

ON THE CHANGING ANGLO-SAXON IMAGE OF BURMA

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THE RENAISSANCE DEPARTURE FROM THE ROME-CENTRIC outlook of the Middle Ages opened West European minds to appreciation of exotic cultures and societies. By sixteenth century standards of sea-faring nations, the Asia which they discovered did not seem backward but advanced—even when the main purpose of observation and description was commercial prospecting. The earliest English traveller's report about Burma—the narrative of Fitch¹—repeats the appreciation (probably, even the over-estimation) for coastal Burma's capital, Pegu, found in earlier Italian and Portuguese reports about that maritime center.

It was not before the coming of the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of unmistakable superiority of British power, that the observers' own standards permitted the consideration of countries like Burma as backward and benighted. What is probably the last positive evaluation of the Burmese Empire by a British observer—the original Embassy Report of Symes—was written in 1795. But even in the early 1820's, the independent British merchant, Gouger, found it worth noticing that Burma's literacy rate was higher than that of Britain at that time.² Having been discouraged from trading in India because of the British East India Company's monopoly, he was pleased by the reception that he and his merchandise found at the Burmese Court. The British declaration of war on Burma in 1824, surprised this lone Englishman; it reduced him to the status of an "Interned Alien" in a Burmese prison, under almost subhuman conditions—the tropical counterpart of British prison situations of the time of Dickens. It was less the horrible experience that disappointed Gouger than did the loss of his private Burma market, a loss resulting precisely from the British victories in the war of 1824-1826. The Burmans appear as arrogant opponents and savage but brave—sometimes desperate—warriors in such British narratives as that of Snodgrass.³

The first Anglo-Burmese War cost the British East India Company more casualties than most of the Indian wars. Perhaps, its best known victim was the Baptist missionary, Adoniram Judson, of Sunday School fame. In 1812, he had come to Burma to preach the gospel of evangelical revivalism. Judson found the Burmese and their Court rather a tolerant but indifferent audience. The British declaration of war against Burma, however, made a martyr of this American missionary. Not understanding too well the difference between

¹ Ralph Fitch, "The Voyage of Mr. Ralph Fitch Merchant of London, to Ormuz and So to Goa in the East Indies, 1583 to 1591," in *Pinkerton's Voyages*, IX (London, 1811).

² Michael Symes, *An Account of An Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava* (London, 1809); Henry Gouger, *Personal Narratives of Two Years' Imprisonment in Burmah* (London, 1860).

³ J. J. Snodgrass, *Narrative of the Burmese War* (London, 1827).

British and American speakers of English and knowing only that Judson had read about the impending British invasion without warning his host (the Burmese king) as well as learning that he had received remittances through a British merchant, the Burmese government mistook him for a spy. Judson suffered the horrors of imprisonment equal to those of Gouger. However, he was spared the fate of those taken, or mistaken for, spies during war time in modern countries. Yet, Judson was known to consider war as the best (if not the only) means to bring the blessings of Christianity and Civilization to benighted Burma whose capital he called the throne of the Prince of Darkness.⁴ Yet, Burma studies are still indebted to Judson, (who acquired an enviable mastery of literary Burmese) for his Burmese-English Dictionary. Many of his missionary successors did not reach his intellectual caliber but have outdone him instead in zeal, a zest that made no fetish out of empathy or even tolerance. Thus, still at the beginning of our century, the Baptist missionary, Cochrane, gathered as "fruitage of fifteen years of war among the Burmese" that "the natives are so sodden in vice; so dull of head and slow of heart to understand and believe."⁵ To such particular ministers of the Gospel, Buddhist monks as well as sculptors of Buddha statues appeared to be "emissaries of Satan" or else as the "Blight of Asia," who were "seemingly equal in intelligence to their graven images." With such particular standards, the message of Buddhism came to be described as "eternal death" and the state of the Buddhists as "utter darkness."

Comparably more understanding and tolerance for the Burmese was shown by some learned Catholic missionaries. The most remarkable of them was the Italian Sangermano, who lived in the country shortly before Judson, and left the most valuable Western account of early 19th century Burma.⁶ In this tradition, the Catholic bishop Bigandet published, in the 1860's, an account of Buddhism as practised in Burma.⁷ Its evaluation of the Buddhist monkhood, though by no means uncritical, is of high objectivity. Without departing from his dogmatic position, the author remained fair in his value judgments. To the same generation of scholarly observers of the Burmese scene, belonged the German ethnologist Adolf Bastian. While travelling in upper Burma during the 1850's, he was called by king Mindon to his court and was given, by royal command, instruction in the Burmese language—being expected, in return, to instruct the Burmese court physicians in modern medicine. Bastian had digests made from the Burmese Chronicle. Though his history is outdated, his communications from Mon sources retain some value, so do his direct observations of Burmese life. As an observer, this pioneer of German ethnology was in a position to throw light on the remarkable personality of Burma's penultimate king Mindon, with whom he debated about the ethics of self-defense. Though Anglo-Saxon historians of Burma usually

⁴ Adoniram Judson, Letter of November 7, 1816 in F. Wayland, *The Memoir of the Life and Labor of Rev. Adoniram Judson* (Boston, 1853), I, 183.

⁵ H. E. Cochrane, *Among the Burmans: A Record of Fifteen Years of Work and Fruitage* (New York, 1904), 157.

⁶ Father Vincentius Sangermano, *A Description of the Burmese Empire* (Rome, 1833).

⁷ P. A. Bigandet, *The Life or Legend of Gaudama the Buddha of the Burmese* (2 vols; Rangoon, 1866; London, 1880).

ignore Bastian, his accounts remain one of the main contemporary testimonies about Mindon's Burma.⁸

King Mindon, one of Burma's exemplary Buddhist rulers, was visited and characterized in a scholarly way by the British Colonel Yule, who accompanied the Embassy of British India's Governor-General to the Burmese court in 1855, under Phayre. Yule's *Mission to the Court of Ava*,⁹ has been called the finest single British contribution to Burmese studies. However, Yule's reading was confined to European sources. In contrast, Phayre—Chief Commissioner of British Burma from 1862 to 1867—was an outstanding Burmese scholar, with an outlook high above the self-satisfied ethnocentrism of his contemporaries. Phayre's *History of Burma* (1883)¹⁰ is mainly a political and military narrative and a record of violence, based on the Burmese royal chronicle which king Mindon gave the historical writer. Phayre's reconstruction of Arakanese chronology is still accepted. His image of Burmese history as a struggle of princes and peoples, with scant consideration for cultural and social dimensions, dominates Anglo-Saxon writing to the present. However, his standards have hardly been reached by subsequent British soldier-administrators, officials and merchants, who wrote about Burma as participants or apologists of the colonial establishment—an establishment about which Phayre had preferred not to write.

In contrast, Commissioner Crosthwaite thus described his achievements in suppressing Burmese resistance to the British Conquest:

Weight was to be given to the *fait accompli* and to considerations of expediency rather than to those of abstract right or justice. . . . Unless men belonging to the village who were now dacoiting [resisting] surrendered within a fixed time, all their relations and sympathizers would be. . . removed to some distant place. . . . Many surrendered in order to save their people from being removed. . . .¹¹

The bloodshed involved in the final British Conquest is merely glossed over in such British memoirs as White's "Civil Servant in Burma."¹² It largely consists of anecdotal episodes of inter-British colonial life. In spite of occasional glimpses of Burmese individuals, the Burmese people remain discreetly in the background—a kind of stage screen for accounts about routine activities of colonials. This is typical of the way the vast majority of the British living in Burma describe their experience in that country.

An exception to this pattern and, outstanding among the few British accounts of Burma, are the works of Scott. Against the background of rich military and administrative experience, he compiled much factual information in the *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*. The most important of Scott's numerous writings is *The Burman, His Life and Notions*, which appeared under the pseudonym of Shway Yoe and has been republished in many

⁸ Adolf Bastian, "Reisen in Birma in den Jahren 1861-1862," *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, II (Leipzig, 1866).

⁹ Sir Henry Yule, *A Narrative of the Mission to the Court of Ava* (London, 1855).

¹⁰ Sir Arthur P. Phayre, *History of Burma. . . and Arakan* (London, 1883).

¹¹ Charles Crosthwaite, *Pacification of Burma* (London, 1912).

¹² H. T. White, *A Civil Servant in Burma* (London, 1913).

editions.¹³ Remaining a classic of descriptive cultural anthropology from a time before there was such a discipline, it conveys a rich pageant of Burmese customs and beliefs on the eve of acculturation, following the British conquest. Shway Yoe presented his *Burman, His Life and Notions* with charming but unmistakable traits of childishness, primitivity and immaturity. Therefore, his work is considered, in present-day nationalistic Burma, as one not free of colonial bias.

The following generation of British readers of a traveller's account, romantically entitled *Peacocks and Pagoda*, already accepted being told that

the average Englishman or American is slow to realize that an outlook different from his own is even possible; to bring him to see life through oriental eyes, though ever so dimly, is an achievement which fully justifies a certain amount of exaggeration.¹⁴

Such exaggerations may have been conveyed by Fielding-Hall, one of the most widely read British authors on Burma. This *fin de siècle* era was, in European intellectual life, a time of disappointment in Modern Civilization, Progress and Historical Christianity, a time when Europe developed self-doubts about her civilization and mission. Marxism, rationalist agnosticism (if not atheism) and Nietzschean attitudes, were challenging middle-class respectability and the liberal and missionary values by which Victorian empire building had been justifying itself. Rationalistic critique of the historical Christianity of the Churches affected Fielding-Hall, a colonial official serving in British Burma after its aggressive Pacification, a Burma whose Buddhism enchanted him. With emphatic sensitivity of the romantic, Fielding-Hall described the personality of the Burmese people in his book, *The Soul of a People*, the influence of which—on the reawakening of Burmese national consciousness—was not unlike that of the German romantic Herder's (1744-1803) cultural and political activation of Slavic nations in the nineteenth century:

What was Buddhism doing? What help did it give to its believers in their extremity? It gave none. Think of a peasant lying there in the ghostly dim-lit fields waiting to attack us at the dawn. Where was his help? He thought, perhaps, of his king deported, his village invaded, his friends killed, himself reduced to the subject of a far-off queen. He would fight—yes, even though his faith told him not. There was no help there. His was no faith to strengthen his arm, to strengthen his aim, to be his shield in the hour of danger.

If he died, in the strife of the morning's fight he were to be killed, if a bullet were to still his heart, or a lance to pierce his chest, there was no hope for him of the glory of heaven. No, but every fear of hell, for he was sinning against the laws of righteousness—'Thou shalt take no life.' There is no exception to that at all, not even for a patriot fighting for his country.

And so the Burmese peasant had to fight his own fight in 1885 alone. His king was gone, his government broken up, he had no leaders. He had no god to stand beside him when he fired at the foreign invaders and when he lay a-dying with a bullet in his throat he had no one to open to him the gates of heaven.¹⁵

¹³ Yoe Shway, *The Burman, His Life and Notions* (London, 1910); J. G. Scott, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States* (5 vols.; Rangoon, 1900).

¹⁴ Paul Edmonds, *Peacocks and Pagoda* (London, 1924), 3-4.

¹⁵ H. Fielding-Hall, *The Soul of a People* (London, 1903).

A poet's sensitivity and romantic empathy, enriched by unique scholarly knowledge, inspired the life work of Gordon Luce. Having originally come to Burma as a lecturer in English literature, he became captivated by the atmosphere of the Burmese Middle Ages and soon commanded the scholarly tools for penetration into the country's past, the literary and old Burmese, the Mon, Pali, and Chinese plus numerous tribal languages, and particularly the epigraphy made accessible through the activities of British Burma's Archaeological Department. It is due to Gordon Luce that medieval Burma of the Papan dynasty (1044-1287), previously treated by some colonial amateur antiquarians, has been opened to historical scholarship. His is the greatest single contribution that any Westerner has ever made to the knowledge of Burma. We owe a great majority of the research monographs on the history, sociology, economics, religion, anthropology, architecture and literature of old Burma to Gordon Luce—frequently cooperating with his Burmese brother-in-law, the Pali scholar, Pe Maung Tin. An example of their cooperation is a translation from the Mon inscription of king Alaungsitthu (1131 A.D.):

But I would build a causeway sheer athwart
 the river of Samsara, and all folk would speed
 Across until they reach the Blessed City.
 I myself would cross
 And drag the drowning over...
 Ay, myself tamed, I would tame the wilful;
 Comforted, comfort the timid;
 Wakened, wake the asleep;
 Cool, cool the burning;
 Freed, set free the bound;
 Tranquil and led by the good doctrines
 I would hatred calm.
 ... As the best of men,
 Forsaking worldly fame and worthless wealth,
 Fled, for he saw their meaning...
 So would I
 All worldly wealth forsaking draw me near
 Religion, and the threefold course ensue.
 ... Beholding man's distress I would put forth
 My energies and save men; spirits, worlds, from
 Seas of endless change.

Gordon Luce has thus formulated the feeling conveyed by monuments of Pagan:

Though Alaungsitthu's Cave is decked
 with prayer more sweet than lotus-scroll
 Though Damayan's great glooms reflect
 The terror of Narathu's soul,¹⁶
 This face a thousand thousand spires
 Called up along the plain and still
 With leaf of flaming gold it fires
 The crest of every tangled hill.

¹⁶ The parricide Narathu (reigning 1167-1170) built the Damayan Pagoda.

Close-huddled fold and kings who dared
 In myriad temples, mile on mile,
 To soar beyond Samsara, spared
 No palace room, no civil pile;
 Impersonal, unseen, the fire
 of life, whose tinder all things are,
 Mid smoking jungle lifts its spire,
 Where mind and matter writhe and jar.¹⁷

If Gordon Luce has opened Medieval Burma to historical scholarship, the novelist Maurice Collis has popularized Burmese historical and legendary themes among readers of fiction. Continuing a tradition which saw in the East a land of mystery and romance, Collis has reached a considerable audience which otherwise would have had no notion about Burma's past. His Burmese experience started in the field of law: Collis served as a magistrate in British Burma. But British colonial opinion forced him to resign because he had given an English driver, guilty of causing the death of a native in a traffic accident, the same sentence as had been received by a native motorist who had unintentionally caused fatal injury to a British pedestrian.

Burmese inequity, cruelty and arrogance, constitute a recurring refrain in Harvey's *History of Burma* which tends to be a subtle and indirect apology for the British conquerors of such a barbarous country: Burmese medieval *practices* are measured by the standards of Victorian *ethical theory* rather than by the practices of Henry VIII and other Tudors. Such bias is exemplified by Harvey's acceptance of a fantastic Portuguese report about a seventeenth century king of Arakan, sacrificing 6,000 human hearts, because some native gentlemen, of this author's acquaintance, told him that "the sacrifice is true to type, although they do not cite other instances. . ."¹⁸ However, Harvey, who had a rich experience in Burma's colonial administration, did use as sources, not only the standard chronicles of the Burmese kings, but also a number of unpublished local chronicles in Burmese and Mon languages. He did have a command of literary Burmese which subsequent British and American experts did not take the trouble to acquire.

Professor D. G. E. Hall—the principal mid-twentieth century British authority on Burmese history—used for his primary research contributions not sources in the Burmese language but English and Dutch archival materials. His main contributions to knowledge deal with activities of the mercantilistic Dutch and British East India companies in Burma as well as with internal colonial policy correspondence between the British administrators themselves. In his short history of Burma,¹⁹ 80 pages are devoted to 120 years of British and Burmese relationships and British rule over Burma. And 1,200 years of pre-British Burmese history are dealt with in almost the same space: 96 pages. His image of Burmese history is clearly Anglo-centric. In his book, *Europe*

¹⁷ Gordon Luce and Pe Maung Tin, "Shwegugyi Pagoda Inscription"; Luce, "Greater Temples of Pagan," in *Burma Research Society, Fiftieth Anniversary Publications*, No. 2 (Rangoon, 1960), 382, 383, 176-178.

¹⁸ G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma* (London, 1925).

¹⁹ D. G. E. Hall, *Burma* (New York: Hutchinson's University Library, British Empire History Series, 1950).

and Burma,²⁰ published in 1945—on the eve of the liquidation of the British Empire—the Burmese chroniclers are compared to the propagandists of Dr. Goebbels: the Burmese chronicle is alleged to have explained the cessions of territory to the English (in 1826), not through military defeats, but through the Burmese king's compassion and generosity. The fact that there is no such passage in Burmese chronicles has been discovered only after this alleged "quotation" had served generations of Anglo-Saxon historians of Burma²¹ for the debunking of a people which had resisted the Empire—without their having noticed that *if* such a passage had existed, it would have been an expression of the Buddhist ethos of an ideal ruler.

The religious and aesthetic dimensions of Burmese culture, as well as primary research in Burmese history, have been cultivated mainly through the Burma Research Society (founded in 1910). In its Journal have appeared most scholarly contributions to Burmese studies, including the pioneering writings of Gordon Luce and some of the monographs of John Furnivall who is the most learned of the Burma experts in the field of agrarian economy.

Furnivall had served in Burma under the Indian Civil Service up to the rank of District Commissioner. His outstanding contributions rest on his authoritative knowledge of Burmese agrarian problems. He had decisive influence on the introduction of socialistic—particularly Fabian—literature into post-Depression Burma. Although Furnivall's writings comprise topics like Burmese literature, folklore and religion, his outlook was that of an economist and, particularly, of an administrator who experienced and described the socially destructive impact of colonial relationships on Burmese society.²² Yet, Furnivall's frame of reference was determined and limited by English utilitarian values. This socialist has felt that "the majority would not know what it would be voting for" and wanted the franchise to be restricted. For Burma, Furnivall desired the kind of regime that would "not give to the people what they want. . . but what they need."²³ He had little interest or appreciation for the Buddhist values of Burmese culture. Folk Buddhism was for him associated with "some religious fanatic's absurd propaganda."²⁴

Similar attitudes of American Burma experts, like John Cady, seem to have been determined by a Baptist missionary background. The tradition of Baptist missionary education, as represented by the Judson College of Rangoon, cannot easily grant the existence of a living Buddhist source of Burmese cultural traditions as alternative to Protestant utilitarian values. But it does concede to its community and, by extension, to Burma the right to political independence. In John Cady's *History of Modern Burma*,²⁵ the author departs from earlier patterns of contrasting the achievements of British colonial rules with the cruelties and backwardness of pre-British Burma. He puts the colonial period into historical perspective, as a far reaching but passing episode in

²⁰ D. G. E. Hall, *Europe and Burma* (Oxford, 1946).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² John Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice* (New York, 1956).

²³ Great Britain, *Burma Reforms Committee, Record of Evidence* (London, 1922), I, 4ff.; III, 219ff., 228ff., quoted by Cady in *A History of Modern Burma*, (Ithaca, 1960), 226ff. and in J. S. Furnivall, *The Governance of Modern Burma* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1950), x.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Cady, *op. cit.*

Burma's history. His book contains a reliable account of Burma's independence struggle. This cannot be said about the American Leroy Christian, who fell in the war against Japan: the latter's handbook—*Modern Burma*²⁶ a descriptive presentation of the state of pre-war British Burma, underemphasizes the social disintegration brought about by colonial rule. Leroy Christian did not take the Burmese nationalists seriously enough. Events superseded such evaluations. The handbook which continues his *Modern Burma* is Hugh Tinker's *Union of Burma* which recalls, with sympathy and understanding, the rule of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League and of Prime Minister U Nu. While expressing appreciation for U Nu's Buddhist ethos, Tinker's liberal image of Burma is limited by his purely political categories. As to sources, he has been frequently satisfied with a Rangoon newspaper in the English language. Cultural factors in ideologies and even ethnological factors of Burmese nationality problems are passed over in an elegantly cavalier way.

Among the obstacles to more depth of perspective is the reluctance of Burmese informants to discuss political Buddhism as "too hot a subject" (or to speak about non-modern and non-rational spheres of Burmese culture) in order not to let their country appear "backward." Allegedly, such attitudes induced the destruction of some volumes of the Burma Research Society Journal. They certainly inspired attempts of censoring authorities to prevent the export of Burmese books on folk-beliefs. Against the long background of anti-Burmese European writing, there are pre-occupations that—if research by foreign scholars be allowed in Burma—might right the wrong. From these results, a notion has developed that research about Burma should wait until the Burmese themselves can produce it—such as the Burmese scholars Maung Maung, Htin Aung and Than Tun²⁷ have already done (the latter, precisely, in the "Humanities"). On the other hand, modern Burmese studies in America—as part of the so-called Area Studies—have developed into a preserve of social scientists, particularly the type of political scientists who consider cultural factors to be irrelevant abstractions and who are fully satisfied with descriptive treatment of outward political processes, starting with the 20th century.

One of the main pre-occupations of such social scientists' Area Studies is a search for political models. Thus, we are informed by Leach, that since the cultural patterns of the valley Burmans are determined by Indian models, the social patterns of the hill minority peoples must be understood in terms of Chinese models.²⁸ Another social scientist—Lucien Pye—has revealed how much of the Burmese political character is determined by tensions between patterns of Burmese infantile experience and the disciplinary experience of Buddhist monastery school education. Furthermore, Pye thinks that to have discovered the Burmese Buddhist's concern for the ultimate is to discover

²⁶ John Leroy Christian, *Modern Burma: A Survey of Political and Economic Development* (Toronto, 1942).

²⁷ Maung Maung, *Burma in the Family of Nations* (Amsterdam, 1956). Htin Aung, *Burmese Law Tales: Legal... Burmese folk-lore* (London, 1962). Than Tun, "Social Life in Burma, 1044-1287," *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, pts. i-ii, 37-47.

²⁸ Edmund Leach, "The Frontiers of Burma," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, III, No. 1 (October, 1960), 51.

the concern for inherently "innocent things." Buddhist moralistic injunctions of Burmese statesmen, like U Nu, have "to his mind" something provocative. To Lucian Pye, "the Burmese insensitivity to the fact that their moralizing might be annoying to others suggests that such activities are designed less as a means of possibly controlling others than as a means of suggesting the innocence of their own intentions."²⁹ As seventeenth and eighteenth century Enlightenment notions about "Human Nature" die hard, cultural deviations from our own patterns have been interpreted as a sign of lack of sophistication in Burmese socialism—with its acceptance of Buddhist values.³⁰

Much, if not most American research on Burma, has been performed or stimulated by experts, whose relationship with Burma began by some professional residence in that country, not by theoretical interest in it. Among the American economic advisers to the Burmese government, Walinsky has produced, from his experience, a valuable monograph about the problems of Burma's planned economy,³¹ while Frank Trager contributed important works about Burma's welfare state programs.³² Trager has also edited several symposia which show considerable understanding and sympathy for the Burmese view point. Even more are the Anglo-centric conventional images of Burmese history discarded in Dorothy Woodman's *Making of Modern Burma*. Not only does she not dwell on Burmese cruelties (in the Harvey tradition), but she actually goes out of her way to expose Victorian British methods of pressuring the remaining part of the independent Burmese kingdom into isolation from the outside world. Her revelations about the terroristic methods used by the British conquerors to break native resistance after 1885,³³ are based on the (otherwise forgotten) British contemporary reports of Grattan Geary³⁴ which have been confirmed by the diaries of the Russian visiting Indologist, Minayev.

An attempt to see and present modernity's impact on Burma's political ideas, in the context of its Buddhist cultural frame of reference, is made in Sarkisyanz's *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution* (published outside the United States, in the Netherlands).³⁵ Its self-imposed limitations consist largely in its treatment of Buddhist impact, without much sociological consideration for the non-Buddhist animistic attitudes in Burmese culture, which have been examined through the anthropological field-work of Michael Mendelson.³⁶

²⁹ L. Pye, *Politics, Personality and Nation Building* (London, 1962).

³⁰ George Torten, "Buddhism and Socialism in Japan and Burma," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, II, No. 3 (April, 1960), 297, 303.

³¹ L. J. Walinsky, *Economic Development in Burma* (New York, 1962).

³² Frank Trager (ed.), "Burma," *Human Relations Area Files* (New Haven, 1960); F. Trager, *Building a Welfare State in Burma, 1946-1956* (New York, 1958).

³³ Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Modern Burma* (London, 1963).

³⁴ Grattan Geary, *Burma After the Conquest* (London, 1886).

³⁵ Emanuel Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution* (The Hague, 1965).

³⁶ Michael Mendelson, "A Messianic Association in Upper Burma," *Bulletin of the London School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXIV, pt. iii (1961).

Both approaches are still not typical, while “religious” materials continue being relegated to the “Humanities” and, as such, are given little consideration in Burmese (unlike the more advanced Indonesian) Area Studies. However, R. Smith’s *Religion and Politics in Burma* represents a step away from such conventions. In it, even remote origins, like the development of Buddhist kingship in medieval Ceylon, are not ignored. But this book appeared only a few months ago.³⁷

³⁷ R. Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma* (Princeton, 1965).