Legitimising the Union of Myanmar through primary school textbooks

by

Nick Cheesman

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education undertaken at the University of Western Australia

2002

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree or award at this or any other university. To my knowledge it does not contain material previously published or written by another person where due reference has not been made in the text.

Nicholas Cheesman

Submitted: 27 August 2002

Final text: 9 February 2003

Abstract

Formal state schooling has since its inception been directed towards the building of national identity. As state discourses are commonly and readily transmitted through school textbooks, they may be uncovered by careful examination. This study looked at five primary school Burmese language readers used in Myanmar (Burma) to reveal how they function to project a particular version of national identity. Its proposition is that the state in Myanmar aims to legitimise itself through schooling—and specifically, the primary school textbooks—by configuring itself as an integral part of a greater entity, 'the Union'. It finds that according to the textbooks' normative model, the ideal citizen has distinct ethnic, religious and gender characteristics. It explores the play between constructs of state, national and individual identity in the textbooks through different techniques for content and text analysis. It is an original contribution to the body of work imparting how formal mass education is designed to buttress national institutions and concepts. Its conclusions, while pertaining explicitly to Myanmar, have relevance to state schooling everywhere.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their support:

My supervisors, Clive Whitehead and Lyn Parker, who assisted and encouraged me more than they were obliged to.

Many other staff at UWA, including Patrick Jory and David Bourchier, who offered advice and friendship; and Philip Taylor, who organised useful seminars during 2001.

Basil Fernando, Sanjeewa Liyanage and other friends and colleagues at AHRC, who have always been ready to help when needed.

Ko Aung Myint, who proofread the Burmese–English text.

Thra Bill Win and Nang Tzam, who sowed the seeds for this study by using the schoolbooks in an admirable effort to teach me a little Burmese.

And finally, thanks to Alistair Paterson for everything.

Contents

List of tables

List of figures

vayadhamma sannhara

all constructions are ephemeral

– *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*

Chapter 1

Introduction

The problem

This study was precipitated by a number of years' work with people from Myanmar, which permitted many interesting and varied conversations about schooling there. Discussions with adults often led to what they recalled of their own schooling. Many times they would recite a passage from a primary school textbook, occasionally assuming the pose of a schoolchild. As the durability of the textbooks' contents was divulged, so too was the books' role beyond the mere transmission of functional literacy and numeracy.

The proposition of this inquiry is that the state in Myanmar, which is dominated by the armed forces, aims to legitimise itself through schooling—and specifically, the primary school textbooks—by configuring a particular version of national identity that mandates its role within a greater entity, 'the Union'. This proposition involves a number of layers: first, the relationship between the state, its legitimacy and schooling; secondly, the role that the school textbooks are to play for the state within that relationship; and thirdly, the methods used in the schoolbooks to that end. The study reveals that schooling in Myanmar aims unequivocally to produce citizens who will benefit the state. The success of this project depends upon the exercise of state authority. In the school textbooks, rather than attempting to secure legitimacy directly, the state prefers learners' attention be on a greater entity encompassing and conflating the state, nation, territory and people. This construct is personified in an exemplary citizen of distinct ethnic, religious and gender characteristics. Various written and visual

techniques introduce students to this version of reality, including repetition, formality, omission, allusion and metaphor.

State schooling is subject to a structural contradiction. It is located at the nexus between social need and state power. The 'right to education' is deemed universal, yet the schooling with which it is associated is particular. In principle universal state schooling satisfies the presumed basic right to education; in practice it satisfies the specific requirements of the institution responsible for its implementation. Little wonder it is among the few 'human rights' that most states accede to with genuine enthusiasm.

Myanmar has been under the management of one military-dominated government or another since 1962, and for most of that time the state has taken sole responsibility for the administration of schooling. It is highly protective of this role, and brooks no outside interference or inquiry. Political opponents harangue the current military government for its mismanagement of virtually every aspect of society, including schooling. But—at least for the present—the military retains power, and the state remains intact. In this environment, discussion is reduced to invective, and not much genuinely autonomous research gets done.

The problem for this study, then, consists of both particular and universal elements: whether it be Myanmar or anywhere, what is the function of 'state' schooling? Is it to promote and reinforce the state, or a wider ideal? If both, then how can the structural contradiction the two entail be resolved? Taking a detailed approach to a key aspect of schooling in an understudied country, this inquiry also addresses that global dilemma.

The rationale

This investigation is intended to contribute modestly to much-needed independent scholarly research on an important institution in a large country of Southeast Asia. Autonomous studies of schooling in Myanmar have been rare and inadequate. Primary-level schooling has received virtually no attention, in spite of it being perhaps the most influential and enduring point of contact between the state and a population of some 52 million people. This is all the more remarkable given the role multilateral agencies have assigned themselves in bringing the 'right to education' to the people of Myanmar. Unfortunately, reports commissioned by these groups to date have been directed principally towards quantitative affairs, namely, both getting students to attend school and having enough schools and materials available for them. The headway made by these organisations insofar as what is actually taught in schools has been insignificant and seemingly of a relatively low priority.[1]

In Myanmar—as most of Asia—school instruction is based on textbooks.[2] A 'textbook culture' prevails: schoolbooks are prescribed by the state, the teacher has no control over their contents, resources other than the textbooks are generally not available, or are rarely used, and assessment is textbook-based.[3] Textbooks are the stuff of schools, and as such are both influential sites for state

---

[1] For instance, *Master Plan of Operations, 1996–2000: Myanmar–UNICEF Country Programme of Co-operation*, UNICEF, 21 September 1995. A. B. Williams, *Primary education in Myanmar Naing-ngan: Proposals for progress towards Education for All*, UNICEF Yangon, February 1990.

[2] In a study of textbook usage in the Philippines, for instance, Maria Louisa Canieso-Doronila found that teachers transmit the books' contents almost totally, believe that it is what should be taught, and make few or no modifications in teaching it. Maria Luisa Canieso-Doronila, *The limits of educational change: National identity formation in a Philippine public elementary school*, University of the Philippines Press, Quezon City, 1989, p. 153.

[3] These are Krishna Kumar's criteria for a 'textbook culture'. Krishna Kumar, 'Origins of India's "textbook culture"', *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 32, no. 4, November 1988, p. 453.

narratives and magnets for controversy.[4] They are cultural phenomena—a collective annexe of the state, a projection of its identity. Their target audience is captive, specific and bounded, culturally and physically. The meeting of students and books in the confines of the school is contrived and deliberate.[5] For these reasons they warrant attention as a valuable means to understanding both schools and society. School textbooks are only one part of the school environment, and therefore provide only a partial picture, but they are the part most susceptible to central control and uniformity: they give an accurate impression not so much of what children *actually* learn but what the state *intends* for them to learn.

Among available textbooks for scrutiny, the primary school Myanmar literacy primers are the most useful. The teaching of literacy is essentially instrumental: the constituents of a literacy reader are not constrained. In teaching reading, writing and recitation, the state is relatively unimpeded. It follows that the Burmese language readers are likely to be the most revealing. They also have the greatest number of hours allocated to them in the school syllabus. Furthermore, out of the population in Myanmar able to attend school, the majority does not go beyond primary school. Hence, it is at the primary level that the state has its greatest reach into society through schooling.

---

[4] In recent years Japanese textbooks, for instance, have aroused international furore over their whitewashing of war crimes. Lloyd I. Rudolph & Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, 'Rethinking secularism: Genesis and implications of the textbook controversy, 1977–79', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 1, 1983, pp. 15–37. Irie Yoshimasa, 'The history of the textbook controversy', *Japan Echo*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1997, [http://www.japanecho.com/ docs/html/240313] (26 February 2002). 'Information concerning [the] new history textbook', Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility, 10 July 2001, [http://www.jca.apc.org/JWRC/center/english/ appeal2.htm] (26 February 2002).

[5] As Alec McHoul has remarked, 'We know, all along, that no one but schoolkids read them and that they read them *in* school... Unlike other written text, the schoolbook limits (or attempts to limit) its possible uses to just one.' Alec McHoul, *Semiotic investigations: Towards an effective semiotics*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London, 1996, p. 78.

This research encompassed a wide variety of primary and secondary sources. Although a sociological study, it has drawn on material from comparative education, Asian studies, discourse analysis, history, political science, linguistics and sociology. It has also referenced publications by the government of Myanmar, international agencies, and non-governmental organisations and political groups working inside and outside the country, in addition to the textbooks themselves. The diversity of these sources is expected to make the findings useful for readers of equally disparate backgrounds, and to link them to wider exchanges on schooling in Asia and further afield.

The study

The body of this study is divided across four chapters, consisting of a conceptual synopsis, an overview of schooling in Myanmar past and present, a discussion of the contents and style in the school textbooks, and an examination of six readings from the schoolbooks.

Chapter 2 explores the conceptual elements of the title: 'legitimising', 'the Union of Myanmar' and 'primary school textbooks'. These are questions of legitimacy, the state and schooling. The chapter draws on studies from a number of different backgrounds. It concludes with a comparative review of schooling in Asia, featuring Cambodia, Thailand, Japan, India, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Chapter 3 is on schooling in Myanmar. It is divided into two parts: historical and contemporary. The major periods covered in the historical segment are the pre-colonial period, British colonial period, war interregnum and post-independence period. Contemporary state schooling is described in terms of its aims, structure,

curriculum, language of instruction, coverage, roles of teachers and students, ritual elements, alternatives to state schooling, and popular conceptions of education and schooling in Myanmar. This chapter and chapter 2 together serve as a conceptual and country-specific background to the commentary on the school textbooks that follows.

Chapter 4 studies the overall contents and style of the Myanmar primary school Burmese readers. It begins by reviewing some relevant studies of school textbooks elsewhere in Asia, and then offers a background to school textbook use in Myanmar and an overview of the readers. It considers keywords used in the readers, their contents, and the descriptive, instructive and moralistic styles that the reading items employ.

Chapter 5 continues the analysis of the readers begun in the previous chapter through more detailed appraisal of the contents and style in six diverse readings. It begins with aspects of the Burmese lexicon, before proceeding to the six items, which are about a distinguished general, a famous pagoda, a model school garden, duties, leadership and self-sacrifice, and the concept of *cetana*, which the state refers to as 'goodwill'. This chapter and chapter 4 investigate the readers to uncover how they impress upon students the 'Union' concept.

On names, spelling and translation

Any writer on Myanmar inevitably faces conflict over the spelling and pronunciation of its names. In 1989 the state—under renewed military management—decided to 'correctly name' and romanise places all over the country, and most notably, the name of the country itself, from 'Burma' to

'Myanmar'. The name change has been the subject of debate that is beyond the scope of this introduction. Suffice to say the new government sought, on the basis of certain historical justifications, to testify to its authority by replacing the old names with others better suited to its own particular nationalist designs. For interested readers, the naming controversy is thoroughly investigated in chapter 2 of Gustaaf Houtman's 1999 *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics*.[6]

Unless otherwise indicated, this text follows the naming and spelling conventions laid down in 1989. The reason for this choice is that the paper is surveying current state discourses, and therefore use of this terminology is thematically appropriate; it should not be taken to have a political inference. However, the study also uses 'Bamar' to designate the dominant ethnic group in Myanmar, and 'Burmese' to designate all nationals of Myanmar and its official language.[7] Where two alternative romanised names exist for non-Bamar groups, the one other than that used is noted parenthetically at the first reference. In quotations from government texts 'Myanma' is also sometimes used, which is an adjectival form of Myanmar.

---

[6] Gustaaf Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics: Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy*, ILCAA study of languages and cultures of Asia and Africa Monograph Series No. 33, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia & Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, 1999, [http://homepages.tesco.net/~ghoutman/index.htm] (11 April 2000). For a far briefer and more particular discussion, see Bertil Lintner, 'Cultural revolution', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 November 1999, p. 24. For an early discussion on the use of 'Burma' or 'Myanmar', see U Kyaw Htun, (ဦးကျော်ထွန်း), '"မြန်မာ" ဟူသောစကားဖြစ်လာရင်းမူလ အကြောင်း' ('About the origin of the word "Myanmar"'). *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 23, 1933, pp. 86–94. More recently, see, Kei Nemoto, 'The concepts of *dobama* ("our Burma") and *thudo-bama* ("their Burma") in Burmese nationalism, 1930–1948', *Journal of Burma Studies*, vol. 5, 2000, pp. 2–3.

[7] 'Bamar' is the standard non-phonetic romanisation of the appellative used in Burmese. In this study it is used for singular and plural forms. This term is used rather than the more common 'Burman' as again it accords with state narratives, though 'Burman' appears in some quotations. The use of 'Burmese' to describe the language and people is a break from the convention of the state (where both are referred to as 'Myanmar'), primarily to avoid confusion. The usages of all these terms have shifted over time, and also between authors of different political and intellectual persuasions. Therefore caution must be exercised when reading a text on Myanmar to first establish its standards.

No single standard exists for romanising Burmese. Although academic writers favour John Okell's 'standard transliteration', here the style of the 1998 *Myanmar-English Dictionary* by the Myanmar Language Commission is used, for the simple practical reason that it does not contain any characters not found on the conventional keyboard and in any roman font, and because it adequately meets the limited needs of this study. Burmese has four basic tones and one toneless vowel sound, and these are adapted in the Commission's romanised alphabet as follows:

Level tone	–	(no distinct character)
Heavy tone	–:	(colon after letter)
Creaky tone	–.	(period after letter)
Stop tone	–'	(apostrophe after letter)
Toneless vowel sound	<u></u>	(line under letter)

Romanised phonetic text is italicised. Names of people and places that follow common (non-phonetic) spelling are not italicised. Pali words (referred to in the text) are italicised but not written phonetically unless in Burmese form.

Translations by the author—as opposed to translations of Burmese text in the *New Light of Myanmar* or other sources—are indicated by reference to a Burmese language source, and where indented are juxtaposed with the original Burmese text. Some indented text is also from both English and Burmese original sources, as indicated in the footnotes. In every case, the simplest, most obvious and most complete translation has been attempted. All weaknesses are entirely the responsibility of the author. Indispensable references for translation were John Okell's classic 1969 *A reference grammar of colloquial Burmese*, and John Okell &

Anna Allot's timely 2001 *Burmese/Myanmar dictionary of grammatical forms*. Aspects of translation are further discussed in chapter 5. It should also be noted that many English translations cited from the *New Light of Myanmar* and other government sources consist of convoluted and sometimes incorrect grammar and vocabulary. In spite of this, minimal changes have been made to these texts, in order to preserve the flavour of the original.

Chapter 2

The state, legitimacy and schooling

> A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; and as this mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government... in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body.
>
> – *John Stuart Mill* [8]

State schooling grew out of nineteenth century Europe, as technological and social revolutions led to radical reevaluations of state-society relations, the nature of education and the role of schooling. School became the foremost educational institution in society, and states increasingly took an interest in its management. These new practices were rapidly replicated throughout the world via European colonies. Subsequent nationalist movements liberated schools from European control, but not from the state.

As this study examines the role that state-managed schooling plays in Myanmar, a rudimentary exploration of some educational thought underpinning state schooling—and its realisation in Asia—is called for. To that end, this chapter is divided into four parts. The first three are organised according to the conceptual elements of the dissertation title: 'legitimising', 'the Union of Myanmar' and 'primary school textbooks'. These pertain to questions of legitimacy, the state and schooling respectively. Discussion begins with the state, upon which the other two elements are contingent. The fourth part sketches pertinent developments in

[8] John Stuart Mill, 'Applications', in *On liberty*, 4th ed., Longman, Roberts & Green, London, 1869 [1859], ch. 5, [http://www.bartleby.com/130/5.html] (17 April 2002).

schooling in Cambodia, Thailand, Japan, India, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

The state

> The fact is that the state has to be understood as an *institution*, of the same species as the Church, the university, and the modern corporation.
>
> – *Benedict Anderson* [9]

Irrespective of its manifest prevalence, 'the state' has proven resistant to attempts to assign it a single specific set of criteria.[10] At the nexus of authority and power, it is a complex accumulation of forces and parties engaged in discrete and varying levels of competition and cooperation with the other. An institution it may be; a simple one it is not.

State authority differs from state power. Power involves subjection through physical or psychological coercion; it allows, according to Max Weber, for the probability that the agency holding it will be able to carry out its objectives irrespective of resistance.[11] Authority, by contrast, lies in the identification of ways that behaviour may be regulated without mandating the use of power.[12]

---

[9] Benedict Anderson, 'Old state, new society: Indonesia's New Order in comparative historical perspective', *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 3, 1983, p. 478.

[10] For a discussion on the problems associated with studying states see, Philip Abrams, 'Notes on the difficulty of studying the state (1977)', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1988, pp. 58–89. See also, Tony Day & Craig Reynolds, 'Cosmologies, truth regimes, and the state in Southeast Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2000, p. 2.

[11] Max Weber, *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*, vol. I, Guenther Roth & Claus Wittich (eds), Ephraim Fischoff, Hans Gerth, A. M. Henderson, Ferdinand Kolegar, C. Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Max Rheinstein, Guenther Roth, Edward Shils & Claus Wittich (trans), Bedminster Press, New York, 1968, vol. 1, p. 53. Michel Foucault has undertaken detailed studies on the dynamics of power in society, notably how it is exercised through various institutions, including schools. See for instance, Michel Foucault, 'The subject and power', *Power*, The New Press, New York, 1994, pp. 326–48. Michel Foucault, 'Two lectures' & 'Truth and power', in *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*, Colin Gordon (ed.), Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham & Kate Soper (trans), The Harvester Press, Sussex, 1980, pp. 78–133.

[12] R. S. Peters, *Authority, responsibility and education*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1959, p. 21.

In reality, power and authority reinforce one another: people subjected to the state's power are both coaxed and coerced to submit. Historically, the capacity of the state to exact warfare, conscript labour and tax subjects guaranteed its survival. This capacity was greatly enhanced by the technological changes of the industrial revolution, which permitted states to rationalise and exhibit their collective presence through expanding bureaucracies, classification of space and resources and standardization of social practices and exchanges. Yet as the idea hardens into a concrete entity (by whatever means) it necessarily involves the performance of legitimising acts in addition to demonstration of power, irrespective of whether or not one accepts Weber's classic proposition that those 'who wield power in the polity provoke the idea of the state'.[13] As Bernard Cohn remarks:

> In the premodern state, in Europe as elsewhere, power was made visible through theatrical displays, in the form of processions, progresses, royal entries, coronations, funerals, and other rituals that guaranteed the well-being and continued power of the rulers over the ruled.[14]

This may just as well describe most pageantry of the twentieth century state—except that whereas that activity is primarily secular, rulers historically asserted authority through a combination of mundane and supra-mundane ritual statements, claiming that it was not merely mandated on this earth, but in the cosmos as well. In South and Southeast Asia such claims to legitimacy took many forms, among which the concept of the 'universal monarch', the *cakkavatti* (Pali; *chakravartin*, Sanskrit), or 'wheel turner' was prominent.[15] This title, however

---

[13] Max Weber, 'Structures of power', in *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology*, H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (trans & eds), Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, 1947, p. 176.

[14] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1996, p. 3.

[15] Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing history from the nation: Questioning narratives of modern China*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1995, p. 77. The wheel was a symbol of power and warfare. Nalin Swaris notes that, 'The symbol did not refer to wheels in general but to the wheel of the war chariot which rolled in the four directions destroying the forces of anarchy and creating a new cosmic order.' Nalin Swaris, *The Buddha's way to human liberation: A socio-historical*

(and other related honorifics) was not available to anyone who assumed the throne. It was reserved for the great unifiers and administrators—those who earned it through superlative kingly performance.[16] These are the men who, as noted in subsequent chapters, have an enduring presence in state commentaries to this day—as do many of the associated ritual narratives for authority.[17]

As the study of state discourses has been criticised for neglecting other sources, its importance should be reasserted. Kosaku Yoshino, for instance, has argued rightly that conventional studies of national identity construction tend to overemphasise formal state-driven text, which he terms 'primary' nationalism, to the neglect of other 'secondary' factors.[18] The latter include the role that 'cultural intermediaries'—the media, advertising agencies, social workers and others engaged in presenting and shaping popular identity—take in manipulating, reshaping or rejecting primary nationalism, and forming alternative visions, possibly entirely outside of state control. Notwithstanding the validity of Yoshino's observations, among others, this research remains unashamedly oriented towards the 'primary' stage of national identity, for reason that without an

---

approach, published by the author, Sri Lanka, 1999, p. 129. Gautama Buddha appropriated the 'wheel turner' concept and invested it with a non-violent and virtuous power in the 'Lion's roar on the turning of the wheel discourse' (Cakkavatti Sihananda Sutta, Digha Nikaya III.26). For a discussion, see Nalin Swaris, *Buddhism, human rights and social renewal*, Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong SAR, 2000, pp. 71–86. The Buddha's first discourse has also been named the 'Turning of the wheel of *Dhamma* [universal law/truth/doctrine] discourse' (Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, Samyutta Nikaya, LVI.11). Hence in Buddhist societies the Buddha has been the penultimate 'wheel turner'. For a discussion on how the *cakkavatti* principle operates in millennial Buddhism see, Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and society: A great tradition and its Burmese vicissitudes*, 2nd edn rev., University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1982, pp. 171–4. For a comparison of Brahmin and Buddhist theories of kingship, see, S. J. Tambiah, *World conqueror and world renouncer: A study of Buddhism and polity in Thailand against a historical background*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 19–53.

[16] Michael Aung-Thwin, *Pagan: The origins of modern Burma*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1985, p. 61. In chapter 3 of his book, Michael Aung-Thwin discusses a typology of Indic kingship as it pertained to the Pagan kingdom.

[17] Gustaaf Houtman has discussed concepts of power and authority in contemporary Myanmar in chapter 6 of his *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics,* including that of *cetana*, raised in chapter 5, below. He also address the dual concepts of 'ana' (*ana* – အာဏာ) and 'awza' (*o:za* – သြဇာ), where he treats the former as 'authority', although in the context of this study it would be better understood as 'power', and the latter as 'influence'. These terms are prevalent in political culture, but they are not explicitly referred to in the textbooks examined for this study. A related concept mentioned, however, is *ina:* (အင်အား), 'strength' or 'power', which is also referred to in chapter 5.

[18] Kosaku Yoshino, 'Rethinking theories of nationalism: Japan's nationalism in a marketplace perspective', in *Consuming ethnicity and nationalism: Asian experiences*, Kosaku Yoshino (ed.), Curzon, Richmond, 1999, pp. 8–28.

understanding of how primary agents are operating, it is not possible to locate the enterprises of secondary actors. In a country like Japan, where Yoshino works, ample studies of primary factors permit the investigator to proceed to secondary constituents of the social struture. In Myanmar—and for that matter, most countries in mainland South and Southeast Asia—very little work has as yet been done on the primary stage. Moreover, in Myanmar (and in a number of its neighbours) the state maintains a virtual monopoly on all official public communication, adding to its value as an object for inquiry, again in stark contrast to Japan. The choice of a state-produced medium, the school textbooks, as the core material for this study is neither to neglect nor underestimate the power of alternative popular discourses. Rather, it is simply a means to delimit and orient this research.[19]

Legitimacy

> What is important is the fact that in a given case the particular claim to legitimacy is to a significant degree and according to its type treated as 'valid'; that this fact confims the position of the persons claiming authority and that it helps to determine the choice of means of its exercise.
>
> – *Max Weber*[20]

As state schooling presupposes and reinforces state authority, it is closely related to the concept of legitimacy. Ernest Gellner, following from Weber, has argued that the state's monopoly of 'legitimate education' is now more important than its

---

[19] Further comments are made in the conclusion. On the enduring presence of the state, it may be added that contrary to the views of some authors (see for instance, Stacy Churchill, 'The decline of the nation-state and the education of national minorities', *International Review of Education,* vol. 42, no. 4, 1996, pp. 265-90) globalisation appears unlikely to result in the demise of modern states. Some pundits now hold that the role of states is in certain respects expanding. See for instance, the remarks by John Gray in 'Global morality', *Background Briefing*, ABC Radio National, 21 July 2002, [http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/stories/s613222.htm] (8 August 2002). On this point see also, Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and nationalism in a global era*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 102–11.

[20] Weber, *Economy and society*, vol. 1, p. 214.

monopoly of legitimate violence.[21] In this he is suggesting that education, schooling, is central to the formation of a belief in the existence of a legitimate order. It is this belief that determines social behaviour.[22] When society gives way to a normative basis for a legitimate order, it is based on some kind of authority.

Authority is not arbitrary: it has its roots in social values, and hence entails some kind of moral claim.[23] R. S. Peters has broadly observed that it

> Presupposes some sort of normative order that has to be promulgated, maintained and perpetuated... [It] regulates behaviour basically because of acceptance of it on the part of those who comply. It operates because of an understanding of and concern for what is intimated within a rule-governed form of life, which those in authority help to create and sustain.[24]

Historically this moral claim was founded on both secular and religious elements—faith, culture, ritual, language and lore—including, as noted above, in Theravada Buddhist polities. By one interpretation of Buddhist doctrine, the social order has been pre-ordained, as one's present life reflects actions in earlier ones. If this is given, then those with power have it because they have the right to it: the degree of control a monarch demonstrates over his kingdom itself bespeaks his legitimacy. Chaos, famine and widespread misery during his reign would betoken illegitimacy and justify his downfall.[25] To whatever extent such principles may have been accepted historically, the monarchs of Theravada Buddhist states

---

[21] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, p. 34.

[22] Weber, *Economy and society*, vol. 1, p. 31.

[23] For the classic typology of political authority, see Weber's discussion of its 'rational', 'traditional' and 'charismatic' grounds. Weber, *Economy and society*, vol. 1, pp. 212–41. For a typology of different levels of legitimacy, see Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*, Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York, 1966, pp. 94–103.

[24] R. S. Peters, *Ethics and education*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1966, pp. 238–9.

[25] Victor B. Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles: Anarchy and conquest, c. 1580–1760,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1984, p. 67. This is what has been referred to as 'kammatic', rather than 'nibbanic' Buddhism, where, broadly speaking, the former deals with one's station in life due to past deeds, whereas the latter is concerned with obtaining *nibbana*, freedom from the cycle of rebirths and successive existences. In kammatic Buddhism there can be no question about what rewards one obtains for being virtuous—there is no Job of the Judeo-Christian canon—one's circumstances in this life are manifestly the product of earlier existences. There is a perfect correlation between cause and effect. However, it should be understood that *kamma* is only one of five 'natural laws' (*niyama*) and therefore but a partial explanation for

did not merely rely upon the exercise of power to secure control but, again as noted already, sought to reinforce their positions through a range of legitimising ventures, including construction of religious edifices and donations to the Buddhist order, the *Sangha*. Kings would also commission the writing of genealogies relating themselves to earlier great leaders, even to the Sakkya clan of the Buddha and the first earthly king of Brahmin mythology, Mahasammata. The link between preservation and historical lineage is relevant to an understanding of the contemporary state in Myanmar—as Aung-Thwin notes, 'Each new king wanted to reaffirm the legitimacy of the present as well as the preexisting social and political order, for he was the preserver, not changer, of tradition.'[26] Well-managed legitimising endeavours could justify further conquest, usually ostensibly to obtain religious relics that would further glorify the kingdom.[27] Successful expansion might lead to a king ultimately obtaining the title of *cakkavatti*.

Some authors have held that the management of states in Southeast Asia has involved nothing more than the exercise of power.[28] This is a massive oversimplification that neglects the extent to which the monarchs of earlier Indic kingdoms and the generals of twentieth century regimes alike have gone in their efforts for legitimacy. As S. J. Tambiah remarks in his landmark text on Buddhist political theory:

---

the totality of events in the universe. For further discussion see '*Cetana*', in chapter 5. Melford Spiro also has comprehensively dealt with these religious conceptions. Spiro, *Buddhism and society*, pp. 31–139.

[26] Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, p. 142.

[27] Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, pp. 57–8.

[28] See for instance, Ing-Britt Trankell & Jan Oversen, 'Introduction', in *Facets of power and its limitations: Political culture in Southeast Asia*, Ing-Britt Trankell & Laura Summers (eds), Uppsala University, Uppsala, 1998, pp. 10–12.

> [The] majestic conception of power harnessed to the chariot of dharma [*dhamma*]—an ideology that provided a model of the polity and commanded political loyalty and service—has always coexisted with a political arrangement that was galactic, not monolithic, and a political actuality that was unstable, often cataclysmic, and rarely guaranteeing durable peace for those in power.[29]

From historical perspective, then, 'legitimacy' does not oblige forms of governance that might be described as 'democratic' or 'just' by the standards of twentieth century political science. The legitimacy of the state rests not on its methodology, but rather on its capacity to *convince* its subjects of something that will justify its rule. This is a decisive point. As discussed in detail in the next chapter, successive military regimes have for decades governed Myanmar; in almost every respect the armed forces dominate state and society.[30] It follows that many commentators automatically deem the military-managed state 'illegitimate'.[31] Yet, the military leadership *is* concerned with legitimacy, and does what it can to boost its authority as well as its power. If a narrow understanding of 'legitimacy' is applied, the regime in Myanmar is by definition without any prospects of legitimacy.[32] However this is to misconstrue not merely the nature of legitimacy but also what the target for legitimacy is, and how it is configured. Legitimacy does not necessarily involve a *specific* moral position or legitimising action—be it Theravada Buddhism or liberal democracy—but is rather a matter of how the state and society interact, determined by the extent to which the role of the state

---

[29] Tambiah, *World conqueror and world renouncer*, p. 482.

[30] For a discussion on the militarisation of state and society in Myanmar see, The People's Tribunal on Food Scarcity and Militarization in Burma, *Voice of the hungry nation*, Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong, October 1999, pp. 10–15.

[31] See for instance Chao-Tzang Yawnghwe, 'Burma: The depoliticization of the political', in *Political legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The quest for moral authority*, Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995, pp. 170–92. On the question of legitimacy for military regimes in general, see Donald L. Horowitz, *Coup theories and officers' motives: Sri Lanka in comparative perspective*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980, p. 12.

[32] It should also be borne in mind that many other thoroughly autocratic states in Asia have mastered the technique of obtaining 'legitimacy' through the ballot box. On Indonesia, see for instance, R. William Liddle, 'A useful fiction: Democratic legitimation in New Order Indonesia', in *The politics of elections in Southeast Asia*, R. H. Taylor (ed.), Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1996, pp. 34–60. On Cambodia, see for instance, Nick Cheesman, 'Cambodian Commune Elections: "Free and fair enough"', *Human Rights Solidarity*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2002, [http://www.ahrchk.net/ hrsolid/mainfile.php/2002vol12no02/2201] (5 August 2002).

is accepted and its propaganda believed. Hence the question of legitimacy is equally pertinent to a multiparty republic or military dictatorship. And one challenge for any state is to find the means to maximise its legitimacy through schooling, thereby guaranteeing its continued authority.[33]

Schooling

> [There] is one [human society] that enjoys a primacy over all the others—the political society, the nation... The school has, above all, the function of linking the child to this society.
>
> – *Emile Durkheim*[34]

In holding that education is fundamentally socialising, both John Dewey and Emile Durkheim pioneered thought on public schooling. The works of the two scholars agree that in its broadest sense education is what makes society exist, and that to sustain an effective modern society, formal education is a necessity.[35] Where the two radically differ is on how formal education—schooling—coordinates students' attention.

For Durkheim schooling is necessary in order to address unrestrained human nature.[36] By imposing discipline, schooling serves as the moral fibre of a nation and as its preeminent social structure. It does not merely reshape what was given to each person at birth, but makes within the learner a social being that exists in nature only at a most rudimentary level.[37] For Durkheim, therefore, schooling is

---

[33] Hans N. Weiler, 'Education and power: The politics of educational decentralization in comparative perspective', *Educational Policy*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1989, pp. 34, 41.
[34] Emile Durkheim, *Moral education: A study in the theory and application of the sociology of education,* Everett K. Wilson & Herman Schnurer (trans), Free Press, New York, 1961 [1925], p. 79.
[35] John Dewey, *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*, Macmillan, New York, 1916, pp. 3, 9.
[36] Durkheim, *Moral education*, pp. 48–9.
[37] W. S. F. Pickering, *Durkheim: essays on morals and education*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston & Henley, 1979, p. 127.

above all both a function and progenitor of society, as 'its object is to create adults out of children who reflect the ideals of their society'.[38]

By contrast, for Dewey using formal education for social control is liable to have negative consquences.[39] To illustrate, Dewey examines the role that schooling played among rising nationalist movements in Europe, especially Germany, where it took on a wholly civic function.[40] In the nineteenth century, Germany was the first state to form regulated universal compulsory public schooling at all levels, specifically aiming at the effective and efficient formation of national identity. Dewey observes that as a consequence, 'The "state" was substituted for humanity; cosmopolitanism gave way to nationalism. To form the citizen, not the "man", became the aim of education.'[41] Schools became unequivocally linked to industrial, political and military expansion. Humanism lost relevance; individual needs were subordinated to state needs; disciplinary training subordinated individual development.

Dewey exposes the structural contradiction, flagged in the introduction, between state objectives and the social aims of schooling. Under state control, the universal qualities of the 'right to education' are liable to be narrowed and subordinated to nationalist objectives, because each state exists in a condition of suppressed hostility with its neighbours, administering its territory with an attitude that it knows what is best for its own people and, not least of all, its

---

[38] Pickering, *Durkheim: essays on morals and education*, p. 104.
[39] Dewey, *Democracy and education*, pp. 26–9.
[40] Dewey, *Democracy and education*, pp. 108–10.
[41] Dewey, *Democracy and education*, p. 109. Germany was in fact operating on a threefold educational programme for state formation, nationalist indoctrination and cultural unification. See Geoff Eley, 'State formation, nationalism and political culture in nineteenth-century Germany', in *Culture, ideology and politics*, Raphael Samuel & Gareth Stedman Jones (eds), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston, Melbourne & Henley, 1982, pp. 283, 287. As discussed in the next section, Japan was the first state in Asia to emulate this model, and it in turn influenced other Asian territories.

children. This is akin to what Henry Giroux has referred to as the 'special ambiguity' of schools, which stems

> On the one hand, from the representation of schooling as '...a vital human need—common to all societies and all people in some form, and as basic as subsistence or shelter'. On the other hand, schools are a fundamental part of the power structure, ideologically and structurally committed to the socio-economic forces that nourish them. It is in this nexus of vital needs and power that the special ambiguity of schooling takes on its meaning.[42]

While Dewey's humanist approach has romantic appeal, it appears to run contrary to the nature of the state. States seek to survive, control is desirable and necessary, and schooling facilitates that end. From this position it is not surprising that nationalism obtained a victory over humanism in nineteenth century Europe.[43] As remarked upon by Dennis Carlson in his work on American history textbooks, implicit in state schooling is the aim to

> Engender and maintain the belief that existing institutions, structures and states' policies are the most just and appropriate ones for the society generally when in fact they facilitate the power of dominant social groups.[44]

In the states that emerged in Asia and elsewhere in the world during the twentieth century, the problem was as much one of maintaining those existing institutions that were perceived to be of benefit to the new state as to forge a new sense of identity and purpose. Invariably mass primary schooling was at the top of the nation-building agenda: schooling that would be of benefit first to the state, second to the individual.[45]

---

[42] Henry A. Giroux, *Ideology, culture and the process of schooling*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1981, p. 73, citing Quintin Hoare (in quotation marks), 'Education: Programmes and people', in *The politics of literacy*, M. Hoyles (ed.), Writers & Readers Publishing Cooperative, London, 1977, p. 35.

[43] Weiler has discussed how contemporary administrative 'decentralisation' programmes in European states are still belied by the desire to dominate. Weiler, 'Education and power'. On the centralised, disciplined nature of states, see also Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, p. 3.

[44] Dennis L. Carlson, 'Legitimation and delegitimation: American history textbooks and the cold war', in *Language, authority and criticism: Readings on the school textbook*, Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke & Carmen Luke (eds), Falmer Press, London, New York, Philadelphia, 1989, pp. 46–7.

[45] Anthony D. Smith, *National identity*, Penguin Books, London, 1991, p. 118.

The exercise of authority in formal education suggests ideology.[46] Much of the exchange on ideology in schooling has been driven by neo-Marxists.[47] These authors have sought to uncover the hidden constituents of schooling, as described by Giroux:

> The first step in developing a radical sociology of school knowledge, one which extends the notion of the hidden curriculum to the formal curriculum, must begin with the recognition that classroom knowledge is shaped by hidden structures of meaning steeped in a complex interplay of ideology and power.[48]

As this body of work is vast and much of it analogous, comment here is restricted to two notable pieces of work, the first by Louis Althusser, the second by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron.[49]

Althusser made a marked early contribution to thought on ideology and schooling with his essay on 'Ideological State Apparatuses', in which he argues that school

---

[46] 'Ideology' is a terminological and conceptual minefield that shall be skirted here in an effort to proceed to the body of this work. For some examples of how it is approached by scholars in various fields see Michael Apple, *Ideology and curriculum*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston & Henley, 1979, p. 20. Clifford Geertz, 'Ideology as a cultural system', in *The interpretation of cultures*, Fontana Press, London, 1973, pp. 193–233. Roland Meighan & Christine Brown, 'Locations of learning and ideologies of education: Some issues raised by a study of Education Otherwise', in *Schooling, ideology and the curriculum*, Len Barton, Roland Meighan & Stephen Walker (eds), Falmer Press, 1980, p. 135. Muthiah Alagappa, 'The anatomy of legitimacy', in *Political legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The quest for moral authority*, Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995, p. 15. Talcott Parsons, *The social system*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1951, p. 349. For the sake of brevity this study has also left aside any remarks on 'hegemony' in schooling, addressed in, for instance, Apple, *Ideology and curriculum*, p. 5. Giroux, *Ideology, culture and the process of schooling*, p. 22. Irrespective of terminology, all these authors raise questions about how people understand their world through socially generated and maintained concepts.

[47] That Marx offered divergent definitions of ideology and did not outline its role in schooling directly has led to confusion among Marxist authors. For a discussion, see for instance, Göran Therborn, *The ideology of power and the power of ideology*, Verso Editions & NLB, London, 1980, pp. 3–4.

[48] Giroux, *Ideology, culture and the process of schooling*, p. 75. The term 'hidden curriculum' was first coined by Philip Jackson to refer to the covert mechanisms for social control used in schools. Philip Jackson, *Life in classrooms,* Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1968.

[49] These texts are indicative, but not necessarily definitive. Others include Michael Apple, *Education and power*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, London, Melbourne & Henley, 1982. Michael Apple, *Ideology and curriculum*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston & Henley, 1979. Basil Bernstein, 'On the classification and framing of educational knowledge', in *Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education*, Michael F. D. Young (ed.), Collier Macmillan, London, 1971, pp. 47–69. Paulo Freire, *Cultural action for freedom*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972. Giroux, *Ideology, culture and the process of schooling*.

It is also helpful to distinguish between this discussion on ideology and debate on 'norms' and 'values' in schooling. Broadly, while the former is concentrated on the role that the state plays in enforcing a specific model for socialisation through schools, the latter is concerned less with the specific role of the state and more broadly with the socialising influence of schools. Useful studies on 'values education' include, Robert Dreeben, 'The contribution of schooling to the learning of norms', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 37, no. 2, 1967, pp. 211–37. Norman T. Feather, *Values in education and society*, Free Press, New York, 1975. Talcott Parsons, 'The school class as a social system: Some of its functions in American society', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1959, pp. 297–316. Milton Rokeach, *Beliefs, attitudes and*

is an instrument for reproduction of—and subjection to—ruling class ideology.[50] By this thesis, schooling is inherently repressive; it is a preeminent 'Ideological State Apparatus', because whereas it operates primarily via ideological methods, it is represented as ideologically neutral.[51]

Bourdieu and Passeron pursue similar themes in their seminal text on social reproduction.[52] In it they argue a case for education as a 'cultural arbitrary'—an arbitrary scheme that is *actually but not apparently* based on power. The culture imposed is arbitrary in that it is not derived from any universal principle; it owes its existence purely to social conditions which are, in turn, the product of formal education: hence the circular nature of reproduction.[53] Although the pedagogic authority is arbitrary, it reinforces and conceals its power by appearing legitimate. In so doing it contributes its own force to social relations:

> Every power to exert symbolic violence, i.e. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations.[54]

According to Bourdieu and Passeron, schooling involves long-term covertly violent practices.[55] It is innately violent as, 'All pedagogic action is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary

---

values: A theory of organization and change, Jossey-Bass Inc., San Fransisco, 1969. Milton Rokeach, *The nature of human values*, The Free Press, New York, 1973.

[50] Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an investigation)', in *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*, Ben Brewster (trans.), NLB, London, 1971, pp. 121–73. While this essay has since suffered criticism on a number of grounds, it remains a landmark in the development of thinking on ideology in schooling. For criticism, see for instance, Giroux, *Ideology, culture and the process of learning*, pp. 14–16. Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and social change*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 91.

[51] Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', pp. 144–8.

[52] Pierre Bourdieu & Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction: In education, society and culture*, Richard Nice (trans.), Sage Publications, London & Beverly Hills, 1977.

[53] Apple remarks that the socialising role of schools is even greater than what Bourdieu and Passeron suggest, as they do not merely distribute and reproduce the dominant ideology, but also create new agents and mechanisms for social control. Apple, *Education and power*, pp. 44, 68–9.

[54] Bourdieu & Passeron, *Reproduction*, p. 4.

[55] For Bourdieu, one important means to this end is the language of instruction. Some of his thoughts on language in schooling are discussed in the section on language of instruction in the next chapter.

power.'[56] The final objective of this structure is for the dominant group to be able to exert authority without having to resort to physical violence and overt means of oppression. But to reach this stage it is necessary that the cultural arbitrary be internalised and reproduce itself after the pedagogic action has ceased. To obtain this level of compliance, the pedagogic work must be of sufficient duration and durability. School is the perfect environment for this task.[57]

The neo-Marxists provided a much-needed corrective to overly optimistic studies of state schooling, but they have been criticised for inadequately accounting for the multiplicity of possible responses to elite-driven socialisation and treating learners as passive recipients of top-down messages.[58] This is a valid observation, however as the present study is, as noted, about state-driven discourse under a military regime, the neo-Marxists' analysis has a high degree of pertinence. It must again be reiterated that this particular research is in no way an attempt to downplay or underestimate the complexity and import and popular discourse in Myanmar. Rather, by understanding how the state perceives things ought to be—as expressed through school textbooks—how things actually are may be better understood.

---

[56] Bourdieu & Passeron, *Reproduction*, p. 5. In this there are again echoes of Weber's famous maxim on the state monopoly over legitimate violence.

[57] Bourdieu & Passeron, *Reproduction*, p. 31–3.

[58] See for instance, Charles F. Keyes, 'State schools in rural communities: Reflections on rural education and cultural change in Southeast Asia', in *Reshaping local worlds: Formal education and cultural change in rural Southeast Asia*, Charles F. Keyes (ed.), Monograph 36/Yale Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1991, pp. 2–3.

The state, legitimacy and schooling in Asia

> The educational problem is, indeed, the most difficult of all those arising in a tropical dependency, a political organization founded and built up on economic circumstances rather than on geographic, racial, religious or linguistic ties...
>
> *– J. S. Furnivall*[59]

Two developments led to the rapid expansion of state-managed schooling in Asia from the late nineteenth century onwards: European colonialism and concomitant Asian nationalism. Although antithetical, together the two had the effect of bringing schooling in Asia increasingly under state auspices. Irrespective of ideological commitment or historical antecedent, schools throughout Asia, as elsewhere in the world, now operate on like principles aimed at reinforcement of state authority, social stability and nation building.

To continue, relevant aspects of state schooling in Cambodia, Thailand, India, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, and Vietnam are outlined. Commentary on each state notes a particular element (or elements) of schooling, together intended to provide a useful regional setting for the next chapter.

Prior to the introduction of schools under European administrations, schooling in Asia was generally managed by local religious authorities. In Theravada Buddhist polities—including Myanmar—the locus of educational control was in the monasteries. The relationship between pre-colonial Theravada Buddhist polities and the Sangha was both cooperative and competitive, and schooling had a lot to do with it. Pre-colonial states did not manage schooling themselves, but they did

[59] J. S. Furnival, *Netherlands India: A study of a plural economy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1944, p. 365.

have an interest in its development, given its bearing on their authority.[60] Buddhist kings were obliged to provide for the security and welfare of the people, and theology and cosmology mandated participation in state affairs by the Sangha.[61] Rulers sought to attract monks via charity and grand religious buildings, in exchange for which the Sangha fulfilled vital religious and instructive roles.[62] The highest depository of learning, intellect and science, the Sangha was obliged to propagate its knowledge, and so all lowland Buddhist states are believed to have had schools operating through monasteries.[63] The Sangha effectively held a monopoly on the teaching of written knowledge.

Though monastic schooling was decentralised, its social influence was equal to that of the European state-managed schools burgeoning in the nineteenth century.[64] It offered an explicit link between the people and their religion—and by extension, their state—and provided minimum levels of literacy for basic administration. It transmitted standardised cultural and intellectual matter across all sectors of society and instilled a valuable sense of discipline that allowed rulers to maintain control over their subjects. It reinforced a respect for tradition and hierarchy. It mandated community participation and support, and facilitated uniformity and conformity within each of the polities it encompassed.

---

[60] For analysis of the historical state–Sangha relationship see, Michael E. Mendelson, *Sangha and state in Burma: A study of monastic sectarianism and leadership*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1975.

Day & Reynolds assert that how knowledge in these polities was interpreted, as a 'cosmological' and 'universalistic' form, meant that there was a special relationship between knowledge and power whereby the former was necessarily brought into the service of the state. Day & Reynolds, 'Cosmologies, truth regimes, and the state in Southeast Asia', pp. 4–5.

[61] Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, p. 65.

[62] Yoneo Ishii, *Sangha, state, and society: Thai Buddhism in history*, Peter Hawkes (trans.), Monographs of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, no. 15, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1986, p. 47.

[63] Since the time of Gautama Buddha himself, the Sangha has forged a strong educational tradition built on highly intellectual foundations and missionary practices. Numerous discourses by the Buddha refer to the importance of education. For example, in the Kevatta Sutta the Buddha condemns superstitious belief in supposed miracles such as psychic power and telepathy but refers to the real miracle as the 'miracle of instruction'. In the Kalama Sutta, the Buddha sets out a charter for free enquiry through investigation and analysis. In the Sigalovada Sutta, the Buddha spells out students' and teachers' reciprocal obligations, which are outlined in chapter 4.

[64] J. K. P. Watson, 'The monastic tradition of education in Thailand', *Paedogogica Historica*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1973, p. 519.

In short, it had an important role in the maintenance of social cohesion.[65] The state and Sangha, then, were caught in what Michael Aung-Thwin has referred to as a structural contradiction: each relied on the other for its social position, but both were competing for the same limited resources.[66]

In Cambodia and Thailand, state schools began to subsume their monastic counterparts from late in the nineteenth century onwards. While the education policies of the French colonial state in Cambodia were different from the non-colonised Thai state, the practical result in each case was the steady increase of state control over monastic schooling. French colonial ideology typically encouraged cultural assimilation, but its practice in Cambodia did not reflect this objective, perhaps due to Cambodia's nominal autonomy as a 'protectorate' rather than as a colony.[67] The colonial state initially left the monasteries to their own devices, preferring to manage a small number of elite schools from which the administrative class was derived. Not until the 1920s did the French authorities attempt to expand schooling downwards to the primary level in response to shifting social and political conditions, particularly through attempts at 'modernisation' of monastic schools.[68] The latter endeavour may have in part been spurred on by a desire to break links between Khmer monks and their

---

[65] Thomas Clayton, *Education and the politics of language: Hegemony and pragmatism in Cambodia, 1979–1989*, Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 2000, pp. 45–6. David M. Ayres, *Anatomy of a crisis: Education, development, and the state in Cambodia, 1953–1998*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2000, pp. 11, 13, 28.

[66] Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, p. 204.

[67] Ayres, *Anatomy of a crisis*, p. 19, 22.

[68] Clayton, *Education and the politics of language*, pp. 51–5. However Clayton notes that graduates of monastic schools still had to proceed through the primary level state schools before they could continue to higher levels on the educational ladder. See also Ayres, *Anatomy of a crisis*, p. 24.

By contrast, the nineteenth century British administration in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was determined to oppose any attempts at modernisation of monastic schooling, out of fear that the widespread Christian mission schools' role would be jeopardised. It legislated to prevent the construction of schools within a quarter-mile of one another. As Christian schools had already been established in most populous areas since the first part of that century, Buddhist schools were stymied and the majority of graduates into the public service continued to be products of the Christian education system. After independence this situation was deliberately reversed, with nationalisation of denominational schools in 1961 and Buddhist monks serving as advisors to the state. Horowitz, *Coup theories and officers' motives*, pp. 35, 43.

neighbouring Thai counterparts.[69] In the 1950s state schooling rapidly expanded under the independent state. Schools were expected to modernise and simultaneously reinforce pre-existing power relations.[70] Despite failing in this task they did succeed, nevertheless, in undermining the role of the monasteries.

Meanwhile, by late in the nineteenth century the Thai monarchy, facing mounting pressure from colonial powers on all sides, was obliged to turn its attention to administrative and educational reforms. Up to 1880, management of schooling in Thailand (Siam) was—as it had been in other Theravada Buddhist polities—basically a prerogative of the monastic schools.[71] From that time on, changing regional conditions led to the establishment of an education department under royal administration, which was upgraded to a ministry in 1889. However, popular demand for state-managed teaching remained low. Most people continued to subscribe to the monastic schools which, unlike in neighbouring territories, had not suffered a decline in legitimacy, having not been subjected to the superintendence of a non-Buddhist power. The Thai state, though, vacillated over the extent to which changes could be made from within the monasteries.[72] It sought to centralise schooling as much as was practically feasible, but did so from the position of a 'traditional' structure. Its advantage as a Buddhist state with an historic mandate was that it met little resistance from the Sangha, compared to its counterparts in neighbouring territories, where any initiatives emanating from non-Buddhist colonial officials—irrespective of details—were seen

---

[69] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, 2nd edn rev., Verso, London & New York, 1991, p. 124.
[70] Ayres, *Anatomy of a crisis*, pp. 3, 39–42, 187.
[71] David K. Wyatt, *The politics of reform in Thailand: Education in the reign of King Chulalongkorn*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1969, pp. 6–23, 84.
[72] Wyatt, *The politics of reform in Thailand*, pp. 140–1.

as unconditionally illegitimate.[73] Still, Thai administrative efforts to consolidate and review monastic teaching, and increase the provision of textbooks, did not initially have any dramatic effect.[74] It was not until 1898 that further reforms were ordered by King Chulalongkorn, reiterating the state's resolve to expand public schooling through the monasteries: for the first time monks were mandated to teach a 'modern' curriculum devised by a state agency.[75] In 1899 a teacher–training programme for large numbers of rural monks was inaugurated, but within a few years their role was already envisaged as temporary.[76] When in 1921 the Primary Education Act—making primary schooling compulsory— was promulgated, the state began to replace monks with specially trained civilian teachers.[77] This programme was accelerated into the 1930s; the act was enforced nationally by 1935.[78] State schools were established in most parts of the country, and missionary and Chinese schools were obliged to follow the national curriculum.[79]

---

[73] Wyatt, *The politics of reform in Thailand*, pp. 130, 156–7.

[74] Watson, 'The monastic tradition of education in Thailand', p. 526.

[75] Charles F. Keyes, 'The proposed world of the school: Thai villagers' entry into a bureaucratic state system', in *Reshaping local worlds: Formal education and cultural change in rural Southeast Asia*, Charles F. Keyes (ed.), Monograph 36/Yale Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1991, p. 95.

[76] Tambiah, *World conqueror and world renouncer*, pp. 221–2.

[77] Keyes, 'The proposed world of the school', p. 96.

[78] Ishii, *Sangha, state, and society*, p. 25. On the expansion of state schooling in Thailand during the twentieth century see also David Bradley, 'Traditional minorities and language education in Thailand', in David Bradley (ed.), *Language policy, language planning and sociolinguistics in South-east Asia*, Papers in South-east Asian linguistics no. 9, Pacific Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1985, pp. 90–1.

Benedict Anderson has remarked that Thailand under Chulalongkorn reverted to diplomacy rather than Japanese-style militarisation for survival and so, 'Nor was anything much done to push an official nationalism through a modernized educational system. Indeed, primary education was not made compulsory till more than a decade after his death.' Anderson, *Imagined communities*, pp. 99–100. Anderson admits that Chulalongkorn perceived himself to be a moderniser, but argues that in fact he was not. Patrick Jory, however, notes that Chulalongkorn was serious in his commitment to the expansion of book learning so that the Thai state might be seen as 'civilised'. By comparison to earlier eras, the expansion of formal education under Chulalongkorn was rapid. Patrick Jory, 'Books and the nation: The making of Thailand's National Library', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2000, 351–73. Regardless of the extent to which tangible reforms may have been achieved during his lifetime, Chulalongkorn is widely credited with having created the administrative and intellectual space for the modernising of Thailand, albeit more slowly and less spectacularly than had occurred in Japan.

[79] Keyes, 'State schools in rural communities', p. 7.

The Thai regime's efforts at modernisation were informed by contemporaneous developments in Japan.[80] There, mass state-managed instruction was first engineered during the late nineteenth century Meiji Restoration. Like Thailand, Japan faced the threat of impending occupation by colonial powers. In a remarkable elite-led social revolution, its inward-looking state was within a few decades centralised, modernised and militarised—not least of all due to a revamp of national education, similar to what was undertaken by Germany during the same period. Among the Meiji state's first steps, the Education Order of 1872 inaugrated compulsory unified schooling. The national conscription law soon followed: for the Japanese policy-makers, growth in schools and the military were synonymous.[81] The Education Order prioritised primary level schools and basic literacy. The result is believed to have been at least a doubling of the recorded literacy rate from around 40 to 80 per cent by the end of the century.[82]

In 1890 the Imperial Rescript on Education renewed Confucian values in the Japanese curriculum, alongside strong patriotic teachings and greater centralisation and state control.[83] The Imperial Rescript was in part a response to

---

[80] Wyatt, *The politics of reform in Thailand*, pp. 224–5. The Thai state was not the only one keen to learn from the Japanese: Chinese administrators also expressed interest in imitating Japanese reforms in their own territory, and in 1898 sent a study team there. Ultimately, the Japanese design was not adaptable to China. While in Japan the elite had responded as a unit to the challenges it faced, and could manage its population effectively, the size, administrative decentralisation and poor infrastructure of China proved insurmountable obstacles. Under the veneer of change, older schooling practices persisted there until the communist takeover, when compulsory mass education was initiated. Sally Borthwick, *Education and social change in China: The beginnings of the modern era*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, Stanford, 1983, pp. 49, 67, 69, 80. Rod Lawrence, 'Education in China: Preparation for citizenship', *Asian Affairs*. vol. 31, no. 3, 2000, p. 273.

[81] Nagai Michio, 'Education in the early Meiji period', in *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and revolution*, Nagai Michio & Miguel Urrutia (eds), The United Nations University, Tokyo, 1985, p. 147. Toyama Shigeki, 'Independence and modernization in the nineteenth century', in *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and revolution*, Nagai Michio & Miguel Urrutia (eds), The United Nations University, Tokyo, 1985, p. 40.

[82] Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The roots of modern Japan*, Macmillan, Hampshire & London, 1982, p. 259. By 1935, primary schooling was virtually universal. Brian Holmes, 'Education in Japan: Competition in a mass system', in *Equality and freedom in education: A comparative study*, Brian Holmes (ed.), George Allen & Unwin, London, 1985, p. 224.

[83] John Caiger, 'The aims and content of school courses in Japanese history, 1872–1945', in *Japan's modern century*, Edmund Skrzypczak (ed.), Sophia University, Tokyo, 1968, p. 58. Confucian schooling emphasises memorisation of moral precepts. Lawrence, 'Education in China', p. 276.

a growing sense that the 'modernised' lessons were becoming too westernised.[84] It was also due to the work by Mori Arinori, who became Minister of Education in 1885.[85] Mori held that formal education should serve state interests first and foremost. He built a highly integrated system, with total state authority over curricula, textbooks, and teachers. He took steps against private sector schools, including closures, and disincentives such as non-recognition of their qualifications. Under the Imperial Rescript, he expanded the role of the emperor in education policy-making in general, and in moral education in particular. His legacy continued until the military defeat of Japan in 1945, and—in spite of orders issued by the American-dominated occupying force to eliminate the most pernicious elements of earlier schooling—echoes of the Meiji Restoration have endured to the present day, notably the highly centralised and uniform national curriculum.[86] Nationalism in Japanese schools, including mandatory use of historic symbols in school ceremonies, has reportedly increased during the 1990s.[87]

Like Japan, schooling in contemporary India owes much to developments in the nineteenth century, however in marked contrast, India's model grew explicitly out of the colonial British Empire. As schooling in 'British Burma' was to a large degree distilled from India—of which it was classed as a province—colonial schooling policy there deserves special consideration. It should be kept in mind that India's astounding heterogeneity makes it difficult to say anything about it

[84] Michio, 'Education in the early Meiji period', pp. 148–9.
[85] Lehmann, *The roots of modern Japan*, pp. 263–4.
[86] Holmes, 'Education in Japan', p. 240.
[87] Yoshino, 'Rethinking theories of nationalism', p. 14. Yoshino argues that this revival is not due to state initiatives but rather the type of 'secondary' nationalism discussed earlier.

with conviction; accordingly, these remarks are tempered by awareness that the Indian 'nation' is something quite unlike its neighbours.[88]

Prior to the British takeover, Indian schooling had passed through many periods of flux. Across different eras and regions, there was little to typify it except that, as elsewhere within Asia, the locus of control rested with the religious establishment. Schooling usually consisted of a small formal sector servicing the elite and a larger non-formal sector for others.[89] The earliest period of British involvement in India did little to alter this situation, and was characterised both by neglect of pre-existing institutions and obstruction of alternatives.

The significant period of British administered schooling in India was from 1813 to 1921.[90] Funds were first issued for education in India during 1813. In 1835 Lord Macaulay was called to arbitrate on the language of instruction, which he decided unambiguously in favour of English, via his (in)famous 'Minute'.[91] Private higher education was also prioritised, rather than public mass education.[92] In 1854, the British administration finally moved to develop a comprehensive education policy, mainly through the stimulation of private enterprise by government grants-in-aid. For much of the latter part of the nineteenth century, market forces dictated schooling in India. As a result there was a rapid proliferation of often poor quality secondary and tertiary education at the expense of primary schooling. As more

---

[88] Scholarly articles on India, Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal quip, are generally 'no more than one-dimensional sketches of the metaphorical Indian elephant'. Sugata Bose & Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, culture, political economy*, Routledge, London & New York, 1998, p. 5.

[89] Padma Gupta & Giri Raj Gupta, 'Education and social change in India', *Indian Horizons*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1975, p. 57. Sushila Mehta, *The school and the community in India*, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1974, p. 10. K. G. Saiyidain, J. P. Naik & S. Abid Husain, *Compulsory education in India*, UNESCO, Paris, 1952, p. 11.

[90] Saiyidain et al., *Compulsory education in India*, p. 15. K. L. Shrimali, *The Wardha Scheme: The Gandhian plan of education for rural India*, Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur, 1949, p. 6.

[91] J. C. Aggarwal, *Landmarks in the history of modern Indian education*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984, p. 5.

[92] This early emphasis on elite education reflected the policies still in vogue in the United Kingdom at that time. State-run schooling was not legislated there until 1870.

and more graduates of upper levels failed to obtain employment in the civil service or other white-collar jobs, the nationalist movement expanded.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Indian leaders were increasingly militating for control of educational resources and a shift in priorities towards mass elementary schooling.[93] In 1921 constitutional changes transferred responsibility for public instruction to Indian control. Efforts to introduce primary schools as an instrument for social and political change culminated in 1937 with Gandhi's Basic Education Scheme.[94] The cornerstone of the Basic Education programme was nationwide free and compulsory primary-level vocational training for students in their 'mother-tongue' with Hindi as the 'link language'. Throughout the 1950s the number of schools grew rapidly, but continued to fall far short of objectives.[95] Numerous subsequent reports and initiatives have highlighted many ongoing problems and proposed new policy measures, with limited success.[96]

Since independence, attempts at educational reform in India have suffered due to an ongoing colonial mentality among the elite, generated by the resilience of the British-sponsored system.[97] Reforms lost their impetus after independence.[98] Schooling continues to be sequential and rigid, geared towards higher education

---

[93] On the role of individuals such as Maharaja Sayajirao and Gopal Krishna Gokhale in pressing for universal elementary education in India see Saiyidain et al., *Compulsory education in India*, p. 21. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, 'Elementary education', in *Speeches and writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale: Volume III—Educational*, D. V. Ambekar, & D. G. Karve (eds), Asia Publishing House, London, 1967, p. 76. Aparna Basu, *The growth of education and political development in India, 1898–1920*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1974, pp. 60, 66–7.

[94] The Basic Education Scheme is examined at length in *Educational reconstruction: A collection of Gandhiji's articles on the Wardha Scheme along with a summary of the proceedings of the All India National Educational Conference held at Wardha, 1937*, 6th edn, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Sevagram, Wardha, February 1956. See also, Shrimali, *The Wardha Scheme*.

[95] Aggarwal, *Landmarks in the history of modern Indian education*, pp. 384–97.

[96] See generally, Caroline Dyer, *Operation Blackboard: Policy implementation in Indian elementary education*, Monographs in International Education, Symposium Books, Oxford, 2000.

[97] Sureshachandra Shukla, 'Indian educational thought and experiments: A review', *Comparative Education*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1983, p. 60. This situation, as R. P. Singh has remarked, is due to a colony being 'as much an intellectual attitude as it is a political fact'. R. P. Singh, *Education in an imperial colony*, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979, p. 131.

[98] Saiyidain et al., *Compulsory education in India*, p. 92.

accessible only to a few, and a 'textbook culture' prevails.[99] English has maintained its position as the preeminent language of instruction, irrespective of Gandhi's earlier attempts to counteract its role.

Singapore also was subject to the policies of the British colonial state, however its circumstances were otherwise thoroughly unlike those of India. Singapore was part of the 'Straits Territories' adjacent to Malaya, and the schools for its almost exclusively migrant population ran under four parallel administrations in Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English mediums.[100] This arrangement accentuated the differences between racial and linguistic groups.[101] Approaching independence within the Federation of Malaya, attempts were made to draw schooling for the divergent parties together with a view to greater 'national unity', and also to increase state control over politically dangerous groups such as Chinese students; in 1952 schooling was brought entirely under government auspices and assigned a set of aims for the first time.[102] All children were to be taught in state schools, with a view to growth of both individual character and community consciousness as part of an 'integrated' society. This policy was carried through to independence in 1959.[103] Growing conflict in virtually all areas of policy—including the nationalisation of all schools under a two-tier structure favouring Malay schools over Chinese and Tamil schools—then forced the political separation of Singapore from the peninsula in 1965.

---

[99] As discussed in the introduction. See Kumar, 'Origins of India's "textbook culture"', p. 453.

[100] The vernacular schools were established in the 1870s out of a sense of 'good governance' at the same time as state schooling was being introduced in the United Kingdom. They were intended to satisfy the minimum needs of rural people and, naturally, avoid stimulating them to militate for social change. Rex Stevenson, *Cultivators and administrators: British educational policy towards the Malays, 1875–1906*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1975, pp. 23, 55, 193–9.

[101] S. Gopinathan, 'Towards a National Educational System', in *Singapore: A society in transition*, Riaz Hassan (ed.), Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1976, p. 69.

[102] Lee Sow Ling, Education and national unity in a bicultural society: Malaya, unpublished MPhil thesis, Institute of Education, University of London, 1967, pp. 129–30, 252–4.

[103] Rosnani Hashim, *Educational dualism in Malaysia: Implications for theory and practice*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1996, p. 6.

Since independence, schooling in Singapore has reflected the objectives of the ruling People's Action Party.[104] But rather than attempting to impose one specific ethnic or cultural idiom on the populace, the state has recognised that the challenge for Singapore has lain in its diversity and discordant nature. Consequently, its lack of common inherited traditions has become the basis for a new identity.[105] The challenge for teachers has been to convince the new generation that they can forge their own unified national identity in spite of differences, and orient their collective attention towards their country of residence and one another, rather than respective lands of origin.[106]

In Indonesia, for centuries parts of the archipelago were home to a decentralised body of religious schools. Initially similar to the Buddhist monastic schools, they later converted to Islam while maintaining the same purpose: to impart religious learning, morality and literacy. Like the schools in other pre-colonial states they also served important functions in the social hierarchy, linking the elite and folk through common teachings.[107] Benedict Anderson suggests that after integration as the 'Dutch East Indies' the colonial schools 'formed a colossal, highly rationalized, tightly centralized hierarchy, structurally analogous to the state bureaucracy itself'.[108] The schools may perhaps have formed a colossus in terms of their geographic coverage, but the per centage of the population that they

---

[104] H. E. Wilson, *Social engineering in Singapore: Educational policies and social change, 1819–1972*, Singapore University Press, Singapore, 1978, p. 232.
[105] Gopinathan, 'Towards a national educational system', pp. 67, 73
[106] Shanta Louisa Pragasam, Constructing the good citizen: Moral education in Singaporean primary schools, unpublished BA Hons thesis, University of Western Australia, 1999, p. 2.
[107] Sidney Jones, 'The Javanese *pesantren*: Between elite and peasantry', in *Reshaping local worlds: Formal education and cultural change in rural Southeast Asia*, Charles F. Keyes (ed.), Monograph 36/Yale Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1991, pp. 19–22.
[108] Anderson, *Imagined communities*, p. 121.

reached remained extremely small.[109] Those whom the schools did service formed the nationalist elite that saw itself, for the first time, as part of a commonality: 'Indonesia'. Unlike India (and Myanmar), the Indonesian leaders took unambiguous and early steps to build their state around a unifying ideology. In 1928 they designated 'Bahasa Indonesia' the future national language—rather than Javanese or Dutch—a decision that has since had massive social ramifications. It is now—apart from the first three years—the sole language of instruction in schools, and the central subject on the curriculum.[110] This concern with a common language reflects the Indonesian state's primary educational objective: to use schools as a unifying force that will create 'good' citizens.[111]

Indonesian schools are in every respect tightly managed by the state to ensure that students have been appropriately socialised.[112] This observation is particularly relevant to the school textbooks, which Dedi Supriadi describes as being evaluated by the National Evaluation Committee (of which he was chairman at time of writing) to determine, among other things

> That the content of the books should be in line with and not contradictory to Pancasila [National Ideology],... Government policies, national unity and security, laws, regulations [and] ethics... Judgement in this aspect is made by evaluators coming from Mabes ABRI (Armed Forces Headquarters), Kejaksaan Agung (Office of Attorney General), Lemhanas (National Defense Institute), and Inspectorate General of [the Ministry of Education and Culture].[113]

---

[109] Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, 'Language, fantasy, revolution: Java 1900–1950', in *Making Indonesia*, Daniel S. Lev & Ruth McVey (eds), Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, New York, 1996, p. 27.

[110] P. W. J. Nababan, 'Language in education: The case of Indonesia', *International Review of Education*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1991, p. 121. Lynette Parker, 'The quality of schooling in a Balinese village', *Indonesia*, no. 54, 1992, p. 101.

[111] Observing primary schools in Bali, Lynette Parker suggests that the Indonesian state is in fact achieving this objective. Lynette Parker, 'The creation of Indonesian citizens in Balinese primary schools', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1992, pp. 44–6. Parker, 'The quality of schooling in a Balinese village', p. 115. Lynette Parker, 'The subjectification of citizenship: Student interpretations of school teachings in Bali', *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2002, pp. 1, 16.

[112] Parker, The creation of Indonesian citizens in Balinese primary schools', p. 50.

[113] Dedi Supriadi, 'Restructuring the schoolbook provision system in Indonesia: Some recent initiatives', *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, vol. 7, no. 7, 1999, [epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n7.html] (26 February 2002).

According to Supriadi, an incredible 65–75 per cent of all publishing in Indonesia is of textbooks, which are distributed free. They are a vital part of schooling that constantly bombards students with mottos, symbols, songs and other devices to make them feel—in Lyn Parker's words—the 'weight and immutability of the Indonesian state'.[114]

This section concludes with reference to Vietnam, as the relationship between the state and schooling there deviates in many respects from other territories in Asia, with the crucial exception that, as elsewhere, the Vietnamese state now unequivocally asserts its prerogative to control schooling. Compared with other parts of the region, the role of teachers in pre-colonial Vietnam was unusual. Schooling was based largely on Confucian values, but it was more unified than its Chinese counterpart. Prior to the nineteenth century, schools had for centuries already helped to integrate state and society.[115] However, unlike schools now, where teachers are expected to be passive transmitters of state-approved orthodoxy, the Vietnamese teachers historically also acted as petitioners to their rulers on behalf of their communities. If petitions went unheard they were capable of organising and leading rebellions, as they also did when the French first entered the south of Vietnam.

Cognizant of the highly volatile and threatening nature of the indigenous schools, the French colonial state spent large sums of money to build an alternative model that would neutralise them. Whereas colonial states elsewhere were contriving artificial unions of arbitrarily delineated territories and populations, the French in

---

[114] Parker, 'The subjectification of citizenship', p. 22.
[115] Gail Paradise Kelly, *French colonial education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*, David H. Kelly (ed.), AMS Press, New York, 2000, p. 3.

Vietnam set about breaking down a prior unity into regions and classes. Notwithstanding, Vietnamese entering the elite French schools soon proved highly adept at taking on roles as bureaucrats. When French administrators found their own positions threatened, they demanded and obtained a dual schooling structure that placed local people out of competition with Europeans. Further 'reforms' forced all schools in the territory to conform to state standards, resulting in the closure of thousands in the villages, established distinct curricula for French and Vietnamese students, and imposed other administrative obstacles to prevent the Vietnamese from obtaining access to French schools. In short, by the 1920s, French schooling aimed explicitly to counter Vietnamese aspirations to anything other than a rural vocational lifestyle, and to prevent any challenges to the state through the kind of elite nationalist movements burgeoning elsewhere in the region. In response, Vietnamese teachers maintained their earlier role as motivators of resistance, and within their state schools departed from the curriculum, substituted government-produced textbooks with subversive literature, and organised and participated in anti-government protests.[116]

Although the study of schooling in Vietnam after independence is complicated by the conflicts that led to its division, school policies in the north and south were not substantially different. In the south, schools were nationalised and given the task of creating 'good citizens' via compulsory Vietnamese-medium primary schooling. Moral education programmes were also devised to counter communist ideologies. In the north there was similar teaching on citizenship, which there included willingness to provide a political and military contribution to the

[116] Kelly, *French colonial education*, pp. 4–8, 18, 76, 108, 118, 123.

state.[117] Either way, according to Thaveeporn Vasavakul, schooling was carefully supervised by the centre, and became increasingly bureaucratised:

> The two Viêt Nams' primary and secondary school systems were similar in their advocacy of the universalization of primary education, the advocacy of general education, the organization of the school system along bureaucratic lines, the uniformity of the study program, the regulation of school activities, and the centralization of teacher training, textbook-writing, and examinations.[118]

The latent uniformity of these two competing systems indicates how schooling throughout Asia from the late nineteenth century until now has been an integral part of state control and national identity construction: an observation, as shall be seen, equally applicable to Myanmar.

Conclusion

Is state schooling—as Mill would have it—a contrivance for social control and state domination? While Dewey advocated education for humanist rather than nationalist objectives, it seems that the state is inevitably driven towards the latter rather than the former. The extent to which it is a singularly repressive apparatus is a matter for debate beyond the scope of this inquiry. Suffice it to say that state-managed schooling is used by states to ensure continued authority.

In Asia, state-managed schooling was born of European colonialism and attendant Asian nationalism. Macaulay's Minute and Japan's Imperial Rescript represent the opposite extremes of educational objectives; nevertheless, ultimately *both* had the effect of mandating a role for the state in the management

---

[117] Thaveeporn Vasavakul, Schools and politics in South and North Viêt Nam: A comparative study of state apparatus, state policy, and state power (1945–1965), unpublished PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1994. On developments in the north, see also, Alexander Woodside, 'The contributions to rural change of modern Vietnamese village schools', in *Reshaping local worlds: Formal education and cultural change in rural Southeast Asia*, Charles F. Keyes (ed.), Monograph 36/Yale Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1991, pp. 183–4.

[118] Thaveeporn, Schools and politics in South and North Viêt Nam, p. 728.

of schools. In the post-independence period the acceleration of state-controlled schooling throughout the region—as a means to national unity and state legitimacy—has far exceeded that of the colonial period. This is not surprising, given that decolonisation throughout Asia—while involving mass movements—was effectively managed through the transfer of power and authority from one elite group to another.[119]

State-run schooling across Asia now has the same basic characteristics, including graduated classes, standardised textbooks and examinations, full time professional teachers and a concise curriculum arranged sequentially.[120] For a region that is so populous and diverse, schooling is—in its objectives, methodology and management—remarkably homogenous. The Asian school has become the preeminent extension of the state and its social hierarchy. The next chapter looks at how these developments have manifest in Myanmar.

---

[119] Anderson, *Imagined communities*, p. 160. David Brown, 'Ethnicity and the state', in *The state and ethnic politics in Southeast Asia*, David Brown (ed.), Routledge, London & New York, 1994, p. 26.

[120] Shukla, 'Indian educational thought and experiments', p. 61. Shukla's remarks are specific to India, but are true for all state-managed systems in the region.

Chapter 3

The state, legitimacy and schooling in Myanmar

> The raison d'etre of the state remains the maintenance of order, thus allowing its persistence and ensuring the smooth functioning of the society which provides it with its resources. If the people do not view the state which they have created and the policies which they pursue in this way, it is because they do not understand the intricacies of the statecraft of the modern world. People need to be educated towards understanding their stake in the new national ventures.
>
> – *Daw Ni Ni Myint* [121]

Schooling in Myanmar has undergone remarkable change within the last two centuries: from an umbrella of monastic schools gradually threatened by a state-sponsored scheme under British tutelage, to one reinvented by an independent state finally hijacked by a military autocracy. Contemporary schooling in Myanmar exhibits features from all of these earlier periods.

This chapter establishes the domain for the textbooks studied in chapters 4 & 5. It is divided into two main parts. The first assesses the historical development of schooling in Myanmar. The major periods considered are the pre-colonial period, the British colonial period, the interregnum generated by the second world war, and the post-independence period—prior to and after 1962, the year since the country has been managed uninterrupted by successive military regimes. The second part of the chapter addresses current affairs, beginning when the latest regime took control of the country in 1988. The main aspects of state schooling under the present state that are briefly surveyed include its aims, structure, curriculum, language of instruction, coverage, the role of teachers and students

[121] Daw Ni Ni Myint, 'Myanmar two millennia: An excursion through history', in *Myanmar two millennia*, part 1, Universities Historical Research Centre, Yangon, 2000, no page numbers. Daw Ni Ni Myint is the Director General of the Universities Historical Research Centre, and the wife of former dictator General Ne Win.

respectively, and popular perceptions of education and schooling in Myanmar. The first part of this chapter breaks with convention in the rest of this paper and refers to the country as 'Burma' (rather than 'Myanmar') and the capital as 'Rangoon' (rather than 'Yangon'). The reason for this is that these older names were those commonly used prior to 1989. The use of 'Myanmar' is resumed in the second part of the chapter.

Before the Union of Myanmar

> There are few among the Burmese who do not know how to read and write; for the Talapoins, to whose care they are intrusted as soon as they attain the age of reason, always teach them to read, as also to write...
>
> – *Father Vincenzo Sangermano* [122]

'Burma' began as a fiction, a product of European demarcation. Before nineteenth century British colonial expansion, like other Southeast Asian polities, there were no fixed boundaries encompassing the whole region as a single nation or kingdom. For centuries people had moved along rivers from the mountains of Central and East Asia into its fertile lowlands. Numerous diverse groups settled in and around the extensive Irrawaddy River basin and established competitive kingdoms. Others developed more discrete small-scale communities.

By the seventeenth century, kingdoms in the region were already increasing their power and authority over local populations through new technologies and more advanced administrative techniques. As noted in chapter 2, like other lowland Theravada Buddhist polities, rulers also entered into complex mutually

---

[122] Vincenzo Sangermano, *The Burmese empire a hundred years ago*, 3rd edn, reprint, White Orchid Press, Thailand, 1995 [1893], p. 180. By 'Talapoins' Sangermano is referring to the Buddhist monks.

advantageous relationships with the Sangha.[123] Buddhism was the preeminent feature of these polities, which were based on concepts of 'civility' and dynasty rather than, for instance, territory or ethnic sentiment.[124]

For the Bamar—the group that obtained dominance in the region by the eighteenth century—monasteries were synonymous with education. In Burmese, the word for 'school' and 'monastery' is identical.[125] The Bamar monastic schools may have begun around the eleventh century.[126] They were rural-based, decentralised and open to pupils irrespective of class—but not gender, as the monks' religious code prevented them from teaching female students. However, some evidence exists of other schools that catered to female students.[127] The monasteries were also found in the peripheries of state-administered territory, where schooling served as a tool for the assimilation of 'uncivilised' peoples into the lowland polity.[128] Technically the lessons were free, but as the Sangha relied predominantly upon local communities for their needs, it was a village-based collective undertaking. Wealthy donors would also entirely fund the erection and

---

[123] Spiro, *Buddhism and society*, pp. 378–82. Robert H. Taylor, *The state in Burma*, C. Hurst & Co., London, 1987, pp. 5, 14.

[124] Michael A. Aung-Thwin, *Myth and history in the historiography of early Burma: Paradigms, primary sources and prejudices*, Monographs in International Studies: Southeast Asia Series No. 102, Ohio University Center for International Studies & Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1998, p. 480.

[125] The term *kjaun:* (ကျောင်း) encompasses 'monastery' and 'school', where only adjectival prefixes distinguish 'monastery', *hpoun:gyi: kjaun:* (ဘုန်းကြီးကျောင်း) from 'school', *sathin kjaun:* (စာသင်ကျောင်း).

[126] Among the Mon they could have commenced by the fifth century, and Chinese envoys' reports have revealed that monastic novitiates were studying under the Pyu (a now disappeared group, possibly predecessors to the Bamar) in the ninth century. U Kaung, 'A survey of the history of education in Burma before the British conquest and after', pp. 12–13.

[127] Kaung discusses these 'lay schools' throughout his text, and argues that early colonial administrators were unaware of them, which would explain why little reference is made to them in the colonial literature. The lay schools were small-scale informal affairs, run out of houses (the Burmese name for them was 'house-school', *ein kjaun:* [အိမ်ကျောင်း]), taught by elderly people free of charge. They instructed girls, and also boys who were too young—or for whatever other reasons were unable—to attend the monasteries. The methodology mirrored that of the monastic system, but did not offer long-term or comprehensive studies. For girls of middle-class families, a tutor would usually be hired to give private instruction. Kaung, 'A survey of the history of education in Burma before the British conquest and after'.

[128] An early colonial administrator travelling in the Assam hill region in the west of present-day Myanmar reported that the monasteries played a crucial role in assimilating non-Bamar local populations. The people he met reportedly would 'become indistinguishable from the Burmans in a generation or two [whereby]... the civilizing influence was the Monastery school'. George E. R. Grant-Brown, *Burma as I saw it*, p. 18, in Kaung, 'A survey of the history of education in Burma before the British conquest and after', p. 93.

maintenance of monastery and school complexes.[129] Most pupils entered around their eighth birthday, and were subject to the strict moral code of the monks for a number of years.[130] The majority of pupils were taught basic literacy and grammar in Burmese and Pali, and crucial tenets of Buddhist doctrine. Technical training was unnecessary for a largely self-sufficient agricultural society where vocational skills were learnt on the farm: the main point of schooling was to build moral character.[131] Few families would have missed the opportunity to send their boys to the monasteries, the practical effect being that virtually every Buddhist male received adequate schooling to meet his minimal needs.[132]

So monastic schools had significant implications for the pre-colonial state, although not managed by it directly. Whereas the Sangha was a benevolent institution to which the people had recourse particularly in times of hardship, kings on the other hand were—akin to the Marxist interpretation of the state—among the 'five traditional enemies'.[133] Melford Spiro likens popular Burmese sentiment regarding state agents to beliefs about a type of supernatural being:

---

[129] Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, p. 175.

[130] Like religious educators elsewhere, the monks—true to Durkheim's interpretation of formal education—were harsh disciplinarians, and when not studying, boys' lives in the monasteries consisted mostly of chores.

[131] Sons of rulers and others demonstrating academic competency were given more extensive training, encompassing astronomy, arithmetic and medicine. The higher levels of monastic scholarship produced court scholars, engineers and prominent writers. U Lu Pe Win, *Report on the teaching of Burmese and Pali in schools in Burma*, Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1931, p. 9.

[132] U Kaung, *Educational needs of the Union of Burma*, Ministry of Education, 11 August 1950, p. 1. Thein Lwin, 'Curriculum traditions: An analysis of teaching and learning in a Burmese school', 31 December 1996, [http://www.students.ncl.ac.uk/thein.lwin/med2.html] 24 June 1999, pp. 7–8.

[133] The ninth stanza of the preliminary verses to any of the eleven *paritta* (protective verses) commonly recited in Myanmar to this day begins with a request for protection from kings (and other dangers). Although this is sometimes now translated as 'bad kings' in texts approved by the current regime, the original verse does not discriminate between kings of different qualities. Sayadaw U Silanandabhivamsa, *Paritta Pali & protective verses: A collection of eleven protective suttas (An English translation)*, International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 2000, p. 9. In Burmese discourse the group of enemies are reduced to five of greatest danger: water (flood), fire, kings (rulers), thieves and ungrateful heirs. See for instance, *Sermons [of] Mingun Tipitakadhara Sayadaw: Obeisance and taking the Precepts*, တိ=နိ စာအုပ်စာပေ၊ အနုပညာနှင့် မော်ကွန်းအဖွဲ့, undated, pp. 12–13.

The above discourses, it should be noted, existed alongside many Buddhist dictates on the role and qualities of a righteous king. Among them, the ten duties of kings were generosity, morality, self-sacrifice (see the discussion on *azani* leaders in chapters 4 & 5), integrity, kindness, austerity, non-anger, non-violence, patience, and harmony with the people. The last has been used to assert the essentially 'democratic' nature of Buddhist political theory. A *cakkavatti* would claim to have met all ten requirements.

> Essentially irascible, and quick to take offense when slighted, it is best to ignore them and have nothing to do with them. Since, however, they cannot be ignored... and since they are very powerful, discretion dictates they be placated.[134]

While this interpretation partly explains why the Sangha, and not the state, was responsible for voluntary schooling, the state nonetheless relied unequivocally on the monastic schools to retain authority. Kings showed their regard for literacy and its manifestations by ordering detailed regular censuses that revealed, among other things, an impressive literacy rate.[135] An early Venetian traveller noting the schools' contribution to the growth of bureaucracy and state control wrote that

> It is a kingdom governed by the pen, for not a single person can go from one village into another without a paper or writing, whereby the government is made most easy.[136]

These were the conditions that the British state undermined from the early nineteenth century on. Initially, few British officials attached weight to the earlier schools and their role in state management.[137] Most colonial bureaucrats saw the schools as having little inherently 'true' educational value.[138] The Burmese were

---

[134] Melford E. Spiro, *Burmese Supernaturalism: A study in the explanation and reduction of suffering*. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1967, p. 53. For this reason, Spiro continues, it follows that both the Buddhist and supernaturalist belief systems have historically served as excellent structures for political integration of the faithful in Burma, as religious belief systems and beliefs regarding the state are parallel.

[135] Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, p. 104.

[136] Manucci, *Storia do Magor, or Mogul India 1653–1708,* William Irvine, (trans.), London, 1906, quoted in Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles,* p. 104.

[137] One bureaucrat with a different view was J. S. Furnivall, who later became a preeminent colonial historian. See for instance, J. S. Furnivall, *Educational progress in Southeast Asia*, IPR Inquiry Series, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1943, p. 13. Furnivall also refers to the high level of literacy in Burma in, for example, 'As it was in the beginning', *Journal of the Burma Research Society,* vol. 18, 1928, pp. 51–61 and, 'The fashioning of leviathan', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 29, 1938, p. 80. Likewise see, Frank N. Trager, *Burma, from kingdom to republic: A historical and political analysis*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1966, p. 45; and, J. G. Scott, *Burma: a handbook of practical information*, 3rd edn rev., Daniel O'Connor, London, 1921, pp. 164–5. Scott, a former governor, cites numerous statistics to impress upon his readers the high level of literacy and concludes that, 'There is no Indian province which can compare with Burma in the number of the population able to read and write.' While the absence of explicit definitions as to what constitutes literacy makes this statement problematic, what can safely be concluded from all accounts is that under the monasteries' tutelage for the most part males gained, at very least, functional reading and writing skills.

[138] Subsequent western historians have mistakenly echoed this sentiment. See, for example, J. Russell Andrus, *Burmese economic life*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1947, p. 36. F. S. V. Donnison, *Burma*, Ernest Benn Limited, London, 1970, pp. 44, 72. G. E. Harvey, *British rule in Burma, 1824–1942*, Faber & Faber, London, 1946, pp. 45–6. Scott, *Burma*, p. 165. Indigenous schooling in greater India was similarly dismissed. See Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge*, p. 52. See also, Brian V. Street, 'Meanings of culture in development: A case study from literacy', in *Education, cultures, and economics: dilemmas for development*, Fiona E. Leach & Angela W. Little (eds), Falmer Press, New York & London, 1999, p. 57.

about to be made answerable to a very different form of governance, and to that end—it was understood—they needed a different kind of schooling.

Schooling under British rule

> It was easier to empty monastic schools than to replace them with new lay schools.
> – *J. S. Furnivall* [139]

The absorption of 'Burma' into the British Empire occurred in three phases. The coastal regions of Tavoy and Arakan were, after a two-year war, annexed in 1826, and lower Burma in 1852. These were consolidated under one administration in 1862. It was not until the third war of 1885–6 that the heartland and throne of the Bamar kingdom, along with the vast plateau to the east and mountains to the north and west populated by other groups, were decreed a province of India.[140]

While the British crown was motivated by profit, and security for its most valuable 'possession' to the west, efficient achievement of these ends necessitated that its rule have a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of its new subjects.[141] Yet the basis for British rule during the first half of the nineteenth century was ambiguous. The British had won the territory by conquest, however their regent had none of the politico-religious grounds upon which to found authority, as had earlier Buddhist rulers. Instead secular, material justifications were used: the establishment of 'law and order', building of roads and development of modern

---

[139] Furnival, 'The fashioning of leviathan', p. 80.

[140] Over time the territory was organised into administrative parts, including the central province, the Frontier Areas and the independent Karenni (Kayah) region. Most schooling was conducted in the central region, but it did not preclude the opening of schools in other areas, particularly by missionaries.

[141] Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity*, 2nd edn rev., White Lotus, Bangkok, 1999, p. 40.

education. 'Police', 'roads' and 'education' were all shaped to form a new version of truth, a new mundane, rather than cosmological, universe.[142]

Although the British authorities were initially indifferent to schooling in their new acquisition, their interest expanded in increments.[143] In 1826–7 they acquiesced to American Baptist missionaries' requests to establish the first non-monastic schools under their dominion.[144] A degree of success encouraged the local administrator to secure funds from the Government of India to support further school expansion.[145] In keeping with broader policy, English-language instruction was put first. In 1835–44, three Anglo-vernacular schools opened in Tavoy, with a bilingual, English-centred curriculum. J. S. Furnivall has remarked that, 'The foundation of these schools, then, may be regarded as the inauguration of the Education Department. But the experiment was not successful' as even when 'the people acquiesced perforce in the desertion of the monasteries'—which were now removed from their earlier central role in socio-political life—they were unconvinced by European efforts, and were particularly skeptical of the Christian teachings.[146] In 1866–7 Burma's first educational bureaucracy, the Department of

---

[142] Day & Reynolds, 'Cosmologies, truth regimes and the state in Southeast Asia', pp. 20–2. By way of example see, J. S. Furnivall, *An introduction to the political economy of Burma*. 3rd edn, People's Literature Committee & House, Rangoon, 1957.

[143] This was in keeping with early British colonial education policy elsewhere. Clive Whitehead, *Education in Fiji: Policy, problems and progress in primary and secondary education, 1939–1973*, Pacific Research Monograph Number Six, Australian National University, Canberra, 1981, p. 10.

[144] Kaung argues that the British military administration's policies towards the missionaries were by no means wholly altruistic: 'The missionaries gave valuable help with information, advice, and mediation during the war and after.' Kaung, 'A survey of the history of education in Burma before the British conquest and after', p. 59. He adds that as the British administration in Burma was still in its infancy it was not strictly regulated and 'much that was against the [Indian] Government's policy was allowed'.

[145] Furnivall, 'The fashioning of leviathan', pp. 80–1.

[146] Furnivall, 'The fashioning of leviathan', pp. 81–2. Notwithstanding, Furnivall argues that the only way western education could have progressed was via the open approach adopted with regards to missionary organisations. Foreword to Andrus, *Burmese economic life*, pp. vii–viii.

Maung Kaung posits that one reason for the early failure may have been the lack of experience of the new local Christian teachers in trying to impart a religious doctrine from an alien culture, as against the depth and cultural familiarity of the monastic schools and their agents. Maung Kaung, '1824–1853: Roman Catholic and American Baptist mission schools', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 21, 1931, p. 9. See also, Kaung, 'A survey of the history of education in Burma before the British conquest and after', p. 67. Note that Maung Kaung and U Kaung are the same person: 'Maung' is an honorific for a younger man, 'U' for an older man.

Public Instruction, was established. Its two main duties were inspection and control of the schools already in existence.[147] It also oversaw the introduction of 'grants-in-aid' to Burma, whereby schools meeting certain criteria could voluntarily apply for financial assistance from the British authorities.[148] Initially only around 1000 of the 5000 students attending British-recognised schools were Bamar, but when graduates found their way into government service to the exclusion of traditional leaders, those desirous of social advantage were obliged to abandon the monasteries in favour of the European model.[149]

The early British administration was cautious in its approaches to the Sangha and attempted to influence it rather than compete. It sensed a need for growing educational involvement, but was wary about the best approach. It was already having but limited success with the few schools it had permitted to open.[150] By 1866 it was training 'circuit teachers' to visit monastic schools and offer additional 'modern' lessons (such as geography), but few monks were enthused.[151] Some administrators (and subsequent commentators) described the monks as backward and recalcitrant, but they appear to have misunderstood or ignored the nature of the monks' objections. Although these were in part based on religious doctrines that were pereceived to be incompatible with secular

---

[147] U Than Oo (ဦးသန်းဦး), *မြန်မာနိုင်ငံပညာရေးဌာနသမိုင်း* (*History of the Myanmar Education Department*), ပညာတန်ဆောင် အထူးစာစဉ်, Yangon, 1999, p. 38.

[148] The main stipulations for grant-in-aid funds related to certain minimums of teaching time and student numbers. Additional requirements were applied to missionary societies seeking assistance. Scott, *Burma*, p. 167.

[149] Furnivall, *Educational progress in Southeast Asia*, p. 27. With depleted student numbers in the monastic system, the net result was higher illiteracy. Furnivall goes on to quote statistics from the 1872 Census Report that among males in the British administered area the total literacy rate had dropped to 32 per cent, whereas the (adult) male population of the jails had a literacy rate of 60 per cent. He wryly remarks that it was unlikely the 'criminal element' would have had a higher literacy than the average for the population educated in pre-colonial times.

[150] Furnivall, 'The fashioning of leviathan', p. 80.

[151] Furnivall argues that demand to learn English grew rapidly and its teaching through the monasteries may have been very successful, 'But the proposal was vetoed as the boys would not acquire a correct English accent'. Furnivall, *Educational progress in Southeast Asia*, p. 28, citing *Report on public instruction in Burma, 1928–29,* p. 11. Donnison, on the other hand, maintains that the only thing the new structure succeeded in doing was draining common-sense from those who had it without replacing it with anything substantial upon which to build a western-style educational tradition. Donnison, *Burma*, p. 98.

teachings, for the most part the monks' resistance to British overtures was due to their being systematically disenfranchised by the colonial state through its demolition of the pre-existing Buddhist political order.[152] Under such circumstances it is not surprising that they were hostile to these possibly well intentioned, but undoubtedly misguided, approaches.[153]

The exile of the last Bamar king to India in 1886 signaled the birth of a roughly demarcated 'Burma' as a province of British India. A new management now controlled the entire Bamar heartland, while suzerainty was established in the mountainous regions populated by non-Bamar groups.[154] This annexation and exile was, short of the destruction of the Sangha, conceivably the most comprehensive assault on Bamar identity and society ever undertaken.[155] It led to mass unrest across the territory over the following decade, which was further exacerbated when the British imported a specialist civil service from India, rather than struggle with training recalcitrant locals.[156] Subsequent chief-commissioners and governors were also appointees from India who brought with them preconceived ideas of how to manage the 'natives', and for whom the results of policy often ran contrary to expectations.

In spite of the enormous social and political changes, the monastic schools proved more resilient under British colonial rule than might have been

---

[152] Not to mention British affronts to religious custom, such as the stationing of troops at the famous Shwedagon Pagoda during successive conflicts, and the refusal of the British to remove their footware on monastery grounds. This regulation persists to the present day and applies to everyone in society irrespective of rank.

[153] This is in marked contrast to what occured in Thailand, under the indigenous state, as discussed in the previous chapter. See also, Keyes, 'The proposed world of the school', pp. 96–7.

[154] Smith, *Burma*, p. 41.

[155] Not only did the British administration remove the king, but also appropriated the sites of symbolic power: the royal palace, for instance, was looted and later converted to a club. Michael Adas, *Prophets of rebellion: Millenarian protest movements against the European colonial order*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1979, p. 57.

[156] J. S. Furnivall, 'Introduction to the third edition', *An introduction to the political economy of Burma*. p. o.

anticipated. In the north, British-administered schooling expanded far more slowly than it had elsewhere: by the turn of the century the monasteries remained 'the backbone of national instruction throughout all the rural districts' there.[157] The 1891 Census Report identified the willingness of some monks to adopt new teaching methods—implying continued British preparedness to expand primary schooling through the monasteries—but these plans never reached fruition.[158] Instead, the authorities adopted an increasingly uncompromising attitude towards the monastic schools.[159] In 1906 the Director of Public Instruction sought greater control of schools whereby 'future education was to place first the welfare of the State, and next the welfare of the child, while religion as an element in education was an unnecessary accident'.[160] The number of vernacular schools was expanded rapidly in a deliberate effort to overwhelm the monasteries, yet by 1930 over seventeen thousand monastic schools were still operating independently of the state. State-run schools numbered a mere one hundred, with another six thousand receiving grant-in-aid assistance.[161] A series of reports on monastic schooling in the late 1930s identified it as very much intact and a conundrum for the British authorities, who were unable to determine how best to deal with it.[162]

---

[157] Scott, *Burma*, p. 167.

[158] John Jardine, in Sangermano, 'Introduction', *The Burmese empire a hundred years ago*, p. xvii.

[159] In the *Report on public instruction in Burma, 1897–1902,* p. 42, the Director of Public Instruction refers to the Sangha as 'very ignorant, or very bigoted, or both'. Quoted in Furnivall, *Educational progress in Southeast Asia*, p. 55. See also, for instance, Harvey, *British rule in Burma*, p. 46.

[160] Furnivall, *Educational progress in Southeast Asia*, p. 55.

[161] Maung Kaung, 'The beginnings of Christian missionary education in Burma, 1600–1824', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 20, 1930, p. 59.

[162] The 1936 *Report of the Vernacular and Vocational Education Reorganization Committee* recommended that attempts to absorb monastic schools into the government programme as a cheap and fast way to expand primary education had proven ineffective and should not be pursued. The 1939–40 Education Department report estimated that there remained 18,000 monastic schools with 200,000 students outside of the government system, but agreed with the 1936 report that efforts to merge them would cause far too much trouble and be liable to alienate moderate monks. Virginia Thompson & Richard Adloff, *Cultural institutions and educational policy in Southeast Asia*, International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, (issued in cooperation with the Southeast Asia Institute & the Far Eastern Association), 1948, p. 21. Finally, the 1941 *Report of the Committee of Inquiry on National Education in Buddhist Monasteries* proposed that renewed efforts should be made to reconcile the two systems, and that the wrong approach had been taken in the past. Kaung suggests that on the whole, attempts to bring the monasteries into line with government objectives 'Were sincere and every care

Although state-supervised schooling remained small relative to its predecessor, it had a powerful divisive effect, particularly via its language of instruction. In 1890 the Education Department began operations across the whole territory, dividing schools (as in other British-administered territories) into three classes: vernacular, Anglo-vernacular and English. Most were vernacular schools, teaching in the Burmese language. Anglo-vernacular schools, teaching comprehensive bilingual curricula with English dominant—from which most students went on to the civil service—were far fewer in number.[163] An elite group of English schools taught mostly foreign children.[164] The three streams soon had the effect of organising students into discrete groups, rather than creating a sense of unity through assimilation into a homogenous body, as the monastic schools had done.[165] Most of all, a chasm grew between vernacular and Anglo-vernacular schools.[166] The British state had successfully removed the explicitly moral lessons from schooling, and had instead emphasised its material benefits over all others.[167] For graduates of Anglo-vernacular schools, aspirations could be realised, but vernacular school graduates were at a dead-end. Anglo-vernacular schools were also prestigious because of the status now conferred by the English

---

was taken not to offend the susceptibilities of the monks; but up to 1941, the results were not commensurate with the efforts expended'. Kaung, *Educational needs of the Union of Burma*, p. 3.

[163] In 1941, the Anglo-vernacular core primary school curriculum consisted of English, geography, arithmetic and 'a recognised vernacular' (not necessarily Burmese, but from a list including many Indian languages, and Sgaw Karen the only indigenous language recognised other than Burmese). *Burma educational calendar, April 1st, 1941, to March 31st, 1942,* Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1941, p. 29.

[164] Entry to Burmese children was not technically prohibited, but highly restricted. Thein Lwin, 'Education in Burma (1945–1999)', July 1999, [http://www.students.ncl.ac.uk/thein.lwin/educationburma.htm] 17 April 2000, p. 4.

[165] This outcome parallels what occured in Singapore, discussed in the previous chapter.

[166] This problem was manifest in other British colonies in Asia, such as Sri Lanka. See for instance, Bruce Ryan, 'The dilemmas of education in Ceylon', *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1960, p. 85.

[167] Even so, there were still echoes of the earlier style of teaching and subject matter. For instance, the formal style of Burmese, incorporating much Pali terminology and grammar, persisted in the textbooks of the secular schools, as it had in the monasteries. John Okell, 'Nissaya Burmese: A case of systematic adaptation to a foreign grammar and syntax', *Lingua*, vol. 15, 1965, p. 195. Nissaya Burmese is discussed briefly in chapter 5.

language. This caused a worried government advisor to remark that use of Burmese had become 'confined to the domestic circle and the poorer classes'.[168]

An educational conflict also lay between Bamar and non-Bamar groups. In contrast to the pre-colonial era, when many of the latter had subsisted in small-scale communities devoid of formal education, the endeavours of missionary organisations meant that groups of elite non-Bamar had succeeded in carving influential blocs for themselves at the centre of civil society. Those described by colonial commentators as 'wild, poor, down-trodden and helpless people' were by the nineteenth century elevated to 'among the best-educated, the most advanced' of races.[169] The new 'pluralistic' schooling exacerbated tension where, for example, special exceptions were made to allow for minority language-teaching in mission schools. The strong sense of ethnic identity and social prestige forged by those people fuelled resentment among Bamar who, having lost their king and state, and seeing their religion and remaining pre-colonial institutions under threat, were at their most disenfranchised.

By 1917 the colonial state was demonstrating increasing interest in the means to extend its tenure through augmentation of its legitimacy. Politically, the British parliament announced promotion of 'the gradual development of self-governing

---

[168] Lu Pe Win, *Report on the teaching of Burmese and Pali in schools in Burma*, p. 2. On the same page Lu Pe Win remarks on the increasingly dated nature of Burmese vocabulary: 'Much of the Burmese language relating to law had dropped out of use. There is no Burmese Army and all the Military terms of Burma have almost been forgotten... ' Apparently this point was not missed by the military governments of years to come, which have successfully reintroduced this terminology to such an extent that the above description seems remarkable. Furnivall's remarks, however, support Lu Pe Win's observations, and he goes on to argue that even those who learnt English were scarcely better off:

> Boys of the wealthier classes were taught English in the anglo-vernacular schools and, until recently, English was the only medium of instruction. They were required to learn all their lessons in a language which they hardly understood and were taught geography, for example, from an English text book by a master who firmly believed that the world was flat... Schools such as these were little better adapted than the monasteries to give the boys an introduction to the modern world and, except for the missionary schools, their inspiration was less humane, for in intention as in effect, they were nothing but factories for the mass production of cheap clerks.

Furnivall, *An introduction to the political economy of Burma*, p. xv.

[169] O. Hanson, 'The Karen people of Burma: A study in anthropology and ethnology, by Rev. H.I. Marshall, M.A.; printed at the Ohio State University Press', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 14, 1924, p. 69.

institutions' in India.[170] Meanwhile, at the local level the *Report of the Committee Appointed to Ascertain and Advise How the Imperial Ideas May Be Inculcated and Fostered in Schools and Colleges in Burma* recommended that the youth be inculcated with a spirited sense of Burma's place in the Indian Empire. Textbooks were duly instructed to portray Burmese kings as despots and the British as liberators under whose guidance the state had come to prosper.[171]

Colonial bureaucrats saw the reforms as little more than administrative reengineering to ensure the long-term stability of the Empire, but in retrospect they contributed to the nationalist movement, as they implicitly recognised a single Burmese polity under foreign domination. The disgruntled Sangha sprang to this cause: evolving nationalist organisations began communicating through the resilient monasteries and registering as associations with religious objectives, which included the establishment of special Buddhist schools after the Christian mission prototype.[172] Increasingly, Buddhism came to be equated with anti-British activism, as its vestigial legitimacy was associated with the (by now mythological) pre-colonial state.[173] This contributed to inter-religious communal tensions, particularly as non-Buddhists were also predominantly non-Bamar peoples.[174]

---

[170] Albert D. Moscotti, *British Policy and the Nationalist Movement in Burma*, Asian Studies at Hawaii, no. 11, Asian Studies Program, University of Hawaii, 1974, pp. 2, 24, citing a policy statement by Sir Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, August 20, 1917, Great Britain 1917, *Parliamentary Debates* (House of Commons), vol. 97, col. 1695–96.

The 1917 policy changes were to be implemented through 'dyarchy'—provisional government under legislative council with semi-autonomous powers—introduced in 1923. The council's responsibilities did not extend beyond central Burma to the predominantly non-Bamar territories.

[171] Taylor, *The state in Burma*, pp. 118–19.

[172] Among these was the prominent Young Men's Buddhist Association, which also applied for grant-in-aid assistance. According to Maung Htin Aung, 'The British government was not pleased but could not refuse the grants because it had been giving the same educational grants to the Christian mission schools.' Maung Htin Aung, *A history of Burma*, Columbia University Press, New York & London, 1967, p. 279.

[173] Cady reports that in 1937 religious activities were banned on the Rangoon University campus 'to avoid threatening trouble with Buddhist partisans'. John F. Cady, *Contacts with Burma, 1935–1949: A personal account*, Papers in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series No. 61, Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1983, p. 16.

[174] Spiro has remarked on the intimate relationship between Buddhism and Bamar identity. Spiro, *Buddhism and society*, pp. 19–20. Kei Nemoto has cited a nationalist pamphlet from the 1936 General Election referring to 'Our Burmese'

During 1920 the student movement began to establish independent 'national schools' across the territory, in competition with their government counterparts. The plan grew from the student boycott of the newly established Rangoon University, amid demands for home rule. With regard to education, the complaints were familiar: the curricula were irrelevant, Anglo-centric and lacking in vocational training. In essence the national schools sought a return to pre-colonial moral education coupled with new demands for civil liberties, prioritising vernacular (Burmese) language, literature and history.[175] The National Education Committee that led the movement spoke of both progress and renewal: 'Patriotism is the new religion of the new generation, and it is best propagated through National Schools.'[176] Students at national schools recited the Five Buddhist Precepts in place of 'The Prayer for the King–Emperor', were permitted to wear Burmese garb, and were free to read any publications.[177] The national schools reintroduced six letters of the Burmese alphabet that had been dropped from government schools.[178] They observed Buddhist sabbath days in lieu of Saturday,

---

(nationalist patriots) versus 'Their Burmese' (colonial sympathisers) where, '[Their Burmese] do not cherish our Buddhism, do not respect it... They try to dominate monks whether directly or whether indirectly...' Kei Nemoto, 'The concepts of *dobama* ("our Burma") and *thudo-bama* ("their Burma") in Burmese nationalism, 1930–1948', *Journal of Burma Studies*, vol. 5, pp. 1–16.

[175] Similar movements occurred in other European colonies during the same period, such as the Taman Siswa (Garden of Pupils) in the Dutch territories of Indonesia. Taman Siswa was established in 1922, and reached its zenith in the 1930s. It appears to have posed a greater threat to the authorities than the national schools in Burma, as the colonial government there attempted to rein it in through a series of ordinances, after (unlike Burma) failing to entice it into the government system through offers of subsidies. Notwithstanding, both movements promoted reversion to earlier teaching models, emphasising greater moral instruction. Kenji Tsuchiya, *Democracy and leadership: The rise of the Taman Siswa movement in Indonesia*, Peter Hawkes (trans.), Monographs of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1987, pp. 56–7, 62–3. Similar to policies later pursued by Bamar nationalists in the independence period, the founder of Taman Siswa, Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, advocated learning of regional language and culture only at the earliest stages of education, to be followed by assimilatory instruction. Norbert Anthony Shadeg, The educational philosophy of Ki Hadjar Dewantoro and its influence in Indonesian life, unpublished MA thesis, Loyola University, September 1959, pp. 27–8. Colonial administrators and their local supporters derided both movements, dismissing the schools as little more than undisciplined rabble and 'wild schools'. Po, interview. Hall, *History*, pp. 640–1.

[176] Students' statement, 'The voice of young Burma', The Publicity Bureau of the University Boycotters, Rangoon, 1922, cited in Aye Kyaw, *The voice of young Burma*, Cornell Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca New York, 1993, p. 36.

[177] Reading of 'inflammatory' publications was not permitted in government-approved schools.

[178] The removal of these six letters was a pragmatic decision intended to simplify antiquated spellings, but it inevitably attracted nationalists' ire, who declared opposition to it as a rallying cry against British hegemony. That narrative has been dragged out to the present day:

Sunday and other British holidays.[179] The movement, although rural-oriented, was urban-driven and centralised. While national schools disrupted the 1921–2 school year—causing some 400 state-registered schools to close—problems with funding and attendant factionalism led to their decline and eventual demise in the late 1930s.[180] Notwithstanding, the schools were part of a broader surge in nationalism that—in a variety of manifestations—reflected growing resentment to colonial rule at all levels of Bamar society and a concurrent revival of pre-colonial archetypes of legitimacy and authority.[181] These were soon to be drawn into the much larger tumult of a world war.

British colonialists moved in various ways to obliterate Myanmar literature, Myanmar culture and Myanmar national character. In AD 1919, they tried again to take six out of the 33 Myanmar letters, but they gave up because of the protest at the meeting of national school teachers held in Jubilee Hall in December 1920.

Tin Kha, 'A historic day of great tradition'. The national schools movement may take the credit for the preservation of these six characters, which remain in the alphabet today (to the continuing vexation of young Burmese minds, not to mention that of the author).

[179] Aye Kyaw, *The voice of young Burma*, pp. 36–7.

[180] Perhaps the most enduring characteristic of Burmese political life is its endemic factionalism. For a study of factionalism in village-level politics see, Melford E. Spiro, 'Factionalism and politics in village Burma', in *Anthropological other or Burmese brother? Studies in cultural analysis*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick & London, 1992, pp. 145–69.

[181] The nationalist drive had also intensified with the 1930 founding of the Dobama ('We Bamar') organisation, and the Saya San rebellion—a crusade rather unlike that of the national schools—led by a charismatic ex-monk appealing to pre-colonial politico-religious authority. Saya San employed all the ritual elements of earlier kingdoms to assert that he was a *cakkavatti* come to save the nation from the British. His uprising spread rapidly out of the villages, but was put down and its leader executed in 1932. It is discussed throughout Adas, *Prophets of rebellion*; on ritual elements and claims to legitimacy, see in particular, pp. 141–2.

Here resentment in 'Bamar'—rather than 'Burmese'—society is used quite deliberately. As noted above, the Bamar were those who felt most disenfranchised by the colonial regime and were most ready to rise up against it when the opportunity came.

The war years

> The breakdown of the educational facilities with the advent of the war and the inadequate and ineffective educational provision made during the interregnum have strongly impressed on the people the value of adequate and efficient provision for education. The nation at large has never been so 'education conscious' as it is at present or so insistent on a system of education suited to the cultural, social and economic needs of the country.
>
> – *Education Policy Enquiry Committee, 1946* [182]

In 1942 seventy-six years of British rule in Burma were brought to an end by Japanese occupation, which lasted for a little over three. Accompanied by the Burma Independence Army, Japanese forces swept into the territory, purportedly fighting an anti-colonial war for national independence. This was nominally granted in 1943, but it soon became clear that the Japanese had no intention of relinquishing the territories they had occupied, and consequently the Burmese revolted in 1945, facilitating the British return.[183]

Japanese educational efforts were balanced between fabricating their own legitimacy and accommodating Burmese demands. The instability of the war years initially led to a hiatus: many schools were seized by Japanese troops (and subsequently by Allied forces) and closed as a matter of policy, or for want of funding. In late 1942 the Japanese state revived the Ministry of Education, seeing its possibility as a tool to 'inspire the people toward better cooperation with the Japanese forces and their grasping the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-

---

[182] *Report of the Education Policy Enquiry Committee, Burma: 1946*, Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1949, p. 3.

[183] While the Bamar saw the war as the beginning of an (ultimately successful) drive for independence, many non-Bamar had sided with the British from the start of the conflict, and had withdrawn to India with them or remained behind to undertake covert plans. Chins, Kachin and Karen in particular offered critical support to the Allies. Thus the war created, renewed or intensified tensions between Bamar and certain other groups. Smith, *Burma*, pp. 60–4.

Prosperity Sphere'.[184] Plans were drawn up to reopen thousands of schools under a unified curriculum with Burmese as the language of instruction, and subjects such as citizenship training and religious teaching. Though the Japanese state was an enthusiastic propagator of public schooling after its own eminently successful design, Bamar nationalists were unwilling to compromise on the question of Burmese language-only schooling, and resisted Japanese intrusion in this area by developing distinct cultural activities for students and youth.[185] Constrained by resources and confronted by people determined to at last get their way, the Japanese authorities relented to local demands, within limits acceptable to their own objectives. Having given in to Bamar sentiment on language of instruction, Japanese language teaching was organised outside of the mainstream schools, and franchised by those who might otherwise have entered the Anglo-vernacular schools.[186]

Even if schooling in Myanmar under Japanese dominion was short lived, its effects were felt in policy initiatives after the war, as for the first time a government body had implemented a single curriculum with Burmese as the language of instruction. U Kaung has also argued that it allowed Burmese people

---

[184] 'The establishment of the Japanese Language Schools and the General Plan of Management: Issued by the Superintendent of the Military Administration in Burma, Februrary, 1943', in Frank N. Trager, (ed.), *Burma: Japanese military administration, selected documents, 1941–1945,* University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1971, p. 195.

[185] Kaung, *Educational needs of the Union of Burma*, p. 9.

[186] Some (British) historians have argued that the Japanese made no more than a pretence of reopening schools, but this argument seems misguided and clouded by enmity. See for instance Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma: A study of the first years of independence*, 4th edn, Oxford University Press, London, 1967, p. 194. The Japanese encouraged new educational infrastructure elsewhere in Asia. Bourchier, for instance, discusses the powerful impact that school instruction under the Japanese regime in Indonesia had on its peoples, and the degree to which it facilitated the forging of a modern state through Indonesian-language instruction and historical revisionism. David Bourchier, Lineages of organicist political thought in Indonesia, unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Politics, Monash University, Melbourne, June 1996, p. 66. Similarly, Swan reveals Japanese educational policy prepared for Thailand, to 'denounce British and American ideas and foster a pro-Japanese spirit'. William L. Swan, 'Japan's intentions for its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere as indicated in its policy plans for Thailand', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, National University of Singapore, vol. 27, no. 1, March 1996, p. 141. The same kind of effort was undertaken in Malaya. Wilson, *Social engineering in Singapore*, pp. 86–8.

to clarify their understanding of the role that schooling should play in their society:

> The spectacle of opportunists sending their children, will-nilly, to Japanese schools in preference to Burmese State Schools for instruction showed, for instance, that parents were still conceiving that a foreign language was a valuable educational subject in itself; whereas, in reality, the Japanese language was a passport to advancement merely because the conquerors decreed it so.[187]

Upon their return the British initially set in motion a scheme for educational reconstruction devised by the Burmese legislature in exile, but it was soon criticised for not being responsive to changed conditions. In 1946 the Educational Policy Enquiry Committee instead set the standards for the 1948 Educational Policy of the first independent government of the Union of Burma.[188] Crucial among the Committee's proposals were the abolition of grants-in-aid in favour of state funding of education; homogenous schooling under central control; and, free, compulsory and universal primary education, mostly in Burmese.[189]

In the immediate post-war period schooling faced a range of problems old and new, which remained largely unresolved by the time of independence. These included rampant inflation (which affected participation levels of both students and teachers); broken infrastructure; social instability; falling levels of teacher training; and a considerable gap between schooling standards in rural and urban areas.[190] The British—increasingly preoccupied elsewhere—moved towards handing power to a provisional government led by the charismatic General Aung

---

[187] Kaung, *Educational needs of the Union of Burma*, p. 9.

[188] *Report of the Education Policy Enquiry Committee*, p. 2. The Committee was headed by the former Minister of Education, U Ba Yin, a leader of the national schools movement in the early 1920s.

[189] *Report of the Education Policy Enquiry Committee*, p. 20. According to the report, schools with non-Bamar pupils should be permitted to study languages other than Burmese at primary level, but not at secondary level. English should be studied only from fifth grade, as compensation for the previous over-emphasis on English and predominant feeling among Burmese that 'education, in course of time, became synonymous with the learning of English'.

[190] Andrus, *Burmese economic life*, p. 38. *Report on the public instruction in Burma for the year 1946–47*, Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1954, p. 17.

San. When he and his cabinet were assassinated in 1947, the country was plunged into a leadership crisis; schooling and social services were subsumed by greater fears for social and national stability.

Independence

> Throughout 1948 and 1949, whenever [I] could get to the people by breaking through the ring of insurgents, [I] made it a point to inquire what it was that they most wanted of the government. Everywhere in the country the answer boiled down to two things: primary school teachers and doctors.
>
> – *Former Prime Minister U Nu* [191]

On 4 January 1948, a socialist government led by U Nu oversaw the birth of an independent country that within months dissolved into an array of populist uprisings. The fledgling state prevailed due in no small part to the Burma armed forces, the *Tatmadaw*, baptised into the role of uniting by force a territory and peoples that had never been unified to begin with. The government gave army commander General Ne Win a free hand in the rapid expansion of uncompromising anti-insurgent military campaigns; encouraged economic and cultural 'Burmanisation' of the state; voiced support for constitutional freedoms (for those willing to capitulate to government rule); and moved fast to set out comprehensive welfare policies.[192] In contrast to the pre-colonial period, it was a frantic and testing time for a state attempting to ascertain exactly what its role was and how it could be achieved.

---

[191] U Nu, *U Nu: Saturday's son,* U Law Yone (trans.), Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1975, p. 206.

[192] 'Burmanisation' has not been a documented policy: the gamut of assimilatory policies enacted by respective Bamar-dominated governments since independence has given rise to this encapsulating term.

In 1948 the new Educational Policy adopted most recommendations of the earlier Educational Policy Enquiry Committee, but the chaos of the first years of independence alluded to by U Nu above meant that it was not implemented until 1950. While government policy was superficially aimed at rectifying what it saw as the failures of the pre-war system, namely, narrow curricula, examination and book-learning emphases, and elitist orientation, in practice what it led to was a dramatic increase in state interventions across all educational affairs.[193] The first full school year since independence (1950–1) was hectic. With the abolition of school fees, a government report observed that 'the schools were flooded with pupils... so crowded that effective teaching had become difficult'.[194] Many schools implemented double-shifts to accommodate the surge in number. The Pilot Project for Compulsory Primary Education was started in Rangoon, however policy-makers were soon backing away from it as impracticable and inappropriate.[195] Vocational subjects were introduced according to regional needs, and many subjects were given a 'rural bias' with a view to preventing unwanted urbanisation.[196]

In 1952, the Pyidawtha [Welfare] Conference based government policy on ten welfare points, including education. Heralded by policy-makers as 'the first time

---

The 1947 Constitution was a rights-based document (in contrast to the 1974 Constitution). On education it simply stated that (article 22), 'No minority, religious, racial or linguistic, shall be discriminated against in regard to admission into State educational institutions nor shall any religious instruction be compulsorily imposed on it.'

[193] *Education in Burma: Before independence and after independence*, Ministry of Education, Office of the Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Burma, November 1953, p. 2.

[194] *Octennial report on education in Burma (1947–48 to 1954–55)*, Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1956, p. 35.

[195] *The Pyidawtha Conference, August 4–17, 1952: Resolutions and Speeches*, Government of the Union of Burma, c. 1952, p. 84. The final report of the Administration Reorganization Committee in 1951 proposed that instead of compulsion, the government should attempt to 'encourage people to want to send their children to school... by appealing to motives of religion, or of national or local patriotism, or by the prospect of enabling the children to earn a better living'. *The final report of the Administration Reorganization Committee*, Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1951, p. 70.

[196] However educational expansion could only go on in areas that were stable and free from insurgency, which were mostly urban or rural areas proximate to towns. Josef Silverstein, *Burma: Military rule and the politics of stagnation*, Politics and International Relations of Southeast Asia, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1977, p. 151.

in the history of Education in Burma that such a high priority has been given to Education by the Government',[197] the Conference criticised the British school system upon which the new one was built, claiming that it

> Did not generate in us a feeling of pride in our culture; it did not teach us to use the tools of modern technology; it did not give us enough scope for teaching the ways of democracy nor for the expression of patriotism and citizenship.[198]

The Conference approved unprecedented expansion, reclassification and reorganisation of state-run schools, in line with the five main resolutions of the Education Plan. Among these were to build literacy and vocations so that students might 'adequately and efficiently perform their various duties as citizens of the Union'; to 'produce more men and women imbued with the five strengths (Bala-Ngadan)'; and, 'to perpetuate Democracy within the Union'.'[199] Compulsory primary school subjects were Burmese, mathematics, social studies and general science.[200] English was compulsory at higher levels. The moral and social aspects of schooling were brought to the fore, particularly principles of self-reliance, the common good, national reconstruction, cooperative efforts, purity in spirit, words and deeds, unity, respect for the working classes and the national constitution,

---

[197] *Octennial report on education in Burma*, p. 46.

[198] *Pyidawtha: The new Burma*, Economic and Social Board, Government of the Union of Burma, 1954, p. 113.

[199] *The Pyidawtha Conference*, pp. 84–6. The full name in Burmese for the 'Education Plan' was 'New Life Creation Education Plan' (ဘဝသစ်ဖန်တီးမှုပညာရေးစီမံကိန်း). U Than Oo, (ဦးသန်းဦး), *မြန်မာ့ပညာရေးသမိုင်း၊ သင်ဘုံးညွှန်းတမ်းကဏ္ဍ (၁၉၄၈–၁၉၉၈)* (*History of Myanmar education: Curriculum component, 1948–98*), Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Yangon, May 1999, p. 7.

The 'five strengths' are intellectual strength, physical strength, moral strength, economic strength and social strength. *The Pyidawtha Conference,* pp. 92–3. Collectively, also referred to as National Health, National Education, National Wealth, National Character and National Unity and Cooperation, said to have been in existence before colonisation, lost during that period and subsequently rebuilt with 'strenuous and sustained efforts' since independence. 'Translation of The Union Rescript on Education for Schools and Other Educational Institutions', in *Education in Burma*, p. 21.

[200] Than Oo, *History of Myanmar education*, p. 9. Learning of Burmese was compulsory for all students beyond second grade. Interestingly, special provision was made for at least one non-Bamar group, the Mon, whose language and literature are widely recognised as the most antiquated in Burma. Mon teachers courses were established 'with a view to preserving Mon Culture and to alleviating the status of their language...' *Octennial report on education in Burma,* p. 45. In light of the dismal state of Mon language and literature in contemporary Myanmar, it could not be said that the courses were a resounding success. See also the section on alternatives to state schooling in the second part of this chapter, which comments on recent attempts to revive teaching of Mon.

and harmonious relations with other nations.[201] Nationalist paraphernalia were also distributed for display and use in schools.[202]

The success of the Education Plan hinged on the recruitment of thousands of new teachers. Minimum qualifications were lowered and training streamlined, yet poor salaries remained a disincentive to candidates; becoming a teacher was still seen 'as a stepping stone or as a last resort'.[203] Other difficulties included inadequate inspection and supervision of schools across the country, and strained relationships between pupils, teachers and parents, as war had caused a 'general decline of parental control and school discipline'.[204]

For many, a solution to the gamut of schooling problems may have been found in renewal of the monastic schools under state auspices, however the role of the Sangha in relation to the new state schools remained ambiguous. As early as 1946 a government report had bemoaned the damage done to the monastic schools during colonial rule, observing that 'the discipline inculcated in the children in these schools in former days was a national asset'.[205] Policy-makers also credited monasteries with producing over four million literate people (out of a total seventeen million).[206] But government encouragement for monastic schools

---

[201] 'Translation of the Union Rescript on Education for Schools and other Educational Institutions', in *Education in Burma*, pp. 21–2. 'Purity in words, spirit and deeds' is a Buddhist doctrine*: mano sucaritta; vaca sucaritta; kaya sucaritta.*

[202] *The Pyidawtha Conference*, p. 87.

[203] Ba Sein, 'Memorandum for the Council of Ministers', p. 4, in Kaung, *Educational needs of the Union of Burma*. Salary increases were little more than attempts to prevent drainage of staff, rather than to attract high calibre graduates. *Education in Burma*, pp. 4, 8.

[204] *Octennial report on education in Burma*, p. 37. One committee's report frankly admitted that,

> There is no wonder that parents do not send their children to village schools where they do not get the sort of education they want for the children. It may be stated without fear of contradiction that with few exceptions there are no suitably equipped and competent village schools beyond the outskirts of big and prosperous towns.

The final report of the Administration Reorganization Committee, p. 64.

[205] *Report on the public instruction in Burma for the year 1946–47*, p. 16.

[206] Robert Biak Cin & Guy B. Sandlen, *Loving kindness and the Five Gratitudes: Burmese cultural values underlying community participation in the Primary School Improvement Programme*, UNICEF, Rangoon, March 1985, p. 10, citing the Executive Director of the Mass Education Council.

seems to have been limited to the role they could play in teaching the basics of literacy. As remarked by the Minister of Education,

> In modern times, though the function of the monastery schools is not the same as in the past, for the purpose of teaching the 'Three Rs', it can safely be said that monastery schools are still to be relied upon.[207]

In spite of some government documents deeming religion essential to a 'sound educational tradition', and some policies leaning towards an increased role for the Sangha in schooling, a specific policy of religious teaching in schools was conspicuous by its absence.[208] That this independent Burmese government was experiencing similar difficulties to its colonial predecessor to some extent demonstrates the general reticence of both Sangha and people towards government initiatives, and the inability of the state at that time to impress its authority on the population. As one non-Burmese researcher concluded, 'A [state] school and its equipment needs leave a villager unmoved, as does any project for which the national or district government has a major responsibility.'[209] Regrettably, the response to this perceived continued reluctance eventually came in the form of renewed authoritarianism.

---

[207] 'The Honourable U Than Aung's supporting speech', in *The Pyidawtha Conference,* p. 99.

[208] Ba Sein, 'Memorandum for the Council of Ministers', p. 2, in Kaung, *Educational needs of the Union of Burma*. In 1950 a body of monks was formed to advocate a place for Buddhist ethics in state schools (including for non-Buddhist students), with little result. Than Oo, *History of Myanmar education*, pp. 197–8. U Nu himself was a Buddhist revivalist, remarking on one occasion that, 'If we go to the root causes of the present disorders in this country, we will find that not less than eighty per cent of them are due to apathy to Religion.' U Nu, *From peace to stability: Translation of selected speeches by the Hon'ble Thakin Nu, Prime Minister of the Union of Burma, delivered on various occasions from 15th August 1949 to 20th April 1951*, Ministry of Information, Government of the Union of Burma, 1951, p. 181. However only in 1961, amid looming crises, did he legislate to make Buddhism the state religion; the act was subsequently nullified by the Revolutionary Council. For some examples of religious ritual conducted by the state during this period, see, Winston L. King, *A thousand lives away: Buddhism in contemporary Burma*, Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1964, pp. 66–7.

[209] Manning Nash, *The golden road to modernity: Village life in contemporary Burma*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1965, p. 95. See also the earlier remarks in this chapter on the state and its agents as malevolent.

Military rule

> The Revolutionary Council believes that the existing educational system unequated with livelihood will have to be transformed. An educational system equated with livelihood and based on socialistic moral values will be brought about...
>
> The Burmese Way to Socialism*, article 17(a)*

Political chaos and threats of renewed civil war in the late 1950s provided the Tatmadaw an opportunity to take over. A military 'caretaker' government was installed under General Ne Win during 1958–60. This period at the helm allowed Ne Win to consolidate power over the weakened civilian leadership. Subsequent parliamentary turmoil in 1961, and the purported threat of national disintegration, led Ne Win to re-assume the mantle of state in 1962, disband the constitution and parliament, and announce plans to implement a 'Burmese Way to Socialism'. Burma was thus transformed into an inward-looking, one-party state under a highly centralised, military-dominated administration.

Schools, as other institutions, became subject to military-style 'socialist' prerogatives. Textbooks and lessons were to 'be in line with the declared policy of the Revolutionary Government... to serve as an effective aid for the speedy realization of the socialist goal'.[210] Publishers were immediately ordered 'to leave out from existing text-books, pending issue of new text-books, chapters or portions... incompatible with the Burmese Way to Socialism programme'.[211] Youth schemes were introduced to expand socialist indoctrination among students, incorporating militaristic parade drills and ideology sessions.[212] A mass literacy campaign was begun to 'strengthen the moral backbone of the nation by

---

[210] *Burma administrative and social affairs, 1962–63*, Director of Information, Burma, c. 1963, p. 55.
[211] *Burma administrative and social affairs, 1963–64*, Director of Information, Burma, c. 1964, p. 46.
[212] Silverstein, *Burma*, p. 110. Taylor, *The state in Burma*, p. 325.

inculcating such qualities as love of work'.[213] Schools were nationalised, and the teaching of science was favoured over humanities. Minority languages were further subordinated to Burmese, and it became increasingly difficult for non-Bamar to publish and distribute materials in their own languages, irrespective of how mundane.[214] The first *Basic Education Law* (1966) continued the tighter supervision of schools, including monastic schools.[215] It also legislated further curricular changes, implemented in 1967 under the 'New Education System'. However this programme underwent constant adjustment, leaving students unsettled by almost annual changes until the next major flux in 1988–9.[216]

The Revolutionary Council allowed but a quiet role for the Sangha in the state and schooling. There was no religious education, but every day the students paid homage to the 'Five Beatitudes', Buddha–Dhamma–Sangha, Parents and Teachers.[217] That aside, the state's primary interest was with maintaining effective control over the as yet large, scattered monastic community, rather than deriving some kind of legitimacy from it.[218] To that end, in 1963 a plan to more systematically supervise and register monastic schools and the Sangha was pushed ahead.[219]

In 1974 the country was returned to constitutional rule, a move that was little more than a formal ratification of the Burmese Way to Socialism and its agents, with which the population was growing increasingly dissatisfied. In stark contrast

---

[213] *Burma administrative and social affairs, 1962–63*, p. 49.
[214] Smith, *Burma*, p. 205.
[215] Replaced by the second *Basic Education Act* in 1973, which was amended in 1989.
[216] For example, arts and science streams at high school level were merged into a single stream in 1977, but re-divided in 1986.
[217] Thein Lwin, 'Curriculum traditions', p. 7. Buddha–Dhamma–Sangha is the Buddhist trinity.
[218] Taylor, *The state in Burma*, p. 356.
[219] See footnoted comments later in this chapter on 'purification' of the Sangha as a means to state control.

to the 1947 Constitution, the 1974 Constitution guaranteed neither academic freedom nor freedom of speech. All rights were conditional to state objectives; none could be exercised if contrary to the socialist programme (article 153[b]). Under article 152, basic education was finally decreed compulsory, and Burmese again reiterated as the common language, although 'languages of other national races [might] also be taught'. During 1974–6 sporadic conflicts engulfed the country. Protests by disgruntled students complaining of deteriorating education standards, and labour strikes over food and commodity shortages, were repeatedly met by military gunfire. Intermittent closures of schools and colleges disrupted studies nationwide. Growing insurgency meant that the most marginalised populations in the least stable areas of the country continued to subsist with little access to any kind of schooling.

By the mid-1980s Burma was speeding towards a massive state-society confrontation, and ultimately its newest experiment in authoritarianism. As inflation again eroded teachers' salaries and dissatisfaction with the low quality of state schooling led wealthier parents to seek alternative avenues for their children, private tuition blossomed. Government attempts to reign-in the practice appear to have been ineffectual.[220] Corruption spread through all sectors of government administration.[221] Finally, in 1988, poor harvests and a series of disastrous economic measures precipitated mass protests throughout the country. In July, Ne Win retired from his front-man political role but appointed a notorious deputy in his place. Throughout August and September mass protests—frequently led by university and high school students—were repeatedly

[220] Private tuition is mentioned under the section on teachers in the second part of this chapter.
[221] See, for example, 'In Rangoon: Civil servants and cemeteries', *Burma Issues*, February 1999, p. 3; Nyah Phay Thwet, 'Bureaucracy days', *Burma Issues*, February 1998, pp. 4–5, 7.

and violently crushed by the military. Thousands of civilians were killed. On September 18 a junta of hard-line military officers reasserted the army's dominance. It declared the 1974 Constitution and Burmese Way to Socialism dead and established the State Law and Order Restoration Council.[222] As mentioned in the introduction, in 1989 it renamed the country the Union of Myanmar and appointed a committee to identify the 'true' names of places throughout the territory.[223] After the Council permitted elections in May 1990, it refused to recognise the overwhelming vote for the National League for Democracy—led by Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of Aung San—and has since retained control of the country. In November 1997 it changed its name to the State Peace and Development Council, however its top echelon remained unchanged. The second part of this chapter, then, is on schooling policies and practices in Myanmar under this regime.

[222] For a detailed background to the events of 1988 see, Bertil Lintner, *Outrage: Burma's struggle for democracy*, White Lotus, Bangkok, 1990. See also Smith, *Burma*, pp. 1–26.
[223] Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics*, p. 44.

As the Union of Myanmar

> The Secretary-1 urged all to strive for the emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation and successful implementation of education promotion programmes designed to develop human resources and to enable the Union to stand tall in the international community, to organize and train youths while safeguarding against the danger of internal and external destructive elements attempting to disrupt stability, peace and tranquility and development of the State and to create riots, and to strive for the flourishing and propagation of Union Spirit and national solidarity, which are the true strengths necessary to repel political, economic and cultural infiltration of neo-colonialists and their lackeys.
>
> – New Light of Myanmar [224]

Since 1988 schooling in Myanmar has remained the exclusive prerogative of the state, configured as a means by which people may be converted to human resources for its benefit, not unlike the earlier socialist period. Being governed by an authoritarian regime and dominated by a disproportionately large military, the state is also deeply concerned by the security issues arising out of mass public schooling.[225] Attempting to ensure that the population does not deviate from its particularistic programme, the state leadership—dominated by members of the armed forces, the Tatmadaw—constantly reiterates citizens' obligations and roles. Schools are captured conceptually in their motto: 'Morale, Discipline, Knowledge' (see figure 3.1).

---

[224] 'Against all the odds, government set on achieving its goal: Any government will not accept any forms of destructive act and head-on confrontation', *New Light of Myanmar*, 1 October 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ oct1.html] (3 October 2000). The English-language *New Light of Myanmar* and its Burmese language equivalent *The Mirror* (မြဝတီ) are the primary sources for the majority of material on state educational policy outlined in this section. Both are state-directed mouthpieces and are considered reliable transmitters of its agenda, if little else. Their contents are also consistent with that of the state-managed television and radio.

[225] The government does not release precise data on the size of its military, however in a letter to Human Rights Watch of 8 May 2002, the Counsellor for Public Affairs of its Permanent Mission to the United Nations put the figure at 350,000. *'My gun was as tall as me': Child soldiers in Burma*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 2002, p. 209. Independent observers suggest that it may in fact exceed 400,000.

On security concerns, see for instance, 'DVB: Students bring down Rangoon regime slogan signboard', *BurmaNet*, 8 December 2000, [strider@igc.org] (10 December 2000). DVB (Democratic Voice of Burma) is an anti-government radio station operating out of Norway. Myanmar Information Committee, 'School faculties, local township authorities and parents working together to prevent political extremists from exploiting school children', Information Sheet No. B-1029 (I), 17 August 1999, [http://www.myanmar-information.net/infosheet/ 1999/990817.htm] (6 May 2002). 'Myanmar junta accuses opposition of trying to sabotage education system', AP press report, 12 September 2000, [burma-education@egroups.com] (22 October 2000).

Figure 3.1: Signboards in a school assembly area. *From left to right:* Our Three Main National Causes; Parent–Teacher Association; the Three School Students' Causes; the schools' motto (Photograph by the author).

Figure 3.2: The Secretary-1 greeted in unison by young students, as he travels the country attending to their needs (*The New Light of Myanmar*, 1 & 27 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm]).

This part of the chapter summarises the aims, structure, curriculum and language of instruction of state schooling in present-day Myanmar, then notes the roles of teachers and students, relevant elements of ritual, alternatives to state schooling, and comments briefly on popular perceptions of education in Myanmar. It is mostly on Basic Education, which encompasses pre-tertiary schooling. Matters that may be relevant to these topics but pertain specifically to textbooks are taken up in the next chapter.

Aims

> The government and the people have been making concerted efforts for the successful implementation of the policies of the State. Their concerted efforts are now bearing fruit.
>
> – *Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt* [226]

Under the current regime, the core aims of Basic Education are unchanged from the preceding socialist period, where the students are perceived as future 'human resources' that must be shaped to maximise their output for the benefit of the state. They are as follows:

1. To enable every citizen of the Union of Myanmar to become a physical and mental worker well equipped with basic education, good health and moral character;
2. To lay foundations for vocational education for the benefit of the Union of Myanmar;
3. To give precedence to the teaching of science capable of strengthening and developing productive forces;

---

[226] 'Secretary-1 attends opening of new building for No. 6 BEMS in Lashio', *New Light of Myanmar,* 31 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july31.htm] (31 July 2001).

4. To give precedence to the teaching of arts capable of preservation and development of culture, fine arts and literature of the state; and
5. To lay a firm and sound educational foundation for the further pursuance of University Education.[227]

The first aim—the building of moral character—will be closely observed throughout the remainder of this study. This is also listed in the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education.[228] Under the 1993 *Child Law*, the Ministry of Education is also responsible for 'implementing the system of free and compulsory primary education', in keeping with the first aim.[229]

These aims are guided by a set of overarching principles, including the Three Main National Causes, twelve national objectives—divided between political, economic and social objectives—and 'People's Desire', reiterated daily in the national media.[230] Among these, the National Causes can be found posted on the exteriors of schools around the country (see figure 3.1):

---

[227] *Basic Education in brief*, Department of Basic Education No. 1, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, Yangon, September 2000, p. 2. 'Ministry of Education' ('ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန'), in *တိုင်းကျိုးပြည်ပြု—နိုင်ငံတော်ငြိမ်ဝပ်ပိပြားမှုတည်ဆောက်ရေးအဖွဲ့၏ ဆောင်ရွက်ချက်သမိုင်းဝင်မှတ်တမ်း၊ ၁၉၈၈–၃၉၉၁* (***Benefiting the country: Historical record of the State Law and Order Restoration Council's undertakings, 1988–1991***), Yangon, 1991, p. 343. See also the *Union of Burma Basic Education Law 1973* (*၁၉၇၃ ခုနှစ်၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံ အခြေခံပညာရေး ဥပဒေ*), Union of Burma Revolutionary Council, Rangoon, 1973, sec. 3.

[228] 'Ministry of Education', p. 343.

[229] *The Child Law* (*ကလေးသူငယ် ဥပဒေ*). State Law and Order Restoration Council, Union of Myanmar, 1993, sec. 20(b)(i). *The Child Law* was legislated in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (sec. 3[a]). As part of its legitimising project at the international level, the current state has ratified a number of UN conventions and incorporated them into domestic law.

[230] The 'People's Desire', referred to in chapter 4 and the conclusion of this study, is a set of points first devised and employed in 'mass rallies' to oppose the National League for Democracy led by Aung San Suu Kyi, whom allegedly act as agents for neo-colonialist forces. Like the other aims and objectives, they later appeared in state media daily, as follows:

Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views.
Oppose those trying to jeopardize the stability of the State and progress of the nation.
Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State.
Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy.

1. Non-disintegration of the Union Our cause!
2. Non-disintegration of National Solidarity Our cause!
3. Consolidation of National Sovereignty Our cause!

In addition to these overarching aims, the state has laid down timelines for the achievement of goals, including a '30-Year Plan' and a 'Special Four-Year Plan'. The 30-Year Plan has been introduced with the ambition of turning the Myanmar education system into 'the backbone of the entire Myanma society'.[231] It consists of nine objectives that are worthy of enumeration here, as they are reiterated in one form or another throughout all state media. These appear to be a fusion of earlier socialist-style ideology with more recent concerns with 'modernisation' and international prestige:

1. Emergence of a basic education system which is on a par with the international education system;
2. Emergence of human resources capable of building and safeguarding a modern, developed nation with the help of advances in science and technology;
3. Emergence of highly-qualified innovative and inventive persons;
4. Emergence of stalwart persons who are imbued with Union Spirit, patriotism and preserve traditional culture;
5. Emergence of highly-educated persons who are healthy and fit and have strong morals;
6. Emergence of outstanding youths who live together in peace and are capable of improving the entire human society;

[231] 'New generation must be able to safeguard good legacy and create better social environment: They are to possess strength, industry, perseverance and courage to be able to overcome every difficulty with which they may be confronted', *New Light of Myanmar*, 16 September 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/ nlm/enlm/sept16.htm] (18 September 2001).

7. Emergence of a constant learning society;
8. Provision of equal opportunities to learn vocational education; and,
9. Emergence of basic education schools which can serve as support centers for regional development.[232]

The Special Four-Year Plan (2000–03)—reportedly developed in a series of seminars from 1997 onwards—contains many detailed layers of objectives for educational achievement, primarily of a material nature. Broadly, it aims to upgrade schooling to 'ASEAN [Association of South East Asian Nations] standard', ensure that it is compulsory, and improve retention rates.[233] How these aims are to be implemented depends first of all on the structure put in place to ensure their success.

Structure

> Educational management and decision making are characterized by a considerable degree of centralization at the national level.
>
> – *UNICEF*[234]

As an international humanitarian non-governmental organisation attempting to cooperate with a parochial military dictatorship, UNICEF (above) has mastered the art of understatement: in Myanmar state schooling is in fact a profoundly

---

[232] '30-year long-term education plan covers lofty Myanmar education goal "emergence of an education system that will create a constant learning society to face challenges of present era": Seminar on promotion of national education in basic education sector (Lower Myanmar) held', *New Light of Myanmar,* 28 April 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april28.html] (28 April 2002). 'Union Spirit' is discussed in the section on curriculum.

[233] 'For upgrading of education', *New Light of Myanmar*, 21 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/perspectives/august/august21.htm] (21 August 2001). 'Myanmar striving to develop IT for national progress: Special four-year education promotion programme implemented to reach ASEAN education level', *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 April 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april3.htm] (3 April 2002). The talk of international/ASEAN standards relates not only to the state's perceptions of the role that education can play for it in the country, but also concepts of prestige, discussed in chapters 4 & 5.

[234] *Master Plan of Operations, 1996–*2000, p. 123.

centralised monopoly. As noted in the first part of this chapter, schools in Myanmar were nationalised in 1962; private Basic Education Schools are prohibited—all officially recognised school students attend Basic Education Schools run by the Ministry of Education, except for the small number of students at special schools run by the Ministry of Defence for children of the military elite.[235] Under the Ministry of Education, Departments of Basic Education Nos. 1–3 manage schools by regions, although all three are headquartered in Yangon. The role of these departments, however, is administrative. Policy-making is the domain of the Myanmar Education Committee, which is chaired by the Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt.[236] It intervenes with a view to 'laying down, nurturing and carrying out' the long-term educational tasks of the state. It offers 'advice' on, among other things, 'educational laws which will support the perpetuation of the physical integrity of the Union, national solidarity and national sovereignty' and 'educational policies in line with the social, economic and political system'.[237] The Secretary-1 personally travels the length and breadth of the country in order to be seen ensuring that tasks are being carried out, and giving instructions (see figure 3.2). For instance, addressing students of monastic schools privileged to receive exercise books and pencils from the state (see the section on alternatives to state schooling below), the Secretary-1 recently spoke on the abovementioned 30-Year Plan:

---

[235] *The current education situation in Burma: Education report year 2000*, Foreign Affairs Committee, All Burma Federation of Student Unions, Bangkok, 2001, p. 79. See further discussion on alternatives to state schools below.

[236] 'Ministry of Education', p. 352. Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt—hereafter referred to by his conventional designation, 'the Secretary-1'—is perhaps best known as the head of the military intelligence service, although he is not usually referred to in this capacity by the state media.

[237] 'Initial reports of States parties due in 1993: Myanmar'. United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, CRC/C/8/Add.9, 18 September 1995, [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/385c2add1632f4a8c12565a9004dc311/3696fdf1928799318025650d00597e4b?OpenDocument&Highlight=0,myanmar] (27 February 2002), para. 26.

> In line with the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe, the 30-year long-term education plan is being implemented to develop the human resources in the hope of catching up with the international education standard. It is necessary for well-wishers to understand the national education promotion programme of the State. With the active participation of the people, the State is striving [to turn] out intelligentsia and intellectuals who will shoulder the responsibility of the State in future and for development of human resources in order to build up the nation into a modern one. He said there are some who think that [the] education system in Myanmar is out of date. As they did not know the government's education promotion programme well, they said so...[238]

This paragraph captures the management of schooling in Myanmar as perceived by the present state. The state's role is to tell people what to do; the people's role is to 'actively participate', which is to say 'keep in line with the guidance of the Head of State'.

Schooling operates on a 5+4+2 structure, starting at five years of age. Primary school consists of a preliminary 'kindergarten' year, then grades one through four, referred to as 'standards'. It is divided into lower primary, consisting of the first three years, and upper primary, consisting of the two highest years.[239] The first year referred to as 'kindergarten' is in fact a de facto school year, with the same curriculum and assessment procedures as the others.[240]

Three nationwide organisations exist in tandem with the schools: the Parent-Teacher Associations, School Boards of Trustees, and the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). Whereas the first two are locally organised (subject to national policies) and existed prior to the current regime, the USDA has a unitary hierarchical structure and was founded in 1993 through

---

[238] 'Secretary-1 attends ceremony to present exercise books and pencils to monastic education schools in Yangon East District', *New Light of Myanmar*, 30 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/may30.htm] (2 June 2002). See the keywords section in chapter 4 for comments on 'intelligentsia and intellectuals'.

[239] U Myint Han, 'Curriculum', *Working Paper Series,* no. 2.3, Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Yangon, February 1992, p. 5.

[240] Williams, *Primary education in Myanmar Naing-ngan*, p. 22. *Education sector study, phase 1: Final report*, Ministry of Education/UNDP/ UNESCO, Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Yangon, February 1992, p. iv.

proclamation by Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council Snr-Gen. Than Shwe. Its causes are identical to those of the state: non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, perpetuation of sovereignty.[241] It has also been established as a civil organisation mandated to support the Tatmadaw, whereby its Code of Conduct states that

> A member shall be loyal to the Union and her citizens, defend and protect the sovereignty and perpetuation of the Union, earnestly strive for the affection and unity of the national races... protect the rule of law and order and peace and tranquility, vitalize a keen sense of patriotism with a view to promoting national pride, and, preserve and protect the national culture.[242]

The USDA's target group unambiguously includes students and teachers. As if to underline this point its motto is virtually the same as that of the schools: 'Morale, Discipline, Solidarity and Unity', and its General Secretary is the Minister for Education. For teachers, USDA membership is now reported to be virtually obligatory. And while groups outside the country have alleged that it has forcibly recruited students, under any circumstances those who join 'voluntarily' certainly accrue academic and possibly non-academic advantages.[243] The state claims that over 9.9 million youths have now been trained under USDA auspices, in programmes that are little more than an extension to and reinforcement of the school curriculum, which is the topic of the next section.

---

[241] On the development of the USDA see Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics*, pp. 116–19.

[242] 'USDA protects, serves nation', *New Light of Myanmar*, 5 September 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/perspectives/september/sept05.htm] (6 September 2001). The 'national races' are discussed in chapter 4.

[243] V. Coakley, 'Politics of stability: Co-opting Burma's civil society through the USDA', *Burma Issues*, vol. 8, no. 10, 1998, p. 3. Christina Fink, *Living silence: Burma under military rule*, White Lotus, Bangkok; University Press, Dhaka; Zed Books, London & New York, 2001, p. 95. Khuensai Jaiyane, 'A trip to the border', *Shan Herald Agency for News*, 28 June 2000.

Curriculum

> In both the basic education sector and the higher education sector, annual working programmes have been laid down and implemented to reform curricula in order to ensure that the level of national education is on a par with that of international education...
>
> – New Light of Myanmar [244]

In keeping with the aims and structure of formal education in Myanmar, the school curriculum is standardised and centrally determined—without regional exceptions or other special allowances.[245] In lower primary school there are four compulsory subjects; in upper primary school there are five. The core subjects are Burmese, mathematics and English.[246] Burmese attracts the largest number of hours in the weekly timetable.[247] The fourth core subject is general studies & natural science. In upper primary the additional subject is social science, which until the 1998–99 school year had been taught as history and geography. Additionally, co-curricular studies include the teaching of aesthetic and physical education, and the study of 'Union Spirit', which the Ministry refers to as 'the feeling of oneness among Myanmar Youths [that] is essential for safeguarding the independence and sovereignty for the perpetuation of the nation'.[248]

---

[244] 'e-Education system launched in Myanmar', *New Light of Myanmar*, 1 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan1.htm] (3 January 2001).

[245] 'Initial reports of States parties due in 1993: Myanmar', para. 99 (i).

[246] Ne Win ordered that English be reintroduced into the primary school curriculum in 1980. The popular story about the reason behind this decision is that his daughter failed entrance examinations to medical courses in the UK and Singapore due to her poor English skills. Tint Zaw (တင့်ဇော်), နအဖနှင့် အနာဂတ်ပညာရေး (၁၀) ('SPDC and future education: 10'), *New Era Journal*, no. 68, January 1999, p. 3.

[247] Discussed further in the next chapter.

[248] *Basic Education in brief*, p. 10. Union Spirit is reported to have been increasingly prominent in schooling during recent years, through activities such as the teaching of nationalist songs. Ye Ni (ရဲနည်), 'အခြေခံပညာကျောင်းသားများ အတွက် စစ်အုပ်စု၏ ဘာသာရပ်ပြဋ္ဌန်းချက်အသစ်' ('Military regime's new pronouncement on subject matter for basic education school students'), *New Era Journal*, July 1999, p. 2. For comments on Union Spirit see Nick Cheesman, 'Seeing "Karen" in the Union of Myanmar', *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2002, pp. 216–7.

Buddhism is not included in the syllabus, but it is among co-curricular activities and those highly publicised by the state (see figures 3.3 & 3.4).[249] Teachers are encouraged to develop their students' spiritual character outside of school hours.[250] Buddhist elements are also incorporated into the daily timetable: mornings begin with homage to the Buddha, and the Five Beatitudes are invariably painted on to the top of a blackboard or nearby wall.[251] School altar rooms are usually on the itinerary of visiting dignitaries.[252] The 'Three School Students' Causes' are an adaptation of a verse in the Mangala Sutta, probably the best-known Buddhist discourse in Myanmar:

1. Not to associate with fools — Our cause!
2. To associate with the wise — Our cause!
3. To honour those worthy of honour — Our cause! [253]

As the current state's usual technique is to reinforce a message through repetition, the Three Students' Causes may be seen printed on signboards around and within schools across the country (see figure 3.1). Although the original text

---

[249] *Basic Education in brief*, p. 16.

[250] 'Teachers warned'. *Burma Press Summary*, vol. 3, no. 8, August 1989, [http://public.ibiblio.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=burmaps&ct=0] (17 January 2002). Mass novitiations of students and teachers were begun in 1999. 'Ordination, novitiation of 3,000 students, teachers and personnel of No. 3 Basic Education Department (Yangon) held', *New Light of Myanmar,* 15 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec15.htm] (17 December 1999).

[251] These comments are based on personal observations. At one school visited in Yangon a sizeable minority of students was Muslim. The headmistress was upset that Muslim parents had requested their children not be forced to pay homage to the Buddha. She was insistent that all the students do so, justifying this by saying that it was not necessarily an act of religious reverence but merely a demonstration of respect, as one would pay homage to an elder or important leader. She said that she had already granted many concessions to the Muslim community, and—no doubt feeling the weight of the state firmly behind her—they would not get their way on this. Besides, she added, 'If they come to a Bamar school they have to do things our way.' That the headmistress saw the school as 'Bamar' rather than 'national' reflects a central message of the school textbooks, raised in chapters 4 & 5.

[252] See for instance 'Government and the people have joined hands to implement education promotion programmes, from first and second phases to the third phase being achieved phase by phase: Ceremony to open Multimedia Classrooms at Hline Township BEHS No. 4' ('ပညာရေးjrifwifအစီအစဉ်များ နိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရနှင့်ပြည်သူလက်တွဲ အကောင်အထည်ဖော်ခဲ့ ပထမဆင့်၊ ဒုတိယဆင့်မှ တတိယဆင့်တိုင် တစ်ဆင့်ပြီးတစ်ဆင့်အောင်မြင်ဖြစ်ထွန်းနေ၊ လှိုင်မြို့နယ် အထက(၄)သင်ထောက်ကူပြုစာသင်ခန်းများဖွင့်ပွဲ အခမ်းအနားကျင်းပ'), *The Mirror*, 4 September 2000, p. 7.

[253] Where 'fools' = destructionists, traitors, National League for Democracy; 'the wise' = those following the state's dictates; 'those worthy of honour' = those already receiving it, the military elite and associates. The Buddha's discourse, naturally, lacks the chorused exclaimations.

Figure 3.3: Female students organised for a mass devotion at Shwedagon Pagoda (*Myekhinthit Magazine*, October 2000, cover).

Figure 3.4: The Secretary-1 making donations to monastic schools (*The New Light of Myanmar*, 19 & 30 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm]).

of the *Mangala Sutta* is in Pali, on these signs it is in Burmese, the language of instruction.

Language of instruction

> The official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses. It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language. Obligatory on official occasions and in official places (schools, public administrations, political institutions, etc.), this state language becomes the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured...
>
> – *Pierre Bourdieu* [254]

The teaching of a standard form of one language suggests it is somehow better and more correct than others. As Pierre Bourdieu notes (above) it is the stick by which everything else must come to be measured. Formal education plays a major role in this 'linguistic domination'. As a language has no inherent qualities that allow for it to perpetually be the 'legitimate' one, it necessitates constant re-invention.[255] School is first among the agencies engaged in this task.

Schooling teaches through the primacy of the *written* word. Benedict Anderson has offered a powerful argument that it is not a language as such but *print* language in particular that makes the nation: written text serves not only as a common means for exchange, but also creates a sense of permanency and power not available to the oral.[256] Writing 'fixes' knowledge in a way that oral

---

Houtman presents an interesting argument that in lieu of an alternative ideology the current state has in fact built its identity on the Mangala Sutta. Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics*, pp. 128–33.

[254] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and symbolic power*, Gino Raymond & Matthew Adamson (trans), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 45.

[255] Bourdieu, *Language and symbolic power*, p. 58.

[256] Anderson, *Imagined communities*, pp. 134–5. Indonesia, where much of Anderson's study has been directed, has had perhaps the most remarkable linguistic revolution of any state in Southeast Asia during the twentieth century. Anderson has referred to the creation of Bahasa Indonesia as 'an *enterprise* for the mastery of a gigantic cultural crisis, and a partly

communication does not.[257] Hence, even in remote Myanmar schools where teachers can be found working through the Burmese language curriculum by explaining it in a local language, the non-Burmese language will remain subordinate, as it is not the language on the page.[258]

For Tove Skutnabb-Kangas the business of validating one language over others involves a number of steps: first, to glorify the dominant group; secondly, to stigmatise others; thirdly, to rationalise the relationship so that the dominant seems practical and beneficial to all. The dominant group then appears as a benefactor and not an oppressor when transmitting its linguistic stock.[259] This venture can be recast in terms of civility and barbarity (as mentioned in the first part of this chapter):

> In order to legitimate assimilation, the dominant population, its language and culture have to be seen as superior and the dominated ones as inferior. This is a civilizing mission to glorify the dominant and degrade the dominated. In addition, the relationship between the groups has to be rationalized, always to the advantage of the dominant group, which is seen as doing the dominated a favour.[260]

As autonomous states reemerged in Asia during the twentieth century one of the issues each faced was the establishment of a 'national' language, to the exclusion of others: in Myanmar, as disussed earlier, this was Burmese—the language spoken by the majority of the population. All school subjects except English are

---

subconscious *project* for the assumption of "modernity"'. See, Ben Anderson, 'The Languages of Indonesian Politics', *Indonesia*, no. 1, 1966, p. 89. See also, Virginia Matheson Hooker, 'New Order Language in Context', in *Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia*, Virginia Matheson Hooker (ed.), Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1993, pp. 272–93. Jack Goody has written a number of interesting texts on the power of the written versus the oral. See for instance, Jack Goody, *The logic of writing and the organization of society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1986.

[257] Keyes, 'The proposed world of the school', p. 91.

[258] The extent to which this actually happens in Myanmar is a matter for conjecture. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers routinely use a non-Burmese language in class only where they have a relatively homogenous non-Bamar student population. Thein Lwin, Barnabas & Nan Lung, 'သင်ကြားနည်းစံနစ်ဆိုင်ရာသုတေသနအစီရင်ခံစာ' ('Report on research into teaching methodology'), National Health and Education Committee, Education Unit, 1 November 2001, p. 15.

[259] Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, *Linguistic genocide in education—Or worldwide diversity and human rights?* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey & London, 2000, pp. 195–6, 200.

[260] Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, *Language, literacy and minorities*, Minority Rights Group, London, 1990, p. 17.

taught in Burmese.[261] The dominance of Burmese language in schools since independence has been justified as a natural readjustment after an aberrant period, a decision made 'so that the invidious distinctions' of the old arrangement would cease and 'a firm foundation for democracy [would be] laid'.[262] As an allowance was made at the primary level for non-Burmese languages—and as the policy-makers invoked democratic principles—this all had a surface appearance of reasonableness. However that non-Burmese languages would be phased out within a few years of schooling in itself indicates a perception that these languages are somehow diminutive; that in practice the study of non-Burmese languages in schools has been virtually impossible only makes matters worse.[263]

The common argument for the teaching of Burmese over other languages in Myanmar, in keeping with conventional wisdom on nation building, is that a single national language is a unifying force over an otherwise divergent population. In 1967 Hugh Tinker put forth this case in all its brilliant simplicity:

> This policy of deliberately replacing the lesser languages by Burmese may be somewhat arbitrary, and will certainly accentuate the difficulties of the frontier races in finding equality with their Burmese cousins: but it is certainly the right policy for the long haul. There is no place for parochialism and clannishness in Burma today, and nothing will create a true sense of solidarity so surely as the acceptance of a common language.[264]

What advocates of this approach seem to have underestimated is the extent to which modern interpretations of ethnic identity can motivate opposition and resentment to policies of assimilation, ultimately making such attempts

---

[261] This, even though section 21 of the *Child Law* reaffirms that 'every child shall have the right to maintain his or her own cherished language, literature and culture'.
[262] *Education in Burma*, p. 2.
[263] Fink, *Living silence*, p. 167. On this point, the experience of some attempting to set up alternative schools with state approval is revealing. See the section on alternatives in this chapter.
[264] Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, p. 167.

fundamentally dis-integrative.[265] Working among non-Bamar groups along the Myanmar–Thailand border, Thein Lwin has found that one effect of the Myanmar schools has been the parallel rise in ethnocentrism in the curricula of alternative schools run by these groups.[266] The restrictive and discouraging approach taken towards non-Burmese languages by the state has undoubtedly fuelled this reaction.

The real significance of this kind of language policy lies not in its justification but in the contents of the dominant language and what they imply. It is the interconnectedness of Burmese language and the framing of 'Myanmar' through the Burmese idiom, culture, religion and social relations—in short, Burmese 'civilisation' (emphasis on civility)—that is important, and that is taken up in subsequent chapters.

---

[265] In this regard the experience of Malaysia is instructive. See for instance, Jasbir Sarjit Singh & Hena Mukherjee, 'Education and national integration in Malaysia: Stocktaking thirty years after independence', *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1993, pp. 91–3.

[266] Thein Lwin, Education for citizenship: How citizenship education is taught in a British primary school and its implications for Burma, unpublished EdD thesis, Department of Education, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 2001, p. 42. This research is discussed further in the section on alternatives to state schooling, below. The author of this dissertation worked in one of those schools for a number of years, and his personal observations correspond to those of Thein Lwin.

Coverage

> The Secretary-1 and party and those present saluted the State Flag. The students sang the National Anthem with the accompaniment of the band. The outstanding students unveiled the stone plaque bearing [the] Myanmar Education Goals. Next the students sang the song 'Myanma School' to mark the opening of the stone plaque... Headmaster U Myint Lwin and Chairman of SBT U Kan Nyunt formally opened the multimedia teaching centre. Afterwards, the Secretary-1 unveiled the signboard of the centre.
>
> – New Light of Myanmar [267]

According to government statistics, primary schooling in Myanmar is widespread and comprehensive. In 1999–2000 it comprised 37,627 primary schools, 153,663 teachers and around five million students.[268] The current state claims to have constructed, 'with the help of well-wishers' over 5300 of these schools itself.[269] Schools are located in most of the country, with a supposed average of one primary school per two villages.[270] The state maintains that at the primary level well over 90 per cent of the target school group is now enrolled.[271]

Independent figures tell a very different story. A 1999 UNICEF Myanmar report suggested that around 50 per cent of students in the target group are not attending primary school at any given time.[272] After primary school, the numbers

---

[267] 'Secretary-1 addresses opening of multimedia teaching centre at Zigon BEHS'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 22 April 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april22.htm] (22 April 2002).

[268] 'Education', *MyanmarPyi: Myanmar Web Directory*, undated, [http://www.myanmarpyi.com/education/myanmar-eduation.htm] (30 May 2001). UNESCO recommends caution when interpreting such data: 'In particular, it is likely that the figures for teachers at times relate to posts rather than to people in place.' *Basic information on Myanmar education sector*, UNESCO, Paris, October 1989, p. 21.

[269] 'Strong economy, peace, stability will ward off foreign influences, perpetuate sovereignty: Government built over 5,300 new high, middle and primary schools', *New Light of Myanmar*, 21 November 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/novem21.htm] (22 November 2001).

[270] *Master Plan of Operations*, p. 3.

[271] *Basic Education in brief*, p. 9. See also recent statistics cited in, 'Due to concerted efforts of all, kindergarten intake rate increased to 91% in 1999, 91.5% in 2000, 92.05% in 2001 and 93.07% in 2002: Both formal education and non-formal education activities are linked and being implemented for all school age children to attend schools and for over school age persons to attend adult literacy classes; Secretary-1 attends ceremony in honour of success achieved in enrolment movement for school-going age children', *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july27.htm] (29 July 2000).

[272] *Situation analysis of children and women in Myanmar*, 3rd draft, UNICEF Myanmar, Yangon, August 1999, p. 7. This analysis is supported by earlier reports. See for instance, Williams, *Primary education in Myanmar Naing-ngan*, pp. 7–13.

drop even more rapidly.[273] Regionally, there are enormous differences: the Thailand-based National Health and Education Committee has heard that in border areas an average of only 20 per cent of primary school-age children are attending school.[274] Facing such conditions, UNICEF Myanmar has occasionally shown frustration with the state at its failure to make progress, despite years of intervention:

> Education has traditionally been a priority for the families of Myanmar... However in recent times, education has been affected by declining resources, minimal professional support and deteriorating learning conditions, resulting in reduced enrolment and completion. Unless these issues are addressed by the state, the burden will continue to fall upon the communities.[275]

The amount of time Burmese students spend in school has also become an issue under the current state. Schools and universities have been closed sporadically since 1988, due to—among other things, it is said—the 'destructive clique', the National League for Democracy, which has been 'creating problems and exploiting even the young primary students in order to gain power' (see figure 3.5).[276] Overcrowding is another matter leading students to spend less time in school. It is now common for schools to split into double shifts to accommodate all students. This reallocation of time and space also allows students to attend private tuition during the part of the day they are not at school.[277]

Meanwhile, talk of modernising has been mostly on the inception of 'Multimedia Teaching Centres' in schools all around the country, equipped with computers,

---

[273] *Education sector study*, p. 2.

[274] 'Opportunities for children to study in each region of Myanmar' ('မြန်မာနိုင်ငံဒေသာအသီးသီးမှ ကလေးများပညာသင်ကြားနိုင်ရန် အခွင့်အရေး'), National Health and Education Committee, Education Conference, Thai-Myanmar border, 28–31 March 2002, p. 1. See also, Zani Win (ဇာနည်ဝင်း), 'မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတွင် ပညာရေးစနစ် ဆိုးဝါးနေသဲ့' ('Education system in Myanmar worsening'), *The Irrawaddy (Burmese)*, 7 June 2002, [http://www.irrawaddy.org/bur/news.html] (8 June 2002).

[275] *All Children in School: Education and Early Childhood Development Programme*, UNICEF Myanmar, July 2000, p. 12.

[276] 'Kyemon: Attack on ASSK over education', *BurmaNet*, 23 January 2000, [strider@igc.org] (23 January 2000).

[277] Notes from discussions with students, teachers and parents, Yangon, July–October 2000. Mention is made of tuition in the section on the role of teachers, below.

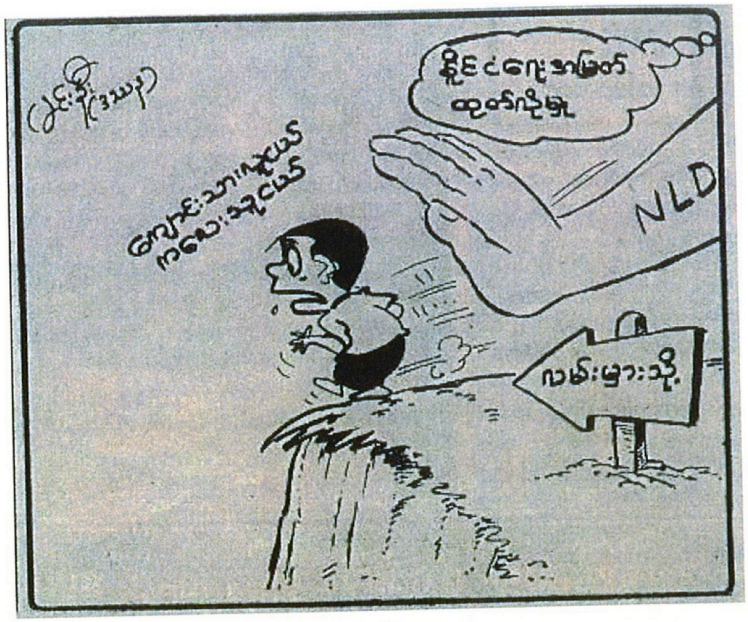

Figure 3.5: A school student pushed down the 'wrong path' by the National League for Democracy (*The Mirror*, 24 July 2000, p. 2).

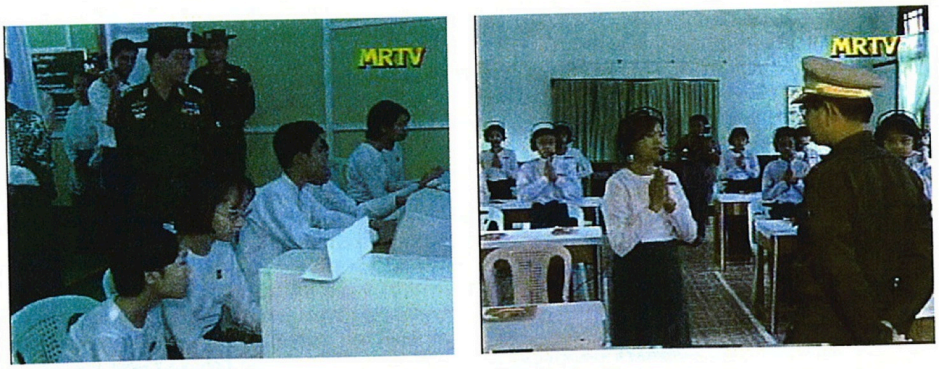

Figure 3.6: The Secretary-1 inspecting multimedia centres (*The New Light of Myanmar*, 8 January 2000 & 28 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm]).

and audio and video equipment, to bring the schooling up to an 'international standard' (see figure 3.6).[278] A typical report of a Multimedia Centre opening proceeds:

> The Secretary-1 unveiled the signboard. The Secretary-1 and party then inspected the different sections of the centre. The Secretary-1 and party watched the musical performance of the students. Next, a ceremony to open the multimedia teaching centre was held. Headmistress Daw Khin Htay Myint reported on modern teaching aids installed at the centre and Chairman of [the] School Board of Trustees U Tun Zaw [reported] on efforts for opening of the centre. The Secretary-1 presented teaching aids to Headmistress Daw Khin Htay Myint. The Secretary-1 said out of 1,000 basic education [high] schools throughout the country over 900 schools got multimedia teaching centres and over 500 centres were opened under the leadership of the government and with the cooperation of the people.[279]

Although the Multimedia Centres find their way into much state propaganda, commentators and activists outside the country have questioned their true value

---

[278] See for instance 'Education gap between urban and rural areas narrowed: Outstanding scholarship spreading into rural areas, continued momentum of successful education promotion programmes; Parents, people and well-wishers continuing to contribute to development of human resources' ('မြို့ပြနှင့်ကျေးလက် ပညာရည်ကွာဟမှု ကျဉ်းမြောင်းလာ၊ ပညာရည်ထူးချွန်မှု ကျေးလက်အထိပျံ့နှံ့ရောက်ရှိ၊ အောင်မြင်ဖြစ်ထွန်းနေသည့် ပညာရေး[၅]တင်မှု အစီအစဉ်များကို အရှိန်အဟုန် ဆက်လက်[၅]တင်၊ လူသားစွမ်းရည် အရင်းအမြစ်များ ဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်စေရေး မိဘပြည်သူများ၊ စေတနာရှင်များက ဆက်လက်ကူညီပံ့ပိုး'), *The Mirror*, 27 August 2000, pp. 6–7. 'MEC Chairman attends opening ceremony of multimedia teaching centre in Kyaunggon', *New Light of Myanmar*, 19 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august19.htm] (20 August 2001). 'Multimedia Classrooms opened in over 300 Basic Education Schools across the entire country: Human resources development comes down to the nurturing of schools; Secretary-1 attends opening ceremonies of Multimedia Classrooms at Basic Education Schools in Bago Division' ('တစ်နိုင်ငံလုံးရှိ အခြေခံပညာကျောင်း ၃၀၀ကျော်တွင် သင်ထောက်ကူပြု စာသင်ခန်းများဖွင့်လှစ်နိုင်၊ လူသားစွမ်းရည်အရင်းအမြစ် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေး အခြေခံအကျဆုံး စာသင်ကျောင်းများမှ စတင်ပျိုးထောင်နေ၊ အတွင်းရေးမှူး[၁] ပဲခူးတိုင်းအတွင်းရှိ အခြေခံပညာကျောင်းများ၏ သင်ထောက်ကူခန်းများ ဖွင့်ပွဲတက်ရောက်'), *The Mirror*, 8 August 2000, pp. 1, 8–9. 'Multimedia Teaching Centre Opened', *New Light of Myanmar,* 12 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/ nlm/enlm/july12.htm] (12 July 2001). 'Secretary-1 attends opening of multimedia teaching centre'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 August 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/ enlm/august27.htm] (22 October 2000). 'Secretary-1 attends opening of multimedia teaching centre of No. 1 BEHS in Dawbon Township', *New Light of Myanmar*, 28 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/ enlm/july28.htm] (29 July 2001). 'Implementing Myanmar educational affairs to be abreast in Southeast Asia: Success of government endeavours to open multimedia centres exceeds expectations due to the people's energetic contribution' ('မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ၏ပညာရေးကို ဒေ့ရှတောင်အာရှတွင် ဒေ့ရှတန်းမှရင်ပေါင်တန်းပါဝင်ရေး ဆောင်ရွက်နေ၊ သင်ထောက်ကူစာသင်ခန်းများ ဖွင့်လှစ်သင်ကြားနိုင်ရေး နိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရ၏ ကြိုးပမ်းဆောင်ရွက်မှုတွင် ပြည်သူများ အားတက်သရော လိုလိုလားလားပူးပေါင်း ပါဝင်မှုကြောင့် မျှော်မှန်းသည်ထက်ပိုမိုအောင်မြင်'), *The Mirror*, 4 October 2000, pp. 1, 8–9.

Some new facilities are partially funded outside agencies, including the Japanese Embassy. See for instance 'Education for All Programmes meet with tangible success: Literacy rate of Myanmar accounts for 91%; Myanmar Education Resource Centre inaugurated', *New Light of Myanmar*, 22 April 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april22.htm] (23 April 2000). 'Kyodo: Japan-donated high school building opens in Myanmar', *BurmaNet*, 19 August 2001, [strider@igc.org] (20 August 2001). 'Myanmar Education Committee Chairman attends hand-over ceremony of four new school buildings and opening ceremony of new school building at Thakayta BEPS No. 14' ('မြန်မာနိုင်ငံပညာရေးကော်မတီဥက္ကဋ္ဌ မူလတန်း ကျောင်းဆောင်သစ် လေးကျောင်း လွှဲအပ်ပွဲနှင့် သာကေတ အမှတ်[၁၄] ကျောင်းဆောင်သစ်ဖွင့်ပွဲတက်ရောက်'), *The Mirror*, 22 July 2000, pp. 3, 9. 'New building of No. 2 BEMS handed over to No. 3 Basic Education Department (Yangon City)', *New Light of Myanmar*, 13 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august13.htm] (13 August 2001).

Under the Multimedia Centre umbrella, 'e-education' programmes have also begun during 2001 in conjunction with the Special Four-Year Plan. See for instance 'e-Education system launched in Myanmar'. A school IT exhibition held to demonstrate progress in this field was organised along the themes of Union solidarity; transport and communication infrastructure; safeguarding cultural heritage; and education promotion programmes. Kyi Kyi Hla, 'IT Exhibition of Young Myanmar Students', *Myanmar Perspectives*, vol. 7, no. 8, 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/gov/ perspec/2001/8-2001/exh.htm] (6 May 2002).

[279] 'Myanmar striving to develop IT for national progress: Special four-year education promotion programme implemented to reach ASEAN education level', *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 April 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/ nlm/enlm/april3.htm] (3 April 2002).

for students. For instance, sometimes it is said that these classrooms will help to 'narrow the gap' in schooling standards between rural and urban areas.[280] However, virtually all references are to centres situated in large urban schools.[281] Even in those schools, the computer–student ratio is reported to be approximately 1:150, obliging teachers to continue with conventional teaching methods.[282] Students genuinely interested in learning computer skills must have the finances to learn privately. The problem of limited resources is only one of the many difficulties facing teachers in Myanmar. Their role is now examined in more detail.

Role of teachers

> Teachers need to explain to their pupils to differentiate those who construct from destructionists [and] thoroughly understand the real situation of the state...
>
> ဆရာ၊ ဆရာမတို့အနေဖြင့် အပြုသဘောနှင့်အဖျက်သဘောကို မိမိတို့၏ တပည့် ကျောင်းသူ၊ ကျောင်းသားလူငယ်များ ရှင်းလင်းသိမြင်အောင် စည်းရုံးညွှန်ပြနိုင်စေဖို့ နိုင်ငံတော်၏ ပကတိအခြေအနေမှန်များကို ယခုလို ရှင်းလင်းပြခြင်း ဖြစ်ကြောင်း။
>
> – *Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt*[283]

The current regime in Myanmar pays lip service to the traditional function of teachers as one of the Five Gratitudes while systematically diminishing their

---

[280] See for instance, 'Emergence of brilliant intellectuals and intelligentsia main requirement for national development and future: Affiliated Hmawdaw Village High School, Kawhmu Township BEHS gets multimedia teaching centres', *New Light of Myanmar*, 8 February 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/ enlm/feb8.htm] (9 February 2001). 'Students urged to try heart and soul to become intellectuals and intelligentsia', *New Light of Myanmar*, 13 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ dec13.htm] (13 December 1999).

[281] For rare examples of rural multimedia centres referred to in the state media see, 'Secretary-1 meets national race leaders, attends opening of multimedia teaching centres in Kutkai', *New Light of Myanmar*, 4 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august04.htm] (4 August 2001). 'Village school gets multimedia teaching centre', *New Light of Myanmar*, 1 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/ nlm/enlm/august01.htm] (2 August 2001).

[282] *The current education situation in Burma*, p. 26.

[283] 'Education promotion programmes launched to bring out intellectuals, intelligentsia and develop human resources'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 July 1999, pp. 1, 6. 'Wishes of the people in outright opposition to national traitors group: Some big Western nations acting in violation of standards and provisions of the United Nations Charter; The force of national solidarity is essential to repel bullying and domineering ideology; All citizens have responsibility to eradicate destructionist national traitors' ('အမျိုးသစ္စာဖောက်အုပ်စုကို အတိအလင်းဆန့်ကျင်မှုများ သူ့သဘောသူဆောင်သည့် ဖြစ်ရပ်မှန်များဖြစ်၊ အနောက်နိုင်ငံကြီး တချို့၏လုပ်ရပ် ကုလပဋိညာဉ်စာတမ်းပါ ပြဋ္ဌာန်းချက်နှင့် ချိန်ထိုးပါက မတရားမှုပေါ်လွင်၊ ဝိုလ်ကျိုးမိုးရေးဝါဒကို တွန်းလှန်ဆန့်ကျင်ရန် သွေးစည်းညီညွတ်ခြင်းအင်အားကို အခြေခံ၊ အဖျက်အမှောင့်လုပ်ဆောင်နေသည့် အမျိုးသစ္စာဖောက်များကို တိုက်ဖျက်ရန် နိုင်ငံသားတိုင်း၌တာဝန်ရှိ'), *The Mirror*, 3 July 1999, pp. 1, 8–9.

collective role and social status. Like the monks' relationship with pre-colonial monarchs, the teachers' relationship with the state is based on a mixture of costs and benefits. To fulfill its objectives the state needs teachers, but it needs them—unlike the monks of earlier centuries—to be passive transmitters of state-approved knowledge and behaviour. Simultaneously, its relationship with teachers is coloured by an awareness of teachers as possible enemies. In the aftermath of the 1988 uprising, a state commentator observed that

> Students by the thousand were misled into going underground. While all this was occurring, we did not hear any instance of school teachers satisfactorily attempting to carry out the responsibilities of trying to prevent things from going too far. On the contrary it is sad to know that not a few teachers of schools and universities actually incited and agitated and even led the disturbances.[284]

By this analysis, teachers breached their responsibilities both by neglecting to stop wayward pupils from challenging state authority and also by encouraging them to protest. The military did not look upon this dual breach of responsibility kindly, and having reasserted its primacy, moved to deal with the troublemakers. Brig-Gen. Myo Nyunt, then Chairman of Yangon Division Law and Order Restoration Council, put the position of the new government straight to the teachers:

> Teachers [have been] repeatedly told to stay away from politics. If you teachers wish to engage in politics, you can do so by tendering [your] resignation. But now some are found to be playing politics while serving duties. If they continue to do the same, they will not be able to enjoy [their] pension[s]. They will have action taken against them.[285]

The military regime backed up threats to punish rebellious staff. It removed around 7000 teachers and educational workers from their posts, and sent others for four–week 'reeducation' courses given by the military intelligence service—

---

[284] Maung Wun-tha-nu, 'Nurturing our offspring to become mature citizens', *The Working People's Daily: Collected articles*, no. 2, News & Periodicals Corporation, Ministry of Information, Government of the Union of Burma, January 1989, p. 401.
[285] 'Teachers warned'.

some of those sacked included teachers who 'failed' the reeducation.[286] To the military's consternation, the message did not seem to have sunk in, as its party received but a tiny per centage of the vote in the 1991 general election. After denying the election result, the government distributed a mandatory questionnaire to civil servants. It asked 33 rhetorical questions on their political beliefs—these included whether the respondent would prefer ethnic or communist insurgents as rulers, would accept CIA interference in the country, would support exiled political groups, would like the country to lose its independence and would support overseas radio broadcasts.[287] Other questions ran as follows:

> Can you accept that all civil servants must stay out of party politics? (Qu. 14)
> If not, explain why. (Qu. 15)
>
> As the government has already instructed civil servants to be free from party politics, do you know that disciplinary actions will be taken in case of violating these instructions? (Qu. 19)
>
> Do you know that violating civil servants' rules and regulations can lead to being dismissed? (Qu. 20)
>
> Which organization has brought peace and stability to the country? (Qu. 24)
>
> What punishment should be given to persons who threaten and cut off the heads of many people, who destroy the country's properties, and who cause splits in the military? (Qu. 29)
>
> Is it right to have a head-on confrontation with the military? (Qu. 33) [288]

Periodic orders since directed towards teachers in an effort to 'depoliticise' schools betray the state's fear of possible disruption arising from ill-supervised schooling. The Department of Basic Education has a range of responsibilities over teachers, including nebulous 'matters of observance and maintenance of integrity

---

[286] Martin Smith, '"Our heads are bloody but unbowed": Suppression of educational freedoms in Burma', *Censorship News*, no. 18, 1992, [http://www.article 19.org/docimages/321.htm] (27 February 2002).

[287] The BBC and VOA, among others, beam Burmese-language news into the country. As the only independent media available to most people, they have a wide audience, and the concomitant hostility of the regime.

[288] Fink, *Living silence*, pp. 78–9. With regards to question 29, the military has alleged that during the 1988 uprising anarchic gangs were involved in mass-decapitations and widespread destruction of property.

in teaching tasks'.[289] The Ministry is also responsible for issuing injunctions necessary to maintain security. A July 2001 order absolutely prohibited the entry of non-students or teachers into schools during daytime; the carrying of any materials into school not part of the prescribed texts; the display of unauthorised material on the inside or outside of the school; and, strict adherence to dress code.[290] Cartoons in state publications represent schools being defended by parents, teachers and students from metaphorical enemies (see figure 3.7).

Teachers have no autonomy. As receptacles for state policy they are obliged to follow, but not comment. For instance, after a new school textbook was released in 2001 denigrating Thai people, four retired teachers and education officers who were disgusted enough to speak out against the text in a district seminar were subsequently arrested.[291] The state media also launches counter-attacks on those having the audacity to criticise Myanmar state schooling from outside the country, particularly Burmese people.[292]

If the above conditions were not enough to deter teaching staff, then there are also the wages. Teachers' salaries are too low to support even one person, let alone a family. Other perks previously available during the socialist period—

---

[289] 'Ministry of Education', p. 344.

[290] 'DVB: Education Ministry issues order on strict security measures at schools', *BurmaNet*, 1 August 2001, [strider@igc.org] (2 August 2001).

[291] Maung Maung Oo, 'Former school personnel arrested in Burma', *The Irrawaddy*, 11 July 2001, [http://www.irrawaddy.org/news/#for] (11 July 2001). Maung Maung Oo describes the arrests as follows: 'Troops from the No. 19 Intelligence Unit of the Mergui District led by Captain Nyi Nyi Min reportedly arrested the individuals in the middle of the night at their homes and charged them with obstructing the pursuance of peaceful education.' See also 'RFA – ကျောင်းသုံးသမိုင်းစာအုပ်ကိစ္စဆရာဆရာမများအဖမ်းခံကြရ' ('RFA [Radio Free Asia]: Teachers arrested over school textbook'), *BurmaNet Burmese*, 22 June 2001, [strider@igc.org] (24 June 2001). The textbook in question is discussed further in the next chapter.

In another case during the university closures of the mid-1990s, a popular comedian asked a high school student in a television singing contest what grade she was in—when told the final school year he replied, 'So, you have completed your studies'. He lost his job and was banned from public performance. Aung Zaw, 'Laughing all the way to prison', *The Irrawaddy*, vol. 9, no. 4, May 2001, p. 32.

[292] See for instance, Pauk Sa, 'Those who daren't show their face–18', *New Light of Myanmar*, 15 June 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/june15.htm] (15 June 2001).

Figure 3.7: The school defended on three sides by teachers, parents and students, from rumours, fabrications and false persuasions. *Note*: the defenders all wear conventional Burmese clothes, whereas the intruders have 'modern' clothes and the figure on the left, with pointy nose and top hat, is clearly European (*The Mirror*, 1 September 2000, p. 3).

Figure 3.8: The closing ceremony of a 'refresher course' for schoolteachers (*The New Light of Myanmar*, 23 June 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm]).

provision of staple foods free of charge or at low cost—are being eroded. Consequently, while international agencies and the government have been intent upon keeping *children* in school, almost as great a problem exists among teachers. Financial incentives for teaching staff are so poor—especially those in rural areas—that for most households the money that a teacher gets will serve only as a second or third income.[293] One outcome of this is that the vast majority of teachers in Myanmar are now women, whose wage supplements that of their husband, or, if they are unmarried, their parents' household income.[294] Another outcome is the inordinate growth of 'tuition', mostly in urban areas, which students and parents consider a necessity to obtain a passing grade.[295] Bribery as a means to pass is also reportedly common.[296]

It is hard to imagine that the introduction of educational reform programmes into this environment could have any measure of success, but this has not stopped some agencies from trying. The regime's main external partner, UNICEF (which began operating in Myanmar soon after independence) has worked on the implementation of a number of schemes, including the Continuous Assessment and Progression System (CAPS).[297] Begun in 1990, the noble aim of CAPS is to reduce exam-oriented pressure on students by spreading assessment more evenly across the year. What CAPS does not appear to have taken into account is its

---

[293] 'Hardship in Irrawaddy Division', *Burma Issues*, vol. 9, no. 7, 1999, p. 3. Notes from discussions with students, teachers and parents.

[294] This comment is based on personal observations.

[295] Notes from discussions with students, teachers and parents. The *Private Tuition Class Law* was introduced in 1984 to address what was already a growing practice. *Basic information on Myanmar education sector*, p. 12. Tint Zaw (တင့်ဇော်), နအဖနှင့် အနာဂတ်ပညာရေး (၁၄) ('SPDC and future education: 14'), *New Era Journal*, no. 72, May 1999, p. 3. The law does not appear to be enforced. Private tuition is now rampant and unregulated, though reports from Yangon have mentioned new attempts by the government to restrict it. The difficulty is that private tuition caters primarily to the children of military officers and upper/middle class civilians: supporters of the state. Attempts to crackdown on the industry are likely to provoke strong resistance and be undermined by state agents themselves.

[296] For instance, 'The situation of education in the Chin State', confidential report to Burma Issues, 1998. 'Situation of Murng Nai township in Shan State', confidential report to Burma Issues, September 1998.

[297] *Master Plan of Operations,* p. 5.

pressure on *teachers*, whose workload it has increased, without more state support, leading to increased resentment and a lack of popular commitment.[298] Not unlike the policies of British colonial administrators a century ago, CAPS is a generic remedy that is equally likely to confound policy-makers when it doesn't work as expected. For example, to reduce emphasis on examinations, CAPS incorporates both 'academic' and 'behavioural' assessment. Under the criteria for the awarding of 'behavioural' marks, the state has included items such as 'obeying the teacher' and USDA membership.[299] This is the kind of 'progressive' system that is welcomed by the state. Apart from the occasional worried remonstrance by UNICEF that things are not going as well as had been hoped, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education generally produce reports on the successes of their undertakings. Teachers, students and parents are, of course, not permitted to comment.

Since the late 1990s the state has also taken upon itself to organise 'refresher courses' and seminars for teachers. The latter are short three-day events aimed at the achievement of specific educational goals; the former are intensive five-week doctrinaire undertakings.[300] Typically around 1500 teachers are brought from all around the country to attend these sessions and then are expected to return and disseminate material among regional teaching staff. During the courses the teachers wear military-style uniforms (rather than the teacher's uniform of a

---

[298] Notes from discussions with students, teachers and parents.

[299] Thein Lwin, discussion with the author, 26 May 2000.

[300] See for instance 'Expenditure on education largest after infrastructural development projects: Secretary-1 attends opening of teachers' refresher courses', *New Light of Myanmar,* 27 August 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ august27.htm] (22 October 2000). 'Perpetuation of independence and sovereignty requires unyielding spirit and zeal and perseverance of entire people: Teachers urged to strive to implement education promotion programmes for human resources development', *New Light of Myanmar*, 24 June 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ june24.htm] (26 June 2001). 'Teachers urged to be in the vanguard of activities of education sector which will go down in history: Secretary-1 addresses closing ceremony of Special Refresher Course No. 45 for Basic Education Teachers', *New Light of Myanmar,* 11 September 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/sept11.htm] (12 September 2001).

white shirt/blouse and green sarong—the same as students), and when receiving awards from the Secretary-1, participants are referred to by name, rank and serial number (see figure 3.8).[301] The opening and closing ceremonies of these events have been occasions for exhortations by the Secretary-1:

> [With] the aim of ensuring the emergence of stalwart persons who are capable of defending the nation, teachers are required not only to improve the education standard of students but also to nurture them to possess high moral character and instill in them a sense of love for national culture, nationalism, patriotism, national solidarity and Union Spirit.[302]

Central to themes endlessly recycled by the Secretary-1 is the discourse on security, protection of youth and 'the enemy'. Teachers

> Are required to prevent the danger of the destructive group bent on using the youths in a wrong way, and instill in the youth... the sense of cherishing the truth and serving the interests of others. They are also required to get Myanmar Youths to clearly know the attempts of some big nations to disrupt the progress of the State and the people... [which are] using information technology and abusing international organizations.[303]

But passive knowledge is not adequate. Directives are also given on how teachers are to prepare youth in order to undertake their preordained tasks:

---

[301] 'Special consideration being given to the carrying out of programmes for the emergence of modern developed education methods in Myanmar education: need to take on self-defence mental development tasks to cherish and preserve traditional customs and character; National traitors and destructive elements group spreading rumours to agitate the people; Defend and preserve [the Union] with national awareness of rumours and destructive acts' ('မြန်မာပညာရေးလောကတွင် ခေတ်မီတိုးတက်သော နည်းပညာများဖြစ်ထွန်းလာအောင် အလေးထားစီမံဆောင်ရွက်ပေးနေ၊ ဝိုးရာလေ့စရိုက်အခြေခံများကို မြတ်နိုးထိန်းသိမ်းတတ်သည့် စိတ်ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာ ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကိုယ်ခံအား တည်ဆောက်ပေးရန်လိုအပ်၊ အမျိုးသစ္စာဖောက်အဖျက်သမားအုပ်စုက ပြည်သူလူထု ချေက်ချားအောင် ကောလာဟဟများထုတ်လွှင့်လှုံဆော်လျက်ရှိ၊ ကောလာဟလသတင်းများ၊ အဖျက်အမှောင့်လုပ်ရပ်များကို အမျိုးသားရေးသတိနှင့် ကာကွယ်ထိန်းသိမ်းသွားကြ'), *The Mirror*, 7 August 1999, pp. 8–9.

[302] 'Better foundations laid in education sector followed by implementation of working programmes: Special Refresher Course No. 11 for Basic Education Teachers at CICS (Upper Myanmar) opens', *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august10.htm] (10 August 2001).

It should be noted that such statements directed towards a notion of 'the enemy' *among* students and teachers are hardly new. As instability seeped through schools in the post-independence period, for instance, U Nu issued harsh warnings about 'renegades' in the student body, whose aim was to 'make the students dance according to the tune of political wire-pullers who have axes to grind'. Accordingly he urged students to diligently prevent subversives from mixing with them, 'just as evil spirits are driven out by recitation of [religious mantras]'. 'New responsibilities: Speech delivered at University Convocation on 28th February 1951', in Nu, *From peace to stability*, pp. 185–6.

[303] 'Secretary-1 addresses closing ceremony of Special Refresher Course No. 8 for Basic Education Teachers', *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 December 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec10.htm] (11 December 2000). The reference to international organisations here is towards United Nations agencies, particularly the International Labour Office (ILO), which has been a strident critic of the military government's use of forced labour on various infrastructure projects.

> In conclusion, [the Secretary-1] urged the trainee teachers to study... with the aim of being able to organize and lead the youths in safeguarding the nation against the danger of some foreign super powers who are disrupting national consolidation, peace and stability of the State and development, and to study with the aim of keeping national unity ever alive and flourishing of the Union Spirit, which are the true strengths to prevent the infiltration in political, economic and cultural sectors with the use of e-technologies, and to counterattack the fabrications of the neo-colonialists and their follower expatriates group.[304]

These regular speeches by the Secretary-1 tend to vacillate between creating a modern well-defended nation and the need to somehow retain 'traditional values'. Often the two elements are counterpoised in a single sentence:

> [Efforts] are to be speeded up... to upgrade the education standard of Myanmar to the international standard [and] to ensure that love of the Union, national interests, national values and national norms are preserved although [the] globalization process is taking shape.[305]

However the Secretary-1 knows well that the way to modernity is fraught with dangers, and so again teachers are admonished to be responsible for keeping their students on the right path:

> It is required to train youth to understand and value the Myanmar social norms such as loving kindness, sympathy, kindness, politeness, compassion, nobility, the will to serve others' interests, humanitarian duties and humanitarian codes of conduct in protecting them against possessing wrong belief such as assuming [that] material progress and wealth and undisciplined freedom [are the same] as modernization and development.[306]

Undoubtedly, teachers are considered vital instruments of state policy. Some remarks on how students are perceived and located by the state are now appropriate.

---

[304] 'Introduction of a single democracy system to all countries with different backgrounds impossible: Special Refresher Course No. 43 for Basic Education Teachers opens', *New Light of Myanmar*, 18 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/ nlm/enlm/jan18.htm] (19 January 2001).

[305] 'Government systematically implementing education reform programmes designed to produce highly-qualified human resources: Special Refresher Course No. 45 for Basic Education Teachers opens', *New Light of Myanmar*, 7 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august07.htm] (8 August 2001).

[306] 'Failure to nurture youth to have clear national outlook will lead to end of their [lives] under uncertain circumstances: Greater success, momentum gained in implementing national education promotion programmes', *New Light of Myanmar*, 19 May 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/may19.htm] (20 May 2001).

Just in case the youth fail to get the message, the state has also been known to take matters further into its own hands and publicly burn illegally imported video tapes, VCDs and 'decadent fashions' that may cause youths to 'ape wrong

Role of students

> If student youths are nurtured systematically, they can invariably become stalwart persons on which the State can rely.
>
> မိမိတို့၏ ကျောင်းသားလူငယ်များ၏ တက်ကြွသည့် အားမာန်၊ ထက်မြက်သည့် ဉာဏ်ရည်ဉာဏ်သွေးတို့ကို စနစ်တကျ မြေတောင်[illegible]က်ပြုစုပျိုးထောင်ပေးလျှင် နိုင်ငံတော်အတွက် အားထားရသည့် လူရည်ချွန်၊ လူရည်မွန်များ ဖြစ်ထွန်းလာမှာ မလွဲဧကန်ဖြစ်ကြောင်း။
>
> – *Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt*[307]

As the majority of state oratories to teachers are also intended to be passed down to their pupils, it follows that the preceding lectures on security, tradition and modernity apply equally to the two groups. That said, the role and position of students in Myanmar society is, as elsewhere, qualitatively different from that of their teachers. Section 30 of *The Child Law*, 'Ethics and Discipline of the Child', is instructive in terms of how children's general place in Myanmar society is perceived by the state:

> Every child shall abide by the following ethics and discipline, according to his age:–
> (a) Upholding and abiding by the law;
> (b) Obeying the advice and instruction of parents or guardian;
> (c) Obeying the instruction of teachers and pursuing education peacefully;
> (d) Abiding by the school discipline, work discipline and community discipline;
> (e) Cherishing and preserving the race, language, religion, customs and traditions concerned with him;
> (f) Abstaining from taking alcohol, smoking, using narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, gambling and other acts which tend to affect moral character.

In the subsequent section of the *Child Law*, parents, teachers and guardians are reminded of their collective role in ensuring that children adhere to the injunctions of section 30—a vital task that the state is not about to leave them to undertaken on their own. Apart from programmes such as those organised by the

---

behaviour' and harm national culture. 'Uncensored tapes, VCDs and CDs, articles out of place in Myanmar culture put to torch', *New Light of Myanmar*, 8 April 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/april8.htm] (10 April 2000).

307 'Sangyoung Township BEHS No. 3 gets multimedia teaching centre', *New Light of Myanmar*, 20 August 2000, [http://www3.itu.int/missions/myanmar/00nlm/n000820.htm] (10 May 2002). 'Education gap between urban and rural areas narrowed due to systematic teaching and training: Outstanding students emerge as matriculation exam pass rate among students of towns has improved; Secretary-1 attends opening ceremony of Sangyoung BEHS No. 3 Multimedia Classrooms' ('စနစ်တကျလေ့ကျင့်သင်ကြားမှုကြောင့် မြို့ပြနှင့်ကျေးလက် ပညာရေးကွာဟမှု ကျဉ်းမြောင်းလာ၊ တက္ကသိုလ်ဝင် စာမေးပွဲတွင် နယ်မြို့များ အောင်ချက်ရာခိုင်နှုန်း တိုးပြီး ထူးချွန်ကျောင်းသားများပေါ်ထွန်း၊ အတွင်းရေးမှူး [၁] စင်းချောင်း အထက[၃] သင်ထောက်ကူ စာသင်ခန်းများဖွင့်ပွဲတက်ရောက်'), *The Mirror*, 20 August 2000, p. 3.

USDA, discussed above, the state has since the 1998–99 school year begun School Family Day celebrations designed to bring everybody together to reaffirm common goals. The state claims that over seven million students of all age levels and 280,000 teachers and 'education family employees' are now involved in these activities.[308] As in the case of the refresher courses for teachers, the School Family Day has at its core military-style flag bearing parades and other student demonstrations before army officers and dignitaries.[309] Similarly, students and teachers alike are conscripted to boost numbers at propaganda rallies, such as the recent anti-Thai gatherings, where they were organised into 'columns' named after prominent monarchs and historical military commanders (see figure 3.9).[310] The state also fetes and promotes 'outstanding students' in the same manner as the earlier socialist youth movement.[311] Annual contests are held to demonstrate various aptitudes, including abilities to rewrite and recite state propaganda. The winners tour the country and meet officials at banquets, who assure them of their bright future as national leaders. Finally, to ensure that its exhortations are followed with precision, the state has also laid down mental development programmes that 'preserve national culture and character'.[312]

---

[308] 'School Family Day further raises students' efforts, stipulates them to emulate outstanding ones', *New Light of Myanmar*, 6 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan6.htm] (8 January 2001).

[309] See for instance, '2001–2002 School Family Day opens at Diamond Jubilee Hall', *New Light of Myanmar,* 28 December 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/decem28.html] (29 December 2001). 'Secretary-1 attends skill demonstration ceremony of outstanding students', *New Light of Myanmar*, 6 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/ enlm/jan6.htm] (8 January 2001). Thabye Khin, 'School Family Day', *Myanmar Perspectives*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/gov/perspec/1999/1-1999/sch.htm] (13 February 1999).

[310] See for instance, 'Yodaya breeds some traitors of our country, arms them, provides them with food and shelter and recruits new members. The entire Myanmar people know these facts. These acts are designed to cause disunity among the Myanmar citizens and create conflicts and bloodshed. The entire Myanmar people know that the acts lead to instability of the State and undermining the national development: Shan State (East) holds mass rally to denounce SURA and KNU insurgents', *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june02.htm] (4 June 2002). It should be noted that the word used to describe these 'columns' of civilians, *si'kjaun:* (စစ်ကြောင်း), is typically used to designate military parades, where *si'* is a prefix denoting military affairs. Myanmar–Thai relations are discussed further in the next chapter.

[311] Fink, *Living silence*, p. 102.

[312] 'Special Refresher Course No. 2 for Basic Education Teachers concludes at CICS (Upper Myanmar)'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 8 August 1999, p. 6. 'Nurturing of highly educated human resources with patriotism and Union Spirit for state peace and stability, development with momentum and perpetuation of the Union; Added momentum in carrying out objective of producing youth intelligentsia of international standard: Secretary-1 addresses graduation ceremony for teachers of upgrading course at Central Institute of Civil Service (Upper Myanmar)' ('နိုင်ငံတော်တည်ငြိမ်အေးချမ်းရေး၊ အရှိန်အဟုန်ဖြင့်

Figure 3.9: Students and teachers called out to rally in opposition to 'Yodaya' (*The New Light of Myanmar*, 10 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm]).

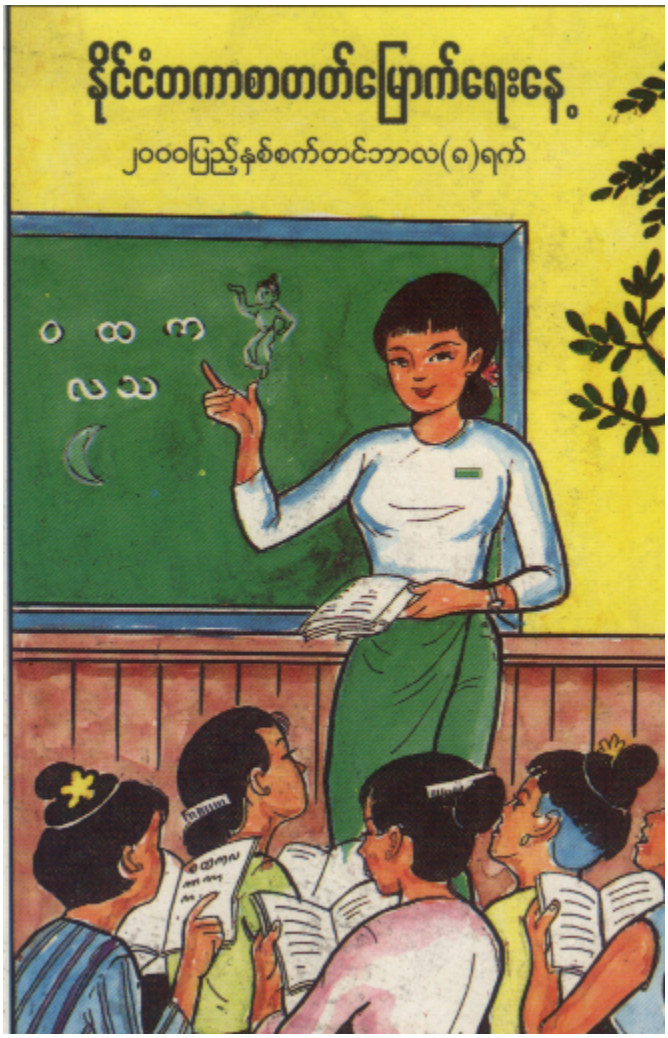

Figure 3.10: A postcard for International Literacy Day. *Note:* The card depicts an adult literacy class conducted in the same manner as a conventional school class: the teacher is in uniform, using a blackboard for the 'ABCs', and the students sit attentively, textbooks in hand (Myanmar Education Research Bureau).

The Secretary-1 touches on similar themes in his speeches to students as those to teachers, particularly stressing students' importance as human resources for the benefit of the state:

> Combining the State's true leadership, the systematic teachings of the mentors, assistance being rendered by the parents and the people and the efforts of the students, harmonious endeavours should be made to enhance the national education for flourishing of the peaceful pursuit of education and bringing out patriotic intellectuals and intelligentsia who will benefit the race and the religion to reach the national goal soonest.[313]

Sr-Gen. Than Shwe is inclined to be less effusive than the Secretary-1, usually restricting his speechmaking to major anniversaries and events where a thorough overview of state guidance is called for. As patron of the USDA, in September 2001 he attended to the role of youth in building the nation while addressing its annual assembly:

> The youth are being nurtured to be well-behaved, to understand the value of the family and the society, to abide by the discipline of the human society and social code of conduct and to safeguard national prestige and integrity and preserve national character. Good morale, morals and preservation of national character are essential elements for the nation and the people. It can be said that the association's efforts to implement the working programmes in this sector over the past eight years amount to preservation of the legacy of ancestors.[314]

In his speech, the Senior General went on to reaffirm the historical role of 'Myanmar civilisations' in creating moral conditions through Buddhism.[315] This brought him to the by now familiar theme of how the role of the 'new generation' is tangibly linked to an historic legacy:

ဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်ရေးနှင့်ပြည်ထောင်စုတည်တံ့ခိုင်မြဲရေး မျိုးချစ်စိတ်ဓာတ်၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုစိတ်ဓာတ်ခိုင်မာဖြိုး ပညာရည်မြင့်မားသော လူသားစွမ်းရည်ပျိုးထောင်ပေး၊ နိုင်ငံတကာ အဆင့်မီခေတ်ပညာတတ်လူငယ်များ မွေးထုတ်နိုင်အောင်ဦးတည်ဆောင်ရွက်မှု အရှိန်အဟုန်[ကြ]ိတင်၊ အတွင်းရေးမှူး [၁] ဗဟိုဝန်ထမ်းတက္ကသိုလ် [အတက်မြန်မာပြည်] ဆရာဆရာမများမွမ်းမံသင်တန်းဆင်းပွဲ၌ မှာကြား'), *The Mirror*, 8 August 1999, p. 9.

[313] 'Outstanding performance of students the best proof of success of education promotion programmes: Secretary-1 presents prizes to outstanding students', *New Light of Myanmar,* 11 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec11.htm] (13 December 1999).

[314] 'New generation must be able to safeguard good legacy and create better social environment'.

[315] See chapters 4 & 5 for discussion on 'Myanmar civilisation'.

> The new generation youth are to dutifully build a social system which the citizens of the nation deserve not only at present but also in future. Since hundreds of years ago, Myanmar has [had] its own culture, independence, sovereignty, and has been able to stand as a strong nation in history... The nation was built by the citizens who preserved and safeguarded prestige and integrity, observed [the] social code of conduct and had high national morale. The most significant characteristic of Myanma society is abstaining from doing wrongs in speech, deed and mind and handing over the tradition of cherishing the origin of the race and social code of conduct from generation to generation.[316]

One means by which this said historic legacy is maintained is through a range of symbolic and ritual activities. These relate both to the broader management of the state and also the specifics of schooling.

Ritual elements

> At 6am today, a ceremony to convey Yadana white elephant was held at Hlawga Wild Life Park under the Ministry of Forestry in Mingaladon township. Yadana white elephant was first conveyed to the vehicle that [would] convey it. At the auspicious time, the convoy, the white elephant vehicle followed by the vehicle that carried the companion elephant Shwe Toe Win drove along Yangon-Pyay Road. Teachers and students from Mingaladon and Insein township welcomed the white elephant from either side of the road. On arrival of the convoy at Mindhamma road, members of Union Solidarity and Development Association, Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Red Cross Society and Auxiliary Fire Brigade, teachers and students welcomed the white elephant.
>
> – New Light of Myanmar [317]

Since consigning its professedly socialist ideology to the rubbish bin, the state in Myanmar has increasingly displayed an interest in religious and 'royal' ritual evocative of earlier centuries. But unlike neighbouring Thailand and nearby Cambodia, Myanmar no longer has a monarchy, and nor is there a single personality within the ranks of the military regime who is either capable of

---

[316] 'New generation must be able to safeguard good legacy and create better social environment'. Abstention from 'wrongs in speech, deed and mind' is the rejoinder based on the Buddhist doctrine of purity in these three characteristics footnoted above. Again, see further chapters for more on these themes.

[317] 'Secretary-1 attends conveying ceremony of the Yadana white elephant', *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ june03.htm] (5 June 2002).

prepared to fill a 'regal' role.[318] Instead, it is the Tatmadaw as a body that has taken on the monarchical mantle. While certain individuals in the Tatmadaw, most notably the Secretary-1, have the leading role in these ritual proceedings, the khaki is itself the king. In prostrating himself before a monk, in full uniform with a white sash tied over the top (indicating a 'pious layperson') a military officer is invoking an historical construct of power that is in equal parts secular and spiritual.[319] As Michael Aung-Thwin has remarked, 'The ideal man in classical Burma was the dynamic king, yet it was the king who bowed down… to the monk, not vice versa.'[320] Acts of piety and largesse would contribute to a leader's glory just as much as displays of power.

Perhaps the most interesting recent ritual appropriation by the state has been the case of two (separately located) white elephants.[321] These are sacred animals, as the Buddha's mother is said to have dreamt that the Buddha entered her side as a white elephant and thus, like the Virgin Mary, she was divinely inseminated. Among Theravada Buddhist polities, white elephants have for centuries been great symbols of state authority that monarchs would go to impressive lengths to acquire, including conquest of neighbours. In 2001 and 2002 two white elephants were sighted in the jungles of different parts of Myanmar. From the start, the capture of these elephants became an exercise in state authority, as the following

---

[318] General Ne Win, who dominated the country from 1962 to 1988, deliberately avoided making a cult of personality, even though national policies followed his whims throughout this period. For example, banknote denominations were changed from 50s and 100s to 45s and 90s to accommodate Ne Win's lucky number, nine. Shopkeepers with more common sense than their national leader—and who had to handle the bills daily—subsequently would staple or pin these notes together with 5s and 10s. Ne Win's face, however, did not appear on the currency.

[319] Spiro describes observing a local man who had captured both forces: a police sergeant-exorcist whose
> very costume symbolized his dual source of power and authority. His police revolver dangled from his hip; in his right hand he held the exorcist's wand; and with his left hand he fingered the rosary which hung from his neck.

Spiro, *Burmese Supernaturalism*, p. 184.

[320] Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, p. 45.

[321] In recent years the state also engaged in massive renovation of Shwedagon Pagoda and extensive associated rituals. See discussion in chapter 5. Another recent prestigious undertaking was the cutting of what the state claims is the largest single piece of marble in the world into a gigantic statue of the Buddha.

extract illustrates. Although lengthy, it is included here as a superlative example of state management and hierarchy in contemporary Myanmar.

> It is learnt from the local security unit and the local intelligence unit that a white elephant was found in Buthidaung and Maungtaw Townships in Rakhine State and was wandering together with another eight elephants. During his tour of Rakhine State in December 2001, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt gave instructions on keeping an eye on it, [on] giving information to the higher authorities and the elephant search team if it was surely a white elephant, and taking measures to capture it as soon as possible.
>
> The local intelligence unit confirmed on 12 December 2001 that a white elephant was found in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State, and asked authorities concerned to send an elephant finding team of Timber Extraction Division under Myanma Timber Enterprise. The Managing Director of Myanma Timber Enterprise reported the matter to the Ministry of Forestry.
>
> Then, a white elephant finding plan was drawn up; an eight-member white elephant finding team led by Assistant General Manager of Timber Extraction Division (Head Office) U Aye Kyaing was formed. The team left for Rakhine [State] on 16 December 2001, and in cooperation with the elephant finding team in Rakhine State and members of the local security unit and the local intelligence unit, were based at Sinsweya Village, Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State.[322]

The article continues with a moment-by-moment description of the capture and conveyance of the elephant to its eventual destination in Insein Township, Yangon, where it was met in the manner described above. Throughout the reporting on these elephants, the personal management of state leaders was constantly reaffirmed. The Secretary-1 is kept informed and he gives 'instructions': nothing is left to chance. In the mountains there are men with the ability to find and capture any elephant, however when the task is of national significance, subordinates can be neither expected nor trusted to make decisions for themselves. The Secretary-1 tells them, 'watch the elephant'. Committees are established to catch it. Due to the guiding hand of the state and benevolent personal attention of its leadership, inevitably the task was carried out successfully, and the people are better off for it:

---

[322] 'Secretary-1 attends conveying ceremony of the Yadana white elephant'.

> At a time when a peaceful, modern and developed nation is being built, a white elephant named Yaza Gaha Thiri Pissaya Gaza Yaza [the first elephant] has been discovered, which is a good omen for the nation. It is assumed that the nation will be peaceful, prosperous and totally free from all dangers because of the white elephant.[323]

To validate this assumption, school students and teachers, members of 'civil' organisations and other groups are all co-opted to act as witnesses. That the people are 'in solidarity' is evidenced by the thoroughness with which their participation is reported. Therefore, descriptions of participants in state-managed events tend to be like manifests of passengers on a bureaucratic voyage, as another example illustrates:

> For the enrolment of all school age children in school, since [the] 1999-2000 academic year, the last week of May has been prescribed as Enrolment Week and the Whole Township Enrolment Day has been designated and observed in each township as [a] mass movement activity based on social mobilization. Committees for All School Age Children in School are formed at [the] central level, state/division level, district level, township level, ward/village tract level, and school/village level. Regional authorities, departmental personnel, educational personnel, well-wishers, parents, communities, members of Union Solidarity and Development Association, the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, the Women's Affairs Committee, Auxiliary Fire Brigade, [and] Red Cross Society cooperate and are involved in this activity throughout the country...
>
> The enrolment activities undertaken from 1999 to 2002 are to be recognized as a national task. In addition, on behalf of the State, all those including parents and communities who have made active contribution[s] in terms of manpower, finance and mobilization, well-wishers of education, members of School Board[s] of Trustees, regional authorities, personnel from social organizations, departmental personnel, responsible personnel from the education sector, headmasters, teachers [and] different levels of All School Age Children in School Leading Committee members are conferred honorable recognition and everyone is urged to continue to collaborate for the success of the materialization of the aim of uplifting the education standards of the entire nation.[324]

On the surface such descriptions suggest that—by contrast to the more grandiose and overtly symbolic ceremonies relating to white elephants and other great national achievements—the management and ritual of state schooling is a mundane business; but in fact there are many parallels. The same personnel

---

[323] 'White elephant welcomed in accord with tradition in Yangon; White elephant conveyed from Sittway to Yangon', *New Light of Myanmar*, 16 November 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/novem16.htm] (17 November 2001).

[324] 'Due to concerted efforts of all, kindergarten intake rate increased to 91% in 1999, 91.5% in 2000, 92.05% in 2001 and 93.07% in 2002'.

bestow something on some other being: holy water on the elephant, boxes of pencils on a school headmaster or an award on an outstanding student. The procedure for each event is fundamentally the same: the personage arrives, designated places are taken up, speeches are made, ceremonies successfully completed. In some events, such as when making donations to monastic schools, the state readily conflates the secular and religious:

> The Secretary-1 and party received the Five Precepts from Masoeyein Taikthit Pali Lexicographer Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sucittabhivamsa. Then, the Sayadaws and members of the Sangha recited parittas. The Secretary-1 and wife Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe offered alms to the Sayadaw of Masoeyein Taikthit. The Sayadaw of Masoeyein Taikthit delivered a sermon, and the Secretary-1 and party shared merits.
>
> Afterwards, the Secretary-1 and party donated exercise books and stationery to the trainee members of the Sangha and trainee nuns individually [see figure 3.4].[325]

Whether catching a white elephant or managing schools, the state's methods are analgous. As shall be discussed in the coming chapters, this is amply demonstrated by the contents of the school textbooks.

Before concluding this section, it is appropriate to recall that the problem for this study does not encompass whether or not the techniques for legitimacy used by the state are actually regarded as 'authentic' or not by their intended audience. Chao-Tzang Yawnghwe has rightly warned against overestimating the role of the state narrative in society, just as colonial researchers were misguided by regional power elites (such as members of the Brahmin caste in India).[326] It is beyond the scope of this inquiry to assess the degree to which state discourses may or may not have permeated society: the point, rather, is to identify how the state exerts

---

[325] 'Secretary-1 and wife offer exercise books, stationery to members of Sangha and nuns', *New Light of Myanmar*, 19 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/may%2019.htm] (21 May 2002).

[326] Chao-Tzang Yawnghwe, 'The Orientalization of Burmese politics? A research agenda', *Burma Debate*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2000, pp. 10–13.

itself to obtain legitimacy, and what this signifies in terms of a normative order.[327] As stated above, investigating the primary school textbooks is an excellent means to that end.

Alternatives to state schooling

> The State is now implementing the thirty-year long-term education plan and monastic education schools guided by Sayadaws [abbots] have help[ed] the plan in some way[s]. Monastic education schools had [existed] in Myanmar before the country fell under British colonial rule, and the sector of monastic education schools became faded at that time, [the Secretary-1] said.
>
> – New Light of Myanmar [328]

Even though the state in Myanmar controls schooling, it should be observed that a few non-state schools have also survived on the margins.[329] The most sustained of these have been the monastic schools, but other religious institutions also teach in their communities. Besides these, insurgent groups have managed small numbers of schools in border regions, and some groups that have in recent years 'returned to the legal fold' have—at least in principle—been permitted to establish schools in the autonomous zones established under ceasefire agreements.

---

[327] That said, personal experience of the author has been that people don't think much of the regime's programme for ritual legitimacy. On a visit to one town, for instance, the author sought directions to a newly constructed state-sponsored pagoda from an elderly seamstress working in a roadside stall. She gave them and then continued: 'Go look at it, but don't pay obeisance: it's a government pagoda.' Her caution contained political and religious elements, just as the pagoda itself: first, disapproval of this official attempt at legitimacy through religious works, reflecting her resentment of its political power; secondly, a warning that praying at the pagoda of an unpopular government would anyway be unlikely to earn much merit. One would be better off going and doing the same elsewhere. On another occasion, in discussion with a group of teachers about problems in schooling one scoffed, alluding to the maarble statue mentioned in a footnote above, 'This country has a giant marble Buddha but no education system.' See the conclusion for further speculative remarks.

[328] 'Secretary-1 presents exercise books, pencils to monastic education schools in Yangon South District', *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june03.htm] (3 June 2002). See also for instance 'Exercise books and pencils presented to basic and monastic education schools in four townships', *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july2.htm] (2 July 2001). 'MEC Chairman attends opening ceremony of Phaungdaw U Parahita Monastic Education High School in Mandalay', *New Light of Myanmar*, 21 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan21.htm] (21 January 2001).

[329] Not addressed here are the adult literacy and adult education schemes managed by the state, which began in the 1950s and obtained prominence in the 1960s. For a review of the most important of these, which was awarded a UNESCO prize,

As the cost of schooling is a primary reason for students dropping out, one result has reportedly been rejuvenated monastic teaching.[330] Students attend the monasteries but use the same textbooks and pay a small amount to sit state-managed examinations. According to government data there are around 1000 monastic schools with 280,000 students.[331] These are monastic schools that receive donations from the state; apart from them, unrecognised community-supported monastic teaching is reportedly on the greatest increase in some areas of the country.[332] If this is so, a widespread move back to the monasteries may indicate a real change in perceptions of the qualitative nature of state schools versus monastic schools. Whereas in the past monastic students were taunted by state school students for being 'beggars' (as they would go with monks to collect alms), a new expression has ironically reversed the relationship, holding that 'Monastic students eat well; school students are beggars (ဘုန်းကြီးကျောင်းသားအကောင်းစား၊ ဆရာကျောင်းသား သူတောင်းစား)'. Under any circumstances, whether students are learning at a monastic school that is obtaining state support or otherwise, since the 1980s the state has implemented numerous measures to restrict the role of the Sangha

---

see, U Thaung Tut, *The National Literacy Campaign of Burma: A case study*, UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia & the Pacific, Bangkok, 1981.

330 UNICEF identifies factors for dropouts as including irrelevant curriculum, lack of community input, costs, lack of textbooks and demands for children's labour. *Master Plan of Operations*, p. 3. See also 'A parent on hardship caused by unjust school fees', Statement 76(5/00), National League for Democracy, Rangoon, 30 May 2000. In remote areas there are numerous substantiated allegations that local people are forced to pay for, and often construct, new schools, as well as provide for the teachers. See for instance Mergui-Tavoy District Information Department (Karen National Union), 'Monthly human rights situation report: April 2002', *BurmaNet*, 12–15 April 2002, [strider@igc.org] (16 April 2002). 'Starving them Out: Forced Relocations, Killings and the Systematic Starvation of Villagers in Dooplaya District', Karen Human Rights Group, 31 March 2000, [http://metalab.unc.edu/freeburma/humanrights/khrg/archive/khrg2000/khrg0002.html] (16 April 2000).

331 'The Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana', Ministry of Religious Affairs, undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/religious/dpps.html] (21 May 2001). Although the figures seem to deviate considerably from one report to the next. See for instance, *Situation analysis of children and women in Myanmar*, p. 80.

332 'Opportunities for children to study in each region of Myanmar', p. 6. 'Monastic education in Arakan State reappearing: Students' parents having doubts about the SPDC's education' ('ဘုန်းကြီးကျောင်းပညာသင်ကြားရေး ရခိုင်ပြည်မှာ ပြန်လည်ထွန်းကား – ကျောင်းသားမိဘများက နအဖ ပညာရေးကို သံသယဖြစ်လာနေ'), *Voice of Arakan*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2002, p. 6. 'Monasteries take on education', *BI Weekly*, no. 73, 14–20 March 2002, [durham@mozart.inet.co.th] (23 March 2002).

and purge its ranks of 'imitation and bogus monks'.[333] Hence it exerts indirect control over the teaching, staffing and management of the entire Sangha.

One distinctive difference between state-approved teaching and that not under its aegis pertains to the language of instruction. As already observed, despite the state's rhetorical commitment to diversity, in reality there are few opportunities for students wanting to learn local languages other than Burmese. Religious organisations have often sought to fill this gap, offering weekly lessons and short-term concentrated courses for literacy in non-Burmese languages. For instance, monasteries in southern Shan State have for years taught literacy in Shan language, as have those supported by Mon and East Pwo Karen (Kayin) in the eastern border regions. Similarly, churches in the urban areas north of Yangon and the Irrawaddy delta have taught students in Sgaw Karen and West Pwo Karen alphabets during Sunday school.[334]

Insurgent groups had for many years also managed schools of varied and fluctuating size and quality. As these groups—excepting the communists—tended to organise along overtly ethnic lines, the language of instruction and contents of schooling typically exhibited ethnic bias and nationalist sentiments. For example, Thein Lwin has remarked that the Burmese language kindergarten primer

---

[333] 'Crackdown on unlawful monks', *Burma Press Summary*, vol. 4, no. 10, October 1990, [http://public.ibiblio.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=burmaps&ct=0] (17 January 2002). In 1980 the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee was established to govern Sangha affairs—that the first word in its title is 'State' indicates where the initiative and authority for this organisation ultimately lies. In 1997, according to monks in Yangon, a disciplinary body was also established under its auspices. The state holds that its concern with Sangha affairs is in keeping with the tradition of periodic 'purification' of the Sangha by secular leadership, apparently in order to ensure its perpetuity. See for instance, 'Buddha Sasana preserved, safeguarded, propagated by monks, kings, governments and people for 2,545 years till now', *New Light of Myanmar*, 21 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ july21.htm] (21 July 2001). Throughout his text on Pagan, Aung-Thwin discusses how the monarchical state historically sought to keep the Sangha in check through periodic 'purification'. Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, pp. 28 ff. See also Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, pp. 63 ff. On purification in other Buddhist polities, see, Tambiah, *World conqueror and world renouncer*, pp. 159–78.

[334] These remarks are based on years of conversations with people from those communities, all of whom were functionally literate in a language other than Burmese.

formerly used by schools under the curriculum of the New Mon State Party (now subject to a ceasefire agreement) was basically a variant on the state textbook. Certain lines and sections had been altered, such as from *Bala.gji: hsin–pjaunhsi* (ဗလကြီး ဆင်ပြောင်စီး), 'A strongman rides an elephant', to *Bamamjou: da:–hnin.–htou:* (ဗမာမျိုး ဓားနှင့်ထိုး), 'Stab the Bamar with knives'.[335] Likewise, history readers substituted Bamar for Mon kings and champions, while the 'heroes' of the state school texts were, not surprisingly, denigrated as invaders and tyrants. Many of the school textbooks that have been used by the Karen National Union schools, a small number of which still operate today, exhibit similar (albeit perhaps more muted) attitudes.[336] Such mentalities endure (despite rhetoric to the contrary) among insurgent leadership, again as noted by Thein Lwin:

> [During] the local education discussion in Mae Sot, Thailand, in December 2000, one of the leaders of the Karen National Union (KNU) General Tar Malar Baw suggested that the school curriculum should include revolutionary histories, including the Karen revolution in the history syllabus. He emphasised that youngsters should be equipped with a revolutionary spirit to fight against the enemy (i.e. the Burma military regime).[337]

The education discussion referred to above was with the National Health and Education Committee. Based out of Thailand, the Committee was established in an effort to coordinate initiatives among the panoply of groups undertaking work for people of Myanmar along the border regions. The work on education is aimed at developing a common curriculum that will be useful for a future democratic Union. Hence, many of the group's proposals raise the idea of 'good

---

[335] Thein Lwin, Education for citizenship, p. 167.

[336] For a discussion on Karen history textbooks and how they relate to perceptions of ethnic identity see, Cheesman, 'Seeing "Karen" in the Union of Myanmar', pp. 205–15. Originally this dissertation was intended to be a comparative work on the contents of the state school textbooks and those of the Karen National Union. Although its scope was narrowed to the state schoolbooks alone, a comparative study would be a fruitful exercise to gauge the extent to which the textbooks and curricula of insurgent groups have mimicked or diverged from the contemporary dominant model, not to mention that of the colonial period.

[337] Thein Lwin, Education for citizenship, p. 42.

citizenship'.[338] The Committee, then, proposes an alternative vision for Union identity, rather than an alternative approach altogether. Whatever its ideas, its interventions will remain limited so long as it, like other groups, is forced to work from outside the country.

Those able, at least in principle, to work inside the country but outside the state schools are former insurgent groups that have 'returned to the legal fold' under ceasefire deals. These agreements are meant to guarantee a degree of autonomy in the publication of books and establishing of schools in languages other than Burmese. Sadly, if reports of what has happened in the case of the New Mon State Party are in any way indicative, this promise remains difficult to realise, as local army commanders are reported to have repeatedly shut down schools opened under that agreement.[339]

A problem that all non-state teaching faces is the lack of accreditation. Where not recognised expressly by the state, 'graduates' do not receive any official recognition for their learning, thereby discouraging more than the most basic study. Even students of monastic schools receiving state support are obliged to sit state examinations if they want to obtain a (non-religious) certificate. The influence this policy has on people's decisions about schooling should not be underestimated. For instance, schools for Burmese migrant workers in Thailand are set up on an ad hoc basis with the support of non-governmental organisations, and are entirely outside of the control of the state in Myanmar.

---

[338] Such as in the recommendations on changes to teaching methodology in 'Opportunities for children to study in each region of Myanmar', p. 13.

[339] 'Mon schools were ordered to close down', *BurmaNet,* 13 January 2000, [burmanet-l@igc.org] (13 January 2000). 'Mon State PDC bars the Mon literacy training in Moulmein', *Mon Forum Newsletter,* June 2000, [ronny@worldview.no] (22 October 2000).

Notwithstanding, the teachers at these schools use the state school textbooks, as pupils' parents expect to later take (or send) their children back to Myanmar, where they will need to be able to fit into school with minimum disruption. For those parents the issue is not the contents of lessons or teaching method, but rather to ensure that their children will be able to continue their studies to a level that they can obtain a recognised award for their efforts.

The above comments point to popular perception of schooling and education in Myanmar, and how it affects decision-making about educational opportunities. At this juncture, prior to beginning the appraisal of the schoolbooks themselves, it may be appropriate to briefly say something more about perceptions of education, distilled primarily from reflections on a number of years talking with Burmese people from all walks of life about their schools and learning in general.

Popular perceptions

> Among all powers, the power of education is the greatest, the most glorious power of all.
>
> – *Ancient Myanmar scholars*

> အားတကာ့ အားတွင် ပညာအားသည်၊ အကြီးဆုံး အမြတ်ဆုံး အားဖြစ်သည်။
>
> – *မြန်မာ့ရှေးပညာရှိကြီးများ*[340]

In his essay on power in Javanese culture, Anderson argues that for the Javanese, education opens a door between ignorance and knowledge—you are either on one side or the other.[341] That perception leads to a 'typical division of

[340] Than Oo, *History of Myanmar education*, p. 1.

[341] Benedict Anderson, 'The idea of power in Javanese culture', in *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*. Claire Holt (ed.), Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1972, pp. 1–69. See also Ben Anderson, 'The languages of Indonesian politics', *Indonesia*, no. 1, 1966, pp. 94, 110.

the population by the political elite into two radically separate groups, those who are *masih bodoh* ("still stupid, still unenlightened") and those who are *insiaf* or *terpeladjar* (aware, educated).'[342] It follows that stupidity is not a hereditary or permanent condition, but something that can at least theoretically be remedied. Anderson's point is a useful to opening to these comments on Myanmar, as in Myanmar education is also a thing to be obtained, although how it is understood and described is perhaps less consistent than he suggests is the case for the Javanese.[343]

For people in Myanmar, the historical concept of education is best summed up in the oft repeated and almost universally known 'Knowledge/education is a gold pot that cannot be stolen (ပညာရွှေအိုး လူမခိုး)'.[344] A villager who is only remotely aware of the pot will say 'I never went to school—I have no education', while a student in search of the pot will modestly remark of her class that 'we have no education; we need education'. But whereas this student may speak in such terms in public to describe a group, in private that same person may very well admit that 'I want to get *more* education', suggesting awareness of a degree of something already obtained individually and a desire to increase its quantity.

In short, how the concept of education is expressed simply depends on the circumstances at the time. A Yangon high school student meeting a prominent

---

[342] Anderson, 'The idea of power in Javanese culture', p. 45.

[343] This section consciously moves from the discussion of 'schooling' taken up in most of this dissertation, to 'education'. Whereas schooling is functional, the latter is discussed here in conceptual terms.

[344] The words for 'education' and 'knowledge' in Burmese are closely related. 'Education' is *pjinnjajei:* (ပညာရေး), while 'knowledge' is usually *a.thi.pjinnja* (အသိပညာ) or merely *pjinnja* (ပညာ). *Pjinnja* is a Pali word used in Buddhist scriptures more broadly and deeply than its secular interpretation. In religious discourse it connotes an intermingling of wisdom and knowledge, as in its highest form it involves supra-mundane contemplation. In Burmese the word for 'knowledge' is usually narrowed through adding the prefix *a.thi.*, restricting it to more mundane perception. 'Education' is obtained through the suffix *jei:*, which forms an abstract noun, a state of being. *Pjinnja*, then, lies somewhere between the two. Whereas it is typically translated as 'knowledge', in this discussion it is preferable to talk more in terms of 'education' as

monk might not have education, but when meeting with an umbrella repairman she might have rather a lot of it. Meeting with a wealthy uncle who may be able to help her achieve her dream of going to English college in Singapore, she will be keen to demonstrate her aptitude for learning and at the same time her need for more—hence 'education' is then a matter of gradients. This is a hypothetical illustration, but its point is that the question of where and with whom education is manifest is significant when interpreting personal impulses and interpersonal relations: the leader of a rebel organisation can denigrate his enemies as 'poorly educated' people and on that basis justify some form of punishment; an overseas Myanmar youth leader can call on 'educated people to help educate the less fortunate people in Myanmar'.[345] Examples such as these are virtually endless.

Under any circumstances, a minimum education means having attended school. School is the place where 'education' is obtained; anybody who hasn't been schooled can't have it. Adult non-formal literacy classes have mimicked schooling for the very reason that without the rituals of 'education' (textbooks and a blackboard) it will remain elusive (see figure 3.10). But that said, what is the minimum standard of schooling to permit one to speak of 'having education'? First standard? Primary school? Higher? Perhaps the majority of people in Myanmar today do not 'have education'. Perhaps the standard is constantly changing, to ensure that most people remain 'uneducated'.[346]

---

when talking about school, Burmese people usually interpret it to mean the place where one first and foremost 'gets an education'. For further discussion on *pjinnja* see the keywords analysis in chapter 4.

[345] Surath Jinakul, 'New KNU leader: "Politics-before-military"', *Bangkok Post*, 12 March 2000, [http://www.bangkokpost.net/today/120330_perspective06.html] 15 March 2000. Myo Htut Myaing, 'Helping Myanmar people', [burma-education@yahoogroups.com], 19 March 2002.

[346] Raymond Williams has noted that in English,

> When a majority of children had no such organized instruction the distinction between *educated* and *uneducated* was reasonably clear, but, curiously, this distinction has been more common since the development of generally organized education and even of universal education. There is a strong class sense in this use, and the level indicated by *educated* has been continually adjusted to leave the majority of people who have received and education below it.

Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*, rev., Oxford University Press, New York, 1983, p. 112.

'Education' is intrinsically 'good'. R. S. Peters has remarked that 'the concept "education" has built into it the criterion that something worthwhile should be achieved [and]... is being transmitted in a morally acceptable manner.'[347] In Myanmar, although the society is highly fragmented, there is a consensus on this conceptual goodness of 'education', whatever 'education' may be.[348] The mere presence of formal education—returning to a theme that will recur throughout this paper—allows one to make a distinction between 'civilised' and 'barbarian' peoples.[349] Education is not merely a question of the stock of it that one has, but also the stock that one places in it. The farmer 'without education' can be redeemed in the eyes of 'civilised' society by her mere recognition of education as a veritable gold pot. By contrast, those who do 'not appreciate the value of education' are outside of society—wild, barbaric—that is to say, not subject to the authority of the state nor influenced by its instruments for legitimacy.[350] They need to be *taught* 'to appreciate the importance of education'.[351]

For the contemporary state, the challenge is to keep the relationship between formal schooling and education intact, and through that to legitimise the Union, and so itself. The preceding sketch of schooling in present-day Myanmar is sufficient to indicate that there are numerous challenges to the state in this regard. Above all, widespread disillusionment with state schooling has stemmed

---

[347] Peters, *Ethics and education*, pp. 45–6.

[348] In a study of educational development in Laos, Jacqui Chagnon and Roger Rumpf observe the same phenomenon but then go on to an uncritical assessment of how indeed 'education is important' for social development. Jacqui Chagnon & Roger Rumpf, 'Education: The prerequisite to change in Laos', in *Contemporary Laos: Studies in the Politics and Society of the Lao People's Democratic Republic*, Martin Stuart-Fox (ed.), University of Queensland Press, St Lucia & London, 1982, pp. 163–80. On Cambodia, see also, Stephen J. Duggan, 'Education, teacher training and prospects for economic recovery in Cambodia', *Comparative Education*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1996, p. 365.

[349] On the 'civilising' influence of the state school and 'education' among 'hill tribes' in Thailand, see, Hjorleifur Jonsson, 'Traditional tribal what? Sports, culture and the state in the Northern Hills of Thailand', in *Turbulent Times and Enduring Peoples: Mountain Minorities in the South-East Asian Massif*, Jean Michaud (ed.), Curzon, Richmond, 2000, pp. 228–9.

[350] 'Border area education'. *Burma Press Summary*, vol. 5, no. 12, December 1991, [http://public.ibiblio.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=burmaps&ct=0] (17 January 2002).

[351] 'Opportunities for children to study in each region of Myanmar', p. 14.

from the extent to which it has been reduced to an institution for the advancement of people with money and military backgrounds.[352] The proverbial gold pot can now be purchased with enough wealth of the mundane variety: now, it is quipped, 'If one has a gold pot one will get knowledge/education' (ရွှေအိုးရှိမှ ပညာရ).[353] Be that as it may, the majority of people in Myanmar—lacking in gold pots—can still find the means for their children to obtain a modicum of 'education' through state primary schooling. The remainder of this study returns to that very topic, and to the centre of the schooling culture: the textbooks themselves.

Conclusion

Schooling in Myanmar—like other countries in Asia and around the world—consists of a farrago of state and non-state projects for legitimacy, derived from historical circumstances and perceived traditions. In Myanmar, schooling was shaped first by the significant role of the Buddhist monasteries as once undisputed centres of learning; second by the slow but inexorable shift of the locus of control over schooling from the Sangha to the state during the British colonial period; third by the reinforcement of that control under the independent state; and fourth by its reconfiguring as a tool for retention of power by successive military-managed autocracies.

The present state in Myanmar has surpassed all its predecessors in the extent to which it is prepared to dictate the terms of schooling under its auspices. Troubled

---

[352] 'The condition within the urban areas', confidential report to Burma Issues, December 1999, p. 7. Notes from discussions with students, teachers and parents. 'The situation of education in the Chin State'.
[353] Zani Win, 'Education system in Myanmar worsening'.

by state-society confrontations stimulated by students and teachers, as a matter of principle it disallows deviation from its singular programme. It mechanically reiterates claims to legitimacy, aims of education, and responsibilities of teachers and students by rote. The 'masses' are not invited to have ideas of their own: they are mere repositories for state discourses and capital stock for it to employ towards broader objectives.

Daw Ni Ni Myint's raison d'etre (at the opening to this chapter) recalls the objective of this investigation: to examine the role of primary schooling, and specifically textbooks, in 'legitimising the Union'. That is to say, the people's need 'to be educated towards understanding their stake in the new national ventures' goes beyond the legitimacy of the government in power at a given time; rather, it profoundly relates to the entire 'Union'. To that end, having established a theoretical background, and regional and national domain, this study now proceeds to the heart of the problem: to obtain an understanding of how the Union of Myanmar is legitimised through primary school textbooks.

Chapter 4

The Myanmar readers

Have you mastered the lesson?
Come for a moment.
Come closer
To the lady teacher.
– *Myanmar Reader: Kindergarten, reading 1*

စာရ သလား။
ခဏ လာပါ။
ဆရာမ အနား
လာသာ လာပါ။
– *မြန်မာဖတ်စာ—သူငယ်တန်း၊ ဖတ်စာ (၁)*

This chapter and the next critically analyse the text of the five primary schoolbooks used in Myanmar for the teaching of Burmese language. Content and text analysis is flexible: it should not involve the application of pre-existing theory to a fixed category of objects, but rather the development of a creative approach appropriate to the subject matter.[354] This analysis, then, does not draw on any particular technique, but rather distills and refines a number of different methods developed by authors working with English language materials, especially Fairclough, and Hodge and Kress.[355] These authors—and others consulted—have in turn derived many of their ideas from the likes of Althusser, Bourdieu, Derrida, Foucault, Halliday, Pêcheux and Saussure.[356]

---

[354] David Howarth & Yannis Stavrakakis, 'Introducing discourse theory and political analysis', in *Discourse theory and political analysis: Identities, hegemonies and social change*, David Howarth, Aletta J. Norval & Yannis Stavrakakis (eds), Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York, 2000, p. 5.

[355] See in particular Norman Fairclough, *Language and power*, Longman, London & New York, 1989. Robert Hodge & Gunther Kress, *Social semiotics*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988.

[356] On the development of text analysis, see Diane Macdonell, *Theories of discourse: An introduction*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford & New York, 1986.

In its broadest sense, content and text analysis involves all elements of written and spoken communication.[357] A discourse running through the text is legitimised when it becomes 'natural': when its consumers no longer see it as an arbitrary set of social constructs, but as normal.[358] To understand how this is achieved involves looking into the *texture* of text: its style, form, organisation, history and context, and not merely its contents.[359] As texture is present at all levels of discourse, everything is relevant.

How do the primary schoolbooks in Myanmar legitimise the state by presenting the Union as the 'natural' order? To appreciate how the Union is naturalised it is first necessary to understand all the elements that it incorporates. Obscured in the English 'Union of Myanmar' these are more apparent in the original, 'Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw' (*Pjidaunzu. Mjama Naingando–* ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်), which contains three distinct words: the Union, 'Pyidaunzu'; its appellative, Myanmar; and the nation-state, 'Naingandaw'. The hyphenated 'nation-state' is deliberately used in this instance, as 'naingandaw' does not draw a clear line between the state and the nation. The word 'naingan' in itself may variously signify a sovereign state, a country or a domain; 'daw', used exclusively for Myanmar, confers nobility on the 'naingan'. It is a noun modifier that historically denoted regal, sacred and official entities, reintroduced by the current regime after being dropped by the socialist state. In the national causes, objectives and desires broadcast daily, 'naingandaw' is translated into English as both 'state' and 'nation', even within the same sentence:

---

[357] Teun A. Van Dijk, 'Principles of critical discourse analysis', *Discourse & Society*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1993, p. 255.
[358] Fairclough, *Language and power*, p. 91.
[359] Norman Fairclough, *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*, Longman, London & New York, 1995, p. 4. Fairclough, *Language and power*, p. 4.

> Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State ('naingandaw') and progress of the nation ('naingandaw').
>
> နိုင်ငံတော်တည်ငြိမ်ရေးနှင့် နိုင်ငံတော်တိုးတက်ရေးကို နှောင့်ယှက်ဖျက်ဆီးနေသူများအား ဆန့်ကျင်ကြ။ [360]

A number of other words may be used to speak of the 'nation', or 'national', including one suggesting a homogenous mass of people (*amjou:dha:*–အမျိုးသား), and another suggesting original inhabitants (*tain:jin:dha:*–တိုင်းရင်းသား), ordinarily used to imply the union of diverse ethnic groups, and typically translated as 'national races'.[361] 'Pyidaunzu' is itself made up of three parts, roughly: 'pyi', a country or territory of abode; 'daun', meaning to 'set up/erect'; and 'zu', a gathering together, a community. Hence, Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw captures the territory, its administration and (by implication) its population. It is this fusion of elements that the state is attempting to naturalise through the schoolbooks.

Critical exploration of primary school textbooks is one means to understand how the state uses formal schooling to naturalise the Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw and so legitimise its own preeminent position. As noted in the introduction, schoolbooks are eminently suited to text analysis, as the target consumer group is known, and the use of the books is controlled. This is certainly the case in Myanmar, where, as discussed in the last chapter, the state has an absolute monopoly over all aspects of school management. Among schoolbooks, reading primers expose state discourses most clearly, as they have no particular prescribed contents—anything to facilitate the teaching of language and literacy is acceptable.

---

[360] This is the second of the four People's Desires. See chapter 3 for comments.

[361] The 'national races' concept is discussed in Cheesman, 'Seeing "Karen" in the Union of Myanmar', pp. 215–19. Broadly, there are 135 official 'national races', including Bamar. Apart from Bamar there are seven other 'races' that appear regularly in the state media: Rakhine (Arakan), Chin, Kachin, Kayin (Karen), Kayah (Karenni), Mon, Shan. See figure 4.8

Discussion of the Myanmar readers is divided between this and the subsequent chapter. The first section of this chapter reviews some relevant studies of school textbooks elsewhere in Asia. The second section begins the critique of the Myanmar textbooks with comments on their manufacture and use. The third section gives an overview of the Myanmar readers. The fourth section identifies keywords used in the readers; the fifth examines their contents. The sixth and final section divides the textbook items according to descriptive, instructive and moralistic styles. Chapter 5 concludes the analysis with detailed remarks on six sample items from the readers.

Studies of textbooks in Asia

> The omnipresent nature of the textbook's authority and power usurps that of the teacher. She is a person who must become a tool in the imparting of the 'real' knowledge of the textbook.
>
> – *Barbara Leigh* [362]

As in chapter 2, before proceeding to Myanmar specifically it is useful to review a number of pertinent studies on school textbooks used in nearby territories, namely, five of the countries mentioned in that earlier chapter: Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam.[363] The relevance of these studies lies in both

---

for a depiction of these. Each has a designated 'ethnic state' under the current delineation of national territory. The large Indian and Chinese populations in the country are not included among the 'national races'.

[362] Barbara Leigh, 'Making the Indonesian state: The role of school texts', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1991, p. 23.

[363] Other relevant studies referred to in preparing this dissertation that, for the sake of brevity, are not discussed here include, Jean Anyon, 'Elementary social studies textbooks and legitimating knowledge', *Theory and research in social education*, vol. 6, 1978, pp. 40–55. Jean Anyon, 'Ideology and United States history textbooks', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 49, no. 3, August 1979, pp. 361–86. Canieso-Doronila, *The limits of educational change*. Richard de Charms & Gerald H. Moeller, 'Values expressed in American children's readers: 1800–1950', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol. 64, no. 2, pp. 136–42. Joseph W. Elder, 'The de-colonization of educational culture: The case of India', in *Comparative perspectives on the role of education in democratization—Part I: Transitional state and states of transition*, Noel F. McGinn & Erwin H. Epstein (eds), Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1999, pp. 207–17. Elaine Gerbert, 'Lessons from the *kokugo* (national language) readers', in *Comparative perspectives on the role of education in democratization—Part II: Socialization, identity, and the politics of control*, Noel F. McGinn & Erwin H. Epstein (eds), Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1999,

their research methods and findings, which speak to the issues being addressed in this work on Myanmar.

John Caiger has compared the stated aims of the history curriculum in Meiji Japan with the contents of textbooks from that period.[364] As commented on in chapter 2, the Meiji state devised a highly centralised structure to achieve rapid modernisation and militarisation. One part of the programme, certainly after the 1890 Imperial Rescript, was the promotion of a 'code of morality'. Caiger remarks on how the books stressed gratitude and loyalty to the emperor, justified by anchoring political and national unity in supposed imperial lineage. Gratitude was best demonstrated by military service, and militaristic values and images of warfare were common throughout the books. History was represented as an orderly series of venerable historical figures whose lives were based on unchanging principles. These personages and their undertakings were also conflated with mythological figures and events, to extend history beyond the confines of mere human experience and into a mystical dimension: the texts dealt much less with historical fact than nationalist legend. To that end the state had little use for recent historical events or contemporary issues, which were virtually absent from the textbooks.

---

pp. 145–80. Roberta Martin, 'The socialization of children in China and on Taiwan: An analysis of elementary school textbooks', in *Comparative Education*, Philip G. Altbach, Robert F. Arnove, Gail P. Kelly (eds), Macmillan & Collier Macmillan, New York & London, 1982, pp. 137–57. Saya Shiraishi, 'Eyeglasses: Some remarks on Acehnese school books', *Indonesia*, no. 36, 1983, pp. 67–86. Sooyeon C. Suh, 'Ideologies in Korea's morals and social studies texts: A content analysis', in *The revival of values education in Asia and the West*, William K. Cummings, S. Gopinathan, Yasumasa Tomada (eds), Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1988, pp. 93–108.

[364] Caiger, 'The aims and content of school courses in Japanese history, 1872–1945', pp. 51–81.

In his description of society and culture in Thailand, Niels Mulder devotes a chapter to the contents of grade school textbooks.[365] He finds that primary school social studies in Thailand are intended to prepare the child for entry into 'society' as defined by the state.[366] Moral themes include diligence, perseverance, self-denial, endurance, obligation, discipline, docility and self-reliance. Students have a duty to parents, teachers, elders/patrons and Nation-Religion-King. The integrity of the state is presented as dependent upon ethical rules, including respect for the law, payment of taxes, assistance to officials in maintaining national stability, loyalty to the Nation-Religion-King and preservation of national independence and related institutions. The notions of people, nation, country, state and society are conflated into one homogenous mass under the monarch. The responsibilities of citizens, rather than any 'rights', are repeatedly articulated. The dual maxim of gratitude and obligation to the state is invoked again and again throughout the textbooks. Mulder argues that the overall aim of schooling in Thailand is to create a static image of 'Thai' (versus 'non-Thai') society founded on the same kind of eternal principles that the Meiji administrators had envisaged for their country.

Shanta Louisa Pragasam has examined moral education textbooks used in Singapore.[367] There, the state has published books in students' 'mother tongues'—Mandarin, Malay and Tamil—to transmit 'Asian values' to the young citizen. As mentioned earlier, in contrast to the image of a homogenous and unchanging identity forged in Thailand, the socialising ordinance of the state in

---

[365] Niels Mulder, 'Individual, society and history according to grade school texts', in *Thai Images: The culture of the public world*, Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 1997, pp. 26–63.

[366] In an earlier work Keyes assessed the Thai state schooling overall and reached a similar conclusion. Keyes, 'The proposed world of the school', pp. 112–7.

[367] Pragasam, Constructing the good citizen.

Singapore has been based on the lack of a common inherited tradition. Central to the teaching of moral education has been inculcation of interethnic harmony: Chinese, Malay and Tamil students are depicted in written and visual text as living together happily and in unison. Although some textbooks contain historical homilies and fables, most contain a normative version of *present* day Singapore. The textbooks also repeatedly use models of family and social life that assign gender roles: father works, and his son leaves for national service; mother does housekeeping and her daughter assists. However, everybody is responsible for some things, such as the maintenance of public spaces.

A number of interesting studies have been conducted on the school textbooks used in Indonesia, notably those by Barbara Leigh and Lyn Parker.[368] Both Leigh and Parker agree that Indonesian state schools have a manifestly 'textbook culture'.[369] Leigh observes that in the textbooks the nation-state and government are deliberately conflated in the mind of the reader. The presence of a strong government is equated with order, peace and stability, whereas liberal democracy is portrayed as leading to disorder and conflict. While the textbooks typically have weak classification—similar content moves freely across different subjects—there is a clear demarcation of school knowledge and non-school knowledge.

Parker's studies of schooling in Indonesia have included analyses of general and gender-specific content in textbooks used in Bali. In the first of these studies she

---

[368] Leigh, 'Making the Indonesian state'. Parker, 'The creation of Indonesian citizens in Balinese primary schools'. Lynette Parker, 'Engendering school children in Bali', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society (N.S.)*, vol. 3, September 1997, pp. 497–516.

[369] In keeping with Kumar's four criteria, noted in the introduction. Leigh, 'Making the Indonesian state', pp. 22–3. Parker, 'The creation of Indonesian citizens in Balinese primary schools', p. 62. From her observations, Parker estimates that 90 per cent of class time in Indonesia is spent working from textbooks.

employed a 'keywords' approach to investigate significant words in the texts.[370] She found the most frequently occurring words described rural life, social progress, national strength and prosperity, industriousness at work and in study, and the centrality of leadership, the state and nation. Her observations of classrooms also support textbook-based findings that there is weak classification of contents, and a tendency for strongly ideological material to permeate all subjects. In her article on gender in school textbooks, Parker found that the state assigns very conventional roles to male and female students: the former are responsible for economic development, whereas the latter are responsible for upholding moral values, particularly through the family.[371] Gender roles are also clearly distinguished in the visual text; existing social relations are reinforced and reproduced through the textbooks.

As part of her comparative thesis on the North and South Vietnamese schooling of 1945–65, Thaveeporn Vasavakul looked into the school history and literature textbooks.[372] She found that under the South Vietnamese state, local history was represented as 'national', its monarchical administration overseeing the 'race', 'nation', 'civilisation' and 'territory'. The state was presented as 'timeless', even if it experienced periods of ascendancy and decline. History was exclusively Viet: no references were made to other peoples in the region. But historical accounts lacked a moral compass; morality was reserved primarily for the literature texts, which included content on family relationships, filial piety, knowledge, personal character, compassion, love of landscape, and anti-colonialism. These qualities

---

[370] Parker, 'The creation of Indonesian citizens in Balinese primary schools', pp. 52–62. On 'keywords', see the relevant section below.

[371] Parker, 'Engendering school children in Bali', pp. 502–4.

[372] Thaveeporn, Schools and politics in South and North Viêt Nam. See the last section of chapter 2 for other points arising from her study.

were used to govern both interpersonal relations and those between the people and the state: family and state were portrayed as unequivocally interdependent. Elements of this interdependence included national loyalty, educated leadership and unity through compassion.

Thaveeporn finds that in North Vietnam the textbooks were aimed at reinforcing an ideology of 'socialist nationalism' through state-based, class-based and nation-based contents. As in the south, historical 'Vietnam' was presented as a geographical, political and cultural unit akin to its twentieth century form, where 'Vietnamese' peoples had always coexisted in harmony. Linguistic devices used to reinforce this concept of a unified and unchanging identity included frequent use of first-person possessive ('our country, our provinces') and terms such as 'invasion' by non-Vietnamese peoples and 'resistance' by locals, reinforcing perceptions of territoriality and other-ness. Peasant resistance was reinvented so that the communist revolution would appear as a continuation of a centuries' long class struggle for national unity, rather than be something inherently new. Literature textbooks further reified the role of the peasantry, by reinterpreting previously apolitical folktales and investing them with socialist ideology. Themes included the value and honour of agriculture and peasant work ethics, sacrifice, and social harmony and unity among Viet and non-Viet peoples as 'descendants of the same father'.[373] Thaveeporn concludes by arguing that in spite of ideological differences between the two Vietnamese states,

[373] Thaveeporn, Schools and politics in South and North Viêt Nam, p. 660.

> What [both] offered in practice was a sense of predisposed continuity. In the case of South Vietnam, political authority was built upon the portrayal of the image of state-building. Textbooks impressed upon the reader by constant repetition the similarity of past administrations with the modern ones... In the case of the North, the state educators legitimized the political authority of the leadership by portraying the Vietnamese communist revolution as part of a historical tradition.[374]

All these studies reveal the centrality of formal schooling and textbooks to nation-building. Themes of loyalty and gratitude to higher powers, continuity of lineage and national beliefs, conflation of national and state identity, obedience of authority, and gender and family roles resonate throughout their findings. The qualitative differences between the management of schooling in one state or other may diverge, but the underlying principles converge. Many of the themes raised in this section also apply to Myanmar.

Making and using the Myanmar readers

> The Ministry of Information shall produce and disseminate children's books which are of cultural benefit to children, which promote and keep alive patriotism and which are aimed at the promotion of the children's moral wellbeing...
>
> – The Child Law*, s. 22 (b)(i)*

The remainder of this dissertation is directed specifically towards the primary school textbooks for the teaching of Burmese language and literacy in Myanmar. As noted in the introduction, Myanmar has a 'textbook culture'. Despite the government's grand plans for multimedia centres throughout the country, discussed in chapter 3, for most students the only materials seen are—at best—textbooks, notebooks and chalkboards.[375] Many students use secondhand copies

[374] Thaveeporn, Schools and politics in South and North Viêt Nam, pp. 752–3.

[375] Keyes has observed that in Thailand's 'textbook culture' even where students do not have the textbooks still they may serve as the dominant medium for transmission of subject matter, as teachers copy lessons from the texts verbatim onto the blackboard. Keyes, 'The proposed world of the school', p. 111.

of books passed down through their families or purchased in the market.[376] Since 1999 the government has itself begun a scheme for donations of used schoolbooks to underprivileged students.[377] There are virtually no supplementary teaching aids, such as charts, posters or cards, and neither are there many libraries.[378] As established in chapter 3, the carrying of anything into school not part of the prescribed texts—and the display of anything unauthorised inside or outside of the school—is prohibited. This regulation greatly inhibits the capacity of teachers and school communities to expand the resources available to students other than the textbooks.[379]

The state has a monopoly on textbook production and distribution. The Basic Education Curriculum and Textbook Committee produces all textbooks under the guidance of the Myanmar Education Committee. In August 2001 the government also established the Textbooks Printing and Publishing Committee, headed by the Minister for Information, Maj-Gen. Kyi Aung.[380] Textbooks are printed at the Government Press and stored and distributed by the Ministry of Trade.[381] A UNESCO mission in the late 1980s observed that

> Printing is done at the facilities of the Ministry of Education or of other government agencies, although capacity is generally inadequate and there are recurring shortages of bookpaper, printing ink and other manufacturing supplies, thus limiting availability... The Mission was made to understand that textbooks are inexpensive and that students are generally able to afford these. However, it appears that textbooks are sometimes out of stock.[382]

---

[376] *Education sector study*, p. 44. See also Zani Win, 'Education system in Myanmar worsening'.
[377] 'Basic Education pupils donate old exercise books, textbooks, to fellow children', *New Light of Myanmar*, 13 April 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april13.htm] (15 April 1999).
[378] *Education sector study*, p. 52
[379] 'DVB: Education Ministry issues order on strict security measures at schools'.
[380] 'Textbooks Printing and Publishing Committee meets', *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august10.htm] (10 August 2001).
[381] *Education sector study*, p. 52.
[382] *Basic information on Myanmar education sector*, p. 25.

Non-governmental inputs on textbook contents, and independent educational publications, are highly restricted. Minor amendments to textbooks have been undertaken to satisfy UNICEF, but criticism or comment from the public, whether from within the administration or without, is not welcome.[383] In recent years UNICEF has funded a freely distributed student magazine, *Pinnya Dazaun* (*Pjinnja Dazaun*–ပညာတန်ဆောင်–'*The Light of Knowledge*'), which is published under the Department of Basic Education and must pass the usual channels of state approval before printing. Like other publications in Myanmar it carries the National Causes and other slogans on the first page of every edition, such as 'Do not let the Union disintegrate because of you' and 'Protect national independence'.[384] Outside of school, non-Bamar groups may also generally obtain permits to publish primers in their own languages and alphabets; but the state does not assist with or encourage these publications, and, again as discussed elsewhere, in some cases actively obstructs them. Armed groups operating in opposition to the state have in the past produced their own textbooks, though their dissemination and use was never substantial, and is diminishing.[385]

Teaching in Myanmar schools is done by rote.[386] The latest textbooks contain instructions to teachers, outlined further below, that discourage rote teaching and encourage comprehension of contents. Yet these same instructions also emphasise all the traditional outcomes of schooling—precision in reading and writing, correctness in speaking and singing—which teachers associate with rote

[383] As discussed in the previous chapter. Maung Maung Oo, 'Former school personnel arrested in Burma'.
[384] *Pinnya Dazaun* (ပညာတန်ဆောင်), Yangon, May 2000, p. 1.
[385] Again, see the section on alternatives to state schooling in chapter 3.
[386] Numerous reports highlight rote teaching as the predominant method in Myanmar. See for instance *Education sector study*, pp. 44, 52.

learning.[387] In addition, the contents and style of the textbooks have not been changed to accommodate new teaching methods. Readings still exhort students to memorise and recite as they have always done, such as this from the first standard (p. 37):

Read the text clearly out loud.	စာကို ပီပီသသရွတ်ဖတ်ပါ။
Learn the poem by heart.	ကဗျာကို အလွတ်ကျက်မှတ်ပါ။
Recite the text without break.	စာကို တတွတ်တွတ်ရွတ်ဆိုပါ။
You will win first prize.	ပထမဆု ဆွတ်ခူးနိုင်ရမည်။ [388]

The importance of rote learning lies in its monastic origins. As the Sangha continues to have considerable influence over Myanmar society, so too does its style of learning. This is illustrated in the Mahasi Sayadaw's retelling of an ancient Buddhist story about a frog that happens to be killed while listening to a sermon by the Buddha:

> The Frog Deity was a frog in his previous existences when [he] happened to hear a discourse given by the Blessed One. Without understanding a word of the discourse, the frog listened to it with respectful attention and complacence, for which... he was reborn in the deva world. As a deva, he gained the opportunity of listening to the Buddha's teaching again, by virtue of which he attained the stage of ['stream winner'].[389]

This explanation is significant, as according to the Mahasi Sayadaw, the frog was rewarded for its respectful attention and complacence, although it *did not understand a word* of what the Buddha was saying. These principles are central to conventional Burmese teaching method: to recognise that the teacher is inherently benevolent, and her words are inherently wise, and to respect her for that and take note of what is said with due reverence, irrespective of whether or

---

[387] As pointed out by Hodge and Kress, 'correctness' in accent is central to the maintenance of social difference and group cohesion. Hence, such instructions are overtly political. Hodge & Kress, *Social semiotics*, p. 82.

[388] By way of another example, see also figure 4.2, item 2.

[389] Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, 'Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta', (part 3), undated, [www.buddhanet.net/wheeld03.htm] (3 July 2002). The story is from the Visuddhimagga, a classical Theravada Buddhist text written by a Sri Lankan monk around the fifth century CE. In Buddhist cosmology the 'deva world' is a higher plane of existence than our own. For the frog to attain the status of 'stream winner' means that he would certainly reach *nibbana* (nirvana) within a maximum of seven rebirths. The Mahasi Sayadaw, now deceased, remains one of the most revered monks in Myanmar.

not one understands. This is the firmament upon which teaching in Myanmar is located, upon which the textbook contents are predicated, and from which the state is projected.

The remainder of this chapter analyses the contents of the five textbooks used for teaching Burmese in Basic Education Primary Schools in Myanmar. The next chapter critically analyses the text of six reading items from the books.

Overview

Table 4.1 summarises the basic data on the five primary school Burmese language readers. As noted above, primary school effectively includes the 'kindergarten' (KG) year, and so the five books are those for kindergarten and first to fourth standards respectively. Table 4.1 summarises the five books researched by the school year for which the book was printed, the number of pages, number of illustrations and number of separate study items in each.

Table 4.2 summarises the items in each textbook by function. The kindergarten text begins by introducing the 33 Burmese consonants through exercises for recitation, tables and writing exercises. Fourteen items cover about half of the major vowels, finals, medials and tones—through tables, illustrations and text—while 15 items consist of reading exercises employing the newly learnt letters. A variety of recitation items are scattered throughout the kindergarten textbook, yet most of these contain the full alphabet and are therefore as yet unreadable for the students: they are quite literally *ju'hsou–jan* (ရွတ်ဆိုရန်), 'for *reciting* out loud', and not *ju'hpa'–jan* (ရွတ်ဖတ်ရန်), 'for *reading* out loud'. The learning of the major vowels,

Table 4.1: Basic data on textbooks researched

STANDARD	*KG*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
School Year	1998–99	1998–99	1998–99	1998–99	1999–2000
Pages	72	83	90	76	64
Illustrations	199	196	79	65	37
Items	62	64	49	40	24

Notes on table 1
Illustrations were quantified according to whether or not they had a distinct border or space setting them apart from other material. Items were quantified according to separate heading. The page count does not include preliminary pages (imprint page and main title page).

Table 4.2: Study items in each textbook by function

STANDARD	*KG*		*1*		*2*		*3*		*4*	
ITEM NO./PAGE NO.	#	pp	#	pp	#	pp	#	pp	#	pp
Consonants	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vowels, finals, medials, tones	14	14	14	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reading exercise	15	15	35	51	35	72	29	64	16	51
Recitation exercise	24	31	11	12	13	15	10	10	7	11
Reading & writing exercise	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
National anthem	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Instructions for teachers	1	3	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	2
Diagrams	-	-	3	5	1	2	1	2	-	-
TOTAL	62	72	64	83	49	90	40	76	24	64

Note on table 2
Instructions for teachers (*) are now contained in all of the textbooks after being tested in the kindergarten book in the 1998–99 school year.

finals, medials and tones continues until half way through the first standard textbook. At that point students have been taught the basic alphabet required for minimum literacy. From then on the books contain readings with exercise questions and a variety of items for recitation. In second standard the exercise questions generally take the following format:

1. Practise spelling (4–8 words)
2. Form sentences with words (4–5 words)
3. Fill in the blanks (2–3 sentences)
4. Answer questions on the text (3–6 questions)

In third and fourth standard these are reduced to the following:

1. Fill in the blanks (2–3 sentences)
2. Form sentences with words (4–5 words)
3. Answer questions on the text (2–8 questions)

The 'Instructions for teachers' is a new item at the start of each of the texts printed in 2000.[390] It is a part of the initiatives to change teaching methods discussed earlier. Although the books examined preceded the introduction of this section at all levels, copies of this item from the 2000–01 school year textbooks—which were otherwise basically unchanged—were also obtained. The areas that teachers are instructed—in keeping with educational aims—to give weight to are:

1. In kindergarten: traditional culture, patriotism, social affairs, agriculture, appreciation for the natural environment and health.
2. In first standard: general knowledge, good disposition, good moral character and upholding of culture.

[390] In the 1998–99 kindergarten textbook 'Instructions for teachers' was located at the end of the book, but in the 2000–01 textbooks it was at the front.

3. In second to fourth standards: general knowledge, patriotism, health, social issues, traditional culture, moral character and animal husbandry.

The instructions also stipulate the number of hours allocated to Burmese language and literacy, as follows:

1. For kindergarten and first and second standards (lower primary) 11 periods of 30 minutes each per week, totalling 198 hours over 396 periods per year.[391]
2. For third and fourth standards (upper primary) eight periods of 35 minutes per week, totalling 168 hours over 288 periods per year.

This is the largest number of hours for any subject in the curriculum. It compares to (in descending order):

1. Mathematics: Seven periods per week at all levels, totalling 126 hours for lower primary and 147 hours for upper primary.
2. English: Four periods per week in lower primary, totalling 72 hours; Five periods per week in upper primary, totalling 105 hours.[392]
3. Science: Four periods per week at all levels, totalling 72 hours in lower primary and 84 hours in upper primary.
4. Social studies (history & geography): Four periods per week in upper primary, totalling 84 hours.

[391] The school year is 36 weeks in total.

[392] Whereas in the period after independence and throughout the socialist era the learning of English was given a low priority, it is now increasingly associated with a high standard of education. The nightly news sometimes shows primary school students reciting welcome messages for the Secretary-1 in English (who among the regime's leadership is one of the few reportedly with basic conversation skills in the language). Its study has become acceptable, as it is no longer a question of subjugation to the language but mastery of it as a means to demonstrate innate superiority. Hence, it has become another element in the national prestige-building task. See also the comments on General Aung San (4.41–5) in this chapter.

Tables 4.1 & 2 point to an increasingly academic style in the textbooks as the year level increases. Table 4.1 reveals a sharp drop in the number of illustrations and items per text between kindergarten and fourth standard, and a moderate drop in page number. This corresponds to the reduction in written text size as the year level increases (allowing a greater amount of text per page), and the written text per item increases. Whereas in kindergarten many new words have individual illustrations, by fourth standard most readings are headed by a single illustration under the title. From kindergarten to the end of second standard the illustrations are printed in colour; in third and fourth standards they are in black and white. In short, the stylistic movement is away from a variety of activities and illustrations in colour to a backbone of reading exercises and questions, smaller sized text, fewer illustrations, longer items and loss of colour. The data correspond with increased use of formality in other aspects of the textbooks and correlate to the increased 'presence' of the state in the textbooks as they progress.

Though the textbooks reviewed are from the 1998–99 school year, changes come slowly, and so many of their contents have been learnt by students over the last two to three decades. A comparative assessment of the kindergarten textbook from 1998 with books from 1979 and 1995 found that across 14 reading items around 60 per cent of the contents from 1979 were reproduced with minor changes. Around another 20 per cent had a strong thematic relevance. In comparison with 1995, around 85 per cent of the contents were virtually or entirely the same, and another 10 per cent of thematic relevance. Therefore examining these textbooks does not merely disclose what students of the last few years have been learning: it is relevant to most of the schooled population in Myanmar.

Keywords

Raymond Williams developed the keywords method by uncovering English words of significance, indicative of certain forms of thought and values, and revealing their etymology and evolution.[393] As noted previously, Parker has used the keywords method in her study of school textbooks in Indonesia. Her work followed an earlier useful study of keywords employed by the state in Indonesia by Michael van Langenberg.[394]

Informed by state narratives on identity and society, the Myanmar readers were appraised for the presence of 50 keywords. This approach suffers from a number of weaknesses, which have been recognised by Williams and other authors. The most obvious is that words cannot be isolated without a loss of meaning. This may be addressed in part by providing examples of how the word has been used, a solution appropriate to a study such as this where the subject matter is limited and well defined. Another problem is that words tend to be clustered, so that using each word as a unit for quantification may lead to an over-assessment of that word's importance across a body of work. To counter that problem, this inquiry has used the page as the unit for assessment, although this alternative admittedly risks the converse problem of under-quantification of some words. A further problem lies in the use of synonyms. Counting each individual word in isolation may lead to underassessment of a particular concept in the text. As a partial solution, below a number of synonyms have been discussed in pairs,

---

[393] Williams, *Keywords,* pp. 12, 15.

[394] Michael van Langenberg, 'Analysing Indonesia's New Order state: A keywords approach', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs,* vol. 20, no. 2, 1986, pp. 1–47.

particularly where they form parts of commonly appearing compounds.[395] There are also difficulties in applying the keywords approach to a non-European non-romanised written text, including the use of root and compound words, and wide varieties of grammatical modification to root and compound base words in Burmese. The 50 words were chosen in part because they are relatively free from ambiguities that may have confused quantification. The ten most frequently appearing words, in order of declining frequency, were:

1.	*pjinnja*	knowledge/learning/education/wisdom
2.	*akjou:*	benefit
3.	*lei:za:/jouthei*	respect
4.	*kjou:za:/kjou:ban*	strive/endeavour
5.	*kjei:zu:*	benefaction/gratitude
6.	*haunjwe'*	carry out
7.	*aunmjin /aunbwe:*	succeed/victory
8.	*si:loun:/njinju'*	united
9.	*tawun/wu'*	duty/responsibility
10.	*jinkjei*	polite/civilised/cultured

Each word is commented upon below, after which they are traced parenthetically throughout the remainder of this study.

***pjinnja* (ပဉ္ဉာ) knowledge/learning/education/wisdom** (27 pages)

Remarks on *pjinnja* were footnoted in chapter 2, where it was observed that the words for 'education' and 'knowledge' in Burmese are closely related. 'Education' is *pjinnja–jei:* (ပဉ္ဉာရေး), while 'knowledge' is usually *athi.–pjinnja*

[395] Compound words are discussed further below, and in chapter 5.

(အသိပညာ), *a̲ta'–pjinnja* (အတတ်ပညာ) or merely *pjinnja* (ပညာ).[396] *Pjinnja* is a Pali word (in conventional romanised Pali it is written *paññā*) which in religious discourse connotes an intermingling of both wisdom and knowledge: in its highest form it involves supra-mundane contemplation. If *–shin* is suffixed to *pjinnja* it means 'scholar' or 'skilled practitioner', where the state refers to 'intellectuals and intelligentsia' as *a̲thi.–pjinnja–shin* (အသိပညာရှင်) and *a̲ta'–pjinnja–shin* (အတတ်ပညာရှင်) respectively. Clearly references to 'intellectuals and intelligentsia' by the current state are not to free thinkers. Rather, the state media, as observed in chapter 3, characterises 'intellectuals and intelligentsia' as people who are patriotic—not deviating from the tasks laid down by the Tatmadaw—who will in the future 'shoulder the responsibility of the state'. To do this requires attending school, and so *pjinnja* is all about school-derived knowledge, as in one kindergarten reading (KG.25):[397]

He is outstanding at learning (*pjinnja*).	သူပညာ ထူး၏။
He obtained first prize.	ပထမဆု ရသည်။
Come collect the prize.	ဆု လာယူပါ။
He is to be emulated.	အတုယူစရာ။

In the accompanying picture a male student wearing an award sash holds his prize (see figure 4.1, item 1).[398] The picture and written text, like others in the schoolbooks, speak to the enveloping discourse on 'outstanding students' in Myanmar. From top to bottom of the national hierarchy, state representatives are busy periodically handing out awards, prizes and donations for one thing

[396] The slight distinction between these terms lies in the prefixes *a̲thi*–knowledge, perception, and *a̲ta'*–skill, know-how.

[397] From this point onwards, this study uses a simple referencing convention for pages in the five school textbooks, as follows: (standard.page/s). Therefore (KG.25) refers to page 25 of the kindergarten textbook, while pages 33–4 of the second standard book, for example, would be written as (2.33–4).

[398] Items are not numbered on the page, but here reference is being made to the first of four items seen in the figure, moving from top to bottom. Whole pages were used for some figures in order to give a clear impression of the page layout and overall textbook style. Note that gender portrayals—here the awardee is male—are discussed further in the next section and following chapter.

Figure 4.1: Kindergarten reading 3 (*Left*)
'He is outstanding at learning; He obtained first prize; Come collect the prize;
He is to be emulated.
The weather is hot; Did you bring an umbrella? Uncle comes; Take a rest.
This family comes to worship; The group comes; Is U Tha Htoo with them?
Come to take food; Come in unison; Don't jostle; Eat together.' (KG.25)

Figure 4.2: Kindergarten reading 8 (*Right*)
'The baby awakes; Don't startle the baby; Don't cry; Be brave.
Sayama has come to class; Act respectfully; Recite softly; Rely on yourself.
Respect parents and teachers; Live honestly; Speak pleasantly;
Pay homage to the elderly.
Rainy season; Grandfolks' field hut; Is the little hut leaky?
Helping put on the roof.' (KG.43)

or other. From the Secretary-1 to the local primary school principal, the procedure is fundamentally the same.

The endowments of one having *pjinnja* are also clearly established:

Acquire knowledge (*pjinnja*).	ပညာကို ရှာမှီးပါ။
Distinguish right from wrong.	အမှားအမှန် ခွဲခြားပါ။
You will obtain mindfulness.	သတိရှိရမည်။
Have compassion.	သနားညှာတာမှု ရှိကြပါ။

In spite of not expressing it directly, the above reading suggests the concept of 'one with *pjinnja*'—the learned or educated person—a *pjinnja–shi.* (ပညာရှိ) person. In the textbooks, *pjinnja–shi.* characters frequent moralistic stories (below), solving the problems of others. The corollary of *pjinnja–shi.* is *pjinnja–me.* (ပညာမဲ့), the absence of *pjinnja*. In the second standard reader the distinction between *pjinnja–shi.* and *pjinnja–me.* is amplified by an analogy to paddy, where the latter is compared to an upright stalk—proud and without benefit (*a̲kjou:–ma̲shi.*) (the stalk is lightweight because it is not bearing seeds). By contrast, the bent stalk is the modest person, able to carry out (*hsaunjwe'*) many tasks of benefit (*a̲kjou:*), adored and respected (*lei:za:*) by everyone (2.68–9). A recitation item in the first standard reader tells the story of how a wealthy couple love their son so much that they shelter him from the world and he grows up knowing nothing (1.80–1). As an adult he becomes destitute due to ineptitude and the deceit of others; eventually he goes to the forest and dies there. This is strong imagery: born in rich and cultured society, the ignoramus ends up dying like an animal in the wilderness; the message: it is *pjinnja* that separates humans from mere beasts and savages. School, as the preeminent agency for the transmission of *pjinnja*, is on the frontline of the battle for civilisation.

a̲kjou: **(အကျိုး) benefit** (26 pages)

Whereas *a̲kjou:* may simply mean 'effect' or 'consequence', it is typically used in the school textbooks and other state media alike for the beneficial outcome of an undertaking. For instance, in the first standard reader a visual image of male students doing physical labour is accompanied by written text (1.09):

The student youths	ကျောင်းသားလူငယ်များ
Are upstanding.	ရိုးသားဖြောင့်မှန်ကြသည်။
They do things to benefit (*a̲kjou:*) others.	အများအကျိုးဆောင်ကြ၏။
They are praiseworthy.	ချီးကျူးစရာကောင်းသည်။

Like the other keywords, *a̲kjou:* is used as a lexical link between the actions of the student and those of the state, personified through historical leaders, heroes and others deserving of emulation. When school students do things to benefit others, they are maintaining the great tradition of Myanmar kings and warriors.

As in the case of *pjinnja*, the characteristics of *a̲kjou:* are explored largely through metaphor and anecdote. In the third standard book there is the story of a farmer who, desiring to give one of his three sons a ruby he has unearthed, calls them and asks each in turn what he has ever undertaken (*hsaunjwe'*) for the benefit (*a̲kjou:*) of others (3.51–2). The first explains that he helped a stranger without taking advantage, the second that he saved a child from drowning, and the third that he refrained from killing an enemy when the opportunity arose. Perhaps because the quality of mercy is twice blest, the father awards the gem to the third son.

***lei:za:/jouthei* (လေးစား၊ ရိုသေ) respect** (25 pages)

Lei:za: and *jouthei* are synonyms for 'respect' that frequently appear as a compound. By the second page of the kindergarten textbook, students are already being instructed to 'respect the teacher'. As the book continues the maxim is articulated with increasing detail. Adjacent to a visual image of a boy assuming a deferential posture before his parents—who are dressed in Bamar clothing, (see figure 4.2, item 3)—is the written text (KG.43):

Respect parents and teachers.	မိဘဆရာ ရိုသေပါ။
Live honestly.	ရိုးရိုးသားသား နေပါ။
Speak pleasantly.	သာသာယာယာ စကားဆိုပါ။
Pay homage to the elderly.	အဘိုးအိုကို ကန်တော့ပါ။

Although the item seems to consist of only a boy and his parents, elements in the text suggest otherwise. First, the adjective form of 'pleasantly' is a component of the word 'peace' in the current government's title; secondly, the imperative to pay homage has a ritual meaning strongly associated with paying respect to the Sangha. Both the first and second standard textbooks also refer to events to pay homage to teachers (1.49, 2.59).

Respect extends to inanimate and abstract objects. In the second standard reader a boy narrates how he respectfully handles his big sister's old textbooks. His respect for the books is confirmed in the visual text by his kneeling posture, extending a book with two hands towards his sister. Within the same item respect for physical objects is extended to the societal level: 'Respect for public property is the good citizen's duty (*tawun*)' (2.36–7). Respect for abstract concepts means, not surprisingly, respect for rules and regulations. Finally, survival of the Union also relies upon mutual respect, or at least rhetoric to that effect (3.47):

It is necessary for each of the national races residing together in our nation to know and respect (*lei:za:*) one another's culture (*jinkjei:*).

ကျွန်ုပ်တို့နိုင်ငံတော်၌ တိုင်းရင်းသား ပေါင်းစုံမှီတင်းနေထိုင်လျက်ရှိရာ တိုင်းရင်းသားအသီးသီး၏ ယဉ်ကျေးမှုများကို အချင်းချင်း သိရှိလေးစားရန် လိုအပ်ပါသည်။

***kjou:za:/kjou:ban:* (ကြိုးစား၊ ကြိုးပမ်း) strive/endeavour** (24 pages)

Kjou:za: and *kjou:ban:*, two synonyms for 'endeavour', figure prominently in state media. They often appear in compounds with other words, such as when the state is 'endeavouring to carry out' (*kjou:za: hsaunjwe'*) some task for the benefit of the people. The impressive magnitude of the state's efforts is sometimes reinforced grammatically by longer compounds, such as when 'the respective officials are striving day and night in all sectors (တာဝန်ရှိသူအသီးသီးက ဘက်စုံထောင့်စုံက နေ့မအားညမနား ကြံစည်ကြိုးပမ်းအားထုတ်ဆောင်ရွက်)'.[399] In this phrase the 'striving' is amplified by a compound of four other compound words: *kjansi–kjou:ban:–a:htou'–hsaunjwe'*, that is, plan–strive–exert–carry out. Together these create a powerful impression of constant mental and physical exertion. The use of compounds, adding weight to meaning, is further taken up in chapter 5.

In the school textbooks, the relationship between personal and national endeavour looms large in written and visual text. Students are exhorted (1.31) to

Preserve our independence.	လွတ်လပ်ရေးကို ထိန်းသိမ်းပါ။
Strive (*kjou:ban:*) for unity.	ညီညွတ်ရေးကို ကြိုးပမ်းပါ။
Carry out (*hsaunjwe'*) tasks courageously.	ရွပ်ရွပ်ခိုခို ဆောင်ရွက်ပါ။
May you not err in your duty (*tawun*).	တာဝန် မချွတ်ယွင်းပါစေနှင့်။
Place the national responsibility above others.	ပြည်သူ့ကျင့်ဝတ်ကို အထွတ်အမြတ်ထားပါ။

[399] 'Wishes of the people in outright opposition to national traitors group', p. 8.

By striving for unity the student is again portrayed as continuing the great tradition of endeavour begun by historical predecessors. General Aung San, it is written, strove to improve himself; through this he could be of benefit to the nation. By inference the energetic and patriotic school student will do the same. A third standard reading also gives an example of how even the most unlikely student can succeed, with effort: although the lazy pupil in the reading is often admonished (*hsoun:ma.*–ဆုံးမ) by her teacher, when a prize of notebooks and pencils is offered as an incentive to memorize and recite a poem, she puts effort into her homework. She derives inspiration from a snail whose progress is slow but ultimately successful, and strives (*kjou:za.*) without rest, finally achieving her goal and winning the prize.

kjei:zu: **(ကျေးဇူး) benefaction/gratitude** (23 pages)

The 'gratitude' entailed in *kjei:zu:* is closely associated with the attributes of a benefactor, a *kjei:zu:–shin* (ကျေးဇူးရှင်). The ultimate *kjei:zu:–shin* was the Buddha, who, it is asserted in the third standard text, travelled to a celestial plane to preach to his deceased mother for three months so that she might obtain enlightenment (3.38). Within the country, the highest *kjei:zu:–shin*, the '*kjei:zu:–shin* of the Union' was General Aung San (3.37).[400] But some ordinary people can be *kjei:zu:–shin* too, and hence the connection between the great and small is again reinforced. Those who donate books to schools are *kjei:zu:–shin*. Peasant farmers are *kjei:zu:–shin*, for providing the nation with agricultural wealth (2.27–8). However there are no women depicted as *kjei:zu:–shin* in the textbooks, implying that the role is for the classic patrons: men.

[400] Concluding her interesting essay on the etymology of a word used for 'general' in Burmese, *bohgyoke* (*bougjou'*), or simply *boh* (*bou*), Aung San Suu Kyi also refers to her father as 'the supreme *boh* who brought to life the tradition of the

The concept of *kjei:zu:* alone is also raised in the textbooks. Parents and teachers show benevolence towards children, for which the children are indebted—they are 'ones with *kjei:zu:*', that is, *kjei:zu:–shi..* The notion of indebtedness is illustrated through Aesop's familiar tale of the mouse and the lion (2.83–4), told in the second standard.

***hsaunjwe'* (ဆောင်ရွက်) carry out** (22 pages)

Hsaunjwe', loosely translated as 'carry out', is a term with positive or negative connotations, depending on what is being undertaken. It is widely used in state media to describe how the government is working for national development, and in this sense is often coupled with other terms to give confidence in the government's capabilities: for example, education development programmes are carried out 'systematically' (*sa̲ni'da̲gja. hsaunjwe'* – စနစ်တကျ ဆောင်ရွက်). A lexical link is made when in the textbooks villagers breeding fish also undertake their task systematically (3.57). By contrast, 'axe-handles' and 'traitorous destructive elements' attempt to 'carry out schemes' and 'plots' to cause ruin to the state and the national people.

In the readers *hsaunjwe'* is generally associated with wholesome activities for national development past and present, big and small. The fish–breeding task is a present-day small-scale undertaking for national benefit. At the other end of the spectrum, King Kyanzittha, it is written, carried out tasks for the benefit

---

leader who is the strength of the nation'. Aung San Suu Kyi, 'The true meaning of *boh*', in *Freedom from fear, and other writings*, Michael Aris (ed.), Penguin, Middlesex, 1991, p. 191. Similarly, see Aung San Suu Kyi's remarks on unity, below.

(*akjou:*) of the nation that led to its unification (*si:loun:–njinju'–hmu.*).[401] *Hsaunjwe'* is sometimes used in a compound with *aunmjin* to describe those undertakings that have turned out for the best, or will turn out for the best given appropriate effort (*kjou:za:*) and guidance.

***aunmjin/aunbwe:* (အောင်မြင်၊ အောင်ပွဲ) succeed/victory** (20 pages)

As noted above, the carrying out of tasks for the national good is not neutral—it involves specific aims and objectives, which demand 'success', *aunmjin*. Happily, media reports inform everyone that the state is invariably successful in its undertakings, and always striving to achieve more. The successful carrying out (*hsaunjwe' aunmjin*) of tasks means the further development of the nation and its people. The first root word of *aunmjin*—*aun*—is also used by itself to denote success or victory, or in related compounds, such as *aunbwe:*, meaning a victory or victory celebration (KG.05):

Welcome the victory with brown Eugenia [402]	သပြေညို အောင်ပွဲကို

The corresponding visual image to the above text has citizens offering flowers to parading soldiers (see figure 4.3, item 3), in a manner reminiscent of the footage from Armed Forces Day shown at the beginning of television broadcasts every afternoon. Victory, of course, is not restricted to soldiers. An illustration of united 'national races' bears the following caption (KG.27):

United in unison (*si:loun:–njinja*),	စည်းလုံး ညီညာ၊
Victory (*aunkjaun:*) radiates	အောင်ကြောင်း ဖြာ
Happily participating,	ဝမ်းသာ ဆင်နွှဲ၊
Our victory celebration (*aunbwe:*).	တို့အောင်ပွဲ။

[401] King Kyanzittha and other historical personages, particularly monarchs, are discussed further in the next section.
[402] This flower—*dhabjei*—symbolising victory and peace, is, according to the *Myanmar-English Dictionary*, the 'generic name for many species of *Eugenia, Jambosa* and *Syzygium*'.

Figure 4.3: Five consonants, kindergarten textbook (*Left*)
‘*La* Yellowy moon shining.
Wa Chubby *Poewa* doll.
Tha Welcome the victory with brown Eugenia.
Ha Laughing ha haa ha!
A The Motherland, our country, the land we love.’ (KG.05)
[*Note:* the *Poewa* doll is a traditional Bamar toy.]

Figure 4.4: For recitation, first standard: The duties of children (sons and daughters) and pupils (*Right*) (1.87). *Note:* The visual text blends Bamar, Buddhist and school imagery; males assume all the dominant positions.

In the textbooks, *aunmjin* is most commonly associated with, like other media, the success of benevolent programmes undertaken by the leadership or people: kings succeed in their undertakings, students wish teachers success, and festivals are likely to be successful if undertaken 'harmoniously (*si:joun:*), unitedly (*njinju'*) and single-mindedly' (4.30).

***si:loun:/njinju'* (စည်းလုံး၊ ညီညွတ်) united** (20 pages)

Unity, *si:loun:–njinju'*, runs deeply through all the textbooks, although the keyword analysis does not capture it well, as it is often expressed through metaphor. Where overt reference is made to unity, it is usually with one of the two synonyms *si:loun:* and *njinju'*, which are often found as a compound: 'the *united* (*si:loun:–njinju'*) strength of the *entire national people* (*ta–mjou:dha:–loun:*) (တစ်မျိုးသားလုံး၏ စည်းလုံးညီညွတ်သည့် အားအန်)'. Such words come from all sides and all levels of politics and society in Myanmar, the constant trumpeting of the 'need for unity' suggesting its absence.[403] For example, speaking in Kachin State during 1989 (and similarly on many occasions since), the leader of the National League for Democracy, Aung San Suu Kyi, exhorted:

> Children's minds are like a clean slate. That's why we have a great responsibility in raising them. We must not teach them things that will divide them because of linguistic or ethnic differences; we must teach them so that they will understand the idea of the Union. In the Kachin State, for instance, we have Jingpaw, Lisu, Shan, Burmans and other peoples. For all of them to live together in harmony we must teach our children from earliest childhood the concept of national unity, of nationhood.[404]

In state objectives and causes, *si:loun:–njinju'* is translated into English as 'national solidarity' (*tain:jin:dha: si:loun:–njinju'–hmu.*) and also an element in

---

[403] See Aung Naing Oo, 'Burmese politics and the broken unity', *The Irrawaddy,* vol. 10, no. 5, 2002, [http://www.irrawaddy.org/commentary.html] (29 June 2002). On national unity, see also Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics,* pp. 59–80. See also comments on national unity in the section on Mahabandoola, chapter 5.

[404] Aung San Suu Kyi, 'The need for solidarity among ethnic groups', in *Freedom from fear, and other writings*, Michael Aris (ed.), Penguin, Middlesex, 1991, p. 227.

'national reconsolidation' (*a̲mjou:dha: pjanlei–si:loun:–njinju'–jei:*). It is the 'spirit of unity' (*si:loun:–njinju'–jei: sei'da'* – စည်းလုံးညီညွတ်ရေး စိတ်ဓာတ်) vital to the Union Spirit (*Pjidaunzu. Sei'da'*– ပြည်ထောင်စု စိတ်ဓာတ်), noted in chapter 3. *Sei'da'*, is itself the first of the three words in the national school motto, and like discipline, *si:kan:*, if not in itself referred to with great frequency throughout the textbooks, it nevertheless has a strong conceptual presence; it is also part of the compound word typically used to describe 'patriotism', *mjou:chi'–sei'da'* (literally, 'kind–love–spirit').

Both *si:loun:* and *njinju'* imply the kind of unity that is achieved not through consensus or mutual understanding, but rather through everybody following a line of conduct laid down by a superior, such as when students rise in unison (*njinju'*) as the teacher enters class (1.87).[405] In a telling of Aesop's fable about a man and his three sons, the man admonishes (*hsoun:ma.*) his sons to remain united (*si:loun:*) (1.71). Unity is achieved through an imperative from the patriach, rather than something that the sons arrive at through their own observations and efforts. The children are admonished, *hsoun:ma.*, which in every case involves someone of superior authority, knowledge or other attributes giving instructions to an inferior. Other words with the same roots also exhibit these characteristics. Children come in unison—*njinja* (ညီညာ)—to share food, not pushing and shoving (KG.25) (see figure 4.1, item 4), illustrated visually by a single line of children, beginning with the oldest,

[405] Some visual depictions of this obligation are contained in figure 4.2, item 2; figure 4.4, bottom half; and, figure 4.6. Note how students standing correctly also fold their arms. See below for further discussion of this duty and its origin.

approaching the table. Kings organise—*si:joun:* (စည်းရုံး)—their populations (3.29).[406]

***tawun/wu'* (တာဝန်၊ ဝတ်) duty/responsibility** (20 pages)

'Duty', *tawun* or *wu'*, is another powerful element in schoolbooks and other media alike. Duty applies at the highest level, where the Three Main National Causes are *tawun–ajei:* (တာဝန်အရေး), literally 'duty–affairs'. *Tawun* encompasses numerous responsibilities, from the duty that everybody has to eradicate mosquitoes (1.11), to supporting the economy (1.27):

Support domestic products.	ပြည်တွင်းဖြစ်ကို အားပေးပါ။
Be fond of them.	ချစ်ချစ်ခင်ခင် နေကြပါ။
If you see a fault, rectify it.	အပြစ်တွေ့လျှင် ပြုပြင်ပါ။
May you be systematic (*sani'dagja.*).	စနစ်တကျ ရှိပါစေ။
May you not neglect your duty (*tawun*).	တာဝန် မလစ်ဟင်းပါစေနှင့်။

Wu' is from Pali (*wu'ta*–ဝတ္တ), and is used in the textbooks for those duties derived from Buddhist doctrine. These are the obligations of children to teachers and parents, and the reciprocal obligations. All are taken from the Buddha's discourse on the layperson's code of conduct, the Sigalovada Sutta (Digha Nikaya 31), although the textbooks do not state this. Pupils are obligated to rise in unison (*njinju'*) in salutation to the teacher, heed her admonitions (*hsoun:ma.*), provide personal service, and learn eagerly. Children are obligated to support parents in old age, manage and carry out (*hsaunjwe'*) affairs, make themselves worthy of their inheritance, offer alms to departed relatives and observe family tradition. Those duties are all itemised in the

[406] The historical records left by earlier elites accord with this interpretation of organisation and unity, which also reverberates strongly with themes of civility, order and duty, as in a 1759 edict by Alaungphaya:

> The inhabitants of the Shan country and the Yuan country scattered to the jungle and mountains when the Toungoo empire disintegrated, and fell into a state of anarchy and civil strife. Therefore I gathered the people and reorganized them. Now let them fulfill their traditional obligations.

Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, p. 254.

kindergarten and first standard books (see figure 4.4); in second standard the reciprocal duties of teachers and parents are given. Teachers must provide skills, guide and admonish (*hsoun:ma.*) students, not omit anything necessary for learning, protect students from danger and provide suitably for their needs. Parents must warn their children away from evil, teach them skills, distribute family wealth and help them in organising marriage. For most people in Myanmar the last of these would seem antiquated, not least of all given that there never has been a strong custom of arranged marriage in the region, unlike where and when the Buddha was preaching.[407] Unbroken religious traditions being what they are, however, they are not readily adjusted to changed circumstances.

As in Mulder's findings for Thailand, a parallel commentary on 'rights' is altogether absent from the Myanmar schoolbooks. One's rights are expressed merely as the duties of others. An explicit reference to 'rights' is made only fleetingly in fourth standard, with regard to how 'the law protects people's rights' (4.14).

***jinkjei:* (ယဉ်ကျေး) polite/civilised/cultured** (15 pages)

Williams has remarked that 'culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language'.[408] The intersection of culture, civility and politeness in *jinkjei:* is similarly complex. Ordinarily, *jinkjei:* is used for refinement in manner and speech. A reading in the second standard begins by observing that, 'Teachers and parents are fond of polite (*jinkjei:*)

[407] See Spiro's account of marriage in Bamar society. Melford E. Spiro, *Kinship and marriage in Burma: A cultural and psychodynamic analysis*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1977, pp. 146 ff.
[408] Williams, *Keywords*, p. 87.

children' (2.43). It proceeds to spell out in detail that to be *jinkjei:* a student must bow down when walking in front of elders, give things with two hands, serve elders before taking food, handle serving spoons with the left hand, eat in a refined manner, and speak in appropriate language (see figure 4.5). Clearly this kind of 'refinement' necessitates recognition of one's subordination, and concomitant servility, before superiors, as it is 'tradition':

> Respect (*jouthei lei:za:*) for elders and parents is Myanmar culture (*jinkjei:–hmu.*)
>
> လူကြီးမိဘများအား ရိုသေလေးစားခြင်းသည် မြန်မာ့ယဉ်ကျေးမှုပင် ဖြစ်သည်

In this instance *jinkjei:* suggests more than the mere good behaviour of individuals. Transformed to an abstract noun by the suffix *–hmu.*, it is rendered a collective practice of some kind, the nebulous 'Myanmar *jinkjei:–hmu.*'. It is sometimes used in compounds with words that associate its meaning with the arts (3.47):

> Among the national races' (*tain:jin:dha:*) cultures and customs (*jinkjei:–hmu. dalei.–htoun:san*), the traditional (*jou:ja*) dances are cherished.
>
> တိုးရင်းသားများ၏ ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဓလေ့ထုံးစံများတွင် ရိုးရာအကများသည် မြတ်နိုးနှစ်သက်ဖွယ် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

Here *jinkjei:–hmu.* is combined with *dalei.–htoun:san*, forming a compound that denotes the entire body of custom and culture in Myanmar, reinforced by reference to dances that are traditional (*jou:ja*). *Jou:ja* is also often found in a compound with *jinkjei:*, expressing 'traditional culture': for example, when the Secretary-1 speaks in connection with efforts (*kjou:ban:*) 'for the successful (*aunmjin*) carrying out (*hsaunjwe'*) of the Tenth Myanmar Traditional Cultural (*jou:ja–jinkjei:–hmu.*) Performing Arts Competition'.[409] In an article in a

[409] 'Preservation and enhancing of cultural heritage, traditions and cultures must be carried out constantly as national duty: Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competitions held annually for preserving traditional arts and culture; In preserving and enhancing national characters, culture and traditions, Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions

Figure 4.5: 'Be polite' (2.43).

Figure 4.6: For recitation, kindergarten
'Boys and girls enter the classroom
Adorned with smiles.
Mingalaba Sayama
Greet in unison.' (KG.13)

government sponsored publication, one author has written of 'Myanmar *jinkjei:–hmu.*' as a collection of anything from the Pagan kingdom that has been built up over subsequent generations: 'literature and speech, music, costume, administration and religious affairs, etc.'[410]

This 'traditional culture', then, is profoundly hierarchical. Superiors, who in the textbooks are usually one or all of the 'elders, parents and teachers' compound (*lugji:–mi.ba.–hsaja*), represent the state: the word for 'elder' is conventionally used in village life to describe the village administrative head; parents are substituted over the course of the five books with state personages, and teachers are, as a matter of fact, state agents. The state also presents itself as a patron of the traditional arts in order to reinforce the idea of an unbroken lineage and great tradition and, as the Secretary-1 has made amply clear, as a line of defence against 'alien influences':

> Only when the national prestige is preserved and enhanced conscientiously and constantly, [can] one's own nation and people... stand prestigiously in the international community. Especially in this globalization period, the big nations which have [the] upper hand in terms of economic progress and technology are trying for their customs, traditions and social norms through the most modern media to infiltrate into the cultures of developing nations. It is needed for all to be aware of the fact that if we cannot take preventive measures with national consciousness, our culture will fade away and it will lead to extinction of the race and the nation will fall under the influence of other countries.[411]

Keywords are a useful entry point into the schoolbooks, however many of the schoolbooks' vital elements are conveyed through metaphor and allusion rather than direct expression. This is the weakest aspect of the keywords method,

---

play vital role', *New Light of Myanmar*, 4 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/ nlm/enlm/july04.htm]; Burmese version (untitled), [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/mnlm/july4.htm] (7 July 2002).

[410] 'Mother's son' (အမေ့သား), မြန်မာ့ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဆိုတာ ဘာလဲ။ ('What is Myanmar culture?'), *မြက်ခင်းသစ်* (*Myekhinthit*), September 1996, p. 119. See more on Pagan in the next section.

[411] 'Preservation and enhancing of cultural heritage, traditions and cultures must be carried out constantly as national duty'.

which—as it cannot be addressed from within—necessitates movement to another level of analysis.

Contents

This section examines the contents of the Myanmar readers according to the classes in tables 4.3 & 4.4. It begins with the contents classed by the family, school, Buddhism, armed forces and the nation respectively, before proceeding to the dichotomised classes of age, gender and ethnicity.

Table 4.3 follows the movement across the textbooks of imagery on five key institutions: family, school, Buddhism, armed forces, nation. It reveals that while total content on family, school and the nation is high, there is a dramatic shift away from the family and towards the nation over the course of the five textbooks. Whereas the lower primary textbooks contain numerous written and visual references to parents and siblings in particular, by fourth standard there is not a single illustration of the family. Although this can be attributed partly to the overall drop in illustrated imagery, by contrast there are altogether 12 pages in the fourth standard book with images of the armed forces and the nation (past and present) between them. These five institutions are now raised in turn.

The first family-specific item is on the second page of the kindergarten book, where a family sits eating dinner—mother, father, daughter and son evenly placed around the table. Like a number of other visual images, there is no reference to 'family' in the written text: it is in the visual image by default. This practice, and that of evenly distributing family gender imagery, continues

Table 4.3: Movement of key imagery across textbooks

STANDARD	*KG*		*1*		*2*		*3*		*4*		*TOTAL*	
WRITTEN / ILLUSTRATED IMAGERY	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill
Family	15	20	15	8	24	11	12	2	8	0	74	41
School	20	22	21	16	11	4	14	5	11	3	77	50
Buddhism	9	7	12	9	8	4	5	2	5	3	39	25
Armed Forces	5	5	5	4	2	1	7	4	10	5	29	19
Nation	6	5	8	9	26	6	18	4	24	7	82	31

Notes on table 3

1. The base unit of measurement was the page. The rationale for this measuring unit lay in its unambiguous character and relative ease of calculation by comparison to alternative units, such as individual items, which vary widely in length and content. Although the page was the least ambiguous unit, its usefulness is mitigated by:
    a. Considerable variations in the quantity of written and illustrated content on each page;
    b. The movement of single study items over multiple pages, resulting in multiple counting of the same imagery in a single study item;
    c. The clustering of imagery within a single page, resulting in undercounting.
2. While none of the five institutions in this table definitively represent the content of the textbooks, their selection was informed by the needs of this study, the nature and aims of the state discussed in chapter 2, and the particular qualities of each. The five institutions are all socially significant and distinct from each other and hence useful indicators of state-society relations.
3. In Burmese, family titles, such as 'aunt' and 'older brother', are typically used when addressing non-relatives. In assessing whether such references were in fact towards family members or not it was necessary to examine the context of the written text and also the style of expression.
4. 'School' was taken to include reference to school-related activities—study of textbooks, wearing of school uniforms—and references to education, and not merely imagery explicitly in the school.
5. 'Buddhism' was taken to include references visual and written to pagodas, monks and Buddhist paraphernalia, and explicitly Buddhist words and concepts in the written text.
6. 'Armed Forces' was taken to include written and illustrated imagery of military personnel and activities both past and present.
7. 'Nation' was taken to include written and visual imagery of the country, the Union, the motherland, flags, and maps.

throughout the kindergarten textbook, though at certain points only a son is present (KG.29):

May daddy and mummy be well.	ဖေဖေ မေမေ မာပါစေ။
Take heed of mummy's words.	မေမ့စကား အရေးထား။
Son, respect daddy's words.	ဖေဖ့ စကား သားလေးစား။

In the visual text, the son pays respects to his parents. Although the action is formal, the picture and written text are intimate. Over the five books this imagery changes, as the number of family references is reduced and increasingly formalised. Anonymous old men take the place of parents in dispensing advice. Children sit with politeness and distance. Parents too, assume more formal postures in visual text, and their titles also are less intimate: 'father', 'mother' and 'parents' (ဖခင် မိခင် မိဘ). The text is increasingly oriented towards the father, *hpa.gin*, who in his highest embodiment becomes the father of the nation, 'The Father of Independence General Aung San' (လွတ်လပ်ရေး၏ ဖခင်ကြီးဖြစ်သော ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း) (4.42). No mere father, Aung San is *hpa.gin–gji:*, the Great Father—the ultimate family representative.[412] Personifying the state, he subordinates all others to its imperatives.

The first extended reference to school in the kindergarten reader is an instructive text on beginning each day (KG.13). The children stand with their arms-folded, girls at the front, boys at the rear, their uniforms neat and in order, their bags stowed away under their desks. The teacher, though her back is turned, is a model of correctness, standing straight, neatly in uniform, wearing modest jewelry, and with a flower in the bun of hair tied behind her head (see figure 4.6). The written text follows:

[412] The use of the suffix *-gji:* is discussed further in the section on lexicon in chapter 5.

Boys and girls enter the classroom	မောင်တို့ မယ်တို့ ကျောင်းခန်းဝင်
Adorned with smiles.	အပြုံးပန်းကိုဆင်။
'*Mingalaba Sayama*',	မင်္ဂလာပါ ဆရာမ
Greet in unison (*njinji–njanja*).	ညီညီညာညာနှုတ်ဆက်ကြ

'Mingalaba' (*mingalapa*) is the standard formal greeting used in Burmese. 'Sayama' (*hsajama.*) is the title for a female teacher; 'Saya' (*hsaja*) is male, or any teacher without clearly defined gender. As noted already, the entire text will at this stage be unreadable to the students—they will not master the alphabet for another year and a half—and even then, '*mingalaba*' is a Pali word of unconventional spelling not actually taught in any of the primary school readers.[413]

The textbooks offer paragons of the student and the school. In 'Maung Nyein Chan' (a boy's name) (2.53–4), the pupil is forgiving, hardworking and neat. He undertakes (*hsaunjwe'*) a lot of beneficial (*akjou:*) tasks for his community, and yet he is modest. The class teacher is always exhorting other students to emulate him. In 'Our school' (1.77–8) the normative school is visualised as a sturdy well-manufactured building, with the national flag flying at the front, neatly planted rows of vegetables, broad trees and a playground to one side.[414] The written text also is about the school as a physical entity—its conditions and environment, including its ventilation and lighting, its flag, its cleanliness and facilities: the playground, garden and library. The male narrator and his fellow students are responsible for its daily maintenance. This is what Charles Keyes refers to as the 'spatial culture' of the school, which

[413] Systematic teaching of Pali begins only in middle school.
[414] A similar depiction of the school is offered in third standard. See figure 4.12.

> Serves to represent the state in microcosm and to prepare the child for entry as a subordinated and rather ignorant villager into a world where certain types of relationships are structured with reference to the existence of the state.[415]

It is the first of a number of readings in the Myanmar schoolbooks where the school is used as a metaphor for the state by describing its 'spatial culture': its qualities are described, and then the students are placed in it and assigned their roles. Similar metaphorical use of the school library and school garden is examined below. In the public media the state's presence in this spatial culture is even more apparent, as schools are always reported on when the Secretary-1 or other military officials and bureaucrats are present. Like the representations in the textbooks, the visits and ceremonies are standardised and precise:

> The Secretary-1 was welcomed [at the school] by the students singing the song 'Myanma School' to the accompaniment of the band of Hlinethaya BEHS No. 2. Then, Deputy Minister for Construction Brig-Gen. Myint Thein, Deputy Minister for Education Brig-Gen. Soe Win Maung, SPA, FMI Group of Companies Chairman Mr Serge Pun (a) U Thein Wai formally opened the school building. Next, Deputy Director-General Col. Tin Win of DHSHD handed over documents related to the building to Director-General U Tin Win of No. 3 Basic Education Department [and so on].[416]

The dimensions and other standard characteristics of the school buildings and their resources are all also described in every report with riveting detail. In this manner the school and its personnel are not only identified, but the features that are important to know about—those things that, out of everything that could be said about the school, represent 'knowledge'—are stipulated for the uninitiated reader's benefit.

Buddhist imagery typically captures family and group activity (KG.25):

---

[415] Keyes, 'The proposed world of the school', p. 100.

[416] 'Secretary-1 attends opening of school buildings at Hlinethaya BEPS No. 20, Shwepyitha Day Nursery, Insein BEPS No. 37', *New Light of Myanmar*, 1 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ july01.htm] (3 July 2002).

This family	ဤမိသားစု
Comes to worship.	ဘုရားဖူး လာ၏။
The group comes.	လူစုလာသည်။
Is U Tha Htoo with them?	ဦးသာထူး ပါသလား။

The illustration associated with the above written text portrays a family walking together to a pagoda; other orderly groups are also on the road (see figure 4.1, item 3). Pagodas are the dominant Buddhist symbol in the textbooks, but monks are sometimes present (KG.37) (see figure 4.7, item 1):

Offer oil lamps.	ဆီမီး ပူဇော်ပါ။
The abbot preaches:	ဆရာတော် တရားဟော၏။
Don't have anger.	ဒေါသ မထားရ။
Exclaim 'sadhu'.[417]	သာဓု ခေါ်ပါ။

A number of poems also have explicitly Buddhist content, and introduce words that, quite apart from their conceptual difficulty, are Pali, and therefore, as noted, of an unusual written and phonetic form.

Description of festivals is one means to introduce Buddhism into the texts. Among the lowland Buddhist polities in Myanmar, as other predominantly Theravada Buddhist countries, the biggest celebrations are religious events based on the lunar calendar. These include the New Year Festival, 'Thingyan', (March/April on the Gregorian calendar) and the Festival of Light, 'Thadingyut'. The reading on Thingyan (2.59–60) explains the meritorious deeds that people undertake for the occasion, and concludes persuasively that

> We really should politely (*jinkjei:*) participate in the traditional (*jou:ja*) Myanmar New Year Festival.
>
> မြန်မာ့ရိုးရာသင်္ကြန်ပွဲတော်တွင် ကျွန်ုပ်တို့သည် ယဉ်ကျေးသိမ်မွေ့စွာ ပါဝင်ဆင်နွှဲသင့်ပေသည်။

[417] Oil lamps are a customary religious offering; 'sadhu' is the Buddhist equivalent of the Christian 'amen'.

Figure 4.7: Kindergarten reading 6
'Offer oil lamps; The abbot preaches: Don't have anger; Exclaim "sadhu".
Soldier hero; Skillful, distinguished person; He is helpful; He is indeed skillful.
The alchemist (*zo*) is dancing [a traditional Bamar dance]; Thrust the chest out;
Laughing heartily, moving swiftly, are you quite tired?
Where have you come from aunty? Have you come early? You've brought a companion. You have guava.' (KG.37)

Figure 4.8: The 'national races' and Tatmadaw united (Illustration opposite the national anthem in the kindergarten textbook) (KG.68).

Similarly, the text on the Thadingyut Festival (3.38–9) notifies students on what occurs during the event and what is expected of them. Students are also informed of the import of the date, which marks the return to earth of the Lord Buddha after preaching to his deceased mother on a celestial plane, as mentioned above.

However, the data in table 4.3 do not give a good indication of references to Buddhism in the textbooks, suggesting that they are low—although constant—relative to other institutions. This is inaccurate: a Buddhist undercurrent flows throughout the texts in the form of duties (*ဝတ္တ*), homilies, parables and fables, some of which are discussed below. Students may hear these not only at school, but also in the home and at the monastery. So while the references to Buddhism are often not overt, they are influential. By contrast, whereas around 13 per cent of Myanmar's population (about six and a half million people) ascribe to other religions—most to Christianity and Islam—there is not a single reference to any other religious practice, either direct or inferred, in the textbooks. This omission both deceives students and belies state pretensions to pluralism.[418]

The data in table 4.3 also disclose a relatively low-level of text expressly pertaining to the military, the Myanmar armed forces, or Tatmadaw. Explicit references to the armed forces as an institution are rare, and even then are made with regards to historical rather than contemporary events and persons. Visual and written imagery of the modern military tends to be of small groups parading, or of individual soldiers engaging the people. For instance, a visual image of a soldier helping a civilian woman doing manual labour, apparently on a

[418] See for instance, 'All the Islamic faithful enjoy freedom of worship as do those who believe in other faiths: 1476th Prophet's Day observed', *New Light of Myanmar,* 10 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june10.html]

government project of some kind, is accompanied by written text (KG.37) (see figure 4.7, item 2):

Soldier hero.	ဖာနည်ရဲဘော်။
Skillful, distinguished person.	လူတော်လူမော်။
He is helpful.	အဖော်ရ၏။
He is indeed skillful.	တော်ပါပေသည်။

In this text the word that has been (poorly) translated into English as 'hero' is *zani*—an abbreviation of *azani* (အာဖာနည်). The chief quality of an *azani* is his willingness to die for the cause. In the textbooks General Aung San is the penultimate *azani*. Hence, the model soldier is in life a hero and potential martyr.[419]

The visual text for the above reading is provocative, as it is reminiscent of propaganda in other state media about members of the Tatmadaw working together with the people on schemes for national development. It depicts the soldier assisting a civilian woman doing *loatapay* (လုပ်အားပေး – *lou'a:pei:*), or labour contribution (literally, 'work – give support'), a point of controversy for people inside, and outside, Myanmar. Short on resources, the country continues to rely upon public participation in infrastructure projects, such as repairs of roads, construction of bridges, digging of ponds and clearing of scrub. In its most brutal forms *loatapay* involves conscription to military units for frontline tasks, such as bearing armaments and travelling as human shields. The practice in all its manifestations is endemic and compulsory. The Myanmar government has been repeatedly censured by the International Labour Organization for breaches of

(12 June 2002). 'Religious freedom enjoyed fully, freedom of worship safeguarded by law, administrative and social means', *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 December 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec2.htm] (4 December 2000).

[419] The concept of *azani* is discussed further in chapter 5.

international law on forced labour.[420] In light of this, the visual image is made more interesting by the fact that it has been changed within the last few years: the 1995 edition of the textbook has the same written text, but the visual text shows a soldier charging, bayonet fixed. In other places, militaristic images have in recent years substituted civilian ones. In one kindergarten reading about a parade, the written text has not changed, but the visual image has gone from a loose gathering of civilians in 1995 to a precise line of soldiers in full dress bearing military flags (KG.39). Soldiers are also liable to appear among the 'national races', as if the Tatmadaw can somehow be equated with Myanmar's cultural and linguistic sub-groups (see figure 4.8). Notwithstanding, the textbooks overall tend away from modern militaristic imagery and towards historical and metaphorical messages as a means to reinforce the Tatmadaw's powerful role as somehow traditional and inherited.[421]

The first reference to the nation and its symbols comes early in kindergarten (KG.05), with

> The Motherland, our country, the land we love
>
> အမိမြေ တို့တိုင်းပြည် ငါတို့ ချစ်တဲ့ မြေ

The written text is accompanied by a small image of a female celestial being flying the flag (see figure 4.3, item 5). A reading in second standard informs students about the symbolism of the flag and reminds them of how every school day starts by paying respects to it (2.05–6). The section concludes that

---

[420] For a recent report, see 'Developments concerning the question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)', ILO Governing Body, 283rd Session, GB.283/5/2, March 2002, [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/ docs/gb283/pdf/gb-5-2.pdf] (28 June 2002).

[421] This point is discussed further in the conclusion.

We bow to the national flag while always remembering that we must preserve our independence and be loyal to our country.

ကျွန်တော်တို့သည် လွတ်လပ်ရေးကို ထိန်းသိမ်းရန်နှင့် နိုင်ငံတော်အပေါ်တွင် သစ္စာရှိရန် အမြဲသတိရလျက် နိုင်ငံတော်အလံကို အလေးပြုကြပါသည်။

The word used for 'loyal' in the above is *thi'sa–shi.*, which is significant for the reason that its presence suggests its opposite: *thi'sa–hpau'* (သစ္စာဖောက်), or traitor, a word commonly used to describe anyone behaving contrary to the stipulations of the military, particularly political opponents and armed insurgent groups.

A range of direct and indirect images is deployed to capture the national concept. When Independence Day celebrations are described, students are reminded of how Myanmar was occupied by the British colonialists, but that the national races continuously endeavoured (*kjou:ban:*) to get independence. This was possible due to the efforts of *azani* General Aung San and the unity (*si:loun:–njinjou'–hmu.*) of the national races. The reading concludes by reminding readers that all national races have the duty (*tawun*) to ensure continued independence. At another level, farmers are used to introduce 'facts' on management and administration (1.17):

Mighty farmers.	ခွန်အားကြီးသော လယ်သမားများ။
They will till collectively.	စုပေါင်းထွန်ကြမည်။
Having given directions on good methods,	နည်းလမ်းကောင်းများ ညွှန်ပြထားသည်။
The crop will be plentiful:	သီးနှံဖွံ့ဖြိုးမည်။
Mutual reliance.	ကိုင်းကျွန်းမို ကျွန်းကိုင်းမို။

Though there is no specific reference to the state in the above reading, it is implied by the correct management and success of the venture, which becomes apparent in later readings (3.17):

To achieve increased paddy yield, the directions that are laid down by the Ministry of Agriculture are followed. Increased paddy yield means more income for the nation.

စပါးအထွက်တိုးအောင် စိုက်ပျိုးရေးဌာနကချမှတ်သော လမ်းညွှန်ချက်များကို လိုက်နာကြပါသည်။ စပါးအထွက်တိုးခြင်းဖြင့် နိုင်ငံတော်၏ ဝင်ငွေများ တိုးတက်လာပါသည်။

The last reading item of the kindergarten book is striking for its overtly nationalist imagery, and for reason of it not having been included in earlier editions (KG.66):

Myanmar, our country,	မြန်မာပြည်သည် ငါတို့ပြည်၊
Myanmar, our language;	မြန်မာစာသည် ငါတို့စာ၊
May Myanmar prosper.	မြန်မာပြည် ကြီးပွားစေရမည်။
Let's strive on (*kyou:za:*).	ငါတို့ ကြိုးစားကြပါစို့။

The first two lines of the stanza have been adapted from those of the rallying cry against the British of 1920: 'Burma, our country; Burmese, our language' (the original is reproduced in the fourth standard history textbook). The associated visual text has a young Bamar male giving a rousing speech. This is a provocative ending to the kindergarten reader: while the government argues that 'Myanmar' is an inclusive term, the way it is presented here equates it exclusively with Bamar identity, an issue explored further below.

Table 4.4 summarises key imagery examined dichotomously by age, gender and ethnic classes. These classes have been divided in two because a greater understanding may be obtained by some familiarity of how *both* youth and adults, both females and males, and both Bamar and non-Bamar are represented in the schoolbooks. Religious imagery might also have been divided as Buddhist and non-Buddhist, had it been the case that the books contained any non-Buddhist text. As they do not, Buddhism was included in table 4.3.

Table 4.4: Movement of key dichotomised imagery across textbooks

STANDARD	*KG*		*1*		*2*		*3*		*4*		*TOTAL*	
WRITTEN / ILLUSTRATED IMAGERY	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill	Wr	Ill
Age												
1. Youth	19	45	24	40	21	21	26	16	17	8	107	130
2. Adult	19	27	6	22	32	25	34	23	27	17	118	114
Gender												
1. Female	21	40	11	34	6	14	14	14	10	4	62	106
2. Male	22	43	21	44	37	37	40	31	32	19	152	174
Ethnicity												
1. Bamar	0	23	3	28	8	19	9	18	11	13	31	101
2. Non-Bamar	1	3	3	5	5	3	10	6	0	0	19	17

Notes on table 4

1. The base unit of measurement was the page. See notes on table 4.3 for further comments
2. Written and illustrated imagery of siblings, children, babies and youth were treated as youth, while parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, teachers and others holding adult professions were classed as adults.
3. While the illustrated gender imagery was usually unambiguous, the written text was sometimes more problematic. Male plural pronouns were sometimes used to indicate both genders. For the purposes of quantification, these references were taken as 'male'.
4. 'Bamar' versus 'non-Bamar' imagery were classified according to illustrated or written references to culture, clothing, hairstyle and environment. In some cases these involved explicit reference to one ethnic group or another (or all of them), in other cases to items and activities commonly associated with one particular group.

The findings for age indicate that over the five books there is a relatively even amount of imagery between youths and adults, but during the first two standards the depictions of youth are more frequent than those of adults. At that level, youth dominates visual portrayals of written text that is not age-specific. However imagery of adults dominates written and illustrated content in the later years, corresponding with the increased presence of the state. In the third and fourth standard history textbooks, mentioned briefly below, there is no reference to youth in written or visual text. There is only one example of a youthful historical personage in any of the textbooks, a boy raised in the court at Ava who became a poet of standing while still young (2.89–90). Where youth are represented in the upper primary textbooks, they are also increasingly characterised as engaged in 'adult' enterprises. The adults too are more remote from the child: instead of parents, relatives and teachers there are figures from folk stories and historical personages. The youths in early textbooks assist parents and elders with whom they seem to be intimate. By the later standards, older-looking children are engaged in helpful tasks that may benefit the community, such as cleaning or working on common areas with other members of the public. Again the imagery suggests a movement from the child's immediate environs, towards the Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw.

The data on gender in table 4.4 reflect a dramatic movement from a relatively even distribution of imagery to predominantly male content. This shift again correlates with the overall movement in the texts towards the state, which in Myanmar is unequivocally patriarchal and militarist.[422] As the readings progress,

---

[422] Myanmar currently has 73 ministers and deputy ministers. 45 of them are military officers. None of them are women. 'Myanmar Today: Government of the State', *The Golden Land: Myanmar*, undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/today/today.html] (4 May 2002). There is no ministry for women's affairs, although there is a 'national committee', appropriately

gender portrayals also change. At first males and females are all associated with similar verbs: cleaning, eating, walking, and playing. But by the first standard distinctions are already being drawn: women are serving men, and household chores are becoming gender-oriented. One reading describes a young carpenter helped by his little sister (1.41). In the visual text, the boy stands assuredly wielding the saw and the girl devotedly kneels and supports the plank in front of him. Another area of assigned gender roles is in gardening and agriculture. Where aesthetic gardens and flowers are depicted, the gender imagery is almost entirely female; but where the imagery relates to farming and agricultural production, it is predominantly male, even though men *and* women have typically been engaged in agriculture in Myanmar.[423]

The roles of parents and teachers are also clearly delineated according to gender. Parental roles are in second standard readings. These are universal stereotypes: mother stays at home and rears the children, teaching them, disciplining them, feeding and clothing them (2.08); father is the breadwinner, the community organiser and the one who works not only for the family but also for the benefit (*a̲kjou:*) of the nation (2.16) (see figure 4.9). Teachers' roles also have clear gender-specific attributes. The number of female teachers in the textbooks' written and visual text outweighs the males by two to one—which in this case reflects reality, as more women are entering the profession to obtain a small supplementary income for their families and more men are leaving it to find higher incomes elsewhere. Although numerically superior, the female teachers are hierarchically inferior. They are engaged in mundane classroom activities, and where venerated

---

headed by a Maj–Gen. Sein Htwa. 'Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs', undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/women/mncwa/mncwa.html] (4 July 2002).

[423] See for instance, the reading on 'The school garden' in chapter 5.

Figure 4.9: 'Our mummy' & 'Our daddy' (2.08 & 16).

by students, they are in the presence of male teachers. By contrast, male teachers are venerated and attended to by students on their own. Male teachers are also engaged in all administrative affairs: watching over the library, giving speeches, and serving as school headmasters. Again this imagery is an unequivocal statement about the management of the state and society: women predominantly staff the lowest levels of government departments. Even at the highest levels, their roles are merely supportive of some greater endeavour by males—on Myanmar Women's Day 2002, for instance, the female national representative was Daw Kyaing Kyaing, the wife of Snr-Gen. Than Shwe. She spoke only after the Secretary–1 had dispensed with his usual admonitions.[424] The wives of military officers and state officials like Daw Kyaing Kyaing also occupy the senior positions in committees and government-sponsored agencies for women's affairs, rather than independent women. This situation exposes the rhetoric of equality as fraudulent, and corresponds with the gender imagery in the textbooks.

The findings on ethnicity in table 4.4 are perhaps the least ambiguous. Ethnic identity is an unstable ingredient in the Union makeup. Since independence, Myanmar's ethnic diversity has been central to political and social unrest. While not always making explicit reference to ethnicity, the majority of state discourse on 'unity' is out of regard for the 'national races'. Yet in the schoolbooks, the 'national races' are submerged by the dominant Bamar imagery, the default visual text throughout. Where written text refers to someone eating, celebrating or otherwise engaging in something that does nto have an innate ethnic quality,

---

[424] 'Myanmar society has been [a] very good environment for Myanmar women: Myanmar women have never been discriminated against; enjoy equal rights with men', *New Light of Myanmar,* 4 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july04.htm] (7 July 2002).

invariably the illustrated text shows someone in Bamar dress or hairstyle.[425] The same applies to material objects: where the generic word for 'a harp' is introduced it is illustrated with a Bamar harp, in spite of there being more than one variety of harp in Myanmar. Students learn that a harp is by default a Bamar object: a 'Karen harp' must be distinguished by an adjectival prefix.

The Bamar people in the textbooks appear 'natural', whereas those of non-Bamar groups are contrived and often comical. People dressed as Bamar are seen as individuals or in family units, engaged in community celebrations or household tasks. Non-Bamar are usually lumped together in contrived groups displaying standardised national costumes, rather than simple day-to-day scenes. The deliberate and powerful nature of the default Bamar imagery is confirmed by a quick glance at Karen language readers that the state has approved for publication.[426] In Karen-produced texts, people in default images all wear standardised Karen clothes, and likewise their material culture is identifiably 'Karen' (including harps) (see figure 4.10, top).[427] Boys and girls neatly attired in Karen dress attend school just the same as their Bamar counterparts. The Karen in those books—well dressed, studying and progressing—stand in marked contrast to those of the state schoolbooks. In them, hunters and foresters have Karen hairstyles and weapons, are all heavily tattooed and wear few clothes: they

[425] Hairstyle is no triviality. Alaungphaya used hairstyle as a form of psychological warfare on the battlefield against the multi-ethnic Mon-led army. Lieberman writes that 'his men unfurled their topknots to show [enemy Bamar] soldiers with whom they could not communicate verbally that they were fellow Burmans'. In response, his desperate opponents commanded their troops to all cut their hair in the Mon fashion. Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles,* pp. 237, 242. On the role of attire and fashion in power and authority, see also Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge*, pp. 113–17.

[426] Those referred to for this inquiry were the *Pwo Kayin Primer: Kindergarten (ပိုးကရင်သင်ပုန်းကြီး—သူငယ်တန်း)*, (West Pwo Kayin script), ပိုးကရင်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်, Yangon, c.1995, and, *Pwo Kayin Reader: Kindergarten (ပိုးကရင်ဖတ်စာ—သူငယ်တန်း)*, (East Pwo Kayin script), စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်, Yangon, 1975.

[427] For a discussion on the manufacturing of Karen (versus Bamar) identity, including examination of the terms 'Karen' versus 'Kayin', see Cheesman, 'Seeing "Karen" in the Union of Myanmar', pp. 199–215.

Figure 4.10: Alternative depictions of Karen. *Top:* Villagers, warriors, books and cultural artifacts in a Karen language reader (*Pwo Kayin Reader: Kindergarten,* p. 4; original text in colour) *Bottom:* Hunting in the third year textbook (3.71).

and their kind are by implication 'jungle people' (see figure 4.10, bottom).[428] Only one reading in the Myanmar primers has a distinctly non-Bamar character in written and illustrated text: a Shan boy who, as a test of strength, wrestles a bear in the forest (3.20–1). Telling his mother about it on his return home, he is admonished (*hsoun:ma.*) for not doing something useful with his ample energy:

> 'Yeah my son, your great strength is good. [But] strength must be used for the benefit (*a̲kjou:*) of others.'
>
> အေး ငဲ့သား၊ ခွန်အားကြီးတာ ကောင်းပါပေတယ်။ ခွန်အားကို အများအကျိုးရှိအောင် အသုံးချရမည်။

This is one of the few occurances of such colloquial style of speech in the textbooks: against the backdrop of extensive instruction on civility and refinement in word and manner, her opening seems blunt (အေး ငဲ့သား). Again, the implication is that even if she is able to make observations of benefit to the student reader, she and her type would be unsuited to manage the country, which necessarily falls to those with the superior traditions and attributes.

In the Myanmar readers, non-Bamar identity is also trivialised through stereotype. In a similar style to that used for the non-Bamar 'national races', in 'Children from faraway lands' a Mexican is in a sombrero, an African has a spear and a grass skirt, and an Arab wears curled-up shoes (2.64–5). Chinese and Indians are also depicted, although school students in areas bordering those countries should hardly be taught to consider them 'far away'. Even where there are realistic illustrations of non-Bamar groups, these are again limited to dances and costume—as they are on state television and in other media. The 'national races' are present in the texts, but their role as distinctive groups in the society is reduced to mere song and dance routines.

---

[428] The depiction of non-Bamar as hunters may also be uncharitable from a religious perspective. Hunters are among those

History also is Bamar. In the third standard book a female student narrates a visit to Pagan (3.71–2) referring to it as 'we Myanmar nationals' most magnificent ancient city (မြန်မာလူမျိုးတို့၏ အခမ်းနားဆုံး ရှေးဟောင်းမြို့တော်ကြီး)'. Again, the concepts of ethnicity and nation are blurred, as the word used for 'nationals' here, *lumjou:* (လူမျိုး), suggests ethnicity or race. The use of 'Myanmar *lumjou:*', then, is ambiguous, as by the state's own definition there exist numerous *lumjou:* within the territory, yet at the same time it suggests a single Myanmar *lumjou:* arising out of the first great Bamar-dominated kingdom in the territory.[429] As the student's visit continues, she observes that

> Myanmar literature and Myanmar fine arts (*jinkjei:-anu.pjinnja*) developed from Pagan onwards.
>
> မြန်မာစာပေ၊ မြန်မာယဉ်ကျေးမှုအနုပညာတို့သည် ပုဂံမှစတင်၍ ဖွံ့ဖြိုးလာခဲ့ပါသည်။

In spite of the overtures to non-Bamar dance and 'culture' elsewhere in the textbooks, this blanket statement makes plain other traditions are not in serious contention: the 'genuine' Myanmar culture is situated in the Indic lowland Buddhist polities, and specifically those managed by the Bamar.[430] This implies the use of 'culture' as a code term for 'race'.[431] In light of the above, given the intricate connection between racial and religious identity, it may be said that references to 'culture', where not otherwise described, are representations of conjoined Bamar and Buddhist identity. These are equally representations of

---

who take life for their livelihoods, and hence according to Buddhist doctrine belong to a 'low' profession.

[429] While Bamar-dominated, Aung-Thwin observes that Pagan was in fact highly syncretic:

> It was an age characterised by Burman military rule, Pyu traditions, Mon culture, and Theravadin spirit. To say that Pagan was, at this time, an ethnic Burman civilization is to speak only of the ruling class; to call it Mon ignores the political and military realities; to call it Pyu overestimates the longevity of that tradition; to call it Theravadin oversimplifies the religious milieu. All these elements made up eleventh– and early twelfth-century Pagan.

Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, p. 23.

[430] None of the textbooks make reference, for instance, to the ancient Arakan kingdom of Mrauk U, the remains of which as yet lie in relative obscurity in the west of the country, apparently of interest only to archaeologists and historians. Similarly, it is not mentioned that Bamar 'culture' is largely derived from that of the Mon, obtained via conquest.

[431] Street, 'Meanings of culture in development', p. 53.

power and authority, which is also adult and male, of what is universal and 'normal', versus what is marginal and subordinate.

Descriptions, instructions and morals

This section takes up readings and recitation pieces in the textbooks classed by three prevalent styles: descriptive, instructive and moralistic. Descriptive pieces provide details of historical and current events, people and places. Instructive pieces assign and articulate activities for students inside and outside of school. Moralistic pieces are based on the Buddha's life stories—the Jataka tales—and other fables, including Aesop's tales.

Readings on history tend towards historical personages.[432] Among the former are four military and monarchical personalities: Kyanzittha, Bayintnaung, Alaungphaya and Mahabandoola; three kings and one general. The readings on Bayintnaung and Mahabandoola are topics for chapter 5; Kyanzittha and Alaungphaya are raised in this section. A few non-military Bamar males are also highlighted in the books, including a famous performer and an orchestra leader; however, unlike the kings and generals, these people neither figure prominently in other state media, nor in other curricula outside of the books.

Kyanzittha (r. 1084–1111 CE) is credited with having consolidated the Pagan kingdom (2.09–10). During the earlier reign of Anawrahta, the first prominent

---

[432] In May 1989 the newly formed military government ordered the rewriting of history to justify the Tatmadaw's latest intervention, by portraying it as an eternally vigilant national saviour in times of crisis. 'Saw Maung orders new history', *Burma Press Summary*, vol. 3, no. 5, May 1989, [http://public.ibiblio.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=burmaps&ct=0] (17 January 2002). As mentioned throughout this dissertation, that project has involved the imagining of an unbroken lineage of prestigious military leaders from past dynasties to the present day, in the same manner as kings historically ordered chronicles identifying the links between themselves and earlier generations.

Bamar monarch, Kyanzittha became famous among the Four Champions—Anawrahta's most senior commanders. The text asserts that after the enemy captured Anawrahta's successor, court advisors urged Kyanzittha to assume the throne. Initially he refused, attempting (*kyou:za:*) instead to carry out a rescue—hence his reputation for loyalty (*thi'sashi.*). The reading goes on to explain how once Kyanzittha did take the throne he provided well for people and finally handed power to a grandson with 'Mon and Myanmar blood', as a gesture of unity (*si:loun:–jei:*). Primary school students again meet with Kyanzittha in the third standard history textbook, where the same information is repeated in greater detail over a couple of readings.

Alaungphaya (r. 1752–60 CE) is presented in the third standard (3.28–9) reader. Alaungphaya came from relatively humble beginnings, and therefore the text mentions his three names, first as an ordinary civilian leader; second, in his ascendancy when he became Alaungmintaya, 'Future King of Law/Righteousness', and third, as the immodest Alaungphaya, 'Future Buddha'.[433] At a time of dynastic decline, Alaungphaya expanded power outwards from the tract of villages he commanded, eventually beginning the Konbaung dynasty. The reading accounts for the succession of battles and victories fought, including the battle at Syriam: defended with the help of 'modern weaponry and foreigners' (Portuguese mercenaries), Syriam was eventually successfully (*aunmjin*) overthrown.[434] These historical 'lessons' are used by the state to instill

[433] In this instance 'king of law', 'mintaya' is a Burmese version of the Pali *dhammaraja*, a specific class of superior king in the Buddhist typology of cosmologically ordained beings. The idea was derived from Brahmin codes. Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, p. 66–7. See also Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, pp. 56–60. Kyanzittha also laid claim to being a future Buddha (although his name is mundane). Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, p. 48.

[434] Lieberman, referring to contemporaneous accounts, describes the scene that followed the siege as 'a ghastly affair, with bodies piled so high in the gates that people within the city could not escape'. Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, p. 248.

in the present body of teachers and students the glorious legacy of Myanmar empires past that is theirs to perpetuate:

> Throughout the successive eras of history, the national empires were founded during the times the national solidarity was firm; and all the dangers harming the nation were crushed with the consolidated force of the national people. Thus, teachers should lead their pupils in all sectors... in enabling them to always keep in the fore the past glories and the will to promote their Myanmar spirit, the unyielding spirit, the spirit of King Bayintnaung, the spirit to root out all the enemies of the nation, and the spirit of King Alaungphaya.[435]

And although the textbook readings admit disunity and strife during the successive dynasties, at the national propaganda level the inherent unity of *all* 'national races' is undoubted:

> In the Konbaung Period, the glory of the third Myanmar Kingdom, built by King Alaungmintaya, reached its peak during the reign of King Hsinbyushin. At that time, the defence force made up of all the national races was able to repel every invasion, and won every battle.[436]

This version of history fits with the conclusions reached by Prasenjit Duara in his study of China, where his 'principal argument is that national history secures for the contested and contingent nation the false unity of a self-same, national subject evolving through time'.[437] For Duara the security that this 'history' brings the state is integral to its survival; it also feeds back into the discourse on 'civility' discussed above:

> It is only nations in the fullness of (their) History that realize freedom. Those without History, those non-nations such as tribal polities, empires, and others have no claims or rights; even more, nations have the right to destroy non-nations and bring Enlightenment to them.[438]

General Aung San is a conspicuous link in this presupposed chain of identity between ancient and modern. The last reading in third standard (3.80) is an

---

[435] 'Failure to nurture youth to have clear national outlook will lead to end of their [lives] under uncertain circumstances'. Bayintnaung is discussed under the section on Burmese lexicon in chapter 5.

[436] 'Yodaya breeds some traitors of our country, arms them, provides them with food and shelter and recruits new members'.

[437] Duara, *Rescuing history from the nation*, p. 4.

[438] Duara, *Rescuing history from the nation*, p. 20. See also Cheesman, 'Seeing "Karen" in the Union of Myamar', pp. 205–15, with regards to the construction of a 'Karen history' as a part of the elite Karen (failed) nation -building project.

independence-era song about Aung San that bristles with historical nationalist imagery and draws parallels between him and Bayintnaung, Alaungphaya and Mahabandoola. This link is vital not merely because it establishes continuity between said ancient and modern historical traditions, but also because it is a means for the state to assert its position in a 'great lineage' from the time of the monarchy up to now. Alaungphaya, too, having obtained the crown through conquest and lacking hereditary credentials for his rule, 'promulgated an official genealogy early in his reign, which claimed he was descended from the sacred race of kings going back through the rulers of Pagan'.[439] The practice, then—as noted earlier—is not new.

That the most prominent opponent of the current military regime is Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of this national hero, has been a problem for the state. Its compensatory strategy has been first to make an equal claim to his prestige—as Aung San was the 'Father of the Tatmadaw' the army is by definition also one of his children—and then inflate it, so that its status is higher than the other (genuine) children. State propaganda agencies have accused Aung San Suu Kyi of having forsaken her heritage by leaving the country and marrying a foreigner, whereas the Tatmadaw, it is held, has always remained true to the national cause. Attempts to discredit Aung San Suu Kyi, which have descended for periods to the slurs and snipes of the gutter press, appear to have been spectacularly unsuccessful, given the acclaim with which she was met after her most recent release from house arrest in mid-2002.[440]

---

[439] Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, p. 239.

[440] Houtman has argued that the Tatmadaw has suffered from 'Aung San amnesia' and downplayed his role since his daughter took a lead role in opposition to its management of the country. Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics*, pp. 27–8. While it is true that his face was removed from the national currency and in other respects his presence became less conspicuous, his ongoing place in the school textbooks and other areas of the national agenda suggest a

Among the historical events in the readers, the first item in the third standard is about the origins of National Day (3.05–6). Again, the reading seeks to establish National Day as a link in an unbroken chain between past, present and future:

> This day that stimulated the upsurge of patriotism (*mjou:chi'-sei'da'*) of the entire Myanmar nation has been recognised as National Day. [We] shouldn't forget National Day, which activated this patriotism (*mjou:chi'-sei'*). While celebrating National Day each year, [we] must strive (*kjou:ban:*) for the eternal flourishing of patriotism (*mjou:chi'-sei'da'*).
>
> မြန်မာတစ်မျိုးသားလုံးအား မျိုးချစ်စိတ်ဓာတ်တက်ကြွအောင် လှုံ့ဆော်ပေးသော ထိုနေ့ကို အမျိုးသားနေ့ဟူ၍ သတ်မှတ်ခဲ့ကြသည်။ မျိုးချစ်စိတ်နိုးကြားစေခဲ့သော အမျိုးသားနေ့ကို မမေ့သင့်ပါ။ အမျိုးသားနေ့ကို နှစ်စဉ်ကျင်းပကာ မျိုးချစ်စိတ်ဓာတ် ထာဝစဉ် ရှင်သန်အောင် ကြိုးပမ်းရမည်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

Interestingly, a number of items on ethnic unity that were in earlier readers, such as 'Union Day' and 'The Panglong Spirit', have been omitted from recent texts. Union Day appears in the fourth standard history reader, but no reference is made to Panglong, where General Aung San signed an agreement with non-Bamar leaders that proved crucial to the establishment and early survival of the Union.

While these are the contents in the primers, it must be noted that the history books are more overtly nationalist and militarist. The first history reader, in third standard, is from cover to cover a parade of kings, the fourth standard, a showcase of independence heroes and events. The personages in these textbooks are all adult males—women appear only in passing references, or in visual text among the masses. The people and culture depicted are almost exclusively Bamar.[441] In the third standard history textbook all 25 readings revolve around

---

narrowing rather than erasing of his role, perhaps by emphasising his place in the lineage of great Myanmar leaders, rather than as an outstanding individual.

[441] There is one reading on a Rakhine king in the third standard history textbook (3.21–22) and some references to the Mon, from whom, as footnoted above, the Bamar obtained a great many of their traditions. There is a reading on a Shan prince in the fourth standard history book (4.29–30) and one on a famous nationalist monk, U Ottama (4.14–5), which in spite of its numerous details on U Ottama's family upbringing omits to mention that he was Rakhine.

royal or military affairs, or both. Eighteen readings are centred on kings or princes and 13 on champions, battles and other military matters (see figure 4.11). Sixteen out of the 27 readings in fourth standard are on distinguished persons and leaders, the other 11 being on mass actions and national events. This is interesting in light of an article by Tun Aung Chain suggesting that the vogue term for 'history' was implemented by the socialist state in an apparently failed attempt to rid the subject of overemphasis on monarchs and personages.[442]

After a series of political and strategic clashes upset relations between Myanmar and Thailand in 2001, the teaching of 'history' suddenly obtained a higher profile.[443] The Myanmar Ministry of Education abruptly issued new inflammatory history textbooks for fourth standard and middle school, referring to Thailand as 'Yodaya', which an article in the state media explained as follows:

> Yodayas called their city Ayutthia, meaning the city state that cannot be conquered. But Myanmars used to call it Yutthia, meaning the city state that can be conquered with intent to degrade it. Later, Myanmars called Yutthia 'Yodaya' in reference to the nation and the people.[444]

---

[442] Tun Aung Chain, 'The broken glass: Changes in the perception of the Myanmar past', *Myanmar Historical Research Journal*, no. 6, Universities Historical Research Centre, Yangon, December 2000, pp. 33–43. Tun Aung Chain discusses how the word used originally for 'history' was 'yazawin' (*jaz̲awin* – ရာဇဝင်), from the Pali *rajavamsa*, for the chronicles of kings. In 1962 the socialist state shifted the usage to 'thamaing' (*th̲amain:* – သမိုင်း), from the Pali *sammuti*, meaning lore or tradition, a word used for the chronicles of pagodas. The point was that history should consist more than the lineages of kings. In light of the current 'thamaing' textbooks, the point appears to have been lost, as indeed it was even during the socialist era. Concluding his assessment of a socialist-period 'thamaing' text, Tun Aung Chain remarks,

> The people are indeed there in the *History*, dotting the landscape. But they remain somewhat like cardboard figures. There are no peasant rebellions, [there is] no class struggle. The people do not make history, it is still the kings who make history.

Tun Aung Chain, 'The broken glass', p. 43.

[443] Achara Ashayagachat & Bhanravee Tansubhapol, 'Textbook is "part of a big campaign"', *Bangkok Post*, 9 June 2001. 'AP: New history textbook tells Myanmar kids that Thais are lazy', *BurmaNet*, 5 June 2001, [strider@igc.org] (6 June 2001).

[444] Kyaw Htin Nawrahta. 'Our forefathers called them Yodayas', *New Light of Myanmar*, 31 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/may31.htm] (1 June 2002). In a communication to the Burma Research e-group, Michael Aung-Thwin has discredited this account, stating that Yodaya 'was not a derogatory term but an identifier' going back to at least the sixteenth century CE. Michael Aung Thwin, 'Re: [Burmaresearch] "Yodaya"', Burma Research e-group, 9 June 2002, [burmaresearch@yahoogroups.com] (10 June 2002). Irrespective of historical use, it now has been taken as derogatory. The Thai Defence Minister, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, a retired general known to have close contacts with senior leaders of the regime in Myanmar, is reported to have remarked, 'We don't know what they mean by Yodaya... When we hear Yodaya we hear Ayutthaya. But Yodaya means subjugated country. This hurts us.' 'Thais warn of "strong measures" in feud with Myanmar', *BurmaNet*, 28 June 2002, [strider@igc.org] (28 June 2002).

Figure 4.11: Martial scenes from the third standard history textbook. *Note:* The 'enemy' in each case is, clockwise from top left, the Chinese, the Hanthawaddy kingdom (part of the contemporary Union), the Manipuri kingdom and the British.

Figure 4.12: 'Our school' (3.07).

The textbooks blame Thailand for all the problems in relations over the centuries, arguing that the conflict is due to Thai chauvinism, despite their state being an historical inferior. The Thai people are also stereotyped as morally deficient and trivial:

> In keeping with their innate character, Yodaya are people fond of beauty and amusement. They have little self-reliance and little inclination for hard work.
>
> ယိုးဒယားလူမျိုးတို့သည် ပင်ကိုယ်အရ အလှအပနှင့် အပျော်အပါးကို ခုံမင်သူများ ဖြစ်ကြသည်။ မိမိကိုယ်ကို အားကိုးလိုစိတ်နည်းပါးပြီး ကြမ်းတမ်းစွာလုပ်ကိုင်ရသော လုပ်ငန်းများကို စိတ်ဝင်စားမှု နည်းပါးသည်။ [445]

This was the first time that a Myanmar textbook unambiguously denigrated Thailand, and it drew a rapid and distressed response from the Thai administration.[446] By the end of 2001 relations had improved and no further mention was made of the commotion. However, in mid-2002 they again deteriorated, particularly after Ma Tin Win, an academic from the Institute of Education in Yangon, wrote a series of articles for the *New Light of Myanmar* dismissing earlier Thai kings as weak sycophants to European colonial powers and traitors to a supposed regional fraternity.[447] Ironically, it is Ma Tin Win who, on the role of schooling in breeding xenophobic sentiment, has written that the Thai people have 'learnt "bad things" about Myanmar prescribed in the school curricula for a long time. That's why they hate and want to kill Myanmar [people] on sight'.[448] In many respects the dispute, at least from the rhetorical position of Myanmar's propagandists, is also a contest of civility:

---

[445] *Social studies: Myanmar history vol. 2 (Basic education middle standard level) [လူမှုရေးဘာသာ—မြန်မာသမိုင်း အတွဲ (၂) (အခြေခံပညာ အလယ်တန်းအဆင့်)]*, Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 2001, p. 10.

[446] Surasak Tumcharoen & Sirikul Burmag, 'Kraisak wants to end spat caused by textbook slur', *Bangkok Post*, 7 June 2001.

[447] See for instance, Ma Tin Win, 'Phra Narit did not amount to much', *New Light of Myanmar*, 28 & 29 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/may28.htm & http://www.myanmar.com/ nlm/article/may29.htm] (30 May 2002). See also, 'Thai military slams Myanmar's junta over insults to Thai monarchy', *BurmaNet*, 26 June 2002, [strider@igc.org] (27 June 2002).

[448] Ma Tin Win, 'I, Ma Tin Win, am a real lady', *New Light of Myanmar*, 22 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/june%2022a.html] (26 June 2002). Ma Tin Win has now been declared 'an enemy of the Thai people' by the Thai Defence Minister, and banned from that country. 'Thais warn of "strong measures" in feud with Myanmar'. See also, Win Myint (ဝင်းမြင့်), 'ဒေါက်တာမတင်းဝင်း ရေးသားမှု ထိုင်းနိုင်ငံမှ ပြင်းထန်စွာ ကန့်ကွက်' ('Thailand strongly protests Dr Ma Tin Win's writing', *The*

> At present, all the citizens of Myanmar including the students should nurture themselves to have the spirit to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of others as they are civilized people.[449]

Even if the insults have again waned, at least for the time being, reports are that soldiers stationed in Myanmar's border territories are being trained in anti-Thai psychological warfare, to 'motivate the public continually... [to] become boiling with indignation' about their treacherous neighbours.[450] Under any circumstances, at least in the short term a continued role for the new supplementary textbooks appears inevitable. Whether the hostility may seep into the mainstream books—including the primers—remains to be seen.

Many items in the Myanmar readers also describe present-day places, issues and phenomena. These include readings about the social and natural environments: health and cleanliness, recreation, animal husbandry, agriculture, transport and manufacturing; the weather and seasons, plants and animals, insects, the constellations, and water. Although these topics may appear to be remote from the business of building national identity and state legitimacy, all of them fit within the educational and social objectives laid down by the government. Many of them have similar lexical cues and metaphors to those noted already. One example is a story about snakebite, 'The enemy snake' (3.76–7). A farmer bitten

---

Irrawaddy (Burmese), 28 June 2002, [http://www.irrawaddy.org/bur/ index.html] (29 June 2002). In response, Ma Tin Win was awarded the prize for political writing in the National Literary Awards of 2002, for her book on the Konbaung dynasty, *The rise of Konbaung*. Thein Win Lat & Kyaw Sein (သိန်းဝင်းလတ်၊ ကျော်စိန်), 'အမျိုးသားစာပေ တစ်သက်တာဆုရ၍ ဂုဏ်ယူဝမ်းမြောက် (စာရေးဆရာပါရဂူ)၊ ကိုယ့်တိုင်းပြည် ကိုယ်ချစ်ရမည်၊ လူငယ်တွေကို အားကိုးရမည် (ဒေါက်တာမတင်ဝင်)၊ အမျိုးသားစာပေတစ်သက်တာဆုနှင့် အမျိုးသားစာပေဆုရသူများအား ကြေးမုံတွေ့ဆုံ' ('Proud and happy to receive National Literary Lifetime Award [Writer Paragu]; We must love our country, rely on the youth [Dr Ma Tin Win]: *The Mirror* meets with National Literary Lifetime Award and National Literary Award winners'). *The Mirror*, 13 November 2003, pp. 1, 3.

[449] 'All citizens of Myanmar should have unyielding spirit to ward off all threats to territorial integrity and sovereignty: Teachers urged to nurture students to love motherland and have nationalist spirit with ardent desire to defend the motherland and to crush those attempting to disintegrate the Union: Secretary-1 addresses opening of Special Refresher Course No. 14 for Basic Education Teachers', *New Light of Myanmar,* 3 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june03.html] (3 June 2002).

[450] Undisclosed source, 'News inside', 3 July 2002.

as he is working in the paddy fields initially dismisses the bite as unimportant.[451] At home, his wife is concerned, but it is left to a village elder to admonish (*hsoun:ma.*) him and take him to a clinic. The health worker there saves him and offers advice on snakebite management. While the reading certainly aims to have students know the dangers of snakebite, it is also a powerful statement of social hierarchy and control: the farmer is negligent; he doesn't know what is good for himself. The village elder—a nominal state agent—tells the ignorant farmer what to do. He is obeyed. Finally the health worker, unequivocally a representative of the state, sheds light on everything and offers reassuring words that it is all under control.

Another kind of descriptive reading is 'Yangon City' (4.14–7). The reading describes how, originally named Dagon, Alaungphaya took the town in battle in 1755 and renamed it 'Yangon', meaning 'end of strife'.[452] It omits to mention that Dagon was a Mon name, and that troops comprising 'national races'—including Bamar—fighting under Mon commanders were those defeated. History having being summarily dismissed, the reader is taken on a tour of Yangon, including the Independence Monument, the Sule Pagoda, the Supreme Court and Town Hall (all adjacent to one another and shown in a poor quality photographic reprint similar to that in figure 5.3). The Town Hall, it is observed, was the site of a famous speech by General Aung San prior to independence. Not surprisingly,

---

[451] Like all other farmers in the textbooks, this normative farmer is engaged in lowland wet paddy cropping. There are no images in the textbooks of farmers engaged in working crops on hillsides or highland areas in general. Hilly regions consist of a large per centage of Myanmar's total landscape—around 270,000 out of its 670,000 square kilometres—and the populations in those regions are almost exclusively non-Bamar.

[452] Although this is the conventional interpretation of the name, Lieberman has offered a more convincing one, that the title means 'enemy is/will be consumed':

> The usual translation of 'Rangoon' is 'End of Strife', which has a conciliatory message. Yet with years of fighting in the Delta still ahead of him, it is far more likely that Alaùng-hpayà sought to demoralize his foes by boasting of his prowess. The translation 'Enemy (Will Be) Consumed' accords with other commemorative place names (including Myanaung ['Swift Victory']) he bestowed in the south at this time, and with the explicit explanation of the Rangoon naming ceremony preserved in the chronicles.

Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, p. 243.

what is not commented on is that the site also has been an historic centre of anti-government protests, including those of 1988 that were ended by the current state.[453] The tour continues past a variety of sights, including historical buildings, state agencies and pagodas. Again, non-Buddhist religious places, including the impressive cathedrals and mosques constructed under the British administration, are omitted from the text. The reading concludes with a familiar kind of admonition:

> The city's inhabitants must henceforth forever undertake (*hsaunjwe'*) to uphold Yangon City's delightful beauty and regulations (*si:kan:*).
>
> ရန်ကုန်မြို့တော် လှပသာယာရေးနှင့် စည်းကမ်းရှိရေးကို မြို့တော်နေ လုပ်သားပြည်သူများက ထာဝစဉ် ဆောင်ရွက်သွားကြရမည် ဖြစ်လေသည်။

Instructive pieces relating to the school cover day-to-day activities and special events. Students are instructed to wear their uniforms, clean around the school daily, plant things in the garden in an orderly manner (*njinja*), be disciplined (*si:kan:*), always respect (*lei:za:*) the school, daily 'pick the buds of knowledge' (*pjinnja*) that come from the school's benefaction (*kjei:zu:*), and strive (*kjou:za:*) to carry out (*hsaunjwe'*) tasks that raise the school's prestige, *goun* (ဂုဏ်) (3.07) (see figure 4.12). *Goun* is another word of Pali origin that figures prominently in state discourses, often in compounds with synonyms, on upholding the 'national prestige' (discussed further in chapter 5). Much of the narrative on improvement of educational standards relative to those internationally and among ASEAN countries (discussed in chapter 3) relates to prestige. Like the school itself, the state will only be looked upon highly by others when its people have resources and skills equivalent, or preferably, superior to, others.

---

[453] Small-scale, sometimes solo, protests also occur at the site with frequency. Offenders are jailed. See for instance the case of Dr Salai Tun Than. 'Professor Salai Tun Than', Asian Human Rights Commission, undated, [http://www.ahrchk.net/tunthan] (3 August 2002). See also, 'AFP: Six students arrested in Myanmar capital—dissident group', *BurmaNet,* 20 August 2002, [strider@burmanet.org] (21 August 2002).

‘The school library’ (4.23–4) is also a reading that on the surface instructs students on mundane day-to-day affairs but is in fact a metaphor for the state, described through the school’s ‘spatial culture’. The student narrator explains about the library at her school, its contents and organisation. The publications it contains seem numerous, in spite of the restrictions on contents of school libraries reported on in chapter 3. Among those available at this normative school library is *Shwe Thway*, a weekly Burmese-English comic that is typically full of parables, homilies and nationalist imagery. UNICEF’s *Pinnya Dazaun* is not mentioned. The narrator continues:

> The books have been covered. They are neatly and methodically placed both in the cupboard and on the bookshelves. The table and chairs for reading are laid out in their appropriate places. The national leaders’ photographic portraits and pictures of literati (*sapei-pjinnja-shin*) have been hung on the wall.
>
> Our Saya, U Win Hpe, serves (*hsaunjwe’*) as librarian. The students help Saya U Win Hpe. Saya always admonishes (*hsounma.*) us to be clean and disciplined (*si:kan:*) while reading in the library.
>
> စာအုပ်များကို အဖုံး ဖုံးထားပါသည်။ ဗီရိုထဲတွင်လည်းကောင်း၊ စာအုပ်စင်များပေါ်တွင်လည်းကောင်း သေသေသပ်သပ် စီစီရီရီထားပါသည်။ စာဖတ်ရန် စားပွဲနှင့် ကုလားထိုင်များကို နေရာတကျ ခင်းကျင်းထားပါသည်။ နံရံ၌ နိုင်ငံခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးများ၏ ဓာတ်ပုံကြီးများနှင့် စာပေပညာရှင်ကြီးများ၏ ပုံကို ချိတ်ဆွဲထားပါသည်။
>
> စာကြည့်တိုက်မှူးအဖြစ် ကျွန်မတို့၏ ဆရာ ဦးဝင်းဖေက ဆောင်ရွက်ပါသည်။ ကျောင်းသားကျောင်းသူများက ဆရာဦးဝင်းဖေကို ကူညီကြပါသည်။ စာကြည့်တိုက်အတွင်း သန့်ရှင်းရန်၊ စာဖတ်ရာ၌ စည်းကမ်းရှိရန် ဆရာက အမြဲသွန်သင်ဆုံးမပါသည်။

The library is the state in miniature. Everything is orderly; the national leaders and role models look down benevolently from above. A male agent manages daily affairs with the willing assistance of subordinates, who are constantly reminded of their obligations. Although all tasks are being fulfilled, still he admonishes relentlessly; presumably things would be left undone otherwise. Everybody is aware that safety lies in following the regulations and admonitions: cleanliness,

discipline, and order can only be achieved with guidance.[454] This is the historic leadership task of the state: Victor Lieberman has remarked on the perceived role held by the righteous kings of earlier periods that, 'The people themselves were [seen as] intrinsically anarchic, inclining to the self-defeating pursuit of private advantage as soon as royal guidance waned.'[455] Alaungphaya, the Tatmadaw and the school teacher-librarian alike all realise that stability and happiness are best ensured by the giving of orders.[456]

In an instructive piece on a special event in school, a headmaster addresses students about General Aung San, in commemoration of Independence Day (4.41–5). Students are first given precise details of the events planned for the day and how they are to conduct themselves. In the principal's speech that follows, the traits of Aung San—endeavour (*kjou:za:*), perseverance, uprightness, transparency, consideration, honesty (*thi'sa*), respectfulness (*lei:za:*), self-sacrifice and patriotism—are held up for students to emulate. There are other specific messages for the students. For instance, as noted in chapter 3, in recent times the learning of English has—as in other countries in Asia—become of interest for a growing number of students in Myanmar. As English language learning accords with state principles for 'modernisation' and national prestige it has also found increasing acceptance in official language. Aung San, the headmaster notes, studied English too—not to be subservient to the British, but rather as an instrument to use for their defeat. The headmaster's conclusion parallels the rhetoric found in speeches by current national leaders cited above:

---

[454] Recall the role of the Secretary-1 in capturing the white elephant described in chapter 3.
[455] Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, pp. 67–8.
[456] See also the comments on 'administration' in the section on the Burmese lexicon, chapter 5.

> ‘You pupils must also strive (*kjou:za:*) to become brave, capable, upright and morally good like General Aung San. If you want to repay the debt of gratitude (*kjei:zu:*) owed General Aung San who laid down his life to obtain (*aun*) independence for our country, then strive (*kjou:za:*) to have his good character and qualities,’ the headmaster counseled in his speech.
>
> ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း သတ္တိရှိသလို၊ အရည်အချင်းရှိသလို၊ ဖြောင့်မတ်သလို၊ အကျင့်စရိတ္တကောင်းသလို တပည့်တို့လဲဖြစ်အောင် ကြိုးစားရမယ်။ တိုင်းပြည်အတွက် လွတ်လပ်ရေးရအောင် အသက်နဲ့လဲပြီး ဆောင်ရွက်ပေးသွားတဲ့ ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်းရဲ့ ကျေးဇူးကို ပြန်ဆပ်ချင်ရင် သူ့လို အကျင့်ကောင်းပြီး အရည်အချင်းရှိအောင် ကြိုးစားကြရမယ်ဟု ဆရာကြီးက သြဝါဒမိန့်ခွန်းတွင် တည့်သွင်း ပြောကြားသွားလေသည်။

Among more broadly instructive items in the books are numerous homilies (*hsoun:ma.–za*–ဆုံးမစာ). Homilies are frequently accompanied by visual text of a middle aged or elderly man in Bamar dress sitting and wagging his finger to politely postured attentive children. One of these old men warns students against taking intoxicating substances, laziness and association with ‘bad persons’ (3.31). Another teaches the value of *pjinnja* and how to identify those without it (3.64). Yet another instructs children on certain behavioural traits—including gullibility, thinking before acting, the ability to distinguish right from wrong and the nature of true friendship (4.59)—that is, *thi’sa–m̲ahpau’* (သစ္စာမဖောက်), literally ‘not turn traitor’. This term is again a cue to the state commentary on traitors, mentioned above. Traitors are not nebulous—they have names, photographs in the newspaper, and organisations, that are—with the aid of complicated diagrams—usually linked to the National League for Democracy. The people oppose them. Therefore, to be *thi’sa–m̲ahpau’* is not merely to be true to one’s friends, but also to avoid and oppose these ‘destructive elements’ and their kind.

A reading item in third standard (3.73) uses the style of a festive chant to deliver admonitions on *loatapay*, the labour contribution remarked on above. As mentioned, the Myanmar government has faced international sanction for its failure to account adequately for the widespread use of *loatapay*. Not to be deterred, the text portrays the practice as an occasion for festivity, urging

students to 'Come for *loatapay*, come, come in unison (*njinji–njanja*) (လုပ်အားပေးဖို့ ထွက်လို့လာ၊ ညီညီညာညာ လာကြလာကြ)' and work for the benefit (*a̲kjou:*) of the community. The reading even lists the kinds of *loatapay* one may be involved in, from laying a bridge or repairing a road to preparing land for agriculture. And whatever the venture, it reassures readers, all are prestigious (*goun*). The reading draws a connection between doing *loatapay* and being a good student: keeping the school clean, being honest, and striving (*kjou:za:*) to excel in education (*pjinnja*), for which one will be duly rewarded. This link between in school and out of school tasks has far-reaching implications. The lesson being taught is not just for the classroom; it is for life and for everyone: what goes for the schoolyard, it becomes clear, applies to the nation as a whole.

Instructions are also given on how to behave at festivals—notably the 'Thadingyut' Festival and 'Htamane' Festival. The student narrator explains how before school closes for Thadingyut, a ceremony is held to pay obeisance and respect (*jouthei–lei:za:*) to the teachers for their benefaction (*goun–kjei:zu:*). Later in the festival, the narrator visits the monastery and also pays respect to elders in accordance with custom (*jinkjei:–hmu.*). The Htamane Festival (4.29–31) is less reverential, but the reading is, nonetheless, scattered with covert cues. 'Htamane' is a variety of sticky rice prepared with oil, sesame seeds, peanuts and other ingredients. The text tells students how it is made, involving a team of energetic and enthusiastic males who must carefully coordinate their movements to ensure a successful product—again, a familiar metaphor for social management. As for the women, their duty (*tawun*) is limited to ferrying the cooked 'htamane' to the monastery and neighbouring houses; no mention is made of the role that they

normally play in purchase and preparation of the ingredients, assisting during cooking, and cleaning-up afterwards.

The birth stories of the Buddha, the Jataka tales, are central to the teaching of morality in the school textbooks. The Jataka stories are at the heart of Buddhist folk life: they are a collection of popular stories purportedly uttered by the Buddha about his earlier lives, which—having obtained enlightenment—it is said that he could peruse at will. Winston King notes that in nearly all the stories, the future Buddha, or *Bodhisatta*, succeeds in convincing the others of his inherent superiority, bar 'a few witless or unregenerate individuals':

> This relationship of gentle dominance of the situation by the Bodhisatta—for he is never vicious or oppressive no matter how clever or strong—is one key to the relation of the Buddhist orthodoxy to accompanying folk-lores. The Buddha and his ways are held to be supreme over all other ways; even the most [spirit]-ridden or animistic villager feels this, though dimly.[457]

Hence the Jataka stories, although derived from folklore, recognise the essential superiority of the Buddha and the Buddhist doctrine over all others. Just as this is inherent in the Jataka tales, so is it inherent in the school textbooks, even if no references are made to the origin of the stories when they are reproduced in the school texts. While the teaching of Jataka stories is derived from the monastic schools, the retelling of Jataka tales in state schoolbooks began during the British administration.[458] It may be reasonable to expect that most of Aesop's tales also found their way into the school textbooks during this period as well, and that they have been passing in and out of successive curricula ever since.

---

[457] King, *A thousand lives away*, p. 60.
[458] Okell, 'Nissaya Burmese', p. 195.

The first reading from a Jataka is 'The parrot brothers' (2.49–50) (Sattigumba Jataka, no. 503), a reading that, like many others, offers a comparative assessment of 'civility' versus 'barbarity'.[459] The story relates the sudden separation of two parrots, one of which ends up being reared by a gang of robbers, the other at a hermitage. One day a king travels to the area and is assailed by the former parrot in very uncouth language; he evades the miserable creature, and, arriving at the hermitage, the latter parrot greets him in a very refined manner. Pleasantly surprised—in light of his first encounter—he rewards the second parrot and the hermit. A short story in the *New Light of Myanmar* from 1999 depicted a young man from Myanmar in Thailand, where 'the ways our Myanmar society disapproves of are tolerated'. Speaking to his long lost friend, he admits to using drugs and prostitutes, and then recalls:

> 'You remember about the two brother parrots? During a storm they were separated and one got to a hermit. The bird learnt sweet and kind words, but another [that] got to thieves learnt harsh and cruel words the way of its masters. For me, I am like the one that fell into wrong company.'[460]

The short story then amplifies what characterises 'wrong company'. Its themes tie into numerous readings in the textbooks, again, particularly the relationship between civility, religion and benevolence:

> 'I thought highly of others. I wanted to be rich and I thought I could do everything if I had money. But I did not contribute even a grain of sand and a chunk of brick towards the welfare of my country and my people. I looked down upon the humble rural life... When I got rich I indulged in pleasures. I haven't contributed anything to the funds of the pagodas, monasteries and religious buildings in my native place...'

---

[459] The reference text for all English translations of Jataka tales was, E. B. Cowell (ed.), *The Jataka: Stories of the Buddha's former births*, vols. 1–6, H. T. Francis & R. A. Neil (trans), Pali Text Society, London, 1973.

[460] May Thazin Thu, 'Honey on the razor's edge', part 3, *New Light of Myanmar*, 30 September 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/sep30.htm] (2 October 1999).

The text of the article concludes when, as his old friend is prepared to forgive the 'bad parrot' for all his sins, he confesses having changed his citizenship. Instead, she slaps him and for his disloyalty calls him 'a maggot from the flesh'.

Another interesting Jataka story is 'Respect for the eldest' (2.72–3), a version of the Tittira Jataka (no. 37), which considers the need for leadership. In the story, three friends—a partridge, a monkey and an elephant—lose respect for one another. They realise that the solution to this unsatisfactory state of affairs is a hierarchy. They decide to establish who is the eldest and venerate that one above the others. They do this by each recalling the size of a banyan tree they live nearby from their earliest memories. Whereas the monkey and elephant recall the tree as a sapling, the partridge is accepted as the eldest by his assertion that he was responsible for the existence of the tree, having carried its seed in his excrement. From then on they all live in peace, according to his admonitions (*hsoun:ma.*). J. Talboys Wheeler, a British envoy who visited the last Bamar king in 1870, described the king's account of this story. The king wished to bestow honourary titles and other privileges on the envoy, as was customary in earlier times, but he explained that he had not done so for fear that the Englishman would refuse them. As the exchange is recorded in his notes, Talboys Wheeler replied that 'no doubt in time your majesty will understand our government better', and

> Here the King, after a pause good-humouredly related at considerable length a story wherein an elephant, monkey and a partridge are said to have agreed to be guided in all their doings by the senior in age of the three. After much discussion which need not be repeated, the seniority was established and conceded in favour of the partridge, who proved that the banian tree came into existence long after his birth, since he had dropped the seed from his own beak; whilst on the other hand the elephant and the monkey could only state that the banian tree had already sent forth a few branches when they were born.
>
> This story was brought in as an illustration to show that the Burmese custom and usage are of a more ancient date than that of any other nation, and that therefore they should have the preference above other customs.[461]

The above stories speak to the by now familiar issues of civility, hierarchy and tradition running throughout the textbooks. Other Jataka stories reinforce these themes. In one, a tortoise is dashed to pieces through an inability to keep his mouth shut (3.15–6, Jataka no. 215)—certainly salient advice for students in today's Myanmar. In another, a hermit teaches a prince a valuable lesson through the analogy of a bitter seedling (3.35–6, Jataka no. 149). A tortoise and woodpecker save their friend the deer from a hunter's trap by working in unity (4.7–8, Jataka no. 206). A rabbit creates anarchy in his community by starting a false rumour, and a lion puts an end to it (4.56–7, Jataka no. 322). A hunter rewards a prince for his sweet speech (2.55–6, Jataka no. 315), and finally, a truncated version of the Sama Jataka (no. 540) explains how a king accidentally kills a son devoted to his blind parents, and then atones for the error (4.65–8).

Moralistic stories from other backgrounds are also found in Myanmar textbooks.[462] A number are from Aesop's tales, including the tortoise and hare (2.07), the goose and the golden eggs (2.17–18), and the wolf in sheep's clothing (4.18–19). Roman deities in 'Hercules and the Wagoner' (2.11–2) and 'Mercury

---

[461] J. Talboys Wheeler, *Journal of a voyage up the Irrawaddy to Mandalay and Bhamo*, White Orchid Press, Bangkok, 1991 (1871), p. 95.

[462] Some fables are attributed to multiple sources. For example, a story about an ass in a lion's skin (not in the textbooks) is both ascribed to Aesop and is also among the Jataka stories (no. 189).

and the Woodman' (2.80–2) are substituted for indigenous celestial beings. Many textbook fables centre on feelings of regret due to foolish decisions. The grasshopper regrets having played all summer instead of collecting food for the winter, as did the industrious ant (1.63–4). The stag regrets admiring his big antlers and looking down on his slender hooves when his antlers become caught in bushes while being chased by a hunter (3.62–3). Two stories relate to wise kings and worthy subjects. In one, a king devises a plan to honour a subject with the spirit (*sei'da'*) to help others (4.25–7). A farmer is duly rewarded while others of lesser character fall victim to the project. In another, a fisherman devises a clever way to reveal to a king how the palace gatesman is extorting fish (4.52–5). The king is impressed and the fisherman ends up being awarded the position instead.

The first standard textbook also contains Aesop's story of a man who gives his three sons a faggot of sticks to break, as a metaphor for unity (1.71–2). This simple reading echoes daily through state television in Myanmar—a statue of one son attempting to break the bundle is shown nightly during the Three National Causes.[463] In another story adapted from Aesop, unity is connected with ethnic and national identity— 'one's own kind' (ကိုယ့်အမျိုး – *kou. a̲mjou:*)—as opposed to 'the other's kind' (သူတစ်ပါးအမျိုး – *thuda̲ba: a̲mjou:*).[464] In the story, a crow aspires to become a peacock, and so he sticks peacock plumage in his behind. Not only do the peacocks chase him off, but his 'own kind', disgusted by his actions, also evict him. The reading ends with a strong warning:

[463] A similar image has been published on the cover of a book promoting the endeavours of the armed forces to achieve ceasefires with ethnic insurgent groups.

[464] Street has discussed how beliefs in distinct racial and ethnic identities arose initially from the concept of a 'type' or 'kind' akin to the usage of *mjou:* in this and other texts in Myanmar. Street, 'Meanings of culture in development', pp. 50–1.

> We must understand that forsaking one's own kind to esteem and mimic another's kind cannot have benefit (*akjou:*).
>
> ကိုယ့်အမျိုးကို စွန့်၍ သူတစ်ပါးအမျိုးကို အထင်ကြီးပြီး အတုခိုးပါက အကျိုးမရှိနိုင်ကြောင်း သိရှိနားလည်ရပါမည်။

In an article from the *New Light of Myanmar*, a woman writer related this story as 'a lesson I learned in my childhood days', then continued to highlight its pertinence for the current generation:

> Our own lineage, culture and origin are the most beautiful... We, the housewives, are to carry out our duties for the security of Myanmar, which is like a large house. We, mothers, have to go straight as required by parents to lay down fine traditions so that our children will follow us properly. We, mothers, are to nurture our children so that they will have tendencies to rely on [their] own country, to love [their] own people, and to safeguard [their] own country.[465]

Some stories centre on an arbiter—an animal *pjinnja–shi.* capable of solving conflict and establishing unity. In 'The two friends' (1.67–8), a fox and an otter bicker over who will get the best portion of a carp they have caught. Unable to decide for themselves, they seek the advice of a rabbit *pjinnja–shi.*, who admonishes (*hsoun:ma.*) them that they 'shouldn't become divided' over this trifle, and successfully splits the fish lengthways. In another reading a *pjinnja–shi.* owl solves a conflict between a monkey and an elephant over who is more useful (4.36–9). The owl has them demonstrate for themselves how each can do things that the other cannot, and concludes with a monologue on how every creature has some quality that makes it beneficial:

> 'Instead of bickering, if you act (*hsaunjwe'*) together in unity (*njinju'*) you will be successful (*aunmjin*) in every undertaking, right?'
>
> အငြင်းပွားနေမည့်အစား ညီညွတ်စွာ ပူးပေါင်းဆောင်ရွက်လျှင် အရာရာကို စွမ်းဆောင်အောင်မြင်နိုင်မည် မဟုတ်ပါလော

[465] Mann Khin Khin, 'Seek true beauty', *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/dec2.html] (4 December 1999).

Whether Aesop or the Jataka tales, Yangon City or a snakebite, Alaungphaya or National Day, discourses on unity and success, knowledge and culture, morality and endeavour, reverberate throughout the textbook readings.

Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on analysis of the primary school textbooks used in teaching Burmese language and literacy in Myanmar, to ascertain how they serve to legitimise the multifaceted Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw. Studies of textbooks in other Asian countries have revealed how schoolbooks manufacture historical lineage, conflate and homogenise the state and society, and reproduce gender roles. Similarly, in Myanmar, where the state has unambiguous control over the production, distribution and use of textbooks, they are directed towards a specific assertion of national identity.

The textbooks emphasise the pursuit of knowledge, the carrying out of tasks for the benefit of others, respect for superiors, success, endeavour, unity, duty, civility and 'culture'. The family is steadily displaced by the state as the books progress. The school typically serves as a metaphor for social relations and order. Buddhism is referred to overtly and covertly throughout the texts, to the exclusion of other religions. The armed forces are evoked primarily through metaphor and inspiring historical allusions, rather than contemporary imagery. National symbols are used to assert identity, but there is a powerful tendency towards idiom and anecdote in reinforcing nationalist messages.

The readings and recitation items in the textbooks tend to be descriptive, instructive or moralistic in style. Descriptive items impress upon students a great

tradition that they have inherited and are obliged to perpetuate. They also cover a wide range of present-day topics, in keeping with the educational objectives laid down by the state, frequently incorporating hidden cues aimed at reinforcing the social structure and Union identity. Instructive pieces set inside and outside school inform students of how to act daily and during special events. Moralistic stories, whether those from Buddhism or elsewhere, reinforce preceding themes on civility and society through allegory.

The state presence is strongly felt in the Myanmar readers, and increasingly so as students progress. Over the course of the books there is a powerful movement towards an image of the normative citizen as an adult male Bamar Buddhist: an exemplar that corresponds to the people who hold state power, and those with the latent capacity to do so. Above all else, this person works for the benefit of the national people and the state, which are, after all, synonymous. As this chapter has studied the entire body of text across all five readers, the final chapter hones this analysis by examining six diverse readings from the textbooks, to observe the operation of individual readings and lexical devices within the text.

Chapter 5

Six readings

How does the headmaster advise the pupils? Elaborate in about 5 lines.
–Myanmar reader: Fourth standard, p. 45, ex. 3(g)

ဆရာကြီးက တပည့်များကို မည်သို့ ဩဝါဒပေးသနည်း။ စာကြောင်း ၅ ကြောင်းခန့် စီကုံးရေးသားပါ။
– မြန်မာဖတ်စာ–စတုတ္ထတန်း၊ စာမျက်နှာ ၄၅၊ လေ့ကျင့်ခန်း ၃(ဆ)

This chapter extends the analysis of the Myanmar primary school Burmese readers from the review of contents in the last chapter to more detailed consideration of six readings. These readings have been selected according to the same classes for analysis used in the last section of chapter 4—descriptive, instructive and moralistic—and are taken from the second to fourth standard textbooks. The six readings are:

1. 'Mahabandoola' (*Mahabandu.la* – မဟာဗန္ဓုလ)
2. 'Shwedagon Pagoda' (*Shweitagoun Zeidido* – ရွှေတိဂုံ စေတီတော်)
3. 'The school garden' (*Kjaun: u.jin* – ကျောင်းဥယျာဉ်)
4. 'Our duties' (*To. tawun* – တို့တာဝန်)
5. 'The *azani* leader' (*Azani hkaun:hsaun* – အာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်)
6. '*Cetana*' (*Seitana* – စေတနာ)

No single template for analysis is used across all six readings. Rather, particular elements of each are identified when they assist in an understanding of the style and contents of the readers, to assess how these serve to legitimise the Union identity. To begin, however, an outline profile of the Burmese lexicon is necessary.

The Burmese lexicon [466]

> Respect for the written word has for long been strong in Burma and forms from an older stage of the language or from elevated contexts are apt to occur side by side with their more recent or colloquial counterparts.
>
> – *John Okell* [467]

In the second standard textbook there is a short reading on King Bayintnaung (2.34–5). Bayintnaung (r. 1551–81 CE) was among the expansionist kings that made up the first Toungoo dynasty. He is elevated historically by virtue of it being under his leadership that Ayutthia (north of where Bangkok is now situated) was first defeated. His reign is considered the apex of the 'Second Myanmar Empire', so, as Ma Tin Win remarks, 'Whenever we read accounts about King Bayintnaung we learn about his valour, his strategic vision and other outstanding qualities'.[468]

The reading on Bayintnaung is a useful vehicle to illustrate certain characteristics of the Burmese literary form. The entire text (not including subsequent exercises) follows. It is accompanied by an illustration of Bayintnaung astride a horse, going into battle (see figure 5.1).

> Bayintnaung is a famous king from the Taungoo Era. Bayintnaung was a courageous person. He also promoted courageous champions.
>
> Bayintnaung's way of selecting champions is interesting. They were tested by hammering a spike under the fingernail. Only those who didn't flinch were selected to be champions; selecting these brave champions, Bayintnaung formed the Myanmar Tatmadaw. The Myanmar Tatmadaw administered by Bayintnaung was renowned for its fighting throughout Asia.
>
> During Bayintnaung's reign Myanmar was a united (*si:loun:njinju'*) and strong country.

---

[466] As this is a sociological study, here the word 'lexicon' is used conventionally, to mean 'the vocabulary of a language'. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1999, p. 817.

[467] John Okell, *A reference grammar of colloquial Burmese*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, p. xii.

[468] Ma Tin Win, 'A Yodaya citizen who pledged allegiance to Myanmar (Because he chose to stand for what is right)', *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/ article/may27.htm] (28 May 2002).

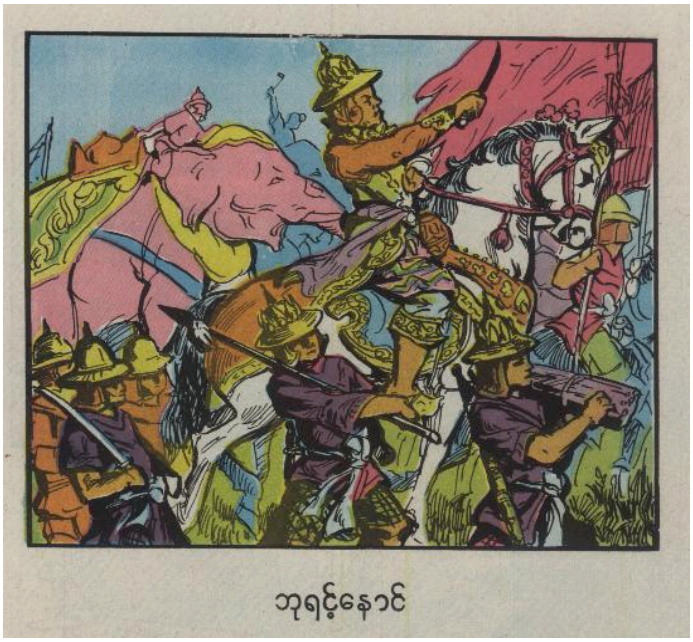

Figure 5.1: 'Bayintnaung' (2.34).

Figure 5.2: 'Mahabandoola' (3.45).

ဘုရင့်နောင်သည် တောင်ငူခေတ်၌ ထင်ရှားသော ဘုရင်တစ်ပါးဖြစ်သည်။ ဘုရင့်နောင်သည် ရဲစွမ်းသတ္တိရှိသူဖြစ်သည်။ ရဲစွမ်းသတ္တိရှိသော သူရဲကောင်းများကိုလည်း ကြိုက်စားသည်။

ဘုရင့်နောင်၏ သူရဲကောင်းရွေးချယ်ပုံမှာ စိတ်ဝင်စားဖွယ် ကောင်းသည်။ လက်သည်းကြားတွင် အပ်စိုက်၍ တူနှင့်ရိုက်ကာ စမ်းသပ်၏။ နောက်မတွန့်သူကိုသာ သူရဲကောင်းအဖြစ် ရွေးချယ်သည်၊ ဘုရင့်နောင်သည် ရဲရင့်သော သူရဲကောင်းများကို ရွေးချယ်ကာ မြန်မာတပ်မတော်ကြီးကို ဖွဲ့စည်းခဲ့သည်။ ဘုရင့်နောင်အုပ်ချုပ်သော မြန်မာတပ်မတော်ကြီးသည် အာရှတိုက်တွင် ထင်ရှားကျော်ကြားခဲ့သည်။

ဘုရင့်နောင်လက်ထက်တွင် မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်ကြီး စည်းလုံးညီညွတ်၍ အင်အားတောင့်တင်းသော နိုင်ငံအဖြစ်သို့ ရောက်ရှိခဲ့သည်။

Most of the written text in the readers has the formal style also found in this item. Burmese is divided between distinctive spoken and written forms that broadly correspond with the colloquial and formal.[469] However, as John Okell's preceding remark indicates, there is no single stringent division of words into colloquial and formal categories. While certain words tend to be used in certain ways and with certain connotations, there is movement between, and blending of, different styles and levels of speech and writing. A critique of these nuances is far beyond the scope of this study: the following comments merely signal some of the most relevant attributes of this style found in the schoolbooks.

In the literary style used in the textbooks, sentences contain particles suffixed to virtually every phrase, identifying the relationship of the given phrase to other parts of the sentence. For instance, taking the first sentence of the reading on Bayintnaung:

> Bayintnaung is a famous king from the Taungoo Era.
>
> ဘုရင့်နောင်**သည်** တောင်ငူခေတ်**၌** ထင်ရှား**သော** ဘုရင်တစ်ပါး**ဖြစ်သည်**။
>
> *Bajin.naun*-***thi*** *Taungu-khi'*-***hnai'*** *htinsha:*-***tho*** *bajin-ti'-pa: hpji'*-***thi*** (punctuation)
>
> Bayintnaung-***subject*** Taungoo-Era-**in** famous-***adjective*** king-one-*classifier* be-***statement***.

[469] For a concise discussion, see Anna Allot, 'Language policy and language planning in Burma', in *Language policy, language planning and sociolinguistics in South-East Asia*, David Bradley (ed.), Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1985, pp. 135–8.

Although a short and simple sentence, it contains four particles suffixed to phrases: three are in phrases in the sentence, the fourth is at the end of the sentence. The suffixes identify the relationships between each of the phrases in the sentence. They are typical of those used throughout the textbooks. In some items, such as the Jataka tales, more archaic forms are used so that the age of the reading will be impressed upon the student reader. The 'higher' the Burmese, the more likely the appearance of increasingly arcane and complex combinations of particles, with more optional particles added for euphonic effect. Where particles are omitted, it is usually in the stanzas in the kindergarten and first standard textbooks, and in poetry or prose, where artistic licence is permitted. In spoken Burmese, by contrast, these particles will either be different or simply omitted altogether for entirely practical reasons, where they are unnecessary to convey the meaning of the sentence. The above sentence might be spoken as, *for example*:

> Bayintnaung is a famous king from the Taungoo Era.
>
> ဘုရင့်နောင် တောင်ငူခေတ်**မှာ** ထင်ရှာ**တဲ့** ဘုရင်တစ်ပါးဖြစ်**တယ်**။
>
> *Bajin.naun Taungu-khi'-**hma** htinsha:-**te'** bajin-ti'-pa:-hpji'-**te*** (punctuation)
>
> Bayintnaung Taungoo-Era-**in** famous-***adjective*** king-one-*classifier* be-***statement***.

Here the suffix to Bayintnaung is dropped as he is clearly the subject of the sentence, and the other three suffixes are in spoken form. Even then, the use of *hpji'* and the classifier here makes the sentence stilted; the verb 'to be' may be omitted if the meaning remains clear without it. As for the classifier—suffixed to numerals—in this case obviously only one person is being referred to, so it also is

not strictly necessary.[470] Speakers may then conclude merely with a single closing particle:

> Bayintnaung [is/was] a famous king from the Taungoo Era.
>
> ဘုရင့်နောင် တောင်ငူခေတ်**မှာ** ထင်ရှာ**တဲ့** ဘုရင်**ပါ**။
>
> *Bajin.naun Taungu-khi'-**hma** htinsha:-**te'** bajin-**pa*** (punctuation)
>
> Bayintnaung Taungoo-Era-**in** famous-***adjective*** king-***closing particle***.

There is of course, nothing technically preventing the spoken form being written, as has been done here, to obtain the same meaning. As Anna Allot remarked in 1985,

> It would be relatively easy for the government to implement a policy of change by deciding to publish all newspapers and government controlled periodicals in colloquial style, if it wished to do so.[471]

It has not wished to do so. On the contrary, the government appears to have observed that the force of written Burmese lies in an air of formality, pseudo-intellectualism and presumed tradition, making it remote and authoritative. It excludes the majority of people in the country from any role in its management or identity formation—as have formal lexicons elsewhere—by ensuring that popular style of speaking and writing is different from that in the textbooks, the newspapers and other official channels of communication. As revealed in earlier chapters, this flagging of a 'correct' style by the state makes it and its agents definitive—it is the measuring stick by which all others are assessed.

---

[470] Classifiers (also sometimes referred to in English as 'numerators') are not addressed here. For a definitive work on classifiers, including a typology, see Dr Hla Pe, 'A re-examination of Burmese "classifiers"', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 50, no. 2, 1967, pp. 177–93. It should be noted that the classifier used for Bayintnaung, *pa:*, is not a common classifier, but one reserved for 'supernormal persons—Buddhas, Minor Buddhas, saints, monks; (anthropomorphic) the Law; precious things e.g. gems; deities, members of royalty...' Hla Pe, 'A re-examination of Burmese "classifiers"', p. 183.

[471] Allot, 'Language policy and language planning in Burma', p. 136.

Aside from the frequent and regular use of literary particles, the textbook readings incorporate a range of other formal lexical devices, among which perhaps the most common is the use of compound words. The tremendous variety of compounds used in Burmese has been properly studied elsewhere.[472] Broadly, compounds may be formed with nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs. Some compounds are necessary to establish a particular meaning. In the text on Bayintnaung, the word translated here as 'champion' (the same used in reference to Kyanzittha in the last chapter) is a compound, *thạ–je:–kaun:*, literally 'person–brave–good'.[473] The combination suggests a gallant individual of exceptional bravery and ability, in this case evoking the idea of Bayintnaung's creating an elite force.

As noted in chapter 4, however, some compounds combine *other* compounds in order to increase the intensity of meaning through repetition of synonyms, but not alter the words' original meanings. In the reading on Bayintnaung, the compound translated as 'renowned' is *htinsha:–kjokja:*. *Htinsha:* consists of *htin*, 'visible', and *sha:*, 'scarce', as a compound they form 'well-known'. *Kjokja:* consists of *kjo*, 'famous' and with *kja:*, 'inform', suffixed, its meaning is unchanged. The two compounds by themselves are synonyms. In the written text they are again compounded to amplify their common meaning and impress upon the student readers just how renowned Bayintnaung really was. This style of

---

[472] Okell has systematically analysed the many classes, elements and usages of compound nouns and verbs. Okell, *A reference grammar of colloquial Burmese*, pp. 24–42, 47–56.

[473] According to Kathleen Forbes in a 1960s article, many compounds such as the above are neologisms introduced after independence to replace English loanwords that had crept into the language during British colonial occupation. Forbes calculates that not only had the number of compounds grown, but they had also become more complex, as they had been stretched to accommodate specialist terminology in politics, the sciences and other professions. K. Forbes, 'Neologism in English and Burmese', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 50, no. 1, 1967, pp. 47–70. It can be surmised that this trend has continued since the time of her article.

compound, with four 'native' Burmese roots, appears frequently throughout the textbooks.

Another example of this variety of compound in the above text is the word inadequately translated as 'strong', to describe Myanmar under Bayintnaung. Here the compound again consists of two compound words (suffixed by an adjectival marker), *ina:–taun.tin:*. *In* by itself has a wide range of possible meanings, including 'strength', and this meaning is made clear when it is used in a compound with *a:*, 'power'. Both *taun.* and *tin:* separately mean 'firm'. The compound of all four, then, has an impressive depth that is lost in the English translation above. *Ina:* suggests dynamism. It is active, although it is possessed (by those in power). It is a font of might, with the capacity to explode in any direction—it is the offensive component of the empire-building venture; the force that expands control and consumes the enemy. *Taun.tin:* is the static element. It suggests that the country has a solid base, an unshakeable foundation from which the *ina:* may be projected. It is the defensive body—the firmament against which the society is buttressed and against which enemies dash themselves.

The above compounds exemplify those features of the Burmese lexicon that Okell refers to as 'rhyme' and 'chime'. Their aesthetic quality makes verbal recitation more sonorous: *htinsha:–kjokja:* brings the rhyming *sha:* and *kja:* together, and likewise the chiming *kjo* and *kja:*. *Ina:–taun.tin:* has chime in both compounds, as *in* and *a:* are formed from the root for all vowels, *a.*, and the rhyming *in* and *tin:*. For each word, the compound of all four roots is more pleasant to speak and hear than the compounds of two roots by themselves.

Compounds of 'native' Burmese words with Pali words are also common in the literary style. This is likely a byproduct of *nissaya* (နိဿယ) Burmese, where Pali text was followed by Burmese translation (a style still found in many religious texts).[474] As the monastic schools held control over written text in preceding centuries, it follows that religious texts and therefore *nissaya* dominated the early written form of Burmese. As Okell notes, 'Pali studies are not just a single thread running through the history of Burmese language and literature: on the contrary, they colour the whole fabric.'[475]

An example of how Burmese-Pali compounds operate in the school textbooks can be found in the reading on Bayintnaung, with the word used for 'courage', *je:zun:–tha'ti.*. The first part of the compound, *je:zun:*, is itself a compound of two Burmese words, literally 'brave-capable'. This meaning is clear; it is duplicated, magnified and given an historical connotation through the use of the Pali word *tha'ti.*, courage. This combination of a Burmese compound word with a Pali equivalent is deliberately used in the textbooks and other state media to lend a noble and prestigious air to a concept, akin to that which was once assigned to Latin and ancient Greek in English. In some instances the loanword may be from Sanskrit. The words imply tradition, culture and learning.[476] They indicate 'correctness' and 'purity' of written form. As noted earlier, they have a strong relationship with the dominant religious institution of the society, and they have been transmitted to the present-day primarily through the written rather than the spoken medium.[477] They stand out in the text due to their unusual written form—

---

[474] For a complete discussion see, Okell, 'Nissaya Burmese', pp. 186–227.
[475] Okell, 'Nissaya Burmese', p. 191.
[476] On the historical use of Pali 'loanwords' in Burmese see, Allot, 'Language policy and planning in Burma', p. 133.
[477] For a discussion, see, Julian Wheatley & San San Hnin Tun, 'Languages in contact: The case of English and Burmese', *Journal of Burma Studies*, vol. 4, 1999, pp. 63–5.

consonants are stacked one on top of the other, among other spelling irregularities—and deviant rules for pronunciation. They also tend to deal with abstract concepts connected to the state project on morality and authority.

Occasionally Pali words are themselves compounded, although this usually appears to be where one of the words is in a 'Burmanised' form. For example, the compound word often used in state media for 'integrity' is *goun–thei'kha* (ဂုဏ်သိက္ခာ), 'prestige–dignity', where *goun* has been referred to in chapter 4 as 'prestige', though it may equate with 'dignity', and *thei'kha* means 'moral uprightness'. Each is derived from Pali, but whereas *thei'kha* is unmodified from its original form (here it is written with Burmese pronunciation—it is conventionally romanised as *sikkha*), *goun* is a modified form of the original, *guna* (ဂုဏ). The contemporary secular interpretations have also deviated from religious usage, where *guna* originally meant (approximately) 'a good quality' and *thei'kha*, 'training'.[478]

At other times a whole series of compound synonyms may be used to capture a single concept. The reading on Bayintnaung does not contain a good illustration of this, but an example from elsewhere in this dissertation will suffice. The word for 'patriotism', as given in chapter 4, is most commonly *mjou:chi'–sei'da'* (or a variant thereof), literally '(one's) kind–love–spirit' where *mjou:chi'* is a compound of 'native' Burmese roots and *sei'da'* is derived from Pali. That relatively simple term may be contrasted with the content of a speech by the Secretary-1 cited in chapter 3, where what was translated into English simply as 'patriotism' was in the original:

[478] In a religious context, training implying morality; see the Sikkha Sutta, Anguttara Nikaya III.88–92.

patriotism

မျိုးချစ်စိတ်ဓာတ်၊ ဇာတိသွေး၊ ဇာတိမာန်စိတ်ဓာတ်

mjou:–chi´–sei´da´ (punctuation) *zati.–dhwei* (punctuation) *zati.–man–sei´da´*

(one's) kind–love–spirit, birth–ancestry/blood, birth–pride–spirit

Burmese–Burmese–Pali, Pali–Burmese, Pali–Pali–Pali [479]

The final line above shows the compounds of Burmese and Pali-derived words in this remarkable nationalist construct (which was in a speech made to schoolteachers). The word *zati.* is the Burmese transliteration of the Pali/Sanskrit *jati*, 'birth', as used in the caste system to distinguish those of supposedly 'low birth' (*hina jati*) from others in society. Except for this word, all the other Pali words in the above have been modified from their original forms to suit the Burmese lexicon: *sei'* from *sei'da.* (စိတ္တ), 'mind–heart' (that is, the seat of thought, conventionally romanised as *citta*); *da'* from *datu* (ဓာတု) (conventionally romanised as *dhatu*), 'element'; and *man* from *mana.* (မာန), 'pride'. Ironically, in Buddhist doctrine, *mana.* has a negative connotation, akin to 'conceit', one of the key obstacles on the path to enlightenment; but in its secular connotation the word has been rendered positively, as noted above, similar to its modern western equivalent.[480]

At this point a caveat is called for. At best, all this is a mere thin excavation, bringing but a few of the most obvious elements of the style used in the textbooks into shallow relief. There are two reasons for this dissatisfactory circumstance.

---

[479] 'Special Refresher Course No. 36 for Basic Education Teachers concludes', *New Light of Myanmar*, 7 August 1999, p. 1. 'Special consideration being given to the carrying out of programmes for the emergence of modern developed education methods in Myanmar education', p. 9. It should be noted that elsewhere *zati.–man* has been translated as 'nationalism'. 'Due to concerted efforts of all, kindergarten intake rate increased to 91% in 1999, 91.5% in 2000, 92.05% in 2001 and 93.07% in 2002'. Properly, 'nationalism' would be *amjou:tha:–sei´da´* or *amjou:tha:jei:–wada.* (အမျိုးသားရေးဝါဒ).

[480] Modern English usage also seems to have deviated from original religious meaning in the Judeo-Christian canon. See the use of 'pride' in Proverbs 16:18, Isaiah 28:1, Mark 7:21–3.

The first is practical and specific: the limitations of this inquiry, and its author, necessarily restrict comments on Burmese lexicon to superficialities. Readers interested in its intricacies would do well to consult texts by expert linguists such as Okell, Allot and Hla Pe. The second reason is a universal problem: the question of whether 'genuine' translation is under any circumstances possible. Leaving aside the extreme argument that the complexities of language render translation impossible in recognition of the fact that translation is done everywhere, all the time, with some measure of success, the problem is relative: just how accurate can any given translation be? Even if Noam Chomsky's argument that all languages share 'formal universals' is taken as a given, he himself has written that this 'does not imply that there is any point by point correspondence between particular languages... [nor] imply that there must be some reasonable procedure for translating between languages'.[481] Inevitably, translation of any kind involves some loss, just as occurs in the translation of thoughts and feelings into words in the first place: at every point there is a less than perfect concordance; there will always be imbalance. So all translation is relative. The relative standard in work such as this should perhaps be what George Steiner refers to as 'faithful but autonomous restatement'.[482] He explains:

> [The] mechanics of translation are primarily explicative, they explicate (or, strictly speaking, 'explicitate') and make graphic as much as they can of the semantic inherence of the original. The translator seeks to exhibit 'what is already there'.[483]

The preceding Pali words make clear how difficult this standard is to meet. On the one hand, they are derived from the centuries of development in Burmese doctrine that originated from remarkable and intricate discourses by an

---

[481] Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the theory of syntax*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1965, p. 30.
[482] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975, p. 253.
[483] Steiner, *After Babel*, p. 277.

enlightened being. On the other hand, they are given secular connotations in state rhetoric that may be very different from their original form. And they also usually have popular colloquial usages distinct from these two, fusing, modifying or rejecting existing meanings. How all of these resonate to the Burmese person on the street, or to school students, will inevitably be all but impossible to convey effectively in a language other than Burmese.

Certain 'native' Burmese words are also representative of this problem. Fortuitously, the above reading on Bayintnaung again contains useful examples. One is the noun modifier *–gji:*. While the use of this modifier in the Burmese text is very deliberate, it has not been conveyed in the English translation. In colloquial speech *–gji:* is usually used to describe things as 'large', or sometimes as numerous. It also has the meaning of 'great' (in magnitude, power, prestige). Used in this way, it may give an entirely new meaning to a word, such as *si'–dhu–gji:*, 'general', literally 'military–person–great'. In this word the *–gji:* is essential to its meaning, as it assigns rank. By contrast, in the reading on Bayintnaung the use of *–gji:* is superfluous, and intended to evoke a powerful image in the mind of the reader. It is suffixed to the words referring to Myanmar and the Tatmadaw. Yet each of these words has a complete meaning, with no need for additional clarification—when readers see Myanmar*–gji:* and Tatmadaw*–gji:*, the suffix is being used to inspire a sense of might, akin to the use of 'maha' in Indic societies (which is also sometimes used in Burmese). The term again serves as a lexical link between the past and present Naingandaw*–gji:* and Tatmadaw*–gji:*.[484]

[484] See for instance the remarks by the Secretary-1 in, 'Wishes of the people in blatant opposition to national traitors group', p. 1.

The compound verb for 'administer', *ou'chou'*, in the above reading also helps to illustrate the practical difficulties of translation. In English this word has a neutral connotation: what is thought about 'administration' generally depends upon what the job is, who is doing it and how well it is being done; by contrast, the Burmese word is inherently malign. Alone, *ou'* may mean, among other things, to 'cover', 'conceal', 'restrain', 'subdue', and 'suppress'. It is also used in some derogatory slang expressions. Likewise, *chou'* may be taken to mean: to 'hamper movement', 'confine', or 'detain'. A range of related compound terms reinforce these restrictive connotations, such as, *ou' sou:* (အုပ်စိုး), 'govern', where *sou:* is to 'dominate' or 'reign over', *ou' si:* (အုပ်စီး), 'administer' (for small scale and informal tasks, such as over a household), and *si:* by itself is to 'possess'; and *chou'* when rendered into a noun with the prefix *a* (အချုပ်) means 'detention center'. Coincidentally, *ou'* is also used in the word for 'headmaster', being *kjaun:–ou' hsayagji:*, literally, 'school-*ou'* teacher-great'.

These words are evocative to their users. Speakers talking about *ou'chou'* sometimes amplify and reflect their mental patterns by moving their hands downwards and inwards to mimic containment and limitation. The compound is itself captured in an expression that befits the above reading, *ou'chou' min:lou'* (အုပ်ချုပ် မင်းလုပ်), meaning 'Administering (is a) king's job'. That this is a proverbial given and that *ou'chou'* has such an inherently malevolent inference also fits with both the conventional historical interpretation of the ruler as enemy, as seen in earlier chapters, and the narrative on civility: civilised peoples are administered properly; uncivilised peoples are anarchists. Proper administration is in this

sense understood to mean the business of restraining—through enlightened and morally upright leadership—the otherwise uncontrollable urges of the masses.[485]

Although very limited, the above outline is sufficient to permit this chapter to continue to the six readings referred to above. The first of those is on another great historical personage, Mahabandoola.

'Mahabandoola'

> The character of Maha Bandoola seems to have been a strange mixture of cruelty and generosity, talent with want of judgement, and a strong regard to personal safety, combined with great courage and resolution, which never failed him till death. The acts of barbarous cruelty he committed are too numerous to be related... Still his immediate adherents are said to have been sincerely attached to him... [He] boldly declared he would conquer or die, and till he actually fell, set his men the first example of the courage he required in all.
>
> – *Major Snodgrass* [486]

Major Snodgrass, who was the military secretary of the British expedition in the first Anglo-Burmese war, offered the above assessment of the commander of the enemy forces, Mahabandoola (sometimes written as Maha Bandoola), upon hearing of his death. It is an assessment that at least in its positive aspects is agreed to by the third standard school textbook (3.44–6), which opens:

> In the history of Myanmar many thoroughly brave (*je:zun:–tha´ti.*) and famous (*htinsha:*) generals have emerged. Among these generals, the one general known to every Myanmar national (*amjou:dha:*) is Mahabandoola. Every Myanmar [national] takes pride (*goun*) in General Mahabandoola.
>
> မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသမိုင်းတွင် ရဲစွမ်းသတ္တိနှင့်ပြည့်စုံ၍ ထင်ရှားသော စစ်သူကြီးအများအပြားပေါ်ထွက်ခဲ့၏။ ထိုစစ်သူကြီးများထဲတွင် မြန်မာအမျိုးသားတိုင်းသိကြသော စစ်သူကြီးတစ်ဦးမှာ မဟာဗန္ဓုလဖြစ်သည်။ စစ်သူကြီးမဟာဗန္ဓုလအတွက် မြန်မာတိုင်းက ဂုဏ်ယူကြသည်။

---

[485] A similar narrative also ran through European literature during the Enlightenment, as a justification for colonial expansion. For a discussion see Brian V. Street, *The savage in literature: Representations of 'primitive' society in English fiction 1858–1920*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London & Boston, 1975, pp. 129 ff. See also the remarks by Lieberman cited with regards to the school library, in the previous chapter.

[486] Major Snodgrass, *Narrative of the Burmese War, detailing the operations of Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell's army from its landing at Rangoon in May 1824, to the conclusion of a treaty of peace at Yandaboo, in February 1826,* Ava House, Bangkok, 1997 (1827), pp. 175–7.

This is an evocative introduction. In the opening sentence the word used for 'brave' is the same as in reference to the courage of Bayintnaung. But these generals are not merely brave, they are 'thoroughly brave', unequivocally so. The compound word used here is *pji.soun*, 'full–complete': the officers are brave in every pore of their collective being. Hence, the first sentence starts with a powerful elevation of Myanmar history and martial lore. The opening passage also has a great sense of finality and officialdom contained in it: it is setting forth a statement of fact—every Myanmar national (*amjou:dha:*—that is, the readers) takes pride in this person. This is the norm, and through it the normative concept of 'Myanmar' as a singular entity is reinforced.

The reading then proceeds through a number of other steps to complete the reader's impression of Mahabandoola. First, the visual text of him astride horseback (see figure 5.2) on the adjacent page is described in glowing terms. Secondly, his birth and family background is summarised. Thirdly, and for most of the reading, the battles he fought are listed one after the other: Manipur, Assam, Rakhine (Arakan), Yangon, and finally, Danupyu. As the battles continue so too do Mahabandoola's prowess, fame and rank increase. Fourthly, his enduring renown is reflected upon. As in most of the readings, there is repetition of relevant keywords: this reading is 37 lines long; it contains 19 references to 'Mahabandoola', plus another six in the subsequent questions. The militarist imagery is also powerful: including the questions, there are seven uses of 'battle' in its noun and verb forms respectively. Prefixes pertaining to troops and the military occur 16 times respectively.

Whereas the battles against neighbouring powers receive minimal attention in the text, it is the battles that Mahabandoola fought against the British that are memorialised. This message is reinforced by the third standard history textbook, which also features a reading on Mahabandoola, devoted almost exclusively to his engagements with the British. For its part, the Myanmar reader explains that the British had occupied Shinmaphyu Island in the Rakhine country, and after being given the title of 'Mahabandoola' the general was sent to deal with them. The reading neglects to mention that the Bamar kingdom had only occupied that territory, over a series of incursions, a few years earlier, as the Mrauk U kingdom collapsed.[487] Instead, the reading impresses the idea of 'invasion' upon the reader, implying a territorial integrity such as exists today. It also suggests the presence of a standing Myanmar Tatmadaw, an institution of like form and substance as today, ready and waiting to defend this territory. These are fictionalised constructs intended to reinforce notions of lineage and national identity in the mind of the young reader. The item continues to evoke stirring imagery:

> In the Panwa battle, Rakhine country, Mahabandoola attacked and utterly crushed the British troops, and as a result the British retreated. Hence at that time, even Calcutta, British-India, trembled.
>
> ရခိုင်ပြည် ပန်းဝါတိုက်ပွဲတွင် မဟာဗန္ဓုလသည် အင်္ဂလိပ်တပ်များကို တိုက်ခိုက်ချေမှုန်းလိုက်နိုင်သဖြင့် အင်္ဂလိပ်များ ဆုတ်ခွာရသည်။ ထိုအခါတွင် အင်္ဂလိပ်ပိုင်အိန္ဒိယနိုင်ငံ ကာလကတ္တားမြို့ပင် တုန်လှုပ်သွားရသည်။

The status of the British as the preeminent historical enemy is of great importance to the nation-building narrative. That the British army conquered the lowlands of the territory denoted as present-day Myanmar and brought an end to its monarchy is historical fact. But this can be used in many different ways. The history of British occupation is rendered advantageous when appended to the concept of unity. 'Unity' is best (and typically) expressed in opposition to

[487] Lieberman, *Burmese administrative cycles*, p. 226.

something else. Here that 'other' is the British. By this account, the national peoples were united for centuries, but they were driven apart by the British—the classic 'divide and rule' argument—and have since had to work to reunify after the seeds of distrust maliciously sown by the great historical enemy. Some remarks from state media illustrate:

> Myanmar had stood as a sovereign and independent nation since yore. Myanmar national people [had] lived in unity, amity, cooperation and understanding and in weal or woe. The British waged three aggressive wars, the first in 1824, the second in 1852 and the third in 1885 and unjustly occupied and enslaved Myanmar, which had stood in peace and tranquillity...
>
> Myanmar national people who never yielded to anyone's unjust domination launched armed resistance against the British whenever opportunity arose. The British made attempts to cause mistrust, suspicions and hatred among the national people in making them unable to unitedly launch anti-colonialist struggles...
>
> As the British were [a] wicked race, they applied unjust means to colonize, enslave and manipulate Myanmar for many years. The British studied in detail the traditions and culture of Myanmar nationals and made instigation to cause dissension among the national people by creating stories to cause disunity.[488]

Through a description of how the British enemy destroyed unity, unity is itself configured, as to have been destroyed it must, by that very fact, have existed earlier. Interestingly, much of the recent conflict between Thailand and Myanmar has centred on the same kind of symbolism in Thailand, where 'the Bamar' are the preeminent historical enemy—those who destroyed the splendid Ayutthia—represented in Thai schools and public media.

Mahabandoola's role as someone who could make this 'evil empire' quake, even for a moment, is significant—his prowess as a supreme general is manifest, and so too the ultimate fallibility of the British. The reading continues to portray him as full of surprises: with the reoccupation of Shinmaphyu Island the British sent

---

[488] 'Imperialist British attempt to sow discord in Myanmar', in *Union Spirit*, undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/union/discord.html] (2 August 2000).

a naval column to occupy Yangon (rather than dare challenge the magnificent general head-on), and stationed troops at Shwedagon Pagoda. Mahabandoola and his men turned to meet them there, crossing the mountain ranges that lay in their path with such speed that even the enemy was in awe. In three lines, the reading then discretely summarises the remainder of Mahabandoola's life: his troops surrounded and fought the British stationed at Shwedagon for three months, before withdrawing to Danubyu, where he was killed by artillery fire.

The final paragraph of the reading observes how Mahabandoola's name lives on in a street and park in Yangon, and one of the four nationwide schoolhouses, as well as in literature, poems and songs. His name also features regularly in the state media, usually in reference to the need to preserve and maintain tradition and lineage, and the dangers of complacency:

> Uplifting or upholding of the national dignity is the inheritance of the traditions and culture handed down by forefathers and the love for the nation and social norms with prestige. This will be possible only if the moral character of the inheritor is good. Though General Maha Bandoola was patriotic, possessing the spirit of sacrifice and courage, his children could not become [like] General Maha Bandoola. His children did not become [like] Maha Bandoola as they did not practise as their father did who was historically brilliant and respectable.[489]

The exercises on the reading indicate what parts of the history are considered important. First, students must fill in the blanks with the correct spelling (compound word to be spelt correctly underlined):

(a) Mahabandoola attacked and utterly <u>crushed</u> the British troops.
(b) Even the British officers had to <u>praise</u> Mahabandoola in awe.

(က) မဟာဗန္ဓုလသည် အင်္ဂလိပ်တပ်များကို တိုက်ခိုက်----မှုန်းနှိုင်ခဲ့သည်။ (ခြေ၊ ချေ)
(ခ) မဟာဗန္ဓုလကို အင်္ဂလိပ်စစ်ဗိုလ်များကပင် အံ့သြချီး----ရသည်။ (ကြူး၊ ကျူး)

[489] Myanmar Myo Nwe, 'Uplifting the national dignity', *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 May 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/may10.htm] (13 May 2000).

Secondly, they must make sentences using the following words: 'courage, brave, march, take pride, crush'. Thirdly, they must answer these questions, which speak for themselves:

(a) Describe Mahabandoola's birthplace.
(b) In which battle did Mahabandoola crush the British?
(c) When was he awarded the title of 'Mahabandoola'?
(d) For what reason did the enemy British praise Mahabandoola's troops in awe?

(က) မဟာဗန္ဓုလ၏ မွေးရပ်ဇာတိကို ဖော်ပြပါ။
(ခ) မည်သည့်တိုက်ပွဲတွင် မဟာဗန္ဓုလသည် အင်္ဂလိပ်စစ်တပ်များကို ချေမှုန်းနိုင်ခဲ့သနည်း။
(ဂ) မဟာဗန္ဓုလဘွဲ့ကို မည်သည့်အခါတွင် ချီးြ i ခြင်းခံရသနည်း။
(ဃ) မဟာဗန္ဓုလ၏တပ်များကို ရန်သူအင်္ဂလိပ်များက အဘယ်ကြောင့် အံ့သြချီးကျူးသေနည်း။

The student getting those answers correct will have demonstrated understanding not only about the said role of Mahabandoola in the business of nation-building, but also that of the current armed forces, the heir to his legacy. Also in that tradition is the role of the Tatmadaw as religious patron: builder, repairer and defender of the Buddhist faith and its material culture.

'Shwedagon Pagoda'

> During the British period for nearly a hundred years the Shwedagon served as a symbol of the emerging Burmese nation against the colonial state. And in the period since 1962 the zedi [pagoda] has served as a symbol of 'the Burmese people' against the military junta. Yet in this case... the state has also seized on the monument as a symbol of the unity of the nation [that] it alone can secure and guarantee.
>
> – *Craig J. Reynolds* [490]

Reynolds has remarked on the role of Shwedagon Pagoda in the national consciousness as a site for contest between nation and state; as a site of occupation by British troops; and as a site of mass protest: against the British

---

[490] Craig J. Reynolds, 'National monuments vs. populist icons in Southeast Asia', Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, 12 June 2002, [http://www.anu.edu.au/culture/activities/sixpack/icon_papers/craig_reynolds.htm] (14 June 2002).

colonial regime and against subsequent governments. Though many of these actions relate to the nationalist movement, none are mentioned in the text on Shwedagon in the second standard book (2.13–14). Instead what readers get is a particularly sanitised version of Shwedagon restricted largely to its physical and (briefly) historical characteristics, and a little on its said significance for the national people. The reading is accompanied by the same photograph of the pagoda as is in the fourth standard reading on Yangon City (see figure 5.3). Like other second standard readings, it is relatively short, totalling only 18 lines over two pages, plus questions. Again, the subject is reinforced through constant repetition. 'Shwedagon' is repeated eleven times, and the word 'pagoda', twelve times—usually together, but sometimes separately.

The reading is divided into five paragraphs (the last two are only two lines each) of which the longest is the first, outlining the physical dimensions of the pagoda and a little of its history. It is noted that 'Myanmar kings' continuously maintained the pagoda and repaired it after earthquakes; reference to its original Mon builders is omitted. The only king referred to directly is the Bamar king Mindon, who, according to the text, was responsible for erecting the current umbrella on top of the pagoda. That text is now out of date: in 1999 the umbrella was replaced by the present regime amid fanfare intended to bolster its legitimacy through the kind of religious patronage discussed in previous chapters.[491] That act of placing the sacred umbrella atop the mighty Shwedagon is the unsurpassed statement of religious patronage that could be performed by anyone in Myanmar. It again fits with the 'kingly' role that the Tatmadaw has assumed for itself—which, as Aung-

[491] 'All-round perpetual renovation of the Shwedagon Pagoda and Shwehtidaw (Sacred Umbrella) Hoisting Ceremony', undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/shwedagon/index.html] (15 July 2002). See also the section on ritual elements in chapter 3.

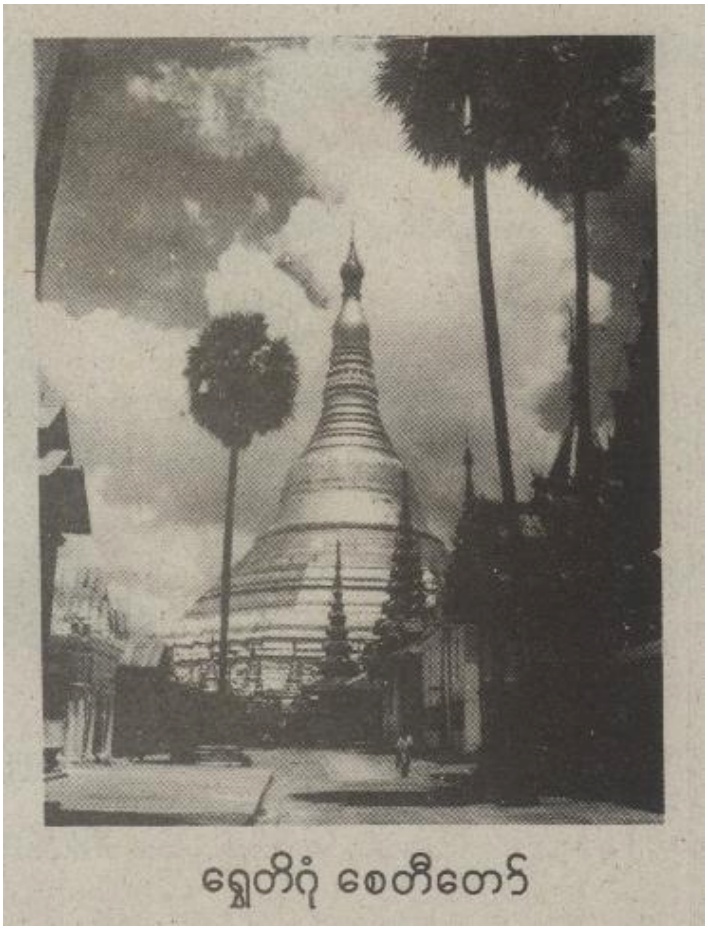

Figure 5.3: 'Shwedagon Pagoda' (2.13).

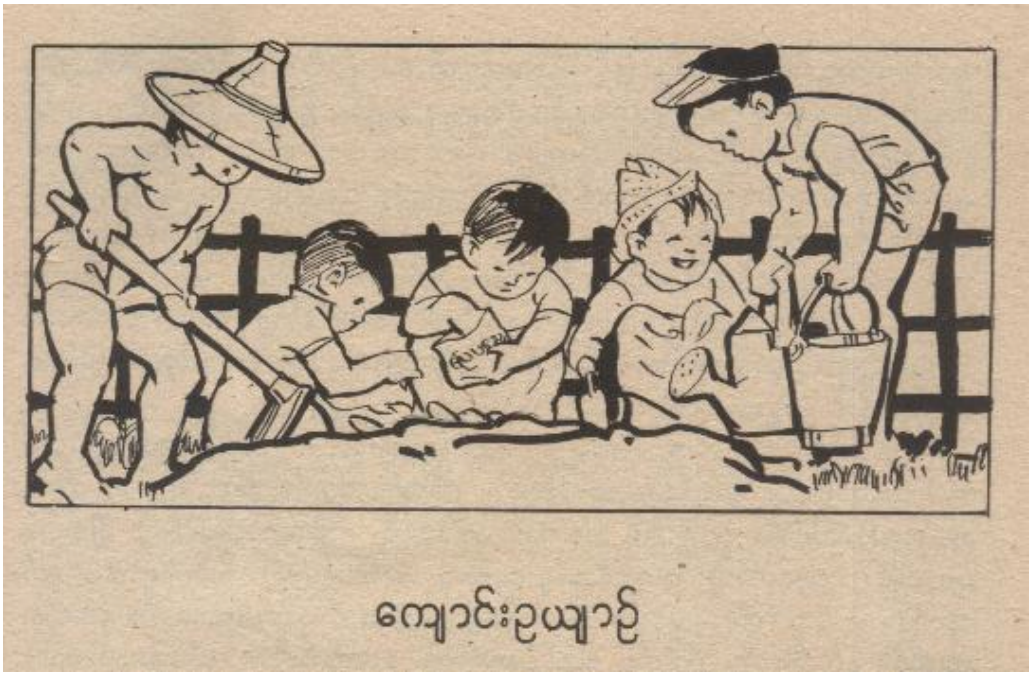

Figure 5.4: 'The school garden' (4.11).

Thwin remarks, means that 'to be commensurate with his status, [the ruler's] donations should surpass everyone else's'.[492]

The description of the pagoda's physical features is more than the simple stating of certain 'facts'. It frames and standardises the knowledge about Shwedagon deemed appropriate for the readers—that it is over 2500 years old, has a height of 326 feet and a gem-encrusted sacred umbrella, and particular architectural features: gateways, edifices and bells. These details are a miniaturised Shwedagon state-approved fact-book. Academic papers, tourist guides and newspaper articles alike all reiterate the same pieces of information, perhaps in much the same fashion, perhaps in far greater detail. A mock dialogue with a tourist in a locally produced English language phrase book, for instance, proceeds:

> While you are in Rangoon, you should go to the Shwedagon Pagoda.
> The pagoda is 326 feet high, and 1420 feet in circumference at the base.
> This famous pagoda is a constant source of pride and joy to the Burmese.[493]

By constantly repeating such comments about this and other historical monuments a sense of the object's 'reality' is created in the collective mind of the readers. School students who may have the privilege to visit Shwedagon will come mentally equipped with the historical and architectural data necessary to 'understand' it.

But the text also establishes an authenticity that exceeds the monument itself, and even the invisible narrator, extending to the entire national populace:

---

[492] Aung-Thwin, *Pagan*, p. 144.
[493] M. Ba Thaung, (M. ဘသောင်း), *Current English speaking*, ဒေဝဦးတော်စာပေ, Yangon, 1996, pp. 97–8.

Every time Buddhists come to Yangon City they go to revere Shwedagon Pagoda.

ဗုဒ္ဓဘာသာဝင်တို့သည် ရန်ကုန်မြို့တော်သို့ရောက်တိုင်း ရွှေတိဂုံစေတီတော်သို့ သွားရောက်ကြည်ညိုကြပါသည်။

This is both an absolute descriptive statement and an instructive one. It guarantees that such a practice exists and effectively enforces the practice by informing the reader that so it shall be into the future, i.e. when the reader visits. It is validated by the earlier tone of authority established through demonstration of apparently neutral 'factual' knowledge. It is a 'transcendental' statement, coming from outside and beyond the classroom, above criticism. Whereas in the opening paragraph the reader was told, 'This is how Shwedagon is', the presumed knowledge of the narrator now extends so far as, 'This is what Buddhists do.' And as Buddhists throughout the country *do* revere Shwedagon (and aspire to visit it), it is not a statement that any would likely contest. As the narrator's status and veracity is assured, it is safe to conclude the reading with a final unequivocal remark:

On account of the all-round renovation of Shwedagon Pagoda, every devotee is at peace.

ရွှေတိဂုံစေတီတော်ကို ဘက်စုံမွမ်းမံပြင်ဆင်ထားသည့်အတွက် ဖူးမြော်ရသူတိုင်း စိတ်အေးချမ်းသာရှိကြသည်။

In the progression of statements by the invisible narrator, this last one is the most tenuous—but it is secured in the foundations of what hs preceded it. Whereas the narrator's statements began as descriptions of material objects and then of human behaviour, the narrator ends by presuming a kind of omniscient familiarity with the collective emotions of those paying obeisance before the pagoda. This is primarily due to the unspoken presence of the state in the statement—the invisible actor, the only one capable of 'all-round renovation', paraded in the state media when, as per usual,

> Patron of the Leading Committee for Perpetual All-round Renovation of the Shwe-Dagon Pagoda Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt inspected perpetual all-round renovation tasks of the Shwedagon Pagoda this morning.[494]

Knowing that everything is being taken care of, the textbook implies, why wouldn't every devotee feel at peace? The statement is akin to narratives in state media where the national leaders feel competent to make assessments of the burgeoning popular sentiment that inevitably follows state projects for national development, such as the Secretary-1 speaking at a Kachin festival:

> The Tatmadaw government with the firm determination to restore the fine traditions and the national solidarity, which had been preserved throughout the past history, was able to strive together with the Kachin national leaders for prevalence of peace and stability in Kachin State; due to the efforts, mutual trust, respect and understanding are flourishing beyond all limits of measurement and peace and stability is prevailing in the state; hence all the Kachin races are now able to unitedly and joyfully take part in the festival.[495]

Although a more convoluted statement than that in the textbook, the remarks by the Secretary-1 contain the same elements as the textbook: the authorities (implied in the first, explicit in the second), their undertakings, the tradition, the benefits, the people and their emotions. Hence, the reading on Shwedagon is an early link in a lexical chain leading readers, progressively towards the more elaborate style of the wider state-managed media. The next reading is another excellent example of this progression.

---

[494] 'Secretary-1 inspects perpetual all-round renovation tasks of Shwedagon Pagoda', *New Light of Myanmar*, 11 December 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/religious/buddha2001/dec/dec11.html] (16 August 2002).

[495] 'Grand and auspicious Manau festival reflects richness and high standard of Kachin culture, pride of preserving and protecting traditions and culture: Secretary-1 attends Wunpawng Ninggawn Hkumra Manau Mali Nmai Zup-Myitkyina Majoi Festival', *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 December 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/decem27.htm] (29 December 2001).

'The school garden'

> When we are moving in good speed to come abreast of other nations which are, like us, betting on present-day human resources in tooling a good and prosperous future, the Government is making all-out efforts to produce better teachers through running of refresher courses for them to be imbued with greater zeal in the discharge of their duties, nurturing their pupils who may be likened to flower-beds which will blossom with the passage of time.
>
> – New Light of Myanmar [496]

Flowerbeds and gardens are suitable metaphors to describe anything that involves growth and nurture; students and the Union alike are suitable topics for the metaphor. 'The school garden' is a lengthy fourth standard reading (4.11–13) that explores the role of the state through the metaphor of the garden's 'spatial culture', similar to 'The school library'. It consists of 49 lines of written text, plus questions. It is accompanied by a visual image of five boys working together on the garden, happy and industrious (see figure 5.4). A male student also narrates the reading in the first person plural.

The body of the written text is divided into five paragraphs that evince a deliberate flow of concepts between past, present and future. The first introduces the garden and those involved in its upkeep. The second describes how it was initiated and organised, pointing to the role of leadership. The third indicates the tasks undertaken by everyone in beginning the garden, pointing to collective endeavour. The fourth depicts the bountiful results of the well-carried out tasks of the previous two paragraphs. The fifth calls for perpetuation of the good results already achieved through continued effort. The reading begins as follows:

> In a vacant plot of land on the left side of our school compound is a school garden. Our school garden is a garden grown with the collective strength (*ina:*) of our schoolteachers and school students.

---

[496] 'Equity in [the] education age'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 12 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/perspectives/august/12aug30.htm] (14 August 2001).

ကျွန်တော်တို့ကျောင်းဝင်း၏ လက်ဝဲဘက်မြေကွက်လပ်တွင် ကျောင်းဥယျာဉ်လေးတစ်ခု ရှိပါသည်။ ကျွန်တော်တို့ ကျောင်းဥယျာဉ်လေးသည် ကျွန်တော်တို့ကျောင်းရှိ ဆရာဆရာမများနှင့် ကျောင်းသူ ကျောင်းသားတို့၏ စုပေါင်းအင်အားမှ ပေါ်ထွန်းလာသော ဥယျာဉ်လေး ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

The second sentence is the first cue revealing the metaphor: the expression 'collective strength' suggests what is demanded of students not merely in their school garden but rather at the national level, such that spoken of in the 2000 National Day address by Snr-Gen. Than Shwe:

> Although there were divergent views due to the divide-and-rule policy of the colonialists shortly after independence was regained, national solidarity is now progressing from strength to strength due to the collective effort and might of the State and the national people.[497]

The repetition of keywords is also evident in this first paragraph. In four lines the word 'school' appears five times. At least two of these references are superfluous ('school garden' in the first sentence; 'schoolteachers' where 'teachers' would suffice). 'Our' appears three times: while the first time it sets the tone for narration of the reading, on the second and third occasions it is used at points where it is not a grammatical necessity. The pluralising modifier for 'school students' also infers '*we* school students', whereas the teachers are brought into this sense of collective identity through being the teachers of 'our school'. 'The garden', the metaphor for the Union, is also referred to three times, twice in the second sentence where once would have sufficed.

The second paragraph describes the steps that preceded the inauguration of the garden six years earlier, on World Trees Day. That the garden was commenced on this day again illustrates the role of the state: a day of universal bureaucratic

---

[497] 'Message from the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe on the 80th Anniversary of National Day'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 20 November 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/nov20.htm] (22 November 2000).

relevance was chosen rather than one that may have been expedient to the locality. The school headmaster personifies the authorities: he is identified as 'the director' of the garden-growing task. Before World Trees Day, he calls all the teachers and students to attend a meeting—an action that itself bespeaks of his power. As his audience is presumed ignorant, he explains the benefits (*ăkjou:–kjei:zu:*) of planting a garden. He then organises them by announcing that each must bring at least one variety of seed and tools—mattocks, hoes and machetes—on the designated day. The instructions may appear innocuous, but the way they are delivered and their qualitative nature have a strong resemblance to orders given to people to attend *loatapay*, the labour contribution discussed in the preceding chapter. The following order by a village tract council to a village chairperson, obtained by a human rights group based in Thailand, illustrates:

> Subject: To send [*loatapay*] for building the rice storehouse
>
> Regarding the above subject, for the [construction of the] rice storehouse come and gather with thatch, 10 [*loatapay*] people, 1 axe, a machete each, and rice packs all complete, at the village tract secretary's house tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock exactly, you are informed.[498]

Whether in the real-life scenario above, or the fictional account in the textbooks, in each case orders are given to bring the raw materials and implements necessary to undertake a certain task, and gather at a particular time and in a particular place to carry it out in accordance with guidelines laid down by a superior, seemingly for the greater good.

The third paragraph describes events on World Trees Day, when the garden is planted. In accordance with the instructions of the headmaster, students clear

---

[498] 'Forced labour orders since the ban: A compendium of SPDC order documents demanding forced labour since November 2000', Karen Human Rights Group, KHRG #2002-01, 8 February 2002, [http://www.ibiblio.org/freeburma/humanrights/khrg/archive/khrg2002/khrg0201.html#General Forced Labour] (20 July 2002), order no. 98.

the designated plot with, the reader is reminded, the mattocks, hoes and machetes they have brought themselves, and systematically (*sa̲ni'da̲gja.*) plant a variety of ornamental and edible plants. The plants are all listed, which apart from adding to the students' vocabulary, creates a sensation of plenty and adds realism to the story. It also familiarises students with the kind of list making that goes on nightly in media reports of state undertakings, evidencing the impressive dimensions of state-managed tasks.[499] The work is carried out in a happy competitive spirit, and completed before long, with students organised into to their four school houses: Kyanzittha, Bayintnaung, Alaungphaya and (Maha) Bandoola.

The second and third paragraphs also contain lexical elements that infer the presence of the state. Three sentences reporting on events—each of the opening sentences and the final sentence of the third paragraph—end with an expression that approximates 'it has become known/it is learnt' (သိရပါသည်). This style, which is not found elsewhere in the readers, imitates media reports on past events.[500] It implies that the narrator has done research and obtained the facts, which he is now reporting back to the readers via an official channel. The link between the instructions of the school headmaster and the national leaders is also drawn through the use of precise expressions. In making preparations, described in the second paragraph, he 'instructs' (မှာကြား) and 'tells' (ပြောကြား) the students what to do, in exactly the same manner as the leaders of the country give directions to the state agents and masses (see examples in chapter 3). Similarly, tasks are undertaken 'in accordance with [his] directions' (ညွှန်ကြားချက်အရ). Finally, at the end

[499] Discussed in the section on ritual elements in chapter 3.
[500] See for instance the newspaper extract on the white elephant in chapter 3.

of the work, the teachers 'feed and honour' the students with sticky rice and fried snacks, adding prestige to the role and status of the students and reinforcing the position of the teachers—who are not mentioned as participating in the work themselves—as benefactors.

The fourth paragraph gives an up to date description of the garden. It is a cornucopia, with multitudinous plants and luxuriant produce of splendid colours and density. The garden's benefits, earlier foreseen by the headmaster, are now manifest:

> [We] could go to donate fruit to the nearby monastery too. Teachers and students have also been able to eat one thing after another.
>
> သစ်သီးများကို အနီးရှိ ဘုန်းကြီးကျောင်းသို့လည်း သွား၍ လှူဒါန်းနိုင်ခဲ့ပြီ။ ဆရာ ဆရာမ၊ ကျောင်းသူ ကျောင်းသားများလည်း တစ်မျိုးပြီးတစ်မျိုး စားကြရပါပြီ။

And while these are the physical benefits, there have been other less tangible but no less important gains for the school:

> [The garden] has become well known by the name of the 'blossoming garden' and suchlike. The news of its beautiful qualities and so on has been spreading in our town.
>
> ပွင့်သစ်ဥယျာဉ်ဟူသော အမည်ဖြင့် ထင်ရှားစပြုလာပါပြီ။ ဥယျာဉ်၏ အလှဂုဏ်သတင်းသည် ကျွန်တော်တို့မြို့လေး၌ ပျံ့သင်းစပြုနေပါပြီ။

So it is that the magnificent garden does not merely provide for the school community's material needs; it also confers prestige on the school and everyone involved in its upkeep.

The concluding paragraph looks to the future. Not surprisingly, the students spend every moment available down in the garden, happily maintaining it. Yet the ambitious aim is to exceed what has already been achieved:

The duty (*tawun*) that must be carried out (*hsaunjwe'*) for this garden to be more luxuriant and more attractive is the duty (*tawun*) of we who are the current students. [We] hope that just like us, later students also will continue to preserve, maintain and nurture this garden. If it is the case that in this way the practice will be unbroken, maintained and nurtured then year upon year our school garden will be many times more luxuriant.

ဤဥယျာဉ်လေး ပိုမိုစိမ်းလန်းစိုပြည်အောင်၊ ပိုမိုလှပတင့်တယ်အောင် ဆောင်ရွက်ရမည့်တာဝန်မှာ လက်ရှိကျောင်းသူ ကျောင်းသားများ ဖြစ်ကြသော ကျွန်တော်တို့တာဝန်သာ ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ကျွန်တော်တို့နည်းတူ နောင်လာမည့် ကျောင်းသူ ကျောင်းသားများကလည်း ဤဥယျာဉ်ကလေးကို ဆက်လက် ထိန်းသိမ်း ပြုစုပျိုးထောင်မည်ဟု မျှော်လင့်ပါသည်။ ဤသို့ အစဉ်အဆက်မပြတ် ပြုစုပျိုးထောင်ကြမည်ဆိုပါက ကျွန်တော်တို့ ကျောင်းဥယျာဉ်လေးသည် တစ်နှစ်ထက်တစ်နှစ် ဆထက်တိုး၍ စိမ်းလန်းစိုပြည်ဝေဆာလာပေမည်။

This is a powerful conclusion that reverberates with the Union's presence. As discussed in earlier chapters, concepts of preservation, maintenance and nurturing of lineage, tradition, culture and national identity are central to the state project for Union identity. In the final paragraph here they are all represented in the fruits and flowers that the student readers have been learning about. The reading is fundamentally instructive: this is how you make, maintain and preserve a garden; this is how we all make, maintain and preserve the state. Know your place and know your responsibility. The benefits will be manifest and manifold. Answer these questions to demonstrate that you have got it, and then continue to the next reading:

(d) Who bears the duty to preserve the school garden?
(e) What benefits are had because of the school garden cultivation?

(ဃ) ကျောင်းဥယျာဉ်ကို ထိန်းသိမ်းရန် မည်သူတို့၌ တာဝန်ရှိသနည်း။
(င) ကျောင်းဥယျာဉ်စိုက်ပျိုးခြင်းကြောင့် မည်သည့်အကျိုးကျေးဇူးများ ရရှိသနည်း။

The mechanics of 'The school garden' are in every respect, as Keyes has it, 'disjunctive' with the life of the typical reader: a village student.[501] Whereas agriculture is something that has historically been undertaken in keeping with natural cycles and community knowledge, now it is managed by the state, and

[501] Keyes, 'The proposed world of the school', pp. 102–3. Keyes also notes the role of school gardens in the 'spatial culture' of Thai schools.

the students are assumed to be know nothing. Activities are conducted on seemingly arbitrary dates and times of official designation, reflecting the objectives of state bureaucrats rather than the local rhythms of the students' world. Finally, production is undertaken not only to obtain food—for the benefit of the producers—but as a greater duty to the state and society that will obtain prestige for everyone involved. No longer oriented toward the local, the immediate needs of the producers and their communities, the garden is in every respect now directed by and towards the state.

'Our duties'

> The duty to preserve, defend and protect the nation's sovereignty is the duty of the national government along with the entire people ourselves...
> *–Seikkan Township USDA Executive Officer Daw Thuza Min*

> နိုင်ငံတော်၏ အချုပ်အခြာအာဏာကို ထိန်းသိမ်းကာကွယ်စောင့်ရှောက်ရန်တာဝန်သည် နိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရနှင့်အတူ မိမိတို့ပြည်သူလူထုတစ်ရပ်လုံးတွင် တာဝန်ရှိကြောင်း၊
> *–ဆိပ်ကမ်းမြို့နယ်ပြည်ထောင်စုကြံ့ခိုင်ရေးနှင့်ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအသင်းအလုပ်အမှုဆောင် ဒေါ်သူဇာမင်း*[502]

As already noted, all state media talk about 'duty', including the school textbooks. Ordinarily it comes to students in the form of duties as pupils, sons or daughters, such as have been noted in chapter 4. Alternately, students may have duties as nationals of Myanmar, such as identified by Daw Thuza Min, above, during an anti-'Yodaya' rally in Yangon, or as in the metaphorical garden of the last reading. In the item discussed in this section, however, duties are designated according to occupational and gender stereotypes.

---

[502] 'Yangonites support mass rallies of national people to denounce SURA and KNU: Yodaya is harbouring and supporting every kind of insurgent who will give trouble to Myanmar; Our People's Tatmadaw is crushing drug-trafficking SURA and KNU who are encroaching on the sovereignty of the nation', *New Light of Myanmar,* 10 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june10.html]; Burmese version (untitled), [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/mnlm/june10.html] (13 June 2002).

The item on ‘Our duties’ is a second standard recitation (2.61–2). Spread over two pages, it consists of seven four-line stanzas of written text and 14 discrete visual images, each associated with two lines of a stanza (see figure 5.5). As it is a recitation—not reading—item, there are no exercises. The pattern of each stanza is the same, and the entire written text follows, with the first three stanzas and associated visual images on the first page, and the latter four on the second. The style is unlike that of the other pieces in this chapter: it is truncated to rhyme in seven syllable lines, so the translation is approximated to convey something of the meaning and something of the rhythm of the stanzas:

Farmer U Tha Aung	လယ်သမားကြီး ဦးသာအောင်
Benefits the country planting rice.	စပါးစိုက်ကာ ပြည်ကျိုးဆောင်။
Worker Ko Phoe Maung	ကိုဖိုးမောင် အလုပ်သမား
Endeavours to produce goods.	ကုန်ထုတ်လုပ်ဖို့ သူကြိုးစား။
Schoolteacher U Phoe Kyar	ဦးဖိုးကျားက ကျောင်းဆရာ
Teaches literacy.	စာပေတတ်ဖို့ သင်ပေးတာ။
Soldier Maung Htun Tha	မောင်ထွန်းသာ စစ်သားကလေး
Defends against the nation’s enemies.	နိုင်ငံရန်ကို ကာကွယ်ပေး။
Postman Maung Thein Tan	စာဖြန့်ဖြူးရေး မောင်သိန်းတန်
Delivers the mail on time.	စာပို့ရာတွင် အချိန်မှန်။
Fireman Ko Thazan	ကိုသာဇံ မီးသတ်သမား
Risks himself extinguishing fire.	မီးသတ်ရာတွင် သူစွန့်စား။
Policeman Ko Hla Shwe	ရဲသားကြီးက ကိုလှရွှေ
Fulfills his duty to catch crooks.	လူဆိုးဖမ်းဖို့ တာဝန်ကျေ။
‘Our lass’ Ma Khin Mya	တို့လုံမေ မခင်မြ
Is very skilled in directing traffic.	ယာဉ်ထိန်းရာတွင် ကျွမ်းကျင်လှ။
Doctor U Sein Ba	ဦးစိန်ဘက ဆရာဝန်
Is outstanding at treatment.	ကုသရေးမှာ သူထူးချွန်။
Nurse Ma Hla Mun	မလှမွန် သူနာပြု
Provides care with *cetana*.	စေတနာဖြင့် သူပြုစု။
Leader U Tha Nu	ဦးသာနုက ခေါင်းဆောင်းကာ
Takes responsibility for the village’s benefit.	ကျေးရွာကောင်းကျိုး သယ်ပိုးမှာ။
Driver Ko Ba Thaung	ကားဆရာ ကိုဘသောင်း
Watching for danger drives with care.	ဘေးရန်ကြည့်၍ သတိနှင့်မောင်း။
Our companion school students	ကျောင်းသူကျောင်းသား တို့အဖော်
Once come of age;	အရွယ်ရောက်လို့ ကြီးပြင်းသော်။
State scholars of noble bearing	ပညာတော် မြတ်စိတ်ထား
Let’s everyone bear our duty.	တာဝန်ကိုယ်စီ ထမ်းစို့လား။

Figure 5.5: ‘Our duties’ (2.61–2).

Perhaps the most striking feature of this item is the dominance of male imagery, in keeping with and perhaps even surpassing the general trend, noted in chapter 4. On the first page all six occupational groups are male, even the schoolteacher. On the second page only two females are referred to in the written text, and they are placed in hierarchically inferior roles juxtaposed against those of the males on the opposite side of the page. One of them does not even have a proper occupational title: she is simply a colloquial 'lass', although she is shown in uniform, directing traffic. A third female is among three male students adjacent to the last stanza. There is no pretension of gender balance here: the reading is aimed at all students equally, but its message is not equal.

The selection of occupations is another interesting characteristic. The rural-looking farmer is the only member of an occupational group not explicitly working for the state: the worker, doctor, nurse and driver, for instance, all represent agencies that were nationalised during the socialist era and over which the state still holds considerable control. In this regard, even the farmer is nominally beholden to the state, as all lands were nationalised during the same period, and compulsory rice acquisition policies imposed then continue until now.[503] The nurse wears the uniform of a public hospital. By contrast the Saya is (as in most other instances of male teachers) not wearing a schoolteacher's uniform but rather Bamar dress. The village leader, lowest on the rungs of state administration, has no uniform and nor does he need (or ordinarily have) one, as he is represented out working with the people undertaking *loatapay*.

---

[503] 'Quota rice', known as *tawun–kjei–z̲aba:* (တာဝန်ကျေစပါး), 'duty-fulfilled-paddy', is currently levied at around 12 baskets per acre. Farmers unable to pay may have their land confiscated and suffer other punitive sanctions. See further, The People's Tribunal on Food Scarcity and Militarization in Burma, *Voice of the hungry nation*, pp. 4–10, 129.

The other notable aspect of the text is the use of particular keywords with regards to certain occupations. The farmer acts for the benefit of the country: *pji–kjou:–hsaun*, literally, 'country–benefit–bear'. The leader also works for communal benefit, that of his village. The worker endeavours, *kjou:za:*, to produce goods. The soldier defends the nation, *naingan*, from enemies. The policeman fulfills his duty, *tawun*. The doctor is outstanding at 'what he does'. The driver takes care, *sati*, to avoid danger. The nurse treats patients with *cetana*, the subject of the last reading in this chapter. The line on the postman also contains a confusing example of an unconventional term used where a simple one would have sufficed. Maung Thein Tan, clearly a postman, is described as *sa–hpjan.bju:–jei:*, 'letter-distribution [officer]', rather than the normal word for 'postman', *sa-pou.–th̲ama:* (စာပို့သမား), 'letter–send–*specialist*', which would have fit just as well.

Whereas the reading has a descriptive appearance—'here are different people and what they do'—this disguises its instructive purpose, which is to indicate to students the kinds of occupations open to them. And, as the final stanza makes clear, once a profession is chosen, it should be carried out correctly for the greater good. In some respects, that is also the theme of the next reading addressed here.

'*The* azani *leader*'

> 'You made yourself a bridge for them to pass in safety through:
> What are you then to them, monkey, and what are they to you?'
>
> 'Victorious king, I guard the herd, I am their lord and chief...
>
> 'Therefore I fear no pain of death, bonds do not give me pain,
> The happiness of those was won o'er whom I used to reign.'
>
> – Mahakapi Jataka (no. 407)

The concept of *azani*, another that features prominently in the state media in Myanmar, was introduced briefly in chapter 4. It is most typically used in relation to Aung San, or the generic Tatmadaw-man, such as in an historical song about General Aung San reproduced at the end of the third standard book (3.80):

> In our country Burma, all parents shall rear heroes like General Aung San. In our country Burma, all parents shall rear genuine *azani*.
>
> ငါတို့ဗမာပြည်မယ်၊ မိဘတိုင်းကကွယ် ဗိုလ်အောင်ဆန်းလို သူရဲကောင်းတွေ မွေးရမယ်။ ငါတို့ဗမာပြည်မယ်၊ မိဘတိုင်းကရယ် အာဇာနည် အစစ်တွေကိုရှိဖို့ မွေးရမယ်။

But to be *azani* one does not have to belong to the military, although the current state understandably prefers this usage. Gustaaf Houtman has cautioned that in its English translation *azani* is liable to be misunderstood by thinking in Judeo-Christian terms, where martyrdom suggests laying down one's life for a 'good cause'. He proposes that the real meaning of *azani* is in renouncing through the conscious practice of mental culture (*samadhi*) and compassion—accordingly, monks may become *azani* without having to lay down their lives. In this rendering, an *azani* is capable of bravery that may only perhaps result in the

ultimate sacrifice, simply due to an ability to ascertain instantaneously the correct course of action in a given situation, without regard to self-interest.[504]

'The *azani* leader' is a reading in the fourth standard textbook (4.46–8) faithfully based on the Mahakapi Jataka. Like other readings at the fourth standard level, it is lengthy and quite dense relative to earlier books. It consists of 47 lines of written text spread over three pages, with exercises and two small illustrations. Whereas many Jataka-derived tales in the textbooks do not make their origin explicit (and none refer to a Jataka by name), this reading does refer to the central character after whom the title is given, the monkey king, as the 'future Buddha'—the *Bodhisatta* (in Burmese, *hpaja:–laun:*–ဘုရားလောင်း, as in Alaungphaya, *alaun:–hpaja:*). It also refers to Indian place names.

The reading begins, 'once upon a time', with the *Bodhisatta* monkey king administering (*ou'chou'*) his monkey charges in the Himalayan forest. The monkeys enjoy fruit of exceptional quality from a mango tree on the bank of the Ganges (see figure 5.6, top). One branch of the tree overhangs the river. The monkey king foresees that fruit falling into the river from this branch may bring danger to the community, and so he orders any mango blossoms budding on this branch to be destroyed. He demonstrates that he is good at administration—an adept leader in keeping with the *ou'chou' min:lou'* principle.

In spite of the monkey king's diligence, a red ant nest (commonly found in mango trees) conceals one fruit, and it ripens and falls into the river. It floats to Varanasi (Benares), where someone plucks it out of the water. This person is impressed by

[504] Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics*, pp. 241–2.

Figure 5.6: 'The *azani* leader' (4.46–7).

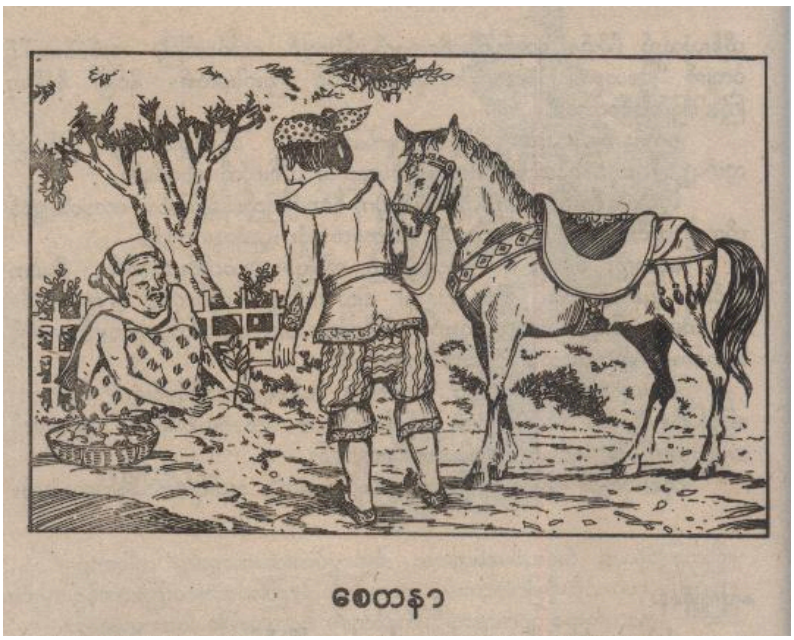

Figure 5.7: '*Cetana*' (3.22).

the fruit and, presumably to curry favour, sends it to the king for his enjoyment. The king wants more as soon as he is done with it. He gathers some trackers and troops, and heads upstream in search of the tree. Having found it, they enjoy its produce and settle down underneath it for the night. After falling asleep they are awoken by the sound of the monkeys coming and eating in the tree. The king orders his archers to surround the tree. The fearful monkeys respond, like true followers, by drawing close to their king. As an *azani* leader, his response is unhesitant: he will lay down his own life to save those of the other monkeys. He makes an incredible leap over the Ganges and again, a leap coming back with a cane shoot tied around his waist, secured to the other side. His estimate on the length of the cane shoot needed to cross the river is slightly short: he grabs and clings to a branch of the mango tree with two hands. Dangling there, he orders the other monkeys to climb over his back and along the cane to safety (see figure 5.6, bottom). They first respectfully pay obeisance to him and then do as he has told them, even when one among them who represents Devadatta—the real-life attempted assassin of the Buddha—jumps down hard on the leader's back. Despite injury, the king perseveres, thinking only of the safety of his charges.

On the ground, the human king witnesses what is taking place with amazement. He demonstrates his own leadership qualities by, in recognition of the sacrifice the monkey king is making, restraining his men and permitting the monkeys to flee to safety. When only the dying *Bodhisatta* remains, he is placed on soft bedding and approached by the king in the verses from the original Jataka that introduced this section. In the textbook they are as follows:

> Oh dear friend Great Monkey, in what way are you related to those monkeys that you used your body as a bridge so the monkey troop could cross to safety?
>
> အဆွေမျောက်ကြီးသင်သည် မိမိကိုယ်ကိုတံတားပြု၍ မျောက်အပေါင်းကို ချမ်းသာရာသို့ ကူးစေသည်မှာ သင်သည် ထိုအမျောက်တို့နှင့် အသို့ ဆွေးမျိုးတော်စပ်သနည်း

And the monkey replies:

> Great Noble King, I am the chief of those monkeys. As the chief, accordingly I got those monkeys to safety. I know that due to undertaking (*hsaunjwe'*) now I will die. However, I have no anxiety. You also Great King, take my example and do things for the benefit (*a̲kjou:*) of [other/all] creatures!
>
> မြတ်သောမင်းကြီး ငါသည် ထိုမျောက်တို့၏ အကြီးအမှူးဖြစ်၏။ အကြီးအမှူးဖြစ်သည့်အားလျော်စွာ ထိုမျောက်တို့၏ ချမ်းသာကို ငါဆောင်၏။ ထိုသို့ဆောင်ရွက်သောကြောင့် ငါယခုသေရတော့မည်ကို သိ၏။ သို့သော် ငါသည် စိုးရိမ်ပူပန်ခြင်းမရှိ။ သင်မင်းကြီးလည်း ငါ၏ပုံစံကိုယူ၍ သတ္တဝါတို့၏ အကျိုးကိုဆောင်ပါလော့

Upon completing his admonition (*hsoun:ma.*) the monkey dies. As the human king has already demonstrated his innate leadership traits in recognising and respecting the highest sacrifice of leadership in another, the reader may assume that he does indeed take the monkey king's example and rule justly and for the benefit of all creatures.

The reading speaks very strongly to the role of leadership, and the prestige and responsibilities attached to it. At every point in the story it is the two leaders—centrally, the *Bodhisatta* monkey king, but also the king of Varanasi—who motivate others to action, demonstrate wisdom and foresight, and ultimately, for the *azani* monkey, self-sacrifice. At every point the other characters, whether they be the monkeys or humans, are submerged under the narrative about the leaders and their evident superiority. The monkeys most of all demonstrate no ability to respond to their situation as a mass: when threatened they know only to rely upon their leader; they have trust, and he does not disappoint them. The one action that they make autonomously is that of respectful homage, knowing that they will likely not see their king again, before crossing the river. The final

question of the reading drives the point home. It does not apply specifically to its contents, but is broadly rhetorical:

> (d) Who [*plur.*] must act (*hsaunjwe'*) for the safety of followers?
>
> (ဃ) ငယ်သားတို့၏ ချမ်းသာမှုကို မည်သူတို့က ဆောင်ရွက်ရမည်နည်း။

'Cetana'

> All things said and done, well-intentioned and implemented properly, we are confident the new [education] system, with new texts and improved technology will produce high school graduates who have only had to depend on their own teachers and not have sought extra tuition outside of school hours, the kind of new generation who can be relied upon, having received full education based on the cetana of their teachers in school.
>
> – New Light of Myanmar [505]

Cetana (စေတနာ–*seidana*) is a Pali word that in Buddhist teaching is usually translated as 'volition', or 'that which motivates action'. While that meaning is neutral—every conscious human action, positive or negative involves volition—when used by the state the word by itself is ascribed only a positive meaning, and is typically translated as 'goodwill'. *Cetana* is usually attributed to the state, its agents or other persons who can theoretically be trusted with it, such as parents. Some examples of how it is used (italics added) follow:

> [The Secretary–1] said the modern multimedia centre could be opened at the village affiliated high school due to the ardent efforts and *goodwill* of the parents, members of the school board of trustees and wellwishers...
>
> The Secretary-1 urged the [state] employees to make sure that the public realize[s] the genuine *goodwill* of the government to achieve national development, public peace and uplift of socio-economic life...
>
> Although the government is endeavoring with *goodwill* for the uplift of the social standards and economy of the people, some opportunists with the wrong objective to cause obstruction to the government are pushing the people into poverty and the nation into instability.[506]

---

[505] 'Equity in [the] education age'.

[506] Top: 'Emergence of brilliant intellectuals and intelligentsia main requirement for national development and future: Affiliated Hmawdaw Village High School, Kawhmu Township BEHS gets multimedia teaching centres', *New Light of Myanmar*, 8 February 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/feb8.htm] (9 February 2001). Middle: 'Entire people urged to harmoniously, unitedly strive for development', *New Light of Myanmar*, 30 January 2000,

By contrast to the goodwill of the state, the destructionists, traitors and internal and external destructive elements are said to carry out their nefarious designs with *ill*will, literally, 'bad *cetana*' (စေတနာဆိုး–*seidana–hsou:*); they also abuse the *cetana* of the state. Houtman writes about the use of *cetana* as a means to continued legitimacy for the military government:

> Usually translated as 'goodwill', in Burmese it means 'a union or accordance of mind with an object or purpose, inclination'. It presumes that for a government to work, all people must share the same deep intentions, and the same object and purpose.[507]

Houtman argues that the military perspective on *cetana* is that it involves firm conviction to carry out a benevolent plan. However the benevolence inevitably has an another motive: through the use of *cetana* the military 'conquers through charity', in the same way as was done by kings in earlier centuries.[508] It connotes the nurturing of a peaceful domain, and obliges the people to have an appropriate response. The discourse is, in Houtman's interpretation, another means to subdue the population.

The third standard reading entitled '*Cetana*' (3.22–3) takes up the theme through an historically-styled non-Jataka moralistic narrative. It is of unusual length for a third standard reading, at 30 lines plus questions, spread over two pages, with a visual illustration. The scenario is as follows. A crown prince returning from a hunting expedition encounters an elderly man planting mango saplings by a fence (see figure 5.7). The elderly man welcomes the prince and offers him

---

[http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan30.htm] (2 February 2000). Bottom: 'Education promotion programmes launched to bring out intellectuals, intelligentsia and develop human resources', p. 6.

[507] Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics*, p. 162.

[508] Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics*, p. 164.

mangoes, which the prince eats.[509] An exchange between the two men follows. Although spoken, it contains many formal and archaic words intended to lend an air of 'authenticity'. It begins with the prince complementing the elderly man for his mangoes and asking after his planting activities. The prince enquires about the man's age, and is told he is 80. He reflects on this and the exchange continues, with a query by the prince and a valuable answer:

> 'Are you hoping to eat the mango you are planting now? Ought one be doing work that oneself will not be able to benefit from?'
>
> 'The mangoes that you are able to be eating now, prince, were planted by my grandfathers and great grandfathers. When the mango seedlings that I am planting now become big, my children and grandchildren, and later generations, will no doubt be able to eat them.'
>
> ယခု အဘိုးစိုက်ပျိုးနေသော သရက်သီးကို အဘိုးစားရန် မျှော်လင့်နေပါသေးသလော။ မိမိအတွက် အကျိုးခံစားခွင့်မရနိုင်သည့် အလုပ်ကို လုပ်ခြင်းသည် သင့်မြတ်ပါ၏လော။
>
> ယခု သရက်သီးကို အသင်မင်းသားစားသုံးနိုင်ခြင်းသည် ကျွန်ုပ်၏ ဘိုးတော်များက စိုက်ပျိုးခဲ့သောကြောင့် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ကျွန်ုပ် ယခု စိုက်ပျိုးနေသော သရက်ပင်ပေါက်များ ကြီးပြင်းလာသောအခါတွင် ကျွန်ုပ်၏ သားမြေးနှင့် နောင်လာနောက်သားများ စားသုံးနိုင်ကြပါလိမ့်မည်။

The prince is pleased by the elderly man's words. He continues with a response that is befitting of the elderly man's remarks and likewise of his station in life as crown prince:

> [I] take appropriate heed of your words! Excuse me that I hadn't thought of this. From today on I won't look out only for myself. I too will only do various beneficial things for future generations. Allow me to make you an offering.
>
> အဘိုး၏ စကားသည် မှတ်သားထိုက်ပေစွ။ ကျွန်ုပ်မစဉ်းစားမဆင်ခြင်ပြောမိခြင်းကို သည်းခံပါ။ ယနေ့မှစ၍ ကျွန်ုပ်သည်ဖို့တစ်ဖို့တည်းကို မကြည့်တော့ပါ။ ကျွန်ုပ်နှင့်တကွ နောင်လာနောက်သားတို့ အကျိုးရှိမည့် အလုပ်မျိုးကိုသာ လုပ်ပါတော့မည်။ အဘိုးအား ပူဇော်ပါရစေ။

With this, the prince removes a ruby ring from one of his fingers and presents it to the elderly man, before renewing his journey. The elderly man concludes the reading by happily reflecting on how he has obtained immediate reward due to his *cetana*.

---

[509] The choice of mango to illustrate this story, coincidentally, may not be arbitrary. Proverbially, it is considered the highest of fruit: 'Among meats, pork; among fruits, mango; among leaves, tea' (အသားတွင် ဝက်၊ အသီးတွင် သရက်၊ အရွက်တွင် လက်ဖက်). In the

The two participants in this reading emerge equally virtuous. The elderly man, representing the knowledge, tradition and continuity in society, is an ordinary civilian. He treats the prince, representing leadership and authority, with deference, but at the same time his accumulated wisdom permits him to teach the prince a valuable lesson. For his part, the prince demonstrates acumen and leadership ability, similar to the human king in the previous reading. He is not foolish and does not disregard good advice. The elderly man's social stature may be low, but he deserves respect for his demonstrated knowledge. The prince also shows benevolence and gratitude by rewarding the elderly man with a valuable item simply plucked from one of his fingers: an action that bespeaks their relative stations in life. The prince has genuine leadership qualities and is clearly destined to serve the nation truly, and with *cetana*, just as—by implication—the present government is doing.

'*Cetana*' itself only appears a few times in the text, but thematically this reading parallels content on 'benefit', *a̲kjou:*, or more generally, 'outcome' or 'effect', discussed in chapter 4. Each has a connection with the Buddhist doctrine of causation, *kammaniyama*—one important part of religious discourse in Myanmar. This doctrine, alluded to in chapter 2, posits that every action has an effect. The effect may be realised immediately, or even thousands of lifetimes from the moment of action itself, but inevitably, it will occur. What is interesting about this story is that while the elderly man had, with his *cetana*, planned for an effect during the lives of his descendants, in fact, as he notes at the end, the effect was immediate, material, unexpected and of a greater dimension than he would have

---

previous reading, it was also considered a choice fruit by the Indian king and monkeys alike.

imagined. The implication is that those who do similar deeds may live in hope of similar rewards… although there are no guarantees.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the text of the Myanmar primary school readers through six readings. These have revealed a formal textual style that consists of numerous particles suffixed to in-sentence phrases, compound words with 'native' and Pali roots, and repetition of synonyms. The accumulated effect of these and other devices is to lend the text an air of authority and a sense of distance between its producer and consumers—that is, the state and students respectively. At the same time, use of first person plural pronouns and other devices draws the readers into this normative order of superior and subordinate positions. Core ideas are also reinforced through repetition of keywords. In other cases, words, sentences and paragraphs serve as lexical cues for broader state discourses. Overall it weaves an all-enveloping net of meaning.

Particular readings are directed towards distinctive purposes, overt and covert. On the surface, the reading about Mahabandoola is intended to mythologise a national hero. However, an equally significant role in the reading is that of the designated historical enemy, the British, which facilitates the state's account of national unity. In the item on Shwedagon Pagoda, some narrow information is presented to the reader as 'the facts'. This technique gives an impression that the contents are definitive and the narrator is always right. The narrator then makes authoritative observations about the entire national people and their collective mental condition. In another instance, the school garden serves as a malleable metaphor for the Union. Students work collectively for its development over a

succession of generations and derive material and non-material gains due to their own efforts and the benevolent guidance of their enlightened and competent leadership. In a passage of verse, gender-stereotypes are reconfigured as occupational duties, again with the state implicit in each person's undertaking. Key principles from state narratives are also introduced to the student readers at primary school level. The notion of *azani*, for instance, is raised through the use of a Jataka tale that speaks to the role of leadership and the merit of self-sacrifice. *Cetana* is illustrated by an historical non-Jataka moralistic story that reinforces ideals of respect for the elderly and maintenance of social hierarchy.

All these examples reinforce the conclusion of chapter 4, that the state asserts its presence and the legitimacy of the Union in a range of different ways throughout the textbooks, including lexical device, structure, metaphor, historical example and allegory. Most of these techniques and themes are reductions of the longer words and bigger images that daily emanate from state media—newspapers, radio and television—redesigned to meet the needs of schools and students. What all of this minutiae amount to is summarised in the final chapter of this study, which reassesses its central themes and makes some further interpretations.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study has examined the primary school Burmese language readers used in Myanmar to establish how they legitimise the 'Union of Myanmar'. To this end it has investigated the conceptual and regional aspects of the problem in chapter 2; the history and current status of schooling in Myanmar in chapter 3; the contents and style of the readers in chapter 4; and, six readings from the textbooks in chapter 5. It has revealed how, under the direction of the armed forces, the state in Myanmar aims to legitimise itself through schooling by conflating itself with the greater 'Union' identity, that of the 'Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw'.

State schooling in Myanmar is expressly aimed at social control as a means to advance the national cause. In this respect, it shares much in common with state schooling elsewhere in Asia. The government affirms verbatim that schooling is to produce 'outstanding human resources' for the benefit of the state: there is no question of Dewey's humanist approach to education here; schooling—and the entire business of 'administration'—is, as Durkheim would have it, unequivocally about constraint and guidance. In this sense, schooling in Myanmar is entirely in keeping with the original object of state schools as civilising institutions aiming to produce moral and productive citizens; it also evokes something of the earlier role played by monastic schools. To this end, the state retains an exclusive prerogative over schooling, and through the schoolbooks establishes a normative order that impresses upon the student a sense of hierarchy and obligation, unity

and prestige, goodwill and social benefit. How its power and authority are manifest in the textbooks is perhaps best summarised by the qualities that personify the Union: 'Bamar', 'Buddha-bathar' and 'amyouthar'.

'Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw' is 'Bamar'. From start to finish, the textbooks link national identity with the dominant ethnic group. State rhetoric speaks to 'Myanmar' identity in terms of 'national races'; in the textbooks this narrative is marginalised and subverted by a stream of text indicating the contrary. 'Ethnic identity' has been the site of perhaps the greatest contest for the Union since independence. In the textbooks the state responds by outward expressions of pluralist solidarity, and undermines them through a succession of opposing covert messages. Culture, tradition, history, civility and normalcy are all associated with being Bamar. But all of these things are also 'Myanmar'. The lines are blurred: overtly, 'Myanmar' is 'national races', covertly it is Bamar. No better illustration for this exists than the fact that the language in which the readers are written, Burmese—with all its concomitant cultural and historical baggage—is signified as 'Myanmar language, our language'.

'Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw' is also 'Buddha-bathar', Buddhist. Religion in Myanmar is a site of secondary contest between the state and its discontents, though this does not usually escalate to the kind of separatist claims that stem from 'ethnic' hostilities, which challenge the basis for the Union itself. Rather, conflict is limited to complaints over freedom of worship and religious autonomy. For their part the textbooks simply ignore non-Buddhists and assert the nation's Buddhist identity exclusively: in this omission lies much of the government's moral claim to authority. Through Buddhist ritual, the generals demonstrate

their benevolence and *cetana*, and in exchange obtain the necessary blessings from the Sangha—in the same manner that the kings of earlier centuries sought to have a symbiotic but controlling relationship with the religious authorities. The textbooks' use of Buddhism is also meant to evoke the same themes of culture, tradition, history and civility discussed with regards to Bamar identity, above.

'Pyidaunzu Myanmar Naingandaw' is 'amyouthar' (*amjou:dha:*), male. Here 'amyouthar' is used gender-specifically—where the suffix *–dha:* denotes masculinity (versus *amjou:dhami:* for woman)—rather than in the sense of 'national' used in earlier chapters. Gender identity is a site of low contest relative to the above two characteristics. Myanmar is generally held as having historically consisted of societies 'tolerant' towards women. Certainly, the atrocities committed against women that have occurred due to caste in South Asia, or other social institutions inimical to women there, do not appear to have penetrated the Irrawaddy river basin, and its women have had important decision-making powers within the family and, to some extent, the community. Be that as it may, the question for this study is not one of tolerance or relative gender equality, but rather one of social control and how it is legitimised. In that regard, the Union of Myanmar presented through the textbooks is unequivocally masculine. Those attributes associated with leadership and authority—and as the books progress, the attributes of nearly anyone doing anything—are inherently male. The women of Myanmar are stereotyped and diminished.

The text in the Myanmar Burmese primary schoolbooks speaks to a kind of unity that differs from that which the state leadership and its agents outwardly express. Whereas the state rhetoric talks of an inherent unity among the diverse

'national races', religious pluralism and gender equality, in schoolbooks ethnic diversity is trivialised and undermined, religious plurality is non-existent and women are subordinate or irrelevant. Yet none of those representations threatens the fundamental national 'unity', which in written and visual text essentially demands that the people simply fall in to line, in the knowledge that those who are in control are benevolent, and have the qualities and skills needed to fulfill the collective role of leadership.

How can the relative paucity of overtly militaristic contents in the readers be explained? In spite of a state dominated by the armed forces for forty years, a society in which generals appear every morning in the newspapers, every noon over the radio and every night on the television, the textbooks have relatively few images of modern warfare and soldiers. The tendency, instead, is towards historical assertions of military glory and quieter assurances of contemporary authority. The Tatmadaw presents itself as the sole agency capable of administering (in the Burmese lexical sense) the Union, but it does not project itself as an autonomous, isolated actor. Instead, through its conflation of army origin, development and identity with the other presupposed and interwoven lineages of tradition, culture, civility, religion and national identity, it becomes an integral part of the Union, the whole. If the whole is legitimised, so too is the part. If the state's version of 'the Union' is accepted, then the said role of the army as 'saviour' is to some extent legitimised. It is this same conflation that in part allows the state to speak of the 'People's Desire' as if it *is* the people.

Extending this point across the military past and present, another way to see the configuration of identity and relations is via the Tatmadaw as the means, and the

Union and its manifestations as the ends. The army, then, is in itself a statement of power, but only with the justification of the Union can it make a claim to authority. This is in keeping with the principles of kingship employed by earlier rulers, those who the current government represents as its predecessors and 'spiritual guides' (in the sense of Union Spirit). Those men conquered militarily and, therefore, their power was manifest by that achievement. But to obtain *authority* involved more than that: it meant justifying their power through religious patronage, claims to prestigious lineage and infrastructure development. Those are the same principles that the current leadership calls upon to demonstrate authority, though, to be sure, its approach befits the very different national, regional and global environment of this day and age. Under any circumstances, the key point is that it is not the means of obtaining power that needs be legitimised; rather it is the legitimacy of the greater order—be it cosmological or mundane—over which power is held and authority mandated.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that the textbooks are but one part of the school environment and the society in which it is embedded, and the state has many other means by which to impress upon the population—school students and adults alike—the magnitude of the army's role. Some of these have been alluded to above, including military-style drills and discipline in schooling, the 'refresher' courses conducted for teachers, and the constant presence of the military in state media, particularly in ceremony and ritual. The textbooks are but a part of these wider social and 'educational' practices intended to render the students the useful human resources that the state expects them to become.

Under these circumstances, what can be said of the celebrated 'right to education'? The state congratulates itself on statistics showing increased enrollment rates and international agencies spend funds and obtain data pointing to 'proof of... renewed commitment both in terms of human resources and financial contributions—to the children of Myanmar'.[510] But the contents of schooling are neglected. This problem is by no means confined to Myanmar. Around the world international agencies and governments ostensibly cooperate when in fact they have fundamentally different objectives—the former guided by nebulous ideals, the latter according to its needs to retain power and obtain authority. Until this structural contradiction is addressed, state schooling—in Myanmar and elsewhere—will continue to struggle not only with the identity of the nation, state and people, but also with the identity of itself.

This inquiry has deliberately dealt with the dominant discourse of the state in Myanmar, rather than popular or counter-discourse, or other non-state aspects of the problem. The reasons for this have been justified by the lack of studies on 'primary' discourse in Myanmar to date, and the need to understand state-driven commentaries in order to figure out those in the rest of society, which have by no means been underestimated. On the contrary, this study was predicated on a belief that counter-discourses run deep in Myanmar.[511] A strong state-driven narrative does not necessarily indicate a strong state: the inverse is just as likely.

---

[510] 'Speech of Mr. Bertie Mendis, UNICEF Representative, delivered at the Signing Ceremony of the UNICEF-Myanmar Master Plan of Operations, 2001-2005 on July 24th, 2001', UNICEF-Myanmar, 24 July 2001, {http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/pages/MPO2.html] (17 July 2002). Note the parallel talk of 'human resources'.

[511] For a recent excellent publication on popular discourse in Myanmar see, Fink, *Living silence*.

That said, this study ends with two reasonable suppositions: one, the state in Myanmar is not widely accepted as legitimate; two, 'the Union' *has* gradually been accepted. Apart from those people in the few regions of the country suffering the worst excesses of ongoing civil war, people in Myanmar are growing up, being schooled into, and accepting as normal, the notion that they live in a bounded territory under a single administration. In 1999 when Saw Roman, a farmer seeking refuge in Thailand, spoke to a group of researchers about why he and his family fled, he remarked, 'I consider Burma my home and land, but because of gross injustice and abuse, we are forced to run away'.[512] What is interesting in this case is that Saw Roman does not much fit the normative model of the Union: he is Karen, and a Christian; he speaks Burmese, having attended a state primary school, but prefers his own language. Yet, when he spoke of 'his land' he used a word that in the above text is denoted as 'Burma', the 'land of the Bamar'—hence now 'Myanmar'—rather than some other expression to denote his own village locale or connote the 'land of the Karen'.

Why mention Saw Roman? Because he helps this study to a fundamentally different conclusion from that of Robert Taylor's 1987 *The State in Burma*, in which Taylor pronounced that

> [While] it is difficult to know to what extent the state has been able to legitimize itself in the eyes of the bulk of the population... Personal observation and the research of others suggest that the language of the state is almost universally accepted and that its symbols and ceremonies are widely followed.[513]

Taylor's assessment lost all credibility when, within a year, the socialist state collapsed under the weight of mass protest and a new military regime was forced

---

[512] The People's Tribunal on Food Scarcity and Militarization in Burma, *Voice of the hungry nation*, p. 70. The author was present when Saw Roman deposed before the Tribunal and heard his testimony.
[513] Taylor, *The State in Burma*, p. 372.

to strong-arm its way back into control. The language of the state, it seems, was far from 'universally accepted'. What Saw Roman makes clear is that to the extent something *has* been accepted, then as now, it is *not* the state, but the concept of 'Myanmar'. Why did he and his family flee? Not out of objection to the *principle* of the Union: actually, he seems to have internalised its most rudimentary elements. What forced them to leave was the *practical* management of the state by the military. Ultimately, if any agency interferes in people's lives to the extent that they are unable to maintain a minimum standard of existence, then they are liable to reject it. For Saw Roman the state simply became intolerable: no project for legitimacy can compensate.

The Union, then, seems likely to persist for a while. For the most part—even among its exiles—in its most basic principles it is no longer questioned. The strategy for legitimising the Union of Myanmar through primary school textbooks has been, so far as the Union is concerned, at least a partial success. The degree to which this may be due to the textbooks and schooling specifically is a matter for conjecture. What can be said with certainty is that schooling has and will continue to play a role in the ongoing project for Union legitimacy.

By contrast to the Union, as the Tatmadaw plays the role of ruler-enemy and people suffer from its impositions without adequate evidence of accompanying gain, its own legitimacy remains considerably more tenuous. Will Myanmar continue to be dictated to by autocratic, intolerant military regimes, or will perhaps some other members of society be permitted to take roles above and beyond those of mere spectators, conscripts and victims? On the national stage and at the centre of every contest, the Tatmadaw seems ready to challenge all

comers with the assurance and qualities of a national saviour: power through conquest and authority through pretence. But all this is ephemeral, and the legitimacy of the present state appears far less durable than that of its Union.

Bibliography

'2001–2002 School Family Day opens at Diamond Jubilee Hall'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 28 December 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/decem28.html] (29 December 2001).

'30-year long-term education plan covers lofty Myanmar education goal "emergence of an education system that will create a constant learning society to face challenges of present era": Seminar on promotion of national education in basic education sector (Lower Myanmar) held'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 28 April 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april28.html] (28 April 2002).

Abrams, Philip. 'Notes on the difficulty of studying the state (1977)'. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1988, pp. 58–89.

Achara Ashayagachat & Bhanravee Tansubhapol. 'Textbook is "part of a big campaign"'. *Bangkok Post*, 9 June 2001.

Adas, Michael. *Prophets of rebellion: Millenarian protest movements against the European colonial order*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1979.

'AFP: Six students arrested in Myanmar capital—dissident group'. *BurmaNet*, 20 August 2002, [strider@burmanet.org] (21 August 2002).

'Against all the odds, government set on achieving its goal: Any government will not accept any forms of destructive act and head-on confrontation'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 1 October 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/oct1.html] (3 October 2000).

Aggarwal, J. C. *Landmarks in the history of modern Indian education*. Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984.

Alagappa, Muthiah. 'The anatomy of legitimacy'. In *Political legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The quest for moral authority*, Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995, pp. 9–30.

All Children in School: Education and Early Childhood Development Programme. UNICEF Myanmar, July 2000.

'All-round perpetual renovation of the Shwedagon Pagoda and Shwehtidaw (Sacred Umbrella) Hoisting Ceremony'. Undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/shwedagon/index.html] (15 July 2002).

'All the Islamic faithful enjoy freedom of worship as do those who believe in other faiths: 1476th Prophet's Day observed'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 10 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june10.html] (12 June 2002).

'All citizens of Myanmar should have unyielding spirit to ward off all threats to territorial integrity and sovereignty: Teachers urged to nurture students to love motherland and have nationalist spirit with ardent desire to defend the motherland and to crush those attempting to disintegrate the Union: Secretary-1 addresses opening of Special Refresher Course No. 14 for Basic Education Teachers'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 3 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june03.html] (3 June 2002).

Allot, Anna. 'Language policy and language planning in Burma'. In *Language policy, language planning and sociolinguistics in South-East Asia*, David Bradley (ed.), Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1985, pp. 131–54.

Althusser, Louis. 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an investigation)'. In *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*, Ben Brewster (trans.), NLB, London, 1971, pp. 121–73.

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. 'The idea of power in Javanese culture'. In *Culture and politics in Indonesia*. Claire Holt (ed.), Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1972, pp. 1–69.

———. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. 2nd edn rev., Verso, London & New York, 1991.

———. 'Language, fantasy, revolution: Java 1900–1950'. In *Making Indonesia*, Daniel S. Lev & Ruth McVey (eds), Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, New York, 1996, pp. 26–40.

———. 'The languages of Indonesian politics'. *Indonesia*, no. 1, 1966, pp. 89–116.

———. 'Old state, new society: Indonesia's New Order in comparative historical perspective'. *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 3, 1983, pp. 477–96.

Andrus, J. Russell. *Burmese economic life*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1947, (with foreword by J. S. Furnivall).

'Anti-colonialist struggle'. In *Union Spirit*, undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/e-index/union/colonia.html] (2 August 2000).

Anyon, Jean. 'Elementary social studies textbooks and legitimating knowledge'. *Theory and research in social education*, vol. 6, 1978, pp. 40–55.

———. 'Ideology and United States history textbooks'. *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 49, no. 3, August 1979, pp. 361–86.

'AP: New history textbook tells Myanmar kids that Thais are lazy'. *BurmaNet,* 5 June 2001, [strider@igc.org] (6 June 2001).

Apple, Michael. *Education and power*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, London, Melbourne & Henley, 1982.

———. *Ideology and curriculum.* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston & Henley, 1979.

Aung Naing Oo. 'Burmese politics and the broken unity'. *The Irrawaddy,* vol. 10, no. 5, 2002, [http://www.irrawaddy.org/commentary.html] (29 June 2002).

Aung San Suu Kyi. *Freedom from fear, and other writings*. Michael Aris (ed.), Penguin, Middlesex, 1991.

Aung–Thwin, Michael. 'Kinship, the *Sangha*, and society in Pagan'. In *Explorations in early Southeast Asian history: The origins of Southeast Asian statecraft*, Kenneth R. Hall & John K. Whitmore (eds), Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia, no. 11, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1976, pp. 205–56.

———. *Myth and history in the historiography of early Burma: Paradigms, primary sources and prejudices*. Monographs in International Studies: Southeast Asia Series No. 102, Ohio University Center for International Studies & Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1998.

———. *Pagan: The origins of modern Burma*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1985.

———. 'Re: [Burmaresearch] "Yodaya"'. Burma Research e-group, 9 June 2002, [burmaresearch@yahoogroups.com] (10 June 2002).

Aye Kyaw. *The voice of young Burma.* Cornell Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1993.

Ayres, David M. *Anatomy of a crisis: Education, development, and the state in Cambodia, 1953–1998*. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2000.

Ba Thaung, M. (ဘသောင်း၊ M.). *Current English speaking*. အောင်လံတော်စာပေ, Yangon, 1996.

Barker, Rodney. *Political legitimacy and the state*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990.

Basic Education in brief. Department of Basic Education No. 1, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, Yangon, September 2000.

'Basic Education pupils donate old exercise books, textbooks, to fellow children'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 13 April 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april13.htm] (15 April 1999).

Basic information on Myanmar education sector. UNESCO, Paris, October 1989.

Berger, Peter L. & Luckmann, Thomas. *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York, 1966.

'Better foundations laid in education sector followed by implementation of working programmes: Special Refresher Course No. 11 for Basic Education Teachers at CICS (Upper Myanmar) opens'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august10.htm] (10 August 2001).

'Border area education'. *Burma Press Summary*, vol. 5, no. 12, December 1991, [http://public.ibiblio.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=burmaps&ct=0] (17 January 2002).

Borthwick, Sally. *Education and social change in China: The beginnings of the modern era*. Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, Stanford, 1983.

Bose, Sugata & Jalal, Ayesha. *Modern South Asia: History, culture, political economy*. Routledge, London & New York, 1998.

Bourchier, David. Lineages of organicist political thought in Indonesia. Unpublished PhD thesis, Monash University, 1996.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and symbolic power*. Gino Raymond & Matthew Adamson (trans), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991.

———. 'Systems of education and systems of thought'. In *Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education*, Michael F. D. Young (ed.), Collier Macmillan, London, 1971, pp. 189–207.

Bourdieu, Pierre & Passeron, Jean-Claude. *Reproduction: In Education, society and culture*. Richard Nice (trans.), Sage Publications, London & Beverly Hills, 1977.

Bradley, David. 'Traditional minorities and language education in Thailand'. In David Bradley (ed.), *Language policy, language planning and sociolinguistics in South-east Asia*, Papers in South-east Asian linguistics no. 9, Pacific Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1985, pp. 87–102.

Brown, David. 'Ethnicity and the state'. In *The state and ethnic politics in Southeast Asia*, David Brown (ed.), Routledge, London & New York, 1994, pp. 1–32.

'Buddha Sasana preserved, safeguarded, propagated by monks, kings, governments and people for 2,545 years till now'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 21 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ july21.htm] (21 July 2001).

Burma Administrative and Social Affairs, 1962–63. Director of Information, Burma, c. 1963, pp. 45–60.

Burma Administrative and Social Affairs, 1963–64. Director of Information, Burma, c. 1964, pp. 44–9.

'Burma aiming to catch up with neighbours in education'. *Burma Courier*, 5–11 November 2000, [celsus@axion.net] (13 November 2000).

Burma Educational Calendar, April 1st, 1941, to March 31st, 1942. Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1941.

Busch, Peter A. *Legitimacy and ethnicity: A case study of Singapore*. Lexington Books, Massachusetts, Toronto & London, 1974.

Cady, John F. *Contacts with Burma, 1935–1949: A personal account*. Papers in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series No. 61, Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1983.

———. *A history of modern Burma.* Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1958.

Caiger, John. 'The aims and content of school courses in Japanese history, 1872–1945'. In *Japan's modern century*, Edmund Skrzypczak (ed.), Sophia University, Tokyo, 1968, pp. 51–81.

Canieso-Doronila, Maria Luisa. *The limits of educational change: National identity formation in a Philippine public elementary school.* University of the Philippines Press, Quezon City, 1989.

Carlson, Dennis L. 'Legitimation and delegitimation: American history textbooks and the Cold War'. In *Language, authority and criticism: Readings on the school textbook*, Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke & Carmen Luke (eds), Falmer Press, London, New York, Philadelphia, 1989, pp. 46–55.

Chagnon, Jacqui & Rumpf, Roger. 'Education: The prerequisite to change in Laos'. In *Contemporary Laos: Studies in the politics and society of the Lao People's Democratic Republic,* Martin Stuart-Fox (ed.), University of Queensland Press, St Lucia & London, 1982, pp. 163–80.

Chan, Pauline. 'Education in the People's Republic of China: Tradition and change'. In *Equality and freedom in education: A comparative study*, Brian Holmes (ed.), George Allen & Unwin, London, 1985, pp. 178–200.

Cheesman, Nick. 'Cambodian Commune Elections: "Free and fair enough"'. *Human Rights Solidarity*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2002, [http://www.ahrchk.net/hrsolid/mainfile.php/2002vol12no02/2201] (5 August 2002).

———. 'Seeing "Karen" in the Union of Myanmar'. *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2002, pp. 199–220.

The Child Law (ကလေးသူငယ် ဥပဒေ). State Law and Order Restoration Council, Union of Myanmar, 1993.

Chomsky, Noam. *Aspects of the theory of syntax.* MIT Press, Cambridge, 1965.

Churchill, Stacy. 'The decline of the nation-state and the education of national minorities'. *International Review of Education*, vol. 42, no. 4, 1996, pp. 265–90.

Cin, Robert Biak & Sandlen, Guy B. *Loving kindness and the Five Gratitudes: Burmese cultural values underlying community participation in the Primary School Improvement Programme.* UNICEF, Rangoon, March 1985.

Clayton, Thomas. *Education and the politics of language: Hegemony and pragmatism in Cambodia, 1979–1989*. Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 2000.

Coakley, V. 'Politics of stability: Co-opting Burma's civil society through the USDA'. *Burma Issues*, vol. 8, no. 10, 1998, pp. 2–4.

Cohn, Bernard S. *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1996.

'The condition within the urban areas'. Confidential report to Burma Issues, December 1999.

Connor, Walker. *Ethnonationalism: The quest for understanding*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary. 10th edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1999.

The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma. Ministry of Information, Rangoon, 1974.

The Constitution of the Union of Burma. Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1947.

Courts, Doug. 'Writing'. In *Communication and the teacher*, Bob Hodge (ed.), Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1981, pp. 159–74.

Cowell, E. B. (ed.). *The Jataka: Stories of the Buddha's former births*. Vols. 1–6, H. T. Francis & R. A. Neil (trans), Pali Text Society, London, 1973.

'Crackdown on unlawful monks'. *Burma Press Summary*, vol. 4, no. 10, October 1990, [http://public.ibiblio.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site= localhost&a=p&p= about&c=burmaps&ct=0] (17 January 2002).

The current education situation in Burma: Education report year 2000. Foreign Affairs Committee, All Burma Federation of Student Unions, Bangkok, 2001.

Day, Tony & Reynolds, Craig. 'Cosmologies, truth regimes, and the state in Southeast Asia'. *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1–55.

De Charms, Richard & Moeller, Gerald H. 'Values expressed in American children's readers: 1800–1950'. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol. 64, no. 2, pp. 136–42.

De Cillia, Rudolf; Reisigl, Martin & Wodak, Ruth. 'The discursive construction of national identities'. *Discourse & Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1999, pp. 149–73.

Demaine, Jack. *Contemporary theories in the sociology of education*. Macmillan, London & Basingstoke, 1981.

'The Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana'. Ministry of Religious Affairs, undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/religious/dpps.html] (21 May 2001).

Derrida, Jacques. *Of grammatology*. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (trans.), Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London, 1976.

'Detained writer of students' history is in serious health condition'. Democratic Voice of Burma, 25 June 2002, [http://www.communique.no/dvb/scoop/20020625] (3 July 2002).

'Developments concerning the question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)'. ILO Governing Body, 283rd Session, GB.283/5/2, March 2002, [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb283/pdf/gb-5-2.pdf] (28 June 2002).

Dewey, John. *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan, New York, 1916.

———. 'My pedagogic creed'. *The School Journal*, vol. 54, no. 3, 1897, pp. 77–80, [http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/e-dew-pc.htm] (18 April 2002).

A dictionary of Buddhist terms. Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, 2000.

Donnison, F. S. V. *Burma.* Ernest Benn Limited, London, 1970.

Duara, Prasenjit. *Rescuing history from the nation: Questioning narratives of modern China*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1995.

'Due to concerted efforts of all, kindergarten intake rate increased to 91% in 1999, 91.5% in 2000, 92.05% in 2001 and 93.07% in 2002: Both formal education and non-formal education activities are linked and being implemented for all school age children to attend schools and for over school age persons to attend adult literacy classes; Secretary-1 attends ceremony in honour of success achieved in enrolment movement for school-going age children'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july27.htm] (29 July 2000).

Duggan, Stephen J. 'Education, teacher training and prospects for economic recovery in Cambodia'. *Comparative Education*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1996, pp. 361–75.

Durkheim, Emile. *Moral education: A study in the theory and application of the sociology of education*. Everett K. Wilson & Herman Schnurer (trans), Free Press, New York, 1961 [1925].

'DVB: Education Ministry issues order on strict security measures at schools'. *BurmaNet*, 1 August 2001, [strider@igc.org] (2 August 2001).

'DVB: Students bring down Rangoon regime slogan signboard'. *BurmaNet*, 8 December 2000, [strider@igc.org] (10 December 2000).

Dyer, Caroline. *Operation Blackboard: Policy implementation in Indian elementary education*. Monographs in International Education, Symposium Books, Oxford, 2000.

'Education'. MyanmarPyi: Myanmar Web Directory, undated, [http://www.myanmarpyi.com/education/myanmar-eduation.htm] (30 May 2001).

'Education for All Programmes meet with tangible success: Literacy rate of Myanmar accounts for 91%; Myanmar Education Resource Centre inaugrated'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 22 April 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april22.htm] (23 April 2000).

'Education gap between urban and rural areas narrowed: Outstanding scholarship spreading into rural areas, continued momentum of successful education promotion programmes; Parents, people and wellwishers continuing to contribute to development of the foundations of human resources' ('မြို့ပြနှင့်ကျေးလက် ပညာရည်ကွာဟမှု ကျဉ်းမြောင်းလာ၊ ပညာရည်ထူးချွန်မှု ကျေးလက်အထိပျံ့နှံ့ရောက်ရှိ၊ အောင်မြင်ဖြစ်ထွန်းနေသည့် ပညာရေး[ါ i]တင်မှု အစီအစဉ်များကို အရှိန်အဟုန် ဆက်လက်[ါ i]တင်၊ လူသားစွမ်းရည်အရင်းအမြစ်များ ဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်စေရေး မိဘပြည်သူများ၊ စေတနာရှင်များက ဆက်လက်ကူညီပံ့ပိုး'). *The Mirror*, 27 August 2000, pp. 6–7.

'Education gap between urban and rural areas narrowed due to systematic teaching and training: Outstanding students emerge as matriculation exam pass rate among students of towns has improved; Secretary-1 attends opening ceremony of Sangyoung BEHS No. 3 Multimedia Classrooms' ('စနစ်တကျလေ့ကျင့်သင်ကြားမှုကြောင့် မြို့ပြနှင့်ကျေးလက် ပညာရေးကွာဟမှု ကျဉ်းမြောင်းလာ၊ တတ္တသိုလ်ဝင်စာမေးပွဲတွင် နယ်မြို့များအောင်ချက်ရာခိုင်နှုန်းတိုးပြီး ထူးချွန်ကျောင်းသားများပေါ်ထွန်း၊ အတွင်းရေးမှူး [၁] စမ်းချောင်း အထက[၃] သင်ထောက်ကူစာသင်ခန်းများဖွင့်ပွဲတက်ရောက်'). *The Mirror*, 20 August 2000, p. 3.

Education in Burma: Before independence and after independence. Ministry of Education, Office of the Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Burma, November 1953.

Education in Myanmar: A country profile. Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, Yangon, 1998.

'Education promotion programmes launched to bring out intellectuals, intelligentsia and develop human resources'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 July 1999, pp. 1, 6.

Education sector study, phase 1: Final report. Ministry of Education/UNDP/ UNESCO, Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Yangon, February 1992.

Educational reconstruction: A collection of Gandhiji's articles on the Wardha Scheme along with a summary of the proceedings of the All India National Educational Conference held at Wardha, 1937. 6th edn, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Sevagram, Wardha, February 1956.

'e-Education system launched in Myanmar'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 1 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan1.htm] (3 January 2001).

Elder, Joseph W. 'The de-colonization of educational culture: The case of India'. In *Comparative perspectives on the role of education in democratization—Part I: Transitional state and states of transition*. Noel F. McGinn & Erwin H. Epstein (eds), Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1999, pp. 207–17.

Eley, Geoff. 'State formation, nationalism and political culture in nineteenth-century Germany'. In *Culture, ideology and politics*, Raphael Samuel & Gareth Stedman Jones (eds), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston, Melbourne & Henley, 1982, pp. 277–301.

'Emergence of brilliant intellectuals and intelligentsia main requirement for national development and future: Affiliated Hmawdaw Village High School, Kawhmu Township BEHS gets multimedia teaching centres'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 8 February 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/feb8.htm] (9 February 2001).

'Entire people urged to harmoniously, unitedly strive for development'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 30 January 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan30.htm] (2 February 2000).

'Equity in [the] education age'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 12 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/perspectives/august/12aug30.htm] (14 August 2001).

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. *Ethnicity and nationalism: Anthropological perspectives.* Pluto Press, London & Boulder, Colorado, 1993.

'Exercise books and pencils presented to basic and monastic education schools in four townships'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 2 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july2.htm] (2 July 2001).

'Expenditure on education largest after infrastructural development projects: Secretary-1 attends opening of teachers' refresher courses'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 27 August 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august27.htm] (22 October 2000).

'Failure to nurture youth to have clear national outlook will lead to end of their [lives] under uncertain circumstances: Greater success, momentum gained in implementing national education promotion programmes'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 19 May 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/may19.htm] (20 May 2001).

Fairclough, Norman. *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman, London & New York, 1995.

———. *Language and power*. Longman, London & New York, 1989.

———. *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992.

Feather, Norman T. *Values in education and society*. Free Press, New York, 1975.

The final report of the Administration Reorganization Committee. Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1951, pp. 56–75.

Fink, Christina. *Living silence: Burma under military rule*. White Lotus, Bangkok; University Press, Dhaka; Zed Books, London & New York, 2001.

'For upgrading of education'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 21 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/perspectives/august/august21.htm] (21 August 2001).

Forbes, K (Dr). 'Neologism in English and Burmese'. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 50, no. 1, 1967, pp. 47–70.

'Forced labour orders since the ban: A compendium of SPDC order documents demanding forced labour since November 2000'. Karen Human Rights Group, 8 February 2002, [http://www.ibiblio.org/freeburma/humanrights/khrg/archive/khrg2002/khrg0201.html] (20 July 2002).

Foucault, Michel. *Power*. James D. Faubion (ed.), Robert Hurley and others (trans), The New Press, New York, 1994.

———. *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*. Colin Gordon (ed.), Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (trans), The Harvester Press, Sussex, 1980.

Fowler, Roger; Hodge, Bob; Kress, Gunther & Trew, Tony. *Language and control*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston & Henley, 1979.

Freire, Paulo. *Cultural action for freedom*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972.

Furnivall, J. S. 'As it was in the beginning'. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 18, 1928, pp. 51–61.

———. *An introduction to the political economy of Burma*. 3rd edn, People's Literature Committee & House, Rangoon, 1957.

———. *Educational progress in Southeast Asia*. IPR Inquiry Series, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1943.

———. 'The fashioning of leviathan'. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 29, 1938, pp. 1–137.

———. *Netherlands India: A study of a plural economy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1944.

Geertz, Clifford. 'Ideology as a cultural system'. In *The interpretation of cultures*. Fontana Press, London, 1973, pp. 193–233.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and nationalism*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983.

Gerbert, Elaine. 'Lessons from the *kokugo* (national language) readers'. In *Comparative perspectives on the role of education in democratization—Part II: Socialization, identity, and the politics of control*. Noel F. McGinn & Erwin H. Epstein (eds), Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1999, pp. 145–80.

Giroux, Henry A. *Ideology, culture and the process of schooling*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

'Global morality'. *Background Briefing*, ABC Radio National, 21 July 2002, [http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/stories/s613222.htm] (8 August 2002).

Gokhale, Gopal Krishna. *Speeches and writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale: Volume III—Educational*, D. V. Ambekar & D. G. Karve (eds), Asia Publishing House, London, 1967.

Goody, Jack. *The logic of writing and the organization of society*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1986.

Gopinathan, S. 'Towards a national educational system'. In *Singapore: A society in transition*, Riaz Hassan (ed.), Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1976, pp. 67–83.

'Government and the people have joined hands to implement education promotion programmes, from first and second phases to the third phase being achieved phase by phase: Ceremony to open Multimedia Classrooms at Hline Township BEHS No. 4' ('ပညာရေး[ြ]ိတင်မှုအစီအစဉ်များ နိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရနှင့်ပြည်သူလက်တွဲအကောင်အထည်ဖော်ခဲ့ ပထမဆင့်၊ ဒုတိယဆင့်မှ တတိယဆင့်တိုင် တစ်ဆင့်ပြီးတစ်ဆင့်အောင်မြင်ဖြစ်ထွန်းနေ၊ လှိုင်မြို့နယ် အထက[၄]သင်ထောက်ကူပြုစာသင်ခန်းများဖွင့်ပွဲ အခမ်းအနားကျင်းပ'). *The Mirror*, 4 September 2000, p. 7.

'Government systematically implementing education reform programmes designed to produce highly-qualified human resources: Special Refresher Course No. 45 for Basic Education Teachers opens'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 7 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august07.htm] (8 August 2001).

'Grand and auspicious Manau festival reflects richness and high standard of Kachin culture, pride of preserving and protecting traditions and culture: Secretary-1 attends Wunpawng Ninggawn Hkumra Manau Mali Nmai Zup-Myitkyina Majoi Festival'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 December 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/decem27.htm] (29 December 2001).

Gupta, Padma & Gupta, Giri Raj. 'Education and social change in India'. *Indian Horizons*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1975, pp. 57–62.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Legitimation crisis*. Thomas McCarthy (trans.), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988 [1973].

Hall, D. G. E. *A history of South-east Asia.* Macmillan, London, 1958.

Halliday, M. A. K. *Language as a social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning.* Edward Arnold, London, 1978.

Hanf, Theodor; Ammann, Karl; Dias, Patrick V.; Fremerey, Michael & Weiland, Heribert. 'Education: An obstacle to development? Some remarks about the political functions of education in Asia and Africa'. *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1975, pp. 68–87.

Hanson, O. 'The Karen people of Burma: A study in anthropology and ethnology, by Rev. H.I. Marshall, M.A.; printed at the Ohio State University Press'. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 14, 1924, pp. 69–71.

'Hardship in Irrawaddy Division'. *Burma Issues*, vol. 9, no. 7, 1999, pp. 2–3.

Harvey, G. E. *British rule in Burma, 1824–1942.* Faber & Faber, London, 1946.

Hashim, Rosnani. *Educational dualism in Malaysia: Implications for theory and practice.* Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1996.

Hla Pe (Dr). 'A re-examination of Burmese "classifiers"'. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 50, no. 2, 1967, pp. 177–93.

Hobsbawm, E. J. *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth and reality*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990.

Hodge, Robert. *Literature as discourse: Textual strategies in English and history*. Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990.

Hodge, Robert & Kress, Gunther. *Language as ideology*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston & Henley, 1979.

———. *Social semiotics*. Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988.

Hoke Sein, U. *The Universal Burmese-English-Pali Dictionary.* Published by the author, Rangoon, 1980.

Holmes, Brian. 'Education in Japan: Competition in a mass system'. In *Equality and freedom in education: A comparative study*, Brian Holmes (ed.), George Allen & Unwin, London, 1985, pp. 209–42.

Holsti, Ole R. *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Addison-Wesley, Reading, Massachusetts, 1969.

Hooker, Virginia Matheson. 'New Order language in context'. In *Culture and society in New Order Indonesia*, Virginia Matheson Hooker (ed.), Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1993, pp. 272–93.

Horowitz, Donald L. *Coup theories and officers' motives: Sri Lanka in comparative perspective*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980.

Houtman, Gustaaf. *Mental culture in Burmese crisis politics: Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy*. ILCAA study of languages and cultures of Asia and Africa Monograph Series No. 33, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia & Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, 1999, [http://homepages.tesco.net/~ghoutman/index.htm] (11 April 2000).

Howarth, David & Stavrakakis, Yannis. 'Introducing discourse theory and political analysis'. In *Discourse theory and political analysis: Identities, hegemonies and social change*, David Howarth, Aletta J. Norval & Yannis Stavrakakis (eds), Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York, 2000, pp. 1–23.

Htin Aung, Maung. *A History of Burma.* Columbia University Press, New York & London, 1967.

Human resource development and nation building in Myanmar. Office of Strategic Studies, Ministry of Defence, 1997.

'Information concerning [the] new history textbook'. Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility. 10 July 2001, [http://www.jca.apc.org/JWRC/center/english/appeal2.htm] (26 February 2002).

'Initial reports of States parties due in 1993: Myanmar'. United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, CRC/C/8/Add.9, 18 September 1995, [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/385c2add1632f4a8c12565a9004dc311/3696fdf1928799318025650d00597e4b?OpenDocument&Highlight=0,myanmar] (27 February 2002).

'Introduction of a single democracy system to all countries with different backgrounds impossible: Special Refresher Course No. 43 for Basic Education Teachers opens'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 18 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan18.htm] (19 January 2001).

Ishii, Yoneo. *Sangha, state, and society: Thai Buddhism in history*. Peter Hawkes (trans.), Monographs of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, no. 15, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1986.

Jaiyane, Khuensai. 'A trip to the border'. *Shan Herald Agency for News*, 28 June 2000.

Jones, Sidney. 'The Javanese *pesantren*: Between elite and peasantry'. In *Reshaping local worlds: Formal education and cultural change in rural Southeast Asia*, Charles F. Keyes (ed.), Monograph 36/Yale Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1991, pp. 19–41.

Jonsson, Hjorleifur. 'Traditional tribal what? Sports, culture and the state in the Northern Hills of Thailand'. In *Turbulent times and enduring peoples: Mountain minorities in the South-east Asian massif*, Jean Michaud (ed.), Curzon, Richmond, 2000, pp. 219–45.

Jory, Patrick. 'Books and the nation: The making of Thailand's National Library'. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2000, 351–73.

Kaung, Maung. '1824–1853: Roman Catholic and American Baptist mission schools'. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 21, 1931, pp. 1–13.

———. 'The beginnings of Christian missionary education in Burma, 1600–1824'. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 20, 1930, pp. 59–61.

Kaung, U. *Educational needs of the Union of Burma.* Ministry of Education, 11 August 1950, (with 'Memorandum. for the Council of Ministers', by Ba Sein).

———. 'A survey of the history of education in Burma before the British conquest and after'. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 46, no. 2, December 1963, pp. 1–124.

Kelly, Gail Paradise. *French colonial education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*. David H. Kelly (ed.), AMS Press, New York, 2000.

Keyes, Charles F. 'The proposed world of the school: Thai villagers' entry into a bureaucratic state system'. In *Reshaping local worlds: Formal education and cultural change in rural Southeast Asia*, Charles F. Keyes (ed.), Monograph 36/Yale Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1991, pp. 89–130.

———. 'State schools in rural communities: Reflections on rural education and cultural change in Southeast Asia'. In *Reshaping local worlds: Formal education and cultural change in rural Southeast Asia*, Charles F. Keyes (ed.), Monograph 36/Yale Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1991, pp. 1–18.

King, Winston L. *A thousand lives away: Buddhism in contemporary Burma*. Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1964.

Koenig, William J. *The Burmese polity, 1752–1819: Politics, administration, and social organization in the early Kon-baung period.* Michigan Papers on South & Southeast Asia, no. 34, Center for South & Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1990.

Kumar, Krishna. 'Origins of India's "textbook culture"'. *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 32, no. 4, November 1988, pp. 452–64.

Kupfer, Joseph. 'Education, indoctrination, and moral character'. In *Values and education*, Thomas Magnell (ed.), Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1998, pp. 59–67.

Kyaw Htin Nawrahta. 'Our forefathers called them Yodayas'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 31 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/may31.htm] (1 June 2002).

Kyaw Htun, U (ကျော်ထွန်း၊ ဦး). '"မြန်မာ"ဟူသောစကားဖြစ်လာရင်းမူလအကြောင်း' ('About the origin of the word "Myanmar"'). *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. 23, 1933, pp. 86–94.

'Kyemon: Attack on ASSK over education'. *BurmaNet*, 23 January 2000, [strider@igc.org] (23 January 2000).

Kyi Kyi Hla. 'IT exhibition of young Myanmar students'. *Myanmar Perspectives*, vol. 7, no. 8, 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/gov/perspec/2001/8-2001/ exh.htm] (6 May 2002).

'Kyodo: Japan-donated high school building opens in Myanmar'. *BurmaNet*, 19 August 2001, [strider@igc.org] (20 August 2001).

Lawrence, Rod. 'Education in China: Preparation for citizenship'. *Asian Affairs*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2000, pp. 273–84.

Lee Sow Ling. Education and national unity in a bicultural society: Malaya. Unpublished MPhil thesis, Institute of Education, University of London, 1967.

Lehmann, Jean-Pierre. *The roots of modern Japan*. Macmillan, Hampshire & London, 1982.

Leigh, Barbara. 'Making the Indonesian state: The role of school texts'. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1991, pp. 17–43.

Lemke, Jay L. *Textual politics: Discourse and social dynamics*. Taylor & Francis, London, 1995.

Lewin, Keith M. 'Education in emerging Asia: Patterns, policies, and futures into the 21st century'. *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1998, pp. 81–118.

Liddle, R. William. 'A useful fiction: Democratic legitimation in New Order Indonesia'. In *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia*, R. H. Taylor (ed.), Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1996, pp. 34–60.

Lieberman, Victor B. *Burmese administrative cycles: Anarchy and conquest, c. 1580–1760*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1984.

Lintner, Bertil. 'Cultural revolution'. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 November 1999, p. 24.

Lu Pe Win, U. *Report on the teaching of Burmese and Pali in schools in Burma*. Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1931.

Luke, Carmen; de Castell, Suzanne & Luke, Alan. 'Beyond criticism: The authority of the school textbook'. In *Language, authority and criticism: Readings on the school textbook*, Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke & Carmen Luke (eds), Falmer Press, London, New York, Philadelphia, 1989, pp. 245–60.

MacDonald, Madeleine. 'Schooling and the reproduction of class and gender relations'. In *Schooling, ideology and the curriculum*, Len Barton, Roland Meighan & Stephen Walker (eds), Falmer Press, Lewes, 1980, pp. 29–49.

Macdonell, Diane. *Theories of discourse: An introduction*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford & New York, 1986.

McHoul, Alec. *Semiotic investigations: Towards an effective semiotics*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London, 1996.

Ma Tin Win. 'I, Ma Tin Win, am a real lady'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 22 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/june%2022a.html] (26 June 2002).

———. 'Phra Narit did not amount to much'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 28 & 29 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/may28.htm & http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/may29.htm] (30 May 2002).

———. 'A Yodaya citizen who pledged allegiance to Myanmar (Because he chose to stand for what is right)'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/may27.htm] (28 May 2002).

Mahasi Sayadaw, Venerable. 'Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta', part 3. Undated, [www.buddhanet.net/wheeld03.htm] (3 July 2002).

Mann Khin Khin. 'Seek true beauty'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/dec2.html] (4 December 1999).

Martin, Roberta. 'The socialization of children in China and on Taiwan: An analysis of elementary school textbooks'. In *Comparative education*, Philip G. Altbach, Robert F. Arnove, Gail P. Kelly (eds), Macmillan & Collier Macmillan, New York & London, 1982, pp. 137–57.

Master Plan of Operations, 1996–2000: Myanmar–UNICEF Country Programme of Co-operation. UNICEF, 21 September 1995.

Maung Gyi, Maung. *Burmese political values: The socio-political roots of authoritarianism.* Praeger, Connecticut, 1983.

Maung Oo, Maung. 'Former school personnel arrested in Burma'. *The Irrawaddy*, 11 July 2001, [http://www.irrawaddy.org/news/#for] (11 July 2001).

May Thazin Thu. 'Honey on the razor's edge', part 3. *New Light of Myanmar*, 30 September 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/sep30.htm] (2 October 1999).

'MEC Chairman attends opening ceremony of multimedia teaching centre in Kyaunggon'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 19 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august19.htm] (20 August 2001).

'MEC Chairman attends opening ceremony of Phaungdaw U Parahita Monastic Education High School in Mandalay'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 21 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan21.htm] (21 January 2001).

Mehta, Sushila. *The school and the community in India*. S. Chand, New Delhi, 1974.

Meighan, Roland & Brown, Christine. 'Locations of learning and ideologies of education: Some issues raised by a study of Education Otherwise'. In *Schooling, ideology and the curriculum*, Len Barton, Roland Meighan & Stephen Walker (eds), Falmer Press, 1980, pp. 131–51.

Mendelson, E. Michael. *Sangha and state in Burma: A study of monastic sectarianism and leadership.* Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York & London, 1975.

Mergui-Tavoy District Information Department (Karen National Union). 'Monthly human rights situation report: April 2002'. *BurmaNet*, 12–15 April 2002, [strider@igc.org] (16 April 2002).

'Message from the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe on the 79th Anniversary of National Day'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec2.htm] (4 December 1999).

'Message from the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe on the 80th Anniversary of National Day'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 20 November 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/nov20.htm] (22 November 2000).

Michio, Nagai. 'Education in the early Meiji period'. In *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and revolution*, Nagai Michio & Miguel Urrutia (eds), The United Nations University, Tokyo, 1985, pp. 143–52.

Mill, John Stuart. 'Of nationality, as connected with representative government'. In *Considerations on representative government*, Longman, Roberts & Green, London, 1865, [etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/m/m645r/repgov16.html] (17 April 2002).

———. 'Applications'. In *On liberty*, 4th edn, Longman, Roberts & Green, London, 1869 [1859], ch. 5, [http://www.bartleby.com/130/5.html] (17 April 2002).

'Ministry of Education' ('ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန'). In *တိုင်းကျိုးပြည်ပြု—နိုင်ငံတော်ငြိမ်ဝပ်ပိပြားမှု တည်ဆောက်ရေးအဖွဲ့၏ ဆောင်ရွက်ချက်သမိုင်းဝင်မှတ်တမ်း၊ ၁၉၈၈–၃၄၄၈ ခုနှစ်မှ ၁၉၉၁–ခုနှစ်* (*Benefiting the Country: Historical Record of the State Law and Order Restoration Council's Undertakings, 1988–1991*). Yangon, 1991, pp. 343–52.

'Mon schools were ordered to close down'. *BurmaNet*, 13 January 2000, [strider@igc.org] (13 January 2000).

'Mon State PDC Bars the Mon Literacy Training in Moulmein'. *Mon Forum Newsletter*, June 2000, [burma-education@egroups.com] (22 October 2000).

'Monastic education in Arakan State reappearing: Students' parents having doubts about the SPDC's education' ('ဘုန်းကြီးကျောင်းပညာသင်ကြားရေး ရခိုင်ပြည်မှာ ပြန်လည်ထွန်းကား – ကျောင်းသားမိဘများက နအဖ ပညာရေးကို သံသယဖြစ်လာနေ'). *Voice of Arakan*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2002, p. 6.

'Monasteries take on education'. *BI Weekly*, no. 73, 14–20 March 2002, [durham@mozart.inet.co.th] (23 March 2002).

Moscotti, Albert D. *British policy and the nationalist movement in Burma*. Asian Studies at Hawaii, no. 11, Asian Studies Program, University of Hawaii, 1974.

'Mother's Son' (အမေ့သား). မြန်မာ့ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဆိုတာ ဘာလဲ။ ('What is Myanmar culture?'). *မြက်ခင်းသစ်* (*Myekhinthit*), September 1996, pp. 116–21.

Mulder, Niels. *Thai images: The culture of the public world.* Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 1997.

'Multimedia Classrooms opened in over 300 Basic Education Schools across the entire country: Foundation of human resources development comes down to the nurturing of schools; Secretary-1 attends opening ceremonies of Multimedia Classrooms at Basic Education Schools in Bago Division' ('တစ်နိုင်ငံလုံးရှိ အခြေခံပညာကျောင်း ၃၀၀ကျော်တွင် သင်ထောက်ကူပြု စာသင်ခန်းများဖွင့်လှစ်နိုင်၊ လူသားစွမ်းရည် အရင်းအမြစ် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေး အခြေခံအကျဆုံး စာသင်ကျောင်းများမှ စတင်ပျိုးထောင်နေ၊ အတွင်းရေးမှူး[၁] ပဲခူးတိုင်းအတွင်းရှိ အခြေခံပညာကျောင်းများ၏ သင်ထောက်ကူခန်းများ ဖွင့်ပွဲတက်ရောက်'). *The Mirror*, 8 August 2000, pp. 1, 8–9.

'Multimedia Teaching Centre Opened'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 12 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july12.htm] (12 July 2001).

'My gun was as tall as me': Child soldiers in Burma. Human Rights Watch, New York, 2002.

'Myanmar (Burma)'. In *The Far East and Australasia 2002*, 33rd edn, Europa Publications, London, 2001, pp. 816–53.

'Myanmar Education Committee Chairman attends hand-over ceremony of four new school buildings and opening ceremony of new school building at Thakayta BEPS No. 14' ('မြန်မာနိုင်ငံပညာရေးကော်မတီဥက္ကဋ္ဌ မူလတန်းကျောင်းဆောင်သစ်လေးကျောင်း လွှဲအပ်ပွဲနှင့် သာကေတ အမက[၁၄] ကျောင်းဆောင်သစ်ဖွင့်ပွဲတက်ရောက်'). *The Mirror*, 22 July 2000, pp. 3, 9.

Myanmar–English Dictionary. 5th edn, Department of the Myanmar Language Commission, Ministry of Education, Union of Myanmar, 1998.

Myanmar history reader: Third standard (မြန်မာ့သမိုင်းဖတ်စာ—တတိယတန်း). Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 1996.

———*: Fourth standard (မြန်မာ့သမိုင်းဖတ်စာ—စတုတ္ထတန်း)*. Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 1996.

Myanmar Information Committee. 'School faculties, local township authorities and parents working together to prevent political extremists from exploiting school children'. Information Sheet No. B-1029 (I), 17 August 1999, [http://www.myanmar-information.net/infosheet/1999/ 990817.htm] (6 May 2002).

'Myanmar junta accuses opposition of trying to sabotage education system'. AP press report, 12 September 2000, [burma-education@egroups.com] (22 October 2000).

'Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs'. Undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/women/mncwa/mncwa.html] (4 July 2002).

Myanmar primer: Kindergarten (မြန်မာသင်ပုန်းကြီးဖတ်စာ—သူငယ်တန်း). Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 1995.

Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV). Selected broadcasts, February–May 2000.

Myanmar reader: Kindergarten (မြန်မာဖတ်စာ—သူငယ်တန်း). Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 1998.

———*: First standard (မြန်မာဖတ်စာ—ပထမတန်း).* Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 1998.

———*: Second standard (မြန်မာဖတ်စာ—ဒုတိယတန်း).* Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 1998.

———*: Third standard (မြန်မာဖတ်စာ—တတိယတန်း).* Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 1998.

———*: Fourth standard (မြန်မာဖတ်စာ—စတုတ္ထတန်း).* Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 2000.

'Myanmar society has been [a] very good environment for Myanmar women: Myanmar women have never been discriminated against; enjoy equal rights with men'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 4 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july04.htm] (7 July 2002).

'Myanmar striving to develop IT for national progress: Special four-year education promotion programme implemented to reach ASEAN education level'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 April 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april3.htm] (3 April 2002).

'Myanmar Today: Government of the State'. *The Golden Land: Myanmar.* Undated, [http://www.myanmar.com/today/today.html] (4 May 2002).

Myint Han, U. 'Curriculum'. *Working paper series,* no. 2.3, Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Yangon, February 1992.

Myo Nwe, Myanmar. 'Uplifting the national dignity'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 May 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/may10.htm] (13 May 2000).

Nababan, P. W. J. 'Language in education: The case of Indonesia'. *International Review of Education*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1991, pp. 115–31.

Nash, Manning. *The golden road to modernity: Village life in contemporary Burma*. John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1965.

Nemoto, Kei. 'The concepts of *dobama* ("our Burma") and *thudo-bama* ("their Burma") in Burmese nationalism, 1930–1948'. *Journal of Burma Studies*, vol. 5, 2000, pp. 1–16.

'New building of No. 2 BEMS handed over to No. 3 Basic Education Department (Yangon City)'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 13 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august13.htm] (13 August 2001).

'New generation must be able to safeguard good legacy and create better social environment: They are to possess strength, industry, perseverance and courage to be able to overcome every difficulty with which they may be confronted'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 16 September 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/sept16.htm] (18 September 2001).

'New history textbook tells Myanmar kids that Thais are lazy'. *BurmaNet*, 5 June 2001, [strider@igc.org] (6 June 2001).

Ni Ni Myint, Daw. 'Myanmar two millennia: An excursion through history'. In *Myanmar two millennia*, part 1, Universities Historical Research Centre, Yangon, 2000, no page numbers.

Nicholson, Philip Yale. *Who do we think we are? Race and nation in the modern world*. M. E. Sharpe, New York & London, 1999.

Nu, U. *U Nu: Saturday's son.* U Law Yone (trans.), Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1975.

———. *From peace to stability: Translation of selected speeches by the Hon'ble Thakin Nu, Prime Minister of the Union of Burma, delivered on various occasions from 15th August 1949 to 20th April 1951*. Ministry of Information, Government of the Union of Burma, 1951.

‘Nurturing of highly educated human resources with patriotism and Union Spirit for state peace and stability, development with momentum and perpetuation of the Union; Added momentum in carrying out objective of producing youth intelligentsia of international standard: Secretary-1 addresses graduation ceremony for teachers of upgrading course at Central Institute of Civil Service (Upper Myanmar)’ (‘နိုင်ငံတော်တည်ငြိမ်အေးချမ်းရေး၊ အရှိန်အဟုန်ဖြင့် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်ရေးနှင့်ပြည်ထောင်စုတည်တံ့ခိုင်မြဲရေး မျိုးချစ်စိတ်ဓာတ်၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုစိတ်ဓာတ်ခိုင်မာပြီး ပညာရည်မြင့်မားသော လူသားစွမ်းရည်ပျိုးထောင်ပေး၊ နိုင်ငံတကာအဆင့်မီခေတ်ပညာတတ်လူငယ်များ မွေးထုတ် နိုင်အောင်ဦးတည်ဆောင်ရွက်မှု အရှိန်အဟုန်[ြ i]တင်၊ အတွင်းရေးမှူး[၁] ဗဟိုဝန်ထမ်းတက္ကသိုလ် [အတက်မြန်မာပြည်] ဆရာဆရာမများမွမ်းမံသင်တန်းဆင်းပွဲ၌ မှာကြား’). *The Mirror*, 8 August 1999, pp. 1, 8–9.

Octennial report on education in Burma (1947–48 to 1954–55). Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1956.

Okell, John. *Burmese: An introduction to the literary style*. Centre for Burma Studies, Northern Illinois University, 1994.

———. ‘Nissaya Burmese: A case of systematic adaptation to a foreign grammar and syntax’. *Lingua*, vol. 15, 1965, pp. 186–227.

———. *A reference grammar of colloquial Burmese*. Oxford University Press, London, 1969.

Okell, John & Allott, Anna. *Burmese/Myanmar dictionary of grammatical forms*. Curzon, Richmond, Surrey, 2001.

Olson, David R. ‘On the language and authority of textbooks’. In *Language, authority and criticism: Readings on the school textbook*, Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke & Carmen Luke (eds), Falmer Press, London, New York, Philadelphia, 1989, pp. 233–44.

Oo Khin Hla, Daw. ‘Teacher quality’. *Working paper series*, no. 2.1, Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Yangon, February 1992.

‘Opportunities for children to study in each region of Myanmar’ (‘မြန်မာနိုင်ငံဒေသာ အသီးသီးမှ ကလေးများပညာသင်ကြားနိုင်ရန် အခွင့်အရေး’). National Health and Education Committee, Education Conference, Thai-Myanmar border, 28–31 March 2002.

‘Ordination, novitiation of 3,000 students, teachers and personnel of No. 3 Basic Education Department (Yangon) held’. *New Light of Myanmar,*15 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec15.htm] (17 December 1999).

‘Outstanding performance of students the best proof of success of education promotion programmes: Secretary-1 presents prizes to outstanding students’. *New Light of Myanmar,* 11 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec11.htm] (13 December 1999).

Pagano, Adriana. ‘Negatives in written text’. In *Advances in written text analysis,* Malcolm Coulthard (ed.), Routledge, London & New York, 1994, pp. 250–65.

'A parent on hardship caused by unjust school fees'. Statement 76(5/00), National League for Democracy, Rangoon, 30 May 2000.

Parker, Lynette. 'The Creation of Indonesian citizens in Balinese primary schools'. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1992, pp. 42–70.

———. 'Engendering school children in Bali'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society (N.S.)*, vol. 3, September 1997, pp. 497–516.

———. 'The quality of schooling in a Balinese village'. *Indonesia*, no. 54, 1992, pp. 95–116.

———. 'The subjectification of citizenship: Student interpretations of school teachings in Bali'. *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2002, pp. 1–37.

Parsons, Talcott. 'The school class as a social system: Some of its functions in American society'. *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1959, pp. 297–316.

———. *The social system*. The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1951.

Pauk Sa. 'Those who daren't show their face–18'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 15 June 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/june15.htm] (15 June 2001).

The People's Tribunal on Food Scarcity and Militarization in Burma. *Voice of the hungry nation.* Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong, October 1999.

'Perpetuation of independence and sovereignty requires unyielding spirit and zeal and perseverance of entire people: Teachers urged to strive to implement education promotion programmes for human resources development'. *New Light of Myanmar,* 24 June 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june24.htm] (26 June 2001).

Peters, R. S. *Authority, responsibility and education*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1959.

———. *Ethics and education*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1966.

Pickering, W. S. F. *Durkheim: Essays on morals and education*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston & Henley, 1979.

Pinnya Dazaun (ပဉ္ဉာတန်ဆောင်). Yangon, May 2000.

Pong, Suet-Ling. 'Access to education in Peninsular Malaysia: Ethnicity, social class and gender'. *Compare*, vol. 25, no. 3, 1995, pp. 239–52.

Pragasam, Shanta Louisa. Constructing the good citizen: Moral education in Singaporean primary schools. Unpublished BA Hons thesis, University of Western Australia, 1999.

'Preservation and enhancing of cultural heritage, traditions and cultures must be carried out constantly as national duty: Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competitions held annually for preserving traditional arts and culture; In preserving and enhancing national characters, culture and traditions, Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions play vital role'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 4 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july04.htm]; Burmese version (untitled), [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/mnlm/july4.htm] (7 July 2002).

'Professor Salai Tun Than'. Asian Human Rights Commission, undated, [http://www.ahrchk.net/tunthan] (3 August 2002).

'Progress of education sector centre of all development plans under way to launch open education system'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 23 June 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june23.htm] (24 June 2001).

Pwo Kayin primer: Kindergarten (ပိုးကရင်သင်ပုန်းကြီး—သူငယ်တန်း). [West Pwo Kayin script], ပိုးကရင်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်, Yangon, c.1995.

Pwo Kayin reader: Kindergarten (ပိုးကရင်ဖတ်စာ—သူငယ်တန်း). [East Pwo Kayin script], စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်, Yangon, 1975.

Pyidawtha: The new Burma. Economic and Social Board, Government of the Union of Burma, 1954.

The Pyidawtha Conference, August 4–17, 1952: Resolutions and speeches. Government of the Union of Burma, c. 1952.

Reed, Horace B. 'Nepalese education related to national unity, economic development and social justice'. *Comparative Education*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1979, pp. 43–61.

'Religious freedom enjoyed fully, freedom of worship safeguarded by law, administrative and social means'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 December 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec2.htm] (4 December 2000).

Report of the Education Policy Enquiry Committee, Burma: 1946. Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1949.

Report on the Public Instruction in Burma for the Year 1946–47. Superintendent, Government Printing & Stationery, Rangoon, 1954.

Reynolds, Craig J. 'National monuments vs. populist icons in Southeast Asia'. Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, 12 June 2002, [http://www.anu.edu.au/culture/activities/sixpack/icon_papers/craig_reynolds.htm] (14 June 2002).

'RFA – ကျောင်းသုံးသမိုင်းစာအုပ်ကိစ္စဆရာဆရာမများအဖမ်းခံကြရ။' ('RFA: Teachers arrested over school textbook'). *BurmaNet Burmese*, 22 June 2001, [strider@igc.org] (24 June 2001).

Rokeach, Milton. *The nature of human values*. The Free Press, New York, 1973.

———. 'A theory of organization and change within value-attitude systems'. *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1968, pp. 13–33.

Rudolph, Lloyd I. & Rudolph, Susanne Hoeber. 'Rethinking secularism: Genesis and implications of the textbook controversy, 1977–79'. *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 1, 1983, pp. 15–37.

Ryan, Bruce. 'The dilemmas of education in Ceylon'. *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1960, pp. 84–92.

Saiyidain, K. G., Naik, J. P. & Husain, S. Abid. *Compulsory education in India*. UNESCO, Paris, 1952.

Sangermano, Vincenzo. *The Burmese empire a hundred years ago*. 3rd edn, reprint, White Orchid Press, Thailand, 1995 (1893), (with introduction by John Jardine).

'Sangyoung Township BEHS No. 3 gets multimedia teaching centre'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 20 August 2000, [http://www3.itu.int/missions/myanmar/00nlm/n000820.htm] (10 May 2002).

'Saw Maung orders new history'. *Burma Press Summary*, vol. 3, no. 5, May 1989, [http://public.ibiblio.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=burmaps&ct=0] (17 January 2002).

'School Family Day further raises students' efforts, stipulates them to emulate outstanding ones'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 6 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan6.htm] (8 January 2001).

Scott, J. G. *Burma: A handbook of practical information*. 3rd edn rev., Daniel O'Connor, London, 1921, pp. 164–70.

Scott, James C. *Political ideology in Malaysia: Reality and the beliefs of an elite*. University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1968.

———. *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1985.

'Secretary-1 addresses closing ceremony of Special Refresher Course No. 8 for Basic Education Teachers'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 December 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec10.htm] (11 December 2000).

'Secretary-1 addresses opening of multimedia teaching centre at Zigon BEHS'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 22 April 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/april22.htm] (22 April 2002).

'Secretary-1 and wife offer exercise books, stationery to members of Sangha and nuns'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 19 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/may%2019.htm] (21 May 2002).

'Secretary-1 attends ceremony to present exercise books and pencils to monastic education schools in Yangon East District'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 30 May 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/may30.htm] (2 June 2002).

'Secretary-1 attends conveying ceremony of the Yadana white elephant'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june03.htm] (5 June 2002).

'Secretary-1 attends opening of multimedia teaching centre'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 August 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august27.htm] (22 October 2000).

'Secretary-1 attends opening of multimedia teaching centre of No. 1 BEHS in Dawbon Township'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 28 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july28.htm] (29 July 2001).

'Secretary-1 attends opening of new building for No. 6 BEMS in Lashio'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 31 July 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/july31.htm] (31 July 2001).

'Secretary-1 attends opening of school buildings at Hlinethaya BEPS No. 20, Shwepyitha Day Nursery, Insein BEPS No. 37'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 1 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ july01.htm] (3 July 2002).

'Secretary-1 attends skill demonstration ceremony of outstanding students'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 6 January 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/jan6.htm] (8 January 2001).

'Secretary-1 inspects perpetual all-round renovation tasks of Shwedagon Pagoda'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 11 December 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/religious/buddha2001/dec/dec11.html] (16 August 2002).

'Secretary-1 meets national race leaders, attends opening of multimedia teaching centres in Kutkai'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 4 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august04.htm] (4 August 2001).

'Secretary-1 presents exercise books, pencils to monastic education schools in Yangon South District'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 3 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june03.htm] (3 June 2002).

Sermons [of] Mingun Tipitakadhara Sayadaw: Obeisance and taking the Precepts. တိ=နိ စာအုပ်စာပေ၊ အနုပညာနှင့် မော်ကွန်းအဖွဲ့, undated.

Shadeg, Norbert Anthony. The educational philosophy of Ki Hadjar Dewantoro and its influence in Indonesian life. Unpublished MA thesis, Loyola University, September 1959.

Shigeki, Toyama. 'Independence and modernization in the nineteenth century'. In *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and revolution*, Nagai Michio & Miguel Urrutia (eds), The United Nations University, Tokyo, 1985, pp. 29–42.

Shiraishi, Saya. 'Eyeglasses: Some Remarks on Acehnese School Books'. *Indonesia*, no. 36, 1983, pp. 67–86.

Shrimali, K. L. *The Wardha Scheme: The Gandhian plan of education for rural India*. Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur, 1949.

Shukla, Sureshachandra. 'Indian educational thought and experiments: a review'. *Comparative Education*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1983, pp. 59–71.

Silanandabhivamsa, Sayadaw U. *Paritta Pali & -protective verses: A collection of Eleven Protective Suttas (An English Translation)*. International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 2000.

Silverstein, Josef. *Burma: Military rule and the politics of stagnation*. Politics and International Relations of Southeast Asia, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1977.

Singh, Jasbir Sarjit & Mukherjee, Hena. 'Education and national integration in Malaysia: Stocktaking thirty years after independence'. *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1993, pp. 89–102.

Singh, R. P. *Education in an imperial colony*. National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979.

Situation analysis of children and women in Myanmar. 3rd draft, UNICEF Myanmar, Yangon, August 1999.

'The situation of education in the Chin State'. Confidential report to Burma Issues, 1998.

'Situation of Murng Nai township in Shan State'. Confidential report to Burma Issues, September 1998.

Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. *Language, literacy and minorities*. Minority Rights Group, London, 1990.

———. *Linguistic genocide in education—Or worldwide diversity and human rights?* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey & London, 2000.

Smart, Kenneth. 'The state—A major element in West German education'. In *Contemporary issues in comparative education*, Keith Watson & Raymond Wilson (eds), Croom Helm, London, Sydney & Dover, New Hampshire, 1985, pp. 89–105.

Smith, Anthony D. *National identity*. Penguin Books, London, 1991.

———. *Nations and nationalism in a global era*. Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995.

Smith, Martin. *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity*. 2nd edn rev., White Lotus, Bangkok, 1999.

———. “‘Our heads are bloody but unbowed”: Suppression of educational freedoms in Burma’. *Censorship News*, no. 18, 1992, [http://www.article 19.org/docimages/321.htm] (27 February 2002).

Snodgrass (Major). *Narrative of the Burmese War, detailing the operations of Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell’s army from its landing at Rangoon in May 1824, to the conclusion of a treaty of peace at Yandaboo, in February 1826*. Ava House, Bangkok, 1997 (1827).

Social studies: Myanmar history vol. 2 (Basic education middle standard level) [လူမှုရေးဘာသာ—မြန်မာသမိုင်း အတွဲ (၂) (အခြေခံပညာ အလယ်တန်းအဆင့်)]. Basic Education Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 2001.

‘Special consideration being given to the carrying out of programmes for the emergence of modern developed education methods in Myanmar education: need to take on mental development tasks to cherish and preserve traditional customs and character; National traitors and destructive elements group spreading rumours to agitate the people; Defend and preserve [the Union] with national awareness of rumours and destructive acts’ (‘မြန်မာပညာရေးလေကတွင် ခေတ်မီတိုးတက်သော နည်းပညာများဖြစ်ထွန်းလာအောင် အလေးထားစီမံဆောင်ရွက်ပေးနေ၊ ရိုးရာဓလေ့စရိုက်အခြေခံများကို မြတ်နိုးထိန်းသိမ်းတတ်သည့် စိတ်ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာ ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကိုယ်ခံအား တည်ဆောက်ပေးရန်လိုအပ်၊ အမျိုးသစ္စာဖောက်အဖျက်သမားအုပ်စုက ပြည်သူလူထုချေက်ချားအောင် ကောလာဟဟများထုတ်လွှင့်လှုံ့ဆော်လျက်ရှိ၊ ကောလာဟလသတင်းများ၊ အဖျက်အမှောင့်လုပ်ရပ်များကို အမျိုးသားရေးသတိနှင့်ကာကွယ်ထိန်းသိမ်းသွားကြ’). *The Mirror*, 7 August 1999, pp. 1, 8–9.

‘Special Refresher Course No. 2 for Basic Education Teachers concludes at CICS (Upper Myanmar)’. *New Light of Myanmar*, 8 August 1999, pp. 1, 6.

‘Special Refresher Course No. 36 for Basic Education Teachers concludes’. *New Light of Myanmar*, 7 August 1999, pp. 1–2.

‘Speech of Mr. Bertie Mendis, UNICEF Representative, delivered at the Signing Ceremony of the UNICEF-Myanmar Master Plan of Operations, 2001-2005 on July 24th, 2001’. UNICEF-Myanmar, 24 July 2001, [http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/pages/MPO2.html] (17 July 2002).

Spiro, Melford E. *Buddhism and society: A great tradition and its Burmese vicissitudes*. 2nd edn rev., University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1982.

———. *Burmese supernaturalism: A study in the explanation and reduction of suffering*. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1967.

———. *Anthropological other or Burmese brother? Studies in cultural analysis*. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick & London, 1992.

———. *Kinship and marriage in Burma: A cultural and psychodynamic analysis*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1977.

'Starving them out: Forced relocations, killings and the systematic starvation of villagers in Dooplaya District'. Karen Human Rights Group, 31 March 2000, [http://metalab.unc.edu/freeburma/humanrights/khrg/archive/khrg2000/khrg0002.html] (16 April 2000).

Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of language and translation*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975.

Stevenson, Rex. *Cultivators and administrators: British educational policy towards the Malays, 1875–1906*. Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1975.

Street, Brian V. *The savage in literature: Representations of 'primitive' society in English fiction 1858–1920*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London & Boston, 1975.

———. 'Meanings of culture in development: A case study from literacy'. In *education, cultures, and economics: dilemmas for development*, Fiona E. Leach & Angela W. Little (eds), Falmer Press, New York & London, 1999, pp. 49–67.

'Strong economy, peace, stability will ward off foreign influences, perpetuate sovereignty: Government built over 5,300 new high, middle and primary schools'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 21 November 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/novem21.htm] (22 November 2001).

Stuart-Fox, Martin. *Buddhist kingdom, Marxist state: The making of modern Laos*. White Lotus, Bangkok, 1996.

———. 'Marxism and Theravada Buddhism: The legitimation of political authority in Laos'. *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 3, 1983, pp. 428–54.

'Students urged to try heart and soul to become intellectuals and intelligentsia'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 13 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec13.htm] (13 December 1999).

Suh, Sooyeon C. 'Ideologies in Korea's morals and social studies texts: A content analysis'. In *The revival of values education in Asia and the West*, William K. Cummings, S. Gopinathan, Yasumasa Tomada (eds), Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1988, pp. 93–108.

Sukatipan Saitip. 'Thailand: The evolution of legitimacy'. In *Political legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The quest for moral authority*, Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995, pp. 193–223.

Supriadi, Dedi. 'Restructuring the schoolbook provision system in Indonesia: Some recent initiatives'. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, vol. 7, no. 7, 1999, [epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n7.html] (26 February 2002).

Surasak Tumcharoen & Sirikul Burmag. 'Kraisak wants to end spat caused by textbook slur'. *Bangkok Post*, 7 June 2001.

Swan, William L. 'Japan's intentions for its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere as indicated in its policy plans for Thailand'. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, National University of Singapore, vol. 27, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 139–149.

Swaris, Nalin. *The Buddha's way to human liberation: A socio-historical approach*. Published by the author, Sri Lanka, 1999.

———. *Buddhism, human rights and social renewal*. Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong SAR, 2000.

The system of correlation of man and his environment: The philosophy of the Burma Socialist Programme Party. The Union of Burma, 17 January 1963.

Talboys Wheeler, J. *Journal of a voyage up the Irrawaddy to Mandalay and Bhamo*. White Orchid, Bangkok, 1991 (1871).

Tambiah, S. J. *World conqueror and world renouncer: A study of Buddhism and polity in Thailand against a historical background*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976.

Taylor, Robert H. *The state in Burma.* C. Hurst, London, 1987.

'Teachers urged to be in the vanguard of activities of education sector which will go down in history: Secretary-1 addresses closing ceremony of Special Refresher Course No. 45 for Basic Education Teachers'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 11 September 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ sept11.htm] (12 September 2001).

'Teachers warned'. *Burma Press Summary*, vol. 3, no. 8, August 1989, [http://public.ibiblio.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a= p&p=about&c=burmaps&ct=0] (17 January 2002).

'Teaching children's mother tongue in schools' ['ကလေးများ၏ မိခင်ဘာသာစကားကို ကျောင်းများတွင် သင်ကြားရေး']. National Health and Education Committee, Education Conference, Thai-Myanmar border, 28–31 March 2002.

Teo, Peter. 'Racism in the news: a Critical Discourse Analysis of news reporting in two Australian newspapers'. *Discourse & Society*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2000, pp. 7–49.

'Textbooks printing and publishing committee meets'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ august10.htm] (10 August 2001).

Thabye Khin. 'School Family Day'. *Myanmar Perspectives,* vol. 5, no. 1, 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/gov/perspec/1999/1-1999/sch.htm] (13 February 1999).

'Thai military slams Myanmar's junta over insults to Thai monarchy'. *BurmaNet*, 26 June 2002, [strider@igc.org] (27 June 2002).

'Thais warn of "strong measures" in feud with Myanmar'. *BurmaNet*, 28 June 2002, [strider@igc.org] (28 June 2002).

Than Htike Aung. 'Read, note down and observe'. *The Working People's Daily: Collected articles*. Book Four, News & Periodicals Corporation, Ministry of Information, Government of the Union of Burma, May 1989, pp. 60–4.

Than Oo, U (သန်းဦး၊ ဦး). *မြန်မာ့ပညာရေးသမိုင်း၊ သင် သိုးညွှန်းတမ်းကဏ္ဍ (၁၉၄၈–၁၉၉၈)* ***(History of Myanmar education: Curriculum component, 1948–98).*** Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Yangon, May 1999.

———. မြန်မာနိုင်ငံစာတတ်မြောက်ရေးသမိုင်းစဉ် ('History of literacy of Myanmar'). In *နိုင်ငံတကာစာတတ်မြောက်ရေးနေ့ အထိမ်းအမှတ်၊ ဟောပြောပွဲစာတမ်းပေါင်းချုပ် (၁၉၉၈–ခုနှစ်)* ***(International Literacy Day Commemoration: Collection of Speeches, 1998)***, Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Yangon, September 1999.

———. *မြန်မာနိုင်ငံပညာရေးဌာနသမိုင်း* ***(History of the Myanmar education department).*** ပညာတန်ဆောင် အထူးစာစဉ်, Yangon, 1999.

Thaung Tut, U. *The National Literacy Campaign of Burma: A case study.* UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia & the Pacific, Bangkok, 1981.

Thaveeporn Vasavakul, Schools and politics in South and North Viêt Nam: A comparative study of state apparatus, state policy, and state power (1945–1965). Unpublished PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1994.

Thein Lwin. 'Curriculum traditions: An analysis of teaching and learning in a Burmese school'. 31 December 1996, [http://www.students.ncl.ac.uk/thein.lwin/med2.html] 24 June 1999.

———. Education for citizenship: How citizenship education is taught in a British primary school and its implications for Burma. Unpublished EdD thesis, Department of Education, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 2001.

———. 'Education in Burma (1945–1999)'. July 1999, [http://www.students.ncl.ac.uk/thein.lwin/educationburma.html] 17 April 2000.

Thein Lwin, Barnabas & Nan Lung. 'သင်ကြားနည်းစံနစ်ဆိုင်ရာသုတေသနအစီရင်ခံစာ' ('Report on research into teaching methodology'). National Health and Education Committee, Education Unit, 1 November 2001.

Thein Win Lat & Kyaw Sein (သိန်းဝင်းလတ်၊ ကျော်စိန်), 'အမျိုးသားစာပေ တစ်သက်တာဆုရ၍ ဂုဏ်ယူဝမ်းမြောက် (စာရေးဆရာပါရဂူ)၊ ကိုယ့်တိုင်းပြည် ကိုယ်ချစ်ရမည်၊ လူငယ်တွေကို အားကိုးရမည် (ဒေါက်တာမတင်ဝင်)၊ အမျိုးသားစာပေတစ်သက်တာဆုနှင့် အမျိုးသားစာပေဆုရသူများအား ကြေးမုံတွေ့ဆုံ' ('Proud and happy to receive National Literary Lifetime Award [Writer Paragu]; We must love our country, rely on the youth [Dr Ma Tin Win]: *The Mirror* meets with National Literary Lifetime Award and National Literary Award winners'). *The Mirror*, 13 November 2003, pp. 1, 3.

Therborn, Göran. *The ideology of power and the power of ideology*. Verso Editions & NLB, London, 1980.

Thompson, Virginia & Adloff, Richard. *Cultural institutions and educational policy in Southeast Asia.* International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, (issued in cooperation with the Southeast Asia Institute & the Far Eastern Association), 1948.

Tin Kha, Tekkatho. 'A historic day of great tradition'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/ dec2.htm] (4 December 1999).

Tinker, Hugh. *The Union of Burma: A study of the first year's of independence*. 4th edn, Oxford University Press, London, 1967.

Tint Zaw (တင့်ဇော်). 'နအဖနှင့် အနာဂတ်ပညာရေး' ('SPDC and future education'). *New Era Journal*, nos. 59, 64, 68 & 72, 1998–99, p. 3.

'Towards Myanmar education coming abreast in Southeast Asia: Success of government endeavours to open multimedia centres exceeds expectations due to the people's energetic contribution' ('မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ၏ပညာရေးကို ရှေ့တောင်အာရှတွင် ရှေ့တန်းမှရင်ပေါင်တန်းပါဝင်ရေး ဆောင်ရွက်နေ၊ သင်ထောက်ကူစာသင်ခန်းများ ဖွင့်လှစ်သင်ကြားနိုင်ရေး နိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရ၏ ကြိုးပမ်းဆောင်ရွက်မှုတွင် ပြည်သူများ အားတက်သရော လိုလိုလားလားပူးပေါင်းပါဝင်မှုကြောင့် မျှော်မှန်းသည်ထက်ပိုမိုအောင်မြင်'). *The Mirror*, 4 October 2000, pp. 1, 8–9.

Trager, Frank N. *Burma, from kingdom to republic: A historical and political analysis*. Pall Mall Press, London, 1966.

———. (ed.) *Burma: Japanese military administration, selected documents, 1941–1945.* University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1971.

Trankell, Ing-Britt & Oversen, Jan. 'Introduction'. In *Facets of power and its limitations: Political culture in Southeast Asia*. Ing-Britt Trankell & Laura Summers (eds), Uppsala University, Uppsala, 1998, pp. 9–18.

Tsuchiya, Kenji. *Democracy and leadership: The rise of the Taman Siswa movement in Indonesia*, Peter Hawkes (trans.), Monographs of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1987.

Tun Aung Chain. 'The broken glass: Changes in the perception of the Myanmar past'. *Myanmar Historical Research Journal*, no. 6, Universities Historical Research Centre, Yangon, December 2000, pp. 33–43.

'Uncensored tapes, VCDs and CDs, articles out of place in Myanmar culture put to torch'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 8 April 2000, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/article/april8.htm] (10 April 2000).

Undisclosed source. 'News inside'. 3 July 2002.

Union of Burma Basic Education Law 1966 (၁၉၆၆ ခုနှစ်၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံ အခြေခံပညာရေး ဥပဒေ). Union of Burma Revolutionary Council, Rangoon, 1966.

Union of Burma Basic Education Law 1973 (၁၉၇၃ ခုနှစ်၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံ အခြေခံပညာရေး ဥပဒေ). Union of Burma Revolutionary Council, Rangoon, 1973.

'USDA protects, serves nation'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 5 September 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/perspectives/september/sept05.htm] (6 September 2001).

Van Dijk, Teun A. 'Principles of critical discourse analysis'. *Discourse & Society*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1993, pp. 249–83.

Van Langenberg, Michael. 'Analysing Indonesia's New Order state: A keywords approach'. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1986, pp. 1–47.

Vickery, Michael. *Cambodia 1975–1982*. South End Press, Boston, 1985.

'Village school gets multimedia teaching centre'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 1 August 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/august01.htm] (2 August 2001).

Watson, J. K. P. 'Education and cultural pluralism in South East Asia, with special reference to Peninsular Malaysia'. *Comparative Education*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1980, pp. 139–58.

———. 'The monastic tradition of education in Thailand'. *Paedogogica Historica*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1973, pp. 515–29.

———. 'Primary education in Thailand: Plans, problems and possibilities'. *Comparative Education*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1974, pp. 35–47.

Weber, Max. *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*. Vols. I & III, Guenther Roth & Claus Wittich (eds), Ephraim Fischoff, Hans Gerth, A. M. Henderson, Ferdinand Kolegar, C. Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Max Rheinstein, Guenther Roth, Edward Shils & Claus Wittich (trans), Bedminster Press, New York, 1968.

———. 'The meaning of discipline'. In *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology*, H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (trans & eds), Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, 1947, pp. 253–64.

———. 'Structures of power'. In *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology*, H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (trans & eds), Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, 1947, pp. 159–79.

Weiler, Hans N. 'Education and power: The politics of educational decentralization in comparative perspective'. *Educational Policy*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1989, 31–43.

Wheatley, Julian & San San Hnin Tun. 'Languages in contact: The case of English and Burmese'. *Journal of Burma Studies*, vol. 4, 1999, pp. 61–91.

'White elephant welcomed in accord with tradition in Yangon; White elephant conveyed from Sittway to Yangon'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 16 November 2001, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/novem16.htm] (17 November 2001).

Whitehead, Clive. *Education in Fiji: Policy, problems and progress in primary and secondary education, 1939–1973*. Pacific Research Monograph Number Six, Australian National University, Canberra, 1981.

Williams, A. B. *Primary education in Myanmar Naing-ngan: Proposals for progress towards Education for All*. UNICEF Yangon, February 1990.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*. Rev., Oxford University Press, New York, 1983.

———. 'Hegemony and the selective tradition'. In *Language, authority and criticism: Readings on the school textbook*, Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke & Carmen Luke (eds), Falmer Press, London, New York, Philadelphia, 1989, pp. 56–60.

Wilson, H. E. *Social engineering in Singapore: Educational policies and social change, 1819–1972*. Singapore University Press, Singapore, 1978.

Win Myint (ဝင်းမြင့်). 'ဒေါက်တာမတင်းဝင်း ရေးသားမှု ထိုင်းနိုင်ငံမှ ပြင်းထန်စွာ ကန့်ကွက်' ('Thailand strongly protests Dr Ma Tin Win's writing'. *The Irrawaddy (Burmese)*, 28 June 2002, [http://www.irrawaddy.org/bur/index.html] (29 June 2002).

'Wishes of the people in outright opposition to national traitors group: Some big Western nations acting in violation of standards and provisions of the United Nations Charter; The force of national solidarity is essential to repel domineering ideology; All citizens have responsibility to eradicate destructionist national traitors' ('အမျိုးသစ္စာဖောက်အုပ်စုကို အတိအလင်းဆန့်ကျင်မှုများ သူ့သဘောသူဆောင်သည့် ဖြစ်ရပ်မှန်များဖြစ်၊ အနောက်နိုင်ငံကြီးတချို့၏လုပ်ရပ် ကုလပဋိညာဉ်စာတမ်းပါ ပြဋ္ဌာန်းချက်နှင့် ချိန်ထိုးပါက မတရားမှုပေါ်လွင်၊ ဗိုလ်ကျစိုးမိုးရေးဝါဒကို တွန်းလှန်ဆန့်ကျင်ရန် သွေးစည်းညီညွတ်ခြင်းအင်အားကို အခြေခံ၊ အဖျက်အမှောင့်လုပ်ဆောင်နေသည့် အမျိုးသစ္စာဖောက်များကို တိုက်ဖျက်ရန် နိုင်ငံသားတိုင်း၌တာဝန်ရှိ'). *The Mirror*, 3 July 1999, pp. 1, 8–9.

Woodside, Alexander. 'The contributions to rural change of modern Vietnamese village schools'. In *Reshaping local worlds: Formal education and cultural change in rural Southeast Asia*, Charles F. Keyes (ed.), Monograph 36/Yale Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1991, pp. 174–205.

Wun-tha-nu, Maung. 'Nurturing our offspring to become mature citizens'. *The Working People's Daily: Collected articles*, no. 2, News & Periodicals Corporation, Ministry of Information, Government of the Union of Burma, January 1989, pp. 395–402.

Wyatt, David K. *The politics of reform in Thailand: Education in the reign of King Chulalongkorn*. Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1969.

'Xinhua: Myanmar's population reaches 52 mln'. *BurmaNet*, 9 July 2001, [strider@igc.org] (11 July 2001).

'Yangonites support mass ralies of national people to denounce SURA and KNU: Yodaya is harbouring and supporting every kind of insurgent who will give trouble to Myanmar; Our People's Tatmadaw is crushing drug-trafficking SURA and KNU who are encroaching on the sovereignty of the nation'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 10 June 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june10.html]; Burmese version (untitled), [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/mnlm/june10.html] (13 June 2002).

Yawnghwe, Chao-Tzang. 'Burma: The depoliticization of the political'. In *Political legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The quest for moral authority*, Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995, pp. 170–92.

———. 'The Orientalization of Burmese politics? A research agenda'. *Burma Debate*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2000, pp. 10–13.

Ye Ni (ရဲနည်). 'အခြေခံပညာကျောင်းသားများအတွက် စစ်အုပ်စု၏ ဘာသာရပ်ပြဋ္ဌန်းချက်အသစ်' ('Military regime's new pronouncement on subject matter for basic education school students'). *New Era Journal*, July 1999, p. 2.

'Yodaya breeds some traitors of our country, arms them, provides them with food and shelter and recruits new members. The entire Myanmar people know these facts. These acts are designed to cause disunity among the Myanmar citizens and create conflicts and bloodshed. The entire Myanmar people know that the acts lead to instability of the State and undermining the national development: Shan State (East) holds mass rally to denounce SURA and KNU insurgents'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 2 July 2002, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/june02.htm] (4 June 2002).

Yoshimasa, Irie. 'The history of the textbook controversy'. *Japan Echo*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1997, [http://www.japanecho.com/docs/html/240313] (26 February 2002).

Yoshino, Kosaku. 'Rethinking theories of nationalism: Japan's nationalism in a marketplace perspective'. In *Consuming ethnicity and nationalism: Asian experiences*, Kosaku Yoshino (ed.), Curzon, Richmond, 1999, pp. 8–28.

Young, Michael F. D. 'An approach to the study of curricula as a socially organized knowledge'. In *Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education*, Michael F. D. Young (ed.), Collier Macmillan, London, 1971, pp. 19–46.

'Youths misled to run away to border areas still being warmly welcomed with open arms'. *New Light of Myanmar*, 7 December 1999, [http://www.myanmar.com/nlm/enlm/dec7.htm] (9 December 1999).

Zani Win (ဇာနည်ဝင်း). 'မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတွင် ပညာရေးစနစ် ဆိုးဝါးနေဆဲ' ('Education system in Myanmar worsening'). *Irrawaddy News (Burmese)*, 7 June 2002, [http://www.irrawaddy.org/bur/news.html] (8 June 2002).