



Myanmar and the Outside World

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Buddhism and trade have been Myanmar's most important interfaces with the outside world, but their importance in shaping external relations has varied greatly. Traders and missionaries were instrumental during the first millennium CE in expanding the teachings of Buddhism and laying the foundation for the country's mature civilization under the kings of Pagan, or Bagan. Exploring Buddhism in its practice and in its art and architecture, one is inevitably drawn in two directions: to the inside toward Myanmar's self-perception and cultural identity and to the outside toward the multiple genealogies from which the country's religious, ritual, and intellectual traditions are derived or have been connected over the centuries. Understanding and defining the inside seems to be the easier task. Buddhism has been the dominant cultural matrix of the country, and Buddhist markers—including artistic forms, concepts, ways of thinking, and social practices—outline a cultural and religious space that has structured Myanmar's historical trajectory throughout the geographical center of the Irrawaddy, or Ayeyarwady Valley for the last thousand years and longer. This interest in Myanmar has therefore favored a scholarly perception of Buddhism as an intrinsic part of Myanmar's identity rather than being, by itself, a historical agent.

The conventional approach of western scholars has been to look at Myanmar and trade from the outside, in

keeping with the perspective of archival sources that adopt the viewpoint of often malcontent Portuguese, Dutch, or English merchants trading Indian cloth, teak wood, rice, rubies, betel nuts, or elephants in Myanmar or Rakhine ports. In this it is too easy to forget the breadth of interests of Myanmar's kings, elites, and traders that nurtured trade relations with the outside world. As the people of Myanmar were neither seafaring nor were they running caravan trade through Inner Asia, historians have often argued that they did not pay much attention to foreign trade. Still, Myanmar's regions were integral parts of both land and maritime trade networks. Nor should one overlook that in the past Myanmar was not a state with fixed borders but included, during most of its precolonial history, several political centers, conventionally known to precolonial Europeans as Rakhine, or Arakan, a coastal kingdom integrated in the Bay of Bengal maritime network; Ava, or Inwa, a place connected both to the riverine and the inland trade; and Pegu, or Bago, a long-time inland port connected to the sea ports of Martaban and later Syriam.

Nonetheless, while one could approach the topic of Myanmar and the outside worlds through themes of Indianization, colonization, or modernization, this would suggest that Myanmar people and their leaders were recipients of foreign influence rather than agents of their own historical

destiny. They would confirm G. E. Harvey's perception, as he wrote in 1925, of the Myanmar people as "living in a world of their own," who did not "visit other lands" while "nobody from other lands came to them, except a few shipmen and some tribal immigrants." For this colonial historian, "Myanmar knew nothing of international affairs save through bazaar rumor and through the tales, usually anti-English propaganda, of Armenian and Mahomedan merchants." The cliché of Myanmar's marginality seems to find further confirmation in the country's recent reputation gained through decades of outcast status and self-inflicted isolation under authoritarian regimes between 1962 and 2011. Moreover, common textbook characterizations of Myanmar as being a "part" of Southeast Asia or a land "between" India and China, convey no particular sense of homegrown developments. The old-fashioned colonial view that "the existence of the Burmese as a powerful and widespread race [was] due to Indian immigration," peremptorily stated in the *Census of India* of 1911, has long ceded its place to Paul Mus's insight that "Indian culture is complementary . . . not imposed, [but] called for from within Southeast Asia."² Postcolonial scholars have not only refined the concept of Indianization but have also integrated the archaeological and inscriptional evidence of the influence of Brahminist and Buddhist ideas within dynamic, local urban communities.

An excellent example of how Buddhism and trade gave essence to Myanmar's relations with the outside world is the territorial expansion under the early Konbaung kings (1782–1819) when, following a secular trend, external relations were at their peak. The second half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century were a crucial period in world history. It was an important time in Myanmar as well, when following seventeen years of internecine wars (1740–57), the country moved through a phase of territorial consolidation in the middle of the century toward a period of vibrant expansion. One hallmark of the early Konbaung dynasty was its aggressive policy of conquests that enlarged the kingdom considerably beyond the Irrawaddy Valley. Following the fall of the city of Pegu in 1757, King Alaungpaya, also known as Alaungmintaya, the dynasty's founder, reunified the northern and southern parts (the Myanmar-dominated Ava and the predominantly Mon kingdom of Hamsavati, or Pegu). The conquest of Manipur in 1758–59 gave the Myanmar king a foothold to intervene in Assam after 1805, while a

well-prepared invasion of Thailand by land and sea in 1759–60 laid the ground for the conquest of Tenasserim, which would come under full Myanmar control in 1793. In 1785, a decisive campaign against Rakhine put an end to this old Buddhist kingdom on the border with Bengal that had enjoyed independence since 1430.

This vast territorial expansion was read in negative terms by colonial historians, who considered Myanmar's conquests barbarous and lacking inspiration in state building.³ Contemporary scholarship has nonetheless rehabilitated the statesmanship of early Konbaung kings from Alaungpaya (r. 1752–1760) to Bodawpaya (r. 1782–1819). Due to an increasingly centralized royal administration, Konbaung capitals such as Ava or Amarapura boasted efficient political control over the country's river plains and their close, mountainous periphery. With the growing commercialization of the economy and the existence of an intricate money-lending system, this was, in historian Thant Myint-U's words, the time when "a common language, a common religion, a common set of legal and political ideas and institutions, and even a shared history existed throughout the core area."⁴ Myanmar was perceived by British geographers of the early nineteenth century as second only to China's military power in Asia. Still, this was not a territorially unified kingdom, as borders were largely undefined or rapidly changing. A set of maps of Myanmar, drawn in 1795 at the request of Dr. Francis Hamilton, conveys the idea of a central corridor of river valleys with strings of interconnected urban centers, surrounded by far-flung outlying regions that were separated and divided by vast, sparsely inhabited zones. Under the early Konbaung kings, the kingdom's geographical body was undergoing tremendous change, growing toward the west and the south, receding in the northeast, and blocked from expanding toward the east.

Relentless warfare against Thailand between 1759 and 1812 overstretched Myanmar's human resources, but resulted in the conquest of Tenasserim and the control of its trade ports Mergui (together with the inland city of Tenasserim) and Tavoy, or Dawei, which had been key possessions of Ayutthaya's transpeninsular commercial network. Together with the control of Rakhine, the territorial expansion toward the south roughly tripled Myanmar's coastline on the Indian Ocean, unifying its maritime frontier and creating challenging new opportunities. The conquest of Rakhine facilitated



FIG. 21. Golden Letter from King Alaungpaya of Myanmar to King George II of Great Britain, May 7, 1756. Gold plate; gold purity between 95 and 98 percent. H. $3\frac{3}{8}$ x W. $21\frac{1}{2}$ x D. $\frac{1}{4}_{25}$ in. (8.5 x 54.7 x 0.02 cm). Adorned with 24 egg-shaped Mogok rubies fixed in 6 x 6 mm hexagonal settings on two gold ribbons. Inserted seal with *hamsa* bird. Total weight: 100 g. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek–Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Hanover, Germany: Ms IV, 571a.

contact with Bengal, and soon an inland trade road developed—crossing Rakhine by the Am Pass northward to Hsinbyugywan—which bypassed the long voyage up the Irrawaddy and its numerous tax posts. The often brutal eradication of local power that followed military conquest—a tactic to avoid losing these territories shortly after conquest—and the pressure on the conquered population to support Myanmar’s warfare through providing recruits and provisions, often resulted in huge demographic losses. Subjected people would flee en masse to more peaceful areas; for example, numerous Mon fled to Thailand, and the people of Rakhine resettled in Chittagong. Thai historians have shown that, starting with King Alaungpaya’s 1759 campaign against Ayutthaya, or Yodaya (Myanmar), Myanmar’s southward expansion was motivated by the rapidly growing exports of tin and pepper produced in the Malay peninsula. The lucrative export of Bengali opium to the peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago, as well as the trade of bird nests

controlled by the sultan of Kedah, fit into the same picture of expansion fueled by trade, where Myanmar competed not only with the Thai, but also with the British, who had opened a port at Penang in 1786. Successive Myanmar attacks against Thalang, or Phuket, failed, while the Thai, in turn, consolidated their possessions on the eastern side of the Malay peninsula, taking possession of Pattani and reasserting their control over the sultan of Kedah.

British sources testify to the existence of royal trade at the beginning of the Konbaung Dynasty. In an exquisite golden letter adorned with twenty-four rubies sent to King George II in 1756, King Alaungpaya declared that he was keen to seal friendship with the British and made friendly overtures for stable business relations with the East India Company (fig. 21). King Alaungpaya founded the port of Yangoon, or Rangoon, in 1754 and heavily lobbied both French and English traders to move their trade from Pegu’s Syriam, or Thanlyin, to his new port. The damage his own ship

suffered at the hands of Thai authorities in Tavoy was allegedly one of the events that triggered the invasion of Thailand in 1759.⁵

The 1767 conquest of Ayutthaya by King Hsinbyushin (r. 1763–1776) is considered a crucial moment in Thai national history because of its destructive impact—the fall of the city, the loss of its treasures, and the end of a dynasty—and the subsequent establishment of a new political order by the Chakri rulers based in Bangkok. The Myanmar did not intend to rule the center of Thailand, but deported several tens of thousands of people from Thailand to Ava. Resettled alongside the Chinese, Muslim, and Manipuri quarters, the Thai brought huge change to Myanmar's visual arts as musicians and dancers. They made the dramatic performance of the *Ramayana*, an epic story that was not wholly unknown in Myanmar, hugely popular as a drama. In 1789, a translation committee was tasked with translating the dance-drama, as well as other literary works from Ayutthaya and northern Thailand. The introduction of western perspective in Myanmar painting, as well as the use of gilding techniques, has been attributed to these Thai, “Yodaya” painters.⁶ Thus skilled Thai, but also Manipuri, craftsmen, musicians, and artists had a long-lasting impact on Myanmar's dance, song, and orchestral music.⁷ Furthermore, the people from Ayutthaya revived the building of sand pagodas and established it as a distinctive tradition practiced by several monasteries in Mandalay.⁸ Still, cultural inputs from the ethnic-Tai world, beyond the Thais of the Ayutthaya, under Myanmar's political control largely predated the Konbaung period to at least to the seventeenth century. Alexandra Green summarizes the complexity of this development stating, “the transfer of religious stories and practices into central Myanmar from Lan Na, the Shan States, and Sipsong Panna was the result of trade, religious exchange, and pilgrimages, royal and monastic interconnections, warfare, and the expansionist efforts of the Burmese.”⁹

Besides the commercial drives connected to the coastal expansion in the Andaman Sea already described, the political motives for Myanmar's unrelenting warfare against Thailand between 1775 and 1812, most notably King Bodawpaya's “nine-army war” of 1785–86, were linked to the reassertion of Myanmar's control over areas situated along the Upper Mekong as well as in Lan Na, where Chiang Mai had regained its autonomy with the rise of the ruler Kavila in 1774.¹⁰ During

confrontations that took place between 1803 and 1808, the Myanmar were able to defend Chiang Tung and keep a hold on the Tai principalities in southern Yunnan, but in 1804 they lost the strategic fortress Chiang Saen, which was situated on the Mekong, and with it all reasonable hope to reach out once more for control of northern Laos.

King Bodawpaya was an overconfident monarch who not only wanted to demonstrate his power through projects of territorial expansion, but also sought to excel as protector of Buddhism and a benefactor of holy Buddhist sites. What distinguished Bodawpaya from many other kings was that, from early on he took an extremely critical stance toward the state of religion and public morals, in particular the monkhood's observance of its own disciplinary norms. He put an end to a ferocious monastic debate regarding the wearing of the robe by novices, a conflict that represented at its core a competition between monastic factions that had lingered for decades. Bodawpaya failed to reestablish the monkhood, or *Sangha* (Pali), according to his own norms and moral standards, but he reset the local monastic hierarchies by enforcing reordinations throughout the kingdom with a focus on the peripheral zones. In Rakhine, Myanmar missionary monks faced local resistance when they performed reordinations to align the local *Sangha*. Surprisingly, they were also duty bound to convert the hill minorities to Buddhism. One of the king's worries touched upon the correct setting and observation of dates in the religious calendar. He scolded leading monks for their astronomical incompetence and checked land claims and chronicle accounts against the evidence of stone inscriptions that he had collected and copied. The king's father, King Alaungpaya, a newcomer to royal power, had followed the recommendations of court members and ceremonial masters of the previous Ava dynasty to establish his court. Bodawpaya, on the other hand, did not want simply to reestablish and follow ancient tradition; he wanted to go back to its roots in the textual foundations of kingship, the royal ablution ceremonies, and ritual ceremonies at the court.

The early Konbaung kings ambitiously claimed to be born to rule a domain that was not limited to what historians or geographers would define as Myanmar. Ideally, this domain would be referred to as Majjhimadesa—the Middle Land from Buddhist canonical texts, the part of central India where the Buddhist teachings flourished in Buddhism's early



FIG. 22. The communication between Myanmar and India during the Konbaung period (1752–1885) is captured in this anonymous painting, *Eight Men in Indian and Burmese Costume*. Delhi, India. 19th century. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. H. 10 x W. 15½ in. (25.4 x 39.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Gift of Dr. Julius Hoffman, 1909, 09.227.1

stages. It is also, in Indian mythology, a part of Jambudipa, the continent where humans reside. In Bodawpaya's intuitive understanding, Myanmar was a part of this imaginary-cum-historical Majjhimadesa because of the belief that not only Gotama but also previous Buddhas had paid visits to Myanmar in former cosmic cycles. It is in this context that one can interpret the king's alleged project to conquer India not simply as a political fantasy but as a logical move within his vision of cosmic duty as a Buddhist world-ruler and protector of Buddhist sites.¹¹ Visiting the places where Buddhism had its origins is defined in religious terms as a pilgrimage, but it was also part of what one scholar has called the preservation of the religion by "pristinification."¹² In 1811, a Myanmar dignitary sent by King Bodawpaya visited the temple ruins of Bodh Gaya, like many visitors from Myanmar before him. A year later, during his own visit, Francis Hamilton learned of this Myanmar mission and made the following comment: "Hence we may infer that the old man [the Burmese king] . . . has been induced to set up the doc-

trine afresh. In the year 1795, the priests of Buddha were seriously alarmed at the influence which the Brahmins had then acquired." Hamilton also reports that already some years before two royal messengers had paid a visit to India "in search of the holy places rendered remarkable by the actions of Gautama" using "books, by the assistance of which they pretended to trace the holy places and to detail their history."¹³ Missions were also sent to Varanasi, or Benares, to recruit competent Brahmin astrologers to revise the ceremonial calendar of the court and bring back Sanskrit texts to authorize such changes (fig. 22).

Bodawpaya's huge intellectual curiosity with regard to kingship and tradition was also demonstrated in his demands for ritual expertise and medical and historical texts from Rakhine after the Myanmar conquest. The foremost trophy from the 1784–85 campaign was the Mahamuni Statue, the paragon of the Rakhine kings taken to Amarapura, an invaluable statue that materialized and confirmed the king's self-acclaimed supernatural status as a predestined monarch.



FIG. 23. Indians, clad in white, were probably a common sight in Upper Myanmar in the Konbaung period (1752–1885). Mural. Ca. 1850. Kyauktawgyi Pagoda, Amarapura

The king also deported the entire Rakhine court elite to Amarapura. Among them, the *ponnas* (court Brahmins) from Rakhine replaced existing ritual experts and formed a new elite at the Konbaung court during the nineteenth century. For the court in Amarapura, conquest was not only about territorial expansion and wider access to the trade in the Bay of Bengal; the cultural appropriation of Rakhine's ritual and ceremonial knowledge was part of what the king saw as a restoration of Buddhist kingship and royal ritual in conformity with Brahminic standards (fig. 23). The royal library contained translations of chronicles from Chiang Mai, Manipur, Pegu, and Laos, lands that had been or were still part of the kingdom. Rakhine's integration into the kingdom is notably reflected in historiography with the adaptation and integration of a part of the former kingdom's historical record in the royal court chronicle.

The early Konbaung court's interest in the old Buddhist world of northern India was paralleled by the continuity of the kingdom's secular, monastic links with Sri Lanka, from which Myanmar Buddhism drew its identity, historical foun-

datations, and canonical teachings. Though the textual evidence is sparse, it is nonetheless revealing. When Francis Hamilton returned from Amarapura to Calcutta at the end of 1795, he met a man from Tavoy whom Bodawpaya had sent to Sri Lanka "to bring an account of the Temples at Anuradhapura, the ancient capital of the island."¹⁴ Although there is no other information on this remarkable visit, the object of the mission was clearly to show the king's attention to ancient Buddhist history and topography. It is well known that Myanmar Buddhist orthodoxy traces its origins back to the textual tradition cultivated at the Mahavihara monastery in Anuradhapura.¹⁵ But there is much more to the story. In late eighteenth-century Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura—an ancient archaeological site of religious significance—remained hugely important to the king of Kandy as a site of remembrance. Religious sites were generously maintained, monastic communities were revived, and roads to the old city were repaired.¹⁶ This revival of Anuradhapura calls for a comparison with restoration done simultaneously in Pagan. Bodawpaya's son, the crown prince, intended to make Pagan

his future capital and initiated restoration at several temple sites, notably at the Lokananda Pagoda, which was witnessed by the mission led by Captain Michael Symes, envoy of the East India Company to the Court of Amarapura in 1795. The existence of numerous Konbaung-era temples and libraries in Pagan, as well as eighteenth-century mural paintings in many of its temples, is also of particular interest. Pagan's architectural, artistic, and spiritual revival during the early Konbaung period should thus be reimagined within the wider context of a Buddhist nostalgia for religious sites of memory, a feeling shared in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and eventually beyond, further stressing Pagan's cultural and historical significance in the Buddhist world. Moreover, the revival of religious activities in Pagan and Kandy underscores the indissoluble links that exist between the intimate political and spiritual ambitions of King Bodawpaya on the one hand, and a wider Buddhist endeavor for reform and textual purity that was shared by leading Buddhist figures. Many were worried and frightened by the decline of the Buddhist teaching and institutions.

While trade and pilgrimage remained constant elements of Myanmar's presence in the Indian Ocean over the centuries, the development of Myanmar's relations with the outside world during the second half of the eighteenth century has traditionally been interpreted in light of the shifting balance of maritime power in the Indian Ocean. Still, while the power of the British grew in India, Myanmar's own steady expansion was nourished by maritime trade interests and ambitions to either maintain or extend its territorial control. Between 1761 and 1795, due to the destruction of the Negrais trade settlement, there was no more official contact between the East India Company and the Myanmar court.¹⁷ They were not yet on a collision course, although early signs of future confrontations appeared along the Bengal-Rakhine border, years before the British mission to Amarapura in 1795.

Similar to Myanmar's western maritime borders, the integration of parts of the country into transregional networks of trade and exchange help elucidate its relations with China. The renaissance of Myanmar's official interaction with China was a major aspect of Myanmar's relations with the outside world during the early Konbaung period. Local and regional interests emerged as the initial drivers of diplomatic action, and relations with the Chinese empire should be understood from the angle of commercial inter-

ests and Yunnan border affairs before regarding them as a matter of prestige.

In 1750, a Chinese trader named Wu Shangxian, who exploited a silver mine in the Shan-Wa border zone, led a trade delegation sent by King Mahadhammayazadhipati of Ava to the court at Beijing. The Myanmar king was led to believe that the mission, referred to as a tributary mission by the Chinese court, could ensure the support of Chinese troops for his plans, while the Chinese miner wanted to see an easing of trade conditions between Myanmar and Yunnan. As a result, Ava was foreseeably registered as an imperial vassal, but unfortunately Mahadhammayazadhipati, the last king of the Nyaung-yan dynasty, lost his power when, a year later, the capital fell into the hands of an invading army from Pegu. Still, during the previous hundred years, Myanmar kings and Chinese emperors had quietly ignored each other at the highest level, as neither side was driven by expansionist ambitions. In fact, the official objective of Wu's mission sheds some light on transregional commercial interests that had been increasing with the growth of autonomous and wealthy Chinese communities along the unclearly defined border.

The importance of this local episode pales in comparison with the events that took place fifteen years later when the Qing Empire waged war on the kingdom of Myanmar (1765–70). This was, as Yingcong Dai wrote, “the most disastrous frontier war that the Qing dynasty had ever waged.”¹⁸ While the reasons that triggered the outbreak of violence are contested, the deep causes were related to a reaffirmation of Myanmar rule over Tai-Yuan principalities (now located in the Sipsong Panna or Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture of China) that had for a long time accepted rule by China and Myanmar, paying tribute to both sovereigns. During their first encounter in Puer, Yunnan, the Myanmar troops routed the Qing provincial garrisons led by the Yunnan governor. Three ensuing campaigns put into the trusted hands of eminent Chinese and Manchu generals similarly ended in disasters despite the lessons learned during various offensives in 1766 and 1767, namely that the threat of lethal diseases, the transport of provisions, and the difficult terrain were insurmountable challenges. King Hsinbyushin (r. 1763–1776) successfully defended the border against the imperial invaders, who ultimately failed to restore the “dignity” of the Empire.¹⁹ With the retreat of the Chinese army

and the signing of a treaty, the Myanmar court hoped that the border trade would instantly resume; regrettably, however, the Chinese trade embargo lasted until 1790.

The relationship softened only after 1787, when a bogus mission, probably again initiated by Yunnan traders, was sent to Bodawpaya's court. The king then sent a mission to the Qing court, which Emperor Qianlong interpreted as a tributary mission, henceforth putting an end to the embargo. Trade with China was demonstrably of foremost concern to the Myanmar side, and Bodawpaya made great efforts to nurture relations with the Qing court.²⁰ Altogether five royal letters, written on sheets of gold, were sent to the Chinese emperor between 1787 and 1792. The magnificent reception of Chinese delegations at the court in Amarapura was self-gratifying to Bodawpaya who reveled in the Emperor's friendship. Still, some Chinese missions, dressed up as imperial delegations, may actually have been regional missions sent from Yunnan where the local government was pulled into action by the importance of the border commerce. In 1790, the Chinese also sent the king a tooth relic of the Buddha, the most valuable present they could possibly give in the eyes of the king.²¹ This form of Buddhist diplomacy was revived in recent decades to underscore the cordiality of both countries' relations: in 1955, 1994, 1996, and 2011, Buddha's tooth relic, kept in the Lingguang Temple in Beijing, was taken to Myanmar for temporary visits, and a copy is now kept in a pagoda built north of Yangon.

It is this tremendous success story of territorial expansion, unchallenged achievements on the battlefield, prestigious relations with China, symbolic appropriation of Indian Buddhist sites, and cultural enrichment that lay the groundwork for the court of Myanmar's overly self-confident stance by the time it had to face the threatening British power in Assam and on the Chittagong-Rakhine border. The crushing defeat Myanmar experienced in the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–26) set the kingdom on a difficult track of adjusting itself to a rapidly changing international context, as its military prowess and capacity to negotiate the control of widely distant lands were insufficient to face the challenges of western imperialism. Nonetheless, the British invasion came at a huge cost for the British invaders, even provoking an economic crisis in India a few years later. Though the scope of Myanmar's international action was vastly diminished during the nineteenth century, Myanmar was far from



FIG. 24. Portrait of Mr. Mackertich J. Mines, an Armenian official in the court of King Mindon (r. 1853–1878), painted during Arthur Purves Phayre's mission to Upper Myanmar, 1855. Watercolor with pen and ink. By Colesworthy Grant. British Library, London

isolating itself or becoming isolated (fig. 24). The singular focus of western observers on Myanmar's often weak kings has unfortunately affected the general perception of the late Konbaung kingdom (fig. 25). Though it could not, ultimately, ensure its own survival, one should note that the political and ideological reform promoted by clear-minded advisers at the Konbaung court pushed the kingdom closer to modernity. Moreover, the activities of Myanmar monasticism within the Theravada Buddhist world were never interrupted, and the flourishing of Buddhist art and architecture during the nineteenth century and beyond are proof that Myanmar's cultural identity remained strong and creative. Still, it is not just in the framework of present political bor-



FIG. 25. Arthur Purves Phayre and a Burmese Minister meeting in Calcutta, 1854. Watercolor on paper. H. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x W. 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (20.5 x 24.5 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 181-1950

ders but in the often neglected, yet connected, transregional histories, and the memories of multiple ethnic pasts in the country's shifting frontiers that scholarly efforts may be rewarded with a fuller and deeper understanding of Myanmar's relations with the outside world and the genealogy of its art and culture.

NOTES

1 Harvey, *History of Burma*, 284, 290.

2 *Census of India 1911, Volume IX, Burma, Part 1*, 74–75; Mus, "Lecture at Yale," November 8, 1966.

3 More recently, Konbaung expansionism and warfare have not played much of a role in Myanmar's nationalist historiography because postcolonial leftist governments and regional realpolitik were hardly sympathetic to triumphalist myths of conquest and neighborly invasions.

4 Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles and Strange Parallels*. Thant Myint-U, *Making of Modern Burma*, 88.

5 King Alaungpaya's main foe, King Banya Dala of Pegu, was a trader to South India, as his correspondence with the East India Company in Madras reveals.

6 Green, "From Gold Leaf to Buddhist Hagiographies."

7 Beemer, "Creole City in Mainland Southeast Asia," 212–46.

8 *Ibid.*, 185–92.

9 Green, "From Gold Leaf to Buddhist Hagiographies," 337.

10 A term used by Thai historians and not widely used outside Thai historiography, "nine-army war" reflects the war from the Thai perspective, with invaders coming from nine directions.

11 This explanation does not exclude alternate interpretations. During the second half of his rule, the king lacked restraint with regard to the way he dealt with the Buddhist *Sangha*, which he considered as fully corrupted. In 1801, he ordered the monks to earn their own living, forbidding people to offer them food. See Pongpattana, "King Bodawpaya of Konbaung."

12 Frisch, "Making of a Buddhist Ecumene."

13 Hamilton, "Description of the Ruins of Buddha Gáya."

14 Hamilton, "Account of a Map," 228.

15 Frisch, "Making of a Buddhist Ecumene," 385.

16 Sivasundaram, "Buddhist Kingship, British Archaeology," 117.

17 Fort Negrais was a trade settlement that the East India Company had erected in 1752 at Cape Negrais, the southwestern point of the Irrawaddy Delta.

18 Dai, "Disguised Defeat," 145.

19 *Ibid.*, 151–58.

20 Grabowski and Wichasin, *Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng*.

21 Harvey, *History of Burma*, 279; Pasquet, "Quand l'Empereur de Chine écrivait à son jeune frère."