

# Burma (Myanmar) since the 1988 uprising: *A select bibliography*

Third Edition

Andrew Selth



# Griffith Asia Institute

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A select bibliography

(Third Edition)

Andrew Selth

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

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AAS	Association of Asian Studies
ABSDF	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
AIIA	Australian Institute of International Affairs
ALTSEAN Burma	Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma
ANU	Australian National University
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASP	American Studies Program
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCP	Burma Communist Party
BIMSTEC	Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation
BRS	Burma Research Society
BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party
C4ADS	Centre for Advanced Defence Studies
CBI	China-Burma-India (Theatre)
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
DAB	Democratic Alliance of Burma
ERIA	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
ExPP-ACT	Ex-Political Prisoners - Assistance, Counselling and Training
EU	European Union
GAI	Griffith Asia Institute
IAS	Institute of Asian Studies
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDE	Institute for Developing Economies
IIPS	Institute for International Policy Studies
IMDb	International Movie Database
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRASEC	Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
ISIS	Institute of Security and International Studies
ISJP	International Society for Japanese Philately
JBRIS	Journal of the Burma Research Society
MTA	Mong Tai Army
NBR	National Bureau of Asian Research
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIAS	Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
NIU	Northern Illinois University
NLD	National League for Democracy
NUS	National University of Singapore
OB/ML	Online Burma/Myanmar Library
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PACSEA	Publications on Ancient Civilization in South East Asia
POW	Prisoner of War
RAF	Royal Air Force
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RSC	Refugees Study Centre
SABREB	South Asia and Burma Retrospective Bibliography

SEAC	South East Asia Command
SEAMEO	Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organisation
SIIA	Swedish Institute of International Affairs
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SSSNY	School for Shan State Nationalities Youth
UG	Underground
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNLD	United Nationalities League for Democracy
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
US	United States (of America)
USDA	Union Solidarity and Development Association
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
WHO	World Health Organization
WPF	World Peace Foundation
YMCA	Young Men’s Christian Association
YSPS	Yangon School of Political Science
YWAM	Youth With A Mission

# Preface to the Third Edition

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Since the first version of this bibliography was released in 2012, the outpouring of books, reports and other publications about Burma (Myanmar) that was noted in earlier editions has continued. Indeed, over the past few years it seems to have picked up in both pace and range, although not always in quality. As one observer bluntly put it a few years ago, 'There is a vast quantity of literature on Burma/Myanmar, some of it quite unreadable'.<sup>1</sup> While many of these works have been posted online, and are only available in soft copy, most have been released in hard copy, and in English. Even if the print run was quite small, this has entitled them to a mention in this third and expanded edition. The newest works fall into a number of categories, which can easily be identified by comparing the contents pages above with those of earlier editions. Broadly speaking, they cover academic works, official reports, travelogues and tourist guides, books for the general reader, and older works that have been reprinted to meet a popular demand.

For example, the chapter on Burma's politics and government continues to grow apace, a result at least in part of the close attention being paid to the country's transition from a military dictatorship to a quasi-democratic administration. The advent of President Thein Sein's reformist government in 2011 and the election of a National League for Democracy (NLD) government in 2015 prompted a surge of publications on the country's rapidly changing political, economic and social landscape. There have also been several new books about Burma's once revered opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, who is now the country's de facto head of state.<sup>2</sup> Given her government's failure to meet unrealistically high popular expectations, and her dramatic fall from grace in the eyes of the international community (due mainly to her disappointing response to the so-called 'Rohingya question'), it can be expected that more publications on the Nobel peace laureate and her turbulent time in office will appear over the next few years.<sup>3</sup>

Also, as Burma has opened up to foreign aid and investment, there has been an increase in the number of reports by governments, international organisations and consultants interested in Burma's political reforms, economic growth and social development.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, a host of reports have been produced by human rights groups and bodies devoted to other causes, such as environmental protection. Most can be found online, but small numbers of hard copies have usually been produced for governments, donors and other interested parties. Many of these works provide useful summaries of past developments, current situations and future plans. They also enjoy the benefit of being published in a more timely fashion than many academic studies. That said, the increased access now available to Burma-watchers carries certain risks. Closer personal contacts with key players and a greater familiarity with local developments can result in deeper knowledge and more penetrating analyses of complex issues. However, they can also lead to narrower perspectives and a greater tendency towards personal bias.

There has been a marked increase in books written by, and for, foreign visitors to Burma, the number of which rose from some 310,000 in 2010 to nearly three million in 2017.<sup>5</sup> Once again, these works are a mixed bag, reflecting what Penny Edwards has called the 'overnight expert syndrome', which has 'fed a rapid demand for books on contemporary Myanmar'.<sup>6</sup> One noteworthy trend has been the flood of guides, travelogues and memoirs by tourists and temporary residents, on whom Burma has clearly made a strong impression. Many are rather shallow and descriptive, bringing to mind Rudyard Kipling's 'Globe-trotter', 'who "does" kingdoms in days and writes books upon them in weeks'.<sup>7</sup> In keeping with most memoirs – and current travel brochures – about Burma, they often emphasise nostalgic and romantic themes.<sup>8</sup> This trend is also seen in books of photographs, which tend to consist of clichéd shots of picturesque pagodas, smiling children and colourful ethnic minorities.<sup>9</sup> That said, there are also some notable collections of high quality images which record Burma's traditional culture, natural environment and colonial-era architecture, all of which are under threat.<sup>10</sup>

The number of English language novels about Burma is increasing. Once again, the quality is highly variable.<sup>11</sup> While there are some notable exceptions, the plots tend to be banal and rather predictable, with Burma serving simply as an exotic *locus dramaticus*. Another interesting development has been the publication of several graphic novels about Burma, including a number that look closely at the contemporary political scene. Most are high quality productions, with excellent illustrations, but not all have been listed in the bibliography as their texts are not in English.<sup>12</sup> There has also been an increase in the number of books about Burma intended for juvenile



readers. They include introductions to Burma's geography and culture, and illustrated stories based on Burmese folk tales. There are also several short biographies of Aung San Suu Kyi that are aimed at children. Once again, this trend seems to reflect both the increased attention being paid to Burma in Western countries and the much larger number of people prompted to write about the place, for various reasons.

Also worthy of note is the increasing number of references to Burma, and even the inclusion of separate chapters about Burma, in broader studies of the region, and of particular subjects. There was a time when, books about insurgencies in Southeast Asia aside, such wide-ranging surveys usually ignored Burma or only referred to it in passing. For decades, there was neither the interest nor the expertise available to give it closer attention. Even standard textbooks about the region lacked significant Burma-related content.<sup>13</sup> This is no longer the case. For example, Anthony Reid's stimulating new history of Southeast Asia expertly folds critical aspects of Burma into his wider narrative of developments in the region.<sup>14</sup> There is a useful chapter about Burma in *Khaki Capital*, a recent study of the political economy of armed forces in Southeast Asia.<sup>15</sup> *The Everyday Political Economy of Southeast Asia*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2016, includes a chapter on trade union politics in Burma.<sup>16</sup>

As noted in earlier editions of this bibliography, there is a growing number of works written in English, or translated into English, by Burmese authors. Most major bookshops in Yangon now have a few shelves of memoirs, travel books and other works by local writers, doubtless encouraged by the influx of tourists, the easing of restrictions on freedom of expression and, probably, the increased availability of modern printing equipment. These books tend to be produced by boutique publishing houses, and in small numbers, but together they offer new and interesting perspectives on aspects of Burma's history, politics and society.<sup>17</sup> That said, the field is still quite narrow. One Western scholar visiting Burma wrote in 2015 that 'I was surprised at how difficult it was to find translated contemporary literature by Burmese writers'.<sup>18</sup> This echoed an earlier comment by the author Wendy Law-Yone, who noted in 2010 that 'precious few [books in Burmese – novels especially] have been translated into English'.<sup>19</sup> As the following checklist indicates, this situation is gradually improving, as local novelists, poets and artists gain wider recognition. One notable example of this trend is *Burma Storybook*, edited by Petr Lom and others.<sup>20</sup>

All these developments must be counted as positive contributions to the broad field of Burma studies, but another trend is a cause for concern. It used to be common practice for the personal libraries of major figures in Burma studies to be purchased by institutions. The British Library, Cornell University, the University of Heidelberg and the National Library of Australia, among others, acquired excellent collections of books, manuscripts and ephemera from former officials, academics and others with close connections to Burma.<sup>21</sup> Even before the country became fashionable in the West, there was a wish to preserve its scholarly and literary heritage. Albeit at a slower pace, this practice continued into the 1970s and 1980s. More recently, however, libraries, universities and research institutes seem to be increasingly reluctant to acquire hard copies of books, either to fill gaps in their collections, or to keep them up to date. The reasons given for this attitude vary between institutions, but usually start with a shortage of funds and shelf space. It would be a tragedy for Burma studies if existing collections were allowed to decline in value, or significant private libraries were broken up, simply because no institutions were willing or able to give them a home.<sup>22</sup>

This edition of the bibliography, like those published in 2012 and 2015, only lists books, reports and monographs that have been published in English and in hard copy since 1988. For other works, including e-books, online publications, articles and short items, readers will need to look elsewhere. As stated in earlier prefaces, Michael Charney's *Living Bibliography of Burma Studies* was not substantially updated after its 2004 iteration and was formally closed down in 2012.<sup>23</sup> While in need of increased financial support, the *Online Burma/Myanmar Library* (OB/ML), begun by the Burma Peace Foundation in 2001, is still functioning, thanks to the efforts of the indefatigable David Arnott.<sup>24</sup> Its database is organised into more than 90 categories and 3000 sub-categories. They guide readers to about 35,000 links to individual documents and more than 10,000 websites or multiple documents. These in turn give access to potentially millions of other Burma-related documents.<sup>25</sup> Needless to say, the OB/ML includes a great many works not listed here, notably those only found online.

This edition of the bibliography follows much the same pattern as the earlier two. There are, however, a number of changes.

The original title of the bibliography has been retained and, in all new and revised chapters, 'Burma' rather than 'Myanmar' has been used for the country's name. This does not reflect its formal title, or current usage, even by die-hard critics of the 1989 name change, such as Aung San Suu Kyi.<sup>26</sup> However, 'Burma' has been retained for this edition, simply for consistency. All titles of books and reports have been cited as they were published, including the use of both 'Rangoon' and its 1989 replacement, 'Yangon'. Some minor amendments have been made to the introduction, and David Steinberg has updated his foreword. The original acknowledgements page has been substantially revised to take account of contributions made by various Burma-watchers since the first edition of the bibliography was published six years ago. Also, a few individual entries carried forward from earlier editions have been amended. This has mainly been to correct errors and account for changed circumstances, such as the publication of new editions.

This is still a 'select' bibliography, in that it does not try to include all hard copy publications on Burma, or in all languages, but an effort has been made to make it more comprehensive. It now lists quite a number of works that, for various reasons, were left out of earlier editions. This is partly to provide a more rounded picture of Burma, but also to fill out some sections that readers felt were too thin. I have also relaxed my initial firm stance against reprints, books printed on demand and self-published works. The emphasis is still on original works produced by established publishing houses, governments and international organisations. However, an increasing number of older works on Burma are now being reprinted by reputable firms. To exclude them all would deprive readers of some useful sources on key subjects. The same consideration applies to self-published books and works printed on demand, some of which deserve a mention. Pirated copies of foreign works, reprinted in Burma, have not been included.<sup>27</sup>

There are now 2133 works listed, compared with 928 in the first edition and 1318 in the second edition. The larger number has necessitated some structural changes. Instead of the 29 chapters and 44 sections found in the 2015 edition, there are now 35 chapters and 72 sections. There are now separate chapters on the Second World War, Aung San Suu Kyi and the 'Rohingya Question', to account for the greater number of titles now listed in those categories. The chapter on politics and government is still the longest and has been divided chronologically. New sections have been created to cover works published when Burma was under the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and its nominal successor, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), after the paradigm shift from direct military rule to President Thein Sein's 'disciplined democracy' in 2011, and since the creation in 2016 of a semi-elected NLD administration under Aung San Suu Kyi. These categories are rather arbitrary, in that they ignore the issues covered within each time frame, but it is hoped that such a device will help readers find particular works more easily. Section headings have also been added to other chapters, to make it easier for readers to find what they are looking for.

When I began this project in 2010, it was my intention personally to inspect, or at least to sight, every work listed in the bibliography, drawing on my own resources and those of the main libraries in Canberra and elsewhere. Given the large number of works cited in this latest edition, however, and the difficulty of accessing hard copies of every one, I have had to modify that aim. However, an effort has still been made to verify each entry, usually by cross-checking the details in more than one source. In the first edition, I was also determined to exclude works that were listed in publishers' catalogues and on the websites of the major booksellers but had not yet been published. That resolution was slightly relaxed in the second edition, as I was keen to include a number of important works that I was reliably informed were close to commercial release. I have taken a similar approach here, although a number of books currently listed on the websites of major publishers and booksellers have not been included due to uncertainty over their publication dates.<sup>28</sup>

There are now three appendices. The first is a revised and updated essay on publications which readers may find helpful if they wish to become more familiar with specific aspects of Burma, or if they are going there for the first time. Once again, it is a personal selection, and would profitably be read in conjunction with the recommendations of other Burma-watchers with particular areas of expertise.<sup>29</sup> The second appendix lists a range of maps and charts of Burma that are currently available, either through commercial outlets or from other suppliers. If the websites of major booksellers are any guide, the demand for maps has grown significantly in recent years as more people have visited Burma, either for business or pleasure.<sup>30</sup> The third appendix lists a selection of feature movies and documentary films made about the country and released in English. Some have had a greater impact than others, but in their own ways they have all added to the romance, mystery and allure of a country that, until 30 years ago, was relatively unknown.<sup>31</sup> The extent to which they have added to a greater understanding of Burma's history, politics and culture, however, is debateable.

It is perhaps worth repeating that the main aim of this checklist is to provide academics, officials, students and members of the general public with an easily accessible list of works on Burma produced in hard copy, and in English, since the 1988 uprising. It includes a wide range of publications, covering many subjects, in an attempt to provide readers with the broadest choice possible. However, the inclusion of a particular work does not signify an endorsement of it, or agreement with any of the opinions expressed in it. Once again, the watchwords of this checklist have been comprehensiveness and balance. No attempt has been made to exclude a work because of its perceived failure to meet criteria such as quality or political correctness. As Paul Duguid once remarked, albeit in a different context, an eclectic collection like this resembles 'a church jumble-sale bookstall, where gems and duds are blessed alike by the vicar because all have been donated'.<sup>32</sup> As always, it is for the reader to decide on the quality and value of each title.

Brisbane  
May 2018

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Cockett, *Blood, Dreams and Gold: The Changing Face of Burma* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p.259.
- <sup>2</sup> Under the terms of the 2008 constitution, she is unable to become president of the country. See Andrew Selth, *Aung San Suu Kyi and the Politics of Personality*, Regional Outlook No.55 (Brisbane: Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, 2017).
- <sup>3</sup> Already in the publishing pipeline are Hans-Bernd Zollner and Rodion Ebbighausen, *The Daughter: A Political Biography of Aung San Suu Kyi* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2018); and Poppy McPherson, *The Shadows of Myanmar: Aung San Suu Kyi and the Persecution of the Rohingya* (London: I.B. Taurus and Co., forthcoming).
- <sup>4</sup> See, for example, 'Myanmar Governance Discussion Paper Series', *The Asia Foundation*, at <https://asiafoundation.org/tag/myanmar-governance-discussion-paper-series>; and 'Myanmar: Publications and Documents', *Asian Development Bank*, at <https://www.adb.org/countries/myanmar/publications>
- <sup>5</sup> Htoo Thant, 'Tourist arrivals rise 22pc in 8 months', *Myanmar Times*, 10 October 2017, at <https://www.mmimes.com/news/tourist-arrivals-rise-22pc-8-months.html>
- <sup>6</sup> Penny Edwards, 'Truth to Power', *Mekong Review*, Vol.1, No.4, August-October 2016, p.9.
- <sup>7</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches: Letters of Travel* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1909), p.3.
- <sup>8</sup> For an interesting discussion of this phenomenon in regard to Burma, see Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.204-7.
- <sup>9</sup> Steven Heller, 'Isolated From the World for Sixty Years', *The Atlantic*, 6 April 2015, at <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/04/a-rare-glimpse-into-burma/390567/>
- <sup>10</sup> See, for example, David Lazar, *Myanmar: Luminous Journey* (Bangkok: The Author, 2016); and P.J. Heijmans, *Relics of Rangoon* (Yangon: Inya Media, 2016).
- <sup>11</sup> See Kyi May Kaung and John Feffer, 'Out of Burma', *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 11 July 2007, at [http://fpif.org/out\\_of\\_burma/](http://fpif.org/out_of_burma/)
- <sup>12</sup> Most have been produced by French and Belgian publishers. For a brief discussion of this genre, see Andrew Selth, 'Graphic novels chart Myanmar's history', *Nikkei Asian Review*, 1 April 2018, at <https://asia.nikkei.com/Life-Arts/Arts/Graphic-novels-chart-Myanmar-s-history?page=1>
- <sup>13</sup> For example, the six-man writing team responsible for the first edition of the joint volume *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1971) did not include a Burma expert. This was rectified for the second (1987) edition, by the recruitment of Robert H. Taylor to the team.
- <sup>14</sup> Anthony Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).
- <sup>15</sup> Marco Bunte, 'The Military-NLD Coalition in Myanmar: Military Guardianship and its Economic Foundations', in Paul Chambers and Napisa Waitoolkiat (eds) *Khaki Capital: The Political Economy of the Military in Southeast Asia* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017).

- <sup>16</sup> Nicholas Henry, 'Everyday Agents of Change: Trade Unions in Myanmar', in Juanita Elias and Lena Rethel (eds), *The Everyday Political Economy of Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
- <sup>17</sup> See, for example, Thant Thaw Kaung, 'Publication trends in Myanmar and reading promotion efforts', presentation given at the School of Culture, History and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, Canberra, 28 February 2017.
- <sup>18</sup> Ellen Wiles, *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts: Literary Life in Myanmar Under Censorship and in Transition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp.2-3.
- <sup>19</sup> 'The Best Books on Her Own Burma', recommended by Wendy Law-Yone, *Five Books*, 1 December 2010, at <https://fivebooks.com/best-books/wendy-law-yone-on-her-own-burma/>
- <sup>20</sup> Petr Lom, et al (eds), *Burma Storybook*, introduction by Emma Larkin, translations by Maung Tha Noe, Maung Day, Zeyar Lynn, Pandora, Kenneth Wong, Zaw Tun and Khun Cho, photographs by Dana Lixenberg (Amsterdam: ZINdoc: 2017). See also Melis Alemdar, 'Petr Lom's "Burma Storybook" captures poetry on film', *TRT World*, 15 May 2017, at <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/petr-lom-s-burma-storybook-captures-poetry-on-film-7035>
- <sup>21</sup> See, for example, Patricia Herbert, 'The Making of a Collection: Burmese Manuscripts in the British Library', *British Library Journal*, Vol.15, No.1, Spring 1989, pp.59-70, at <https://www.bl.uk/eblj/1989articles/pdf/article5.pdf>; and Andrew Gosling, 'Burma and Beyond', *National Library of Australia News*, October 1996, pp.3-5, at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/131760/20120120-0944/www.nla.gov.au/pub/nlanews/1996/oct96/story-1.pdf>
- <sup>22</sup> For a brief discussion of this problem, see Andrew Selth, 'The wisdom in the literature', *New Mandala*, 21 March 2017, at <http://www.newmandala.org/the-wisdom-in-the-literature/>
- <sup>23</sup> M.W. Charney, 'The Bibliography of Burma (Myanmar) Research: The Secondary Literature (2004 Revision)', *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research*, Bibliographic Supplement (Winter, 2004), at [http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/6241/1/Bibliography\\_of\\_secondary\\_literature--2004.pdf](http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/6241/1/Bibliography_of_secondary_literature--2004.pdf)
- <sup>24</sup> 'Online Burma/Myanmar Library', at <http://www.burmalibrary.org/>. See also M.D. Alicas, 'Online Burma/Myanmar Library: A Gateway to Burma/Myanmar', *Asian Politics and Policy*, Vol.4, No.4, October 2012, pp.591-3.
- <sup>25</sup> The library is an invaluable resource but relies on donations to survive. Anyone wishing to assist can contact David Arnott by email at [burmalibrary@gmail.com](mailto:burmalibrary@gmail.com)
- <sup>26</sup> Questioned about the official name of the country soon after her party took office in 2016, Aung San Suu Kyi stated her continuing preference for the colonial-era term, but said that both 'Burma' and 'Myanmar' were acceptable. See Andrew Selth, 'More name games in Burma/Myanmar', *The Interpreter*, 10 August 2016, at <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/more-name-games-burmayanmar>
- <sup>27</sup> For an interesting discussion of this phenomenon, see Mandy Sagan, 'Knowledge, Piracy and Academic Development in Myanmar', *Tea Circle*, 30 November 2017 (part 1) and 1 December 2017 (part 2), at <https://teacircleoxford.com/2017/11/30/knowledge-piracy-and-academic-development-in-myanmar-part-i/> and <https://teacircleoxford.com/2017/12/01/knowledge-piracy-and-academic-development-in-myanmar-part-ii/>
- <sup>28</sup> These include, for example, Lynette J. Chua, *The Politics of Love in Myanmar: LGBT Mobilization and Human Rights as a Way of Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming); Rohan Gunaratna, et al, *The Rohingya Crisis* (London, World Scientific Europe, forthcoming); Helen James, *Myanmar's Strategic Choices* (London: Routledge, forthcoming); D.C. Lammerts, *Buddhist Law in Burma: A History of Dhammasattha Texts and Jurisprudence, 1250-1850* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018); Ludovica Marchi (ed), *The European Union and Myanmar: Interactions via ASEAN* (London: Routledge, forthcoming); Irene Slegt and Simon Long, *Myanmar: A Burmese People's Story* (London: Zed Books, forthcoming); Ardeth Maung Thawngmung, *Everyday Economic Survival in Myanmar* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, forthcoming); and Sean Turnell, *Burma's Economic Renaissance* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, forthcoming). Also, the latest edited volume flowing from the Australian National University's Myanmar Update conference series is due out soon. See Justine Chambers, Gerard McCarthy, Nicholas Farrelly and Chit Win (eds), *Myanmar Transformed? People, Places and Politics* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2018).
- <sup>29</sup> See for example, 'The Best Books on Burma', recommended by Emma Larkin, *Five Books*, n.d., at <https://fivebooks.com/best-books/emma-larkin-on-burma/>; 'The Best Books on Understanding the Burmese Economy', recommended by Sean Turnell, *Five Books*, n.d., at <https://fivebooks.com/best-books/sean-turnell-burmese-economy/>; and 'The Best Books on Describing Burma', recommended by Sue Arnold, *Five Books*, n.d., at <https://fivebooks.com/best-books/sue-arnold-on-describing-burma/>
- <sup>30</sup> Andrew Selth, 'Journeys without maps in Myanmar', *New Mandala*, 12 September 2016, at <http://www.newmandala.org/journeys-without-maps-myanmar/>
- <sup>31</sup> Andrew Selth, 'Burma, Hollywood and the Politics of Entertainment', *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, Vol.23, No.3 (June 2009), pp.321-34; and Andrew Selth, 'Burma-watching on film', *The Interpreter*, Weblog of the Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, 30 November 2010, found at <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2010/11/30/Burma-watching-on-film.aspx>
- <sup>32</sup> Paul Duguid, 'PG Tips', *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 June 2004, quoted in Stuart Kells, *The Library: A Catalogue of Wonders* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2017), pp.270-1.

# Preface to the Second Edition

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A bibliography is never complete. No matter how conscientious the compiler there will always be gaps and scope for additions, particularly to select bibliographies. In this regard, Burma (renamed the Union of Myanmar in 1989, and given the formal title of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in the 2008 constitution) is certainly no exception. Indeed, several developments over the past three years argue strongly for the preparation of an updated checklist of the English language literature on Burma.<sup>1</sup>

Since the first edition of this book was released in 2012, there has been an increasing flow of new, revised and reprinted publications about Burma. This activity has reflected the continued high level of interest in the country, not only in official and academic circles, but also among the wider public. This interest is likely to be maintained in 2015, when Burma's hybrid civilian-military government is due to hold national elections and, in early 2016, to choose a new president. The outcome of these competitions will be critical to the future of President Thein Sein's ambitious reform program, launched in 2011, and to Burma's relations with the wider world.

As this edition of the bibliography helps to demonstrate, most of the public (and scholarly) interest in Burma over the past few years has been related to the country's politics and economy, accounting for the large number of new works in those categories. This has included several edited works, with chapters provided by a range of noted Burma-watchers, covering such issues as the continuing political role of the armed forces, unresolved tensions with the ethnic minorities, the obstacles to further economic development and the growth of civil society. Also, the increased number of postgraduates working on Burma in Western countries has led to specialised studies on areas and issues that, until now, had rarely been subject to close examination.

Another factor has been the dramatic surge in foreign visitors to Burma, up from an estimated 310,000 in 2010 to more than 3,000,000 in 2014.<sup>2</sup> Estimates for 2015 range as high as 5,000,000.<sup>3</sup> This has prompted the production of a large number of works which seem designed to cater mainly to tourists, businessmen and armchair travellers. They have included guide books, phrase books, cookery books, collections of photographs and personal accounts of visits to the country. There is also a trickle of novels that are set in Burma or have Burma-related themes. The quality of these works has tended to be highly variable but, in different ways and at different levels, they have helped fill niches in a market that still seems to be expanding.

Also, it is worth noting that many older books and monographs with Burma-related themes have been revised or reissued. There have long been a few firms (like the Bangkok-based White Lotus Press, established in 1972) that have specialised in reproducing out-of-print books on Burma. However, several other well-known publishers are now producing good quality, hard copy reprints of classic works. It is possible to find soft copies of many more online, through the digital collections of major libraries, notably (since 1994) the Library of Congress and (since 1995) the British Library. Also helpful are large-scale collaborative repositories of digital content such as the Hathi Trust, which was formed in 2008. These developments have made many rare books and other research materials much more accessible, helping to revive interest in Burma's history and culture, on which there are now some excellent studies.

Since 2012, a number of major gaps in the academic literature have been plugged, in part at least. For example, much closer attention has been given to legal issues in Burma, both during the colonial period and since 1948.<sup>4</sup> However, there are still some notable omissions, particularly in the area of Burma's foreign contacts. For example, there are still no definitive histories in English of Burma's relations with countries like the US, Russia, Japan, the two Koreas or Australia. There is also a shortage of serious studies looking at Burma's role in the strategic competition between China and India, its membership of ASEAN since 1997, and its place in the wider environment of the Asia-Pacific. Some good work has been done recently on the place of Islam in Burma, but there is still no comprehensive or detailed overview of the development of Christianity.

There has been a revival of interest in foreign books within Burma itself.<sup>5</sup> Under the former military government a wide range of works were blacklisted (as were, of course, many publications in Burmese).<sup>6</sup> Often, the reasons for these bans were not clear, one example being *Love and Sunshine in the East*, an obscure novel written in

1930 by Janet Aldis.<sup>7</sup> The intent behind other bans was more obvious, as in the case of Aung San Suu Kyi's three books on (among other things) modern Burmese politics and Bertil Lintner's graphic account of the 1988 uprising.<sup>8</sup> Under Thein Sein's more relaxed administration, however, English language versions of these and other banned books are being imported into Burma and are available from local bookshops and street vendors. For those Burmese with Internet access, others can be read online. Since 2013, an international literary festival has been held in Burma, one feature of which has been the many formerly banned books openly displayed for sale.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, there has been a revival in the translation of foreign books into the Burmese language. This has included some blacklisted books, notably copies of works by Aung San Suu Kyi. In 2012, a translation of George Orwell's seminal novel *Burmese Days*, which was also banned by the former military regime, even won a national literary award.<sup>10</sup> There are now Burmese versions of David Steinberg's popular primer *Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know* and Bertil Lintner's *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy*. Other foreign works which have been translated into Burmese and released in the country have included Robert Taylor's ground-breaking study *The State in Myanmar*, and Wendy Law Yone's *Golden Parasol: A Daughter's Memoir of Burma* (all listed in this bibliography). Also on sale in Rangoon is a collection of broadcasts by the BBC's Burmese language service, summarising my own 2002 study *Burma's Armed Forces: Power Without Glory*.

This is in addition, of course, to the bound photocopies and pirated versions of foreign language books that have long been a feature of Burma's literary scene.<sup>11</sup>

In recent years, there has also been a proliferation of books in English by Burmese authors, and English language translations of Burmese works. The print runs may be small, but they too are having an impact on the local publishing scene. A representative sample has been included in this edition of the bibliography. While many of these publications seem to be aimed mainly at foreign visitors and foreign residents of Burma, they help represent a return to the lively literary and scholarly traditions that prevailed before General Ne Win's coup and the introduction of harsh censorship laws. Related to these developments has been the formation of several new literary associations in Burma, as various groups have taken advantage of the lifting of government restrictions in 2012.<sup>12</sup> The Myanmar Publishers and Booksellers Association, for example, holds Burma's largest annual book fair.

On the bibliographic front, there has also been some movement. The 'Bibliography of Burma (Myanmar) Research', last produced by London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 2004, is no longer being compiled, but work has continued on some other projects mentioned in the introduction to the first edition of this book. For example, the Heidelberg University bibliography now boasts electronic listings of articles and multi-author documents up to September 2012.<sup>13</sup> There have been several other checklists drawn up over the past three years, most of which have been posted online. They have tended to be subject-specific, to cater to the wider range of topics now being given attention by students and other researchers. For example, the University of California at Berkeley has compiled a list entitled 'Myanmar: Women's Studies Bibliography'.<sup>14</sup> An Australian researcher has drawn up a list of works in English about Burmese marionettes.<sup>15</sup> Most of the major studies of Burma published since 2012 have included extensive bibliographies.

In all these ways, the Burma literature scene is now a vibrant one, reflecting the dynamic state of modern Burma studies. There is every indication that, as the country continues to evolve and grow, so will the demand for fresh and original publications of all kinds.

Since the first edition of this bibliography appeared, Burma-watchers and others have alerted me to the existence of a number of works that they felt deserved inclusion. I have also been pointed in the direction of several major reports produced by think-tanks and international organisations. As this remains a select bibliography, and not an attempt to list every English-language publication about Burma released over the past 27 years, I have not included them all. However, many suggestions have been taken up, helping to plug some gaps in the first edition and to fill out a few sections that were rather thin. This edition has also given me an opportunity to record more publications produced by Burma-related activist groups. Such works are often considered to be ephemera and omitted from checklists of this kind. However, they represent a major effort on the part of these organisations over the years and often provide information and views that are not readily available elsewhere.

To the 928 titles listed in the first edition of this bibliography, another 390 have been added. Most of these new works have been released over the past three years. As before, I have restricted myself to publications produced in English (or, in three cases, English and Burmese), and in hard copy, since the 1988 pro-democracy uprising.<sup>16</sup> Where there has been some doubt whether or not a particular work was produced in hard copy, for example by an international organisation with its own website, I have usually erred on the side of inclusion. This is because, in most cases, small numbers of hard copies were produced by these organisations for libraries and for presentation to select audiences, such as donors, journalists and government officials.

In order to make greater allowance for the latest publishing trends, I have slightly relaxed my earlier rule about books printed on demand. This has been to take account of the increasing number of academic theses and self-published works on Burma, some of which have made useful contributions to the field. Also, I have taken the risk of listing a small number of books that have not yet been formally released. They have been included because they are significant works that, as far as I have been able to determine from the authors and the publishers, are confidently expected to be released in 2015. Not to have included them would have detracted from the usefulness of this checklist over time, and left gaps in areas that are currently subject to close attention. Once again, briefings, academic articles, chapters and short commentaries have not been listed, although a few examples are mentioned in the appendix.

This edition of the bibliography follows much the same format as the first. However, to help readers navigate their way through the many subjects covered in the checklist, and to find particular works more easily, I have rearranged a few chapters. I have also added a number of additional headings and sub-headings. This has necessitated moving some titles from their original positions and giving them new reference numbers. As before, many of the books named could have been listed under more than one category. Inevitably, the placement of some titles will still strike a few readers as arbitrary but that seemed preferable to duplicating entries or trying to include cumbersome cross references. Individual works can also be found by consulting the consolidated list of authors, editors, translators and photographers provided at the end of this book.

Some other parts of the first edition have been changed. David Steinberg has made a few amendments to his foreword, to reflect developments since the original version appeared three years ago. A small number of editorial changes have been made to the Introduction and a few minor errors in the checklist have been corrected. The appendix has been substantially revised and updated, to reflect the wider range of books now available to a newcomer to Burma (and Burma studies). It has also been expanded in response to the flood of tourists and short-term foreign residents who may be looking for some guidance on reading matter. As with all such exercises, the suggestions made in that essay reflect personal choices, and are based mainly on my own reading. It has also benefited from helpful suggestions made by others in the field, but should not in any way be considered authoritative.

At the risk of repeating myself, let me also briefly address a couple of comments made about the first edition of the bibliography.<sup>17</sup>

It is quite true that both the first edition and this one fail to represent the full range of modern Burma scholarship, in that they do not include any works produced before 1988 (apart, that is, from modern reprints), in soft copy or written in languages other than English. Nor does it list any articles in academic journals or magazines. As explained in the introduction to the first edition, this reflects a deliberate decision to restrict the checklist to major works that are likely to be readily accessible to the majority of readers, in terms of both language and availability. It goes without saying that there is a large body of related works that do not fit into these categories. Despite their possible merits as sources on Burma, however, this checklist is not the place to look for them.

It is also acknowledged that the first edition listed at least one work that could be seen as racist in content.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, a few books cited below could be so described. Also, both editions of the bibliography include works that represent the propaganda of a repressive military government, as well as publications produced by a highly politicised activist community. No-one could claim that all these works were accurate or balanced. A couple of other books named could be accused of being in poor taste, at least. As stated in the original introduction, however, I have listed titles that cover the full spectrum of opinion about Burma, not just those which express points of view I agree with, or which are deemed by others to be politically acceptable. This reflects my firm

conviction that only by being aware of all attitudes and opinions — both inside and outside Burma — can the ‘fiendishly complex’ challenges facing modern Burma be fully understood.<sup>19</sup>

I am indebted to many people for helping me prepare a new version of this bibliography. As always, David Steinberg has been a great support. Contributions have also been made by several other Burma-watchers, among them John Brandon, Nick Cheesman, Melissa Crouch, Reneaud Egreteau, Nicholas Farrelly, Marie Lall, Jacques Leider, Stephen McCarthy, Lex Rieffel, Matthew Smith, Ashley South, Lindsay Stubbs, Robert Taylor, Sean Turnell and Trevor Wilson. I am grateful to them all for taking the time and trouble to help me with this project. The members and staff of the Griffith Asia Institute (GAI) have once again worked wonders to bring this work to its final stages. To those members of the GAI named in the original acknowledgements, I should like to add Russell Trood, Leong Liew, Natasha Vary, Belle Hammond and Vanessa Lau. The National Library of Australia and its staff constitute valuable resources for anyone interested in conducting research about Burma.

My wife Pattie has provided constant encouragement and support for this project, as she has done for so many others conducted over the past 35 years. I owe her much more than can be recorded here.

Brisbane  
April 2015

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Andrew Selth, ‘Burma/Myanmar: Bibliographic Trends’, *New Mandala*, 16 February 2015, at <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2015/02/16/burmamyanmar-bibliographic-trends/>
- <sup>2</sup> San Yamin Aung, ‘Tourist Numbers Hit 3m in 2014: President’, *The Irrawaddy*, 2 January 2015, at <http://www.irrawaddy.org/business/tourist-numbers-hit-3m-2014-president.html>
- <sup>3</sup> Interview with Tourist Police, Myanmar Police Force, Rangoon, March 2015.
- <sup>4</sup> See, for example, Melissa Crouch and Tim Lindsey (eds), *Law, Society and Transition in Myanmar* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2014); Nick Cheesman, *Opposing the Rule of Law: How Myanmar’s Courts Make Law and Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Andrew Harding and Khin Khin Oo (eds), *Constitutionalism and Legal Change in Myanmar* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2015).
- <sup>5</sup> Alisha Haridasani, ‘Myanmar comes in from cold with bookish revival’, *CNN*, 10 November 2014, at <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/11/10/world/asia/myanmar-book-revival/>
- <sup>6</sup> See, for example, A.J. Allott, *Inked Over, Ripped Out: Burmese Storytellers and the Censors* (New York: PEN American Centre, 1993).
- <sup>7</sup> Janet Aldis, *Love and Sunshine in the East* (London: Herbert Joseph, 1930).
- <sup>8</sup> Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom from Fear and other writings*, edited with an introduction by Michael Aris (London: Penguin, 1995); Aung San Suu Kyi, *Letters from Burma*, introduction by Fergal Keane (London: Penguin, 1997); and Aung San Suu Kyi, *The Voice of Hope: Conversations with Alan Clements, with contributions by U Kyi Maung and U Tin U* (New York: Seven Stories, 2008). See also Bertil Lintner, *Outrage: Burma’s Struggle for Democracy* (London: White Lotus, 1990).
- <sup>9</sup> Sian Powell, ‘Festival reflects Myanmar’s novel freedoms’, *The Australian*, 18 January 2013, at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/books/festival-reflects-myanmars-novel-freedoms/story-e6frg8nf-1226556087224>
- <sup>10</sup> Kyaw Phyto Tha, ‘Orwell’s “Burmese Days” Wins Govt Literary Award’, *The Irrawaddy*, 19 November 2013, at <http://www.irrawaddy.org/culture/orwells-burmese-days-wins-govt-literary-award.html>. See also George Orwell, *Burmese Days* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1934).



- <sup>11</sup> Burma has not signed the 1886 Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, but it is a signatory to the World Trade Organisation's 1994 Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. Burma is also a member of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Despite the Copyright Act of 1911, promulgated in 1914, no formal copyright procedure has ever been instituted in Burma. In 2004, new copyright legislation began to be drafted based on a WIPO model, but it has still not entered into force.
- <sup>12</sup> Lucas Stewart, 'Myanmar Literature Associations', *My Yangon*, No.5, January 2015, pp.24-5.
- <sup>13</sup> S.M. Schwertner, 'Burma/Myanmar Bibliographic Project', at <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/savifadok/2579/>
- <sup>14</sup> University of California Berkeley Library, 'Myanmar: Women's Studies Bibliography', at <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/SSEAL/SoutheastAsia/seaburm.html>
- <sup>15</sup> John Macallister, *Myanmar Marionettes (Burmese Puppets): A list of references in the English language* (Glenbrook: The Author, 1996).
- <sup>16</sup> The three multi-lingual books in question are *Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008)* (Naypyidaw: Ministry of Information, 2008); Daw Khin Hnin Oo, et al (eds), *Felicitations for U Thaw Kaung's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Yangon: Myanmar Book Centre, 2012); and Nick Cheesman and Htoo Kyaw Win (eds), *Communal Violence in Myanmar* (Yangon: Myanmar Knowledge Society, 2015).
- <sup>17</sup> See, for example, David Gilbert, 'Andrew Selth, "Burma (Myanmar) since the 1988 Uprising: A Select Bibliography"', *Asian Studies Review*, Vol.38, No.1, March 2014, pp.157-8. Also relevant is Nicholas Farrelly, 'Andrew Selth's Burma Bibliography', *New Mandala*, 10 October 2012, at <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2012/10/10/andrew-selths-burma-bibliography/>
- <sup>18</sup> One reviewer singled out Maung Tha Hla, *Rohingya Hoax* (New York: Buddhist Rakhaing Cultural Association, 2009).
- <sup>19</sup> This description of Burma's problems was coined by Timothy Garton Ash in 'Beauty and the Beast in Burma', *New York Review of Books*, 25 May 2000, at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2000/05/25/beauty-and-the-beast-in-burma/>

# Acknowledgements

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This bibliography — or, more properly, checklist — is in one sense a by-product of four and a half decades collecting, reading and writing books, reports and sundry other publications about Burma (officially known since 1989 as Myanmar). During this period, I have incurred debts to many friends, colleagues and fellow Burma-watchers, both amateur and professional. A few key booksellers have kept me informed about new and forthcoming works and helped me search for those that were out of print. Also, from time to time my personal library has directly benefited from gifts made by generous fellow travellers along the Burma Road. I owe them all my thanks. In compiling a work such as this, however, there are some people to whom special consideration is due.

Once again, I should like to record my sincere gratitude to *Sayagyi* David Steinberg of Georgetown and Johns Hopkins Universities. Not only has he provided an updated foreword to this edition of the bibliography, but his advice, encouragement and practical support over the past quarter century has been invaluable. For their contributions to this project, as it has grown and developed, I would also like to thank Nicholas Farrelly and Nick Cheesman of the Australian National University, Sean Turnell of Macquarie University, John Brandon of the Asia Foundation, Sally Burdon of the Asia Bookroom and Thant Thaw Kaung of the Myanmar Book Centre. Others who have contributed in various ways to this and past editions include David Arnott, Michael Charney, Chit Win, Melissa Crouch, Gavin Douglas, Nic Dunlop, Renaud Egreteau, Zunetta Herbert, Richard Horsey, Larry Jagan, Nathalie Johnston, Marie Lall, Len Lambourne, Emma Larkin, David Lazar, Jacques Leider, Joan Merenra, Lex Rieffel, Matthew Smith, Ashley South, Lindsay Stubbs, Robert Taylor, Ma Thanegi, Rhys Thompson, Derek Tonkin, Win Vervest, Richard Warren, Evan Williams, Trevor Wilson and Garry Woodard. I am in their debt.

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As always, my greatest debt is to my wife, Pattie Collins. Over the past 37 years she has probably learned more about Burma — and its books — than she ever really cared to know. I owe her much more than can be recorded here.

Needless to say, any errors and omissions are my responsibility alone.

Brisbane  
May 2018

# Foreword

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by

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The indefatigable Andrew Selth, fresh from his seemingly myriad major studies, chapters, research papers, intellectual excursions (see his Kipling and Western music piece),<sup>1</sup> blogs and op-eds, has demonstrated once again his catholic knowledge and his capacity for care and detail related to Burma/Myanmar. This new edition of his bibliography, which should become an essential reference for those even minimally concerned with Burma/Myanmar, is path-breaking, and is a critical guide to those both figuratively and literally Burma bound, as was his earlier editions and his work on the state of Burmese studies.<sup>2</sup>

The publication of this third edition of the bibliography is especially timely. The state has entered a new incarnation following the elections of 2015 after 50 years of direct and indirect military control in its “civilianized” form in 2011. Foreign-imposed sanctions have been suspended or lifted, the iconic Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has entered public political life, Myanmar has hosted the Southeast Asian games in 2013 and chaired ASEAN in 2014, international businesses seek Burmese opportunities, tourism has exploded, and violence continues in ethnic areas. These and other processes will no doubt spur new publications, both ephemeral and more lasting, about aspects of Burma/Myanmar. Yet it is essential for those seriously concerned, and even those touristically inclined, to understand what has gone before if they are to comprehend the present, which is never written *de novo*. This bibliography, then, offers a Virgilian guide to Myanmar’s recent past, and is an essential reference component for both the interested traveller and the dedicated student or specialist.

Burma/Myanmar formerly has been simplistically characterized as isolated and unknown. This may have been comparatively true for a quarter of a century following the coup of 1962, but has been inaccurate for the past generation. In spite of direct rule by junta from 1988 under a regime that was noted worldwide for its repression and human rights violations, the state, known since 2011 as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, attracted more academic and political interest than might have been imagined from a country previously insulated from much of the West. From the essentially isolationist policies of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) under General Ne Win (1962–1988), Myanmar (the name was changed in 1989) began to attract both international media attention and academic concern. In part, this was due to some changes in policy, such as the opening to foreign investment, but perhaps more importantly to the image of Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who soon became the international icon of democracy, and whose example and appeal attracted many to enter the field of Burma studies and/or work on the Thai frontier among Burmese refugees. She has personally seemed to exemplify the raised international concerns over human rights issues in that country. Her further leadership role in the elections of 2015 and the positive expectations of the following government are juxtaposed by continuing violence and abuses in the country’s northern reaches and in the militarization of communal conflict in the Rakhine State on the Bangladesh border.

This bibliography, then, reflects that new era–now past but quintessentially relevant to the present. Scholarship on Burma after the coup of 1962 essentially dried up, as few scholars were admitted for field work, and then only in a few academic “safe” fields. Responsible professors could not advocate dissertation research on a country in which field work was impossible. Tourism was discouraged and internal travel limited. With the quiet opening of Burma after the coup of 18 September 1988, and in spite of the bloody repression of the failed “people’s revolution” earlier that spring and summer, growth in interest in Burma/Myanmar became evident.

This was reflected in both the human rights/democracy advocacy literature, which proliferated especially along the Thai border with Myanmar, and the stirring of disciplinary academic research and quiet field work in-country. Scholars were allowed in, often with tourist visas. We now have a new generation of scholars and published scholarly works in all disciplines. Some reflect internal conditions; others compare, and draw lessons

from, the Myanmar experience with other countries. Especially important have been the contributions of expatriate Burmese scholars who have markedly enhanced study of their country from perspectives that foreigners lack.

The importance of foreign scholarly research on Myanmar is especially salient if one understands the past stringent controls over research and publishing for those within the country. Until 1988, all internal research (even in science and medicine) by anyone employed by the state (which meant all academicians) was considered classified until presented at a state-sponsored research seminar and then formally approved for public dissemination. Since 1988, any research publications have had to meet the mercurial conditions of the official censorship board. History was reinterpreted and rewritten to emphasize the roles of the Myanmar military, and even when classic works were republished, their titles had to change “Burma” into “Myanmar”, a name that was pursued with intense vigour. For example, *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma* was published originally in 1923, but in 2008 was republished as *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Myanmar*.<sup>3</sup> All publications had to list the military-sponsored state objectives.<sup>4</sup>

Burmese expatriates writing abroad, often with family in-country, often had to be circumspect in their analyses, and ardent critics of the regime sometimes neglected balanced reporting. Most books on Burma/Myanmar published abroad were legally banned from Myanmar, but increased travel and new technology enabled the surreptitious import and distribution of many. Now, works of all calibre and persuasion are available in the country’s bookstores. With a decline in the easy capacity to read the English of academic treatises, a need for the translation of important works into Burmese has become evident as present trends since 2011 in relaxation of censorship continue. A number of seminal foreign studies have been translated—some under international copyright rules and others pirated.

Internal events have been the especial salience of foreign publications on Myanmar since 1988. These works have proliferated and have provided welcome analyses of internal dynamics and external relations. Conditions within Myanmar, however, have resulted in the polarization of external opinions on whether to engage with, and if so how, the regime in Yangon and then Naypyidaw. Advocacy literature on all sides of the issue expanded, often based on anecdotal evidence, since few trustworthy statistics emanated from the government. And, as Professor Donald Emmerson once noted, “the plural of anecdote is not data”.<sup>5</sup> Political liberalization has eased this gap, although Myanmar continues to invite strong opinions that often colour scholarship.

Dr. Selth, in his introduction, provides a fascinating and thorough account of the various previous attempts to engage in bibliographic work, and even specialists on Burma/Myanmar may not have been aware of some of these important contributions to the literature. His is also a service to the field. His professional background in the Foreign Service and security arena, as well as being an Australian, has demonstrated that personal history in this case is an asset, rather than a liability, in preparation of this bibliography. This has meant that Dr. Selth has filled a lacuna often left virtually empty in most bibliographies. As an Australian, his emphasis on works emanating from that country fill a void, because of all Western states, the Australian government and academic community has shown the most continuous and supportive roles in analyzing Burma/Myanmar. The worldwide audience for serious study of that country needs to recognize this contribution.

There remain gaps needing analysis, and these are demonstrated by gaps in the bibliography, but as Burma/Myanmar continues to attract attention, they likely will be filled. There is only one contemporary and serious study of Myanmar-U.S. relations (although another is in process); bilateral ties between Myanmar and Russia need exploration, as those between Burma and each or both of the Koreas. A comprehensive study of Christianity in its socio-political setting is needed. Dr. Selth has wisely avoided including works in preparation on some of these issues, for the time disparities between research and publication may be extensive. Yet the increase in those enrolled in advanced programs on Burma/Myanmar, and those with experience in and on that country will no doubt begin to fill the void.

A corollary of the relative isolation of Burma/Myanmar, its notoriety in the narcotics literature, its strategic location, its long and porous border with Thailand, and its ostensible “exoticism”, have all given rise to a variety of both serious literature and the pulp fiction inhabiting airport book kiosks. The last item may be dismissed, but the fiction field should not be ignored either by the serious scholar or the ardent traveller.

Dr. Selth has added a section in the bibliography on the Rohingya (the Muslim community on the Bangladesh border), as their safety has prompted worldwide concerns. Their plight has also damaged the international reputations of the state and Aung San Suu Kyi, and resulted in an increased flow of publications.

Scholarship and analyses obviously need personal commitments, but they also need institutional bases. Although a variety of international academic institutions and some research organizations teach on and/or conduct research about Burma/Myanmar, their focus is usually Southeast Asia or Asia more broadly interpreted. There is a paucity of international educational institutions solely devoted to that country. There is one in the United States (Northern Illinois University), one in China (Yunnan National University), one in India (Manipur University), one in Thailand (Naresuan University) and two in Australia (Australian National University and Melbourne University). The small number of such centres may limit future scholarship and inadequate analyses could adversely affect policy choices. Universities also now tend to focus on disciplinary studies, rather than on area research, which limits university employment opportunities for some Burmanically inclined. Two decades ago, a meeting on Burma/Myanmar attended by representatives of most ASEAN governments at that time needed to draw on Western specialists on that country because those in the ASEAN states had no such analytical capacity. That situation has begun to be rectified, but clearly the ASEAN states and their neighbours need to expand their sights.

Griffith University is to be congratulated for its interest in opening vistas on Burma/Myanmar. More than two decades ago, it sponsored a major international conference on Myanmar, attended in part by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.<sup>6</sup> Since then, especially in the last decade, the steady stream of papers on public policy issues has added significantly to our understanding of that country and its relations with the region.

The serious student, the professional journalist, the potential investor, the policy advocate, and even the prospective traveller to Myanmar will welcome this publication. It is an important contribution to the burgeoning interest in Myanmar, and we are all once again, and in so many ways, in Dr. Andrew Selth's debt.

Washington DC  
May 2018

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Andrew Selth, *Burma, Kipling and Western Music: The Riff from Mandalay* (New York: Routledge, 2017).
- <sup>2</sup> Andrew Selth, 'Modern Burma Studies: A Survey of the Field', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.44, No.2, March 2010, pp.401-40.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Myanmar*, translated by Pe Maung Tin and G.H. Luce (Yangon: Unity Publishing House, 2008).
- <sup>4</sup> There were four political objectives, four economic objectives and four social objectives. In addition, there were 'Three Main National Causes', which were: 'Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of National Solidarity and Perpetuation of Sovereignty'.
- <sup>5</sup> This comment was made at a workshop on Burma arranged by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and held in Washington DC in October 2009.
- <sup>6</sup> See 'The Situation in Burma and Australia's Response', Opening Address by Senator the Hon. Gareth Evans QC, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, to the International Seminar on Burma, Griffith University, Brisbane, 3 December 1992, at [http://www.gevans.org/speeches/old/1992/031292\\_fm\\_Burma.pdf](http://www.gevans.org/speeches/old/1992/031292_fm_Burma.pdf)