Burma Redux

Global Justice and the Quest for Political Reform in Myanmar

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Introduction

For nearly 25 years since a brief eruption of mass pro-democracy protests in the middle months of 1988, Myanmar has been governed by an entrenched military machine that centralizes power, enforces rigid control, projects an abrasive nationalism, wages war on its own people, commits widespread human rights abuse, fosters systemic corruption, enriches itself and its associates, and drastically curtails the life chances of the vast majority of its citizens. For more than a quarter-century before that, from 1962 to 1988, the country then known as Burma was ruled by an autocratic regime installed by military coup and dominated by a xenophobic and quixotic general who first sketched the pattern of harsh repression that continues to this day. For 18 months before that, from 1958 to 1960, the state had a fleeting experience of praetorian politics under a caretaker government led by the same top general. In six and a half decades since the collapse of British colonialism in 1948 there have been occasional brushes with democracy, including a tightly managed 2010 election designed to attach a flimsy civilian façade to an inflexible garrison state. Mostly, however, grinding authoritarianism with a stern martial stamp has been the daily reality in this Texas-sized Southeast Asian country of, currently, 55–60 million citizens.[1]

By and large, the record of military supremacy has been abysmal. Unlike other Asian despotisms, notably South Korea and Taiwan for three decades to the late 1980s and China and Vietnam today, the country has not witnessed an economic miracle under its oppressors.[2] Rather, it has endured relative and even absolute decline, and a strategic state sandwiched between India and China and blessed with extensive natural resources and a wealth of additional advantages has seen its economy fall prey to predatory racketeering devised by leading generals and replicated by their friends and enemies. The social impacts of martial law have been mainly devastating, and with human security routinely at desperately low levels Myanmar today finds itself at the

wrong end of most global rankings. As a result, the vibrancy, vigor and hope found in booming parts of the region are often attenuated or absent here. Furthermore, stretching across almost all of the period since independence, episodic and increasingly peripheral civil war has taken tens of thousands of lives and destroyed countless communities.[3] Minority ethnic nationalities living chiefly in hill country surrounding Myanmar's large central plain and intricate southern delta, and collectively making up about one third of the total population, have suffered in particular at the hands of generals determined to impose a narrow and constraining vision of national unity on the diverse population they command.[4] Chased from their homes and forced off their land, millions are now internally displaced, living as border-zone refugees and migrants, or resettled in distant parts of a growing diaspora.

As the 2000s gave way to the 2010s, a measure of political renewal passed through the country when military rulers choreographed a step-by-step transition to "discipline-flourishing democracy." An election of sorts was held in November 2010, parliament convened in January 2011, fresh executive positions were filled in February, and the junta created close to a quarter-century earlier was formally dissolved in March.[5] Sealing this final move, paramount leader Senior General Than Shwe ceded power to a new civilian government headed by President Thein Sein. However, since every part of the 2011 polity was controlled by individuals from or close to the outgoing regime, and since Than Shwe himself remained a key figure behind the scenes, it was hard to see what had changed.[6] Moreover, even after this flurry of institutional renovation critical issues long dominating national politics remained largely unaddressed. Some relate to the role of the democratic movement animated by opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, but also stretching beyond her influence as additional forces surface to contest austere military rule. Others concern a patchwork of ethnic nationality groups and their varying demands for autonomy. Still others focus on modernization strategies for a decrepit state, economy and society. At a time of both ongoing military rule and some structural reform, the pathways that might one day be threaded through this fractured political landscape are therefore anything but visible.[7]

Viewed from outside in an age of bracing and often unforeseen popular challenge to entrenched despotism in disparate parts of the world, the sense that real change must one day come to Myanmar nevertheless remains palpable. Indeed, in a post-Cold War era of humanitarian engagement driven by generic notions of global justice, this problematic state has for years looked to be a prime candidate for political reform, and the main task facing the rest of the world has long seemed crystal clear: helping to make it happen.

Put very broadly, that is the line taken by this book. The core aim here is to identify practical ways for foreigners motivated by mandates of global justice to facilitate real institutional change inside the country and return it to the path of democracy and diversity envisaged at independence in 1948, pursued for most of the 14 years down to General Ne Win's 1962 coup, glimpsed for several weeks in 1988 when large masses of people rose in revolt against authoritarianism, and present today in the hearts, minds and acts of many citizens.

At the same time, however, the book seeks to situate itself solidly in reality, acknowledging that colonialism had negative impacts on a subject people, that actually existing democracy for most of the long 1950s was fractious and fragile, that military control since the early 1960s has been powerfully and pervasively oppressive, that an adequate settlement between distinct ethnic communities remains a distant prospect, and that reform proposals floated by political leaders across the political spectrum are multiple and contradictory. Surveying the scene in 2006, Thant Myint-U, expatriate grandson of former United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, accepted that the country had become a "poster child" for "nightmarish twenty-first century ills."[8] In a lyrical account blending personal and national histories, the points he sought to stress though were that more needs to be said, that this is a far more complex state than most public discourse will allow, and that patient efforts to understand it must be made.

Still more importantly, the book recognizes that Myanmar's future course can be set by nobody other than Myanmar citizens, and in examining potential roles for outsiders seeks above all to develop strategies that empower local people to realize their hopes for change. Returning to public life in November 2010 after many years of enforced silence through house arrest, Aung San Suu Kyi had much to say to her compatriots and the wider world. However, her central message picked up on an argument made throughout her political career: that nothing can be achieved without active participation across society.[9] When regular citizens are given a chance to speak, they too emphasize the need for foreigners to work with and through individuals currently living inside the country. Interviewed in 2008, a staff member from a local organization focusing on gender and women's rights noted that "Many people talk of women as being victims but they have agency."[10] The point also applies to much global engagement with Myanmar. While outsiders are right to point to widespread suffering at the hands of an obdurate and rapacious military machine, they must also accept that people throughout the land are determined to shape their own destinies.

To the extent possible for an analysis written by a foreigner, and perhaps likely to be read mainly by foreigners, this book thus attempts first and foremost to get to grips with the many challenges confronting contemporary Myanmar. Only thereafter does it move to consider the demands of global justice, and the contribution outsiders prepared to acknowledge its mandates might make to domestic political reform. To this end, it focuses particularly on means by which indigenous preferences might be articulated, grassroots leadership enhanced, and the sphere of local politics expanded. Alongside a commitment to principled foreign engagement thus stands a dual insistence that outsiders willing to perform duties of global justice take a deep rather than surface interest in Myanmar, and never lose sight of local agency. On the rare but important occasions that listening projects are undertaken inside the country, they routinely transmit this kind of message. Asked in 2009 what he wanted from the international community, a middle-aged Kayah man gave this response: "Come and be in our place. Feel it and help us."[11] This modest injunction has major implications for all outsiders seeking to get involved with Myanmar, and must be fully heard, appropriately weighed and duly respected by any proponent of cross-border action informed by often abstract notions of justice. It stands as something of a direction marker for this book.

Before turning in its second half to debates about global justice and what it calls interactive intervention animated by constructive transnational partnerships for political reform, the book thus explores in its first half the situation in which Myanmar citizens currently find themselves. In such a layered and labyrinthine case, indeed in any case, this is a necessary basis for examination of means by which foreigners might reach across a recognized international frontier to facilitate political change. To get to that first main part and establish a context for analysis of a far away country about which outsiders typically know little, this introductory chapter looks at controversy surrounding its name, ways in which the current reality inside its borders might be framed, means by which its politics might be examined, and initial possibilities for rebuilding from the ruinous state that is Myanmar a place that might properly be called Burma.

Naming a nation

A standard starting point for debate, whether explicit or implicit, is a dispute about the name of the country that opened in the middle months of 1989 and continues to this day.[12] It can be traced notably to Law No. 15/89, issued on June 18, 1989, which decreed that "The expression 'Union of Burma' and

the expression 'Burma' or 'Burman' or 'Burmese' contained in the existing laws enacted in the English language shall be substituted by the expressions 'Union of Myanmar' and 'Myanmar' respectively."[13] In parallel, Notification No. 5/89 provided a brief list of new names for nationalities, states, divisions, cities and rivers across the land. Order No. 2/89 held that "since the term 'Bamar' used in the National Anthem of the Union of Myanmar refers only to the 'Bamar nationality,' it has been replaced with 'Myanmar' to refer to all the nationalities."[14] The quarrel unleashed by these edicts is an appropriate place to begin this analysis.

One feature worth noting at the outset is that the decrees affected peoples and places known to the outside world chiefly through colonialism. Indeed, it was largely because something had been lost in transliteration that changes in English terminology were deemed necessary in June 1989. The city the British called Rangoon, bureaucratic heart of their Burma and first capital of the postcolonial nation, was thus renamed Yangon to reflect local pronunciation as faithfully as possible. The Irrawaddy River, cast by Rudyard Kipling in 1890 as an imperial road to Mandalay, became the Ayeyawady.[15] Maymyo, a hill station named in 1887 for Colonel James May and frequented by colonial officials, entrepreneurs and traders as refuge from monsoon heat and humidity in Burma's central plain, became Pyin Oo Lwin. To the east, Karen State, lodged on the border with Thailand and fiercely loyal to Britain in the Second World War, became Kayin State. Its administrative capital switched its spelling from Pa-an to the aspirated Hpa-an. To the south in Mon State, port city and governance center Moulmein, setting in 1926 for George Orwell's shooting of an elephant, became Mawlamyine.[16] In these many ways, the Burma captured in stages by Britain through wars fought in 1824–26, 1852 and 1885, and ruled as part of the Empire on which the sun never set to 1948 save only for three years of Japanese control from 1942 to 1945, became a rather unfamiliar place to outsiders.

In principle there was little wrong with that, for it is hard to object to local people devising a set of changes designed to improve the mapping of English to indigenous usage. Indeed, in the context of postcolonial Asia such exercises have taken place repeatedly, and rarely have they generated sustained criticism. Among former British possessions alone, parts of India have experienced parallel revisions since independence in 1947, with colonial Bombay, Madras and Calcutta all taking new names as Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata between 1995 and 2000. Changes have also been made in Bangladesh (itself East Pakistan until independence in 1971), Malaysia (Malaya until a set of 1965 reforms), and Sri Lanka (Ceylon until 1972). Elsewhere, a

classic instance is the switch from Peking to Beijing mandated by China's adoption of the *pinyin* transliteration system in 1958. Although Beijing was rarely used by people speaking and writing in English during the early years of Communist rule, it became common linguistic currency from the 1980s onward as Chinese leaders promoted it more insistently. Other than in fixed historical contexts, such as Peking University in Beijing or Peking Road in Hong Kong, it is now the standard term across the English-speaking world, and Peking strikes a jarring note. Guangzhou (Canton), Nanjing (Nanking) and Tianjin (Tientsin) are also approved contemporary usages.

In the Myanmar case, however, objections to the name changes soon surfaced, though at the time the foreign press displayed little interest. In the United Kingdom, for instance, *The Times* took three days to report the news and on June 21 ran only a 20-word item supplied by the Reuters office in Bangkok. In the United States, *The New York Times* carried a 100-word piece from the Associated Press one day earlier, on June 20. In Hong Kong, Britain's last Asian colony, the *South China Morning Post* also mentioned the change from Burma to Myanmar on June 20. Tellingly, it buried the item at the end of a story on political talks between regime officials and student leaders: "Meanwhile, the country officially changed its name in English yesterday."[17] With the passage of time, however, this early indifference became atypical as varying degrees of opposition took root.

One challenge was technical. Containing only two linguists among more than 20 members and convening for no more than a few weeks, the Commission of Inquiry into the True Naming of Myanmar was widely held to have done a poor job. On the headline issue of country name, for example, several criticisms surfaced. One was that Myanmah would be a better English rendition than Myanmar, as it would more successfully generate the soft tonal ending found in the indigenous language.[18] Another was that Myanma was preferable, and that the "r" added to produce a final long "a" sound was ineffectual outside southern British English. In the wake of the changes, and indeed for some years thereafter, academic articles from a wide range of disciplines and on an eclectic mix of topics devoted lengthy footnotes to technical flaws in the new transliterations.

Ultimately, however, the greater challenge was political. At base, this focused on naming rights for a composite country that in 1948 gained independence as a functioning democracy with explicit protections for at least some minority groups, but in 1989 was subject to martial law. Many noted that when formed by military leaders on September 18, 1988, precisely nine months prior to release of the name changes, the State Law and

Order Restoration Council had pledged to be no more than temporary. The *tatmadaw*, or defense service, Chairman General Saw Maung declared, had "no desire to hold on to state power for a prolonged period."[19] Rather, the junta intended to stabilize the polity and then sponsor a transition to fully elected government. Its first decree, issued as Declaration No. 1/88 on its initial day in control, thus set out four objectives: first, maintain law and order; second, provide secure and smooth transportation; third, ease the material needs of the people; and fourth, once all the other measures were complete, oversee multiparty democratic general elections. On September 21, it followed up by promulgating Law No. 1/88 to set the stage for nationwide polls. On September 27, it issued Law No. 4/88 to permit political parties to register. In this transitional setting leading to a planned election, many felt SLORC had no mandate to change English names across the country.

This critique was reinforced by evidence of widespread repression undertaken by SLORC both before and after its renaming exercise. Declaration No. 2/88, also issued on its first day, placed major constraints on civil liberties, declaring that "Congregating, walking, marching in procession, chanting slogans, delivering speeches, agitating and creating disturbances on the streets by a group of more than five people is banned regardless of whether the act is with the intention of creating disturbances or committing a crime or not."[20] Notification No. 8/88, issued on October 10, 1988, imposed strict limits on political parties, notably restricting their ability to address issues relating to the *tatmadaw*. Martial Law Order Nos. 1/89 and 2/89, promulgated on July 17–18, 1989, authorized the Yangon and the Central and Northwest Military Commands to conduct summary trials and executions. Within three months, 100 people had been sentenced to death.[21] On July 20, Aung San Suu Kyi and other top opposition figures were detained under house arrest.

Objections deepened still further when SLORC eventually allowed a reasonably free and fair general election to take place on May 27, 1990, but then tightened its stranglehold on power when the opposition won in a landslide. In a stunning result, the National League for Democracy took some 60 percent of the national vote, 80 percent of the parliamentary seats, and 90 percent of the seats for which it stood candidates. Even military towns voted NLD in large numbers. By contrast, the National Unity Party and its allies, widely seen as close to the generals, won little more than 20 percent of the vote and 2 percent of the seats.[22] Faced with this unexpected outcome from a poll in which more than 200 political parties initially surfaced to compete for votes, the junta again exhibited its repressive instincts. Rather than transfer power to the NLD and deliver on the undertaking given in 1988, or even set

up the constitutional convention to which military leaders pointed toward the end of a campaign evidently not going to plan, SLORC proceeded as if little had changed.[23] In Declaration No. 1/90, issued on July 27 by Secretary-1 and Military Intelligence chief General Khin Nyunt, it insisted that it was "not an organization that observes any constitution." Rather, it was common knowledge that SLORC was "governing the nation as a military government and that it is a government that has been accepted as such by the United Nations and the respective nations of the world."[24] The junta amplified this response by reasserting harsh control, notably through harassment, imprisonment and sometimes torture of opposition leaders, many of whom had won seats in the general election.

In this context, a set of name changes always viewed with skepticism around the globe came to symbolize the brutal rule of a military machine that brazenly ignored the will of the people and persisted for years thereafter in centralizing power within a tight elite. Inside the country, the NLD long argued that any changes must be endorsed by an elected legislature, specifically the parliament chosen by the people in May 1990, and many other opposition figures supported this position. Leaders of minority ethnic nationalities also questioned the imposition of fresh English transliterations derived from the language of the dominant ethnic group, and mainly resolved to stick with colonial usage for both their territories and the country as a whole.[25] Outside, the UN acting in accordance with practice and precedent at once accepted the switch from Burma to Myanmar. Most states in international society also fell into line. However, a small number continued to hold firm to the old practice. Chief among them remains the US, which expresses solidarity with opposition to military rule by refusing to use the revised terminology.[26]

Two and a half decades on from the late 1980s, when a broad-based democracy movement was crushed, a military-backed single-party state was replaced by a formal junta, a landslide electoral victory was blithely ignored, a broad swath of civil rights was trampled and, at the same time, a set of changes was made to place-names throughout the country, the term Burma thus continues to represent, for many, more than just customary usage for the largest country in peninsular Southeast Asia. It also signals thoroughgoing opposition to the military machine that introduced the name Myanmar, and fierce commitment not only to the democratic cause of the opposition movement, but also to the identity claims of minority ethnic nationalities likewise preferring, on the whole, to speak of Burma. Clearly there is some irony in this, for the Burma erased from the map by dictatorial fiat in June 1989 was in no sense democratic and to no satisfactory degree multicultural,

and had not been so for decades. Rather, throughout the period since the 1962 coup it had been a highly centralized authoritarian state exhibiting scant regard for minority nationalities, many of which it had long fought in alternately hot and cold civil wars.

In these circumstances, what gives the term Burma a democratic spin and at the same time hints at real ethnic diversity is its association with a series of democratic thrusts and inter-communal accords scattered across many decades of history. On the democratic side, the link is above all with the late 1980s conflict between a genuinely mass movement bent on thoroughgoing political reform and prepared to take to the streets to argue, fight and not infrequently die for it, and an entrenched dictatorship determined to cling to power by whatever means necessary. Additional ties bind in those who struggled in the long 1950s to turn the democracy created on British withdrawal in 1948 into a workable system of government, and movements launched from the 1920s to the 1940s to campaign openly for a sovereign and democratic Burma. On the side of ethnic diversity, the association is chiefly with a legendary inter-ethnic agreement struck at the Shan town of Panglong in 1947, and a series of largely unknown individuals who subsequently struggled to resist a remorseless military machine bent on imposing its will throughout the land.[27] Before that, it is with an assortment of princely leaders and peasant militias who fought loyally with the Allies in the Second World War, and believed they would one day be rewarded with meaningful degrees of territorial and cultural autonomy. To some extent it is also with romantic notions of tribal communities untouched by the rigors of modern life and skilled in evading the ever more insistent demands of the nation state.[28] When, in the late 1980s, the authoritarian strand in Burmese politics opted for Myanmar and other name changes as correct English terms, contending strands in the democracy movement and minority nationalities chose to hold fast and defiantly to the traditional nomenclature. For many, then, Myanmar and Burma most fully capture the broad national forces that for years have set the main parameters of political discourse and action across the country.[29]

Throughout, this book joins many others in taking Burma to signal aspirations for democracy and diversity. In rejecting the authoritarian path of repression and despair signposted Myanmar, down which military leaders have driven the nation, it simultaneously indicates a commitment to the democratic path of freedom and hope marked Burma for which citizens mobilized in 1988. At the same time, however, the book consciously makes use of the official terminology in referring to the years since the late 1980s. In all that follows, Myanmar is the label applied to the nation subjected to rule by

junta until 2011 and to military-dominated ersatz democracy thereafter, for it neatly encapsulates much that has happened in the past two decades and more.[30] Deviations from official usage are made only in cases of ethnic nationalities that prefer to retain the old terms. As a prime example, the book thus refers to Karen State and the Karen people, rather than Kayin State and the Kayin people. Moreover, for the period prior to 1989, the old lexicon is kept in play. This runs counter to military policy and also to some current scholarly practice, both of which reach back into history to read recent name changes even into the colonial period, when standard English usage was Burma, Rangoon, Irrawaddy and so on. Such an anachronistic approach, though politically correct in military circles, is not taken here.

Finally, in the whole of this analysis Burmese (since 1989 Myanmar people) designates citizens of the country and is blind to ethnicity, whereas Burman (since 1989 Bamar) identifies members of the main ethnic group. While this conforms to current practice, it conflicts with imperial convention. This is, for instance, what colonial official, educator, scholar and post-independence adviser J. S. Furnivall wrote: "'Burman' connotes all the indigenous inhabitants of Burma together with permanent residents of alien origin who have come to regard themselves as natives of the country; this leaves 'Burmese' for use as a distinctively racial term."[31] Precisely the opposite usage is adopted here.

Framing a situation

Once a position is taken on terminology, a larger issue is how to frame Myanmar's current situation. In a history of the past 125 years published in 2009, Michael W. Charney identified several themes that have "transcended the phases of the Burmese experience … and contribute to something that might be called the rhythm of Burmese history."[32] He listed them as first the relationship between Burmans and non-Burmans (or Bamars and non-Bamars), second impoverishment of the general population, third confrontation between democracy and authoritarianism, fourth fear of foreign domination, and fifth monastic participation in politics. For an analysis centered on promoting political reform inside the country, however, it is perhaps acceptable to focus on three main features.

Two were most visibly on display in the seismic events of 1988. The first part of a grim dialectic unleashed then was popular protest fueled by economic mismanagement and hardship, triggered by official incompetence and brutality, and detonated as the 8-8-88 democratic movement. The second

part was the reassertion of military power undertaken six weeks later, which reflected and indeed consummated the decisive 1962 coup by setting in place a formal junta.[33] Other events of the past quarter-century, including the abortive 1990 general election, student strikes in 1996 and 2002, the 2007 march of the monks widely known as the saffron uprising, the criminally mismanaged 2008 Cyclone Nargis, the 2010 general election, and even the installation of notionally civilian government in 2011, were little more than somber footnotes. Two defining features of Myanmar's situation can therefore be found in what became in 1988 a violent clash between popular demands for democracy, and entrenched military rule.

Alongside these twin features, the third essential dimension is the series of increasingly localized civil wars bleeding the country's borderlands since independence in 1948. In the early decades, sporadic fighting mainly pitted the ever more Burman *tatmadaw* against both a force raised by the Communist Party of Burma, and a series of militias and ragtag bands of soldiers put together by ethnic nationalities, giving civil conflict ideological and racial strands. However, the CPB's abrupt splinter and collapse in April 1989, when anti-communist revolution was also sweeping East-Central Europe, left only ethnic conflict in place.[34] To this day fighting sometimes erupts in peripheral parts, and even zones not subject to overt violence endure deep insecurity.[35] Indeed, the state of nature described by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* nearly four centuries ago, in which the life of man is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," is often nothing other than a precise description of desperate daily conditions in frontier lands.[36] In such areas a multitude of distinct political dynamics plays out.[37]

However, within this broad context of democratic aspiration, military repression and ethnic conflict, not everything has been static during the past 20 years and the country is in no sense trapped listlessly in a late 1980s time warp.[38] Then, the political environment was characterized chiefly by a junta that held power by coercion but had no clear strategy for retaining it, and opposition groups, both democratic and ethnic, with immense moral authority but no viable program for seizing control. In the heartland, tense standoff was the order of the day. In peripheral parts, sporadic skirmishing continued to take place. Thereafter, though, the opposition's resolute push to secure full recognition of its 1988 street presence and above all its 1990 electoral triumph was obliged through force of circumstance to become more responsive and reactive to moves made by military leaders. For the NLD, one consequence was official liquidation of the political party in 2010 as senior figures decided not to contest the junta's managed election.

Across the same period, the wider society also experienced substantial change as local organizations emerged in many parts of the country to tackle problems faced by ordinary people in their everyday lives, notably during the emergency situation generated by Cyclone Nargis. Clear signs of a revival of civil society created much greater communal complexity and gave a further twist to political development.[39] Similarly, in the borderlands a decline in actual fighting took place in the early 1990s as a set of ceasefire deals was struck by the *tatmadaw* and most of the ethnic militias that for decades had confronted it.[40] The political space created by these agreements enabled local people to pay at least some attention to rebuilding shattered communities. It also allowed many individuals to play an important role in the wider national push for democracy and human rights, and ensured that by the time of the generals' 2010 election ethnic nationality activists were a key part of the peaceful political opposition.[41]

In addition, major changes have taken place on the side of the military machine. In the immediate aftermath of the September 1988 restoration of *tatmadaw* control, the junta lived from day to day with little more than a sharp survival instinct to sustain it. There was no grand strategy, and shocks like popular repudiation in the 1990 general election were dealt with strictly on an *ad hoc* basis. For a decade thereafter, serial attempts were made to stabilize the political situation. At home, a National Convention was established in January 1993 to draft a constitution to replace the 1974 charter abrogated at the time of the 1988 coup, ceasefires were agreed with ethnic nationalities, and from time to time talks, secret or otherwise, were held with opposition leaders. In November 1997 the junta renamed itself the State Peace and Development Council, indicating that Than Shwe, dominant figure from April 1992, intended to retain power for a long while. Abroad, bilateral links with China were reinforced following massacres in Rangoon in 1988 and in Beijing in 1989, and multilateral ties were developed through membership of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to which Myanmar was controversially admitted as a full member in July 1997. However, while these policy strands succeeded in their minimal aim of keeping the junta in power, they did not enable it to seize the political initiative.

Soon after the turn of the millennium, though, military leaders registered greater progress. In August 2003, Khin Nyunt, incoming prime minister and key regime strategist, unveiled a seven-point roadmap to a "discipline-flourishing democratic state." Built on drafting work commenced more than a decade earlier, the map traced a path to a constitutional referendum, a general election and installation of civilian government. Although Khin Nyunt

himself was purged in October 2004 and placed under a long term of house arrest, the roadmap remained in place. Notwithstanding major challenges, it created an opportunity for the generals to take the lead in political development and pursue a game plan looking beyond the immediate future. In the margins, they displayed growing self-assurance by starting in November 2005 to transfer government functions to Nay Pyi Taw, a brand new fortified capital located 250 miles north of the restive city of Yangon.[42] By releasing Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest six days after the 2010 election, they signaled further belief that politics in their garrison state were firmly under control.

Analyzing a society

Democratic aspiration and authoritarian reaction, witnessed most clearly in 1988 but viscerally present since 1962, did not emerge from nowhere. Similarly, ethnic contestation and revolt, a scar on the landscape since 1948, have profound social roots. To understand contemporary Myanmar, it is thus necessary to investigate the forces that have shaped it. Within a body of English-language scholarship amassed mainly by outsiders, many options are available.[43] Among political scientists, however, two broad clusters predominate.[44] One is a cultural approach looking to underlying modes of social integration and interaction and employing methodologies from anthropology and sociology. The other is a historical approach tracing social and political development into the past and seeking thereby to comprehend present-day society. While there are clear overlaps, the two have different reference points and dynamics.

Under the British, cultural approaches were a popular means of tapping into a distant territorial possession to understand what colonial administrator James George Scott, in a remarkable analysis published in 1882 under the pseudonym Shway Yoe, called *The Burman: His Life and Notions*. In 64 chapters, the human cycle is presented from first years to death and burial, with domestic life, religion (including Burma's famous *nats*), village life, and governance all examined.[45] *The Soul of a People* (1898) and *A People at School* (1906) by British official H. Fielding-Hall also probed political culture.[46] After independence, though, surveys penned by informed outsiders operating on an immersion basis were less common as foreign engagement tailed off. In their place came occasional cultural analyses written in the emergent idiom of political science, notably Lucian W. Pye's pessimistic analysis of political trust in *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building: Burma's Search for Identity*

(1962).[47] Modern anthropological studies were also launched by E. R. Leach in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954), F. K. Lehman in *The Structure of Chin Society* (1963) and Manning Nash in *The Golden Road to Modernity* (1965).[48] In Burma's years of great isolation from 1962 to 1988, however, little fieldwork was possible.[49] Only later did ethnographic accounts of politics in part or all of the society reemerge. Christina Fink's *Living Silence* (2001) and Monique Skidmore's *Karaoke Fascism* (2004) both address Myanmar as a whole.[50]

More commonly in recent decades, scholars of national politics have turned to history. Arthur P. Phayre in 1883 and G. E. Harvey in 1925 both drew on direct local knowledge to write pioneering books under the title *History of Burma*.[51] The late colonial and early postcolonial periods then witnessed wide debate as former officials and academics trained their attention on the war-torn colony and emergent state. Among erstwhile administrators, Furnivall, already mentioned in passing and soon to be encountered again, was preeminent. Set within a broad range of study, *An Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma* (1931), *Colonial Policy and Practice* (1948) and *The Governance of Modern Burma* (1958) most fully displayed his deep understanding.[52] F. S. V. Donnison, Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma in 1946, also drew on intimate experience to write *Public Administration in Burma* (1953) and *Burma* (1970).[53] Among professional historians, examinations of the modern state informed by long or short surveys of the past came notably from D. G. E. Hall in *Burma* (1950), Hugh Tinker in *The Union of Burma* (1957), John F. Cady in *A History of Modern Burma* (1958), Dorothy Woodman in *The Making of Burma* (1962), Frank N. Trager in *Burma, from Kingdom to Republic* (1966), and Maung Htin Aung in *A History of Burma* (1967).[54]

The position taken by early postwar writers was picked up by many subsequent analysts. As Tinker put it roughly a decade after independence, this was that "The old Burma has bequeathed much to the new, but not in the sphere of government; the origins of the representative institutions of today must be sought in the British period."[55] Some 45 years on, Thant Myint-U made much the same point in *The Making of Modern Burma* (2001): "the end of the [nineteenth] century witnessed the birth of Burma as we still know it today."[56] In *The River of Lost Footsteps* (2006), he identified 1885 as the "watershed year," marked by "a break with the ideas and institutions that had underpinned society in the Irrawaddy Valley since before medieval times."[57] Charney also endorsed this approach by opening *A History of Modern Burma* (2009) in 1886.[58]

The line taken by Cady in 1958 was different, however, making reassertion of the past the core theme. "Generally speaking, the structure of governmental administration in newly independent Burma follows closely the improved patterns developed in British times, but the spirit of the exercise of authority owes much to pre-British custom as popularly recognized."[59] In this way he identified vital cultural and political traditions as important conditioning factors in the contemporary state. Later, this departure from the established focus on the colonial period was endorsed and extended by Cady's student, Robert H. Taylor. In a book that appeared as *The State in Burma* in 1987, and in a revised and extended edition as *The State in Myanmar* in 2009, Taylor reached decisively into the past to argue that "the contemporary state in Myanmar cannot be understood other than through an appreciation of the nature of the early modern pre-colonial state."[60] He thereby made a case for a very deep historical understanding of Myanmar's current political situation.

Taylor did not argue for analysis to go all the way back through more than 1,000 years of recorded history. For him, Burma's first chronicled centuries, corresponding to the medieval period in Europe, are best viewed as prehistory. They contain the revered Pagan Dynasty, founded in 1044 and maintained until 1287.[61] They feature the legendary King Anawrahta, who ruled from 1044 to 1077 and was identified as a founding father by Hall, sometime Professor of History at Rangoon University: "He was the first king of Burma and with him Burmese history proper begins."[62] They span a mix of kingdoms and tribal societies marked by shifting forms of government and patterns of alliance. Thus, while the Pagan Dynasty managed for more than two centuries to dominate not only the plains at the heart of the territory, but also parts of the surrounding hill country and delta lands, it was equally possible for central control to break down and peripheral leaders to extend their dominion into the heartland. Shan people to the east and Mon people to the south both boast long-dead monarchs able to project power from the periphery into the core.[63] Indeed, as Victor B. Lieberman noted in *Burmese Administrative Cycles* (1984), "the waxing and waning of royal power constitutes a major theme in the political history of the region."[64]

Rather, Taylor argued that in a context of fluid patterns of control stretching across many centuries, Burmese political history became settled in the late 1500s. The key figure in implanting a more consistent and ultimately modern pattern was King Bayinnaung, who from 1551 to 1581 consolidated the Toungoo Dynasty, which ruled from 1486 to 1752. Subsequently, from 1752 to 1760, King Alaungpaya formed the equally important Konbaung Dynasty, which exercised power for more than a century. Taylor demonstrates that for

some 300 years down to the late 1800s the Burman state sustained reforms that considerably enhanced its capacity to exercise control over a broad range of territory. In his words, "the power of the state relative to society increased because of more effective taxation and greater military strength; increased and centralized military strength was also a consequence of advances in technology, together with an altered external political and economic environment, the result of increasingly rapid changes occurring in Europe and in neighbouring areas."[65] One consequence was that when, in the late eighteenth century, East India Company officials looked beyond Bengal into lands to the south and east, the Burma they encountered had a coherent core dominated by an established state and underpinned by a pervasive Buddhist faith. That state was also able supervise, regulate and exact tribute from much of its mountainous periphery.

An additional move is critical. Having shown that a competent Burman state was constructed in the centuries preceding British imperial rule, Taylor argues that pre-colonial governance patterns and political culture exercised a decisive shaping power over every succeeding polity down to the present day. "Both the colonial state and the contemporary state developed in the same geographical and ecological condition as the precolonial state, and there are significant cultural continuities between the periods of the state's existence."[66] He thereby holds that a full understanding of the state established by Burma's unifying Toungoo and Konbaung Dynasties across 300 years from the late sixteenth century onward is necessary to any attempt to capture contemporary governance. At the start of this book, the validity of this important methodological claim requires careful examination.

When that is done, it looks decidedly problematic. The first part relates to geographical conditions, for Taylor unchanging across pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial states. In the broad sense of brute facts, there may be some truth in this. However, it was only by British officials that an entity corresponding to contemporary Myanmar was first mapped, and even then its borders were no more than rough approximations of those that exist today. Additionally, abundant change in the past 200 years, comprising something like a tenfold population increase, the rise of new urban centers, major population movements, and a revolution in the technological underpinnings of state-society relations, further undermine the idea of constant conditions. Any human geographer can show that in many important respects they are radically different, and anthropologist James C. Scott demonstrates that dramatic change in the control capacity of the modern state has drastically reduced space available to "the art of not being governed."[67] The second part states

that ecological conditions have also been the same across the past two centuries. However, that is not the case either. In a largely rural setting, modes of agricultural production shifted markedly in many parts of the country. In particular, the opening of a new rice frontier in the second half of the nineteenth century had a wide impact.[68] The final part argues for significant cultural continuities, and is bolstered by Cady's original contention. For Taylor, political dynamics have always been established by a controlling state. "It is the nature of the state and its personnel which provides meaning to [Burma's political history since the late sixteenth century], for it is the state which has been the dominant institution in shaping economic, social and other opportunities for the population."[69] This state-centric claim is distinct from society-centric arguments reaching much the same conclusion by the different route of the country's allegedly authoritarian political values.[70] Taylor argues not that local people have long got the government they deserve, but rather that local rulers have always felt the need to adopt a maximalist, assertive conception of their role. Under threat, elites project power.

There is much to be said for this interpretation. Throughout history, state leaders have sought to boost central command, and often they have succeeded. Looking to this heritage, Michael Aung-Thwin argues that Burmese independence came not in 1948 when authority was vested in an elite shaped by colonialism and beholden to western powers, but rather in 1962 when Ne Win destroyed a crumbling democracy, shrugged off external influence, and asserted full national sovereignty through a centralizing state.[71] Moreover, it is strictly within this tradition that military leaders operated in 1988, that Than Shwe worked in the 1990s and 2000s, and that disciplined democracy is intended to function under Thein Sein in the 2010s. Nevertheless, it is stretching the point to argue that broader ecological conditions remain sufficiently unchanged for analyses of the pre-colonial political system to be centrally relevant today. The very year after Taylor's book was first published witnessed the four eights uprising.[72] In turn, this mobilization for democracy also looked to tradition as individuals walked consciously in the steps of protesters from every decade since the 1920s. Thus, while the state certainly remains what Taylor calls "the determining partner" in relationships with civil society, in modern times its authority and legitimacy have been fiercely contested.[73]

Indeed, once the focus of inquiry shifts from a persistently dominant state to the larger context in which it is embedded, many features of the political landscape exhibit clear discontinuity. Already noted is the development of democratic aspirations among a broad spectrum of citizens and evident at

many points since at least the 1920s. Alongside it is politicization of ethnic identity across the country, triggered in colonial times and painfully present thereafter. Also significant is the absence prior to British rule of anything remotely resembling the modern nation-state successive elites have sought to impose on the country. Moreover, many attributes associated with such a construct were also missing in the pre-colonial period. Infrastructure and communications were poor, and interaction between people in the central plains and surrounding hill country was fundamentally different from what is witnessed today. Internal trade was chronically underdeveloped. Outlying parts now and then fell under Chinese, Indian or Siamese control. Crucially, there was no sense of a notionally unified Burma spanning core and periphery. Largely for this reason, the ethnic identities that in many ways have come to define the modern state, and have also come close to tearing it apart, are also modern constructs.[74] The firm boundaries that mark them out are often located in different places from the informal borders existing in the pre-colonial period, and both are distinct again from the frontiers set in place by the British.

In 1958, Furnivall wrote that "Burma, secluded from the outer world by mountains and the sea, appears destined for political unity by nature." However, his argument was that only rarely has unity been realized.[75] Furthermore, it was under the British that a single legal entity was definitively marked out and established on the map of the world. "Burma, as we know it with its present boundaries," wrote Bertil Lintner in 1994, "is a colonial creation rife with internal contradictions and divisions."[76] Indeed, Taylor himself made the same point some two decades on from his 1987 analysis: "Though this flies in the face of the official nationalist historiography of the country, it is no exaggeration to say that the British made modern Myanmar." Only under the British were demarcated "the internal conceptual and administrative structures of the modern state."[77] If, then, the colonial period was decisive in creating the contemporary state, it is to British rule and the consequences flowing from it that analysis should chiefly turn, and not to earlier eras and the procession of indigenous monarchs that dominated them.

For these reasons, the analytical orientation underpinning the next four chapters is a variant of orthodox scholarship, with one modification. First, it endorses the need to look to the past. "The most striking aspect of the Burma debate today is its absence of nuance and its singularly ahistorical nature," wrote Thant Myint-U in 2006.[78] Both are to be avoided. Second, it acknowledges that Britain's colonial adventure was decisive. "The speed with which Burma changed after the arrival of the British was alarming," wrote Aung

San Suu Kyi in 1990.[79] Third, though, it looks back not to 1886, when full imperial rule was imposed, but rather to the 1850s, when dramatic reshaping of a traditional society began to be registered both internally and externally. Inside, annexation of Burma's large southern delta in 1852 and formal creation of a new province within the British Raj in 1862 were key landmarks enabling colonial officials to embark on purposeful exploitation of their new possession. Outside, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 transformed the territory's place in the global economy. "During the forty years prior to the outbreak of World War I, Burma was caught up in a maelstrom of worldwide commercial and industrial activity far in excess of anything the country had ever before experienced," writes Cady.[80] As he also notes, the economic dynamic unleashed by these developments was at least as revolutionary as the extensive administrative reforms introduced after 1886. The social impact was enormous.

Chapter 1 examines what colonial officials liked to call the British connexion, focusing on the years from the 1850s to 1948.[81] Its twin themes are political dependence and social disintegration. Chapter 2 investigates the prehistory of modern Myanmar in independent Burma from 1948 to 1988. Its core themes are the drive for dominion sought by the *tatmadaw*, and the dissent triggered among many citizens. Chapter 3 analyzes government by junta from 1988 to 2011. Its central themes are the dictatorship to which the country was subjected for more than two decades, and the deadlock into which it slid at the end of the 1980s and struggled for years thereafter to break. Chapter 4 looks beyond the sham democracy set in place in 2011 to consider domestic political futures. Taking democratization and dialogue as twin themes, it focuses on transitional process, national reconciliation and transitional justice, drawing evidence and insights not only from Myanmar's own history and path dependence, but also from the abundant resources of comparative political science. The intention is not to prescribe, but rather to set out as clearly as possible the challenges the country is likely to face if it embarks on real political reform, as well as options for channeling them in a constructive direction.

Rebuilding a country

The major reason for looking in detail in the first half of the book at historical Burma and contemporary Myanmar is to build a secure foundation for analysis of foreign engagement with this problematic state. Ultimately, that is the core aim of everything written here. In the second half, attention thus

turns squarely to outside actors and action, and in particular to debates about global justice that for the past two decades and more have infused much analysis of international politics. Again some contextual work is required through examination of existing external efforts to shape the country's political development. Only when that has been accomplished can fresh possibilities be explored.

Chapter 5 surveys how foreigners have dealt with Myanmar since the late 1980s. The twin poles of debate are inattention and involvement. Taking the major camps in global society, it finds that a case for engagement is made most forcefully in Asia. Practised both by regional powers such as China and India, and by regional bodies such as ASEAN, it is also supported by growing numbers of INGOs. By contrast, a case for isolation is made above all by a bloc of countries led by the US and vociferous activist groups. Citing repression of the country's democratic opposition and violence against ethnic nationalities, the US eventually ratcheted up sanctions to onerous levels. Alongside economic measures, it has also long placed embargoes on the country to outlaw arms sales, visas for senior officials and their families, and many forms of humanitarian assistance. The European Union and other US allies also impose sanctions. Furthermore, almost all companies with visible trade names in western markets have for years declined to do business in and with Myanmar because of negative consumer reaction and a generally difficult business climate.[82] The chapter finds that current strategies have registered only limited success and are now openly disputed among policymakers and activists outside Myanmar, and politicians and citizens inside.

Chapter 6 begins to explore new ways forward by considering the extent to which foreigners are implicated in injustice in Myanmar, and thereby carry corresponding obligations to engage with it. Picking up on debates about global justice where this issue is most fully examined, it investigates duties of both historical injustice and universal justice in an attempt to determine how the demands of justice might be framed in this context. Rejecting radical cosmopolitan approaches as inapplicable in a world of sovereign states located behind generally secure international frontiers, and indeed of sub-state communities committed to vibrant minority identities within those sovereign domains, it also dismisses fully state-centric views leaving citizens entirely at the mercy of their rulers. In between, it sketches a realm of possibility in which outsiders can confront injustice while paying necessary respect to local agency. Crucially, though, it finds that in the Myanmar case analysts of global justice are unable to specify the demands of justice in anything other than very provisional terms.

Chapter 7 thus follows up by examining how individuals prepared to acknowledge mandates of global justice might properly become involved in the political affairs of a jurisdiction other than their own. Specifically, it draws on the plentiful resources of the just war tradition to develop a typology of intervention configured chiefly by discursive and assertive forms, a framework for evaluation, and a procedure for hearing contributions to debate. In this final context it builds on calls for local control surfacing repeatedly within Myanmar to argue that insiders must be given priority, amounting to an effective veto, and that only on this condition can the views of foreigners be considered. Terming the resultant approach interactive intervention, it sketches the implications for Myanmar of this reading of justice across borders.

Chapter 8 completes the analysis by switching from procedural to substantive matters, and investigating the practical contributions outsiders willing to follow the dictates of global justice might make to political change in Myanmar through intercession and investment. Seeking both to listen to local voices as fully as possible and to learn from elsewhere, it surveys current possibilities for external action and considers prospects for political reform. It argues for an expansive notion of investment spreading beyond financial and commercial undertakings to committed and purposeful engagement designed to help build capacity at grassroots levels, boost indigenous agency and expand political space throughout the society. Alongside analysis of the fundamental role played by international aid organizations, it therefore explores the implications of a growing sense that global corporations are critical in triggering the broad social renewal essential to sustainable political reform. It incorporates each of these elements into the case for intercession made here.

While these four chapters all form part of a structured argument for political change in Myanmar, they also engage in set-piece debate with contemporary global issues. Chapter 5 on inattention and involvement evaluates existing policies of engagement and isolation. How successful are these divergent strategies? Chapter 6 on injustice and implication taps into analysis of global justice. How can injustice be confronted in the still strongly statist conditions of today's world? Chapter 7 on intervention and interaction extends just war theory to complex cross-border challenges. When intervention takes so many more forms than simply warfare and is pursued by an increasingly diverse range of actors, how should it be framed? Chapter 8 on intercession and investment focuses on somewhat parallel debates about the aid business and corporate social responsibility to examine what to do in the context of a difficult yet potentially rewarding case for engagement. In toxic circumstances, how might external action properly be fashioned?

Finally, the Conclusion pulls together the threads unraveled in preceding chapters. The core argument acknowledges the strength of opposition claims. Notwithstanding Myanmar's 2011 praetorian transition, the political situation remains dire and necessitates substantial reform. National reconciliation embracing all strands of political opinion and all ethnic groups is also essential. For foreigners, the critical question is how to deliver on the demands of global justice by making an effective contribution to change sought and driven by local people. The chapter thus focuses on how insiders might unmake Myanmar and remake Burma, and how outsiders might support their endeavors. Looking on this basis at strategic issues generated by external engagement with Myanmar and a future Burma's reintegration into international society, it argues for an agenda that can be supported by neighboring states and at the same time chime with global opinion. How that might happen is spelt out in some detail, with both state and non-state actors brought within the analytical frame.

Throughout, the main interest is how principles of global justice might inform a quest to create the multiethnic democratic order that the very notion of Burma has come to symbolize in the hearts and minds of both insiders and outsiders. That Burma, the country many seek to build in place of contemporary Myanmar, could come into being by a multitude of routes and may indeed never be fully realized. Even if it is, it will clearly not be a literal reconstruction, but rather a new creation informed by the changed circumstances of a world that has moved on considerably in the 50 years since Burma last came close to measuring up to the expectations many now have for it.[83] While the concept of Burma redux that brands this analysis conveys a sense of bringing back, reviving or restoring a Burma long written off global maps, it contains no suggestion of strict replication.

Still, however, inspiration can be drawn from the past. On the side of democracy, the link is with those who fought and in many cases died for an ideal in the tumultuous year of 1988, those who challenged Ne Win's autocracy after 1962, those who helped create a rather rickety new state in Burma's long 1950s, and ultimately those who in one way or another made the case for popular rule in struggles against British colonialism and Japanese fascism. Looming iconically over this parade of Burmese democrats is the father-daughter pairing that above all symbolizes the fight: General Aung San, independence hero and prime minister in waiting, assassinated in cabinet at age 32 in July 1947, and Aung San Suu Kyi, 1991 Nobel Peace Laureate, motivating force behind the NLD and moral leader of the nation for two decades, detained under house arrest for a total of 15 years from 1989 to 2010.[84] On

the side of ethnic pluralism, the connection is with countless anonymous people who have suffered for years at the hands of a domineering and at times belligerent central state. Although there are no well-known names, no events or dates with wide resonance, and no instantly recognizable images, the need for change in interethnic relations is just as pressing.

Invigorated by the efforts of individuals past and present, this book seeks to contribute to global debate about Myanmar, and about ways forward for those who embrace a desire to wrest it from the iron grip of its military leaders and return it to a Burmese path of democratic development. One animating belief is that much current analysis does not provide a very full or balanced perspective.[85] A 2009 examination of the civilian response to Cyclone Nargis noted "a trend which sees news stories about Myanmar narrowly focus on: the brutality of the military regime, deep divisions between Myanmar people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds; emphasising its isolation within the international community."[86] Later, when ethnic people spoke, they made similar remarks. A young Shan INGO worker put it this way: "Things are not that terrible, though of course they are not good. The media paints the country in a bad light and people fear for our country. The impression given internationally is that it is very risky and dangerous to live and work here; but that is not the case."[87] A young Bamar female journalist said this: "Foreigners always think it is oppressed, not safe, and dark in Myanmar; they are afraid. But when they come here they realise the situation is different; communities are OK and survive."[88] The conclusion reached by the researchers was that "along with the stories of horror and destruction" there must be room to "acknowledge and explore the positive and negative parts of this tragedy."[89] This argument merits wide application.

Perhaps more basic still is a sense that there is simply not enough Burma talk of any kind in today's world. In 2009, one local person had this to say: "It is difficult to access data and facts on Myanmar. External organisations can help out by keeping the issues alive. They need to talk, analyse and discuss what has been written and publicised."[90] The implication is that any news item, op-ed journalism or documentary feature, any academic book, lecture or conference, any parliamentary debate, summit meeting or UN session, any film, novel or play, any painting, sculpture or performance art, indeed any routine daily conversation that makes a sincere attempt to place Myanmar and the concerns it generates at the center of at least part of the world's attention is welcome. That is the spirit in which this book is written.

Notes

Introduction

1. The last full census, conducted in March 1983, gave a population of 35.4 million. However, when a constitutional referendum was held in 2008 the total population was recorded as 57.5 million. Human Rights Watch, *"I Want to Help My Own People": State Control and Civil Society in Burma after Cyclone Nargis* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2010), p.63. Also see Anthony Ware and Matthew Clarke, "The MDGs in Myanmar: Relevant or Redundant?," *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 16 (2011), forthcoming.
2. Oded Shenkar, *The Chinese Century: The Rising Chinese Economy and Its Impact on the Global Economy, the Balance of Power, and Your Job* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School Publishing, 2005). Bill Hayton, *Vietnam: Rising Dragon* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).
3. The Human Security Report Project at Simon Fraser University measures conflict years within states by isolating specific civil conflicts and calculating their total duration. It places Myanmar at the top of global rankings with 246 conflict years from 1946 to 2008, meaning that on average each year has been marked by four civil conflicts. Human Security Report Project, *Human Security Report 2009/2010: The Causes of Peace and the Shrinking Costs of War* (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University, 2010), Table 10.2.
4. Accurate data on ethnic composition are not available. In 2011, a US estimate gave this breakdown: Bamar 68 percent, Shan 9 percent, Kayin 7 percent, Rakhine 4 percent, Chinese 3 percent, Indian 2 percent, Mon 2 percent. US Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*. www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook. The University of Maryland tracks six endangered ethnic groups inside Myanmar: Chin, Kachin, Karen, Mon, Rohingya and Shan. Minorities at Risk, www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar.

5. The junta assumed two distinct identities in the period from September 1988 to March 2011. However, since there was considerable continuity of membership and policy, this analysis refers throughout to a singular junta.
6. *Irrawaddy*, "SPDC, R.I.P.," March 30, 2011.
7. Transnational Institute and Burma Centrum Nederland, *Ethnic Politics in Burma: The Time for Solutions* (Amsterdam: Transnational Institute and Burma Centrum Nederland, 2011).
8. Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps: A Personal History of Burma* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), p.ix.
9. Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom from Fear: And Other Writing*s, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1995), pp.192–8. In an April 2011 interview, she put it this way: "More people, especially young people, are realising that if they want change, they've got to go about it themselves — they can't depend on a particular person, ie me, to do all the work." Polly Toynbee, "Saturday interview: Aung San Suu Kyi," *Guardian*, April 16, 2011.
10. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Listening to Voices from Inside: Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis* (Phnom Penh: Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2009), p.124.
11. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Listening to Voices from Inside: Ethnic People Speak* (Phnom Penh: Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2010), p.202.
12. Lowell Dittmer, "Burma vs. Myanmar: What's in a Name?," *Asian Survey* 48:6 (2008), 885–8.
13. *Working People's Daily*, "Placenames law enacted," June 19, 1989.
14. *Working People's Daily*, "Change in national anthem," June 19, 1989.
15. Rudyard Kipling, "Mandalay," in Rudyard Kipling, *Barrack-room Ballads* (New York, NY: Signet, 2001), 40–2.
16. George Orwell, *Shooting an Elephant: And Other Essays* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1953).
17. *South China Morning Post*, "Burma states terms for student talks," June 20, 1989, p.12.
18. See, for instance, Mya Maung, "The Burma Road from the Union of Burma to Myanmar," *Asian Survey* 30:6 (1990), 602–24, n.1.
19. Cited in Derek Tonkin, "The 1990 Elections in Myanmar: Broken Promises or a Failure of Communication?," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 29:1 (2007), 33–54, p.38.
20. Amnesty International, *Myanmar (Burma): New Martial Law Provisions Allowing Summary or Arbitrary Executions and Recent Death Sentences Imposed under These Provisions*, ASA 16/15/89 (London: Amnesty International, 1989), p.4.
21. James F. Guyot and John Badgley, "Myanmar in 1989: Tatmadaw V," *Asian Survey* 30:2 (1990), 187–95, p.188.
22. James F. Guyot, "Myanmar in 1990: The Unconsummated Election," *Asian Survey* 31:2 (1991), 205–11.
23. Tonkin, "The 1990 Elections in Myanmar."
24. *Working People's Daily*, "State LORC Declaration No. 1/90 of July 27, 1990," July 29, 1990.

25. Everyday usage is now quite variable, with old and new names often employed interchangeably. Nevertheless, official positions taken by leadership groups tend to stick to the old terminology.
26. The State Department puts it this way: "The SPDC changed the name of the country to 'Myanmar,' but some members of the democratic opposition and other political activists do not recognize the name change and continue to use the name 'Burma.' Out of support for the democratic opposition, the U.S. Government likewise uses 'Burma'." US Department of State, *Background Note: Burma*. www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35910.htm.
27. Matthew J. Walton, "Ethnicity, Conflict, and History in Burma: The Myths of Panglong," *Asian Survey* 48:6 (2008), 889–910.
28. James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).
29. Dittmer, "Burma vs. Myanmar."
30. In 2010, Amartya Sen, who lived for three years as a boy in prewar Mandalay, wrote this: "The military rulers have renamed Burma as Myanmar, and the renaming seems perhaps understandable, for the country is no longer the Burma that magnificently flourished over the centuries. New Myanmar is the hell-hole version of old Burma." Amartya Sen, "We hear you, Michael Aris, loud and clear," *OutlookIndia*, November 15, 2010. www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?267765.
31. J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1956), p.11, n.1. British historian Hugh Tinker held to this usage in all four editions of *The Union of Burma*, published in 1957, 1959, 1961 and 1967, explaining that he was following the practice adopted in the 1953 census. Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma: A Study of the First Years of Independence*, 4th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.xi.
32. Michael W. Charney, *A History of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.201.
33. Bertil Lintner, *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy* (Hong Kong: Review Publishing Company, 1989).
34. Martin J. Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 1999).
35. Tom Kramer, *Neither War nor Peace: The Future of the Cease-fire Agreements in Burma* (Amsterdam: Transnational Institute, 2009).
36. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), p.82.
37. Mary P. Callahan, *Political Authority in Burma's Ethnic Minority States: Devolution, Occupation, and Coexistence* (Washington, DC: East-West Center Washington, 2007).
38. Michael Aung-Thwin, "Parochial Universalism, Democracy *Jihad* and the Orientalist Image of Burma: The New Evangelism," *Pacific Affairs* 74:4 (2001–02), 483–505, p.492.

39. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis*.
40. Zaw Oo and Win Min, *Assessing Burma's Ceasefire Accords* (Washington, DC: East-West Center Washington, 2007).
41. Amnesty International, *The Repression of Ethnic Minority Activists in Myanmar*, ASA 16/001/2010 (London: Amnesty International, 2010).
42. Donald M. Seekins, *State and Society in Modern Rangoon* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).
43. Andrew Selth, "Modern Burma Studies: A Survey of the Field," *Modern Asian Studies* 44:2 (2010), 401–40.
44. For a full survey and a different way of dividing the field, see Robert H. Taylor, "Finding the Political in Myanmar, a.k.a. Burma," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 39:2 (2008), 219–37.
45. Scott distinguishes two kinds of *nats*. The first are "inhabitants of the six inferior heavens" of the Burmese spirit world. "Perfectly distinct from these are the nats of the house, the air, the water, the forest, — the spirits of nature, fairies, elves, gnomes, kelpies, kobolds, pixies, whatever other names they have received in other countries." Shway Yoe, *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1910), p.232. On Scott, see Andrew Marshall, *The Trouser People: A Story of Burma in the Shadow of the Empire* (New York, NY: Counterpoint, 2002). On the 37 *nats* in the contemporary pantheon, see Bénédicte Brac de la Perrière, "The Taungbyon Festival: Locality and Nation-confronting in the Cult of the 37 Lords," in Monique Skidmore (ed.), *Burma at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 65–89.
46. H. Fielding-Hall, *The Soul of a People* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1898). H. Fielding-Hall, *A People at School* (London: Macmillan, 1906). Fielding-Hall also wrote books about domestic life and religion described by Maung Maung as "tender and loving and a little romantic." Maung Maung, *Burma's Constutition*, 2nd ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), p.5.
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57. Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps*, pp.5, 162.
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62. Hall, *Burma*, p.14.
63. Hall, *Burma*, pp.28–37. Ashley South, *Mon Nationalism and Civil War in Burma: The Golden Sheldrake* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
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65. Taylor, *The State in Myanmar*, p.6.
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67. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.
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70. Maung Maung Gyi, *Burmese Political Values: The Socio-political Roots of Authoritarianism* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1983).
71. Michael Aung-Thwin, "1948 and Burma's Myth of Independence," in Josef Silverstein (ed.), *Independent Burma at Forty Years: Six Assessments* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1989), 19–34.
72. In the preface to the later edition of his book, Taylor wrote: "*The State in Burma* did not predict and I did not anticipate the dramatic events of 1988. Some reviewers and critics were happy to draw attention to that point. Whether their prediction skills were and are more acute than mine is for others to decide." Taylor, *The State in Myanmar*, p.xv.
73. Taylor, *The State in Myanmar*, p.4.
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76. Bertil Lintner, *Burma in Revolt: Opium and Insurgency since 1948* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994), p.41.
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78. Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps*, p.41.
79. Aung San Suu Kyi, *Burma and India: Some Aspects of Intellectual Life under Colonialism* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1990), p.33.
80. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, p.155.
81. Donnison, *Public Administration in Burma*.
82. Ian Holliday, "Doing Business with Rights Violating Regimes: Corporate Social Responsibility and Myanmar's Military Junta," *Journal of Business Ethics* 61:4 (2005), 329–42.
83. Ironically, those expectations were perhaps expressed most fully by Maung Maung in *Burma's Constitution*, published in 1959 and 1961. This was an extended celebration of an emergent democracy about to be crushed by a military-state complex that the author himself was to join, and indeed briefly head in the middle months of 1988. Maung Maung, *Burma's Constitution*.
84. Gustaaf Houtman, "Sacralizing or Demonizing Democracy? Aung San Suu Kyi's 'Personality Cult'," in Monique Skidmore (ed.), *Burma at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 133–53.
85. Compare a remark from 2004 that hostile commentary often makes it "almost impossible or politically unacceptable to portray any positive aspects of the military regime." Ardeth Maung Thawnghmung, *Behind the Teak Curtain*, p.xii. Also see Selth, "Modern Burma Studies," pp.433–9.
86. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis*, p.2.
87. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Ethnic People Speak*, p.192.
88. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Ethnic People Speak*, p.196.
89. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis*, p.2.

90. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis*, p.51.

Chapter 1

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2. Frank N. Trager, *Burma, from Kingdom to Republic: A Historical and Political Analysis* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1966), p.19.
3. British terminology is still in use, with local people sometimes speaking in English of Lower and Upper Burma.
4. Amitav Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* (New York, NY: Random House, 2000).
5. Neil A. Englehart, "Liberal Leviathan or Imperial Outpost? J. S. Furnivall on Colonial Rule in Burma," *Modern Asian Studies* 45 (2011), forthcoming.
6. G. E. Harvey, *British Rule in Burma, 1824–1942* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946), p.77.
7. Englehart, "Liberal Leviathan or Imperial Outpost?."
8. J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), pp. 71–2, 160.
9. John L. Christian, "Burma: Strategic and Political," *Far Eastern Survey* 11:3 (1942), 40–4. Robert H. Taylor, "Politics in Late Colonial Burma: The Case of U Saw," *Modern Asian Studies* 10:2 (1976), 161–93.
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11. J. S. Furnivall, *An Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma* (Rangoon: Burma Book Club, 1931). Also see J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1902), and V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1939).
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13. Maurice Collis, *Last and First in Burma (1941–1948)* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p.290.
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15. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, p.125.
16. For an analysis of perceptions of Burma recorded by British travelers, see Stephen L. Keck, "Picturesque Burma: British Travel Writing 1890–1914," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 35:3 (2004), 387–414.
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19. Michael W. Charney, *A History of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.5.

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Note: Name changes decreed mainly in 1989 mean that any analysis of recent history will capture many people and places under two different terms: Arakan and Rakhine, Rangoon and Yangon, and so on. In this index, all cases of split identity are listed separately.