare groups with the direct financial, political and in-kind support of military commanders and officers. Amid the otherwise tightly regulated social life of the 1990s, these localized spheres of action - often linked organizationally and discursively to religious institutions - became nodes where everyday people, businessmen and members of the regime could offer their time, money and resources for the 'benefit of others' (parahita). I argue that the co-production of welfare and public goods by the state, people and businessmen since the 1990s has helped to craft a contemporary self-reliance culture linked to, yet carefully differentiated from, the Myanmar state. This co-production of welfare influences how people see the role of the state in care, assess the legitimacy of various authorities, and forms cleavages of religiously imbued compassion that are unlikely to fade despite the recent victory of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar's 2015 elections.

WHAT IS LOCAL POLITICS IN BURMESE HEARTLAND? AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF VILLAGE HEADMAN' (S)ELECTION IN MYANMAR CENTRAL DRYLANDS

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Village headmen' (s)election process is a key entry to understand how local politics in Myanmar Drylands is rooted in village social relations and their interplay with government practices. The role of headmen since colonial times positioned them as villages' political brokers with diverse government institutions or agents. Therefore, the latest official headmen election (2015) can be challenged as being rather a locally embedded political broker selection. Nevertheless, the emerging questions are how it is perceived and practiced at village level? What are the specific power relations at play within the village and between village and government in the long-term? Drawing from an 18-months ethnographic fieldwork in Monywa Township, Sagaing Division, the paper firstly describes a case of headman (s)election to, secondly, incorporates historical insights to understand the history of village-state relations in Burmese heartland. The description of the latest case of (s)election allows to analyze how does village candidates emerged within an "election like" system contrasting from previous–colonialist, socialist, militarist–modes of selection. Moreover, it enables us to see how relations with government are encompassed within broader conceptualizations of social spaces, brokerage, and power relations. Key elements of the paper look at the way people try to avoid (or not) dealing with government, how headmen are negotiating their position, and how influent villagers are taking care of village socio-political life. Besides, it is necessary to set such (s)election in a broader historical perspective to understand variations in headmen authority between villages. Hence, exploring their position from colonial times up to today's "democratic transition" enables to tackle the question of continuity and change in local power relations and their interplay with government practices at large.

EVERYDAY JUSTICE AND PLURAL AUTHORITIES: INSIGHTS FROM KAREN STATE.

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Burma/Myanmar is a country characterized by legal pluralism and the coexistence of different authorities who engage in the resolution of disputes and in the dispensation of justice. The official state legal system, governed from the country's capital, constitutes only one among many other avenues for seeking remedies in criminal and civil cases. In fact from the perspective of ordinary people the official system is seldom the preferred option: it is seen as expensive, slow, distant and intrusive. Instead, village elders, religious leaders, local administrators, and/or ethnic armed organizations are the main providers of everyday justice, sometimes in unpredictable ways that involve a hybrid mixture of norms and remedies. This multiplicity of mechanisms and actors reflect, we argue, the prevalence of plural authorities in Burma, and in particular in the ethnic nationalities states. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Karen State government as well as ethnic armed group

controlled areas, we explore in this paper the everyday practices of dispute resolution and what this implies for the constitution of plural authorities.

FROM INSURGENCY TO GOVERNANCE: THE INTERNATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF REBEL ADMINISTRATION IN MYANMAR'S MULTIPARTY CIVIL WAR

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Why do some non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in protracted multi-party civil wars govern better? When and how do these groups evolve from insurgents to governors? Extant explanations of insurgent governance privilege natural resource endowment or the extent of counterinsurgency as key determinants of insurgent governance. This article seeks to bring back international relations into the study of intrastate wars. By employing the comparative historical method, I argue that insurgent external relations are crucial to understanding variations in insurgent governance. External relations matter because they shape ceasefires negotiations, which can be distinguished into two pathways: agreement or disagreement to cease hostilities. Whereas early ceasefires exert a positive effect on insurgent governance, the alternative path undermines the group's ability to govern effectively. Through a within-conflict study of Myanmar's civil war (1948-present), I trace how particular configurations of external relations shaped the differing administrations of three insurgent groups: the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the Karen National Union (KNU), and the New Mon State Party (NMSP).

WRITING RACE AND CRAFTING POWER IN COLONIAL BURMA

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Race/ethnicity has been a defining feature of state development in Myanmar since before the country's independence. Currently, the country recognizes seven 'ethnic states,' six self-administrated zones (SAZ) created from 'ethnic communities,' 135 ethnicities and various 'ethnic' national representatives. Tensions between communities have often been defended in the name of race/ethnicity. Given that a sense of ethnic identification and differentiation is important to numerous communities in Myanmar, where does it come from and how is it defined? This paper analyzes the reports from the *Census of India* in 1901-1931 and supporting documents to trace the origins of racial terminology in the classification of Myanmar's population. Language, religion, territory, and economic relations were all important components in how the British differentiated communities; however, the idea of 'racial' groupings become something that embodied a classification of stronger political authority over these other characteristics. As the British increasingly became aware of the differences between community interactions in India and Burma and prepared to split Burma from India, they determined the need for a separate classification basis. Thus,

race, as opposed to religion, became the primary means of classification out of need for an abstract terminology to categorize and tabulate Myanmar's diverse populations. As the British created, documented, and defined the nature of state-oriented human categorization, local populations began to mold into these terms and normalize them as a means to defend political, economic, or territorial advantage. This analysis identifies the implications of British colonial constructions of race and procedures of enumeration that normalized the racial/ethnic tensions dividing communities in Myanmar today.

PANEL SEVENTEEN: Religion, Orthodoxy and Folklore & Religiosity, Identity and Democracy in Burma

Regency Room

HUMAN NONHUMANS. NATS AND THEIR MEDIAL FIGURATIONS.

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Nats are diametrically opposed to humans, they exist in a mode that is decidedly non-human. Nevertheless, they are somewhat anthropomorphic entities, not only because they stem from the death of a human, indeed an inhumane death, but because they are depicted in human gestalt and they incarnate as humans in myths, dreams or rituals. In short, the human here manifests as a medium of apparition for the nonhuman, the human face operates as an interface at the threshold between human and nonhuman. In this talk I draw on first person narratives and periods of participation in village Nat Pwes in Southern Myanmar (Tanintharyi), as well as Buddhist writings on Nats and humans, in order to explore the anthropological implications of thinking the human as medium.

MONKS IN POLITICS: ESTABLISHING A RELIGION IN BURMA

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Many of Myanmar's monks use a complex rationale to engage in politics (Walton 2015). This paper examines the transformative impact of politics and state power on the monastic community of Theravada Buddhists in contemporary Myanmar. Traditionally, Theravada Buddhist monks are forbidden from "doing politics" and "doing politics" is (or was) a cause for disbarment from the monkhood (Jordt 2015). However, the Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, which adjudicates monks' behavior, has not sought to defrock the infamous monk, Wirathu or his followers, for their extensive and controversial engagement in Myanmar politics. Wirathu is the leader of the Organization for the Protection of Race and Religion (called the Ma Ba Tha) and has been widely engaged in controversial and often violent political action. In September of 2012, Wirathu led a Ma Ba Tha rally to support a controversial plan to deport 800,000 Burmese Rohingya Muslims. Ma Ba Tha leaders claim

responsibility for the government's recent passage of four controversial pro-Buddhists protection of race and religion laws. Wirathu and the Ma Ba Tha movement enjoyed the backing of the Myanmar military government and actively campaigned with and for the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) which lost in the landslide November of 2015 election to Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party. This paper seeks to explain how Myanmar politics has affected the Buddhists' religion and monastic community. Through historical analysis, interviews with leaders in the Myanmar monastic community, and a survey, this research examines and explains three important ways in which politics has changed monastic religious discipline and norms, and transformed and reshaped the relationship between and perceptions of the monastic community in the larger society in contemporary Myanmar.

THE TRAFFIC IN HIERARCHY

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Traffic on city streets is the first of three scenes from everyday life I use in this lecture to illustrate principles of hierarchy and power as they obtain in contemporary Burmese social life. The second is the public "Dhamma talks" or Buddhist sermons sponsored increasingly frequently at pagodas and neighborhood festivals. The third is the interaction among customers and servers at tea shops, where hot and cold drinks and a variety of snacks can be had at most hours of the day. The very ordinariness of these phenomena shows how concerns for relative standing—hierarchical understandings—and the privileges and obligations they entail, pervade Burmese social interaction. At the same time, differences among those scenes makes it possible to illustrate how hierarchy inflects behavior in diverse ways according to the nature of the situation at hand: when interaction is anonymous and therefore implicates only differences in power; when situations elicit enthusiastic displays of subordination; and when arrangements provide hints of what superior standing without implications of reciprocal obligation would feel like, which is to say, why the market economy exercises such seductive allure.

PANEL EIGHTEEN: Religiosity, Identity and Democracy in Burma

Regency Room

A FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND THE ANTI-MUSLIM SENTIMENT AND HATE SPEECH IN MYANMAR

Ye Myint Win

Anti-Muslim sentiment and hate speech have always escalated right before outbreaks of collective violence against the Muslims in Myanmar. The contemporary outbreaks of anti-Muslim violence in Myanmar demonstrate a nexus between anti-Muslim hate speech and anti-Muslim violence, as anti-Muslim sentiment

and hate speech serve as precursors to or even prerequisites for the instigation of anti-Muslim riots. The tactic of anti-Muslim speech acts is to generate a "new reality" in which Buddhist society in Myanmar is perceived to be under existential threat. This paper draws on interviews, and examines various forms of anti-Muslim sentiment and hate speech that have appeared in pamphlets, leaflets, sermons and interviews recorded on DVDs, VCDs, CDs, posters and other media that have circulated in some parts of Myanmar before the instigation of anti-Muslim violence. This paper suggests a framework to understand the five conspicuous characteristics of anti-Muslim sentiment and hate speech that have catalyzed collective violence against Muslims in Myanmar: i) Mischaracterisation of Islam, ii) Mediatisation of the Transnational Nature of Religious Terrorism, iii) Demonisation of Muslims, iv) Generalisation of Muslims as a threat to Burmese Buddhists Society, v) Communalisation of "Buddhism, Burmese Race, and Burmese Lands". This paper contributes to a framework that envisages the essential attributes of anti-Muslim sentiment and hate speech in Myanmar.

RELIGIOSITY, GENDER IDENTITY AND DEMOCRATISATION IN BURMA/MYANMAR

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The political situation in Myanmar is unique; the 2008 Constitution precludes Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from taking up the post of President, but in what is a striking achievement, she circumvented this attempt by the military to keep her out of power by designating her own role as 'State Counsellor'. Although women represent more than half of Myanmar's population of 51.41 million, they held only 4.6 per cent of seats in Myanmar's legislature in previous years and currently only one out of ten parliamentarians is only female politician. This is still one of the lowest proportions of female representatives in the region. Religious ideologies, patriarchal power structures and the profoundly militarized culture continue to exclude women and bar them from equal access to power and resources. Still, the dynamics of gender relations in the Burmese cultural landscape are poorly understood, even if the struggle between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the military regime is well known. This paper will discuss how socio-religious identities and political ideologies have impacted on gender power relations in Burma and created structural inequalities and gender based violence.

PANEL NINETEEN: Burma and the West: Two Recent Books

Capitol North

REFLECTIONS ON UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH BURMA/MYANMAR SINCE 1945

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Even as there has been an explosion of scholarship in the last several decades about United States relations with Southeast Asia, serious historical studies of American relations with Burma have been almost nonexistent.

This paper will explore why this has been the case, focusing attention on the centrality of the Vietnam War and Ne Win's coup in 1962, after which Ne Win deliberately isolated his country and expelled most foreign institutions and personnel. Because of this, our understanding of Burma's importance to the United States during the early Cold War has been forgotten. The paper will examine the major themes in the US-Burma relationship since World War II, beginning with Cold War issues, including relations with the Burmese ethnic minorities and US covert assistance to the Guomindang (KMT) forces in Burma, as well as US perceptions of U Nu and Ne Win. After a brief look at narcotics control issues, that were most important in the 1970s and 1980s, the paper will explore US relations with Burma/Myanmar since 8888. Among the issues discussed will be the importance of Aung San Suu Kyi, the debate over sanctions and their effectiveness, and the degree to which China has been a factor in US policy. The paper will be based on my recent book, A Delicate Relationship: The United States and Burma/Myanmar since 1945 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, December 2015).

ROMANCING HUMAN RIGHTS: GENDER, INTIMACY, AND POWER BETWEEN BURMA AND THE WEST

Tamara Ho

Highlighting and critiquing Burma's fraught terrain, Ho's Romancing Human Rights maps "Burmese women" as real and imagined figures across the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. More than a recitation of "on the ground" facts, Ho's groundbreaking scholarship—the first monograph to examine Anglophone literature and dynamics of gender and race in relation to Burma—brings a critical lens to contemporary literature, film, and politics through the use of an innovative feminist/queer methodology. She crosses intellectual boundaries to illustrate how literary and gender analysis can contribute to discourses surrounding and informing human rights—and in the process offers a new voice in the debates about representation, racialization, migration, and spirituality.

Romancing Human Rights demonstrates how Burmese women break out of prisons, both real and discursive, by writing themselves into being. Ho assembles an eclectic archive that includes George Orwell, Aung San Suu Kyi, critically acclaimed authors Ma Ma Lay and Wendy Law-Yone, and activist Zoya Phan. Her close readings of literature and politicized performances by women in Burma, the Burmese diaspora, and the United States illuminate their contributions as authors, cultural mediators, and practitioner-citizens. Using flexible, polyglot rhetorical tactics and embodied performances, these authors creatively articulate alter/native epistemologies—regionally situated knowledges and decolonizing viewpoints that interrogate and destabilize competing transnational hegemonies, such as U.S. moral imperialism and Asian militarized dictatorship

PANEL TWENTY: Mapping the ineffable and the charting of spatial narratives in Pre-Modern Burma

Capitol South

SPACE, REAL AND MORE THAN REAL, IN 13TH CENTURY PAGAN

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Georges Duby reminded us that people's attitudes and the conduct they dictate are determined by mental images. The "spatial turn" prompts this paper's effort to recover a 13th century people's spatial conception, their place in the universe and their mental images of that space. Cosmographic frameworks embedded in gandhakuti decors, socializing devotees along an approved path, instantiate ways of being in the world linking geographies of the here and now and elsewhere. This was evident, for example, in Pagan's veneration of the Buddha's four eye teeth relics. Two were housed in the human world, one in Sri Lanka and another in what Pagan's received sources called Gandhara, but the kingdom, by the 13th century labeled Tin Dwe (China). The story's Pagan popularity suggests blurred boundaries between what a scholar has called the real and the more than real. Such mappings turned the plains of the universe into arenas of thought and practice, making abstractions tangible to inform devotees' sense of self. They were the nidana—the context and condition for kammatic work. The universe was enveloped by the dhamma's spatial inclusiveness - encapsulated in the image of the bodhisatta's dreams on the Night of Awakening, reclining on top of the universe, framed by devas' heavenly mansions and tooth relics stupas. Inscribed or imaged referents to the Agganna sutta, to realms like Uttarakuru, to the varied denizens of the universe's frequently named multiple levels, to human and celestial venerators of Buddha relics, as well as to the sites of the three Buddha Lanka sojourns and Asoka's 84,000 stupas indicate Pagan's capacious spatial sense linking its own world and the beyond. A 13th century structure inscribing various Pali texts making cosmography meaningful, shows how claims on behalf of its interpretation were substantiated.

BURMA'S BUDDHIST GEOGRAPHY: A BRIEF HISTORY OF SPACE IN A CHANGING BUDDHIST LANDSCAPE

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Burmese historical narratives with their emphasis on origin, precedence, and lineage have remained central to the study of the country's history, society, and culture, contributing to the formulation of contested discourses linked to ethnicity, religion, and nation. In this process, however, spatial narratives, whether painted pictorial maps, cloth maps, charts, or even texts describing space and places, have received little scholarly regard. This is surprising for at least two reasons. First, Schwartzberg in his contribution to History of Cartography identified

"within Burma a continuous development of cartography, which becomes increasingly sophisticated over the period beginning in the latter half of the eighteenth century," the very same period that saw the beginning of sustained efforts to write about the Burmese past. Second, the 'spatial turn', a paradigm shift in the social sciences and humanities, has meant for the past twenty years, among other developments, that representations of space and places are no longer examined simply for the information they provide but also seen as illustrations of an evolving spatial awareness. Recognizing this paradigm shift and the Burmese tradition of cartography, the panel will explore the charting of spatial narratives and the ways in which these narratives mapped space and places in Burma and abroad and, at times, produced political and sacred topographies, reflecting the rulers' imperial designs in an effort to propagate the Buddhist religion.The contributions will address the following questions: In what ways are spatial narratives constructed differently from historical narratives? What do spatial narratives tell us about those who produced them and the context in which they were established? In what ways is the knowledge produced by these spatial narratives scholarly significant?

MYANMAR TRADITIONAL CARTOGRAPHY: COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF PRE-MODERN INDIGENOUS MAPS

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Myanmar is a Southeast Asian nation where historical maps drawn by indigenous peoples themselves have survived. In comparison with other countries, for instance Thailand, Malaysia, etc., the number of surviving pre-modern indigenous maps of Myanmar may be the largest. These maps were drawn by Myanmar court painters, draftsmen as well as scribes at the service of indigenous chiefs. All the maps so far identified date back to the Konbaung Dynasty (1752- 1885) and the early colonial period (1886-1900). They are in the forms of parabaik-maps, wall painting-maps, cloth-maps, paper-maps and rock-maps, all of which have their own style, significance, characteristic features and technique of mapmaking as well as value for historical study and cultural preservation.

MANDALAY'S BODHI-TREE OR THE COALESCING TRAJECTORIES, SACRED AND MUNDANE, OF A RELIC OF THE BUDDHA

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With their emphasis on temple maintenance, Burmese missions to Bodh Gaya have contributed to develop a spatial awareness of the Buddhist 'holy land', in which the Bodhi-tree and its temple stood at the center of the realm and other sacred sites were located at further distance. Spatial awareness of this realm also increased owing to narratives related to Majjhima-desa, ancient Buddhist India, prominently featured in the Pali canonical literature and to Burmese monks' visits to Sri Lanka's holy sites. Both empirical and textual knowledge eventually combined to shape the ways in which the Burmese sangha and the throne have, in turn, attempted to create their own Buddhist 'holy land.' One of these instances is the Mahabodhi Pagoda in

Mandalay. From the time when a sapling of the Bodhi-tree was brought from Sri Lanka and planted by King Mindon himself in 1862 to the erecting in 1879 of a stone inscription whose text was composed by the Hsee-ban- ni Sayadaw, Mandalay's Mahabodhi pagoda has made manifest, at one single location, an overlapping series of spatial narratives, real and imaginary, historical and legendary, some made of bricks, other crafted in words.

Based on field visits and examination of sources, such as spatial charts, stone inscription, chronicles, etc., the presentation will explore the charting of these spatial narratives and gives insight into the identity of those who created them. It will then discuss how the study of spatial narratives can contribute to new approaches in the expanding field of Burma's historiography.

PANEL TWENTY ONE: Social Issues and Education: Histories, Policies and Progress

Sandburg Auditorium

BURMA CHALLENGES SOCIOLOGY IN 2016

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Burma had a long tradition. Burmese people who have come from Tibeto-Burman area of the central Asia, which is among the three parallel rivers of "Yanzi", "Mekong" and "Salween" to live in the "Irrawaddy" river valley have brought their own traditions and customs with them. The origin of Burmese sociology can be traced back "Pyu" around 2500 years to the time when those people arrived in Burma. Burmese people live peacefully and isolated in the country according to Buddhist teachings why majority people in Burma are Buddhists. Traditionally, people believe that men are superior and women are inferior. Now we try to get harmony our superstitious and gender unfair. King "Mindon" (1853-1878) reformed establishment of factories under the supervision of European people and introduced free religion as a reform process, then we met many Churches and Mosques throughout the country. Socio-culture thrived under the three Anglo-Burmese Wars but later declined during the British colonization of Burma. Burma established based on all different ethnic backgrounds. National Lead for Democracy won the election led by Aung San Su Kyi in November 8th 2015 and opened the door in April 1st 2016 to the world. Firstly we faced communal violence at the western coast (Rakhine State) and still happened civil wars in Kachin State. Thus, we have many challenges on sociology that is the beginning of the clashes between the culture and society. Today, Burma spring begins and move forward to get better future.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS OTHER THROUGH THE LENSES OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE GROUPS IN YANGON

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Since the rising tensions between different religious groups in Myanmar, particularly after 2012, interfaith dialogue has been utilized as a tool to negotiate and build peace and harmony between the religions. Ever since the number of interfaith dialogue groups and councils have increased and conferences as well as workshops of faith-based groups are taking place throughout the country. This paper outlines the religious and hierarchical structures of several leading interreligious dialogue groups centered in Yangon. Based on the thesis that interfaith dialogue groups are significantly influencing the presentation and depiction of religions and their followers within the discourse on religious diversity, interreligious dialogue is seen not only as a tool to negotiate peace but as a system which shapes how Buddhists, Muslims, Christians and Hindus are describing themselves and their respective other. As part of a discourse on religious diversity in Myanmar interfaith dialogue has its rules and boundaries and produces religious stereotypes. The paper answers the following questions: How is interfaith dialogue conducted by the different groups? What topics are discussed and what are the rules and structures of picturing the other? Are their taboos and limitations in presenting themselves and the other? What kind of stereotypes are produced and established in the process?

TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN FROM BURMA: EDUCATION, LANGUAGE POLICY, AND MULTICULTURALISM IN THAILAND

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This study explores tensions and complexities in discourse on multiculturalism and diversity by focusing exclusively on schooling and language education for children of Burmese migrant in Samutsakhon province, Thailand. This study examines how “migrant childhood” becomes an object of state and non-state interventions and a site of contestation over meanings and categories. Children of migrant workers in this context are an ambiguously and paradoxically positioned figure. While recent state policies and public discourses seemingly embrace the linguistic and cultural diversity of Thailand’s minority groups and people from its neighboring countries, the children face the challenge of understanding their identities under conditions of lacking social or legal status. A child of migrant workers born in Thailand does not acquire Thai nationality and many of which do not hold Burmese documents either. Although they are not assigned a legal category of “Thai citizens,” they have internalized in schools to think along the state logic of being a “good citizen.” Simultaneously, they are also reminded of their own cultural heritage and their alien identity. While local educators strategically depict the children as potential valuable human resources of the future Thailand, historical narratives about Burmese-Siamese wars are often reproduced to perpetuate a sense of animosity and prejudices against Burmese workers in general. The subjectification of migrant children, therefore,

becomes a site where multiple chronotopes and various spatiotemporal domains of social life in and around these Burmese migrant communities in Thailand dynamically interacted.

THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON LEADING CHANGES AND MANAGING PEOPLE

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The paper presents the impact of education on leading changes and managing people in the Parliament during the transition and transaction period. The main reason that inspired to present is I have been working as a senior trainer at the capacity building program in the Parliament since 2014. In order to build up the capacity of the members of parliament (MPs) and parliamentary staff, I have to conduct core competency and skills-based training programs. According to Suslu (2006: 2) collaborative with Donmyei (2001: 47), a development training program is “a valued field to increase the professional skills and knowledge.” Therefore, from the valued field core competency and skills-based training programs, the MPs and parliamentary staff achieve what knowledge and how they will apply is interesting. Furthermore, the progress of MPs and parliamentary staff can be supportive to their “personal development, performance management, workload and wellbeing” in the professional needs. (Ref: Sabb and Earley, 2007:41). On the other hand, examining what knowledge gained from the training program, how to apply and what results come out is not only for the MPs and staff but also for me. I gained knowledge and experience from Youth Leadership Program at Northern Illinois University in 2011 April. Then, I attended a master program, Education Leadership and Management, in Oxford with Chevening scholarship. After completing the study programs from the States and Oxford, the applicable area is conducting core competency and skills-based training programs in Burma. As a result, the attendees from the training programs improve their knowledge that can be measured by the assessment after the course and are able to use the knowledge towards skills at work. Due to the feedback from the attendees and follow-up observation, the progress is convinced. One of the concrete examples is that a number of staff and MPs would like to take part in the process of positive changes but their capacity is limited. To be able to be involved with the effective change management, the capability of MPs and parliamentary staff take the vital role. In accordance with such experience, it is highlighted on “Education is the most powerful weapon which can change the world” by Nelson Mandela.

THE 2014-15 STUDENT PROTESTS IN BURMA: THE UNIVERSITY AS A MICROCOSM OF SOCIETY

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During the past century, university students have taken a prominent role in Burmese politics. From their protests against British regulation of higher education in the 1920s, which catalyzed the anti-colonial nationalist movement, to their opposition to military rule throughout the later decades of the 20th century, students have demanded autonomy and respect. Reform of higher education has once again been at the center

of political debate during the transition to nominal democratic rule that began in 2010. In 2014, students took to the streets to protest the recently passed National Education Law, demanding "democratization" of universities, including decentralization of decision-making, the right to form student unions, mother-tongue instruction for ethnic minority students, and modernization of the curriculum and entrance examinations. The Ministry of Education's noncommittal response to these demands, as well as the army's violent crackdown on these protesters in 2015, illustrated the government's attempt to retain control over higher education.

Despite their differences, the government and the protesters share a fundamental assumption: the university is a microcosm of society, and university reform sets the tone for social change. In this paper, I will use critical discourse analysis to compare statements made by the government and the protesters, illustrating how struggles over social hierarchy and political structures are played out in the realm of higher education. Additionally, I will analyze how these texts reveal and conceal contests for representation and internal dissonance and within purportedly monolithic groups such as "students" and "the government."

PANEL TWENTY TWO: Visual Culture, Relics and Tools: Approaching Objects of Study

Regency Room

THREADS RUNNING THROUGH A NATION – NEGOTIATIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT IN CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE CRAFTSMANSHIP IN MYANMAR

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Myanmar's textiles have always fascinated and inspired scholars for research in the past. But what does the present of textile production look like? Approaches from an art historical point of view primarily concerned with provenience, style and aesthetics dominate the discussion to date. This presentation is based on fieldwork researching handloom weaving in Yangon, Amarapura, Sagaing and Kyaingtong (2015-2016) for my doctoral thesis in cultural anthropology of textiles. The diversity of Myanmar is clearly communicated and often made visible in form of fabrics, translated into the specific dress of an ethnic group. This communicative potential is used in museums throughout the country. In contrast to this form of representation, today's production is shaped by several strategies to supply a market that is growing in complexity. The aim is to further the understanding of the strategies that are employed by the locals and show the connections running like threads through the whole country. The ideas presented draw from micro-perspectives and show the interconnectedness within Myanmar and beyond.

INVESTIGATING METAL OBJECTS AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE KONBAUNG PERIOD: SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

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A little explored dimension of the Konbaung Period is the emergence of the industry and the technological achievements made during the period. These developments can be examined through how iron making technology sponsored by the crown was used for multiple purposes and how it resulted in high quality iron. Not only was the iron making technology used for a wide range of objects of varying size, such as small objects like nails for royally-sponsored structures, or large ones, like bells, or cannons, but the quality of the iron produced reached new standards.

The present contribution offers some findings into the analysis of original iron nails produced at the time of the reconstruction of the Shwenandaw Monastery in Mandalay in the early years of King Thibaw. The results of the analysis of these metal objects show that the iron produced in the late Konbaung Period was of rather high quality. They also allow us to compare the quality of the iron achieved at that time with that of other metal objects produced at earlier times during the Konbaung period and therefore to better understand the significant milestones that the iron making technology and more generally the kindgom's industry achieved during the period.

"NATIVE LIFE ALONG THE BURMA-YUNNAN FRONTIER:" TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHS AND TRAVEL ACCOUNTS OF FREDERIC WILLIAM CAREY

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After leading two different survey expeditions for the Chinese government along the Yunnan-Burma frontier, F. W, Carey published a pair of essays in the Royal Geographic Society's Journal. Carey's observations of terrain and local commercial activity were particularly important to Chinese economic and trade interests. He was also charged with collecting examples of local dress to be included in China's Imperial Pavilion at the Paris Exposition and the subjects Carey selected for photography in the later essay shifted dramatically from a focus on landmarks to portraits of individuals and groups. Although not a part of sanctioned ethnography, Carey's accounts are another example of the burgeoning scientific interest in race and cultural analysis. But his position as a British subject working for the Chinese government implicates him as an agent working on behalf of two imperial powers. In this paper, Carey's photographs are compared with contemporary ethnographic illustrations from across the border in Shan States, Burma. These artifacts, created during roughly the same period, betray heightened awareness on the part of Britain and China of the race to understand and influence groups not fully under imperial control.

QUINTESSENTIALLY BURMESE? TEXTILES PATTERNED WITH GEOMETRIC BLOCKDESIGNS

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Geometric block designs, popular on coverlets in late eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe and North America, were introduced into Burma during the colonial period along with other innovations such as the fly shuttle loom, multiple heddles, and chemical dyes. Such designs which appear as numerous tiny squares and rectangles can be combined in a number of ways to create distinctive and often complex patterns. Produced by a supplementary float technique known as "overshot" such designs became a welcome addition to the male longyi design repertoire which previously had been largely limited to stripes, plaids, and wavy lines.

Such block patterns became particularly popular in Rakhine. Woven in silk on a brightly colored cotton ground, a number of early twentieth century examples have survived thanks to the Rakhine custom of refashioning the longyis of deceased male family members into large curtains as donations to monasteries for use as room dividers. Block patterns eventually spread to other major weaving centers throughout Burma. With the passage of time, Amarapura, the Yaw district, In-ma near Prome, the Tennasserim coast, and the Shan States all developed their own their own unique repertoire of block designs, some of which have been combined with indigenous motifs while others have been amalgamated with other patterning techniques to produce weavings that today are widely regarded as "quintessentially Burmese," with few being aware of the foreign origins of such patterns.

PANEL TWENTY THREE: Environmental Issues, Biodiversity, and Poor People's Movements

Capitol North

MISSING THE TARGET: INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST THE SHWE PIPELINES

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Under the Thein Sein administration, Chinese investment encountered setbacks in Burma. There were protests against the Myitsone Dam, the Letpadaung Copper Mine and the Shwe Pipelines. However, the opposition produced divergent outcomes. The Burmese government suspended the hydropower project and renegotiated the mining contract with China, but the pipeline construction continued smoothly. More surprisingly, the anti-pipeline campaign, with the support of overseas civil society groups, supposed to be more influential, but failed to change the status quo of the agreement. Why did the international campaign yield little impact on the pipeline case? More specifically, under what circumstances could international actors influence the status quo

of a committed foreign investment project? This article will answer this question with a case study of transnational anti-pipeline campaign. Drawing data from thirty in-depth interviews and secondary sources, and employing Putnam's two-level game as a tool of analysis, this article argues international campaign neither strengthened domestic opposition nor diminished the gain of the government in the pipeline project. Additionally, it did not target China's executive in the economic cooperation. As such, solidarity actions against the pipeline as an appeal to "international community" had little relevance to the two-level game negotiation. This pipeline case shall have both theoretical and empirical implications on other controversial state-to-state agreements outside Burma.

TRAPPED IN MOBILITY: SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF DISPOSSESSION, DISPLACEMENT, DETERRITORIALIZATION, AND DEVALORIZATION OF PEASANTS AND POOR PEOPLE IN CONTEMPORARY MYANMAR

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The trope of eternal Myanmar village life endures and is implicitly confirmed by generally static urbanization rates. Yet multiple factors—including rapacious natural resource extraction, war and counterinsurgency policies, agribusiness expansion, SEZ development, speculative land grabs and enclosure of commons deriving from land's recent legal commodification, land investment as a drugs-money laundering tactic, and inadequate support for farmers (inputs, capital) resulting in indebtedness – are undermining agrarian viability. Concurrently, in urban areas forced evictions of 'squatters' define Yangon's history and present, and increasing living costs and rents keep people moving. Recent research suggests that movement has become necessary for survival in both cases. Combining fieldwork data from rural (Ayeyawaddy and Mandalay divisions) and peri-urban areas (Okallapa) with historiographical materials, I focus on movement and displacement as a perverse state 'development' strategy, in which individuals' bodies are deployed so as to transform environments (whether in turn-of-the-century Delta land clearing or Hlaingthaya's 'new fields' industrial zones). I argue that structural changes to the economy wrought by this long-term pattern of 'development' have de-valorized labor, and risk producing a lumpen proletariat 'sedentarized in motion', trapped in mobility. I inquire into the socio-political consequences: how can new democratic 'rights' compensate for this deterritorialization? What happens to patronage ties as oligarchic business-military elites ('cronies') increasingly amassing wealth? I suggest a potential irony: the very political-economic conditions increasing the dependence of poor Burmese on the powerful have produced a state apparatus progressively disinterested in them and an elite consciousness gradually undermining a sense of responsibility for them.

“LEGACY LANDSCAPES” OF WAR, RESOURCES AND ARMED CONFLICTS IN A BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION HOTSPOT IN SOUTHEASTERN MYANMAR

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Burma has recently positioned itself as the world’s newest frontier market, undergoing a transition to a post-conflict, democratic neoliberal state. Opening land and resources to foreign investment, however, is confronting decades of war and state-backed violence. Political and economic grievances in resource-rich ethnic territories have in part been ignited by resource extraction, and more recently agribusiness land grabs. As the Burmese military-state further opens to global finance and markets, international conservation endeavors are now targeting the same forested ethnic territories trying to recover from war while also fending off resource concessions. This paper critically explores climate change mitigation strategies (in this case biofuel production and forest conservation measures) as highly political large-scale re-zonings of contested territory, human settlements and resource use within “legacy landscapes” that have been shaped by decades of war and counterinsurgency. The paper critically frames and examines the overlapping spatial and temporal relationships between war, displacement, historical injustices and climate change mitigation, applied to one in-depth case study in a biodiversity hotspot in the Tanintharyi Region, southeastern Myanmar. In particular, the paper presents a narrative of sequential waves of resource extraction, production and conservation in the Tanintharyi Region that have built off of, benefited from, and further contributed to, (post-) war and counterinsurgency efforts and effects.

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE IN MYANMAR

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This USAID-supported project, led by University of Arizona researchers in collaboration with Burmese universities and private and public sectors, will move Burma’s seafood sector towards an aquaculture industry that meets global standards of sustainability, equitability, profitability, and food safety. This presentation will report on the successes and challenges encountered during the first 18 months of the project, which focused on outfitting a fully functional seafood lab with dual roles as a service center to the industry and a teaching facility within Yangon University; training the future trainers in seafood safety, Best Management Practices, certification programs, fisheries and aquaculture regulations, and seafood business English; providing scholarships and internships to Burmese students to gain practical experience in various aspects of seafood; and increasing opportunities for women in all aspects of the seafood business. Demonstration field projects with farmers and students have been established, including a barramundi farm, an eel nursery, a crab hatchery, on-farm sanitation training site for farm workers, and mangrove replantings. A central theme of the project is to improve seafood safety and quality for export and domestic customers with improvements throughout the value chain. We plan to successfully provide the trained people who will make this effort a major contribution to the seafood economy of Myanmar.

PANEL TWENTY FOUR: Historical and Literary Narratives

Hunt Room

NATSHINNAUNG: ROMANTIC MASTER POET, TRAGIC KING – AND TRAITOR?

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Few figures of Myanmar's pre-colonial literary world have held so much fascination for many people in Myanmar. His works continue to be quoted and his biography has been the subject of several modern novels, either emphasizing his romantic relationship with Yaza Dhatu Kalya and praising the beautiful yatu poems that he composed for her, describing his military achievements and the tragic loss of his kingdom to Anaukpetlun, or denouncing the "treason" he committed by allying himself with the Portuguese adventurer Filipe de Brito e Nicote and asking to be baptized as a Christian. While this last fact has secured him a place in most accounts of the history of Christianity in Myanmar as the only Burmese King who ever converted to Christianity, this decision was seen as particularly damnable by his nationalist biographers in the twentieth century who nevertheless could not but admire his unmatched mastery in poetry—a poetry that is perfect in formal terms and so rich in artfully crafted metaphors and images that contemporary readers often struggle to grasp the full depth of its meanings. The paper presents preliminary results of a fresh and ongoing study of his poetic work and discusses its reception by later scholars, writers and readers.

NARRATING BURMA: BEYOND NATIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Drawing from Aung San Suu Kyi's Letters from Burma (1991), Pascal Khoo Thwe's *From the Land of Green Ghosts* (2002) and Thant Myint-U's *The River of Lost Footsteps* (2008), this paper constructs the subgenre of "nationalogue": a narrative monologue of a nation that arises out of a lack of proper dialogue with the dominant nationalist discourse. The genre of national autobiography, which is commonly associated with the life stories of male nationalist icons such as Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela or Lee Kuan Yew, has gained considerable attention in recent literary criticism. As such, a number of critics have identified the filial, fraternal and predominantly masculine characteristics of postcolonial national autobiographies (Philip Holden; Elleke Boehmer). In attempt to challenge the existing autobiographical canon, this paper draws attention to the narratives of submerged histories, subaltern struggles and unfulfilled nationalist aspirations of the ethnic minorities in Burma. In particular, the paper argues that while Aung San Suu Kyi's "exile-at-home" (Letters from Burma) counteracts the syntax of the traditional male hero's national journey (Boehmer) – from humble village origins to an "exile-in–the-west", followed by a return to indigenous roots –, Pascal Khoo Thwe's (From the

Land of Green Ghosts) and Thant Myint-U's (The River of Lost Footsteps) life narratives chart Burmese national history through individual and communal trajectories.

MENTALITY OF THE "TATMADAW" THROUGH THE LIVING HISTORY

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As a person who has outlived the military regimes (I was just a freshman at the Rangoon University when the Tatmadaw shot at us on 7th July 1962) I have interpreted things as I deem fit. At least from a Burmese perspective. The backdrop is a brief history of Burma before the British annexation, the colonial rule and the Panglong Agreement to form the Union of Burma just before independence. With the assassination of Aung San and how the Myanmar leaders manipulated the non-Myanmar ethnic nationalities, the latter was forced to reciprocate with democratic means only to be met with a military coup compelling them to take up arms. The various juntas under different names that had dragged the country to the lowest rung of the Least Developed Country ladder with its bogus Burmese Socialist Ways used the Tatmadaw as a tool which was finally overthrown by the democratic movement in 1988. The Tatmadaw has become the tool of the Generals, who continued to hold on to power under a different guise, and have implemented the ethnic cleansing policy in the name of nation-building. How the Generals used the cronies and became nouveau riche still desperately clinging on to power under the guise of Disciplined Democracy has become an ad nauseam not only to the people of Burma but also to the international community.

DVB MULTIMEDIA GROUP AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FAIR COMPETITION AND DIVERSE MEDIA CONTENT IN MYANMAR'S TRANSITION

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Media are key sites of contestation in any society, and play especially key practical and symbolic roles in any country in transition. This paper will feature the history and work of the DVB Multimedia Group (formerly the Democratic Voice of Burma) as a lens through which to examine key aspects of Myanmar's transition period. Formerly an exile media group, DVB has returned to the country and is currently Myanmar's sole independent broadcaster. Over the years, DVB has developed a significant network throughout the country, including involvement with many ethnic media and civil society groups, positioning itself as the country's public service broadcaster. In drafting media laws, however, the government has claimed this role for its own media network. Since returning to the country, DVB has had to maneuver carefully to slowly expand their available space for broadcast reporting, developing administrative and logistical strategies to remain in the country, as well as strategies for expanding content beyond that previously or currently permitted. They have also had to strategize carefully in order to gain the acceptance of potential advertisers initially too intimidated by DVB's former exile status. Drawing on theories of democratic transition and media's role in this process, and on interviews with DVB founding members and observations of DVB's own transformation stretching over more

than twenty years, this analysis demonstrates how DVB, its strategies and the debates in which it has played a central role mirror the significant issues facing the country as a whole during this transition period.

PANEL TWENTY FIVE (PART I and II): Identity, Buddhist or Otherwise

Capitol South

HOW BUDDHIST ARE BUDDHISTS? RITES OF PASSAGE AND THE BEIKTHEIK SAYA

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With exception of funerals, rites of passage in Burma are not generally presided over by Buddhist monks. The Beiktheik Saya is the foremost ritual specialist to specialize in taking charge of such rituals. Ultimately the rituals by which identity is established – i.e. marriages and puberty rites – are principally based on brahmanic ritual. This raises the question whether 'to be a Burman is to be a Buddhist' might not be rephrased as 'to be a Burman is to be ritually transitioned by an honorary Brahmin.'

AUTHENTICITY AND ADAPTATION: RESPONSES OF THE BURMESE SANGHA TO DIMINISHING BUDDHIST IDENTITY AMONGST YOUNGER GENERATIONS IN THE DIASPORA

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Buddhist monasteries play a crucial role in preserving Buddhism and Buddhist culture amongst the immigrant communities in the West. They provide social space and act as learning centres for the immigrant communities. Early Burmese migrants to the UK have seen it as their duty to preserve Buddhism and Burmese culture within the family. They express concern over the lack of interest in Buddhist practices and Burmese culture among later generations. However, many from the younger generation have distanced themselves from cultural activities and monasteries and have become detached from not only Buddhism, but also from Burmese culture and language. This paper examines what factors contribute to the decline of Burmese Buddhist identity amongst the younger generations, and how the Burmese Sangha in the UK are responding to it.

NEGOTIATING TENSIONS - BUDDHISTS IN MYANMAR AND SRI LANKA

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Myanmar and Sri Lanka are considered important repositories of Theravada Buddhism by Buddhists living in both countries. The two countries have lot of cultural similarities and long historical connections. In recent times, there has been renewed interest among scholars on tensions between Buddhists and members of other religious communities, the nature of which has differed in the two countries. Buddhists movements have emerged that proclaim to assert Buddhist identity and culture. Bodu Bala Sena in Sri Lanka has not only remarkable similarities with Ma Ba Tha in Myanmar but also pragmatic connections with the same. While some describe these movements as protectors of Buddhism, others see them as radical forces fostering tension and violence. This paper brings in research evidence from Myanmar and Sri Lanka (2015 and 2016) to shed comparative light on the motivations that drive these movements forward. What sort of needs, interest and fears drive them to act in the way they do?

RECLAIMING A MORAL LIFE: PLONG KAREN BUDDHIST IMAGINARIES AT THE BASE OF MOUNT ZWEGABIN

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Popular conceptions of Buddhism in Myanmar are largely based on religious practices of the ethnic Bamar majority. Drawing on fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in south-east Myanmar, this paper examines the multiplicity of Buddhist religious practice at the base of Mt Zwegabin, in Hpa-an, Karen State. Employing an anthropological approach which sees religious beliefs and ritual practices as a symbolic medium through which social identity is imagined and constructed, this paper highlights the interaction between traditional Karen customs and more orthodox forms of Buddhism by exploring the millennial Karen Buddhist sect formed by PhuTaki in the 1990s. Research on Karen millennial cults has often positioned them as a reaction of a minority ethnic group, or resistance to, the politically centralised lowland state (Gravers 2001, 2015; Hayami 1996; Stern 1968). However, taking the emphasis away from the 'millenial' aspects of their beliefs, I instead draw on literature from Vietnam on spirit and deity possession (Endres & Lauser 2012; Taylor 2004, 2007), which emphasizes the hybridity and interwovenness of differentiated religious practice in the search for 'alternative modernities' (Gaonkar 2001, Knauft 2002). By examining the hybrid religious beliefs and practices of PhuTaki followers, I highlight how the synchronised tempo of socio-economic and religious life assures the reproduction of Buddhism and Karen traditions as a stable reference point, an 'alternative modernity,' in an ever changing world, regional and national context.

“MORE THAN YOUR HUSBAND”: MIXED-MARRIAGE CONTROVERSIES IN BURMA

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Mixed marriage has repeatedly been an issue of contestation over the last century. The Wunthanu Konmaryi Athin raised the issue in the 1920s; three laws regulating marriage were passed in the late colonial and early independence eras; the Supreme Court twice addressed it in directives; four laws were adopted last year: what should we make of this persistent controversy? Building on valuable research addressing mixed marriage by Ikeya, Mazumber, Tin Tin Htun, and Crouch, this paper seeks to understand the controversy by asking just what, exactly, is being mixed? The paper concludes by arguing that reading back over the marriage controversies enables us to gain new insight on formations of collective identity in Burma without presuming the salience of designations imported from elsewhere.

MYANMAR’S DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT AND THE CONTEST OVER ‘REAL’ BUDDHIST TEACHING

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Over the last two decades, Myanmar’s struggles for democracy have been characterised by competing references to, and understandings of, Theravada Buddhist teaching. Rival uses of Buddhist concepts between military elites and democracy movement leaders such as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have been well explored in scholarly analysis of Myanmar’s politics. Less recognized have been competing uses of Buddhist teaching amongst activists and political party leaders within the democracy movement itself. Based on field research during the period of the Thein Sein administration, this paper explores contests within the democracy movement over what constitutes ‘real’ Buddhist teaching. For some democracy activists the values of benevolence (sedana), unity (nyinyutgyin) and fulfilment of relational obligations such as the wutiya are understood and communicated with reference to Buddhist teaching and seen to be crucial in the country’s democratization. Meanwhile others activists claim that the emphasis on these values and the resulting relational hierarchies are a misinterpretation of Buddhist teaching. ‘Real’ teaching is seen to free citizens from traditional relational hierarchies and bring a more democratic relational equality. Further, this contest over ‘real’ Buddhist teaching is also connected to relations of power within the movement. Activists or political party leaders with greater power and influence in the movement often emphasized the values of benevolent leadership and unity, while activists who present a critical understanding of these values are more likely to be peripheral to centres of power. Despite significant recent political transformations in Myanmar the claim to ‘real’ Buddhist teaching remains a crucial one.

DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS ON THE BUDDHA'S PATH: THE POSTHUMOUS TRIAL OF SHIN UKKAṬṬHA BEFORE THE STATE SAṄGHAMAHĀNĀYAKA COMMITTEE OF MYANMAR

Ven. Ashin Janaka

The Burmese nationalist monk, Shin Ukkaṭṭha, is famous for reinterpreting the Buddha's teachings, especially the doctrine of rebirth, in the light of Darwinian evolutionary theory. This led him to come up with a theory called 'Die Human, Born Human', Lu-the- lu-phyit, which proposes that humans cannot be reborn in a state lower than human. Writing over 30 books, he questioned the authenticity of canonical texts, especially that of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, and accepted a handful of suttas, 'discourses', as the true path of the Buddha. In 1981, his writings and a group of followers were posthumously tried in Vinicchaya, 'judgement', hearings by the State Saṅghamahānāyaka Committee (SSC) of Myanmar. The SSC, formed in 1980 under General Ne Win, takes as its ultimate authority the canonical and commentarial texts of the Theravada tradition. This paper examines how Shin Ukkaṭṭha and the SSC diverged completely in their evaluation of the Buddha's teaching and what this divergence of views means in terms of formation of Buddhist identity for them.

PANEL TWENTY SIX: Visual Art, Heritage, and Preservation

Regency Room

A BUDDHA IMAGE FOR EXORCISM

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Buddhist iconography reflects extraordinary conservatism so that the appearance of images exhibiting unconventional features attracts immediate attention. This paper examines, and documents a recently discovered image whose unusual features become intelligible when viewed in the context of Buddhist exorcism as practiced by weikza congregations. An identification of the image as exorcist is facilitated by dating its casting to the reign of King Bowdawpaya (aka Badon Min, reigned 1782-1819), a period of Buddhist heterodoxy when cabalistic squares (in) were widely used. The image is further identified as an exorcist Healing Buddha by setting it within the two-hundred-year iconic development of Burmese images that hold the myrobalan, a medicinal fruit whose use is believed to assist in expelling evil from the human body. An examination of contemporary weikza practices shows the additional iconographic anomalies to embody weikza concerns: in containing the occult letters sa, da, ba, wa appearing at nine locations on the body and the robe, the offering of two myrobalan fruit with contrasting gestures, the unorthodox wearing of the monk's robe, the wide striated belt, the deliberate grinding away of the image, and a "relic" enclosed within the body. A peripheral observation in this study concerns how closely nineteenth century visual representations of weikza saints such as Bo Bo Aung are homologous to those of the standing Healing Buddha.

TRACING A BA BO MIN GAUNG TODAY

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Buddhist Pali text indicated that there are eighty thousand Weikzas in this Badda Kabar. Even though these Weikzas are believed by the a large portion of Burmese Buddhist population that they are still in existence today and being worshipped, most of them but a few are not seen or known well in modern Myanmar. A Ba Bo Min Gaung is the one with the most significant physical evidences and the biggest number of followers. In tracing A Ba Bo Min Gaung, I studied from some monks and laymen who are believed to have connection with A Ba, and inquired about their first hand experiences and missions they are carrying out for the upkeep of Buddhism by his guidance and support. My mission is to find out how the believers and contact personnel get connected with A Ba, what guidance and support they received, in what way does this relationship with A Ba affect their lives and that of others. Any how I was provided with only second hand knowledge. Carrying out studies in related literature, having interviews and employing research techniques which the western academics usually follow, seems to lack the deep spiritual understanding about A Ba. To get to deeper understanding of Weikzas, one needs to pass the threshold of research and go through experiential learning as a true follower. Along with a group of devotees, I went through the practices under different Bo Daws with the aim to have firsthand knowledge and understanding of Bo Min Gaung. Various experiences seem to indicate that I am on the right track, receiving his approval and support on my mission. As I walk the path, it seems that he is gradually revealing himself. As one sees him then one gets to understand not only about him but also the essence of Buddhist world in an aspect that is not in any contrast with Theravada Buddhist teachings. This paper consist of my personal accounts and that of some least known special individuals connected to A Ba Bo Min Gaung.

DOCUMENTATION, DISSEMINATION & TRANSMISSION: AN OPEN-ACCESS DATABASE OF BAGYI AUNG SOE'S ILLUSTRATIONS

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Between 1948 and 1990, Bagyi Aung Soe (1923/24-1990) the reputed trailblazer of modern Burmese art made illustration the site of his artistic explorations. To date, more than 5,000 documented illustrations tell a story of his art's evolution over four decades in parallel with that of 20th-century Burmese art. Fruits of intersections between the Yangonite literary and artistic worlds, they are part of Burma's intellectual and artistic heritage. Documentation, Dissemination & Transmission: An Open-Access Database of Bagyi Aung Soe's Illustrations investigates the potential of aungsoeillustrations.org, an open-access online database hosting this corpus of works, in the documentation, dissemination and activation of this common estate. This paper next proposes how their significance extends beyond the writing of a (hi)story of modern Burmese art to prompt a recalibration of the prevailing art historical paradigm. In so doing, it seeks to generate enquiry into efficacious means of expanding scholarship, as well as nurturing its agents.

PANEL TWENTY SEVEN: Electoral Structures and Political Representation

Capitol North

THE INSTITUTIONAL INHERITANCE OF MYANMAR'S LEGISLATURE (2011-16)

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This paper seeks to understand how legislative traditions were embedded in Myanmar's first legislature during the transition from direct military rule. Myanmar's legislature, known as the Hluttaw, was re-established in 2011 after more than two decades of absence. With a history of party infighting and factional splits that became a pretext for the military coup in 1962, the Hluttaw and its lawmakers were careful not to repeat the same mistakes. However, the role of the legislature was still haunted by its past. There were indications that clientelism, patriarchalism, and factionalism re-emerged within the legislature. Drawing on original field research, this paper looks at how the Hluttaw (2011-16) has adapted its traditions from two of its predecessors, the Pyithu Hluttaw (Burma's socialist legislature from 1974-88) and the Parliament of Burma (1948-1962). This paper argues that the socialist legislature exerted more influence on the new Hluttaw institutional practices. These reinforced inefficiencies but also helped to emphasise consensus based and non-partisan approaches during the early phase of the democratic transition.

WESTMINSTER LEGACIES, BURMESE SYMBOLS: REDISCOVERING PARLIAMENTARY RITUALS IN MYANMAR

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Parliaments around the world have ritualized the behaviors and procedures a representative is expected to follow. Members of parliament are socialized into the legislative process through the learning and practice of codified parliamentary rituals and ceremonial performances. How to enter a chamber, where to sit, how to dress, when and how to speak, how to debate and vote? This paper shows that Myanmar's early postcolonial lawmakers, as well as its most contemporary ones, have developed parliamentary rituals and ceremonies which reflect a double, mixed heritage. Not only were most basic parliamentary norms and rituals inherited from Britain's Westminster model. But many a symbol, artifact and ritualistic performance observed in, and by, Myanmar's successive post-1948 parliaments, including the most recent one shaped after the 2010 elections, have also pointed out to the cultural creativity, nationalist legacies and political agendas of the country's ruling elites. I focus in this paper on four rituals and symbols commonly examined by the scholarship on parliamentary rituals and their political significance. First, the peculiar architecture and internal layout of Myanmar's successive Union parliaments. Second, the ritualistic oath of allegiance, which new members of parliament are expected to take before joining the assembly. Third, the ceremonial spectacle marking the

opening of the daily parliamentary session, which involves a codified ritual of mace-bearing by a sergeant-at-arms. Fourth, the code of dress and the politics of clothing performed by Burmese legislators.

WINNING ELECTORAL SUPPORT FROM ETHNIC COMMUNITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL PARTIES FROM BURMA'S 2015 ELECTIONS

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Until now, Burma is still an ethnically-divided society with weak civic institutions in transition away from military dictatorship. Thus, the general elections in 2015 was expected to give rise to ethnic and religious cleavages that defined most political parties. However, the elections proceeded relatively peacefully with a resounding victory for the nationwide pro-democratic party of National League for Democracy across many ethnic constituencies. What explained the NLD's predominance at the polls? A widely accepted explanation attributes NLD's victory to its success in persuading ethnic voters to vote strategically. Accordingly, even though the NLD might not be their number one choice, they should still vote for Aung San Suu Kyi's party since it was the only viable force that could defeat the ruling party, USDP. Nonetheless, a closer look at the NLD's performance shows variations of electoral support among the ethnic communities. How do we account for variations in the effect of the NLD's campaigning rhetoric? As for ethnic parties, why did some parties perform better than the others in their supposed "home" regions? Using the 2015 electoral and socio-economic data from 323 ethnic constituencies, the paper tests different hypotheses that attribute variance in ethnic votes to dynamics of ethno-nationalist conflicts or incumbents' performances in community development. The results show that voters were not easily impressed by ethno-nationalist or vague political rhetoric, but took into account other heuristics while forming opinions about political parties. These results are further confirmed by qualitative interviews with community leaders and civil society in various ethnic states. By offering explanations for these phenomena, I hope to generate useful policy implications for political actors working to consolidate democracy in Burma and in other multi-ethnic societies.

PANEL TWENTY EIGHT: Assessing Burma's Armed Conflicts

Hunt Room

BEYOND RANGOON AND THE 1962 COUP: A DECENTERED APPROACH TO ARMED CONFLICTS IN BURMA

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The history and dynamics of Burma/Myanmar's armed conflicts are undoubtedly complex. It has experienced one of the world's longest– if not the longest – running civil war in the post-World War Two period. Within months after achieving independence from the British in 1948, the fighting broke out. It continues to present. Despite ongoing peace process, new armed groups have emerged. These include the Arakan Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army. This paper addresses the following questions: How do we account the historical patterns of the outbreak of armed resistance at different times and in different places? Why does it matter? A conventional approach to understanding the emergence of armed conflict in Burma/Myanmar points to the role of the military rule and conceptualizes the issue through an ethnic politics framework. The goals of this paper are to show the limitations of these perspectives in accounting for the onset of armed conflicts and emphasize the importance of taking into account local dynamics to examine "ethnic politics." It does so by advancing an approach that is decentered and plays close attention to the localized factors that account for the onset of armed conflicts. By focusing on the early periods of ethnic conflict, it points out the shortcomings of a state-centric analysis that emphasizes the roles played by the ruptures in the national level political systems and the subsequent authoritarian turn in accounting for the mobilization of armed resistance against the state.

FUELING RESISTANCE AND REBEL RECRUITMENT: NARRATIVES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BURMA'S CIVIL WAR

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Narratives of ethnic resistance in Burma/Myanmar often invoke denied justice and political aspirations, either independence or federalism, as drivers of rebellion. Other perspectives frame conflict as competition over resources and markets. This paper seeks to move beyond the now discredited 'greed vs grievance' debate and look instead at actual patterns of abuses against the civilian population by state and non-state forces during Burma's civil conflict and how insurgent groups and their civil society support base appeal to their own constituents and the international community for support. This paper first overviews historical narratives of insurgent grievances over the long civil war, particularly in Karen State during the 1980s-1990s. It then outlines

key contemporary narratives of abuses in the conflicts in Kachin State and Shan State since 2011, and how these narratives work to appeal to internal loyalty and support for insurgents, and internationally appeal to human rights norms to seek legitimacy and material assistance. Often these narratives amplify government abusive behavior and underplay, or actively obscure, insurgent abusive behavior. It concludes with a critique of Burma's nascent peace process and its marginalization of human rights concerns as drivers of continued resistance and social support for continued resistance.

GEOGRAPHIES OF MICRO-POLITICS IN KACHIN STATE: WAR, DISPLACEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT

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War, much like post-conflict development that follows, is an entirely messy affair, but for reasons often discounted. This empirical field research study critically examines post-conflict resettlement and development in Kachin State through the analytics of spatially-explicit geographies of micro-politics. Since the first ceasefire with the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) and army (KIA) in 1994, populations have been rebuilding their agrarian livelihoods in their old villages under the KIO, and in new road-side settlements known as "sut see ywa" that are jointly developed by the Myanmar military's *NaTaLa* with the KIO. Since war resumed in 2011 against the KIA, villagers once again have been displaced and living as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps scattered throughout Kachin areas, still waiting to return. Which villages IDPs fled from, and the human and land tenure security situation in those villages since fleeing, reflects the nature of village-specific armed politics and degrees of military-state building achieved during the ceasefire period. Data on the political geographies of (re-)settlement is based on a six month study in 2015 in seven Kachin IDP camps in both government and KIO controlled territories in Kachin State, together with key informant interviews. Qualitative data reveals that the "sut see ywa" road-side settlements originally established after the ceasefire have experienced greater degrees of military-state administration and governance and associated forms of state-backed corruption, which explains their high incidences of land and resource grabs during both the ceasefire period and since war has resumed. Older settlements nestled in the higher remote highlands beyond the reach of the state, Tatmadaw and businessmen, however, have mostly escaped land rights abuses during the ceasefire period, yet are now caught within the frontline of the war as the very territory being fought over to expand the edge of military-state power. A settlement's particular political geography, agro-ecology, ethnicity and history have been found to be instrumental factors in explaining the geographically varied expressions of armed political control and related land and resource governance dynamics. This paper thus speaks to the importance of micro-politics and multiple scales in dynamic armed conflict zones played out in an evolving political territorial mosaic, and raises important critical questions about the role of the state, armed groups and non-government organizations in post-conflict development.

ARMED POLITICS IN BURMA/MYANMAR AND BEYOND

Paul Staniland

Scholars traditionally contrast civil war to civil peace. But in many parts of the world, states and armed groups interact in much more complex ways that blend conflict and cooperation. Burma/Myanmar since 1989 has experienced numerous distinct "armed orders." This paper explores the patterns of armed order in Burma/Myanmar, introducing new data on ceasefires, group emergence and collapse, and combat to map the trajectories of violence on the country's armed peripheries.

PANEL TWENTY NINE: Reconstruction, Social Transformation and Development

Regency Room

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF WORLD WAR II IN BURMA

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The devastation of World War II in Burma has been recorded in many ways, but there has been no overview of its environmental impacts. Immediate environmental damage and longer-term land use changes resulted from the Japanese invasion, the mass flight of Burmese, Indian and British refugees to India by the Arakan coast and northwestward into Assam. The British-Chinese-American counter-campaigns along the Burma and Ledo Roads and the bloody Japanese retreat left detritus strewn across the landscape. In Lower Burma the intensively managed rice ecosystem was badly disrupted, but its productivity recovered in the years after independence. In the teak forests farther north, when management of the groves collapsed, the plantations suffered severe damage from both Japanese and local loggers. In Upper Burma fighters and refugees slashed bloody scars through the forest. The legacy of the war saw variable social and ecological recovery in many regions. In the north natural regeneration gradually healed the forest cover, though some transport routes carved in wartime remained. The military operations of the Kachins and other minorities set the stage for post-independence ethnic struggles and the concomitant environmental damage that resulted from insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. It is less clear what disruption of land use happened along the Arakan coast, though this was intimately related to the intensified ethnic tensions of the war years that come down to today.

THE NAMSANG RESETTLEMENT PLAN: INTEGRATED RURAL/REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS FRONTIER TERRITORIAL POLITICS IN 1950S BURMA

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At the end of the 1950s the government of Burma was interested in regional rural development through the resettlement of veteran soldiers. Established diplomatic relations with the state of Israel has led to exchange of strategy and arms, utilizing Israel's nation building expertise in spatial territoriality and rural settlement. On his weeklong visit to Israel in 1955, the Burmese Prime Minister U Nu said, "I believe life in the Kibbutz could be established also in Burma…I admire how efficiently it has changed the country". The first experiment of integrated rural/regional development was the Namsang resettlement plan. Coordinated by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the IDF and the Settlement Division of the Jewish Agency, the plan utilized Israeli expertise in agriculture development and settlement in arid areas. Its fundamental model was frontier cooperative settlements (Moshavim), as spelled out by Golda Meir, Israeli Foreign Minister, who following a visit in Burma on February 1962, wrote "they took from us the idea of people being farmers and at the same time defending themselves. I suggested the Burmese establish their own periphery settlements. I suggested that they send veterans Burmese soldiers and their families to work in Kibbutzim for about a year as we send Israelis to Burma to help plan Moshavim Burmese style." Based on archival material contextualized in place and time, the paper explores the Namsang resettlement plan. Looking at this transnational professional exchange it asks who was resettled in Namsang, why and for what reason. Were the settlers government favorites, or were they moved to rural areas for political reasons, to be better controlled and monitored?

PANEL THIRTY: Traditions and Challenges: Exploring Religious Communities through Narrative

Capitol North

FROM TEXTILES TO CHALK TO PROPERTY: A SURTI MUSLIM ENTREPRENEUR AFTER NE WIN

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This paper tells the story of Aung Kyaw and his entrepreneurial success as a downtown Yangon property developer. Through Aung Kyaw's life, we trace the collective experiences of a Surti Muslim community in downtown Yangon from the Ne Win period through the SLORC and SPDC to the present. Aung Kyaw's relationship with the tight-knit, endogamous Surti Muslim community in Yangon allowed him to rise as a go-between or broker between Surti families scarred by their experience of the 1960s, and the post-Ne Win state.

Through his life story and the story of his business, this paper explores the tumult of 1962-64, the fear amongst the community during the Ne Win period, the targeting of "foreign" property by the SLORC and SPDC, and contemporary anti-Muslim rhetoric. This paper teases out oft-held stereotypes and speculations about Muslim entrepreneurial success and property ownership in downtown Yangon, examining the role of close community networks in developing and registering property. Aung Kyaw's story allows for alternative narratives of community agency and resilience in response to the threat of property confiscation, and demonstrates the importance of close ties through ethnic and religious communities when it comes to property relations.

MOBILE BUDDHISTS FROM THE MARGINS: COSMOPOLITAN INTERACTIONS IN COLONIAL YANGON

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Looking at migrants, merchants and monks from smaller seaports in Burma, this paper offers a series of composite life stories of what we can know of plebeian Buddhists arriving in Yangon in the early years of the 20th century. In contrast to the highly organized Buddhist lay associations, later nationalist movements, and monastic and meditation movements, the lives of these Buddhists demonstrate the Buddhism was not always a force to consolidate a central or hegemonic identity or to carry out projects of (anti) colonial governmentality, but instead facilitated movement, migration and fluid cosmopolitan interactions across boundaries of religion, ethnicity and regional origin.

TALKING TRANSITION: SPIRITUAL, SPECTRAL, AND SPECULATIVE NARRATIVES OF SOUTHERN SHAN STATE

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This paper analyzes widely-circulated narratives—whether spiritual, spectral, or speculative—that have emerged as a part of broader claims made to land in southern Shan state. Discourses linked to spatial control have long been central to encounters between ethnic minority populations and authorities—from colonial era efforts to "pacify" the ethnic "frontiers," to post-independence strategies of territorial control, to ongoing policies of "Burman-izing" ethnic place-names. However, in recent years, the language used to legitimize spatial claims-making has shifted, with numerous ethnic minority communities claiming land—and its associated histories—on their own terms. This paper looks at the stories through which such claims are made and sustained, taking account of the ways in which narratives of spiritual entities and religious figures—of nats and monks, for instance—intertwine with this-worldly stories of international conspiracies, political maneuvering, and resource extraction in the peripheries.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

PANEL THIRTY ONE: Democratic Transition and Ethno-Religious Minorities in Myanmar

Sandburg Auditorium

DEMOCRACY AND SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS: CHINESE INDONESIAN AND BURMESE MUSLIMS IN POST-TRANSITION MYANMAR AND INDONESIA

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Why do some formerly excluded minorities do better than others in post-authoritarian contexts? Chinese Indonesians and Burmese Muslims are similar on a number of points: both were brought-in by a colonial power, came to occupy a privileged economic position, were seen as alien by the indigenous population (kalar, orang cina), faced extensive state discrimination, and were targets of deadly riots during the transitional period. Since the democratic transition, however, there is a growing tolerance of Chinese identity in Indonesia and - in contrast - a growing intolerance of Muslim identity in Myanmar. What explains these divergent outcomes? Initially, actors of the former regime have incentives to foment anti-minority violence because it distracts people away from the regime's wrongdoings. Then, however, two important factors explain the divergent attitudes: whether the minority is an electoral threat or potential asset for the competing parties; and whether the minority has economic ties with members of the former regime. In Myanmar, Muslims were seen as an electoral threat to the USDP and had little economic ties with the military; in Indonesia, Chinese were seen as a source of electoral support for more than one dominant party (e.g. PDI, PKB, Golkar) and had extensive economic ties with members of the former regime. These two factors explain whether politicians have incentives to build durable alliances with majority religious fundamentalist groups or not; and the extent to which the situation of minorities are likely to improve or worsen in post-transition context.

DEMOCRACY, ETHNICITY, AND CONVERGING AREAS OF AUTHORITY IN CONTEMPORARY MYANMAR

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This paper sheds light on expanded political spaces that have allowed political parties and civil societal activists to lobby for activities that acknowledge and promote the culture and political autonomy of minority ethnic, and analyzes the possibility of convergence between the administrative and legislative powers delegated to central and regional governments and those exercised in the past by armed resistance groups in the democratic

consolidation period. By the end of 2014 two evolving trends had emerged in Myanmar, pushing for the recognition of ethnic rights and greater autonomy at sub-national levels. The primary arena for these reforms is parliament and the governmental system, and is manifested in terms of expanded space for minority cultural activities and a push for laws which include the devolution of power. Other activity takes place outside the parliament, and stems from negotiations with non-state armed organizations, most of which went underground during the independence era to fight for greater autonomy and independence. Negotiating for the future shape of Myanmar's various territories and the powers to be enjoyed by its sub-national units will hinge on the degree of convergence achieved by agreements made within parliament and those concluded outside of the parliamentary framework. This paper highlights and assesses some of these unresolved issues that have been unfolded in the period of democratization in Myanmar.

ETHNIC ARMED GROUPS AND THE "NATIONAL" CEASE-FIRE: CONVERGING INTERESTS?

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After sixty years of civil war, fatigue set in. Both the Myanmar state and armed groups reached an impasse as neither could completely eliminate the other. The paper argues that democratization has enabled the creation of an institutional framework that made possible some compromises to end violent conflict. Diverging from other similar cases, Myanmar has been able to do so in the absence of international mediation or intervention. The cease-fire has been a precondition for seeking any alternative solution to the political accommodation of ethnic minorities. Yet, there have been important obstacles. First, there are several armed groups, representing a number of different ethnic minorities. Second, armed groups have varied in terms of size, legitimacy among their respective minority groups, as well as cohesiveness. Third, some groups signed bilateral cease-fire agreements in the past, and enjoyed a degree of autonomy and territorial control that they are reluctant to relinquish. Fourth, segments of Myanmar's armed forces have benefitted from war and, sometimes, informal deals with armed groups to pursue informal resource extraction. The paper questions the extent to which negotiations toward a "national" cease-fire represents a convergence of interest, and raises potential obstacles ahead in the search for a political solution.

ETHNIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND ARMED CONFLICT IN BURMA

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This work examines the roles of ethnic women's organizations in armed conflict in Burma. Much work on women's organizations focus on their role as advocates for mothers and children and emphasize the role of women in peacebuilding. Increasingly, however, scholars are turning their attention to the role of women in armed conflict as combatants, direct supporters of armed groups, and promoters of nationalist ideologies underlying conflict. This project considers the case of the Karen Women's Organization to argue that ethnic

women's organizations function in all of these roles and that the particular terms of their work are shaped by ideals of ethnic identity and womanhood. Based on qualitative research conducted primarily on the Thailand-Burma border, this work finds that women's organizations serve as key players in ethnic armed conflict in Burma and in borderland politics, with a role that is only becoming more significant as ceasefire negotiations continue. This paper concludes by considering the possibilities of the role of these groups for meaningful conflict resolution in Burma.

PANEL THIRTY TWO: On the Margins: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in Burma/Myanmar

Ellington's

IDENTITY FORMATION AND DECOLONIZATION: THE POLITICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF ANGLO-BURMAN IDENTITIES IN THE 1940S

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Of the many effects of European colonization in Asia, mixed race populations that would not have existed without imperialists are a critical consequence. While the offspring of European colonists and native populations have been given various names over time — including Eurasian, metis, or half-caste — scholars have realized the importance of studying the effects these groups have had throughout the European empires. Even though the examination of mixed race populations in Asia is a growing field, studies of Anglo-Burmans have been largely excluded. Therefore, this paper will examine how this relatively small population, in the twentieth century, defined their own community in conjunction with, or opposition to, other populations they lived with. Since they were largely employed within the government, and contributed to British redefinitions of ethnicity, they are a critical population to examine. Being unable to claim full European or Burmese heritage, this paper examines how this marginalized population manipulated their identities in order to garner a sense of security and stability.

WOMEN IN THE RANGOON LUNATIC ASYLUM, 1875 – 1935

Trude Jacobsen

In 1871, an establishment for mentally disturbed persons in Rangoon was built on St John’s Road, some fifty years after the annexation of Lower Burma by the British. A small but significant proportion of the patients in the Rangoon Lunatic Asylum, as it was known until the 1930s, were women. Inasmuch as the treatment of mental illness can reveal much about attitudes toward race and class, so too can it shed light on the history of gender interactions and assumptions in the colonial context. This paper uses the reports of the Rangoon Lunatic Asylum to discuss the particular experiences of women – Burman, Shan, Mon, and Karen as well as European

and Anglo-Burman – receiving treatment for mental illness in British Burma and presents statistical analyses of diagnoses juxtaposed against notions of race and class.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS: MYANMAR'S RECENT ELECTIONS AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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Myanmar's recent elections have been credited with a myriad of changes within the country. Much has been written about the changing political climate within Myanmar. However, one topic which has not yet been discussed adequately is the role of Burmese women in the country's recent elections. This paper seeks to examine women's political participation in Myanmar's recent move towards democratization. By analyzing rates of female candidacies in the 2010, 2012, and 2015 Burmese elections and conducting surveys with Burmese citizens about their views towards women's role in politics and running for office themselves, this paper will contribute to an absence of scholarship regarding the role of women in new democracies.

PANEL THIRTY THREE: Disease, Public Health and Policy

Hunt Room

HEALTH SYSTEM CONVERGENCE TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE, PRIMARY HEALTH SYSTEM IN BURMA: PERSPECTIVES OF ETHNIC AND COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS (ECHOS) OF EASTERN BURMA

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Burma's health system ranks among the world's worst-performing, a consequence of long-standing military mismanagement, disinvestment, and human rights abuses, which have had deleterious impacts on access to health services. Conflict-affected communities of eastern Burma have responded, developing their own health system independently of Burma's centralized system to realize their right to health, operating a network which covers over 500,000 internally displaced persons. ECHOs also operate their own standardized health information and educational tailored to the specific needs of their communities. Significant changes have occurred since 2011, including increasing government resources for health, ceasefires between the tatmadaw and many ethnic armed organizations, and the initiation of limited collaborations between the central health authorities and ECHOs. These changes have prompted in increasing discussions regarding the possibility of a convergence between these two disparate health programs into a coherent, primary health system. These discussions were given further impetus with the NLD's prioritization of health, particularly for "remote and

hard-to-reach ethnic areas" and their goal to achieve universal health coverage by 2030. Yet numerous challenges remain to realizing this, particularly given the ambiguities and competing models of health convergence. This paper will summarize recent efforts towards health convergence and will outline the model proposed by ECHOs of eastern Burma, a perspective rooted in the decentralized, federal union their communities have long aspired to. The paper will also discuss the major challenges and potential pitfalls that await the NLD government in realizing a convergence between these two systems given its ethnic, political, and social limitations.

WHY RECOGNITION MATTERS? HEALTH AID PARTNERSHIP ACROSS THE MYANMAR-CHINA BORDER

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Inspired by the binary relationship between Hegel's Master and Slave, and Fanon's White and Black, I am exploring a more complicated story of recognition among multiple actors of cross-border health aid between China and Myanmar. The Kachin and Shan, Health Poverty Action (HPA), Chinese government and Myanmar government make a four-lateral relation of mutual recognition, rather than a bilateral one. With four-year work experience at HPA in Kachin State, I have observed and conducted interviews how things go on among these multiple actors who complicate each other's interests and desires. On one hand, these ethnic groups sought for human dignity and aid living in such a neglected conflict area from HPA, China and international attention. Their recognition from HPA was first mediated by the Chinese government, and their recognition from China is further complicated by the fact that people are historically and culturally related along the border. On the other hand, they also attempt to ask for existential diversity through solidarizing their ethnicity in health aid partnership. The Kachin and Shan prefer HPA than China because it works at ground and reaches to remote areas, which increases their status via the recognition of particularity in the daily experience of partnership. With the addition of Myanmar government, it will not be unproblematic unless those ethnic groups attain their status in nationwide social life. It is a question of recognition, relationality, and human diversity, and the story of seeking recognition will be full of expectations and challenges under the democratic Myanmar.

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY RENDITION TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY PROFESSIONAL CHIN-HAKHA <> ENGLISH INTERPRETERS

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Community interpreting (CI) is increasingly a significant field of professional practice and academic research interest. In general, CI is a form of interpreting practice defined as interpreting undertaken in consecutive mode in public service and welfare settings. There are few existing medical interpreting studies in English that address lexical challenges. Specifically, there are no studies in English that address the lexical challenges encountered by community interpreters from Burma, in particular, Chin-Hakha language interpreters. Chin-Hakha is one of

the dialects widely spoken in the Chin State of Burma and in Chin diasporas around the world (Australia, USA, Canada, Malaysia, India etc.). For Chin-Hakha interpreters, the main challenge of interpreting in a medical setting is that some medical terminology does not exist or have a lexical equivalent in Chin-Hakha. Medical terminology relates to specific concepts with specialised meanings. However, interpreting is a verbal communication activity characterised by one-the-spot decisions in highly fluid situations: it is immediate, oral, and heavily dependent on memory. For this reason, what really happens in practice is extremely significant as it is the basis for individual decisions relating to health and health care. This paper discussed the extent to which Chin-Hakha interpreters explain or paraphrase medical terminology in medical interpreting when medical words and concepts are absent in the target language. It considers the distance they move from the source language (English) in interpreting practice and the accuracy of their resulting interpretations, accompanied by a consideration of the potential implications.

ROUNDTABLE

Sponsored by Asia Foundation:

"Prospects for Reform in Myanmar: Challenges and Opportunities."

Sandburg Auditorium

Chair: John Brandon (Senior Director, Asia Foundation's International Relations Program)

Dr. Nyo Nyo Thinn (Founder, Yangon Watch)
Dr. Khin Zaw Win (Director ,Tampadipa Institute)
Kyaw Zaw Moe (Editor, The Irrawaddy)

Discussant: David Steinberg (Professor Emeritus, Georgetown University)