

# HISTORIES OF BURMA

A SOURCE-BASED APPROACH TO MYANMAR'S HISTORY

STUDENT'S BOOK

Rosalie Metro, Ph.D

## ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်အမည်

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## ထုတ်ဝေသူ

ဦးအောင်မြတ်စိုး

## စာပေတိုက်အမည်

မုခ်ဦးစာပေ

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Rosalie Metro, Ph.D

Histories of Burma, A Source-Based Approach to Myanmar's History, Student's Book

Rosalie Metro, Ph.D

ရန်ကုန်၊ မုခ်ဦးစာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၂၀၂၀။

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မူရင်းအမည် - Histories of Burma, A Source-Based Approach to Myanmar's History, Student's Book

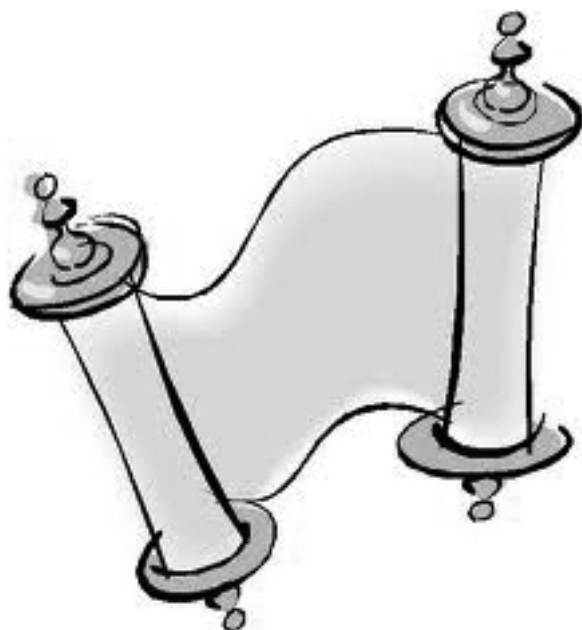
(1) Rosalie Metro, Ph.D

(2) Histories of Burma, A Source-Based Approach to Myanmar's History, Student's Book

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*Histories of Burma: A Source-based Approach to Myanmar's History* provides an introduction to key history skills as well as providing a critical and reflective study of many aspects of history from the region.

Accompanying this book is the **Sourcebook**. You will need it for reading the sources, timelines, maps and other references mentioned in this book.



■ A Buddha head surrounded by an overgrown tree in Ayutthaya, Thailand. The site was the scene of a famous Burmese invasion of the ancient city in 1767.



## Introduction to:

# Historians' Skills

### 1. How and why do we study history?

People study history for many reasons. Before you start this module, consider why history matters to you. In your opinion, what are the most important reasons for studying history? Choose at least three and rank them in order of importance. These are what we will call “reasoning questions”- there are no right or wrong answers.

#### 1. I study history...


- so that I can respect and be proud of my ethnic group or nation.
- so that I can learn about the perspectives of people from many backgrounds, and get along with them.
- so that I can memorise correct facts, names, places, and dates.
- so that I can think critically and form my own ideas about history.
- so that I can know for sure which facts are correct.
- so that I can compare many theories about history and understand the evidence for and against them.
- for some other reason (please explain).

#### 2. Why did you choose these answers?

- #### 3. Think back to the history classes you have had in school. What purposes did those classes have? Are they the same as the ones you chose as most important?



## 2. How do we approach history differently in this module?

Over the past century, history has mostly been taught in schools so that students can fulfill purposes A, C and E. In other words, history has been taught to promote nationalism, accuracy and certainty about the past. This is true all over the world, and it is true in Burma today, too [see  Document (D) 63]\*. These purposes may be suitable in some situations, but this curriculum is different. We will focus more on purposes B, D, and F. In other words, we will emphasise empathy and reconciliation, critical thinking, and open-mindedness about the past.

In this module, we will ask you to study history in a way that might be different from what you are used to. Instead of memorising what someone else says about history, you will read historical documents and interpret evidence in order to form your own theories about history. In other words, we will ask you to be a historian.

Being a historian is challenging because many people have strong feelings about history. You might have different ideas about history from your classmates, teachers, family, or friends. This is OK. Historians often have different interpretations of the past.

These books are also set up in a different way from most textbooks. They contain mostly reference materials: Documents, a Timeline, Maps, and a Who's Who section. In addition, there are 10 chapters, or Themes, each of which addresses a major question in Burmese history. For instance, our question for this Theme is, "How and why do we study history?" We will direct you to documents and other information that can help you answer these questions, and we will explain some key concepts for each Theme that can help you understand it better. We organise history by Theme instead of chronologically (in the order that events happened) so that you can compare different ways that people in the past have dealt with important issues and decide which approaches have been most successful.

You can use these books in many different ways. You can study the reference materials with a class or by yourself, and you can complete some or all of the Themes, in any order you like. However, it is helpful to complete this unit, "Theme 0" before you begin any



others because in this unit we will teach you some skills that you can use as you study the rest of the module. Because we are using a new approach to studying history, we would like to know how it works out for you. Please contact us with questions and comments so that we can improve the module.

To help you compare our approach to Burmese\*\* histories with other people's, we will ask you to read an explanation in the Documents section about why Gen. Khin Nyunt thinks history is important.

### Types of Question

There are two different types of questions throughout these books:

**Comprehension** questions that have correct and incorrect answers, although in some cases you might have different ideas than we do about which answers are correct. If this happens, please let us know.

**Reasoning** questions are activities or exercises that help you use the material to form opinions, conclusions or new ideas.

\* This is called a citation. Historians use citations to show readers where they found evidence for their theories so the readers can decide for themselves if they agree or not.

\*\* When we say "Burmese," we mean any ethnic group that lives in Burma, not just Burmans. As we will learn, the word "Burmese" means different things to different people, and its meaning has changed throughout history.

# Using your textbook

Throughout this module you will be directed to different resources (Documents, Timelines, Maps and Who's Who) in the following way:



**'D'** - a historical document. This can be found in the History Resource book in the Documents section.



**T-1946** - 'T' represents a date or a period of history on the 'timeline'. You can find the specific dates in the Timelines section of the resource book.



**M-4** - 'M' represents a map. You can find this in the Maps section of the resource book.



**B - (name)** - this is a person or organisation from history. It gives a brief summary of the person's accomplishments or the purpose of the organisation. This can be found in the 'Biographies' section of the History Resource Book

**Factbox** - this will display additional information related to an exercise. This includes profiles of people or organisations and other helpful facts.

**6. The AFPFL: Why did it try to get independence through constitutional reform?**

- Read D38; B-AFPFL; B-Thakin Pe, B-Mountbatten, B-BLA; and T-1940-1945; T-1942-1945, T-1944-1945; look at M5.

**Comprehension**


- Thakin Thakin Pe argues that it is best to get independence by reforming the constitution because**
  - fewer people will be injured or killed that way.
  - Burma does not have a strong enough army to fight a violent revolution.
  - after fascism is defeated, there will be no more need for violence or war.
  - the British will support the Burmese drive for independence only if they only use non-violent means.

**Reasoning**

- The other reasons listed in question 1 might have influenced Thakin Thakin Pe, although he does not mention them. Explain.
- Have world events since the end of WWII proved Thakin Thakin Pe's argument correct or incorrect? Why?

**Factbox**

**Anti-Fascist People's freedom league (AFPFL)**, Previously called the AFO. Aung San led demands for independence from Britain. After his death, Nu led this party, which controlled the parliament in the 1950s. In 1958 the AFPFL split into the Clean Faction (led by Nu) and the Stable Faction (led by Kyaw Nyein and Ba Swe).



**Exercise Type** -  
Comprehension - understanding the information in a text, or Reasoning - being able to analyse and interpret that information to form opinions, conclusions or make inferences.

Study the sources to the right and answer the questions.



D80 B-Khin Nyunt T-40 million BCE

## Comprehension

- General Khin Nyunt explains that if a nation has a long history**
  - it will never be enslaved.
  - its citizens will be more patriotic.
  - it is better than nations with short histories.
  - it will have a better government.
- General Khin Nyunt says that Myanmar's history has to be corrected because**
  - Burmese historians did not do a good job in the past.
  - the government has set social objectives related to history.
  - then the country will be more unified.
  - foreign historians have written incorrect histories.

## 3. General Khin Nyunt claims that Burmese historians

- have been collecting correct facts.
- have been patriotic.
- have worked together with foreign historians.

## Reasoning

- Do you agree with General Khin Nyunt's three main points? Why or why not? Do you think most Burmese people agree with him?**
- There is a saying, "The winners write history." What does it mean? Do you think General Khin Nyunt would agree with this statement?**

### 3. How can you identify multiple perspectives?

Why do people have different perspectives on history? Because they have had different experiences and they have access to different information. This means that no-one can understand the entire world by themselves. However, if you read histories written by people from diverse backgrounds, you can understand a bigger picture.

Many factors affect people's perspectives on history, including their gender, age, ethnicity, social class, nationality, region, religion, political ideology, level of education and occupation. These characteristics and many others make up your identity or your idea about who you are. Over the course of your life, some characteristics (typical or usual qualities or features of something or someone) might start to seem more important, while others seem less important. For instance, if you are surrounded by people who are from a different ethnic group, preserving (saving something from being

destroyed or harmed) your own ethnicity might become more important to you. In this way, your identity can change over the course of your life.

Your identity influences your perspective and your perspective is like a pair of glasses through which you see events. Reading histories by people who are different from you is like putting on someone else's glasses; you might be able to see things in a new way. And you might find that your own perspective changes as a result.

In this module, you will read documents written by men and women; young and old; rich, poor, and middle class; Burmese and foreigners; urban and rural people; Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, and animists; radicals and conservatives; soldiers, revolutionaries, monks, students, and many others. This variety of perspectives will help you to see that Burma has many histories, not only one.

- a. Ne Win
- b. Clement Atlee
- c. Ba U Gyi
- d. Aung San Suu Kyi



## Comprehension

### 1. The main idea of the previous text is

- Understanding multiple perspectives can give you a more complete understanding of history.
- There is only one correct version of history.
- There are documents in this unit written by both urban and rural people.
- People who have had similar life experiences have similar perspectives on history.

## Reasoning

1. Answer the questions below for yourself. Then imagine that you have a friend whose answers are all different. For instance, if you are female, imagine you are male, etc. Decide on all the characteristics of this imaginary friend who is different from you in every way.

Question	You	Imaginary friend
a. Are you male or female?		
b. What is your ethnic group?		
c. How old are you?		
d. Are you rich, poor, or middle class?		
e. What country were you born in?		
f. Did you grow up in a city or a village?		
g. What is your religion?		
h. What kind of political system do you prefer?		
i. What job do you hope to have?		
j. Another characteristic not mentioned yet		

2. Now, think of the 2010 elections in Burma. Write down three ways your perspective about this event would be different if you were this imaginary friend instead of yourself?

3. Which of the characteristics that you listed for yourself above are the most important parts of your identity right now? Pick your top three, and explain why they are the most important.

c



Histories of Burma

d



Student's Book





#### 4. How can you understand your own biases?

Just as people have different perspectives about history, almost everyone has biases, or preferences, for certain people or groups based on their past experiences. If your perspective on history is like a pair of glasses, your bias is like a pair of glasses that you cannot easily take off.

For instance, imagine a football game between Manchester United and Newcastle. The Manchester United fans and Newcastle fans are both biased in favour of their favorite team. When the referee calls a foul on a Newcastle player, the Newcastle fans are likely to think the referee is being unfair, while the Manchester United fans will agree with the referee. The two groups of fans are watching the same game, but they see it differently. The referee might prefer one team or another, but his job is to ignore his bias and judge the game in a neutral way.

Just like people have biases for and against certain sports teams, they also have biases for and against certain people and groups in history. And just like a referee tries to be

neutral in a sports match, as a historian you can try to reduce how much your biases affect your theories about history. The first step in doing this is to understand your own biases. Often, people are biased in favor of people who are similar to themselves, and they are biased against people who are different from them. They may also be biased in favour of a group that already has power and respect in their society, especially if they are part of that group. If they are outside the powerful and respected group, they may be biased against it.

One kind of bias is a stereotype; this means believing that all people in a group are the same based on your experiences with only a few of those people. Another kind of bias is a generalisation, which means thinking something is always true because it has been true in your experience. Having biases is normal and it is very difficult to get rid of them totally, but you can become aware of your biases so that you can be a better historian.

## Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the text?
  - a. Referees try to be neutral.
  - b. Historians try to understand their biases so they can be more neutral.
  - c. Some historians have no biases at all.
  - d. A stereotype is one kind of bias.
2. Identify which statement expresses a bias; stereotype; generalisation; and neutral statement.
  - a. Women are not good at football.
  - b. Whenever people play football, someone gets injured.
  - c. Manchester United is the best football team.
  - d. Manchester United and Newcastle both have strengths and weaknesses as football teams.

## Reasoning

1. Imagine you are a judge. You learn that one person has accused another person of stealing. Even before you hear their stories, you might be more likely to believe that one person was telling the truth depending on their age, ethnic group, gender, economic class, or some other factor. Look back at the list you made for Reasoning Question 1, Section 3 of this Theme (Page 7). Would you be biased towards a person with the characteristics you had, for a person with the characteristics of your imaginary friend, or would you be neutral? Go through points A-I and select the group/person you would be biased towards.
2. What did you learn about your biases by doing this activity? Do you think it is possible to have no biases at all? Why or why not?

“ There is a Burmese folktale that tells of a magic mirror in which a person sees only what he wishes to see. History is such a mirror; and a historian, however much he attempts to be objective and detached, often finds that he cannot overcome his human frailties of prejudice and preference. The reader may therefore find that this history of Burma gives too flattering a picture of Burmese people. ”

■ Maung Htin Aung

### Factbox

**Maung Htin Aung (1909-1978):** Burman writer and historian, rector of Rangoon University from 1946-1958.

3. Do you agree with Maung Htin Aung's generalisation about historians? Why or why not? If you read his book, would you trust his theories about history? Why or why not?



## 5. How can you find biases in a text?

What will make your job as a historian so difficult is that not only do you have biases, but the people who wrote the historical documents you will be reading have biases, too. No history can be totally free of biases; even if it contains only correct facts, the author's biases influenced which facts they chose to include and which ones they decided to leave out. Still, you can decide how much you trust the information in a document based on how much of a bias you see. Just because an author is biased does not mean the information they include is false, but understanding their bias might cause you to trust their theories more or less.

Even before historians read a document, they often ask themselves, "Who wrote it? Why did they write it? What bias are they likely to have?" After they have predicted the author's bias, they try to read the text with open-mindedness. Then they can evaluate the bias and see if it matches their prediction.

The first step in evaluating bias is noticing if the author portrays certain people or groups in a positive, negative, or neutral way. The second

step is figuring out if the author systematically and consistently shows certain people and groups in a negative or positive way, or if the author gives balanced information by showing both positive and negative sides of people or groups. If the author only says negative things about a person, you might conclude that the author is biased against that person. However, if the author mentions the person's strengths and weaknesses, you might decide the author is staying neutral and giving a balanced explanation. You may also think the author is biased if you believe the information they include is incorrect.

When deciding if a text contains bias or not, sometimes it helps to imagine the document as a movie or novel. Is it clear who would be the villains and who would be the heroes? If so, the author might be biased towards the "heroes."

After reading the document carefully, you can go back and see whether the bias you predicted was correct. It depends on your judgment, and often there is no clear right or wrong answer.

### Comprehension

#### 1. Put these questions in the correct order you must ask to find bias in a text.

- "Does the author portray certain groups in a positive, negative, or neutral way?"
- "What bias is the author likely to have?"
- "Was I right about the bias I predicted that the author would have?"
- "Does the author portray certain groups in a positive or negative way systematically and consistently?"

### Reasoning

#### 1. What biases have you noticed in books or newspaper articles that you've read?

## 6. Practice finding Bias

Practise finding bias in a text by reading two different histories about the end of the First Anglo-Burmese War.  
First, study the documents listed on the right.



D10



B-Bagyidaw



T-1752-1885



T-1824-1826



D11



B-Snodgrass



T-1858-1948



M3, M4

### Comprehension

1. Predict the bias of D10: towards the Konbaung Kingdom, or the British Empire?
2. Predict the bias of D11: towards the Konbaung Kingdom, or the British Empire?
3. Read D10 and fill in the chart below.

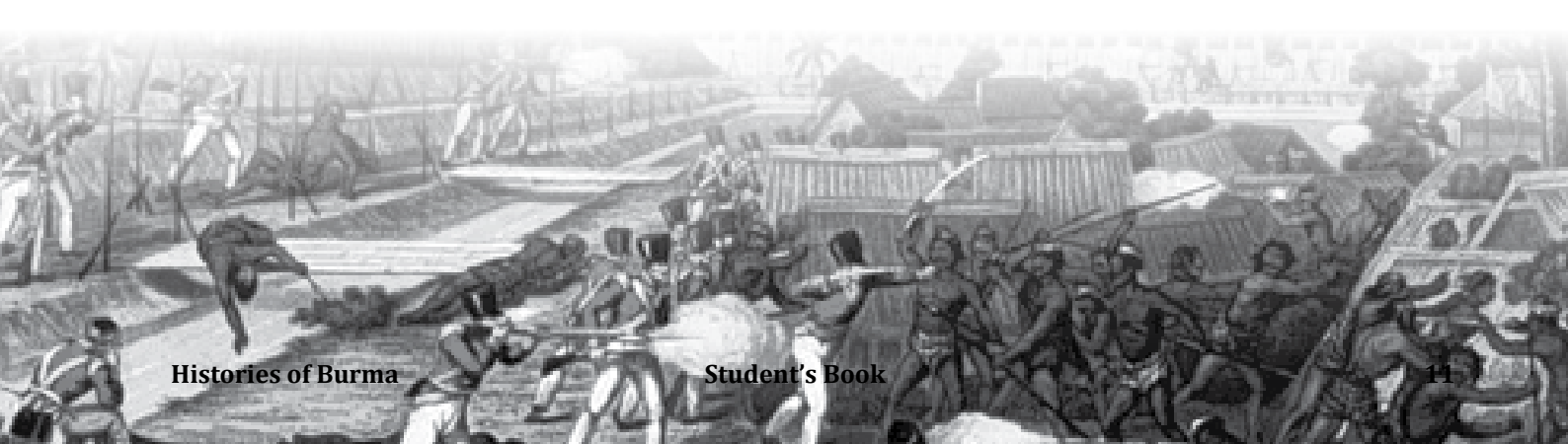
	British (“white strangers”)	Burmese (“Lord of the Golden Palace”)
What do they do or how are they described?		
Are they portrayed as positive, negative, or neutral?		
Is there bias towards or against them?		

4. Read D11 and fill in the chart below

	British (“Government of India”)	Burmese (“Court of Ava”)
What do they do or how are they described?		
Are they portrayed as positive, negative, or neutral?		
Is there bias towards or against them?		

### Reasoning

1. Were you correct about the biases you predicted the texts would have? Did anything surprise you about the biases in the texts?
2. Is your own perspective on the Anglo-Burmese war more similar to D10 or D11? Why do you think that is the case?





■ The battle of Kemmendine 1824, during the First Anglo-Burmese War.

## 7. Facts, beliefs, and theories

After evaluating the bias of texts, historians need to differentiate between the facts, beliefs, and theories they contain. A fact is a piece of information that can be proven correct or incorrect. For instance, “The Anglo-Burmese war ended in 1826” is a correct fact; “The Anglo-Burmese War ended in 1926” is an incorrect fact.

A belief is a personal view about what is good or bad. Beliefs cannot be proven correct or incorrect, but there are some beliefs that are widely accepted within a community, while other beliefs are controversial. For instance, “General Mahabandula was brave” is a widely held belief among Burmese people. “General Mahabandula was a coward” is a controversial belief.

A theory is a guess about why or how things happened that can be supported or discredited (shown to be not true or good to trust) with evidence, but that cannot usually be proven definitely correct or incorrect. A theory about history is different from a hypothesis in science, because it is about the past, not the future. For instance, “The British won the First Anglo-Burmese War mostly because of their superior weapons” is a theory that could be supported or discredited by reading British and Burmese military records. We can call this theory well supported because there is a lot of evidence for it. On the other hand, “The British won the First Anglo-Burmese War because all the ordinary Burmese people helped them” is a poorly supported theory. It is easiest to discredit theories that make generalisations about people or situations using the words “always,” “all,”

“none,” or “never” because you only have to prove that one person or one situation does not fit the theory.

One important part of learning to think like a historian is accepting that people will always have different theories about the past because no one has all the evidence; new evidence is being discovered all the time. But even if you cannot say for sure which theory is correct, you can decide which theory you agree with most based on how much evidence you can find to support it. If you get new information later, you might change your mind.

Some statements are difficult to classify as fact, theory, or belief because they have qualities of all three. For instance: “In 1826, the great and noble British Empire defeated the cowardly Burmese because of their superior weapons.” It is a fact that the war ended in 1826, but the statement also theorises that the British won because of their superior weapons. The statement also includes the author’s beliefs that the British Empire was “great and noble” and the Burmese were “cowardly.” Even “facts” can be controversial and cause a lot of disagreement because people can strongly disagree about what words mean. For instance, the authors of D10 and D11 might not agree on what “defeat” means, so it would be hard for them to agree about whether the British defeated the Burmese in the war.



## Comprehension

1. Which statements are facts, which are beliefs and which are theories?  
Are they based on D10 or D11?
  - a. In 1825 and 1826, the British landed at Rangoon and took the palace.
  - b. King Bagyidaw was pious and had regard for life.
  - c. The Burmese were stubborn.
  - d. The treaty that ended the war was advantageous to India.
  - e. King Bagyidaw gave the British money because they had run out and were in distress.

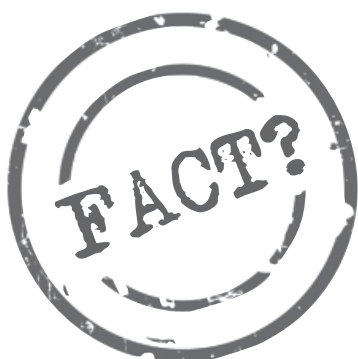
### Factbox

**Mahabandula**, General (above) (1783-1825): Commander of Konbaung Kingdom's army, 1819-1825. Died in action during the *First Anglo-Burmese war*

## Reasoning

1. Why do the authors of D10 and D11 have different theories about the war?
2. Based on your prior knowledge, which of the above statements do you accept more, d or e? Why?

■ British forces arriving in Mandalay (right) at the end of the third Anglo-Burmese war on the 28th November, 1885.



## 8. Primary sources: Finding evidence for a theory

Once historians have separated facts from beliefs from theories, they check the accuracy of the facts and decide whether there is evidence to support the theories. Sometimes the author of the historical document they are reading provides evidence (facts or signs that can be used to show something is true) for his or her theories, but sometimes historians have to look for evidence in other sources. For instance, on page 13, the author of D10 does not provide much evidence for Statement e in the Comprehension Questions from “Facts, Beliefs, and Theories,” and the author of D11 does not provide much evidence for statement d.

If you wanted to find evidence for these theories, you would have to look at other sources of information. Historians rely on primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources were written or created by the people in the time and place the historian is studying, and they include first-hand accounts, treaties, constitutions, speeches, letters, and photos. If you are studying the Anglo-Burmese War, both D10 and D11 can be called primary

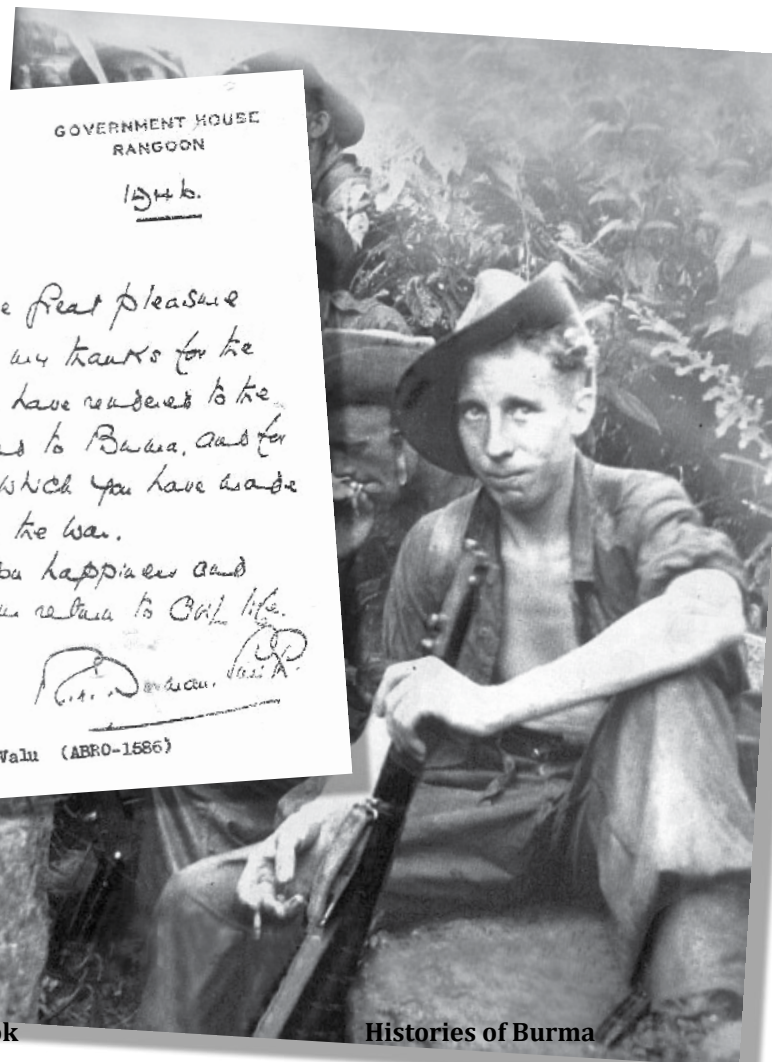
sources. Major Snodgrass, the author of D11, fought in the war. The scholars in the Konbaung court who wrote D10 may not have participated directly in the war, but they may have had first-hand knowledge of what was happening at that time.

Secondary sources are what historians write many years after events in which they did not participate. For instance, a school textbook’s history lesson about the Anglo-Burmese War written in 1975 would be a secondary source. Secondary sources present facts and theories about historical events based on the information in primary sources. Some sources are hard to classify as secondary or primary; for instance, if Major Snodgrass had written D11 in 1857, thirty years after the war had ended, then you might think he had forgotten some of what had happened and treat his book more as a secondary source.

The information in primary sources is not necessarily correct; their authors could be biased, lying, or misinformed. But their authors are one step closer to what really happened than the authors of secondary sources.



c



- The Burmese star medal. Given to British troops who served in the Burma during WW2
- A letter written to a British soldier, congratulating him on his service in the region
- A photo of British troops in Burma
- The History page of the BBC website that gives information regarding the WW2 campaign in Burma
- A British intelligence map showing the operations of UK troops in Burma during the Japanese occupation
- Prince Charles meeting Burma WW2 veterans

On the other hand, the historians who write secondary sources have the chance to gather and compare many primary sources, so they may understand a greater variety of perspectives on the event.

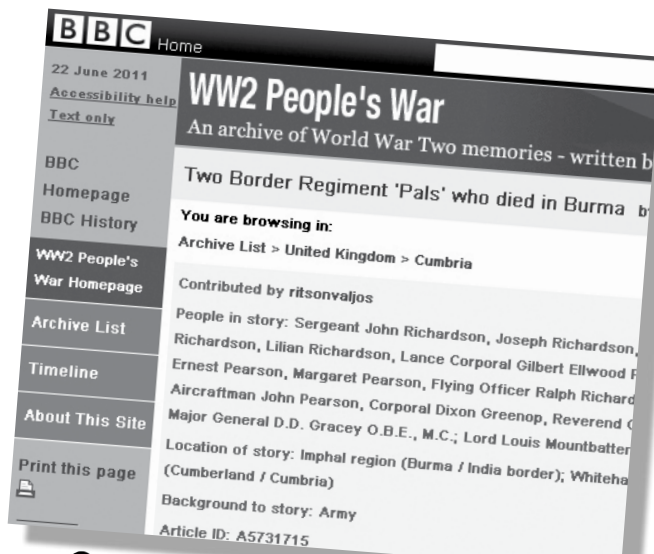
The Documents section of this module contains mostly primary sources, written by people who actually participated in events in Burma's history, so that you can form your own theories about the information they provide. Still, your job will not be easy. You have already seen that two people who witness the same event, such as the authors of D10 and D11, can have different perspectives about it.

Your next step is to find a primary source that is even closer to the event. D11 refers to the treaty that ended the war, which was called the Treaty of Yandabo (D9), which you will read in order to evaluate the theories in D10 and D11.

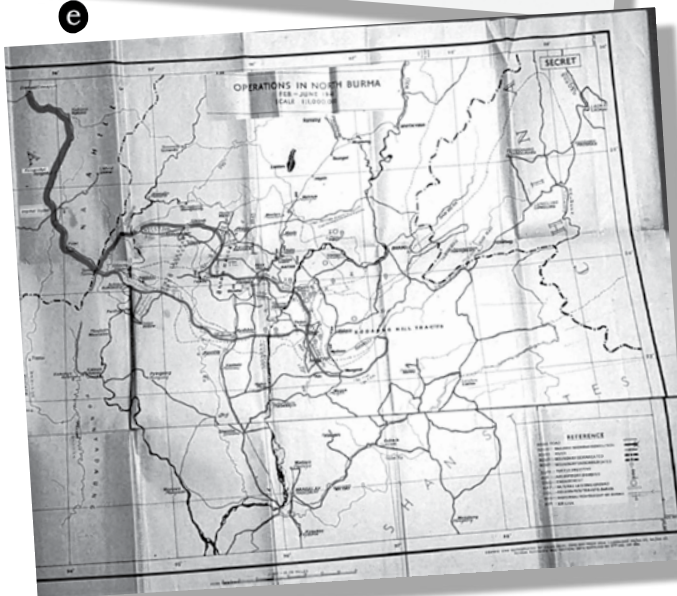
## Comprehension

- Classify each of the documents below as primary or secondary sources on the First Anglo-Burmese War or both.
  - a letter from King Bagyidaw to the British King George IV, 1825
  - Dr. Than Tun's Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma, 1988
  - Dr. Maung Htin Aung's History of Burma, 1967
  - a diary written by a British soldier in the war, 1826
  - an article about the war written by a British journalist in London, 1826
- Read D9, decide if the statements below are true, false or not stated by the treaty.
  - The Burmese get to keep the provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim.
  - The King of Ava has to pay 10 million rupees to the British as compensation for the money the British spent on the war.
  - The Arakan mountains will be the boundary between British India and the Burmese Kingdom of Ava.
  - The British promise never to take over any more Burmese land.
- Re-evaluate the theories from D10 and D11. What evidence did you find in D9 that supports or discredits these theories?
  - D11: "The treaty that ended the war was advantageous to India."
  - D10: "King Bagyidaw gave the British money because they had run out and were in distress."

d



e



## Reasoning

- Based on the information in D9, do you believe D10's or D11's theories more strongly? Why?

f



## 9. Making inferences: The differences between stated and implied



Often, in order to find and evaluate evidence for a theory, historians need to differentiate between what their sources state directly and what they imply indirectly. Figuring out what is implied indirectly, or “reading between the lines,” is called making an inference. You already know the difference between direct and indirect messages from your own life; for instance, you might say “It’s getting late, I’m a little tired,” instead of directly telling your friend, “Leave my house, I want to go to sleep now.” Your friend will probably infer that you’d like them to leave.

The historical documents you will read also contain indirect messages. Certain words are clues to their underlying meaning. Sometimes authors imply rather than state what they mean because they think the meaning is already obvious, but sometimes they are presenting one-sided information in order to influence the reader to believe that groups or individuals are good or bad, powerful or weak, honest or dishonest. Some authors are not even aware of the implied meanings of what they write, because their biases prevent them from seeing things in a neutral way.

a. **D11: The British were stubborn**

b. **D11: The British won the war**

c. **D10: The Burmese were more powerful than the British**

d. **D11: The Burmese forced the British into having a war**

e. **D10: The Burmese could have stopped the British from advancing to Yandbao if they had wanted to**

f. **D10: The Burmese king was pious and generous**

Presenting one-sided information for political purposes is called propaganda. Political purposes include giving power to, taking power from, or maintaining the power of a certain group or person. It is important for historians to recognise propaganda because it often contains incorrect information and poorly supported theories.

### Comprehension

1. **Study the statements at the bottom of the page. Which statements are stated? Which are implied?**
2. **Which of the points below is the main political message of D10?**
3. **Which of the points below is the main political message of D11?**

### Reasoning

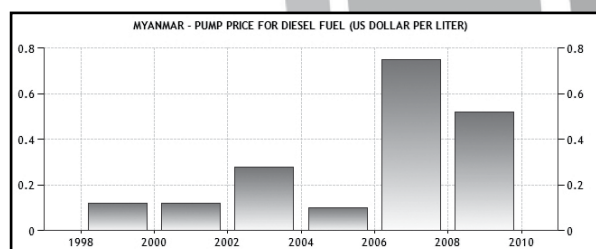
1. **Why would the author of D10 want to spread the political message in Question 2? Why would the author of D11 want to spread the message in Question 3?**
2. **Do you think D10 or D11 can be called propaganda? Why or why not?**

## 10. How can you analyse theories about cause and effect?

Many historical theories are about cause and effect. After reading all the sources you can find on a topic, you can make an educated guess about why events or processes occurred. Events usually have many causes, but your job will be to decide what the most important causes are. Often, each effect is also a cause of some other event, so you can link several causes and effects into a chain. Often, events have immediate causes which set them off, as well as several background causes which created the conditions for them to occur. They also have short-term effects which become clear right away, and long-term effects which emerge over time.

You may see chains of causation in your own life. For instance, "Because I had my family's support, I could study hard. Because I studied hard, I did well on the exam. Because I did well on the exam, no employer wanted to hire me."

The last link in that chain of causes and effects is not very plausible or likely to be true. Part of your job as a historian is to decide how plausible certain chains of cause and effect are so you can decide whether theories are well supported or not.



### Comprehension

1. Think back to D10 and D11. Match the cause (on left) with the effect (on right).

Causes	Effects
1. Because the Burmese King did not want to harm the British...	a. the British were able to negotiate the Treaty of Yandabo, which was advantageous to the British and humiliating for the Burmese.
2. Because the British worked hard...	b. the British were forced into the war.
3. Because the Burmese were stubborn...	c. the Burmese King gave the British some money.
4. Because the British had run out of money and were in distress...	d. the Burmese King did not stop the British advance to Yandabo.

### Reasoning

- Do you think any of the cause-effect pairs are plausible, according to your own assessment based on your prior knowledge and your reading of D9, D10, and D11? Which show the author's biases?
- D10 offers certain causes for c. and d. above. Can you think of any other plausible causes, based on your reading of D9? Fill them in below.
  - Because \_\_\_\_\_, the Burmese King gave the British some money.
  - Because \_\_\_\_\_, the Burmese King did not stop the British advance to Yandabo.

## 11. How can you assess continuity and change?




Theories about history also concern continuity and change. As you complete various Themes in this book, we will ask you to notice which conditions remained the same over time, and what kinds of changes occurred. Historians compare what happened at different times to find out which events represent major changes. In this way, they divide history into eras. For instance, some historians say the colonial era began in Burma in 1885, when the British annexed Upper Burma and deposed

Read  D15;  B-Thibaw; and  T-1885.

King Thibaw. However, other historians say the colonial era began in 1826 when the Treaty of Yandabo was signed and the British took over Arakan and Tenasserim. In order to decide whether 1826 or 1885 represented a more important change in British-Burmese relations, you can compare documents from these two years.

### Comprehension

- 1. The main political message of D15 is**
  - a. the Burmese are more powerful than the British.
  - b. the British are more powerful than the Burmese.
  - c. the British and the Burmese are equally powerful.
  - d. neither the British nor the Burmese are powerful.
- 2. According to D15, the relationship between the British and Burmese is**
  - a. the Burmese will surrender and give in to the British demands.
  - b. the Burmese will fight back against the British who are preparing to attack them.
  - c. the helpless Burmese ask for support from the British, who are more powerful.
  - d. the powerful Burmese expand into British territory.

- 3. D15 implies that the British are**
  - a. threatening and evil
  - b. kind
  - c. dutiful
  - d. neutral
- 4. Now look back at  D11 and answer questions 1-3 according to D11.**

### Reasoning

- 1. What are the continuities and changes you see in the attitudes of Burmese rulers toward the British between 1826 and 1885, as shown in D15 and D10?**
- 2. Based on your prior knowledge of history, why do you think these changes in the attitude of Burmese rulers occurred?**


# Review

1. Match the terms below with their definitions.

multiple perspectives  
identity                      generalisation  
belief                          theory  
continuity  
secondary source                      inference  
changes                      cause                      **fact**  
**effect**                                      **evidence**  
stereotype                      primary source

- a. a guess about the causes or effects of an event that can be supported or discredited with evidence \_\_\_
- b. things that are different from one period of time to another \_\_\_
- c. different ideas that people have based on their experiences and the information they have \_\_\_
- d. a personal opinion about what is good or bad that may be widely accepted or controversial \_\_\_
- e. a source of information that you can use to support or discredit a theory \_\_\_
- f. what stays the same from one period of time to another \_\_\_
- g. a reason why an event happens \_\_\_
- h. a piece of information that can be proven correct or incorrect \_\_\_
- i. what results from an event \_\_\_
- j. a bias that claims that things always happen a certain way \_\_\_
- k. a guess you can make based on what someone implies indirectly \_\_\_
- l. a bias that states that a whole group of people are all the same \_\_\_
- m. your idea of who you are and the characteristics that are most important to you now \_\_\_
- n. a document written by historians many years after the event that they are studying \_\_\_
- o. something created by people in the time and place you are studying \_\_\_

2. How has completing this unit changed your perspective on studying history? How has it stayed the same?
3. Which of the concepts or skills taught in this theme did you know already? Which were new to you? Which are most difficult, and which are easiest?
4. What are your concerns about completing this module? What are you looking forward to most?



Theme

**1**



# **Rights and Responsibilities of Governments and Citizens**



# 1. What has been the “social contract” between the rulers and the ruled?

Throughout history, there has been discussion about what governments should do for people and what people should do for governments in different ways. Citizens’ rights and duties have also changed over time along with ideas about economic class, social status, and religion. We can analyse these changes using an idea from political science, the “social contract.” According to this idea, the government has an informal agreement, or “social contract” with citizens.

In a social contract, citizens agree to give up some of their freedoms if the government provides them with security and other benefits. If the government does not fulfil its duties, citizens might rebel or leave the country.

If the citizens do not fulfil their duties, the government might use its power to punish them. For instance, in many political systems, the government has the right to collect taxes, and the citizens have a duty to pay taxes. If they do not pay, the government may put them in jail or take away their property. In some political systems, the government has a responsibility to provide free education, and the citizens have the

right to receive it. If the government does not provide it, citizens may protest.

Even in ancient times, there were guidelines for how kings should interact with the people they ruled. They did not always follow these guidelines, so people sometimes rebelled. When the British colonised Burma, they wrote laws about what the government officials and people had to do. Some Burmese people were dissatisfied with these laws and tried to change or resist them. Likewise, some Burmese people protested when the Japanese did not respect their rights during World War II. The Burma Socialist Programme Party government tried to change the social contract to reflect socialist ideas, while the SPDC gave more rights to the military. Pro-democracy leaders want a different system in which people have more freedoms.

In this Theme you will analyse how the social contract in Burma has changed since ancient times, and you will have a chance to think about what type of social contract you would most like to live under.

## Comprehension

1. The “social contract” is
  - a. a law about what the government can make citizens do.
  - b. an informal agreement about what the government should do for citizens and what citizens should do for the government.
  - c. an informal agreement about who should rule a country.
  - d. a law that says citizens must pay taxes.

## Reasoning

1. In the table below list the five most important rights and responsibilities you think a government should have. Then list the five most important rights and responsibilities that citizens should have.

Government’s rights	Government’s responsibilities	Citizen’s rights	Citizen’s responsibilities

2. Do you think people living 100 or 1000 years ago would have given similar answers as you did? Why or why not? Why would the “social contract” change over time?

## 2. Ancient times: What responsibilities did kings have?

Read  D2; and  T-320-550.




### Comprehension

1. Some of the Ten Duties have similar meanings. Which ones?
  - a. (1) and \_\_\_
  - b. (8) and \_\_\_
  - c. (7), (5), and \_\_\_
  - d. (2) includes (6) and \_\_\_

### Reasoning

1. Many kings fought wars in order to expand their kingdoms. Could they do this while also fulfilling their Ten Duties? Why or why not?

## 3. Ancient times: What rights did kings have?

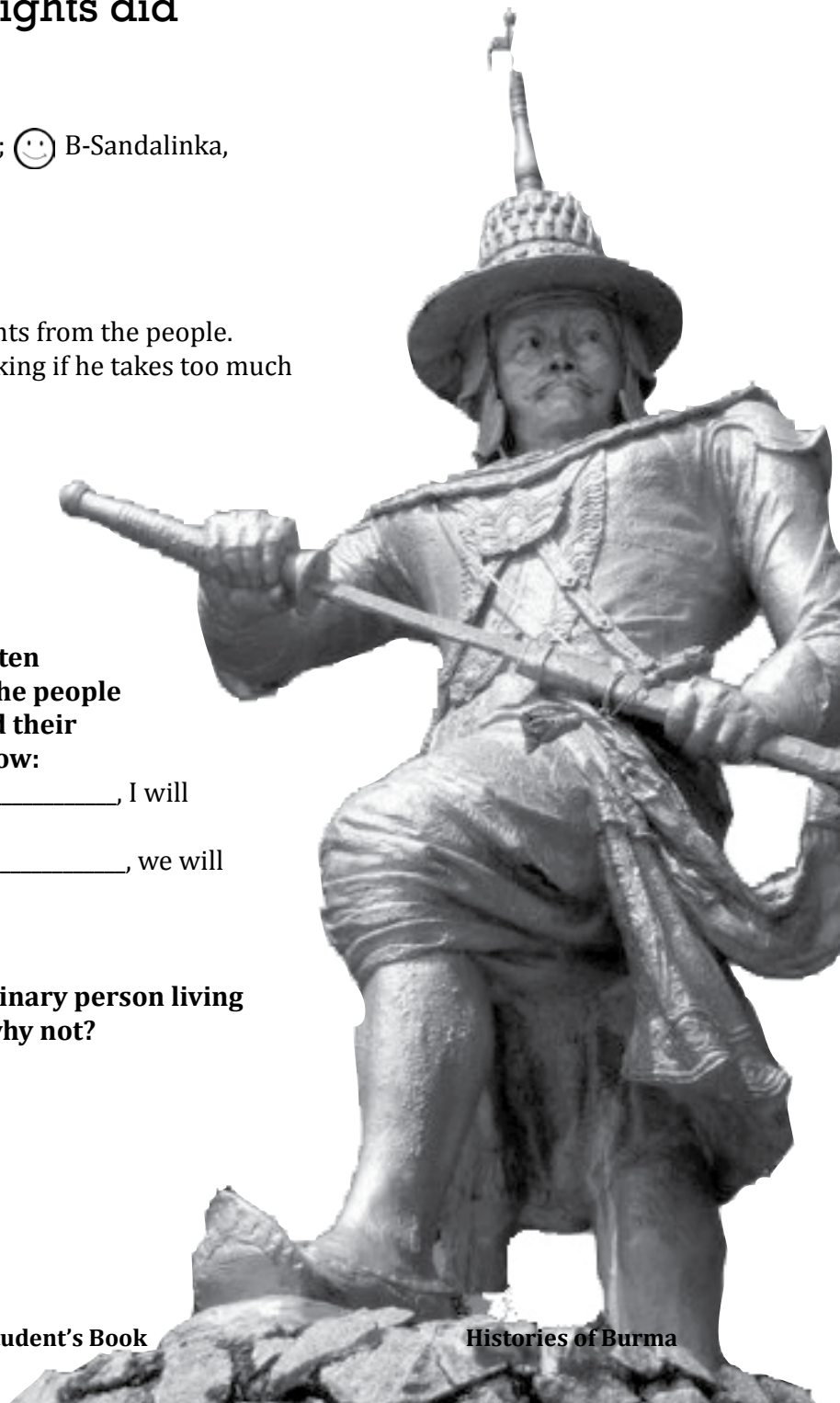
Read  D6 - on taking profit from towns;  B-Sandalinka, B-Alaunghpaya; and  T-1752-1885.

### Comprehension



1. What is the main idea of this text?
  - a. The king can take as much as he wants from the people.
  - b. People might fight back against the king if he takes too much from them.
  - c. If the king picks fruit before it is ripe, it will not taste good.
  - d. If the king waits until the people have produced enough to take some for himself, the kingdom will be more peaceful.
2. Social contracts are not usually written down, but how would the king and the people living in his kingdom have explained their responsibilities? Use the format below:
  - King: "If the people agree to \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_."
  - People: "If the king agrees to \_\_\_\_\_, we will \_\_\_\_\_."

### Reasoning

1. Would you have wanted to be an ordinary person living under this social contract? Why or why not?



## 4. Ancient times: What happened when rulers did not fulfil their responsibilities?

Read  D4 and  T-13th c.

### Comprehension

1. List some things Prince Maung Myo did and explain which of the Ten Duties he failed to fulfil.

What Prince Maung Myo did	Which duty he did not fulfil
<i>Made his subjects cut firewood</i>	<i>(10) not to be oppressive</i>

### Reasoning

1. In this text, the people got help from another prince to drive Maung Myo out of power. What other options do you think they had? Why did they choose to get help from another prince?
2. Describe an example from the past ten years when people have tried to get rid of a ruler who they felt was not doing a good job. Were they successful?

## 5. Colonial era: What laws did the British make?

Read  D17; and  T-1885, T-1885-1890

### Comprehension

1. Put each of the points from the law into your own words.
  - 6.1.g *if a British official tells him to, the headman has to give food, supplies, and transportation to British soldiers and police in his area in exchange for some money.*
  - 6.1.h
  - 6.1.i
  - 9.1
  - 11.1

### Reasoning

1. After this Act was passed, many Burmese people complained that it was too strict, but British officials said it was necessary for keeping law and order. Who do you agree with and why?
2. How do your biases or past experiences affect your answer to question 1?



## 6. Democracy: Is it possible for the people to have too much power?



Read D30; B-Thant; and T-1930s, T-1930-1931, T-1936, T-1946, T-1953-55.

### Comprehension

1. The main idea of this text is
  - a. democracy is a good system because the people make all the decisions.
  - b. equality is an absurd dogma.
  - c. democracy is not a good system because people with the best qualifications should lead.
  - d. all people are equal.

### Reasoning

1. Do you agree with U Thant's main idea? Why or why not?
2. How do you think events of the 1930s influenced U Thant's perspective?
3. What events of the 1950s might have caused the Guardian newspaper to re-print U Thant's 1936 essay in 1956?

## 7. The Anti-Fascist Organisation: What rights did it want from the Japanese rulers?

Read D39; B-AFO; and T-1942-1945, T-1944-1945.

### Comprehension

1. Match the freedom with the way the AFO accuses the Japanese of violating it.

Freedom	Violation
1. Freedom of Religion	a. Spreading Japanese propaganda on the radio
2. Freedom of Speech	b. Using religious buildings as barracks
3. Economic Freedom	c. Suppressing peasants' groups
4. Freedom of Organisation	d. High tax rates

2. Which of these are resistance strategies that the AFO recommended?




- a. killing collaborators
- b. refusing to work for the Japanese
- c. stealing Japanese weapons
- d. hiding anything that could be used for transportation by the Japanese
- e. guerrilla warfare
- f. giving false information to the Japanese
- g. destroying Japanese religious shrines

### Reasoning

1. Do you think the rights violations listed in Question 1 justify the resistance tactics in Question 2? Why or why not?
2. If you were alive in 1944, which of the resistance tactics would you have chosen and which would you have not chosen? Why?

# 8. The Revolutionary Council and Socialist Ideology:

How did they explain citizens' rights and governments' responsibilities?

Read  D62;  B-BSPP, B-RC; and  T-1962.

## Comprehension

Choose the best answer below.

- In the socialist economy described in D62, people have the right to**
  - choose their leaders freely.
  - own businesses.
  - have their basic survival needs guaranteed.
  - speak out against the government.
  - all of the above.
  - none of the above.
- In the socialist economy described in D62, the government has the responsibility to**
  - control trade.
  - make sure people don't exploit each other.
  - control the production and distribution of goods.
  - all of the above.
  - none of the above.

## Reasoning

- The social contract under the Revolutionary Council requires people to give up certain freedoms. In exchange, the government will take care of their basic survival needs. As a citizen, would you agree to this social contract? Why or why not?**





**a** **9. Pro-democracy leaders: What responsibilities and rights do they give to government and citizens?**

Read D74; B-Aung San Su Kyi; T-1988.

**Comprehension**

- b**
1. According to Daw Suu Kyi, if governments do not keep law and order
    - a. people will definitely become corrupt.
    - b. people have to try very hard not to become corrupt.
    - c. fair laws prevent corruption.
    - d. there will be no corruption.
  2. According to Daw Suu Kyi, as long as governments rule by force instead of doing what the people want them to do
    - a. people will have to struggle to defend their human rights.
    - b. people will continue to have revolutions.
    - c. there will be interest groups.
    - d. people will have rights that no one can take away.
- c**

**Reasoning**

1. Which of Daw Suu Kyi's points above do you agree or disagree with? Why?

**d** **10. The 2008 Constitution: What are the rights and responsibilities of government and citizens?**

Read D90- Chapters I, VIII; and T-2003, T-2008.

**Comprehension**

Put these points from the Constitution in your own words.

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1. The government's goal is to:</b></p> <p>Chap. I, 6a: <i>stop the country from falling apart</i></p> <p>6b:</p> <p>6c:</p> <p>6d:</p> <p>6e:</p> <p>6f:</p> | <p><b>2. Citizens' rights are:</b></p> <p>Chap. VIII, 354:</p> <p>354a:</p> <p>354b:</p> <p>354c:</p> <p>354d:</p> | <p><b>3. The government does not have to respect the rights listed above if:</b></p> <p>Chap. I, 40c:</p> <p>Chap. VIII, 381:</p> <p>Chap. VIII, 382:</p> |
|---|--|---|

- a. U Win Tin
- b. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
- c. U Tin Oo
- d. Daw Phyu Phyu Tin

# Review

1. According to each of the people or groups below, list one important right the people have, and one responsibility the government has.

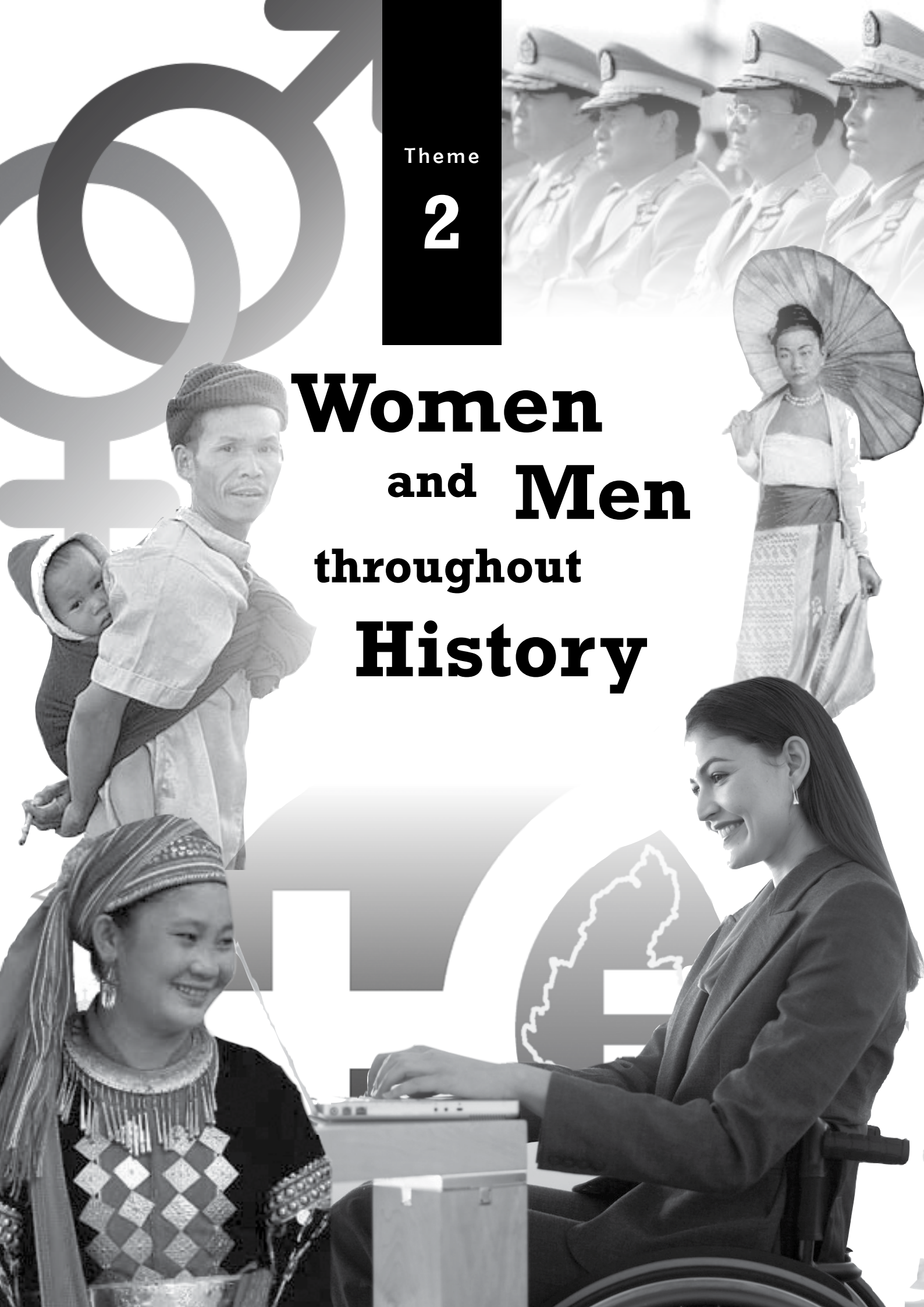
	Government's responsibility	People's rights
D2: Kings who follow the Ten Duties		
D6: Shin Sandalinka		
D4: Shan villagers		
D17: British Government		
D30: U Thant		
D36: Wun thar nu organisations		
D39: AFO		
D62: Revolutionary Council		
D74: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi		
D90: Authors of 2008 Constitution		

2. Which of the people or groups above do you agree with most about the social contract? Which do you agree with least? Why?
3. You studied the social contract in political systems of monarchy (D2, D6, D4), colonialism (D17), military occupation (D39), socialist dictatorship (D62) and democracy (D30, D74, D90). How is the social contract intended to work in each of these systems?
4. Re-read D2. Do you think it could serve as a guideline for rulers today? Why or why not? What duties are outdated, and which are still appropriate?
5. During which period do you think ordinary people faced the most difficulties: ancient times, (D2, D6, D4), the colonial era (D17, D36) the Japanese occupation (D39), the BSPP era (D62) or SPDC/SLORC era (D74, D90)? Why?
6. How has completing this unit changed your perspective on government's and people's rights and responsibilities? How has it stayed the same?

Theme

2

# Women and Men throughout History



# 1. How have ideas about gender affected history?

The physical differences between men and women can be called “biological sex.” Gender, on the other hand, is an idea about how people should act based on their biological sex. For instance, the gender role for women in Burma, like in many societies, often involves staying home and caring for children while men participate in political or military activities. Thus gender roles influence both men and women. This unit will focus on women in particular because history books often leave them out.

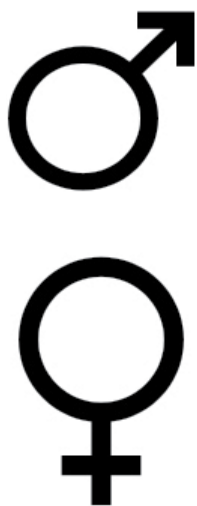
One reason women are left out of history books is because of sexism, the belief that women are not as capable or valuable as men. Sexism has made it more difficult for women to get into the positions of power that usually cause people to be included in traditional history books.

Furthermore, historians’ sexism has caused them to write less about the women who do manage to attain positions of power. Not only are most history books about men, but they are also mostly written by men. All over the world, men have traditionally had more access to education and thus more

opportunity to express their perspectives on history. As we have already discussed, all historians are biased in some way, and many historians have stereotypes about women. This does not necessarily mean that they don’t like women; it can mean that they simply don’t see women as important or powerful in the same way men are.

Therefore, in this unit, we will make a special effort to include information about women’s lives that has been left out of previous histories of Burma. We will also examine continuities and changes in gender roles from ancient times to the present. Although there have been female leaders since ancient times, in some cases gender roles restricted women’s activities. In particular, there have been controversies over who Burmese women should or should not marry and have children with. Today, women face special difficulties under the current regime.

In this unit, you will have a chance to learn more about women’s role in Burma’s histories. You can also think about the gender roles that influence your life today, and learn about how they have changed over time.



■ **The Gender Symbols** (above) are commonly used symbols that identify organisms as male or female. They were first used in the 18th century but have since become internationally recognised symbols for gender.

## Comprehension

1. **Match each term with its definition.**
  - a. biological sex
  - b. sexism
  - c. gender
  1. the belief that women are not as capable or valuable as men
  2. physical differences between men and women
  3. ideas about how people should behave based on their sex.
2. **According to the passage above, women have not appeared as much as men in histories of Burma because**
  - a. women didn’t do many important things.
  - b. sexism caused women’s contributions not to be valued by society and by historians.
  - c. female historians have not wanted to discuss the accomplishments of women.
  - d. most male historians don’t like women.

## Reasoning

1. **Name the most important ten men and ten women in Burma’s history.**
2. **Was it easier to come up with the names of ten men or ten women? Why?**
3. **What common issues do women face because of their biological sex? What common issues do women face because of gender roles?**
4. **How do you think your life would be different in terms of education, career plans, and family responsibilities if you were of the opposite sex? Do you think most of these differences would be due to sex (biological differences) or gender (ideas about how men and women should act)?**

## 2. What were gender roles in the past?

Read  D7




### Comprehension

1. Label each trait as a male or female responsibility, according to the text.
  - a. supporting relations and spouse's relations \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. trying to get more money \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. being a good cook, weaver and housekeeper \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. obedience to spouse's commands \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. looking after cattle \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasoning

1. Do your own skills match up with those connected to your sex in this text? What does this show about continuity and change in gender roles since ancient times?

### 3. Ancient kingdoms: What were women's roles in politics?

Read  D5- about Tayashwehti cutting his hair like a Mon;  B-Tabinshwehti, B-Kala; and  T-1486-1762.




### Comprehension

1. King Tabinshwehti takes which of the following actions to please his Mon wife?
  - a. cuts his hair in Mon style
  - b. eats Mon food
  - c. follows Mon customs
  - d. all of the above

### Reasoning

1. Do you think the Mon woman wanted to marry King Tabinshwehti? Why or why not?
2. How could historians find out the answer to this question?
3. This passage provides some evidence that in ancient times, marriage helped to create alliances between kingdoms or ethnic groups. Did this give women power, or show their lack of power?

## 4. Anglo-Burmese Wars: How did women participate?

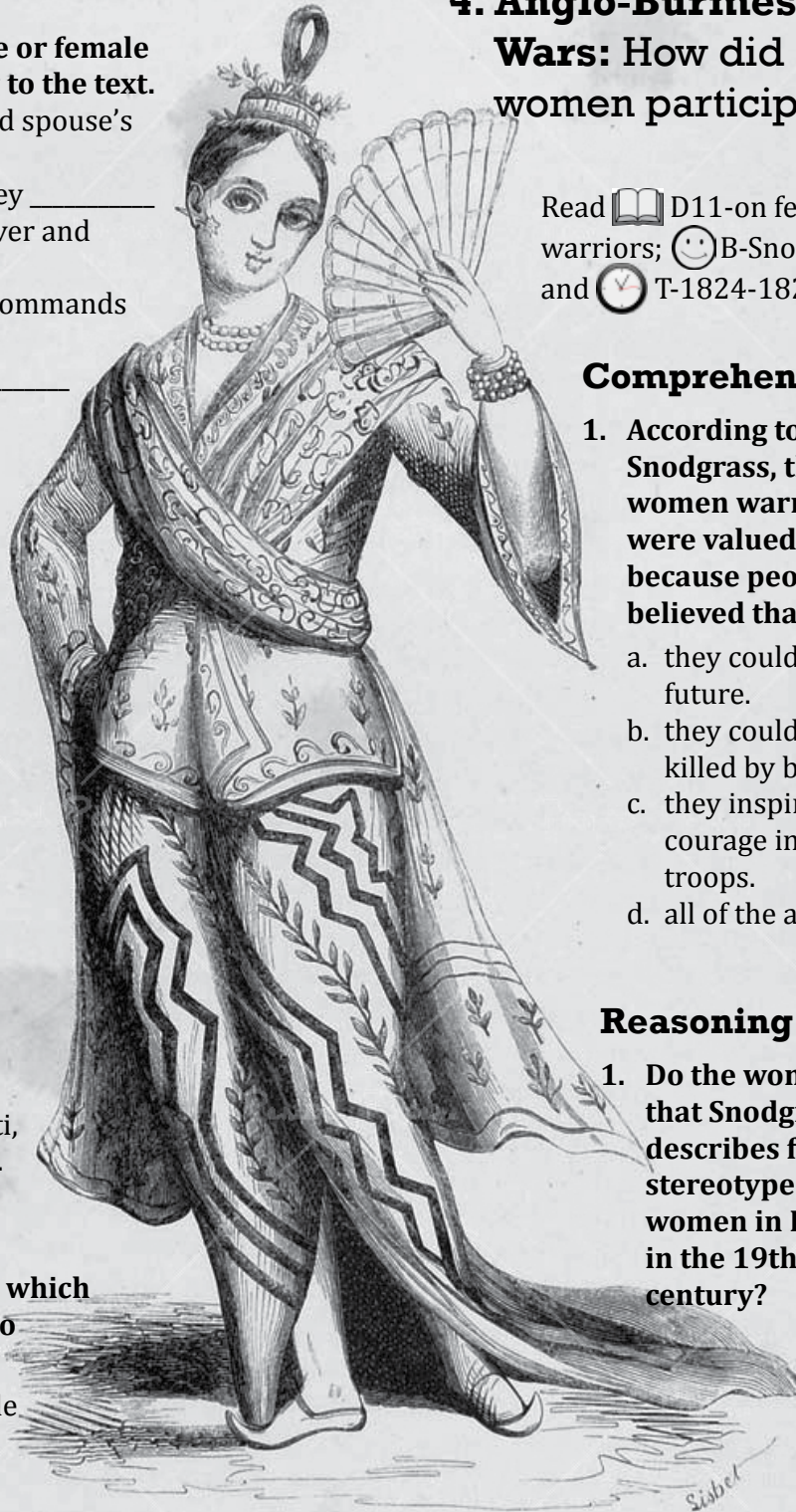
Read  D11-on female warriors;  B-Snodgrass; and  T-1824-1826.

### Comprehension

1. According to Snodgrass, the women warriors were valued because people believed that
  - a. they could see the future.
  - b. they could not be killed by bullets.
  - c. they inspired courage in the troops.
  - d. all of the above.

### Reasoning

1. Do the women that Snodgrass describes fit your stereotype of women in Burma in the 19th century?



Noble Birmane.  
(Asie.)

## 5. Colonial era: Why did marriage become a political issue?



Read D27, D34; and T-19th c.

### Comprehension

- The message of this cartoon is that
  - Burmese girls are lucky if they find British husbands.
  - Burmese girls will meet with misfortune if they become involved with British men.
  - British women are jealous of Burmese women.
  - all of the above.
- The main argument offered for why Burmese women should not marry Indian men in D34 is that
  - Indian men are cruel.
  - Burmese men are better providers.
  - the purity of the Burmese race and culture will be lost.
  - their children will have trouble finding spouses.

### Reasoning

- If Burmese men wanted to marry Indian women, do you think they would have faced the same kind of criticism as Burmese women did for marrying Indian men? Why or why not?
- Do you think Burmese women who got involved with British men raised their own status, or lowered it?
- Do you think male cartoonists and journalists like the ones who created these documents should criticise women's decisions about who they marry? Why or why not?

## 6. Women's rights in the colonial era: How did they compare to other women in the region?

Read  D29;  B-Mya Sein; and  T-1928-1935.

### Comprehension

1. Which of these statements are facts, beliefs or theories?
  - a. The literacy rate among Burmese women is higher than that of Indian women.
  - b. Burmese women are more independent than Indian women because they have had the freedom to participate in the economy.
  - c. Burma should get independence from Britain.
  - d. Burmese women do not practice purdah.
  - e. The fact that Burmese women do not practice purdah proves that they have higher status than Indian women.
2. Which of the three points above are implied?






■ Mya Sein (above) attending a meeting in 1931

### Reasoning

1. Daw Mya Sein explains the way women in colonial Burma had high status. Can you think of any ways that they might have faced discrimination?
2. What reasons would Daw Mya Sein have to exaggerate about the freedoms women had at the Burma Roundtable Conference?
3. How does the status of Burmese women compare to women in other countries today? Describe a country where you think women have lower status, and one where you think they have higher status.

## 7. The anti-colonial struggle: How did women participate?

Read  D36- on the amyothami kounmari athin;  B-Ba Khine, B-May, B-Ottama; and  T-1919.

### Comprehension

1. What evidence does U Ba Khine provide for his statement that Burmese women were patriotic? List two main ideas and a supporting example for each one.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_; for example, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_; for example, \_\_\_\_\_.

### Reasoning

1. How do you think the Kounmaris' activities fit into traditional gender roles? How did they break out of these traditional gender roles?

# 8. Colonial Era Fashion:

How did it show changing gender roles?



Look at  D32.

## Comprehension

1. Fill in the chart to show the differences in the older and younger women's clothing:

	Older women	Younger women
shoes		
hair		
clothes		
accessories		

2. This cartoon illustrates

- older women's surprise and disapproval of young women's fashions.
- older women's jealousy of the new freedoms that young women had.
- young women's desire to keep the traditions of the older generation.
- young women's participation in the nationalist movement.

## Reasoning

- Do most Burmese women today dress more traditionally, or in newer fashions? Why do they make these choices?
- Do you think most Burmese elders are more concerned with their boys' or their girls' clothing choices? Why? Is this a kind of bias?
- Do you think the cartoonist was sympathetic to the old woman's disapproval, or to the young woman's fashion choices?

## 9. Buddhism: What is the position of women?

Read the following passage:

*“There is no doubt in our minds. Spiritually, a man is higher than a woman. This is just not an abstract idea belonging to religious philosophy. Conviction of it enter[s] our very bones.”*

■ Mi Mi Khaing. 1984. *The World of Burmese Women*. London: Zed Books, p. 16.

### Comprehension

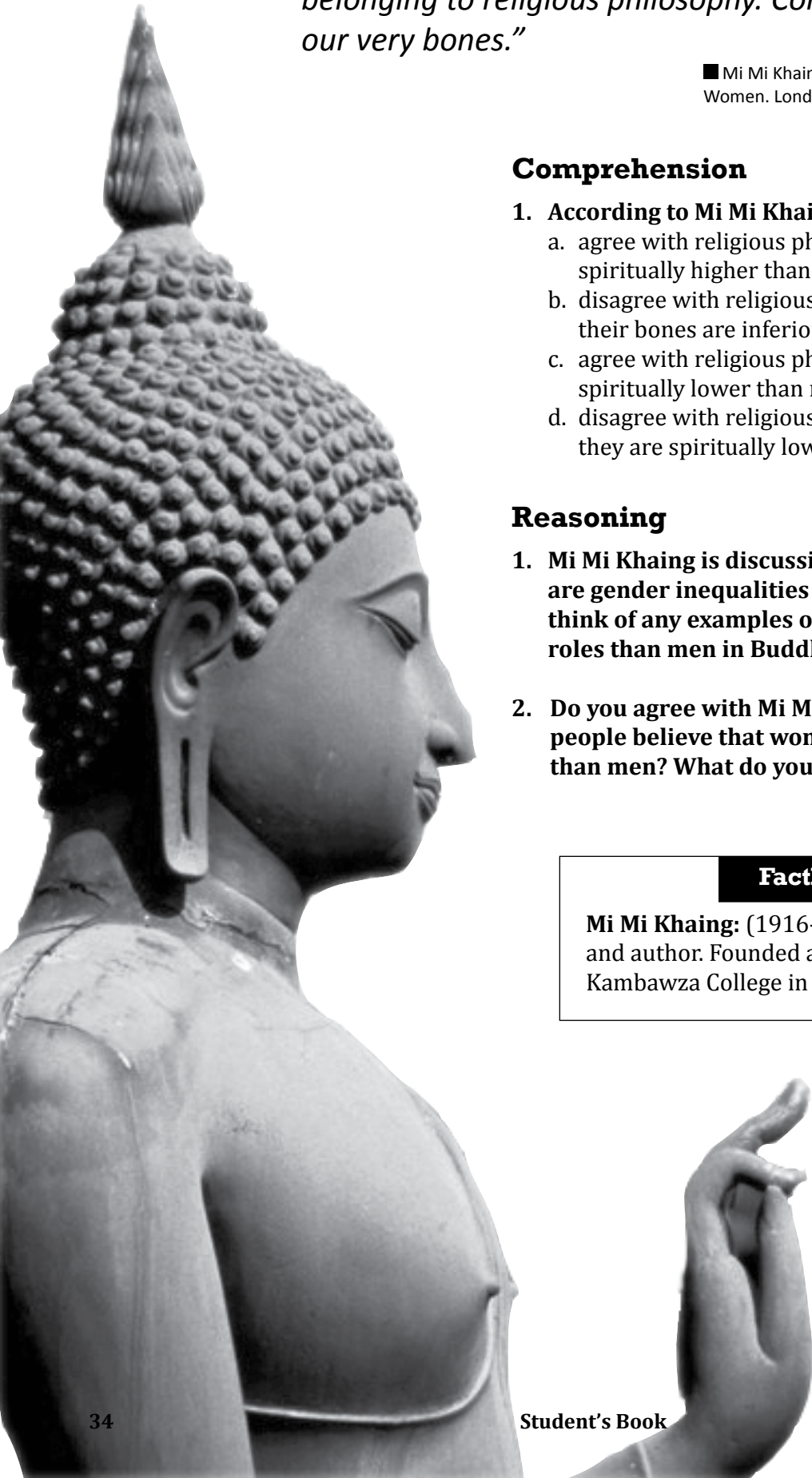
1. According to Mi Mi Khaing, Burmese women
  - a. agree with religious philosophers that they are spiritually higher than men.
  - b. disagree with religious philosophers who say that their bones are inferior to men's.
  - c. agree with religious philosophers that they are spiritually lower than men.
  - d. disagree with religious philosophers who say that they are spiritually lower than men.

### Reasoning


1. Mi Mi Khaing is discussing Buddhism, but there are gender inequalities in many religions. Can you think of any examples of how women have different roles than men in Buddhism or other religions?
2. Do you agree with Mi Mi Khaing that all Burmese people believe that women are spiritually lower than men? What do you think about this issue?

#### Factbox

**Mi Mi Khaing:** (1916-1990) Mon scholar and author. Founded and directed Kambawza College in Taunggyi.



## 10. Women politicians: How would Burma be different if they ruled?

Read  D92; and  B-Zipporah Sein (above)

### Comprehension




1. Naw Zipporah Sein's main argument is that
  - a. women are innocent victims of war.
  - b. women can help solve the problem of war.
  - c. women have been most affected by war.
  - d. women make better decisions than men.

### Reasoning

1. Do you agree there would be less violent conflict if more women were in power? What evidence can you provide for and against this argument?

■ Zipporah Sein, Naw (1955-): Karen political leader, activist for women's rights, General Secretary of the KNU 2008-present.

## 11. Female political prisoners: What difficulties have they faced?

Read  D84;  B-Khin Mar Gyi; B-Aung San Suu Kyi; and  T-2000.


### Comprehension

1. Of the different kinds of suffering involved in prison life, which does Dr. Khin Mar Gyi imply was most difficult for her?
  - a. She could not sleep well.
  - b. It was very cold.
  - c. The food was not sufficient.
  - d. She had to be separated from her children.

### Reasoning

1. In what ways were Dr. Khin Mar Gyi's problems in prison specific to women? Which ones did both men and women prisoners face?
2. What other problems might women prisoners face because of their sex or their gender? What problems might male prisoners face that female prisoners did not?

## 12. Government-supported women's organisations in Burma: What positions do they take?

Read  D85; and  B-MWAF, B-ILO;  T-2000s

### Comprehension

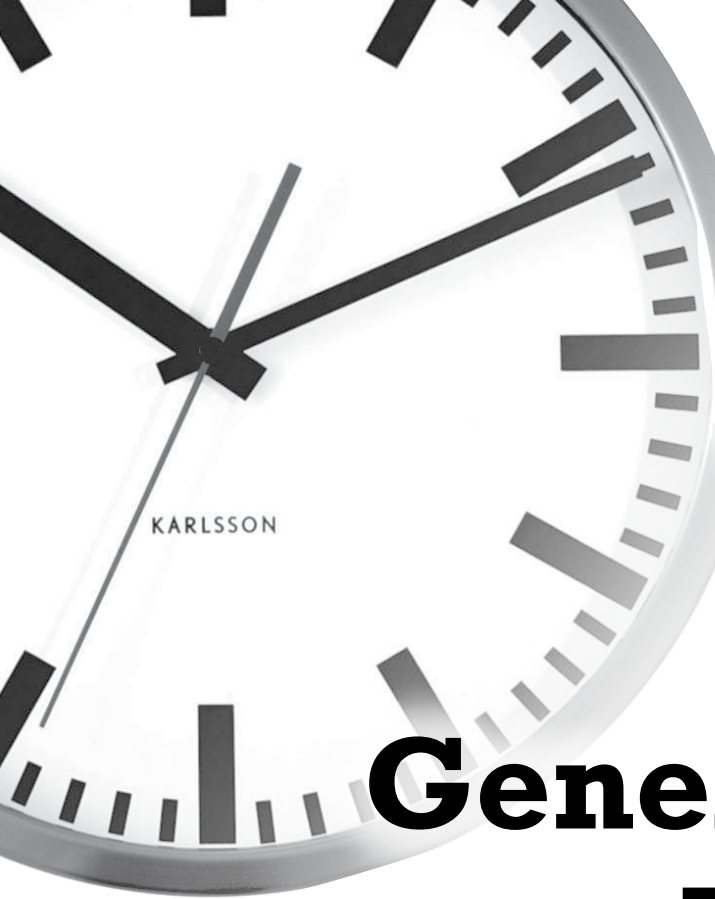
1. MWAF implies that the ILO should
  - a. continue pressuring the government to stop using forced labour.
  - b. collaborate with exiled dissident groups to bring political change to Burma.
  - c. focus more on women's issues.
  - d. stop interfering and allow the government to maintain peace.

### Reasoning

1. How do you think Zipporah Sein would respond to MWAF's report?
2. Do you think there is anything Zipporah Sein and MWAF could agree or collaborate on?
3. Why do you think MWAF and Zipporah Sein have such different perspectives?
4. Which perspective is closer to your own, and why?

## Review

1. Use examples from the documents to show two ways that gender roles have changed over time, and two ways that gender roles have remained the same. On the whole, do you think gender roles have shown more changes or continuities since ancient times?
2. Use the documents to describe two examples of sexism from Burmese history. Then describe two situations from the documents in which men and women were considered of equal competence and value.
3. Has this unit helped you understand more about the perspective of the opposite sex, or the perspective of your own sex? Why?
4. How has completing this unit changed your perspective on gender roles? How has it stayed the same?

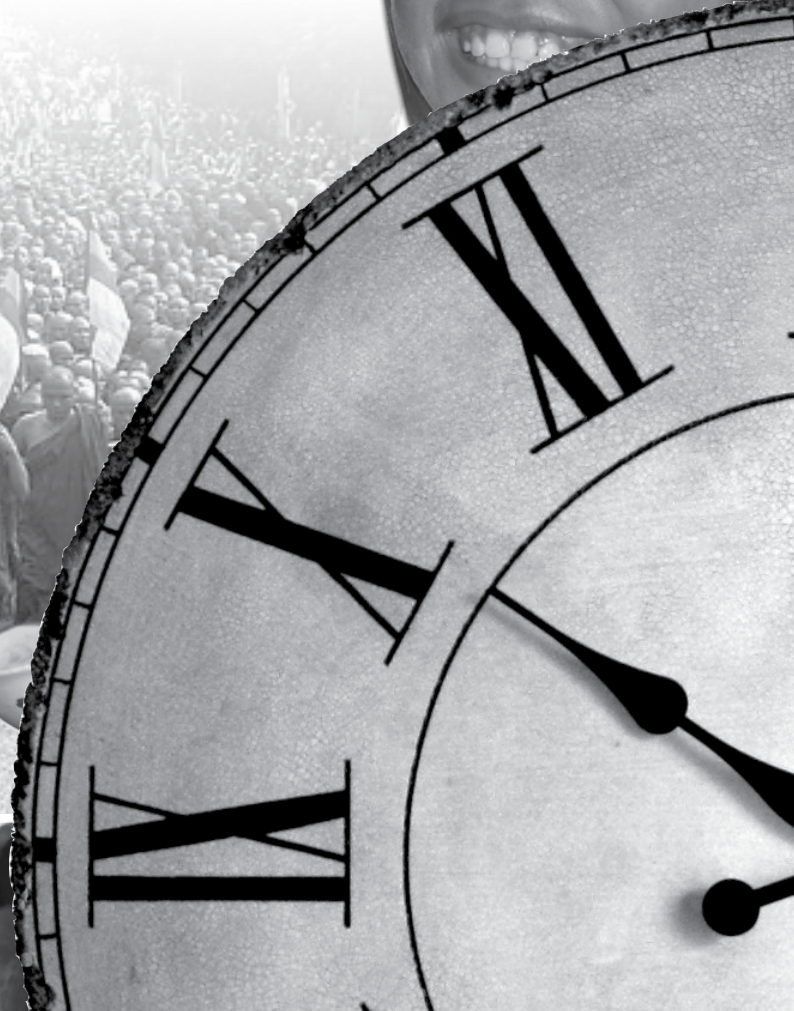


Theme

**3**



# Generational Divides



# 1. How have youth and elders competed for power?

Throughout Burmese history, youth and elders have approached social and political problems differently. These differences in perspective can be called the “generational divide.” Sometimes youth and elders have managed to bridge this divide and work together, while in other situations they have used different strategies or have disagreed with each other about the most effective approach.

Many Burmese people follow a long tradition of respecting elders and following their guidance. Some people see this as a positive trait that helps society to remain stable and enables the younger generation to benefit from the wisdom of people with much more life experience. However, other people may feel that this tradition of respecting elders can lead young people to follow older people’s advice without thinking for themselves. New ideas might not be heard.

Youth and elders differ not only in their perspectives, but also in the power that they have. This is because of differences in where they are in their life cycle, or the series of events that people in a society usually go through- for instance, school, work, marriage, family, caring for older relatives, becoming a leader in the community. Elders may have higher social status; they may have had a chance to

accumulate more money; and it may be easier for them to become leaders. However, young people often have a better understanding of new technologies, greater physical power, and fewer family responsibilities. Sometimes these different kinds of power balance each other out, and at other times one group has more influence than the other.

The relationship between youth and elders has showed change and continuity through history. There is evidence that the tradition of respecting elders began in ancient times. This tradition remained important in Burma from the colonial era to the present, but young people participated actively in politics. They helped to lead protests against the British, the BSPP, and SLORC/SPDC. But in some cases, elders have tried to indoctrinate youth (convince them to believe an ideology).

Since many of you who are using this unit may be young, you may find that you naturally sympathise with the youth perspective. But the interesting thing about the generational divide is that most people end up on both sides of it during their lifetime; today’s youth will become tomorrow’s elders, and you may find yourself later in life taking positions that you opposed when you were younger.

In this Theme, you will have a chance to learn about both perspectives as you consider how youth and elders have collaborated and come into conflict throughout Burmese histories. You can also think about when “youth” ends, when life as an “elder” begins, and what happens in between. You can track how the meaning of these terms has changed over time along with culture and society.



■ Karen Youth Organisation  
a youth development and support group for Karen people

## Comprehension

### 1. The generational divide means that

- youth and elders always disagree.
- youth should follow elders’ guidance.
- youth and elders may have different perspectives on society and politics.
- youth and elders always cooperate in harmony to achieve shared goals.




### 2. Match these terms with their definitions: generational divide, indoctrinate, life cycle

- the series of events that happen in most people’s lives
- the difference between youths’ and elders’ perspectives
- to try to make people believe one ideology

## Reasoning

- Think of some controversial issues in your community. Are youth and elders’ perspectives on them different or similar?
- Define “youth,” “elder,” and “middle age.” What occurs in each life stage? Which group are you part of now?

## 2. Ancient times: How did traditions of respecting elders begin?

Read  D3;  B-Rajakumar, B-Kyansittha; and  T-849-1287.




### Comprehension

1. **Prince Rajakumar honours his father by**
  - a. taking the throne in his place.
  - b. conquering new lands.
  - c. bringing three villages of slaves back to the capital.
  - d. having a golden Buddha image made and placing it in a pagoda.

### Reasoning

1. **Do you admire Prince Rajakumar's actions, or do you think he should have done something else with his wealth, such as start his own kingdom? Why?**
2. **What kinds of things do Burmese children today do to honour their parents? How are their actions similar to or different from Rajakumar's?**

## 3. The 1920 student movement: How did students become a political force in the colonial era?

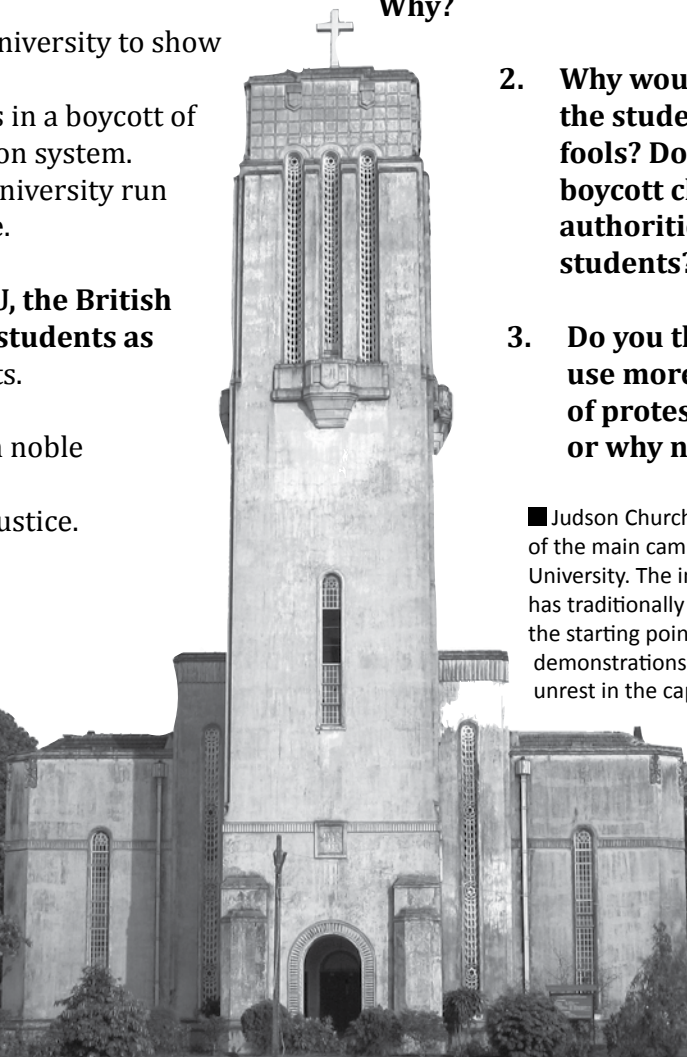
Read  D24;  B-Ba U; and  T-1920.

### Comprehension

1. **According to Ko Ba U, at first elder Burmese people wanted the students to**
  - a. accept Rangoon University which the British had set up.
  - b. protest Rangoon University to show their patriotism.
  - c. join the schoolboys in a boycott of the British education system.
  - d. set up a National University run by Burmese people.
2. **According to Ko Ba U, the British authorities saw the students as**
  - a. determined patriots.
  - b. hot-headed fools.
  - c. human beings with noble sentiments.
  - d. fighters against injustice.

### Reasoning

1. **Do you think Burmese elders' or British authorities' opposition to the student movement affected the students more? Why?**
2. **Why would the British see the students as hot-headed fools? Do you think the boycott changed the British authorities' ideas about the students?**
3. **Do you think youth tend to use more extreme strategies of protest than elders? Why or why not?**



■ Judson Church (left) forms part of the main campus of Yangon University. The institute has traditionally been the starting point for demonstrations of civil unrest in the capital.

## 4. Anti-colonial struggle: How did youth and elders' strategies differ?

Read  D36;  B-U Ba Khine; and  T-1910s.




### Comprehension

1. **Why did the elders call the young men “potential prisoners”?**
  - a. to honour the youth for the sacrifices they were willing to make for their country.
  - b. because they could get in trouble for challenging the police commissioner.
  - c. because some went to jail over the shoe question.
  - d. to show that they were willing to go to prison to support the youths' actions.
2. **According to U Ba Khine, how did the youth in 1938 see U Ba Pe and U Hla Pe?**
  - a. as opportunists who lacked determination.
  - b. as heroes who had paved the way for their movement.
  - c. as wise uncles who could advise them on tactics against the British.
  - d. as extremists who had gone too far in opposing the British.

### Reasoning

1. **Do you think U Ba Khine is correct that each generation becomes critical of their elders? Give examples from the present day.**

## 5. Lanzin Youth: How were students indoctrinated in the BSPP era?

Read  D79;  B-Lanzin Youth, B-BSPP; and  T-1962.

### Comprehension




1. **This Lanzin Youth member explains that the organisation was designed to**
  - a. train youth to follow orders, but it did not work on him.
  - b. train youth to think for themselves, and that is why he felt superior to his classmates.
  - c. train youth to follow orders, and in his case it succeeded.
  - d. train youth to be arrogant and feel superior to their classmates.

### Reasoning

1. **Do you think you would have been successfully indoctrinated by Lanzin Youth if you were living in the BSPP era? Why or why not?**
2. **Who is trying to indoctrinate Burmese youth today? What methods do they use? Are they successful? Why or why not?**



## 6. The U Thant affair: How did students protest the BSPP?

Read  D86;  B-Henry Soe Win; B-U Thant; and  T-1974.

### Comprehension

1. The students wanted to
  - a. bury U Thant in a mausoleum.
  - b. criticise the government.
  - c. express feelings they had been keeping silent.
  - d. all of the above.
2. This document shows how
  - a. elders supported the students' actions.
  - b. elders opposed the students' actions.
  - c. youth asked for help from elders but did not receive it.
  - d. youth refused to take the advice of elders.

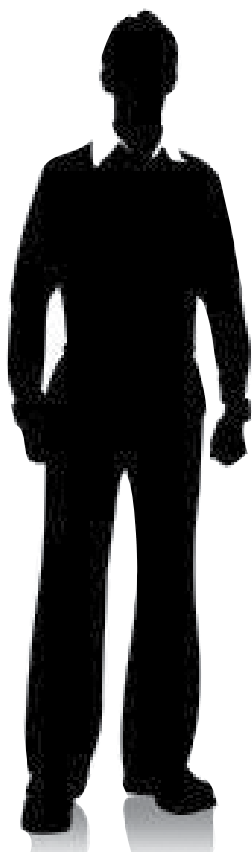


### Reasoning

1. Why do you think the old lady mentioned in this document wanted to help build the mausoleum? What had she seen in her lifetime that the students had not?
2. Why do you think that in this case, youth and elders were able to collaborate successfully?
3. Henry Soe Win seems to have published this story more than 30 years after he participated in this demonstration. Do you think his memory is reliable? Why or why not? How might his bias have influenced the way he wants to remember or report events?

## 7. 1988 protests: How did youth become involved?

Read  D69;  B-Aung Gyi, B-Ne Win; and  T-1988



### Comprehension

1. Which of these statements are true according to Brig.-Gen. Aung Gyi?
  - a. U Ne Win is likely to try to cover up the police's violence.
  - b. The crowd was totally non-violent.
  - c. Girls as young as 10 were killed by police.
  - d. The students burned the police station.
2. Which of the statements above are implied rather than stated directly?

### Reasoning

1. Brig-Gen. Aung Gyi's open letters played an important role in letting people know about the demonstrations in 1988. Why do you think people paid attention to his letters?
2. This letter describes children as young as 10 participating in political demonstrations. What age do you think is appropriate for youth to become involved in politics, and why?



## 8. 1988 protests: How did youth and elders try to bridge the generational divide?

Read  D71; and  B-Aung San Suu Kyi.

### Comprehension

1. Match Daw Suu's claims (a-c) with the evidence or details she provides to support them (1-3).
  - a. "Young people are frank and free from deviousness." \_\_\_
  - b. "There is a sort of gulf between the older and younger generations." \_\_\_
  - c. "What I am trying to do is to help achieve the democratic system of government which the people want." \_\_\_
  1. "Some students have asked me which politicians are standing behind me."
  2. "Should these politicians try to obtain positions of political power I promise in front of this assembly of people that I myself will not hesitate to denounce them."
  3. "There is the feeling that the older and younger generations are quite apart from each other."

### Reasoning

1. Why do you think some students did not trust veteran politicians? Do you think they were right not to trust them? Why?
2. Daw Suu Kyi wanted to bridge the gap between the older and younger generation. Do you think this is possible? From what you know of the 1988 demonstrations, was this effort successful?

## 9. 1988 protests: What strategies did youths use to oppose the military regime?

Read  D73; and  B-Aung San Suu Kyi.




### Comprehension

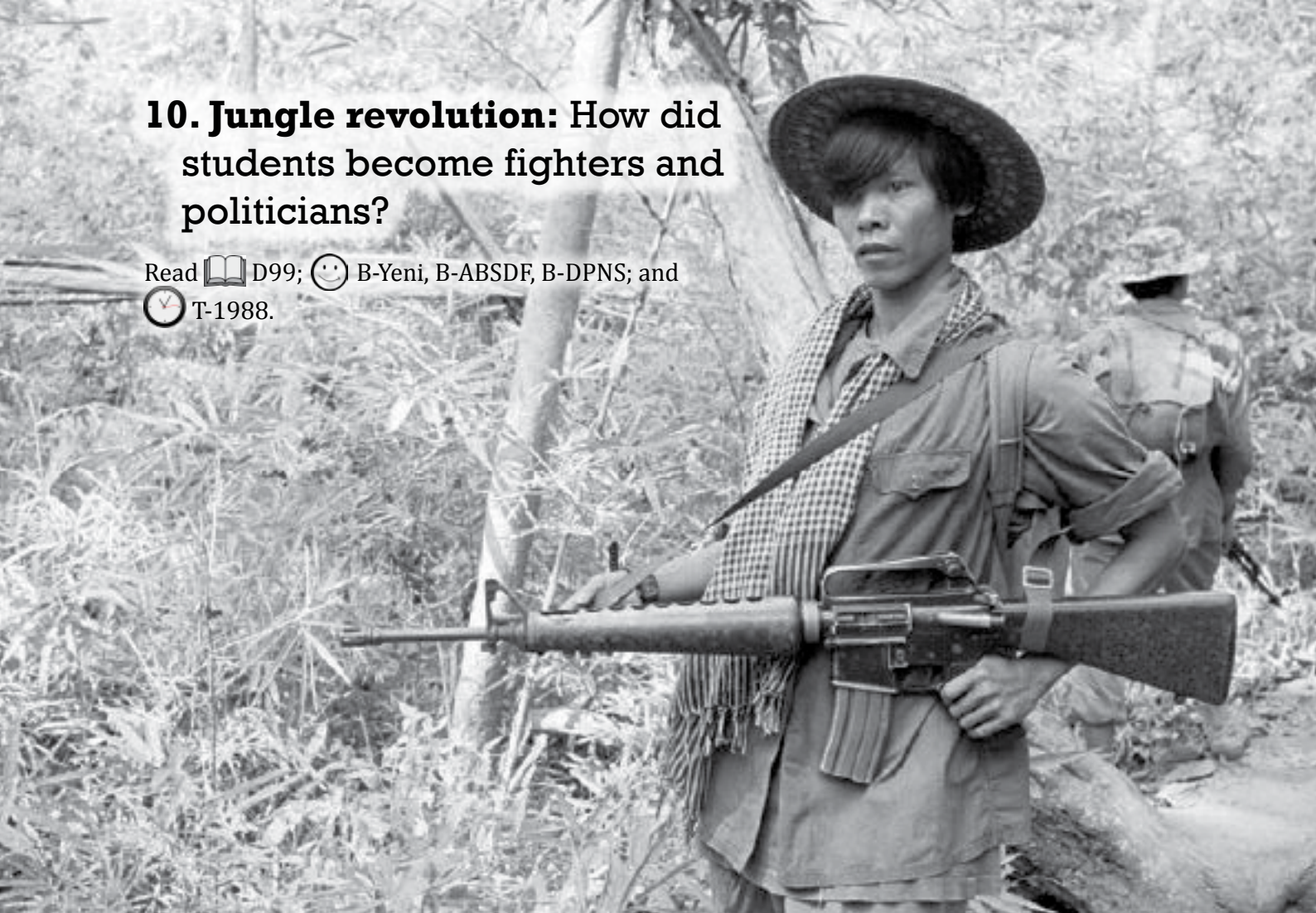
1. What does Ko Min Ko Naing mean when he says, "Physically, I might be dead, but many more Min Ko Naings would appear to take my place."?
  - a. If he dies, other people will take on the name "Min Ko Naing."
  - b. If he dies, other young people will continue to fight the dictatorship.
  - c. If he dies, kings will rule Burma again as they did in the past.
  - d. If he dies, someone else will move into his house.
2. Ko Min Ko Naing's attitude toward older politicians is
  - a. very supportive.
  - b. openly hostile.
  - c. neutral.
  - d. guarded.

### Reasoning

1. Why do you think Ko Min Ko Naing did not express total support for older politicians? How do you think the older politicians felt about his position?
2. Do you find Ko Min Ko Naing's statement in Question 1 sad, inspiring, or do you have some other feeling about it? Why?
3. Now, Ko Min Ko Naing is almost fifty years old and he has spent about half of his life in prison. How do you think his perspective has changed since he gave this interview when he was 26?

## 10. Jungle revolution: How did students become fighters and politicians?

Read  D99;  B-Yeni, B-ABSDF, B-DPNS; and  T-1988.



### Comprehension

1. According to Ko Yeni, in the jungle the students realized that they
  - a. could do things much more skillfully than the local people.
  - b. had many weaknesses and needed help to continue their struggle.
  - c. should give up because they would never succeed in defeating the military regime.
  - d. should have stayed back in Burma.

### Reasoning

1. Do you think young people tend to be over-confident or lack confidence? How could these traits have influenced the struggle against the military regime?
2. Ko Yeni eventually moved to Thailand and became a journalist for *The Irrawaddy*, the magazine that published his story. How do you think the generation of young people who became journalists in exile in the past ten or twenty years have influenced the movements for political change in Burma?



### Factbox

**All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF)**, formed in 1988 by leaders including Moe Thee Zun, opposes the military dictatorship and supports human rights both through armed struggle and political means.

■ (above) An ABSDF soldier. (right) The patch and insignia of the ABSDF, worn by soldiers.



# 11. Resettled refugees: How will the next generation of Burmese people born in exile be different from their parents?

Read  D98; and  T-2007.

## Comprehension

1. According to the resettled refugees, in what ways will their children experience a different life than they did?
  - a. It will be more difficult for the children to adapt to cold weather.
  - b. The children will have the chance to live in a society where the government helps the people.
  - c. The children will not have as much experience with machines as their parents did.
  - d. The children are likely have easier lives than their parents had.



■ Jo Kae and Daisi's family (above) were resettled to the UK. Their story is explored in the documentary film 'Moving to Mars'. This ethnic Karen family, after many years living in refugee camps in Thailand, were eventually resettled to the city of Sheffield, in northern England (below).

## Reasoning

1. When the children mentioned in this story grow up, do you think they will have an identity as Karen, Burmese, Irish, all of these, or part of some other group? Why?
2. Technologies such as Facebook, blogs, chatting, and Skype enable Burmese youth who have access to the internet to communicate with each other whether they are inside Burma, living as refugees or migrants, or resettled in third countries. What are the effects of this ability to communicate on your life or the lives of other young people?



# Review

1. How has the tradition of respecting elders that is shown by Prince Rajakumar in D3 changed over the years? In what situations have youth honoured their elders, and in what situations have they challenged their elders? Look especially at D24, D32, D73 and D86.
2. Name five important Burmese leaders who are alive today. How old are they? Do you believe that younger leaders should be given a chance to lead or should older leaders keep their positions? Why? Explain your answers using examples from the documents or your previous knowledge.
3. In what ways did young people contribute special skills and strengths to political movements described in these documents? In what ways did they display weaknesses that may have resulted from their youth? Re-read D24, D73 and D99.
4. How did the elders in these documents view youth? Do you think these attitudes helped elders and youths to work together toward common goals? Why or why not? Look especially at D32, D36, D86, D69 and D71.
5. Do you believe that youth or elders have held more power throughout Burmese history? Reread D79 and D73 and think about the balance of power between young and old.
6. How has completing this unit changed your ideas about the generational divide? How have they stayed the same?



20

15

10

5

Theme

4

1961

1967

1972

19

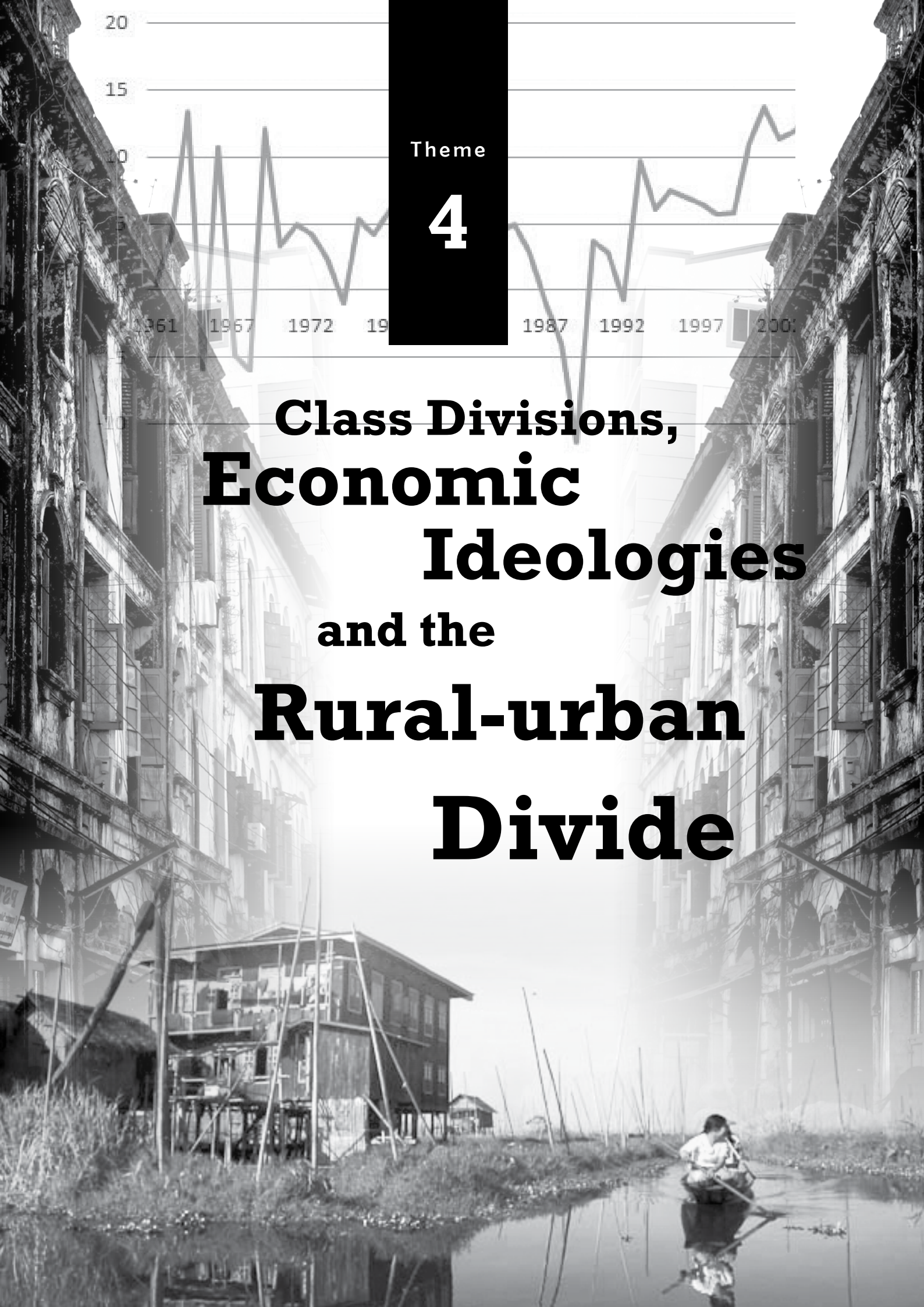
1987

1992

1997

2001

**Class Divisions,  
Economic  
Ideologies  
and the  
Rural-urban  
Divide**



# 1. How has socioeconomic status affected people's opportunities?

Throughout history, people's socioeconomic status, or class, has affected their opportunities in life. Class and socioeconomic status describe a person's position in society based on how much money and possessions people have already (wealth), how much money they make by working (income), how much others respect their job or qualifications (status), and their level of education.

Classes have changed over time. For example, in ancient kingdoms in Burma, people were born into one of four classes: rulers, educated people, wealthy businesspeople, and common people. At that time, there was not much class mobility; you could not change your class easily. Since the 20th century, peasants and workers have formed a lower class, while middle class people included professionals such as doctors, teachers, and civil servants. Upper classes included people in business or politics. Today, class mobility is more common. Even if your parents were peasants, if you succeed in school you might become an engineer. Therefore, your socioeconomic status can change over the course of your life as you gain education or change jobs.

However, some people think that the class system is unfair because the upper class exploits the lower class. These people want to reduce income inequality, the gap between the rich and the poor. People started to feel this way especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, when industrialisation happened and some people got very rich (see T-18th and 19th c.). In countries that were colonised, like Burma, many native people became upset that the Europeans were using natural resources and labour from their colonies to make money for themselves.

These issues caused Karl Marx (above), a 19th century German philosopher, to criticise the capitalist system. Capitalism is an economic system in which people own property and compete for money. Marx thought that this system hurt workers and peasants. He suggested a communist system in which people

owned what they produced and shared it with others. He thought a revolution was necessary to create society that did not have any class divisions.

Marx's ideas became popular in Burma in the early 20th century. Many Burmese nationalists were communists or socialists. Socialism is a less extreme system than communism, in which governments organise the people to own property and work together. After Burma got independence, its parliamentary government used some socialist principles, but communists rebelled against the government.

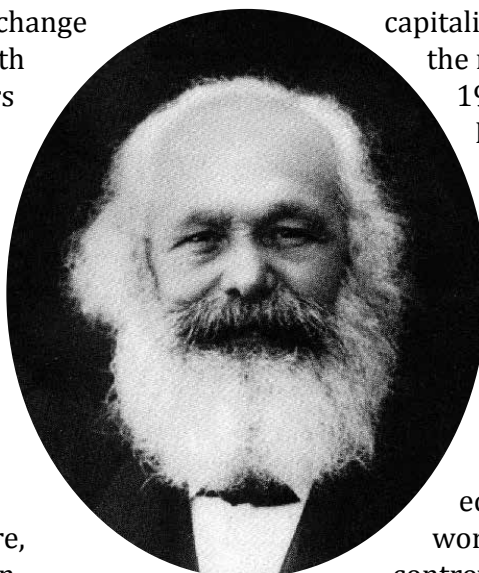
In the worldwide Cold War between capitalist and communist countries in the mid-20th century (see T-1949-1985), Burma stayed neutral.

In 1962, the BSPP started a socialist economy that was controlled by the government. In the 1980s, Burma stopped being socialist and began allowing international free trade and capitalism. Today, Burma is experiencing the effects of economic globalisation; when the national economy becomes part of the world economy. Globalisation is controversial because foreign trade

makes the country wealthier, but upper class people often get more of this money than poor people.

Another factor that affects socio-economic status is the rural-urban divide, or the difference in opportunities between people who live in the countryside and in cities. There are poor people both in cities and in the countryside, but rural poor and urban poor may have different problems. Rural farmers may fall into debt to landlords and have trouble paying taxes; they might not have health, education, and communication systems that exist in cities. On the other hand, urban poor people may suffer from crowded conditions and unemployment. All of these problems have occurred in Burma over the years.

In this unit, you will have a chance to compare different economic systems that have been used in Burma and consider which ones have worked best.



## Comprehension

1. Match each term (below) with its definition (right).

class mobility  
socio-economic status  
communism  
capitalism  
socialism  
economic globalisation  
rural-urban divide  
income inequality

- a. joining of national and world economies
- b. social and economic group depending on your income, wealth, education, and status
- c. being able to move from one class to another
- d. society without class divisions in which everyone owns and shares what they produce
- e. government controls sharing of wealth and labour
- f. differences between people who live in cities and in the countryside
- g. economic system of private ownership and competition for wealth
- h. the difference between how much money rich people and poor people have

2. Karl Marx was a

- a. communist
- b. capitalist
- c. socialist
- d. globalist

## Reasoning

1. Describe the socio-economic classes in your community. How do you know who is lower class, middle class, and upper class? Which class do you think you are a part of? Why?
2. Which economic system do you prefer, capitalism, socialism, or communism? Why?
3. Are you from a rural area or an urban area? How do you think that influenced the opportunities you have had in your life?
4. Do you think class mobility is easy or difficult in your community? What evidence do you have to support your theory?
5. Is there much income inequality in your community? What are the causes and effects of this income inequality?



## 2. Ancient kingdoms: What did different classes do?

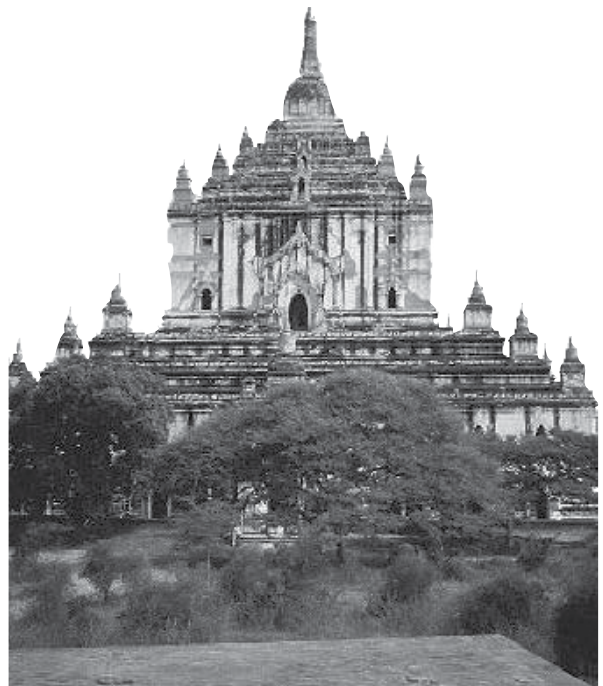
Read  D6-on taking profit from towns;  B-Sandalinka, B-Alaunghpaya; and  T-1752-1885

### Comprehension

1. Which of the following groups are NOT one of the four classes of people who live in the kingdom?
  - a. ordinary people.
  - b. wealthy business people.
  - c. soldiers.
  - d. educated people.




### Reasoning

1. Although Shin Sandalinka does not mention slaves as one of the four classes of inhabitants, there were slaves in the kingdom. Why do you think they did not have to give the king some of what they produced?
2. Do you think people from different classes had perspectives on giving some of what they produced to the king? Why or why not?



■ Htilominlo Temple Bagan. built by King Nantaungmya in 1218

## 3. Urbanisation and international trade: How did they affect people's lives in the 18th century?

Read  D8, D19, D20;  B-Sangermano; and  T-17th c.

### Comprehension

1. Look at photos D19 and D20. Which of the goods that Sangermano mentions can you find in these photos?

Rangoon:

Jungle village:

### Reasoning

1. What do you think were the benefits and negative effects of international trade for residents of Rangoon?
2. What do you think were the benefits and negative effects of international trade for residents of the jungle village?





## 4. 1300 Revolution: Why did workers protest capitalism in the colonial era?

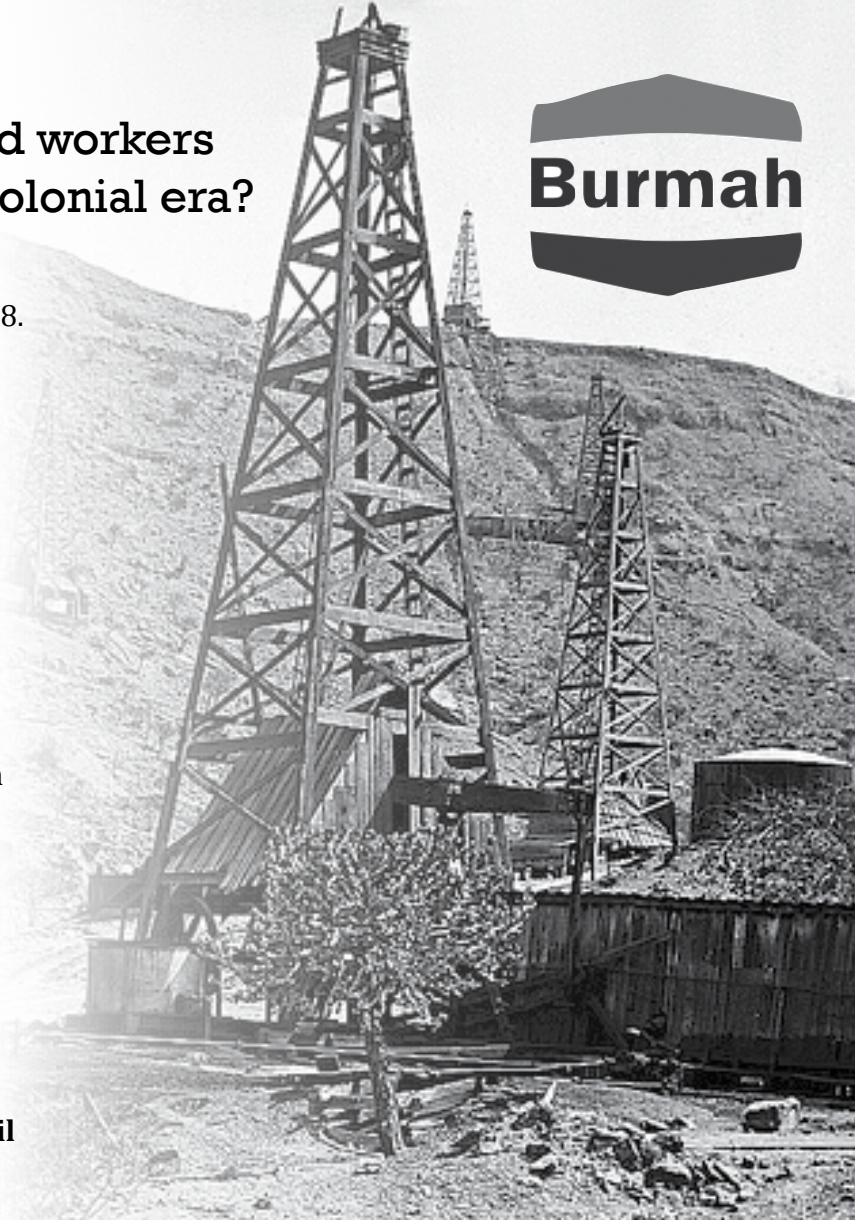
Read D35; B-Dobama Asiayone, B-Burmah Oil Company; and T-1936 T-1938.

### Comprehension

1. Infer which changes the strikers would be likely to support and which ones they wouldn't.
  - a. Changing to a communist economy.
  - b. The British leaving Burma.
  - c. The British passing a law saying that newspapers could not talk about the strike.
  - d. Oilfield bosses promising to increase their wages slowly over the course of ten years.

### Reasoning

1. Students from the Dobama Asiayone introduced communist ideas to the oilfield workers. Do you think this was helpful to the workers? Why or why not?
2. The Burmah Oil Corporation (BOC) employed Burmese workers to extract oil that the BOC then sold for its own profit. Who are the “rightful owners” of natural resources - the British company who bought the rights to the oil, the Burmese people who live in the area, the Burmese workers, all Burmese people, or another?



■ An example of an oilfield in Burma, operated by the now-defunct Burmah Oil Company

## 5. The Saya San rebellion: Why did peasants want land reform in the colonial era?

Read D31; B-Chettyars; and T-1930s, T-1930-31.

### Comprehension

1. According to the Committee, land reform is necessary because
  - a. Burman peasants are unhappy because they lost control of their land to mostly Chettyar landlords.
  - b. the capitalist system is wrong, the government should own all the land.
  - c. the British want to own all the land themselves.
  - d. the Chettyars should have the right to own the land that they farm.

### Reasoning

1. In the Saya San rebellion, peasants got angry at Chettyar landowners for taking over their land. They also protested against the British for raising taxes. But they did not protest the capitalist system under which these things were occurring. Do you think it is easier for people to get angry at a group of people rather than an economic system? Why or why not?
2. Do you think farmers should always have the right to own their land? Or should landlords be allowed to own land and rent it out to farmers? Why?

## 6. Class divisions: How were they shown in the media in the colonial era?

Look at  D32.




### Comprehension

1. What are the signs that the two women might be of different classes or socioeconomic backgrounds?

### Reasoning

1. Do you think the cartoonist wanted us to think the women in the cartoon are of different socioeconomic classes, or just that they choose to dress differently? Why?
2. In what ways do Burmese people of different socioeconomic groups differ in dress and lifestyle today?

## 7. Indo-Burmese riots: How did socio-economic status play a role?

Read  D37;  B-Collis, B-Gandhi; and  T-1930s.




### Comprehension

1. According to Collis, how did upper-class Burmans and Burman workers act differently during the riots?
  - a. Upper-class Burmans led the killings of Indians, while workers followed their lead.
  - b. Upper-class Burmans tried to protect the Indians while workers tried to kill them.
  - c. Upper-class Burmans hid in their houses while workers bravely faced the Indians.
  - d. Upper-class Burmans tried to negotiate with the workers' bosses while workers rioted.

### Reasoning

1. Do you think Collis is biased toward upper-class Burmans or Burman workers? What experiences do you think he had that would have caused his biases?
2. Who do you think had more in common, the Burman workers and the upper-class Burmans, or the Burman and Indian workers? Why?

## 8. Communist revolutionaries: How did they want to help the poor?

Read  D52;  B-Ba Tin; and  T-1946, T-1947.

### Comprehension

1. Which statements are Thakin Ba Tin's demands?
  - a. Give free health care to all Burmese citizens.
  - b. Redistribute land to the peasants.
  - c. The government should control international trade.
  - d. Foreign companies should have full rights to operate in Burma.
  - e. Pay back debt to British immediately.

### Reasoning

1. What would have been the positive and negative effects of carrying out Thakin Ba Tin's plan?

## 9. Rural-urban divide: How were opportunities different in the city and countryside?

Read  D54.




### Comprehension

1. Are these statements true or false?
  - a. Overall, the most common occupation was farming.
  - b. Jobs in service were more common in rural areas.
  - c. Jobs in manufacturing were more common in cities.
  - d. Rural women who didn't farm probably worked in commerce.

### Reasoning

1. Based on this chart, did people in rural and urban areas have equal job opportunities? Explain.
2. Which people shown in the chart do you think were lower class? Middle class? Upper class?
3. How do you think this table would be different if the census was re-taken today? Why?

## 10. The civil war: How did it affect the economy?

Read  D57;  B-Kodaw Hmaing, B-Soe, B-Thun Tun, B-Po Kun, B-Nu, B-Aung San, B-Ba Swe, B-Kyaw Nyein, B-Ba Choe; and  T-1946 T-1958, T-1963.

### Comprehension

1. According to the Finance Minister, resources destroyed in the civil war
  - a. will be easy to get back because the government has already defeated the insurgents.
  - b. will be difficult to get back because new financial and human resources will be required.
  - c. will be difficult to get back because the government is not willing to fight against the insurgents.
  - d. will be easy to get back because the government has made a strong economic plan.

### Reasoning

1. Do you think the civil war damaged the urban or rural economy more? Why?
2. The communists were fighting to help the poor, yet civil war may have made the poor even poorer. How do you think the communists explained their decision to continue to fight?



■ Thakin Kodaw Hmaing (1876 – 1964). An influential Burmese poet, writer and political leader.

## 11. BSPP: How did it plan to build a socialist society?

Read  D62;  B-BSPP, B-RC; and  T-1962.

### Comprehension

1. Complete the chart contrasting parliamentary democracy and socialism, according to the Revolutionary Council .

Parliamentary democracy	Socialism
Some businesses are privately owned	
Rich people exploit poor people	
People must provide their own food and shelter	
People have private property	

### Reasoning

1. Do you think the socialist society the RC describes is possible to create? Why or why not?
2. What would be the benefits and negative effects of this system?

## 12. Armed resistance groups: How do they get money?

Read  D83;  B-Zahkung Ting Ying, B-NDA-Kachin; and  T-1994.

### Comprehension

1. Chairman Zahkung Ting Ying explains that the NDA-Kachin sells the trees in order to
  - a. develop the region the way the government should have done.
  - b. further the cause of getting an independent Kachin homeland.
  - c. preserve the natural environment of Kachin state.
  - d. prevent the SPDC from making a profit from the Kachins' natural resources in the future.



### Reasoning

1. Do you agree with Chairman Zahkung Ting Ying's reasons for selling the timber? Why or why not? What else could the NDA-Kachin do to develop the region?
2. Have you heard of other ways that armed resistance groups get money? What are they? Is selling timber better or worse than these other ways?
3. Some armed struggle groups have been accused of fighting for wealth rather than for freedom. Do you think an armed resistance group can or should do both at the same time?
4. Do the problems Chairman Zahkung Ting Ying describes only happen in rural areas? Why or why not?

### 13. Globalisation: How has it affected Burma's economy?

Read  D88; and  T-1988-SLORC.

#### Comprehension

1. With which countries did all trade (imports and exports) increase between 2001 and 2006?
2. With which countries did trade decrease between 2001 and 2006?
3. With which countries did trade stay about the same between 2001 and 2006?

#### Reasoning

1. What are the positive and negative effects of international trade on lower and middle class Burmese people?
2. What are the positive and negative effects of international trade on upper class Burmese people?
3. Trade with the US went down because the US put sanctions on Burma to protest the government's human rights abuses. Do you support this idea?

### 14. The 2007 demonstrations: What were the economic factors?

Read  D89;  B-ABMA and  T-2007



#### Comprehension

1. Classify the monks' demands (1-4) as economic, political, or social.
2. According to the ABMA, the protests were first sparked by
  - a. the SPDC's mistreatment of monks.
  - b. the aggression of the USDA.
  - c. the imprisonment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
  - d. fuel price increases.

#### Reasoning

1. Some people disagreed about whether the 2007 protests were primarily about economic issues or about political issues. Which do you think were most important in causing the protests?

### 15. The End of Economic Sanctions: What were the EU's concerns?

Read  D104; and  T-2013



#### Comprehension

1. The EU mentions several concerns they have. Which one is NOT included?
  - a. The Kachin conflict
  - b. The conflict between Rakhine and Rohingya
  - c. political prisoners.
  - d. The 2008 Constitution

#### Reasoning

1. Do you think 2013 was the right time for the EU to end economic sanctions on Burma? Why or why not?
2. The EU mentioned several concerns they had about the situation in Burma. Do you think this list was appropriate? What would you add or take out?

## 16. Global migration: How has it affected Burmese people's socio-economic status?

Read  D98; and  T-2007.

### Comprehension

1. What evidence can you find in the refugees' stories that shows that they were lower class when they lived in Burma and in the refugee camp?

### Reasoning

1. Do you think resettled refugees have better socioeconomic status and class mobility in their new countries than in Burma? Explain.
2. Have you heard much about Burmese people who have resettled in foreign countries sending money back to relatives and friends in Burma? Could it reduce income inequality in Burma?

## Review

1. How have classes changed throughout Burma's histories? How have they stayed the same? Use D6, D32, D37 and D54 especially to answer.
2. How have economic conditions caused people to oppose the government throughout Burmese history? Use D31, D35, D52, and D89 to answer.
3. What do you think have been the main obstacles to Burma's economic development throughout history? Give examples from the documents, especially D57, D83, and D91.
4. Do you think that capitalism, socialism, or communism has been best for Burmese people in the past? Explain your choices using D35, D52, D62, and D91.
5. Would you rather have lived in an urban or rural area in the colonial era (D19, D20, D31)? The parliamentary era (D54, D57)? The SLORC/SPDC era (D83)? Why?
6. How has completing this unit changed your perspective on class and economic issues? How has it stayed the same?

■ This map shows the main areas where refugees from Burma resettle. They usually go via Thailand, India or Malaysia.

Theme

5

# Religion & Politics



# 1. How have spiritual beliefs affected society?

Over the years, people in Burma have practised a variety of religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, animism and Hinduism. Some people, especially those who have communist beliefs, might not have practiced any religion at all. Religion can be broadly organised into two categories. Organised religions, such as Christianity, Islam and Bhuddism, have clearly defined guidelines and goals for how to best live your life. They also have some form of leadership or hierarchy and include specific religious sites. Non-organised religions, such as animism (the worship of animal or nature spirits), have a general belief system, but are not represented by leaders or specific guidelines. Animism is the most ancient religion. Many elements of it have mixed with other religions that people started to practise later. Organised religions such as Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism were practised in Burma since ancient times, while Christianity was brought by missionaries in the 19th century.

Because most people in Burma are Buddhist, some Burmese and foreigners have called Burma a “Buddhist country.” Burmese people who practise other religions usually don’t like this. In particular, there have been conflicts about how religion should affect the government.

Around the world, there are different relationships between government and religion. One option is to have a secular state that does not favour any particular religion. In a secular state, religion is a private matter that should not become part of public life. Another option is for the government to encourage religious pluralism, or the freedom to practise any religion. On the other hand, the government can choose one religion to support; this is called



■ Ayatollah Khamenei (above) is the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He leads a theocratic system of government whereby the rules of Islam dictate the government’s domestic and international policy.

state-sponsored religion. In this case, people may support the government because they believe in that religion. A more extreme option is to have a theocracy, in which the rulers are spiritual leaders who rule according to religious laws.

Burmese people have tried these different options throughout history. In Burma, religion has not only played a role in government, but also in opposition to governments; Burmese people opposed the colonial, parliamentary, and military governments for religious reasons. In this unit you will have a chance to examine how religion and politics have mixed during Burma’s histories.

## Comprehension

### 1. Match the word with its definition.

a. secularism	1. protection of the freedom to practise any religion
b. religious pluralism	2. keeping religion separate from society and politics
c. state-sponsored religion	3. a government controlled by leaders claiming to rule as a representation of a deity
d. theocracy	4. when a government chooses one religion to support

**2. Which of these statements are true according to the text?**

- a. Most people in Burma are Buddhist.
- b. Burma is a Buddhist country.
- c. Animism was the first religion to be practised.
- d. Muslims only recently came to Burma.
- e. There has been religious discrimination in Burma.

**Reasoning**

- 1. Which of the statements in Question 2 do you agree with? Which do you disagree with? Why?
- 2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option described in Question 1?
- 3. Which of the options described in Question 1 do you think the government should take toward religion in Burma? Why?

**2. Animism: What did people believe before organised religion?**

Read  D1 and  T-3000-1000 BC.

**Comprehension**




- 1. Based on this *hta*, Karen animists in ancient times probably
  - a. built pagodas and respected monks.
  - b. respected nature, ancestors, and spirits.
  - c. believed in Jesus Christ and built churches.
  - d. had no spiritual beliefs at all.

**Reasoning**

- 1. Because animism was practised for many centuries before other religions were organised, some animist beliefs can still be seen in the way Burmese people practise Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions today. Can you think of any examples that show how animism influences spiritual beliefs today?
- 2. Later in history, both Burmese and non-Burmese people tried to convert animists to other religions, especially Christianity and Buddhism. Do you think that trying to convert animists to other religions is a kind of discrimination against them? Why or why not?



### 3. Ancient kingdoms: How did Buddhism affect government?

Read  D3;  B-Rajakumar, B-Kyansittha; and  T-849-1287.

#### Comprehension




1. Which statement summarises this document?

- Rajakumar made a Buddha image and pagoda in his father's honour and donated slaves to care for it.
- Kyansittha built a cave pagoda in honour of his wife.
- Three villages of slaves donated their labour to help build a Buddha image for Kyansittha.
- Rajakumar let the slaves go free so that his father would recover from his illness.

#### Reasoning

- How do you think practising Buddhism helped kings build up their power?
- Royal families supported Buddhism by building pagodas and making Buddha images as Rajakumar did, but they also did things that seem to go against Buddhist precepts, such as having wars to capture religious relics and using slave labour. Do you think these ancient kings were good Buddhists? Why or why not?

### 4. Christian missionaries: How did they build relationships with Burmese people?

Read  D14, D21;  B-Carson, and  T-19th c.

#### Comprehension

- These two documents imply that colonised people who convert to Christianity would be
  - more likely to rebel against the British government.
  - less likely to have conflicts with members of their own ethnic group.
  - more likely to live peacefully with people of other religions.
  - less likely to oppose the British government.

#### Reasoning

- Do you think that Burmese Christians were more likely to have close relationships with British colonisers? In your experience, do Burmese Christians have closer relationships with Western foreigners today?



## 5. The shoe question: Why Buddhists opposed British colonisers?

Read  D23, D36- on the shoe question;  B-Ba Khine, B-Ba Gale, B-YMBA; and  T-1910s.

### Comprehension

1. According to these documents, how did the British offend Buddhists?




- By visiting pagodas.
- By trying to convert them to Christianity.
- By forcing Burmese people to carry British people on their shoulders.
- By wearing their shoes in pagodas.

### Reasoning

1. What political goal do you think British colonisers were trying to achieve by refusing to take off their shoes when they entered pagodas? Did they achieve their goals?



## 6. 1947 Constitution: What did it say about religion?

Read  D46- Rights of Freedom;  B-Chan Htoon;  T-1947-Constitution.

### Comprehension




1. Decide if each statement is true or false according to the Constitution.

- All religions except Buddhism will be outlawed.
- Only Buddhists can be civil servants.
- The government cannot discriminate against anyone because of their religion.
- The majority of citizens are Buddhist.

### Reasoning

- What do you think it means to “acknowledge the special position” of Buddhism? What would be the practical effects of this position?
- Does this constitution show religious pluralism, state-sponsored religion, or both? Why?

## 7. Burmese Muslim Organisation: How did it work with other groups to get independence for Burma?

Read  D42;  B-Razak, B-AFPFL, B-BMO, B-BNA; and  T-1945-1948.




### Comprehension

1. Decide if these statements are true or false according to U Razak.
  - a. Burman Muslims joined the BNA so they could be sure they would be represented in the post-war government.
  - b. The BMO agreed to work together with the AFPFL.
  - c. It was the British divide and rule policy that caused Muslims to be separated from other Burmans in the past.
  - d. No Burman Muslims were fluent in Burmese.

### Reasoning

1. Do you think U Razak was too optimistic in his view that the past tensions between Burman Muslims and Burmese of other religions had been resolved? Why or why not?
2. Did you have any stereotypes about Muslim people? Did reading this document change those stereotypes? Why or why not?

## 8. Civil war: Why did some Muslims rebel?

Read  D50;  B-Mujahid Party;  T-1946.

### Comprehension

1. Which demands did the Mujahid make?
  - a. A homeland.
  - b. The right to speak and teach Urdu.
  - c. That no Buddhists should live in Arakan State.
  - d. Legal status for the Mujahid Party.
  - e. That Islam should be recognized as the national religion of Burma.

### Reasoning

1. How is the BMO's political strategy in D42 different from the Mujahid Party's? \
2. Why do you think people from the same religion had such different perspectives on politics?



## 9. Why did U Nu make Buddhism the state religion?

Read D66; B-Nu; and T-1961.

### Comprehension

1. Which arguments did U Nu provide for why Buddhism should become the state religion?
  - a. 85% of Burmese people are Buddhist.
  - b. No Burmese people opposed making Buddhism the state religion.
  - c. No Burmese people claimed making Buddhism the state religion would be unconstitutional.
  - d. He could make sure there would be no religious discrimination against non-Buddhists.
  - e. All major national minorities are majority Buddhist.

### Reasoning

1. Do you think U Nu's information is correct today? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree with U Nu's decision to make Buddhism the state religion? Why or why not?

## 10. BSPP: How did it view religion?

Read D62; B-BSPP, B-RC; and T-1962.

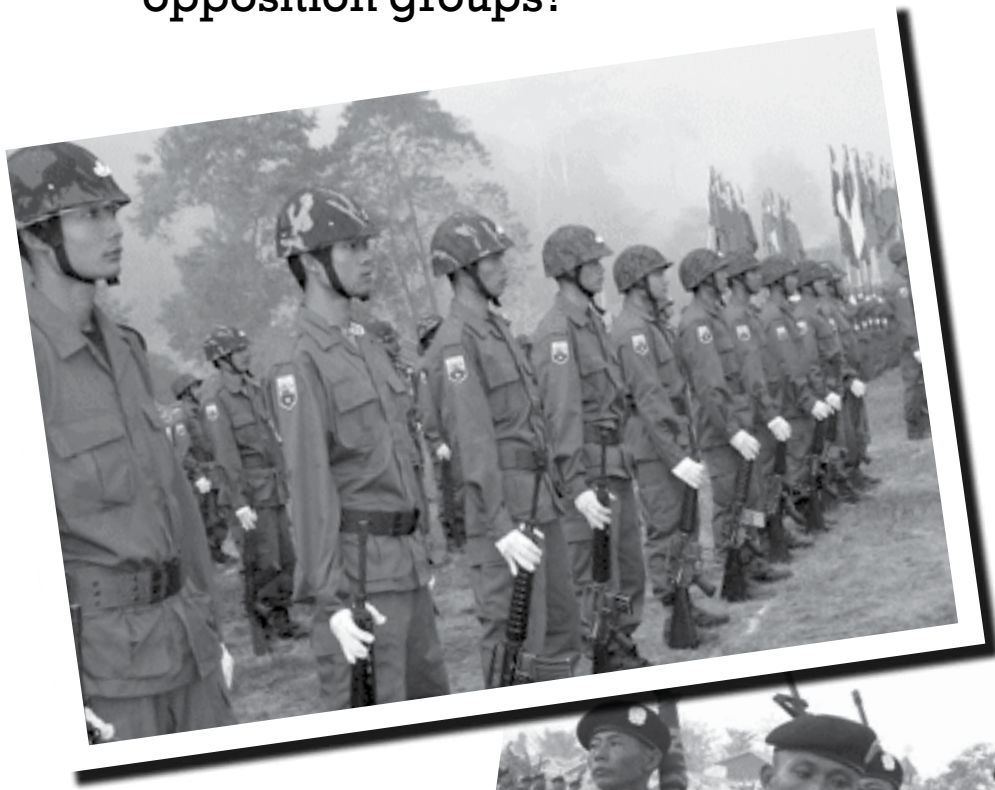
### Comprehension

1. Which statement summarizes the Revolutionary Council's attitude toward religion?
  - a. Under socialism, all religions will be encouraged to develop.
  - b. No one can be religious under socialism.
  - c. No religion can bring about justice and equality; only socialism can do that.
  - d. Buddhism will be declared the state religion by the Revolutionary Council.

### Reasoning




1. The Revolutionary Council states that "an empty stomach is not conducive to wholesome morality." Do you think religious people would agree or disagree? Why? Do you agree or disagree?

## 11. The KNU-DKBA split: How has religion divided opposition groups?



■ (above) KNLA - Karen National Liberation Army troops. The armed wing of the KNU. (right) DKBA soldiers.



Read  D77;  B-Mya; B-Thuzana, B-KNU, B-DKBA; and  T-1994-1995.

### Comprehension

1. Bo Mya says that the KNU should
  - a. unite with the SPDC against the Buddhist Karens.
  - b. give the Buddhists what they want so that the SPDC does not succeed in dividing Karens.
  - c. make the KNU a Christian-only organisation.
  - d. attack the Buddhists at Thumwehta.

### Reasoning

1. Despite Bo Mya's instructions, the DKBA split away from the KNU. Do you think all political organisations that contain people of different religions will break apart? What evidence do you have to support your position?



## 12. 2007 demonstrations: How did Buddhism inspire opposition to the SPDC?

Read D89; B-ABMA, B-USDA; and T-2007

### Comprehension

- Which of these ABMA protest tactics were used by the monks?
  - Marching in the streets.
  - Boycotting the SPDC.
  - Starting an armed struggle.
  - Demanding that fuel prices be lowered.
  - Working for national reconciliation.

### Reasoning

- The ABMA joins a long tradition of politically active Burmese monks, including U Ottama and U Wisara. However, some people think monks should not become involved in politics. What are the advantages and disadvantages of their involvement?

## 13. The SPDC: How did it support Buddhism?

Read D101; B-SPDC, B-Thaw Shwe and T-1990s-2000s.

### Comprehension

- The main idea of this passage is that
  - Gen. Than Shwe enjoys strolling in pagodas.
  - Gen. Than Shwe's wife usually accompanies him on pilgrimages.
  - Gen. Than Shwe is a devout Buddhist.
  - Gen. Than Shwe has lots of money to donate.



### Reasoning

- This type of article appears frequently in state newspapers. Why would the SPDC want to convey the main idea described above?

# Review

1. Are the following people or groups supporters of theocracy, religious pluralism, secularism, or state-sponsored religion: Prince Rajakumar (D3), U Nu (D66), Mujahid Party (D50), U Razak (D42), BSPP (D62), Bo Mya (D77), Gen. Than Shwe (D101). Explain your answer using the documents.
2. Imagine a meeting between the following people. What advice would they have for each other on the relationship between religion and politics?
  - a. U Razak (D42) and the Mujahid Party (D50).
  - b. U Nu (D66) and Mrs. Carson (D21).
  - c. Prince Rajakumar (D3) and Gen. Than Shwe (D101).
  - d. the BSPP (D62) and the ABMA (D89).
3. In Burma, has religion usually made people support the government or oppose it? Use examples from the documents, especially D21, D66, D89, D36 and D50.
4. The 1947 Constitution guaranteed freedom from discrimination to people of all religions, but gave a special place to Buddhism. How would you rewrite that section of the Constitution to protect the rights of people of all religions in Burma?
5. How has completing this unit changed your perspective on the relationship between religion and politics? How has it stayed the same?





# 1. How has colonialism affected Burma?

Colonialism is when people from one area go to a new place and control its economy, government, and society. Colonialism is an unequal relationship between the colonisers and the indigenous people who are colonised, and it is based on the idea that some races or national groups (such as the British) are better at governing than others (such as the Burmese). British colonisation had economic, social, and political causes and effects. Although in this Theme you will learn mostly about effects that British rule had on Burmese people, Burma also influenced British society, economy, and politics.

British rule had a large impact on the relationships between the different ethnic and national groups living in Burma. Britain, like many colonial powers, has been accused of using “divide and rule” policies that kept ethnic groups separate so that they would be easier to control and would not unite to get independence. However, British rule also created borders around the country that we now call Burma, giving the people inside a common political identity. For instance, because the British encouraged workers to come into Burma from outside its borders, some people living in Burma felt that they, the “natives,” had to compete with “foreigners” from India, China, and Europe. Some Burmese people even became xenophobic, fearing and disliking all people they considered foreign.

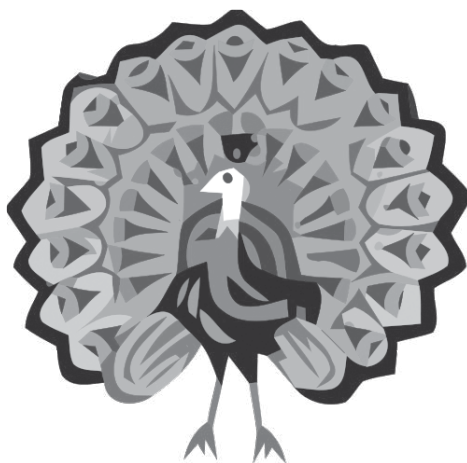
People living in Burma had a range of different reactions to colonial rule. Some Burmese people had anti-colonial beliefs. They felt that colonisation had negative effects and they wanted it to end. (There is more about the anti-colonial struggle in Theme 2 and Theme 4). Other Burmese people saw British rule as a positive opportunity. They cooperated with the British in order to get benefits for themselves,

their families, communities, or ethnic groups. Some Burmese people may have experienced “internalised colonialism,” which means that they accepted the British perspective that Western people were superior to them. Others may have developed biases against British or Western people.

Although the colonial era has ended, some of its effects can still be seen today. Some Burmese people blame the British for problems that exist in Burma to this day. They may also feel that Britain and other Western countries today are “neo-colonial,” meaning that those

countries still try to influence Burma’s economy and society even though they don’t control the government anymore. On the other hand, some Burmese people today may have “colonial nostalgia:” they believe that conditions in Burma were better under British rule than they are today.

Therefore, colonisation can be seen as having had positive effects, negative effects, or mixed effects, depending on your perspective. This unit will give you a chance to think about how the effects of colonialism are visible in your own life and in your community.



■ The peacock (above) the symbol of the Konbaung Kingdom in the 19th century and later as a symbol of the pro democracy movement

## Comprehension

1. Decide if each statement is true or false according to the text above.

- All Burmese people opposed British colonialism.
- Colonialism is an equal relationship between the colonisers and the colonised people.
- The effects of colonialism are no longer evident in Burma.
- British people changed Burmese society, but Burmese people did not change British society at all.




## 2. Match each term with its definition.

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| a. neo-colonialism          | 1. when Western countries try to influence former colonies        |
| b. internalised colonialism | 2. belief that conditions were better under British rule          |
| c. colonial nostalgia       | 3. colonial power separating groups so they are easier to control |
| d. divide and rule policy   | 4. when colonised people believe that the colonisers are superior |
| e. anti-colonialism         | 5. belief that colonialism has negative effects and should end    |

## Reasoning

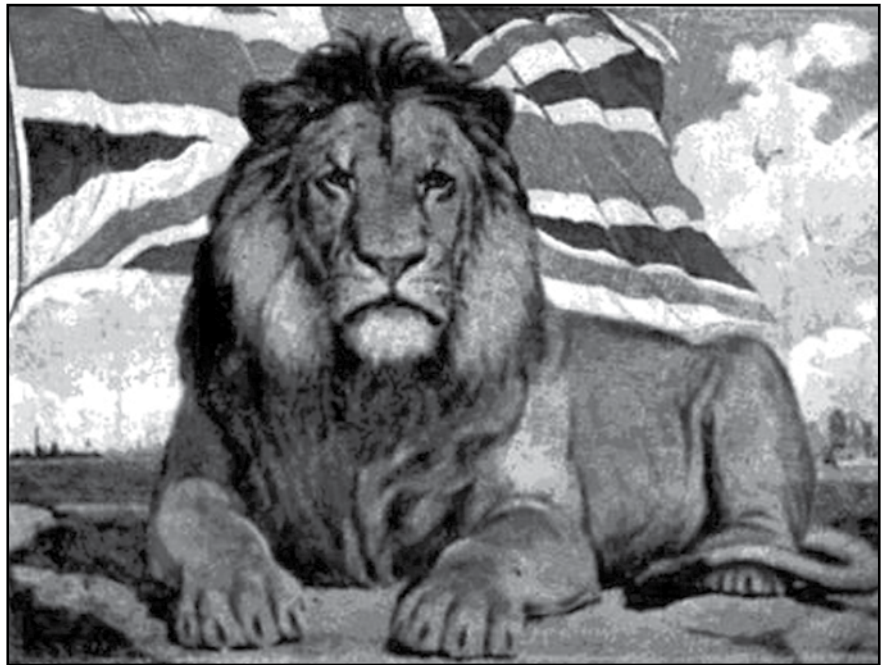
1. What effects of colonialism do you see in Burmese societies today? Do you see these effects as negative or positive?
2. Do you know any older relatives or community members who remember the colonial era? Do they have “colonial nostalgia,” or anti-colonial attitudes?
3. Have you encountered anyone who has “internalised” colonialism? What is your reaction to this belief?

## 2. How and why did the British establish control in Burma?

Read  D9;  B-Bagyidaw; and  T-1824-1826

## Comprehension

1. Match the clause in the treaty (1-5, 7, 9) with a British motivation for making the treaty.
  - a. To have peace with the Kingdom of Ava.
  - b. To recoup money spent in the war.
  - c. To be able to trade without being taxed.
  - d. To have diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Ava.
  - e. To control some of the Kingdom of Ava’s territory.
  - f. To prevent the King of Ava from interfering in territories bordering the British.
  - g. To have clear boundaries between the British Empire and the Kingdom of Ava.







■ **The British Lion:** A common symbol of imperial strength and nobility throughout the British Empire

## Reasoning

1. Which of the reasons above do you think was most important to the British? Why?

### 3. How did the British draw the boundaries between Burma and neighbouring countries?

Read  D18;  B-Stirling;  T-1782; and look at  M2, M3, M4 & M5

This letter is part of the correspondence between British officials who were trying to set boundaries between Siam and Burma, and local officials appointed by the Konbaung court. A myosa was an official appointed by the Konbaung court to supervise an area. This myosa was in charge of Kengcheng and its capital Mongsing.

#### *Letter from the Myosa of Mongsing to British officer Stirling, March 15, 1894*

1. *Kengcheng had been tributary to Burma and therefore became tributary to the British after November 1885.*
2. *Fully admitting this, the Myosa was willing and anxious to submit to British suzerainty in 1891, but his offer was refused and nothing had happened for two years.*
3. *In 1893 the British declared Kengcheng to be a vassal State to Siam and accordingly the Myosa drank the water of allegiance to Siam and sent tributes to King Chulalongkorn.*
4. *Now he was told that the transfer was cancelled and he was still in British territory.*
5. *He refused to accept this story as no one had informed him officially of the re-transfer and Siam had accepted his tributary presents, Siamese officials having left Mongsing only a month before.*
6. *Should there be a mistake again, acceptance of Stirling's demands would be a treasonable act against the King of Siam.*
7. *No. He could not bring himself to accommodate Mr. Stirling without orders from Bangkok releasing him from his oath of allegiance to the King there.*



■ King Thibaw (above) Leader of the Konbaung dynasty, the final King of Burma.

[Sao Saimong Mangrai. (1965). *The Shan States and the British annexation*. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, p. 248.]

#### Comprehension

1. **According to the Myosa, Mongsing isn't part of British territory because**
  - a. he paid tribute to the Konbaung King before the British arrived.
  - b. he already promised his allegiance to the Siamese king King Chulalongkorn.
  - c. he does not like the British.
  - d. none of the above.
2. **Find Kieng Hung (Keng Cheng) on M2. Is it part of Burma today?**
3. **How did the shape of "Burma" change from M2 to M3 to M5? Did it get larger or smaller?**

#### Reasoning

1. **Imagine you are a villager in Keng Cheng in 1782. Do you feel you are more Thai, Burmese, Shan, British? Why?**
2. **Look at M2, M3, M4, and M5. Given that boundaries between kingdoms often shifted in ancient times, did the country we now call "Burma" exist before the British fixed its boundaries? Explain.**

# A. THE FRONTIER AREAS:

## WHY DID THE BRITISH RULE THEM DIFFERENTLY FROM BURMA PROPER?

Read  D16; and  B-Dufferin.

### Comprehension

- Dufferin says the Shans and Kachins are different from the rest of the people in Burma because**
  - they are organised under chiefs who control them.
  - they are more civilised than other groups.
  - there are no valuable resources in their territory.
  - they are more likely to rebel against the British.
- The British plan to rule the Shans and Kachins differently from the rest of the Burmese people**
  - in order to create division between the ethnic groups.
  - so they don't have to take on too much administrative responsibility.
  - so that the Shans and Kachins will enter into relationships with other powers.
  - all of the above.
- What did the British want from the Shan and Kachin chiefs?**
  - That they should accept British supremacy.
  - That they should prevent their people from fighting or raiding.
  - That they not develop relationships with other foreign countries.
  - All of the above.



### Factbox

**Lord Dufferin (1826-1902)** : British official, served as the British viceroy in India, 1884-1888 during the *Third Anglo-Burmese war*.

### Reasoning

- Are you surprised by the answer to Question 2? Does this mean that the British were not pursuing a Divide and Rule policy?
- The British ruled Shans, Kachins and Chins indirectly through their own chiefs, while they ruled people in Burma Proper directly, through village headmen (as described in D16). How do you think this difference in the style of rule made the Frontier Areas develop differently from Burma Proper?

## 5. Ethnic minority independence: How did the British recognise this?

Read  D13;  B-Forsyth, B-Kinwoon Mingyi;  T-1875; and look at  M5

### Comprehension

1. What is the main point of this agreement?
  - a. The British will rule Western Karenni.
  - b. The Konbaung King will rule Western Karenni.
  - c. The British and the Konbaung Kingdom will jointly rule Western Karenni.
  - d. Western Karenni will remain independent of British and Konbaung control.

### Reasoning

1. How do you think this Treaty influenced the development of the Karenni people?
2. This territory was included in the Union of Burma in 1948. Why do you think that Western Karenni did not get to stay independent?

The British signed this agreement with the Konbaung kingdom.

### *Agreement regarding the Independence of Western Karenni, 1875*

*In accordance with the request of His Excellency the Viceroy of India that Western Karenni should be allowed to remain separate and independent, His Majesty the King of Burma, taking into consideration the great friendship existing between the two countries and the desire that the friendship may be lasting and permanent, agrees that no sovereignty or governing authority of any description shall be exercised or claimed in Western Karenni and His Excellency the Kin-Woon Mingyi, Minister for foreign affairs, on the part of His Majesty the King of Burma, and the Honorable Sir Douglas Forsyth, CB, KCSI, envoy on the part of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India, execute the following agreement:*

*It is hereby agreed between the British and the Burmese Government that the state of Western Karenni shall remain separate and independent, and that no sovereignty or governing body of any description shall be claimed or exercised over the state. Whereunto we have on this day, the 21st day of June 1875 corresponding to the third day of the waning moon of Nayoung 1237 BE, affixed our seals and signatures.*

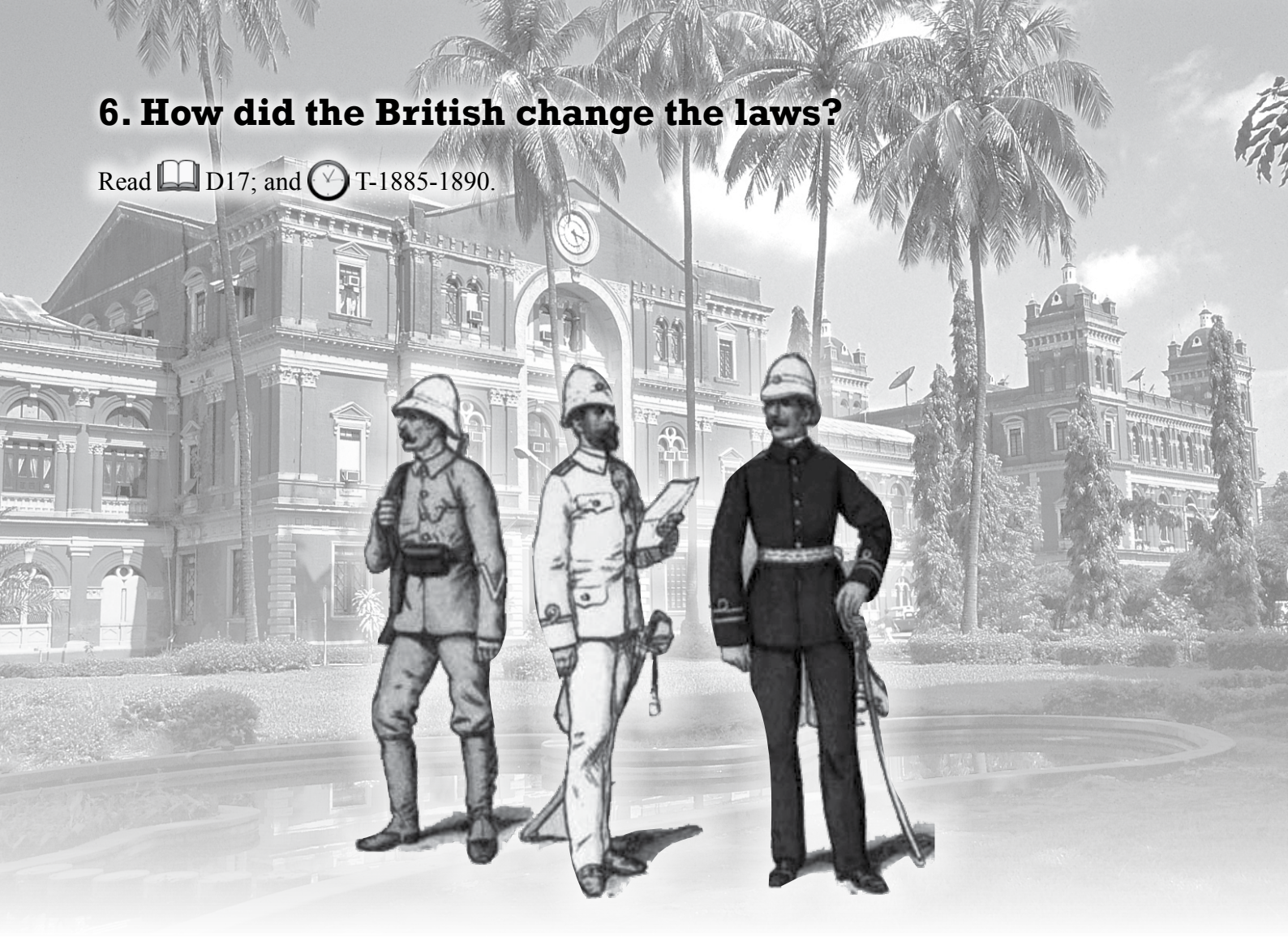
*Seal (signed) T D Forsyth*

*Seal. (signed) Kin-Woon Mingyi*

[Sao Saimong Mangrai. (1965). The Shan States and the British annexation. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, p. xviii.]

## 6. How did the British change the laws?

Read  D17; and  T-1885-1890.



■ Examples of the various types of British colonial officers in Burma

### Comprehension

1. The British passed laws to shape the conditions they wanted to create. By looking at the laws, you can understand the pre-colonial conditions they were trying to change. Assuming that the British made this law to change villagers' behaviour, which one of the following would be true?
  - a. Before colonisation, people could come and go from villages without telling anyone.
  - b. Before colonisation, villagers had to give food to troops passing through the area.
  - c. Before colonisation, villagers who did not help with road-building had to pay a fine.
  - d. Before colonisation, villagers did not have to help local officials whenever they asked.

### Reasoning

1. The British used existing traditions (such as asking villagers to contribute labour to projects), but they enforced them more strictly than Burmese kingdoms had done (those who did not contribute labor could be fined or punished). Why would the British try to use existing traditions in ruling Burmese people, instead of using British traditions?
2. The headmen that the British appointed were "middle men" between the British and the Burmese. Imagine you are a headman. What are the difficulties and benefits of your job? What reasons do you have to cooperate with the British, and what reasons do you have to become anti-colonial?

## 7. How did the British develop Burma?

Look at  D19 and D20.

### Comprehension

1. Name all the differences you can find between these two photos.

	Jungle village	Rangoon
Transportation		
Clothing		
Industry		
Architecture		

2. The photo of Rangoon was taken after the British had controlled Rangoon for several decades. What British influences are visible in this photo that you can't see in the photo of the jungle village?

### Reasoning

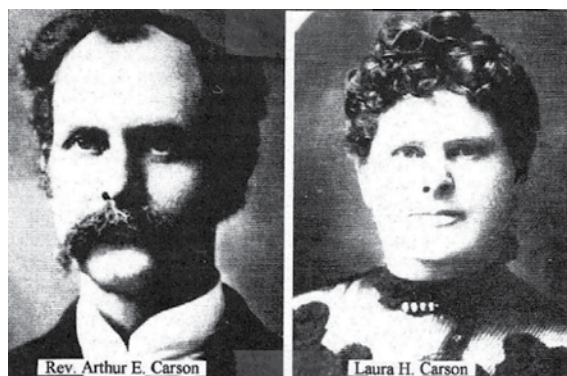
1. How do you think people living in Rangoon felt about the changes the British brought to the city?
2. Do you think the people in the jungle village would have wanted the British to build a large city near them? Why or why not?

## 8. How did missionaries support British rule?

Read  D21;  B-Carson, B-Judson;  T-19th c

### Comprehension

1. According to the London Missionary Society, missionaries help the British empire by
  - a. making converts more friendly toward the British.
  - b. training converts as soldiers.
  - c. creating better relationships between Christians and non-Christians.
  - d. all of the above.
2. The British official tells Thang Tsin that
  - a. the British government cannot help him.
  - b. he should stop being Christian if it causes conflict with his neighbours.
  - c. the British will protect his right to worship the Christian God.
  - d. if he worships a foreign god, the crops will fail and children will die.





■ Arthur and Laura Carson, the first American missionaries to work in the Chin hills of Burma.

### Reasoning

1. What were the incentives for converting to Christianity that you can find in Laura Carson's story?
2. In what ways do you sympathise with Thang Tsin? In what ways do you sympathise with the chief?
3. How do you think the conversion of some groups to Christianity (e.g. Chin, Kachin and Karen) affected their relations with non-Christian Burmese people?

# 9. Divide and rule:

How did the British use “divide and rule” policy to prolong their power?

Read  D22;  B-Cochrane

## Comprehension

1. According to Cochrane, what would happen if British rule ended?
  - a. The Shans would rule themselves well.
  - b. The Shans would unite with the Kachins.
  - c. The Shans would be glad to be rid of the British.
  - d. Fighting would break out among the Shans and between Shans and Kachins.

## Reasoning

1. Do you think Cochrane was correct that the Shan people were content to be under British rule? Why or why not?
2. Why would Cochrane and other British administrators have wanted the Shans and other groups to fear that fighting would break out if British rule ended?

## 10. How did the British and Burmese negotiate cultural differences?

Read  D23, D36;  B-Ba Gale;  T-1910s

### Comprehension

1. Who did U Ba Gale's cartoon make fun of?
  - a. The Burmese pagoda trustees who did whatever the British told them even if it went against Burmese culture.
  - b. The British for not knowing that they were supposed to take their shoes off when they went into the pagoda.
  - c. Police Commissioner Shuttleworth for making it legal for British to wear shoes in the pagoda.
  - d. The Burmese for starting to wear shoes in the pagoda just like the British.

### Reasoning

1. Why do you think the British didn't adapt to Burmese culture by taking off their shoes when they went into pagodas? Why did the pagoda trustees allow the British to wear shoes inside the pagoda?
2. How do you think British and Burmese people reacted to this cartoon, and why?

## 11. How did British ideas about different ethnic groups influence the jobs they gave them in their empire?

Read  D25;  B-Enriquez; and  T-1920s

### Comprehension

1. Enriquez believes that Kachin people
  - a. would not make as good soldiers as the Burmans.
  - b. would make good soldiers because they are clever and can adapt to any environment.
  - c. would make good soldiers because they are physically strong.
  - d. would not make good soldiers because they are lazy.
2. Enriquez believes that ethnic groups who join the military
  - a. are more likely to revolt against the British.
  - b. are more likely to get along well with other ethnic groups.
  - c. are more likely to convert to Christianity.
  - d. are more likely to be loyal to the British.

### Reasoning

1. Many British scientists and officials in the 19th century believed that each ethnic group had a "national character" that determined how they behaved. Do you believe that all people in an ethnic group share certain traits? Why or why not? How do you think this belief influenced people's ideas about themselves and their groups during the colonial era?
2. Shortly after Enriquez wrote this book, the British began recruiting "hill people" such as Kachins, Chins and Karens to their army, and excluding Burmans. How do you think this policy affected inter-ethnic relations?

## 12. How did Burmese people see British and Burmese intermarriage?

Look at  D27.



### Comprehension

1. **What happens to the young Burmese woman in the cartoon?**
  - a. She lives happily with her British husband and child.
  - b. Her British husband abandons her and her child when his British wife arrives.
  - c. Her British husband takes their child away from her and sends her away.
  - d. Her British husband learns Burmese and lives like a Burmese person.
2. **How does the young woman's mother feel about a possible British son-in-law?**
  - a. She is afraid his culture will be too different.
  - b. She is glad - her grandchildren will speak English well.
  - c. She is angry - her daughter will move to England.
  - d. She is happy - she thinks her daughter will be wealthy with many servants.

### Reasoning

1. **From this cartoon, does it seem like the children of English fathers and Burmese mothers were considered Burmese or English? What do you think life was like for these children?**
2. **Do you agree with the cartoon artist's belief that it was a bad idea for Burmese women to become involved with English men? Why or why not?**

## 13. How did the arrival of people from Europe, India and China create tension between "natives" and "foreigners"?

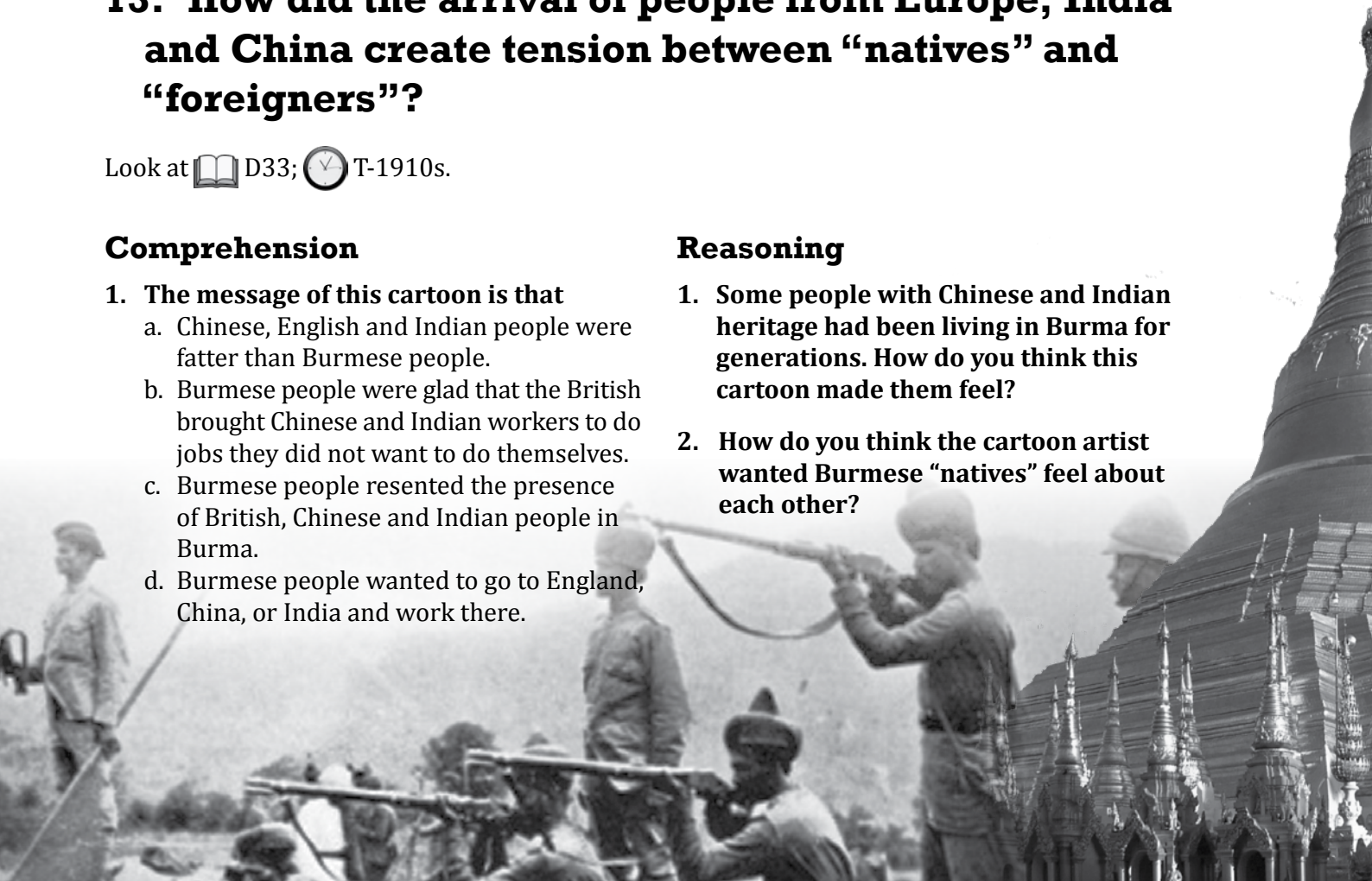
Look at  D33;  T-1910s.

### Comprehension




1. **The message of this cartoon is that**
  - a. Chinese, English and Indian people were fatter than Burmese people.
  - b. Burmese people were glad that the British brought Chinese and Indian workers to do jobs they did not want to do themselves.
  - c. Burmese people resented the presence of British, Chinese and Indian people in Burma.
  - d. Burmese people wanted to go to England, China, or India and work there.

### Reasoning

1. **Some people with Chinese and Indian heritage had been living in Burma for generations. How do you think this cartoon made them feel?**
2. **How do you think the cartoon artist wanted Burmese "natives" feel about each other?**



## 14. How did British labour policies affect relations among Burmese and Indians in Burma?

Read  D37;  B-Collis;  T-1930s

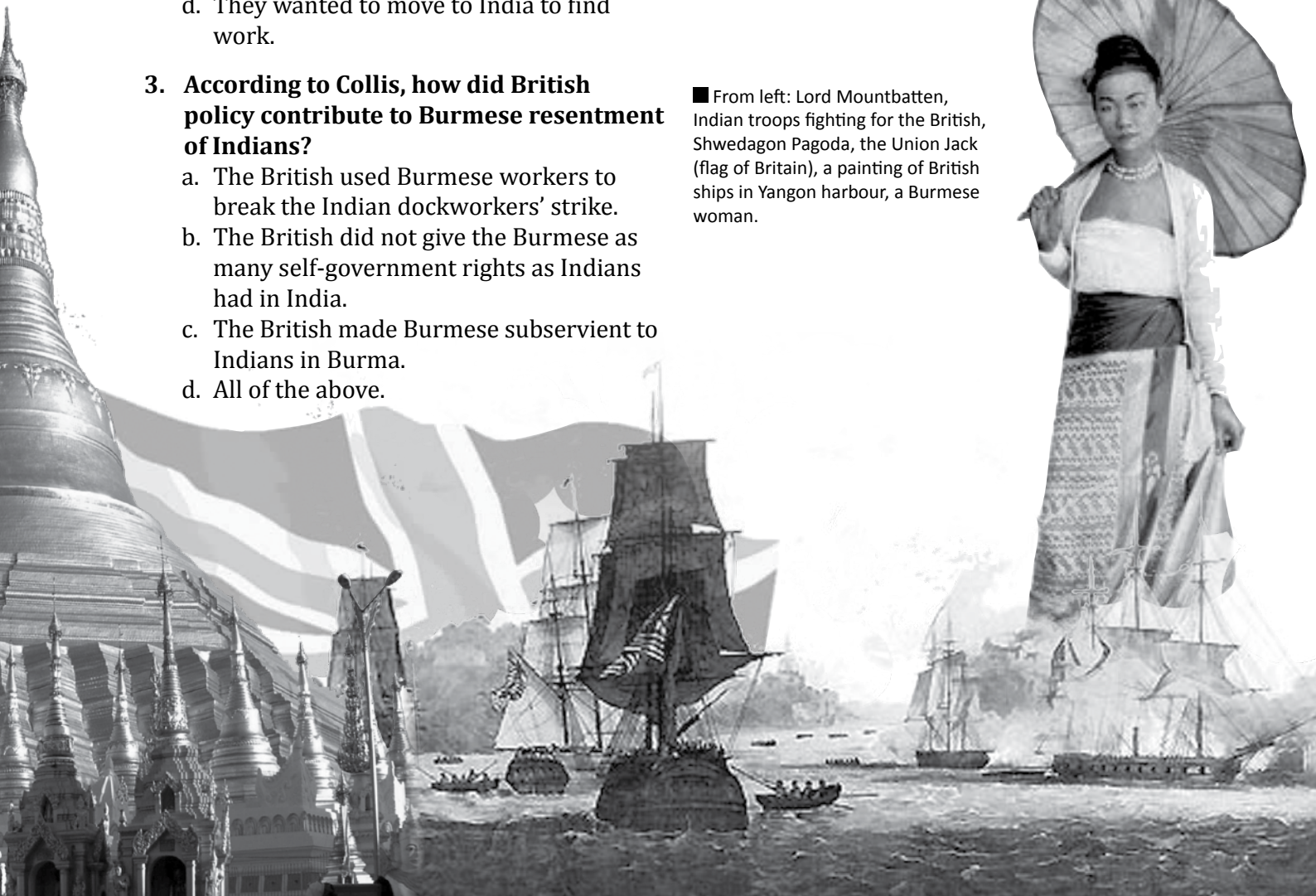
### Comprehension

1. According to Collis, the British firm normally employed Indian workers
  - a. because Burmans did not like to work on the docks.
  - b. because Indians were better workers for any kind of job.
  - c. because Burman and Indian workers could not get along.
  - d. because they were less likely to strike than Burman workers.
2. According to Collis, why didn't most Burmese sympathise with Indians who were struggling for independence from Britain?
  - a. They resented the wealth of Indians who were living in Burma.
  - b. They liked the English and the Chinese better.
  - c. They thought if India got independence, Burma would not.
  - d. They wanted to move to India to find work.
3. According to Collis, how did British policy contribute to Burmese resentment of Indians?
  - a. The British used Burmese workers to break the Indian dockworkers' strike.
  - b. The British did not give the Burmese as many self-government rights as Indians had in India.
  - c. The British made Burmese subservient to Indians in Burma.
  - d. All of the above.




### Reasoning

1. Do you think Collis was correct that Burmese workers were "disinclined" to work on the docks? What kind of stereotype does he seem to have about Burman workers?
2. British firms often employed one national group to do a certain job—for instance, most civil service jobs and prison guard jobs were filled by Indians. How do you think this policy affected relations between "natives" and "foreigners"?
3. Do you sympathise more with the Burmese people or the Indian people described in this passage? How do your own biases or life experiences cause you to sympathise more with one group or the other?

■ From left: Lord Mountbatten, Indian troops fighting for the British, Shwedagon Pagoda, the Union Jack (flag of Britain), a painting of British ships in Yangon harbour, a Burmese woman.



## 15. Why did the British change their policy on uniting the Frontier Areas with Burma Proper?

Read  D43;  B-Rance, B-Pethick-Lawrence, B-Knight; and  T-1945-1948, T-1946-1947.

### Comprehension

1. According to Knight, the reason the British don't want to give the Frontier Areas an independent country under British protection is that
  - a. the Frontier Areas peoples are less advanced politically.
  - b. the Frontier Areas cannot survive economically and an independent government of Burma would not accept the British remaining in control there.
  - c. they want to divide the ethnic minority groups from the Burmans.
  - d. the Frontier Areas peoples served loyally in British armies.



■ Saw Ba U Gyi (above left) (1905-1950): Sgaw Karen Christian political and military leader, a founder of KCO and KNU. Killed in battle with Burmese army.






■ Pethick-Lawrence, Lord Frederick (1871-1961): British politician, served as Secretary of State for Burma and India, 1945-1947.

2. According to Rance, how was the British attitude toward Burma changing?
  - a. Whereas in the past the British would not promise to support independence for the Frontier Areas, now they will.
  - b. Whereas in the past the British had thought the Frontier Areas people were not as advanced as the Burmans, now they have realised that all ethnic groups are at an equal level.
  - c. Whereas in the past the British did not trust the Burmans to treat the Frontier Areas people fairly, now they believe that there will be no problems between the ethnic groups.
  - d. Whereas in the past the British had treated the Frontier Areas and Burma Proper as separate, now they will treat them as one country.

### Reasoning

1. Read D40. How do you think the KCO leaders who wrote it would have responded if they had read these secret telegrams in 1946?
2. How do these telegrams show a change from the “divide and rule” policy expressed in D16 and D18? Look at the timeline. What world events do you think were most important in causing a change in this policy?

## 16. Why did some ethnic groups want to remain under British protection?

Read  D40;  B-Ba U Gyi, B-San C. Po; and  T-1942-1945

### Comprehension

1. According to the KCO, the British
  - a. protected Karens from Burmans.
  - b. helped Karen people develop.
  - c. kept law and order.
  - d. all of the above.

### Reasoning

1. The British never responded to this message from the KCO. Why do you think that is?
2. Do you think most Karen people shared the KCO's attitude toward the British in 1945? How about now? Why would their attitudes change or remain the same over time?

## 17. How did the treaties of independence prolong British influence?

Read  D52;  B-Ba Tin, B-BCP; and  T-1947, Anglo-Burmese Treaties.

### Comprehension

1. Infer what kind of relationship Thakin Ba Tin thinks Burma should have with Britain:
  - a. Burma should revolt to become economically and militarily independent of Britain.
  - b. Burma should maintain friendly diplomatic relations with Britain.
  - c. Burma should declare war on Britain.
  - d. Burma should stay connected to Britain's banking system and army temporarily.

### Reasoning

1. Given the details of the Anglo-Burmese treaties in the Timeline, do you agree with Thakin Ba Tin's belief that Burma did not truly become independent of Britain in 1948? Why or why not?
2. Did the Anglo-Burmese Treaties make the British a neo-colonial, instead of a colonial power? Explain.



■ **Burma Communist Party (BCP/CPB)** formed in 1939 by Soe Aung San and others. The BCP split in 1946 when the Red Flag Faction went underground to fight the AFPFL. Henceforth the BCP under Than Tun was known as the White Flag Faction; it later revolted as well.

## 18. How did the British interpretation of Burma's history influence Burma?

Read 📖 D80; 😊 B-Khin Nyunt.

### Comprehension

1. According to Gen. Khin Nyunt, one result of British colonisation is that
  - a. Burmese historians had the chance to learn from foreign historians.
  - b. Burmese people did not know how long and glorious their history really was.
  - c. foreign historians collected facts that Burmese historians can use today.
  - d. foreign historians wrote accurate and unbiased accounts of history.

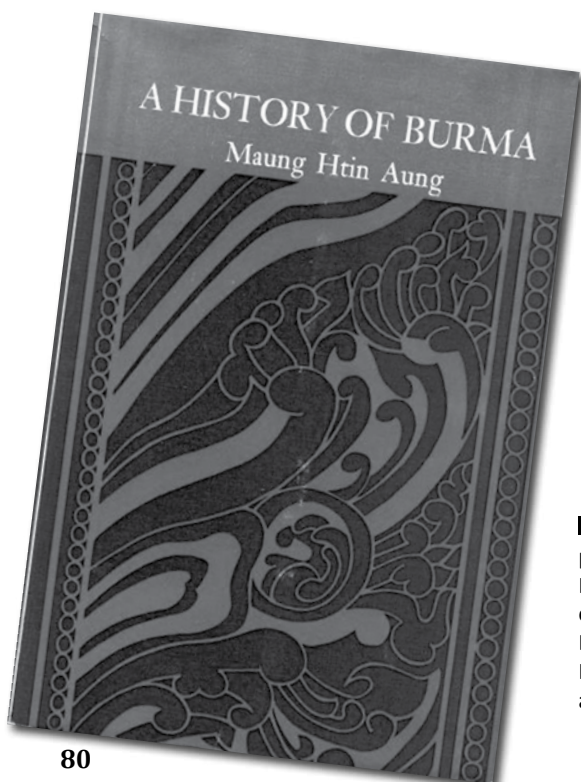
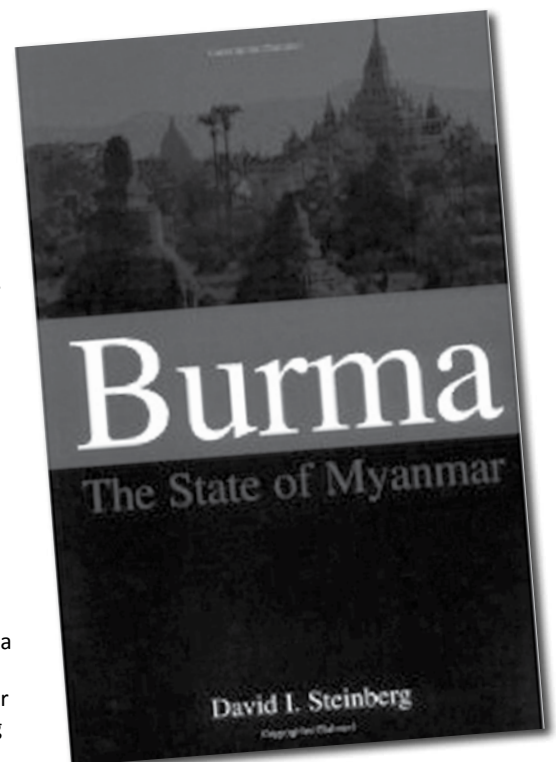
### Reasoning

1. Do you think British historians wrote inaccurate histories of Burma (for instance, D22, D37)? If so, did they do this on purpose or by accident?
2. Do you agree with Gen. Khin Nyunt that Burmese people who write histories of Burma are less biased than foreigners? Why or why not?

■ **'The River of Lost Footsteps'** (above) (2008) - covers a wide narrative of Burmese history from early civilizations to the modern Era. Written by Thant Myint-U a Burmese-American Historian, born in the US and educated at Harvard and Cambridge University. He is the grandson of former Secretary-General of the UN, U Thant.

■ **'Burma: The State of Myanmar'** (2001) - takes a critical look at the political, social and economic landscape of Burma since the popular uprising in 1988. Written by David L. Steinberg,

■ **'A History of Burma'** (1967) - provides a general overview of Burma History, including a particular focus on the rise and fall of the three major Burmese empires. Written by Maung Htin Aung, a Burmese-born scholar and historian.



# Review

1. Re-read D18, D21 and D37. What biases do they contain? Do you think the authors were aware of their biases? Why or why not?
2. Re-read D13, D16, D17, D21, D25, D37, D40 and D43. How did British policy make different ethnic groups living in Burma more united, and how did it divide them? How can the effects of these policies be seen today?
3. Did British rule have mostly positive or negative effects on Burma? Use information from the documents you read in this Theme to infer the beliefs of the people mentioned in the chart.

D21	A British official: (positive) "We British have brought law and order to Burma!"	A Burmese villager: (negative) "We don't want to follow the headman's rules." OR (positive) "I feel safer under British rule."
D19-20	Burmese person in village:	Burmese person in Rangoon:
D21	Christian convert Thang Tsin:	Non-Christian village headman:
D27	Mother in cartoon:	Daughter in cartoon:
D33	A Burmese person who couldn't find a job:	A Chinese person who came to Burma to work:
D23	U Ba Gale:	Pagoda trustee:
D37	U Set:	Collis:
D40	Dr. San C. Po:	Burmese person who wants Karen state to be part of Burma:
D80, D22	Gen. Khin Nyunt:	Cochrane:

4. How do the documents D9, D16, D17, D22, and D52 show the social, political and economic causes and effects of British colonisation of Burma?

	Causes	Effects
Social		
Political		
Economic		

5. How has completing this unit changed your beliefs about British colonisation? How have they stayed the same? Are you more or less likely than before to have "anti-colonial feelings," "internalised colonialism" or "colonial nostalgia"?

Theme

7

# Burmese & Unity Ethnic Self-determination

Ethno ngu st c Groups

S NO-TIBETAN

BETO-BURMAN

Bu  
bal 1. Chin 2.  
4. La Akha Na a)

TAI

Sha ka  
Th

AUSTROAS ATIC

M o W 11 F

CHINES  
KARE



# 1. What have been the relationships among different ethnic groups in Burma?

Most historians believe that the ethnic groups we now consider “Burmese” migrated into the area over the course of hundreds of years. That means the ancestors of all “native” Burmese are from somewhere else. When new groups migrated into the area, they came into contact with the people that had already arrived. Some groups, mostly “plains people” like the Mon, Arakanese, Shan, and Burman, formed large kingdoms and tried to conquer territory and include more people. “Hill people,” like the Chin, Karen, Karenni, Kachin, Wa, and Pa-O were sometimes included in these kingdoms, and at other times were separate from them. All of these groups had different languages, cultures and political systems.

However, many historians believe that in ancient times, ethnicity was not the most important part of people’s identity. If someone asked them, “What kind of person are you?” they might mention their local leader, their family, their village or their occupation before they mentioned their ethnicity. The importance of ethnicity began to rise in the 18th century, when the Konbaung dynasty increased its efforts to convert the people in its territory to Buddhism, have them speak Burmese, and gain their loyalty to the Konbaung king. This process is often called “Burmanisation.”

As you learned in Theme 6, British colonisation changed the relationship of different groups in Burma, by making ethnicity an even more important part of their identity and making them more aware of their differences. However, contact with British, Chinese, Indian and other groups also made some people living within the boundaries of British Burma feel that they had more in common with each other than with those “foreign” groups. They felt they shared a common identity of being Burmese, and that Burma could become a nation that ruled itself.

But what did it mean to be Burmese? Did it mean being a Buddhist from the Burman ethnic group who spoke Burmese language? What about Burman Muslims? What about people with Indian ancestry who had been living in Burma for generations? What about Karens, Kachin, Shans, and all the other groups in the Frontier Areas? Could they, or did they want to be “Burmese”? These were questions that people in Burma tried to answer in the early 20th century.

The belief that you share some good traits in common with other people in your nation (even though you will never meet most of them) is called nationalism. Nationalism may cause some people to believe that they are better than people from other nations. They may become xenophobic (biased against foreigners) or extremist (not willing to consider other beliefs). Or they may simply love their nation and want the people in it to succeed. Often, nationalism emerges when people begin to feel they are oppressed by people they label “foreigners.” But they also have ways to communicate with each other and share their feelings of oppression and nationalism. Therefore, most historians say nationalism appeared in Southeast Asia in the 19th and 20th centuries, when people could publish their ideas in books and newspapers.



■ The Panglong Agreement, as illustrated by the picture above, was signed in 1947 by Gen. Aung San and representatives from Chin, Shan and Kachin ethnicities. It guaranteed basic rights and regional autonomy to these ethnic groups within the newly formed independent Union of Burma.

At the same time as some people were starting to believe they were part of a Burmese nation, others were starting to believe they were part of a Karen, Shan, Karenni, Arakanese, Kachin or other nation. Some non-Burmans joined Burmese nationalist movements, but others started their own movements. Just as Burmese nationalists believed they were oppressed by the British, some other ethnic groups believed they were oppressed by the Burmans.

During this time, people were also trying to define what a nation is. Is it made up of one ethnic group or many? Must a nation have its own country, or can it be part of another land? Does a nation have to share the same genetic background, or is sharing a culture more important? Is national identity a simple matter of which country's passport you hold? Can you be part of two nations at once? Sometimes a national group shares one language, religion, style of dress, appearance, or a common history, but this is not always the case. For example, there are many different ethnic groups, such as Rawang and Lisu, who share a Kachin identity. Chin people speak many different languages. Some Karen people are Christian, while some are Buddhist or animist. Shan people live in several different countries including Burma, Thailand, and China. On the other hand, the United States is a nation made up of people from many different ethnic backgrounds.

These questions about what a nation should be led to debates when Britain was giving Burma independence. Should all the ethnic groups be united under a strong central government? Should there be a federal union in which all ethnic groups have autonomy and self-determination (the right to make decisions for and rule themselves)? In some cases, ethnic minority nationalists felt comfortable joining the Union of Burma, and in other cases they decided to rebel and try to get their



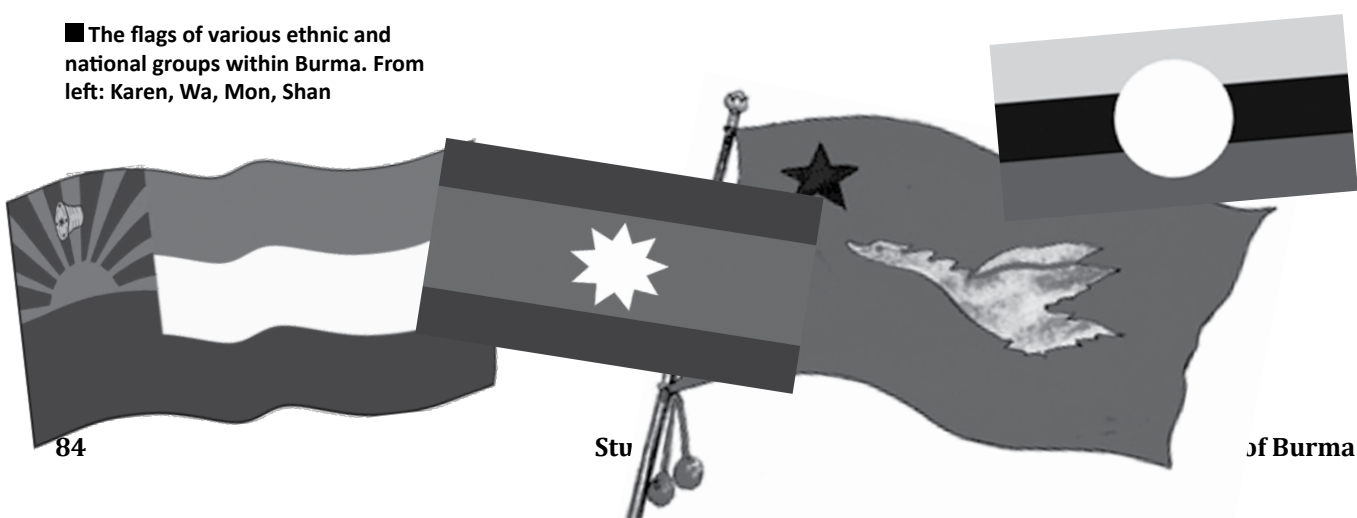
### Factbox

**Kachin State** (above) in its modern form was created as a direct result of the Panglong Agreement in 1947. The state is named after the Kachin, a term that broadly includes a variety of ethnic groups and tribes across the region. Large portions of the state have been controlled by the Kachin Independence Organisation and its armed wing the KIA. They have administered parts of the state with various degrees of autonomy.

own countries. Sometimes, ethnic minority nationalists allied with each other or with other groups that opposed the Burmese government, and at other times they fought each other.

Could there be a Burmese identity that all of the people within Burma's borders felt they were part of? In this Theme, you will answer this question for yourself and come to your own conclusions about how to balance Burmese unity with ethnic self-determination.

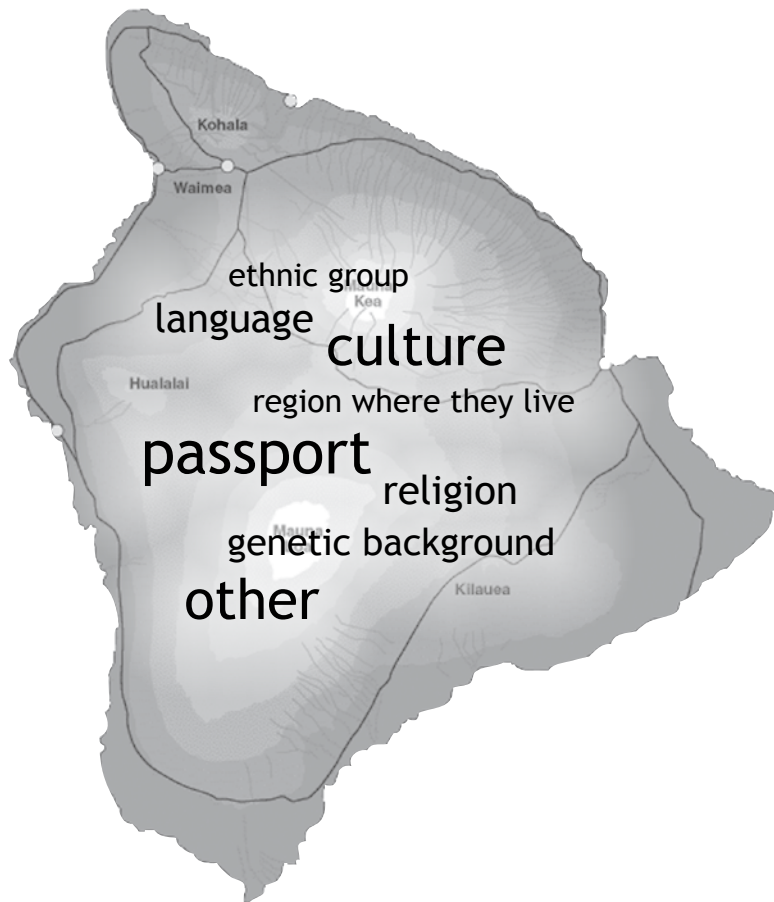
■ The flags of various ethnic and national groups within Burma. From left: Karen, Wa, Mon, Shan



## Comprehension

### 1. Decide if each statement is true, false or not stated according to the text.

- Burmans are the only group native to Burma.
- Shans arrived first in Burma.
- Ethnicity was not an important part of people's identity at all before British colonisation.
- Ethnicity has always been the most important part of people's identity.
- Ethnicity became a more important part of people's identity during colonisation.
- Burmanisation started in the 12th century.
- Burmese nationalism emerged in the 18th century.
- All people in Burma joined Burmese nationalist movements.
- Books and newspapers helped to spread nationalism.



## Reasoning

### 1. Make your own definition of a nation by circling the top three things from the list above that all its people must have in common.

### 2. Would you consider these people Burmese? Why or why not?

- A person of Chinese ethnic background whose family has lived in Mandalay since 1825.
- A child of Burman ethnic background whose parents resettled in Norway in 2005 and is a Norwegian citizen, speaks only Norwegian, and has never been to Burma.
- A person whose English father and Chin mother were both born in Burma in the 1920s, but who moved to the US as a young child and speaks Chin as a first language.
- An ethnically Mon person who was born in Thailand in 1970, but whose ancestors were part of the Hanthawadi kingdom, which occupied parts of present day Thailand and Burma.
- A person of Indian ethnicity who was born in Rangoon in 1925 (grandparents had come from India in the 1800s), speaks Burmese as a first language, and has never been to India.
  - A Rohingya person whose family has lived in Burma for two generations, who fled to Bangladesh as a refugee in 1999.
  - A Karen Christian born in 1985 in Karen state who speaks only Karen language.
  - A Karenni child born in a refugee camp in Thailand, whose parents fled Burma in 2007.

### 3. Which nation or nations do you feel part of? Why? How does this influence your political views?

### 4. Are there any points in the text on pages 83-84 that you disagree with? Why? Do you think the author of this text has any biases?

# 2. Hill tribes & the plains people:

**What was their relationship in ancient times?**

Read  D1; and  T-3000-1000BCE.

## Comprehension

### 1. This *hta* and proverb

- refer to a time before agriculture and describe how the Karen were oppressed by others after they started cultivating rice.
- refer to a time in which Karen people had a powerful kingdom that was destroyed by outsiders.
- refer to a time in which the Karen had a war and split into different groups.
- refer to a time in which Karen people oppressed the people living on the plains.

2. Fill in the the chart to contrast the lives of plains people and hill people in ancient times, based on what you can infer from D1. The first has been filled in as an example.



	Plains People	Hill People
<b>Ethnic group</b>	Ethnic groups including Burman, Shan, Mon and Arakanese	<i>Ethnic groups including Karens, Kachins, and Chins</i>
<b>Living area</b>	Lived in the plains or in river valleys	
<b>Religion</b>	Practised Buddhism	
<b>Political organisation</b>	Founded kingdoms and empires	
<b>Agriculture</b>	Established permanent, irrigated rice fields and built cities around them	

## Reasoning

- Imagine you live in the hills. You hear that a powerful king from the plains is coming to take away the rice you have grown and bring some people back to the capital. Would you a) stay where you are and give the ruler the rice; b) fight back against the ruler; c) run away; or d) some other option? Which option do you think most hill people chose in that kind of situation, and why?
- Why do you think plains people like the Burmans tried to conquer hill people like the Karens in ancient times? How are conflicts between the Tatmadaw and the KNU different today?
- Burmese government school textbooks show kings like Alaunghpaya and Anawrahta as heroes who united many ethnic groups in one powerful empire. How do you think Karen textbooks describe these kings? Which view is closer to your own perspective, and why?

### 3. Ethnic groups in ancient times: What were the relationships like between the different groups?

Read  D5- the alliance with the Arakanese king;  B-Narapati, B-Ali Khan;

 T-1433-1784, T-1364-1555; look at  M1.

#### Comprehension

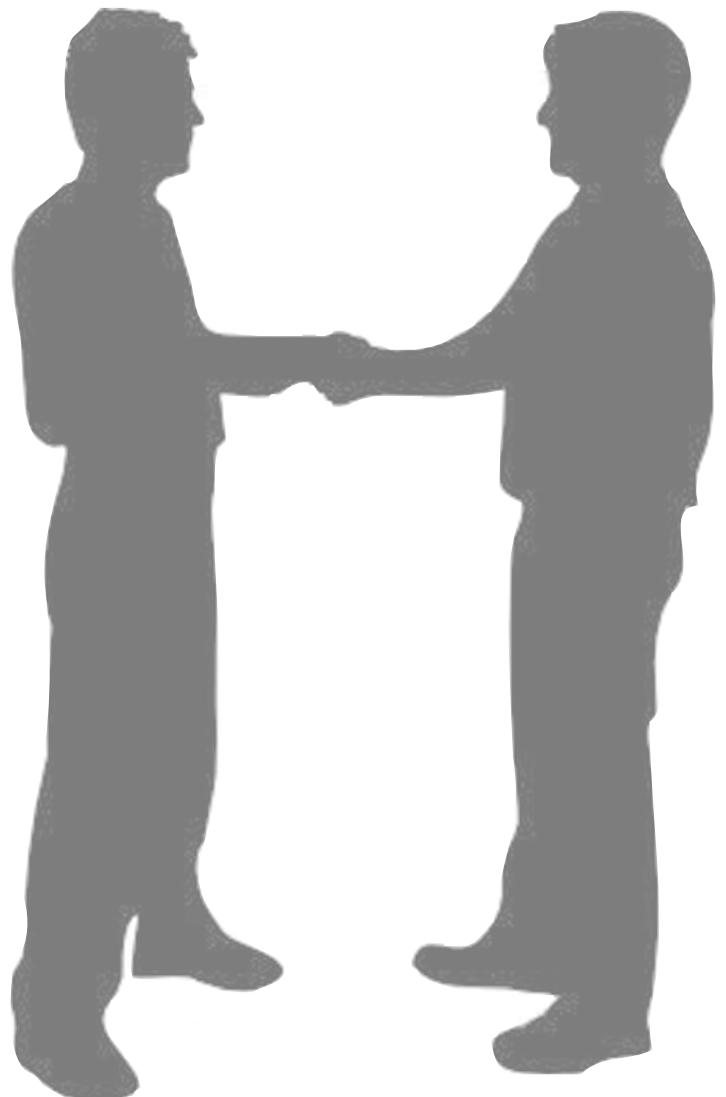
1. Which statement best represents the relationship between King Narapati and King Ali Khan described in this passage?
  - a. King Ali Khan is more powerful and wants to take over King Narapati's land.
  - b. King Narapati is more powerful and wants to take over King Ali Khan's land.
  - c. King Narapati and King Ali Khan are enemies with equal power.
  - d. King Narapati and King Ali Khan are allies with equal power.
2. This passage provides strongest evidence for the theory that
  - a. different ethnic groups sometimes coexisted peacefully in ancient times.
  - b. different ethnic groups always coexisted peacefully in ancient times.
  - c. Burmans never took over ethnic minority people's land in ancient times.
  - d. Burmans always tried to take over ethnic people's land in ancient times.



■ **Dukkanthein Paya** formed part of the Arakanese kingdom of Dyanyawadi, known today as Mrauk-U.

#### Reasoning





1. History books often include information about wars between different ethnic groups or tell stories of one kingdom taking over another. However, they do not usually include information about peaceful coexistence between different groups. Why do you think that is?








**~Mainland Southeast Asia~  
(1540)**



Read  D5-about Tayashwehti cutting his hair like a Mon;  B-Tabinshwehti;  T-1287-1539, T-1486-1762; and look at  M1.

## Comprehension

1. According to this passage, why does Tabinshwehti cut his hair in Mon style?
  - a. To show he is more powerful than the Mon.
  - b. To create Mon-Burman unity.
  - c. He thinks that style is more beautiful.
  - d. To please his Mon wife.
2. This passage provides strongest evidence for the theory that
  - a. in ancient times, people could only belong to the ethnic group they were born into.
  - b. in ancient times, people could change their ethnic identity by choosing to dress, eat, speak, and style their hair differently.
  - c. in ancient times, all ethnic groups dressed and styled their hair the same way.
  - d. in ancient times, there was no difference between the customs of ethnic groups.

Read  D6- on boundary with Shan area;  B-Sandalinka, B-Minyaza, and B-Zwasawke; and  T-1254-1448.

## Comprehension

1. Which of these theories could you support based on the evidence in D6?
  - a. Shan people at Mohnyin always wanted to be part of the Ava Kingdom.
  - b. The boundaries between kingdoms changed based on the power of the ruler.
  - c. Rulers of the Ava Kingdom appointed local officials in outlying areas so they could control those areas.
  - d. Minyaza gave King Zawswake good advice.

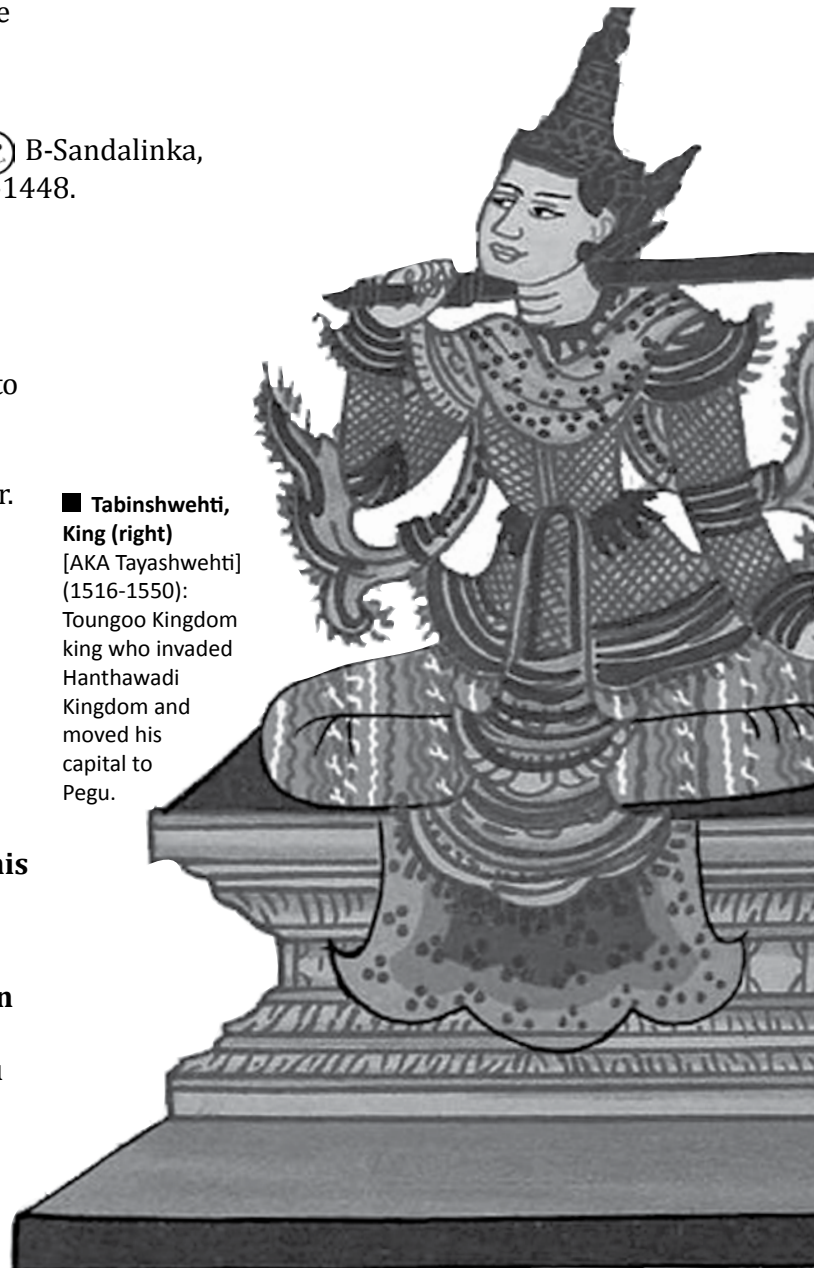
## Reasoning

1. How might the Mohnyin Sawbwa's perspective be different from the one you read in D6? How would he explain his relationship with King Zawswake?
2. In D5 and D6, you have read different examples of what relationships between different ethnic groups were like in ancient times. Which one surprised you most? Which one surprised you least? Why? Is there anything else you know about the relationships of ethnic groups in ancient times that is not represented in these documents?

## Reasoning

1. Have you ever changed your hairstyle, way of dressing, way of speaking, or views in order to fit in with people from a different culture? If so, why did you do it? If not, imagine some reasons why you might do that.
2. Some historians use this passage to support the theory that in ancient times, ethnicity was a less important part of people's identity than it is today. If Burmans could become Mons, etc., how would that change your idea about "Burman" kingdoms and "Mon" kingdoms?

■ Tabinshwehti, King (right) [AKA Tayashwehti] (1516-1550): Toungoo Kingdom king who invaded Hanthawadi Kingdom and moved his capital to Pegu.



## 4. The beginnings of Burmese nationalism

Read  D15;  B-Thibaw;  T-1885, T-1885-1890;  M3.




### Comprehension

1. **Why does King Thibaw say the people should fight against the English?**
  - a. If they don't, the King will punish them.
  - b. For the good of the nation.
  - c. So they can get closer to reaching Nirvana.
  - d. So they can get money and rewards.
  - e. To protect Buddhism.
  - f. For the good of King Thibaw himself.
2. **List five words that show King Thibaw's bias against the English.**

### Reasoning

1. **Some historians say that this document was one of the first that shows Burmese nationalism. How could having a "common enemy" (the British) increase Burmese nationalism?**
2. **In the years after the British took over, many people living in the newly annexed territory fought back against the British. Do you think those who resisted did so for Burmese nationalism, nationalism based on another ethnic/national group, or for some other reasons?**

## 5. Nationalists and the Burmese nation: How did colonial era nationalists describe their country?

Read  D28;  B-Dobama Asiayone; and  T-1930s.

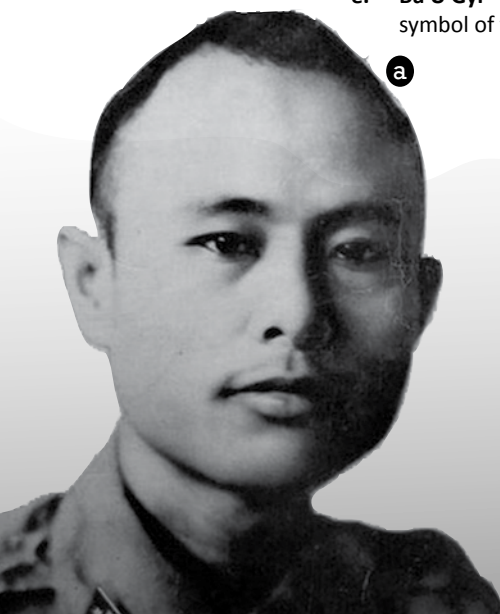
### Comprehension

1. **According to this song, the characteristics of a Burmese person are that s/he**
  - a. is Buddhist.
  - b. speaks Burmese.
  - c. has ancestors who lived at Tagaung.
  - d. has ancestors who fought against Thai and Indian people.
  - e. all of the above.

2. **There is most evidence that the main purpose of the authors of this song and slogan was to**
  - a. inform the British about past Burmese military victories.
  - b. make non-Burman groups feel left out.
  - c. inspire Burmese people to be proud of their heritage and resist the British.
  - d. make Burmese people protest the British through non-violent means.

### Symbols of nationalism


- a. **Aung San** - a popular symbol of independence in Burma
- b. **The Hintha** - a Southeast Asian bird, long associated with Mon nationalism and old Myanmar kingdoms
- c. **The KNU flag** - the de-facto national flag of Karen National Union-controlled Karen state
- d. **The Peacock** - a symbol of Burmese royalty and later of the pro-democracy movement
- e. **Ba U Gyi** - founder of the KCO and leader of the Karen independence movement. Long recognised as a symbol of the ongoing Karen uprising.



## Reasoning

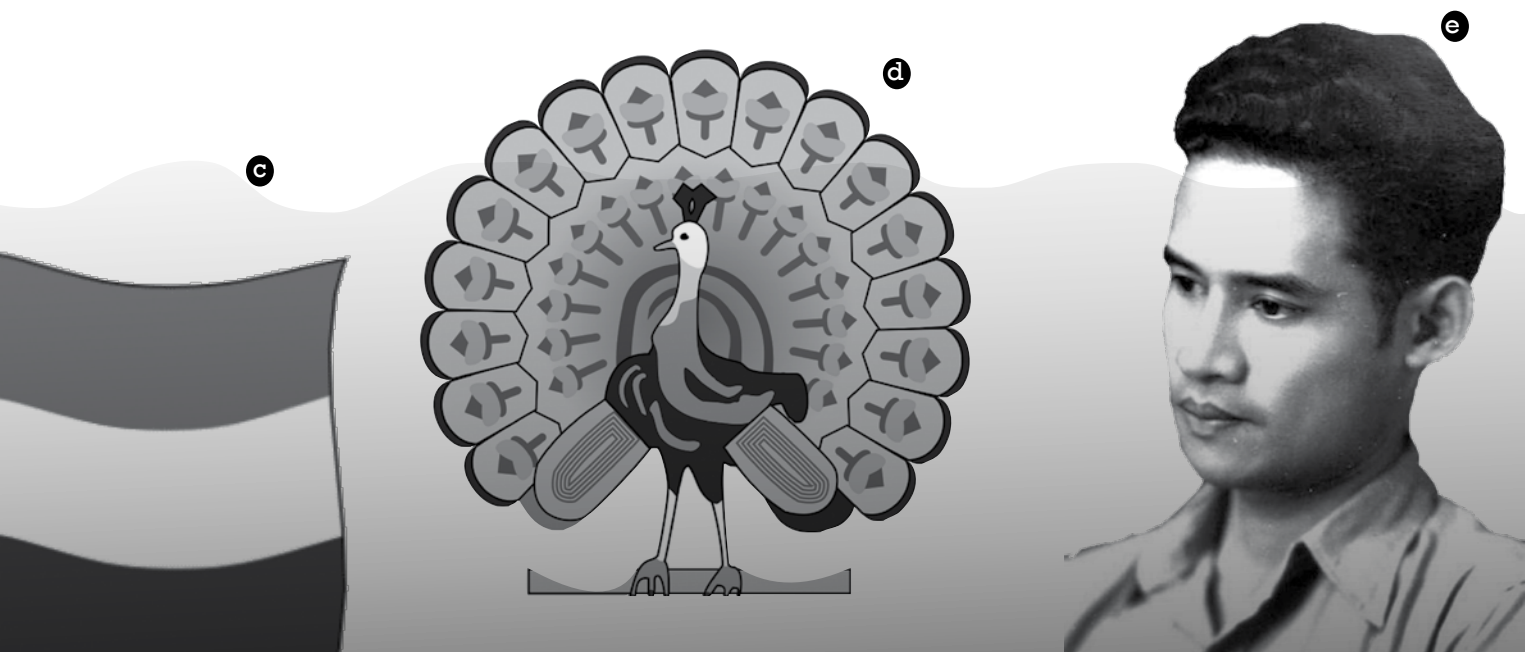
1. Imagine that it is the 1930s, and you are a Chin Christian whose first language is Chin. You do not like the British and you want them to leave your land. Would you have supported Dobama Asiayone if you heard this song? Why or why not?
2. In the 1930s, just like now, some people thought that the word “bama” or “myanma” referred to the Burman ethnic group, while other people thought it referred to the nation of Burma and all people within its boundaries, including the Frontier Areas. Does this song and slogan express Burmese nationalism or Burman nationalism? Why? What are the differences between the two?
3. What do “Bama” and “Myanma” mean to you?

## 6. Why did Karen nationalists want their own state?

Read  D40;  B-San C. Po; B-KCO, B-KNA, B-Ba U Gyi. B-Judson; and  T-1881, T-1942-1945.

### Comprehension

1. Match the quotations from the article with what they imply about why the British should give the Karen their own state.
  - a. “The Karens have faithfully and loyally followed the flag they vowed to fight for, to distant lands, and not merely as evacuees.”
  - b. “Over a hundred years ago, before the British ever set foot in Burma, the Burmese Kings and the Burmese people literally made slaves of the Karens, and persecuted them generally.”
  - c. “This unfortunate, uncalled-for and unprovoked series of bloodshed and persecution has turned the clock back a century in our relationships.”
  1. The British should give the Karen their own state because Burmese people oppressed Karen people in ancient times
  2. The British should give the Karen their own state because Karen soldiers fought on the British side during wars.
  3. The British should give the Karen their own state because violence during WWII caused Karen people to mistrust Burmese people like they did in ancient times.



**2. Label each statement a fact, theory or belief.**

- Karen people have served in British armies.
- Karen people deserve their own state because they are virtuous.
- Violence during WWII caused relationships between Karen and Burmese people to worsen.
- The British were better rulers than the Burmese kings.
- In 1942, the British left Burma.
- Burmese businesspeople have discriminated against Karen businesspeople



**3. Which statement below expresses a generalisation? A stereotype? A bias? Which is a neutral statement?**

- All Karens are faithful and loyal.
- “In every sphere of life the Burmese took the best.”
- “Then came the British, not only as a Liberator, but also as a Guardian Angel, maintaining Law and Order, and preserving Peace and giving Protection.”
- “Geographically and socially, there should be no reason why the Karens and the Burmese living on the same soil for so many centuries could not live harmoniously, and be united and treated as one race.”

**4. Use the information in D40 to find the area that the KCO asked to be made into a Federated Karen State. Shade in this area on Map 9.**

**Reasoning**

- Do you think the KCO expresses an extremist point of view in this document? Is it more or less extreme than the point of view of the Dobama Asiayone in D28? Do you think most ordinary Burmese and Karen people had more or less extreme points of view than those expressed in these documents?
- If you were part of the KCO in 1945, would you have requested a smaller state or a larger one than the one you sketched above?



**Factbox**

**Karen Central Organisation (KCO)** formed by leaders including San C. Po and Ba U Gyi. in 1942 to protect Karen people’s interests and cooperate with the Burmese government to prevent inter-ethnic violence. In 1947 it split into the KNU and KYO.

■ **San C. Po, Dr.** (left)(1870-1946): Sgaw Karen Christian doctor, author, and political leader, active in KCO





## 8. Aung San's vision: A nation of many ethnic groups

Read D45; B-Aung San; T-1945-1948.

### Comprehension

- 1. According to Gen. Aung San, a nation is a group of races that shares**

  - a language
  - a territory
  - a common history
  - an economy
  - all of the above.
- 2. Which group(s) meet Gen. Aung San's definition of a nation?**

  - Karen
  - Burmese
  - Kachin
  - Karenni
  - All of the above
- 3. According to Gen. Aung San, nations should not exercise their right to self-determination or secession if**

  - doing so would leave the nation vulnerable to outside attack.
  - doing so would cause a war.
  - doing so would hurt the larger cause of democracy.
  - doing so would cause the nation to become communist.
- 4. Match the causes (on the left) with the effects (on the right). After you have finished, put them in the correct order.**

a. If national minorities are content	1. then national minorities will be content.
b. If there is democracy in Burma	2. then national minorities will have freedom of language, education, thought and movement
c. If national minorities have freedom of language, education, thought and movement	3. then national minorities will not want to secede

### Reasoning

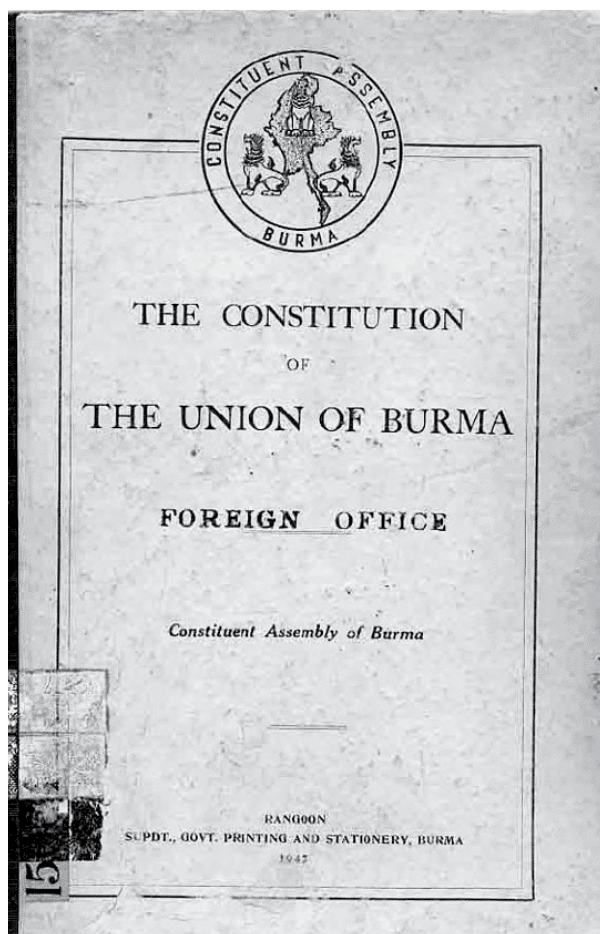
- 1. Consider the answers to questions 1-4 above. Which of Gen. Aung San's points do you agree with? Why?**
- 2. Which points above do you think the KCO would have agreed with, based on what they say in D40? Which would the Shan, Kachin and Chin representatives who signed the Panglong Agreement have agreed with?**

## 9. The 1947 Constitution: Balancing power between ethnic minority groups and central government

Read  D46-preamble, Chapter 1, Karen State, and Right of Secession; and  T-1947 Constitution.

### Comprehension

1. A state may secede
  - a. after five years.
  - b. only if it is one of the newly incorporated states.
  - c. only if the Union of Burma does not fulfil its needs.
  - d. after ten years.
2. This Constitution
  - a. sets the boundaries of Karen state.
  - b. calls for a Special Commission to determine whether Karen people want to join the Union as Karen State.
  - c. denies the right of Karen people to form a Karen State.
  - d. calls for a Special Commission to determine whether Shan and Karenni people want there to be a Karen State.
3. According to the Constitution, Burma is a
  - a. Sovereign Independent Republic.
  - b. Federal Union.
  - c. Dominion of Britain.
  - d. Socialist Democracy.



■ The English language version of the Constitution of the Union of Burma.

### Reasoning

1. Why do you think the Constitution postponed the decision about making a Karen State? What problems could this postponement have caused?
2. Under the 1947 Constitution, the federal government controls national defence, external affairs, inter-state communications, most financial matters and other general matters, while States control internal security, some internal financial and communication matters, education and health. Do you think this separation of powers accords with the “full autonomy in internal administration” promised in the Panglong Agreement? Why or why not? Which powers would you give to the states, and which to the federal government?

## 10. How did U Nu describe the development of the Union of Burma?

Read  D49 (below);  B-Nu;  M2, M5, M7.



“ Protected by the sea and by mighty mountain ranges, we in Burma had pursued our own way of life till the all-pervading West intruded on our history, but on this auspicious day, on which we regain our independence, we need harbor no resentment. [...] [W]e have gained in knowledge of the world and have had time and opportunity to align our civilisation and our way of life to what the world demands though we have been careful not to lose in that process our national individuality and the principles that we hold dear. Perhaps the main disadvantage of our loss of independence was that the natural process by which the several races of Burma were integrating into a nation was retarded and, until recently, we were divided administratively from our brethren of the Frontier Areas. [...] There is no room for disunity or discord- racial, communal, political or personal- and I now call upon all citizens of the Burma Union to unite and to labor without regard to self and in the interest of the country to which we all belong.”

■ U Nu's Independence Day Speech, January 4, 1948. U Nu (left) made this speech in his role as first Prime Minister of Burma.

### Comprehension

#### 1. What is the most accurate summary of U Nu's speech?

- The West is responsible for creating all the problems in Burma. Now that the British are gone, there are no problems in Burma.
- Burma was previously more united, but the British created divisions between ethnic groups. All people in Burma should unite.
- On independence day, all people from different ethnic groups should unite and help build a strong country.
- Burma has many different ethnic groups. All of these groups are part of Burma, including the Frontier Areas.


#### Factbox

**U Nu (above-left) (1907-1995):** Burmese nationalist political and military leader and author, devout Buddhist; member of Dobama Asiayone, Prime Minister of AFPFL government, 1948-1956, 1957-1958, 1960-1962. Leader of APFLF's Clean Faction. Deposed in 1962 coup, led armed resistance group in 1970s, active in 1988 demonstrations

### Reasoning

- Compare M5 and M7. Do the changes from M5 to M7 illustrate U Nu's point that the ethnic groups in Burma would have integrated into one nation if the British had not colonised? Why or why not?
- What do you think U Nu meant when he said that there is "no room for discord"? Does that mean no room for disagreement and discussion, or only no room for violence?

## 11. Who has the law defined as a Burmese citizen?

Read  D51 and D68.

### Comprehension



1. Look back at the list of people mentioned in Reasoning Question 2 of Theme 7, Section 1. Which would be considered citizens according to D51? Which would be considered citizens according to D68 (assuming they were not citizens when the law came into effect)?

### Reasoning

1. Which citizenship law do you think is more suitable? Why?
2. Why do you think the citizenship law changed between 1947 and 1982?
3. Some countries, such as the US, have laws that automatically make anyone born in the country a citizen. On the other hand, since 1982 Burma has very strict citizenship laws. What are the advantages of each system?



## 12. What was the Shan leaders' vision for a federal union?

Read  D59; and  T-1962.




### Comprehension

1. Label each statement as true or false according to the Shan Steering Committee.
  - a. It is possible to fix the 1947 Constitution by making a few minor changes.
  - b. The States should control Foreign Affairs and Union Defence.
  - c. Shan leaders accepted the 1947 Constitution because they were in a hurry to get independence.
  - d. Shan State cannot be economically viable without help from the Union of Burma.

### Reasoning

1. Do you think U Nu was right to say that he would consider the Shan Federal Proposal? Why or why not?
2. When U Ne Win took over the country in a coup shortly after this Proposal was submitted, he said he was trying to prevent the Union from disintegrating. Do you think that if the changes recommended in this proposal had been made, that the Union could have fallen apart? Why or why not?

### 13. What were ethnic minority nationalists' attitudes toward Burmans?

Read  D67;  B-Ba Zahn, B-NDF; and  T-1948, Ethnic Minority Alliances.

#### Comprehension

1. According to Mahn Ba Zahn, the true enemy of the KNU was
  - a. Burman workers and farmers.
  - b. Burmans in general.
  - c. the AFPFL government.
  - d. other ethnic minority groups.

#### Reasoning

1. Have you met people who have the kind of “narrow nationality” or extremist attitude that Mahn Ba Zahn describes? What do you think causes people to hold such attitudes, and is it possible to change them in the ways Mahn Ba Zahn suggests? Why or why not?

### 14. The Manerplaw Agreement: A vision for federal union

Read  D75;  B-Mya, B-Shwe Kyin, B-Sein Win, B-NLD-LA, B-DAB, B-NCGUB, B-KNU; and  T-1994-1995.

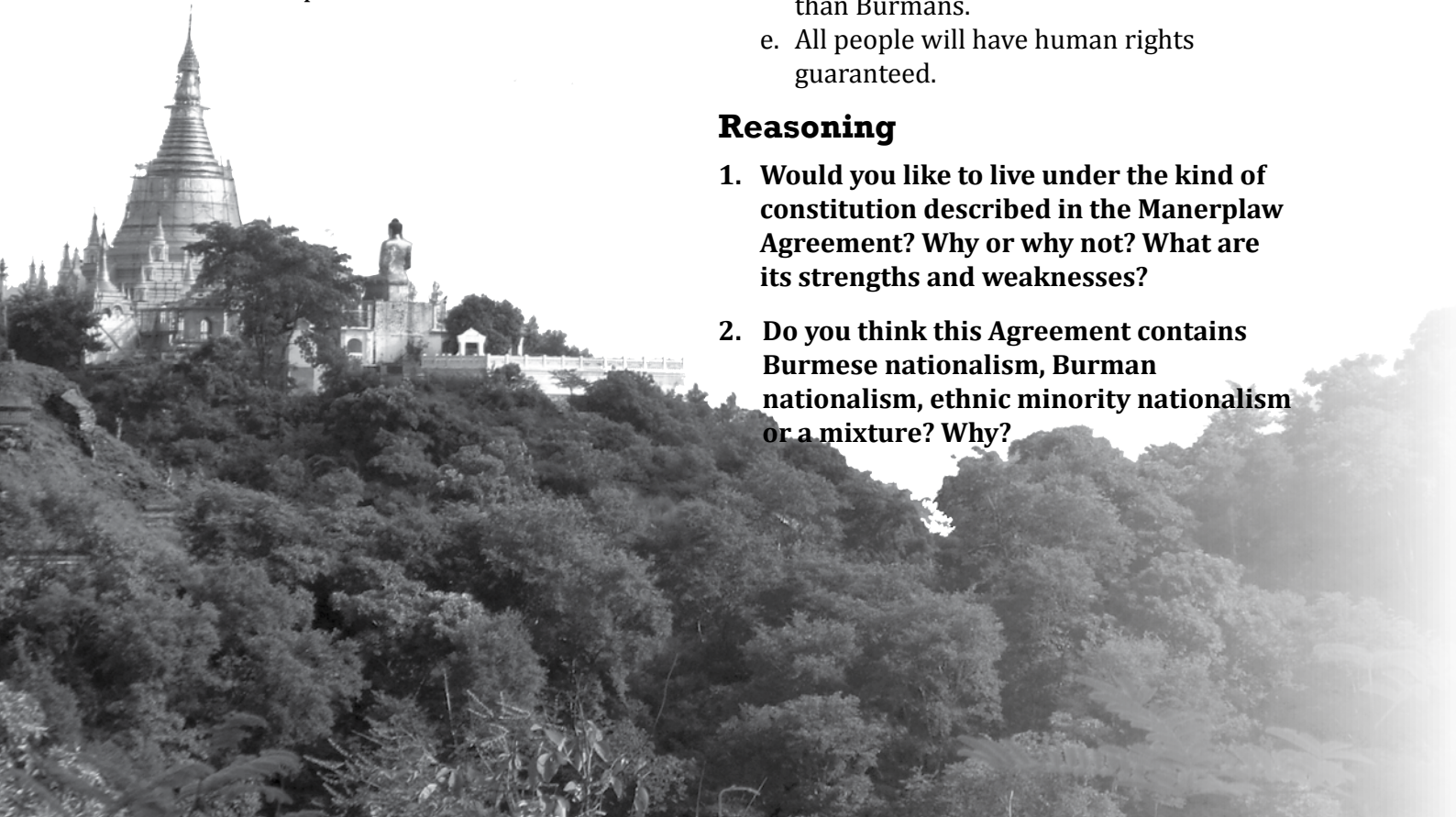
#### Comprehension

1. Place the steps described in the Manerplaw Agreement in sequence.
  - a. Draw up a Constitution.
  - b. Topple SLORC.
  - c. Hold a national convention.
  - d. Establish peace and freedom.

2. Which of these characteristics will the new Constitution have?
  - a. The Burmans will not have a national state.
  - b. There will be a federal union.
  - c. Military leaders will run the government.
  - d. Ethnic minorities will have more power than Burmans.
  - e. All people will have human rights guaranteed.

#### Reasoning

1. Would you like to live under the kind of constitution described in the Manerplaw Agreement? Why or why not? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
2. Do you think this Agreement contains Burmese nationalism, Burman nationalism, ethnic minority nationalism or a mixture? Why?








## 15. What have smaller ethnic groups asked for from the central government?



■ (above -top) UWSA troops in Pangkram.  
(above-bottom) The flag of 'Wa-state,' the name given to the territory in Burma controlled by the UWSA in northern Shan state

Read  D94;  B-UWSA, B-Bao Yu Xiang;  
and  T-2009.

### Factbox

**United Wa State Army (UWSA)** formed in 1989 to protect the rights of Wa people through military means. Currently they are the largest ethnic army in Burma. They made a ceasefire with SLORC in 1989 but have since resumed fighting after refusing to join the tatmadaw-administered Border Guard Force.

### Comprehension

1. Which of these are the UWSA's demands?
  - a. For the central government to invest more to develop infrastructure in Wa areas.
  - b. For the central government to take control of mineral resources in Wa areas.
  - c. For conflicts to be solved peacefully.
  - d. For all members of UWSA to have immunity from prosecution for crimes they committed before joining the BGF.
  - e. For the UWSA to pay taxes to the central government.
  - f. For qualified Burman people to be brought from Yangon to run local government offices in Wa areas.

### Reasoning

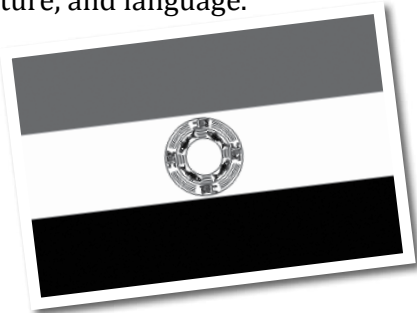
1. Which of the UWSA's demands do you think the government is most likely to accept, and why? Which are they likely to reject? Which demands do you think are reasonable?
2. What difficulties do smaller ethnic groups such as the Wa face when trying to secure their rights that larger groups like the Shan and Karen might not face?
3. Do you think the BGF is a good solution to armed conflict? Why or why not?

## 16. Nationalism in exile: How have ethnic minority groups promoted this?

Read  D97;  B-KNPP; and  T-1980s, T-1990s-2000s, T-2007.

### Comprehension

1. Choose the most accurate summary of the KNPP's message.
  - a. Karenni people need to take responsibility for the difficulties they have faced.
  - b. Karennis should preserve their culture despite the atrocities by chauvinistic Burmans.
  - c. It is sad that Karennis have had to leave Burma because of fighting.
  - d. The Karenni people value their identity, culture, and language.



### Reasoning

1. How is the KNPP's message different from Mahn Ba Zahn's message in D67? How is it similar? Which is more extremist? Which message do you prefer?
2. What are some of the challenges of preserving cultural identity in exile?



■ The flag of the KNPP. (right) troops of the Karenni Army (KA), the armed wing of the KNPP

## Review

1. How were political relations between ethnic groups different in kingdoms (D1, D5 and D6) than they were under parliamentary democracy (D46)?
2. Compare D15 with D49 to analyse how Burmese nationalism has changed from the beginning to the end of the colonial era. How are King Thibaw's and U Nu's attitudes toward the British and toward their own people different and similar?
3. D28, the Dobama song and slogan, expressed the Burmese nationalism of the 1930s. How would you rewrite them for today in order to be more inclusive of different ethnic groups?
4. Look back at D45, General Aung San's address to the AFPFL Convention. Have the conditions he described in which national minorities would be contented been realised? What advice would he have for those who rule Burma today?
5. Look back at D40, D43, D59, D67, D94 and D97. How have the demands of ethnic minority nationalists and their attitudes toward Burmans changed over time, and why? How might the different situations facing these groups have influenced the demands they made?
6. Compare and contrast the Panglong Agreement (D44), the 1947 Constitution (46) and the Manerplaw Agreement (D75).
7. How has completing this unit changed your perspective on what it means to be "Burmese"? How about your view of ethnic minority nationalism and self-determination? How have your beliefs about these issues stayed the same?

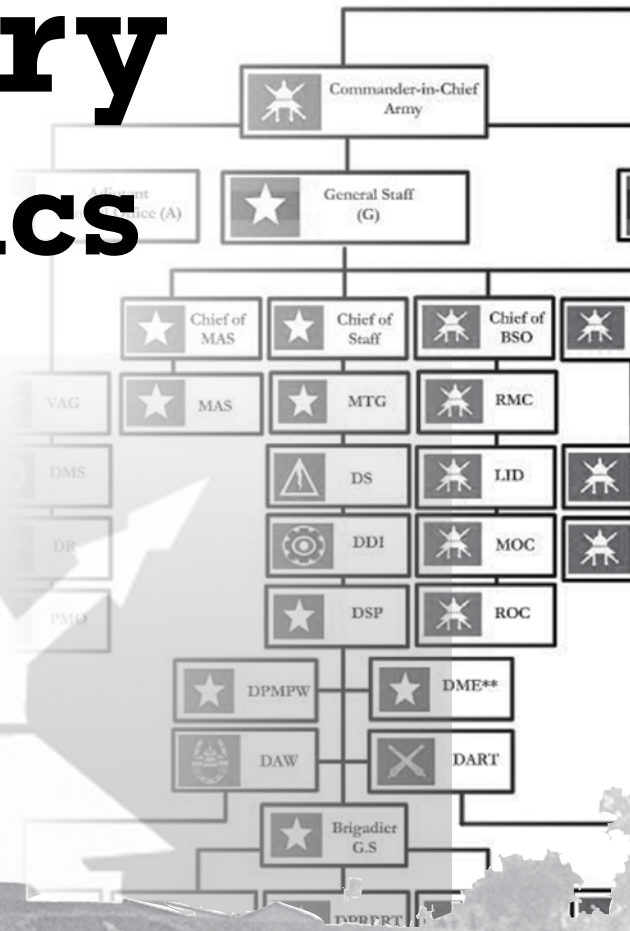


Theme

8



# Military Politics



IN  
EFFECTIVE  
BURMA



# 1. The Army in society: What has been its role?

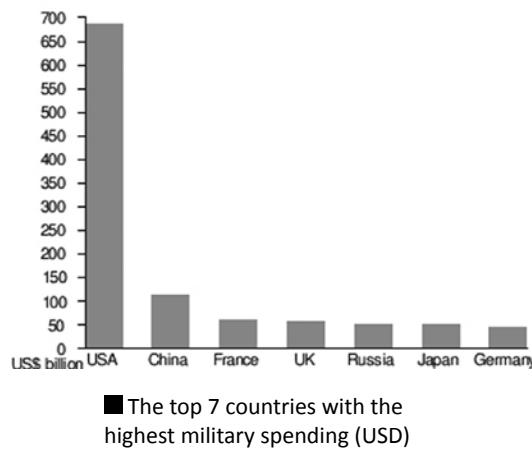
Most countries today have a military, but there are many beliefs about what its role should be. One idea is militarism, the belief that a country should have a strong army to defend its national interests. Many militarists also believe that the army should play a role in the government. An opposite view is pacifism, the belief that military force should never be used for any reason. Many people have beliefs in the middle between these two extremes. They believe that military force should be used only in certain situations.

Throughout history, armies have been used for various purposes. Armies can be used for expansionism, to get more territory. They can be used defensively, to protect against outside threats. Armies can also be used strategically to make enemies afraid. Finally, armies can be used domestically to control the population of their own country, especially in circumstances of civil war.

In Burma, the role of the army in society has changed over time. In ancient times, kingdoms built up armies to defend their interests and expand their territory. In the colonial era, the British built up an army that they used both within their empire and outside of it. Since Burma's army was founded during WWII, its role has been controversial. For instance, there was conflict between the Burmese Independence Army and Karen and Burman villagers during the war. Various people in the army were also

accused of assassination or murder. Since the late 1950s, the Burmese Military has played a key role in government. In 1962 and 1988, there were coups in which the military seized power. The Burmese Military has also been accused of committing human rights violations against Burmese people, especially against women, children, and ethnic minorities.

In order to understand the choices Burmese people have made in defining the role of the military, it may be helpful to compare Burma to other countries. Some countries, such as Costa Rica, have no army at all. Instead, of spending money on an army, the Costa Rican government provides free university education to all citizens. In other countries, such as Israel, all citizens, both male and female, must serve in the army for several years. The US, which has the highest military spending in the



world, used 4.7% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on the military in 2009. On the other hand, Iceland, which has among the lowest military spending in the world, used only 0.1% of its GDP on the military. How much Burma's government spends on the military is difficult to find out. Estimates range from 5% to 10% of GDP.

In this unit, you will have a chance to analyse the choices rulers have made in using armies in Burma, and to think about what you think is the proper role for the army in society.

Figures from [www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org) and [www.janes.com](http://www.janes.com)


## 1. Match the term on the left with its definition on the right.

a. militarism	1. the belief that there should never be war for any reason
b. pacifism	2. the belief that a powerful army is necessary
c. expansionism	3. trying to prevent enemies from attacking
d. use of army domestically	4. trying to intimidate enemies by showing great military power without using it
e. use of army defensively	5. trying to control people inside a country who are rebelling against the government
f. use of army strategically	6. using army to get more land

## Reasoning

1. From what you know of Burmese history, in what situations has the army been used for expansionism? In what situations has it been used defensively or domestically? Do you agree with these decisions to use the army in these ways? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think different countries give the military such different roles in society? What about a country's situation might influence its decisions about the military?
3. What is your experience with the Burmese army? Have you studied it before, or have you met many soldiers? How do you think your experiences affect your bias towards or against the Burmese military?

## 2. Ancient times: Why were armies important?

Read  D5- on the alliance with the Arakanese king;  B-Kala, B-Narapati, B-Ali Khan; and  T-1433-1784, T-1364-1555.

### Comprehension

1. Which of the following can you infer from D5?
  - a. U Yazathinkyan told King Narapati to bring many elephants and horses because he thought the King Ali Khan might try to trick them and they needed defences.
  - b. He wanted to give elephants and horses to King Ali Khan as a gift.
  - c. He wanted to show King Ali Khan that the Kingdom of Ava was just as great as Mrauk-U.
  - d. He had 1500 elephants.

### Elephants of war

Across the region, Elephants were used as important tools for war. Both Burma and Thailand deployed elephants during their military campaigns.

In this period, it was common practice for the leaders of opposing armies to fight each other personally. As was the case when Burma invaded the Siam kingdom of Ayutthaya

An elephant's size and charge meant they were a fearful presence on the battlefield. Many troops on the opposing side did not want to fight at the sight of such a creature.

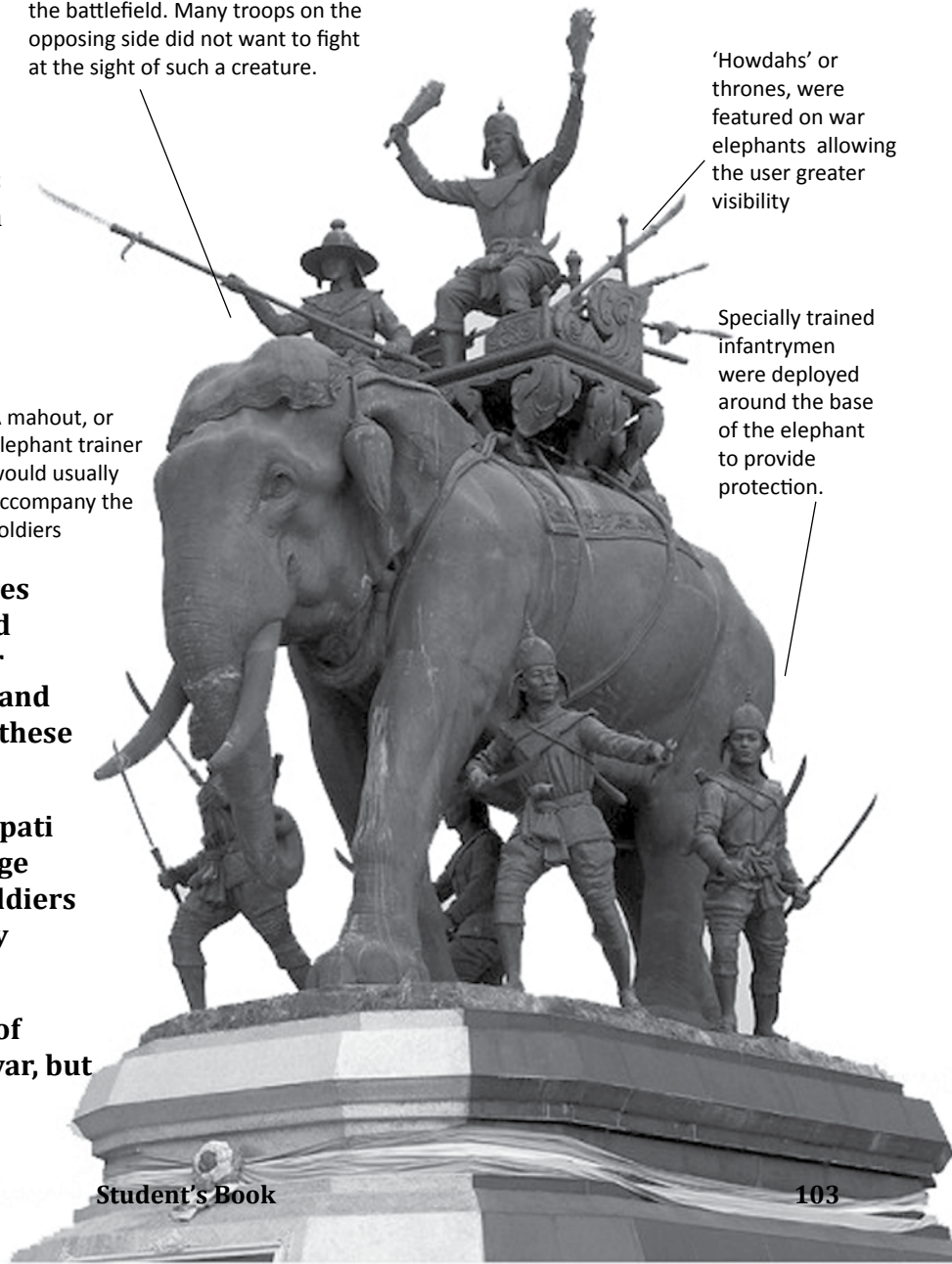
'Howdahs' or thrones, were featured on war elephants allowing the user greater visibility

Specially trained infantrymen were deployed around the base of the elephant to provide protection.




A mahout, or elephant trainer would usually accompany the soldiers

### Reasoning

1. Do you believe that the figures for the number of troops and elephants is correct? Why or why not? Why would U Kala and other historians exaggerate these numbers?
2. How do you think King Narapati and other kings got such large armies? Do you think the soldiers wanted to fight, or were they forced? Why?
3. How does D5 show the role of armies not only in making war, but also in making alliances?



### 3. Colonial Era: How did the British form their army?

Read  D25;  B-Enriquez;  T-1920s.



■ British soldiers in Burma during WW2

#### Comprehension

1. Enriquez wants to recruit Kachin soldiers to the British army mostly because
  - a. Kachins will be most useful to the British empire as soldiers.
  - b. the British want to separate ethnic minorities from Burmans.
  - c. Kachins have volunteered for military service.
  - d. he wants the Kachins to benefit from the education they will get in the army.


#### Reasoning

1. If Burmese people had the power to form their own national army in the 1920s, how do you think it would have been similar or different to the British Empire's army that Enriquez describes?

### 4. World War II: Why were there conflicts between the BIA and Karen people?

 B-Ba Maw, B-BIA;  T-1939-1945, T-1942-1945.




#### Comprehension

1. Decide if each statement is true or false according to your own knowledge about the Myaungmya conflict between the BIA and Karens during WWII. If you are not sure, write "not sure."
  - a. Karen people were hiding weapons that the British had left them in order to fight back against the Japanese and the BIA.
  - b. While BIA soldiers attacked Karens, Karens did not fight back against Burmese civilians.
  - c. BIA soldiers mostly started the conflicts that occurred.
  - d. BIA soldiers learned torture techniques from the Japanese that they used against Karen people.
  - e. Burmese and Karen people are both to blame for the violence that took place.
2. Read  D64. Decide if each statement above is true or false according to Ba Maw.

#### Reasoning

1. Did reading this document change your ideas about whether the statements above are true or false? Why or why not?
2. Ba Maw wrote this book 25 years after the Myaungmya incident occurred. Do you trust his memory of what people did and said? Why or why not?
3. What biases would you expect Ba Maw to have? Do you find these biases in his writing?

## 5. The assassination of General Aung San: What was the role of the military?

Read  D47;  B-Laithwaite, B-Fowler, B-Aung San, B-Saw, B-Nu, B-Ne Win, B-Ba Choe, B-Ba Khaing, B-Razak, B-Sam Tun;  T-1947 Assassination.

### Comprehension

1. Label each statement true, false, or not stated according to D47.
  - a. U Saw planned the assassination.
  - b. A witness identified the gunmen as members of the 4th Burma Rifles.
  - c. Thakin Nu was present at the meeting but was uninjured.
  - d. There is suspicion that opposition parties knew about the attack.
  - e. Sao Sam Tun was expected to recover.

### Reasoning

1. This telegram has been used as evidence by some historians to argue that that the British administration, U Nu and/or U Ne Win were involved in planning the assassination. How credible do you find these arguments? Why? What motivations would these groups or individuals have had for wanting Gen. Aung San and other AFPFL politicians dead?



■ (left) Gen. Aung San and the first delegation of the Burmese army on their visit to Japan. (right) Burma Independence Army troops.

## 6. The Burmese Military Oath: What should soldiers do?

Read  D48.

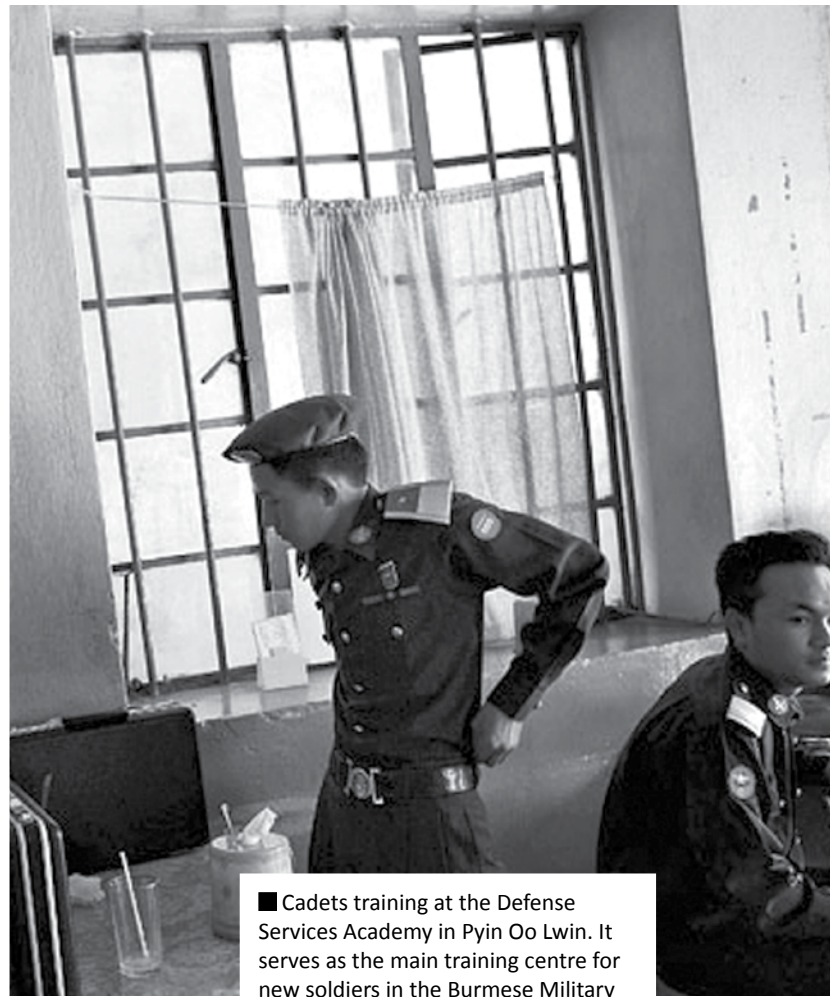


### Comprehension



1. Give an example of how a soldier would follow each of the four duties.


### Reasoning

1. Are there situations in which loyalty to the state would make you do one thing, and loyalty to the citizens would make you do another?
2. Point three is part of many military oaths around the world. Some people say that soldiers should not follow orders that they believe are wrong (for instance, killing innocent civilians). What do you think?



## 7. The Caretaker Government: Why did it take charge?

Read  D58;  B-Ne Win, B-BCP, B-White Flag Faction, B-PCP, B-KNDO, B-MNDO;

 T-1958, T-1958-1960.


### Comprehension



1. Match the point that is stated (a-c) with the implication (1-3).
  - a. "Insurgency must be uprooted or it will reappear with the next opportunity".
  - b. "Only a few leaders and isolated bands of White Flag Communists remain."
  - c. "Henceforth, the Defence Services must keep in step with the will of the people if they are to deserve the name of the people's armed forces."
  1. The people want the army to fight the rebels.
  2. The Caretaker Government has done a good job in fighting the rebels in the past two years.
  3. The army has to continue fighting against the rebels in the future.

### Reasoning

1. Imagine an argument between two friends who read this document in 1960. One believes the army should continue to control the government, the other does not. What would they say to each other? Write a dialogue.

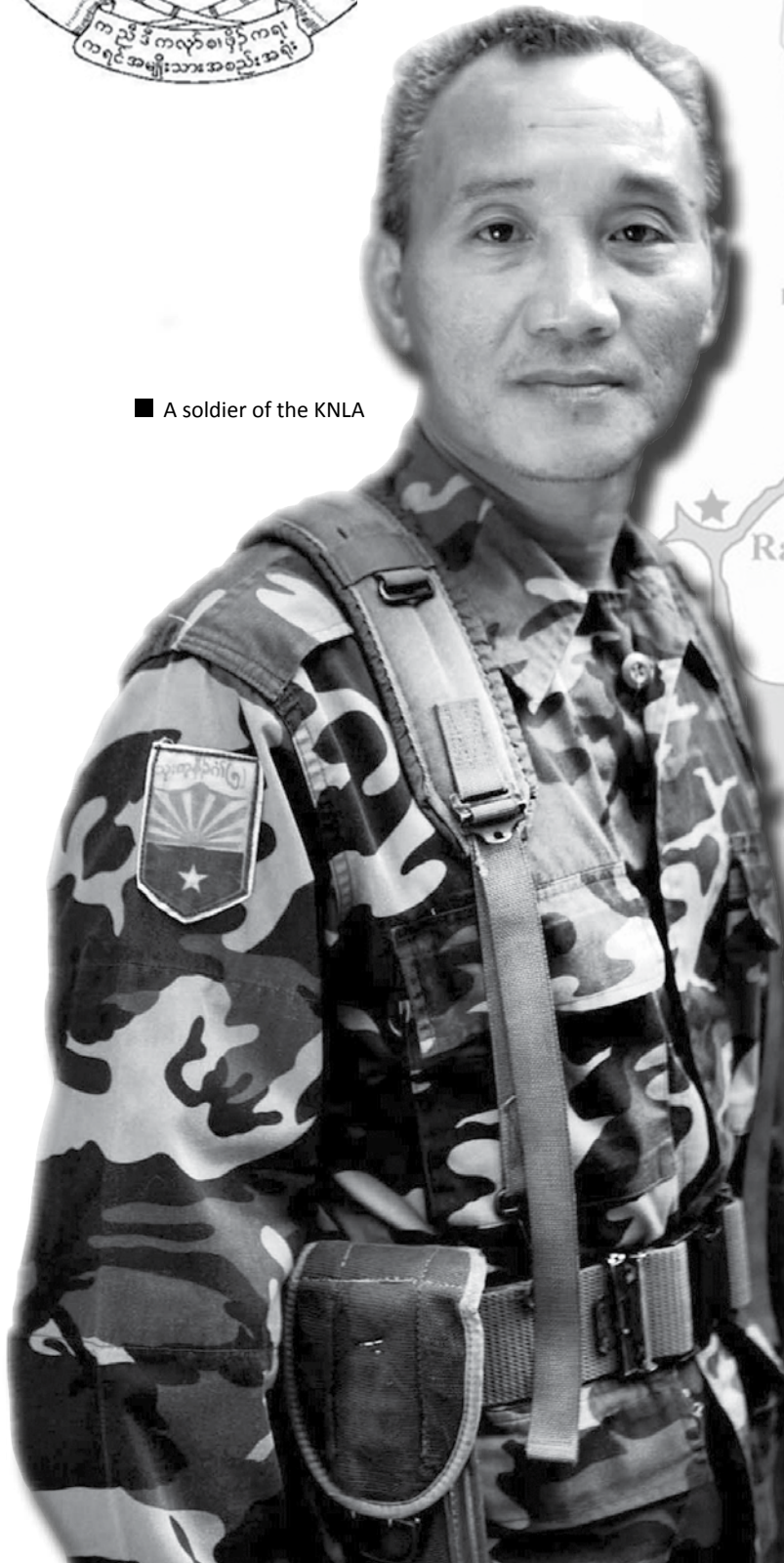
## 8. The Karen National Union: Why did it begin armed struggle?

Read  D53, the second section "A national state for the Karens...";

 B-Ba U Gyi, B-KNU;  T-1946.



■ A soldier of the KNLA

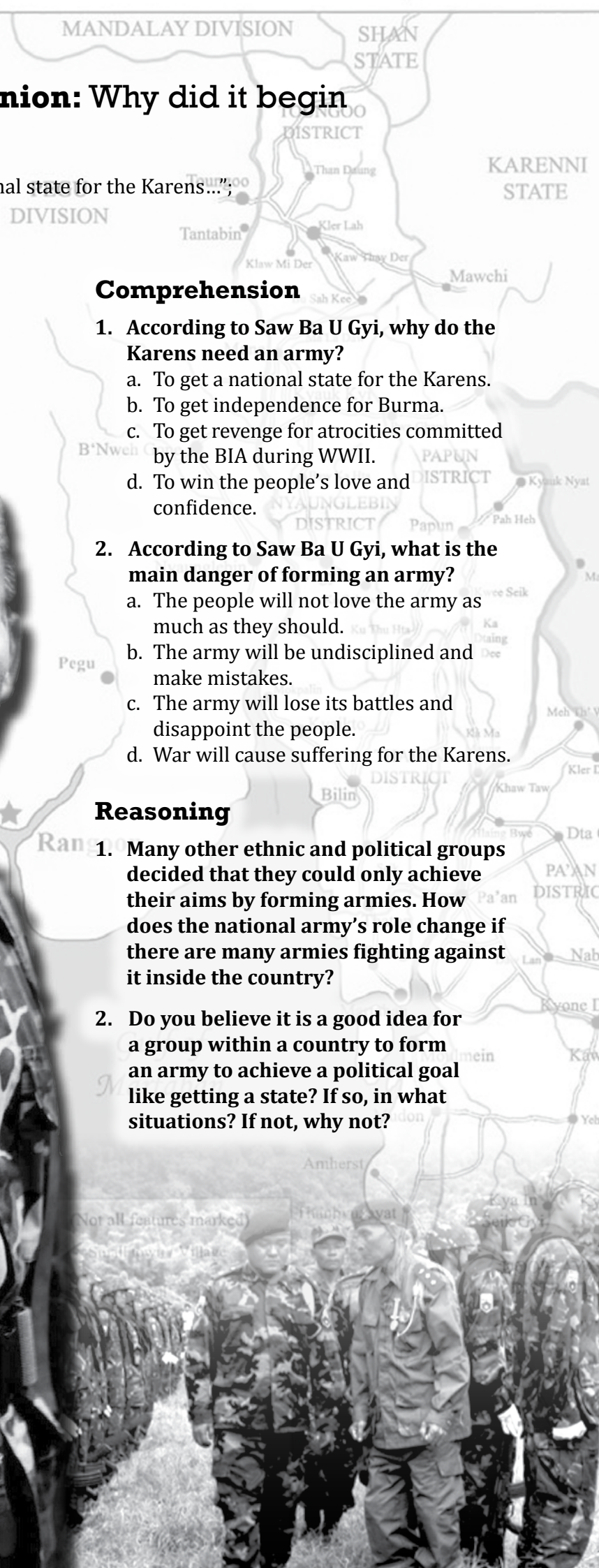


### Comprehension




1. According to Saw Ba U Gyi, why do the Karens need an army?
  - a. To get a national state for the Karens.
  - b. To get independence for Burma.
  - c. To get revenge for atrocities committed by the BIA during WWII.
  - d. To win the people's love and confidence.
2. According to Saw Ba U Gyi, what is the main danger of forming an army?
  - a. The people will not love the army as much as they should.
  - b. The army will be undisciplined and make mistakes.
  - c. The army will lose its battles and disappoint the people.
  - d. War will cause suffering for the Karens.

### Reasoning

1. Many other ethnic and political groups decided that they could only achieve their aims by forming armies. How does the national army's role change if there are many armies fighting against it inside the country?
2. Do you believe it is a good idea for a group within a country to form an army to achieve a political goal like getting a state? If so, in what situations? If not, why not?



## 9. The 1962 Coup: Why did General Ne Win decide to use military power?

Read  D61;  B-Ne Win; and  T-1962.

### Comprehension

1. According to Gen. Ne Win, what is the army's main role?
  - a. To fight the people who want to destroy the Union.
  - b. To protect the people from foreign invasions.
  - c. To scare off enemies.
  - d. To wait until the people call on them for help.

### Reasoning

1. Do you agree that the military had no choice but to take over in a coup? What else could Gen. Ne Win have done instead?
2. Gen. Ne Win says he will "fight sword with sword, fight spear with spear." Do you believe this is a good attitude for the leader of a country to have toward his own people?

#### Factbox

**General Ne Win** [AKA Shu Maung] (1911-2002): Burman political and military leader. One of the Thirty Comrades. Prime Minister in Caretaker Government. Led the 1962 coup, founded BSPP, and served as head of state until 1988 demonstrations. Placed under house arrest in 2002.



## 10. 1988 Demonstrations: How did the Burmese military control the demonstrators?

Read D70; B-BSPP; and T-1988.

### Comprehension



- Classify the following of Gen. Ne Win's statements as facts, theories, or beliefs.
  - People in Prome and Taunggyi were imitating people in Rangoon.
  - He ordered the Burmese Military to go into Prome to suppress the disturbances.
  - It was right for the government to intervene in the teashop dispute.
  - It is a good idea for the army to shoot people if there are mob disturbances in the future.
- Rephrase Gen. Ne Win's statements below from the perspective of a neutral observer and a pro-democracy observer. The first has been completed as an example.

Gen. Ne Win	Neutral observer	Pro-democracy protestors
"acting against discipline"	<i>Protesting against the government</i>	<i>Fighting for freedom from brutal tyrants</i>
Army "exercises restraint"		
"mob disturbances"		
Army "maintains control"		
Prome affair "became bolder"		
Government "intervenes"		

### Reasoning

- As you saw in question 2 above, Gen. Ne Win and the protestors would use different language. Do you think they could agree on the "facts" of what happened in 1988? Why or why not?
- Do you agree with Gen. Ne Win that the army should act to keep order and safety when there are demonstrations or disturbances? Why or why not?

## 11. 1988 Demonstrations: How did Daw Aung San Suu Kyi view the Burmese military?

Read  D71-on the army; and  B-Aung San Suu Kyi.

### Comprehension

1. Read the following statements. Which does Daw Suu Kyi state, and which does she imply? Which are not included in the document?
  - a. She is attached to the army.
  - b. The army has come to be hated by the people.
  - c. Her father would be pleased with what the army has become.
  - d. The people and the army are currently unified.
  - e. People should forget any bad things the army may have done wrong in the past.






■ 1988 represented the first time that Daw Suu Kyi (above) entered the Burmese political arena.

### Reasoning

1. Why do you think Daw Suu only implied certain points rather than stating them? Do you agree with her decision to imply rather than state them directly? Why or why not?
2. Daw Suu asks the army to feel sympathy for the protesters. Do you think most soldiers were able to do this in 1988? Why or why not?

## 12. The SLORC: What were their reasons for the 1988 coup?

Read  D72;  B-Saw Maung, SLORC;  T-1944-1945, T-1988



### Factbox

**Saw Maung, General (1928-1997):** Burmese military leader, commander of army in BSPP. Founder of SLORC, Chairman 1988-1992.

### Comprehension

1. What are the Burmese military's three main duties, according to Gen. Saw Maung?
2. What promises does Gen. Saw Maung make in this speech?

### Reasoning

1. Why do you think the government renamed "Resistance Day" "Armed Forces Day"? Do you agree with this decision? Why or why not?
2. According to your knowledge, which of Gen. Saw Maung's promises came true and which did not? Do you think he believed these promises when he made them? Why or why not?

### 13. 2008 Constitution: What is the role of the military?

Read  90-Chapter I, Chapter IV, Chapter VIII; and  T-2008

#### Comprehension

1. What is the percentage of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw representatives that will be Defence Services members nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services?  
a. One-third      b. One-half      c. All      d. One-fourth
2. Which of these are powers that the Defence Services have?
  - a. Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services may veto all decisions made by the Hluttaw.
  - b. Defence Services personnel may restrict citizens' rights by passing a law.
  - c. Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services may take over government in an emergency to prevent disintegration of the Union.
  - d. Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services may appoint all Hluttaw representatives.

#### Reasoning

1. Do you think the powers of Defence Services under the 2008 Constitution are too much, too little, or just right? Why?
2. Do you think a “genuine, disciplined multi-party democracy” can exist in a government in which Defence Services are guaranteed the right to “participate in the national political leadership role of the state”? Why or why not?



■ Burmese soldiers at a military outpost in Shan State.

### 14. Ceasefires: How did the Kachin National Organisation respond to the 2013 ceasefire?

Read  D-103;  B-KIA; and  T-2011

#### Comprehension

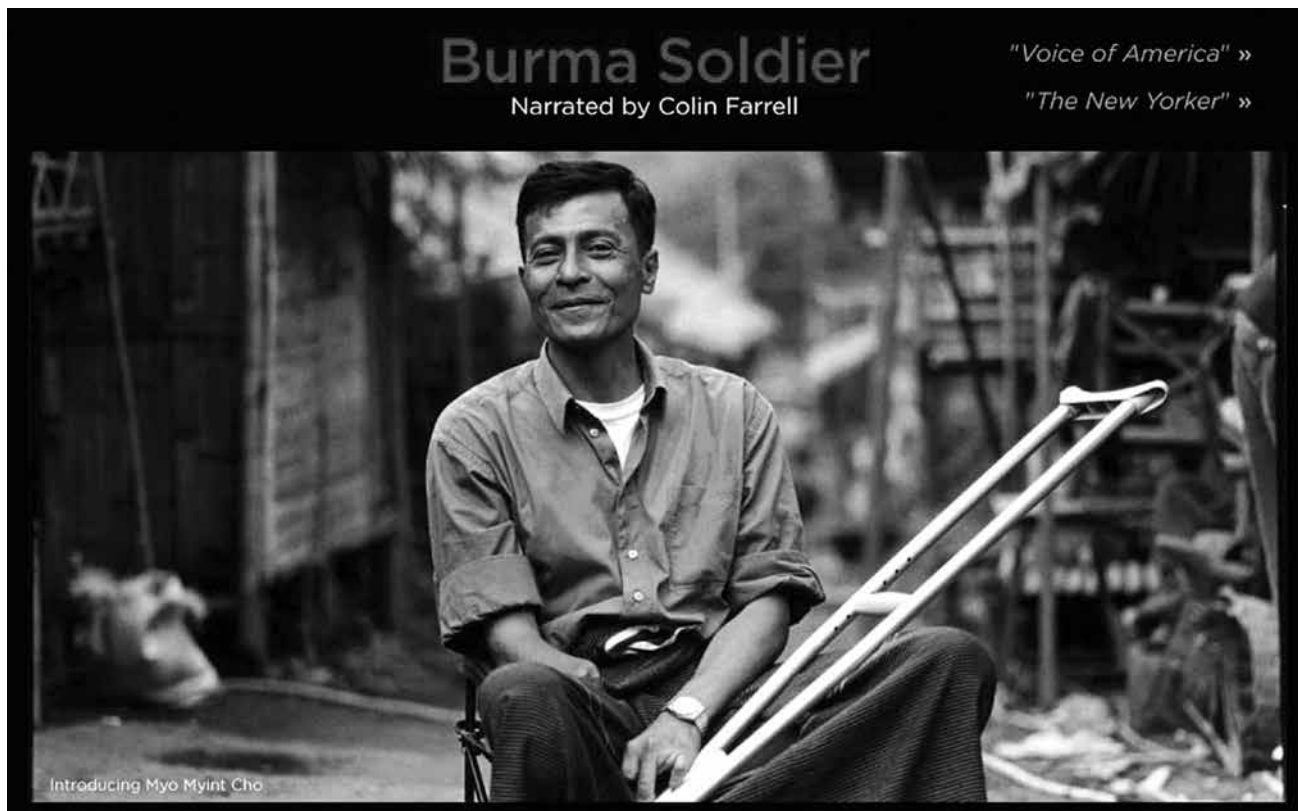
1. The KNO is most likely to describe the January ceasefire with the Burmese military as
  - a. perfect                      b. helpful
  - c. fake                         d. encouraging
2. The KNO asks the government to:
  - a. investigate the ceasefire.
  - b. stop sending soldiers to Kachinland.
  - c. diminish international pressure.
  - d. supply more military hardware.

#### Reasoning


1. Three months after the Burmese government announced this ceasefire, the EU did in fact end economic sanctions on Burma (D104). How do you think the EU would respond to the KNO's charge that the ceasefire was only organised so that it would appear that Burma was making political progress?
2. Why do you think ceasefires have often broken down in Burma?

# Review

1. Would you call Burma militarist, pacifist, or somewhere in between? Use examples from the documents to support your argument.
2. In Burma, how has military power been used for defensive, strategic, domestic and expansionist purposes? Give an example of each from documents in this Theme, other Themes or from your outside knowledge. Argue which kind of power Burma has used most.
3. What, if any, restrictions should be placed on soldiers during wartime, and why? Give examples from the documents to support your points.
4. Rewrite Sections I, IV, and VIII of the 2008 Constitution to reflect the role you think Defence Services should play.
5. Compare and contrast the military's rationale for taking over power in 1958, 1962, and 1988. Which of these takeovers do you think was most justified? Least justified? Why?
6. In what ways have members of the Burmese military followed their "four oaths"? In what ways have they not followed them?
7. Compare and contrast the Burmese military to other armed struggle groups in Burma, in terms of purpose and strategy.
8. How has completing this unit changed your ideas about what the role of the military in society should be? How have they stayed the same?



■ 'Burma Soldier' (2011) is a documentary about former soldier Myo Myint who defected to join the democratic opposition.



Theme

9

# Resistance, Revolution and Reform

# 1. How have people struggled for political change?

Throughout Burma's history, people have tried to create political change by using various strategies. There has been resistance against British colonisers, Japanese occupiers, the parliamentary government and the military government.

In some cases, Burmese people have tried to create change by asking for reforms. This means working within the rules of a system to change it, for instance, by altering laws or constitutions. Reformers have to negotiate with the people who are already in power.

In other situations, Burmese people decided they could not reach their goals by asking for reform. Instead, they resisted the authorities. Some people used passive resistance, by ignoring the authorities' orders without confronting them. For instance, if workers in a factory were unhappy with their boss, they might slow down their work without stopping it or telling the boss they were unhappy. Passive resistance is sometimes called "everyday resistance," because ordinary people can do it without organising a special event. It is difficult to find documents that show this type of resistance.

Burmese people have also used active resistance. They have held demonstrations to let the authorities know their demands. Students have boycotted schools and politicians have boycotted elections. Workers have gone on strike and refused to return to their jobs until conditions change. Political groups have held mass rallies to build solidarity and show the

authorities how many people support them. Sometimes people have been so upset that they have had a riot (when a crowd of people suddenly and without a plan uses violence against authorities, people or property).

When people use active resistance in order to get rid of the government that is in power, it is often called a revolution. Some revolutionaries use armed struggle to overthrow the

government by force, but others use

non-violent methods. One way

to change the government is

to carry out a coup, as the

Burmese army did in 1962

and 1988. Some groups

that used armed struggle

in the past have now

made ceasefires with the

government (they said they

would stop fighting if the

government would meet their

political demands).

Reformers, resisters, and

revolutionaries have all made

alliances with each other to

increase their strength and

chances of success. But these

alliances have not always lasted,

because groups may have different goals. An

alliance can also fall apart due to factionalism,

when one group breaks off and forms a new

organisation because of personal or political

conflicts. People who want political change

also have to decide whether they want their

movement to have one strong leader, or to have

many leaders sharing power.

There are advantages and disadvantages

of all of these approaches. In this unit you

will have a chance to compare these tactics of

reform, resistance, and revolution.



■ The emblem of the USDP (above) the Union Solidarity and Development Party, the current ruling party in Burma



## Comprehension




1. Match each word with its definition.

a. factionalism	1. working within the system to change laws
b. revolution	2. a complete change in government
c. reform	3. refusing to work
d. everyday resistance	4. showing the authorities your demands
e. strike	5. refusing to participate in an event or buy a certain good
f. boycott	6. when groups join together to work for similar goals
g. demonstration	7. when groups break into different parts
h. alliance	8. the ways that ordinary people passively oppose authorities
i. riot	9. when an armed struggle group agrees to stop fighting
j. non-violent resistance	10. unplanned, sudden violence against people or property
k. ceasefire	11. working for change without using weapons

## Reasoning

1. Which of the strategies described above do you think would be most effective for getting the kind of political change you would like to see? Why?

## 2. The University boycott: How did students resist British education?

Read  D24;  B-Ba U; and  T-1920.

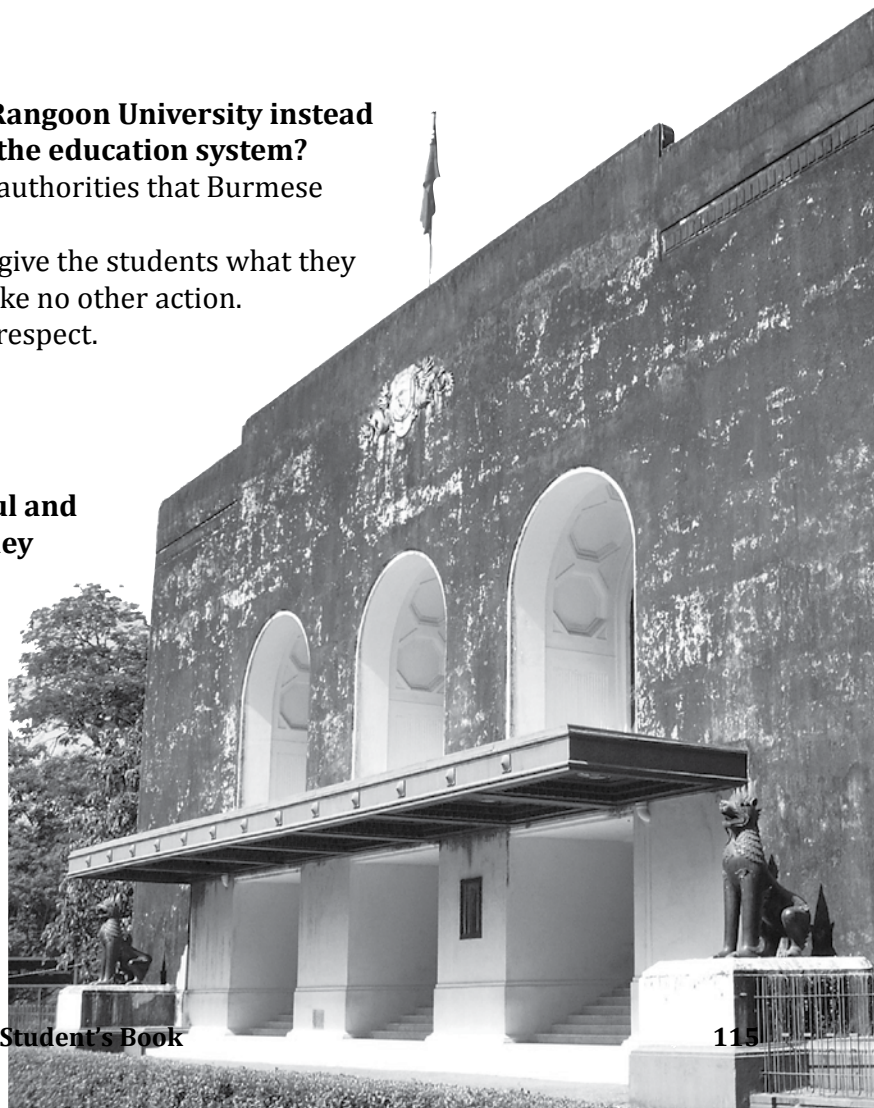
## Comprehension

- Why does Ko Ba U want to boycott Rangoon University instead of asking the authorities to reform the education system?
  - The boycott will show the colonial authorities that Burmese people should be respected.
  - The colonial authorities will never give the students what they want if the students only ask but take no other action.
  - A boycott shows the students' self-respect.
  - All of the above.




## Reasoning

- The students' boycott was successful and National Schools were opened as they demanded. Why do you think this strategy was more successful in this situation than asking for reform or starting armed struggle would have been?

■ The convocation hall of Yangon University (right)



### 3. Legal reform of colonialism: What are the arguments against it?

Read  D26 (below);  B-Ottama, B-GCBA; and  T-1928-1935.

#### *U Ottama's speech at the GCBA Meeting, July 15-16, 1922*

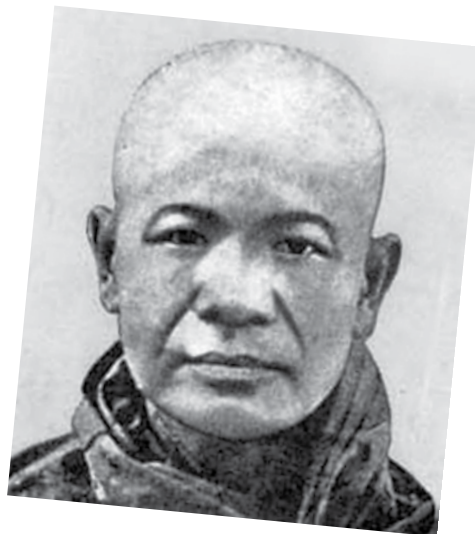
Here, U Ottama describes his objections to the Montagu-Chelmsford diarchy system.

*In a bureaucratic system, the government does not consult with the people; they don't consider the people's desires; they do as they like. In a diarchy system, government officials manipulate the people as if they were lifeless puppets, as a tactic to appear as if they are giving the people's a chance to achieve their desires. [...]*

*Diarchy is like a stillborn child. The Montagu-Chelmsford diarchy system given by the English parliament can't bring a stillborn child back to life. It is a lifeless corpse. [...]*

*No matter how cruel those who govern are, their plots will not be able to withstand for long the entire people's resolution to achieve their unified dream of independence. [...]*

*You don't get independence by bowing down and begging for it. You won't get it with an obsequious request.*



#### Factbox

**Ottama, Sayadaw U (1880-1939):** Arakanese monk and Burmese anti-colonial nationalist leader. Active in YMBA and GCBA. Imprisoned frequently in 1920s and 1930s, died on hunger strike in prison.

■ [Mya Htun Aung. (1979). U Ottama and Diarchy Rule. n.l.: All Arakan Students and Youth Congress. p. 4-6.]



#### Comprehension

1. **U Ottama compares the diarchy system to a stillborn child because**
  - a. under this system, many children will die.
  - b. it promises people political power but does not deliver it.
  - c. it treats Burmese people like children.
  - d. all of the above.

#### Reasoning

1. **U Ottama claimed that the Burmese couldn't get independence from the British by asking politely, but should demand it. Do you think this strategy fits well with Burmese culture and with U Ottama's role as a monk?**

## 4. Peasant riots: Why did they happen?

Read  D31; and  T-19th c., T-1930s (both entries).

### Comprehension

1. How did Lower Burma change during the 1930s?
  - a. Burmese peasants started buying the land that they farmed from the landlords.
  - b. British people began buying most of the land.
  - c. Many Burmese peasants had to sell their land to Indian Chettyar landlords.
  - d. There was no change.
2. Look at the timeline. Why would Burmese peasants have fallen into debt and had to sell their land during the 1930s?
  - a. Because British laws forced them to.
  - b. Because taxes increased.
  - c. Because the worldwide economic depression lowered the price of rice.
  - d. Because Chettyars arrived in Burma.



■ Burmese rice farmers

### Reasoning




1. Why would the change in question 1 cause peasants to riot?
2. Do you think rioting was an effective way for the peasants to get the economic and political changes they wanted? Why or why not? What else could they have done?

### Slogans from the oilfield workers' strike, 1938 (cont. on next page):

[Daw Khin Yi. (1988). The Dobama Movement in Burma (1930-1938). Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, p. 107-108.]



## 5. The 1300 Revolution: Why did workers strike against the British?

Read  the protest slogans (bottom of the page) ;  B-Ba Maw, B-Dobama Asiayone; and  T-1938.

### Comprehension

1. Match the slogans (below) with their explanations (right)

**a. Withdraw Section 144!**

**b. Death to Dr. Ba Maw!**

**c. Down with imperialism!**

**d. Down with capitalism!**

1. Allow people to assemble freely

2. The British should leave Burma

3. There should be a socialist or communist economy

4. People who collaborate with the British should be punished

### Reasoning

1. Slogans tend to simplify issues. What are the advantages and disadvantages of making complicated political problems seem simple? Use the slogans above as examples.
2. Practise writing your own slogans about current political issues, then share them with the class. Try to write slogans that simplify the issue enough so that people can understand it, without misrepresenting the issue.

**Live dangerously!  
We want the  
reckless ones!  
Be brave!...**

**... Unity for prosperity  
throughout the land!  
Down with  
imperialism!**

■ These slogans (left and on previous page) were chanted during the strike, which was organised with the aid of Dobama Asiayone. Section 144 was a law that authorised police to open fire on any group of more than five people who refused to give up their weapons. The strikers perceived Dr. Ba Maw, then Prime Minister of Burma, as collaborating too closely with the British.



## 6. The AFPFL: Why did it try to get independence through constitutional reform?

Read  D38;  B-AFPFL; B-Thein Pe, B-Mountbatten, B-BIA; and  T-1942-1945; T-1944-1945.




### Comprehension

1. Thakin Thein Pe argues that it is best to get independence by reforming the constitution because
  - a. fewer people will be injured or killed that way.
  - b. Burma does not have a strong enough army to fight a violent revolution.
  - c. after fascism is defeated, there will be no more need for violence or war.
  - d. the British will support the Burmese drive for independence only if they only use non-violent means.

### Reasoning

1. The other reasons listed in question 1 might have influenced Thakin Thein Pe, although he does not mention them. Explain.
2. Have world events since the end of WWII proved Thakin Thein Pe's argument correct or incorrect? Why?
3. Do you agree with Thakin Thein Pe's decision to avoid violent revolution and collaborate with the British? Do you think a violent revolution against both the British and the Japanese simultaneously would have been successful? Why or why not?

## 7. The AFO: What strategies did it use to resist the Japanese occupation?

Read  D39;  B-AFO; B-BDA; and  T-1944-45.




### Comprehension

1. Find one or more of the AFO's strategies that fits the following descriptions:
  - a. passive resistance
  - b. legal reform
  - c. violent revolution

### Reasoning

1. Do you think all of the AFO's strategies could work well together? Why or why not?

## 8. The BCP: Why did it support communist revolution against the AFPFL government?

Read  D52;  B-Ba Tin; and  T-1948.

### Comprehension

1. Thakin Ba Tin believes he can only reach his goals by violent revolution because
  - a. an imperialist bureaucracy can never be reformed to serve the interests of the people.
  - b. he has already tried constitutional means and they have not been successful.
  - c. the Anglo-Burmese treaties must be annulled.
  - d. reforming the constitution will take too long.

### Reasoning

1. Thakin Ba Tin did not succeed in reaching his goals through violent revolution. Do you think he could have reached them in other ways?

# 9. The KNU:

Why did it pursue armed struggle instead of constitutional reform?



■ Soldiers of the KNLA, the armed wing of the KNU.

Read D53; B-Ba U Gyi, B-KYO, B-KNU, B-Aung San; and T-1946-1947.




## Comprehension

1. According to Saw Ba U Gyi's 1948 speech, how are the KYO's and KNU's strategies for getting a Karen state different? Choose one of the following:
  - a. The KYO wants to ask for a smaller state than the KNU does.
  - b. The KNU wants to start a violent revolution to get a Karen state.
  - c. The KNU does not want to negotiate with the Burmese government.
  - d. The KYO wants to boycott the Burmese government.
2. In the 1950 speech, which of the three ways to get a Karen state does Saw Ba U Gyi think is best, 1, 2, or 3?
3. Put each of Saw Ba U Gyi's 4 points from his 1950 speech into your own words.

## Reasoning

1. Which approach to getting a Karen state do you think was more practical, the KYO's or the KNU's? Why?
2. How does Saw Ba U Gyi's attitude toward the Burmese government change between 1948 and 1950? Why do you think it changed?
3. Which of Saw Ba U Gyi's 4 points do you think was most difficult for the KNU to stick to over the past 60 years? Why?

## 10. 1958 Peace Parley: How did Thakin Kodaw Hmaing try to end the civil war?

Read  D57;  B-Kodaw Hmaing, B-Soe, B-Thau Tun, B-Po Kun, B-Zeya, B-Nu, B-Ba Swe, B-Kyaw Nyein, B-Aung San, B-Ba Choe, B-Mya; and  T-1946, T-1958, T-1958, 1963.

### Comprehension

1. Thakin Kodaw Hmaing wishes that his former students would
  - a. break into more factions.
  - b. find a win-win solution for the conflict.
  - c. continue the revolution.
  - d. repay the damages they have caused to the country.

### Reasoning

1. Why do you think Thakin Kodaw Hmaing's former students, who used to be close, split into so many different factions over time? How could this have been prevented?
2. What do you think Thakin Kodaw Hmaing means by a "win-win solution"? Is it a realistic goal?

## 11. Federalism: How did Shan leaders try to reform the constitution?

Read  D59;  B-Ne Win, B-Nu; and  T-1962.



### Comprehension

1. The Shan State Steering Committee wanted to change the structure of government by
  - a. starting an armed revolution.
  - b. demonstrating non-violently.
  - c. changing some parts of the constitution.
  - d. getting rid of the old constitution and writing a new one.

### Reasoning

1. Why do you think the Shan State Steering Committee chose this strategy for changing the structure of government instead of the other strategies mentioned in Question 1? If they had known Gen. Ne Win would carry out a coup before U Nu could consider their proposal, do you think they would have used a different strategy?

## 12. The 1962 coup: Why did the Revolutionary Council take power by force?

Read  D61; and  B-RC.

### Comprehension

1. Gen. Ne Win intends to
  - a. resolve conflicts through peaceful negotiations.
  - b. avoid conflicts and focus on developing the economy.
  - c. fight back against anyone who attacks the government.
  - d. give the rebels what they want.

### Reasoning

1. Do you think that a coup was the best way to keep the union together? Why or why not?

## 13. 1988 demonstrations: How did students try to get democracy?

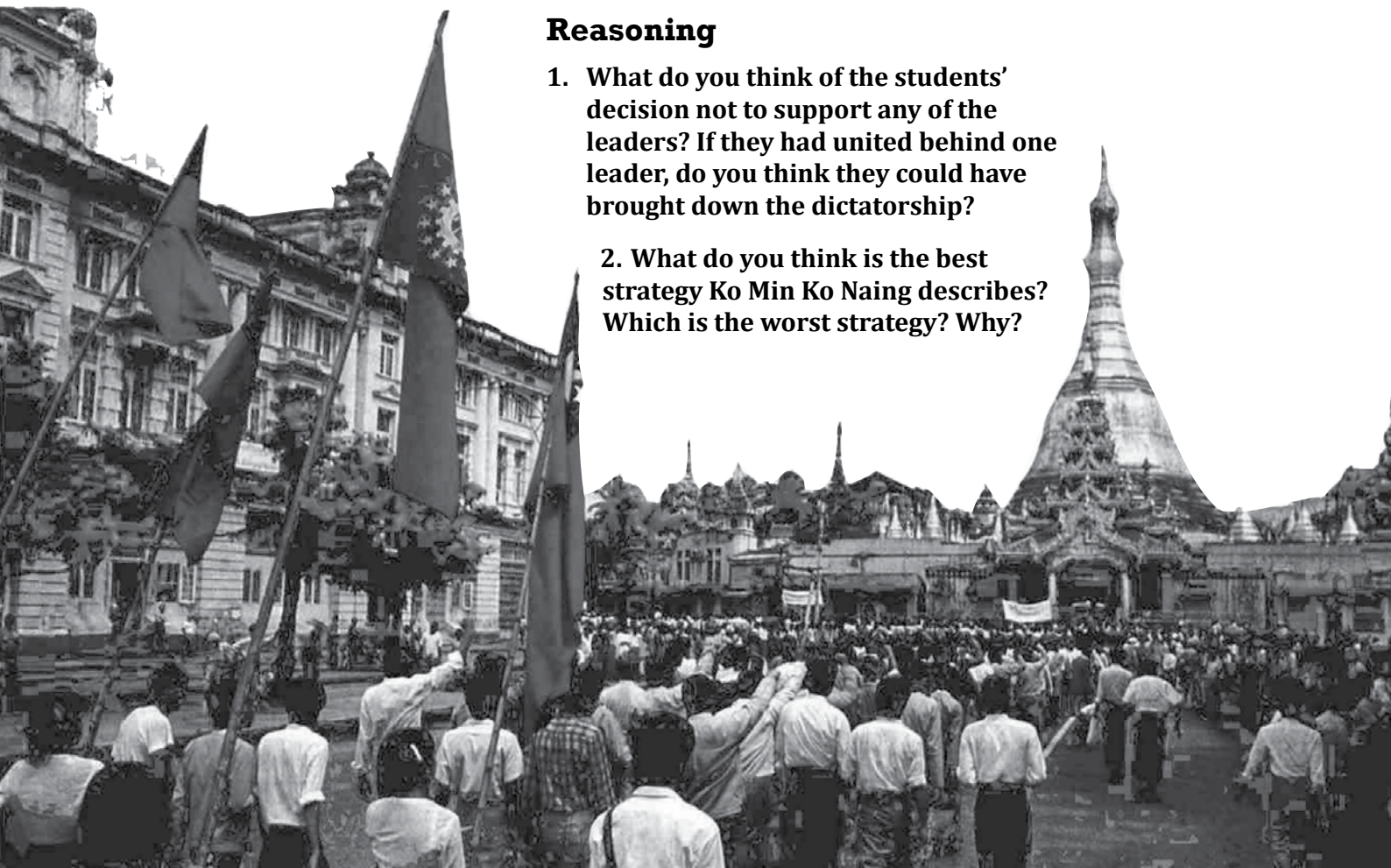
Read  D73;  B-Min Ko Naing, B-Aung San Suu Kyi, B-Aung Gyi; and  T-1988 - both entries

### Comprehension




1. Label each statement true or false according to Ko Min Ko Naing.
  - a. He prefers Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as a leader.
  - b. He will continue armed struggle until the dictatorship falls.
  - c. He encourages workers to use passive resistance against the dictatorship.
  - d. He and the students supported people with food during the demonstrations.
  - e. He intends to participate in the elections.

### Reasoning

1. What do you think of the students' decision not to support any of the leaders? If they had united behind one leader, do you think they could have brought down the dictatorship?
2. What do you think is the best strategy Ko Min Ko Naing describes? Which is the worst strategy? Why?



## 14. The Manerplaw Alliance: Why did pro-democracy and ethnic nationalist groups join forces?

Read  D75;  B-NCGUB, B-NDF, B-NLD-LA, B-DAB, B-Mya (Bo), B-Sein Win, B-Shwe Kyin; and  T-1994-1995, T-1946-1947.




### Comprehension

1. According to the Manerplaw Agreement, what do all the signatories have in common?
  - a. They have suffered under the military regime.
  - b. They are ethnic minority groups.
  - c. They opposed the Panglong Agreement.
  - d. They don't want there to be a Burman state in the Union.

### Reasoning

1. This alliance and some of the coalition groups that signed it eventually broke down. Why do you think this occurred? How much do different groups' goals need to overlap for alliances to last?

## 15. The KIO: Why did it make a ceasefire with the military regime?

Read  D76;  B-KIO; and  T-1994

### Comprehension

1. The KIO's main reason for making a ceasefire is that
  - a. all ethnic groups should pursue peace together through negotiation rather than armed struggle.
  - b. the situation has remained the same since 1988.
  - c. they believe the SLORC is sincere in wanting peace.
  - d. the Kachin people asked them to do so.

### Reasoning

1. Do you support the KIO and other groups' decisions to make ceasefires with the military regime? Why or why not?

■ A soldier from the KIA, the armed wing of the KIO, warms himself by a fire (below)



## 16. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: Why does she choose non-violent methods to get democracy?

Read  D78; and  B-Aung San Suu Kyi.

### Comprehension

1. Label each statement as true or false according to Daw Suu.
  - a. Non-violent means can achieve change just as quickly as armed struggle can.
  - b. I cannot understand why anyone would choose armed struggle.
  - c. Non-violence is the same as being passive.
  - d. If you use violent methods, more violence is likely to result.



### Reasoning

1. Which of Daw Suu's points listed above do you agree with? Why? How have your life experiences influenced your perspective?

## 17. 2007 anti-government demonstrations: How did the monks protest?

Read  D89;  B-ABMA, B-Aung San Suu Kyi, B-SPDC, B-USDA; and  T-2007.



### Comprehension

1. Which of these demands did the ABMA NOT make?
  - a. The SPDC must release political prisoners.
  - b. The SPDC must resign from power.
  - c. The SPDC must apologise to the monks.
  - d. The SPDC must reduce food prices.



■ Monks march through the streets in downtown Rangoon in 2007.

### Reasoning

1. The SPDC did not fulfill the ABMA's demands. What strategies do you think the ABMA should have used? Why?

# 18. Cyclone Nargis:

Why did NGOs  
inside Burma  
cooperate  
with the SPDC  
to provide  
humanitarian aid?

Read  D93; and  T-2008.

## Comprehension

1. Which of the people quoted (A, B, C, D) would complete the following sentence which way?

“Collaborating with the SPDC to provide humanitarian aid after Nargis is...”

- a. pointless, because the SPDC does nothing.
- b. difficult and slow.
- c. more productive than foreign organisations report.
- d. allowing civil society to develop.

2. Which of the people quoted would be most likely to agree with each other?

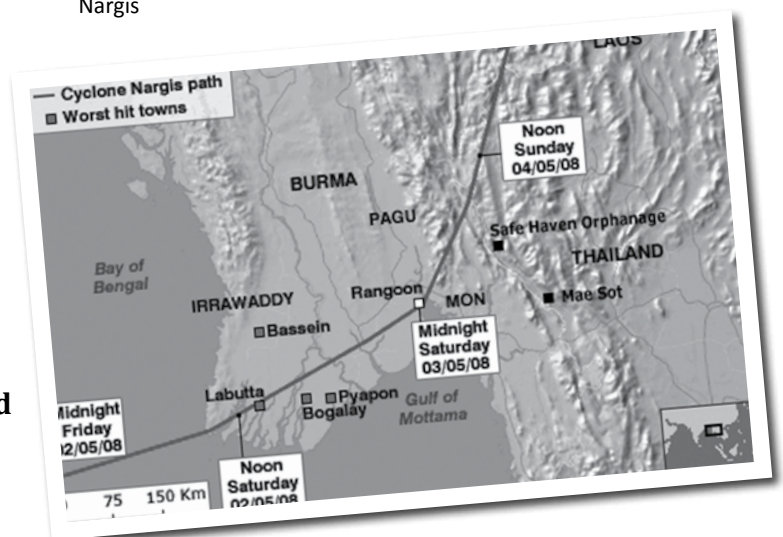
- a. A and C.
- b. C and D.
- c. A and D.
- d. B and C.

## Reasoning

1. If you were a Burmese NGO worker trying to deliver aid after Nargis, would you be willing to work with the SPDC even if you did not agree with their policies? Why or why not?



■ (above) Myanmar soldiers unload aid packages given by international aid organisations. (below) The path of Cyclone Nargis



## 19. The NMSP Ceasefire: Has it helped Mons reach their goals?

Read  D96; and  B-Hong Sa, B-NMSP.

### Comprehension

1. According to Nai Hong Sa, the NMSP's ceasefire with the government has
  - a. already succeeded and delivered many benefits.
  - b. not succeeded; he plans to break the ceasefire.
  - c. not succeeded yet; he plans to wait patiently.
  - d. partially succeeded; he will work with other ceasefire groups to pressure the government.

### Reasoning

1. Do you agree with the NMSP's strategy for achieving their goals? Is it possible to be too patient? Why or why not?



■ Nai Hong Sa (above) the general secretary of the New Mon State Party. (Below) the flag of the NMSP.



## 20. The 2010 Election: How did democracy activists decide whether or not to participate?

Read  D95;  B-NLD, B-NDF, B-Win Tin, B-Khin Maung Swe; and  T-2010.

### Comprehension




1. Who supports the points below, U Win Tin or U Khin Maung Swe?
  - a. If they don't register the NLD, the party may die out.
  - b. If they register the party, Daw Suu will be left out.
  - c. Registering the party is like approving the SPDC's constitution.
  - d. Working within the government is the best way to get democracy.

### Reasoning

1. Whose argument do you find more convincing? Why?
2. Since you now know the results of the 2010 elections, what advice would you give to these two politicians?
3. The NLD faced a choice about whether to unite behind one leader (Daw Suu) or to share power among many different people. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?

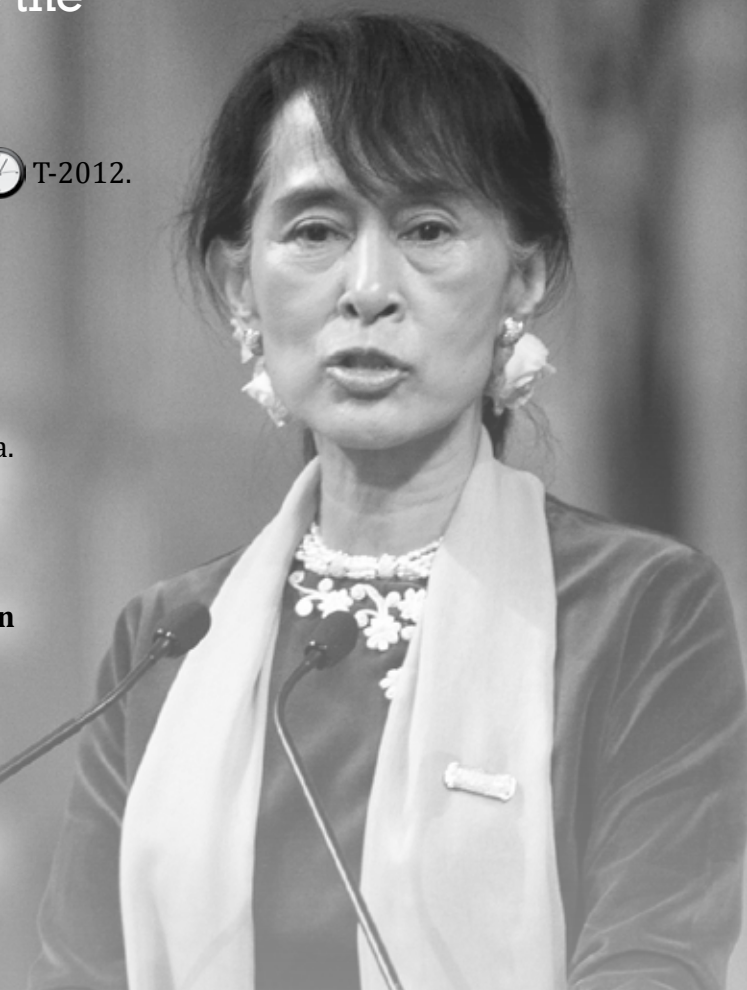
## 21. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel Acceptance Speech:

How did Daw Suu evaluate the political changes since the 2010 election?

Read  D102;  B-Aung San Suu Kyi; and  T-2012.

### Comprehension

1. **Daw Suu believes that**
  - a. change will definitely continue in a positive direction.
  - b. true democracy will never come to Burma.
  - c. Burma is already a successful democracy.
  - d. it is possible that Burma will continue to democratise.
2. **According to the UN Declaration of Human Rights,**
  - a. people need to follow laws in order to protect human rights.
  - b. people should rebel against the idea of human rights.
  - c. laws aren't necessary because people can rebel in order to win their human rights.
  - d. man is not to be compelled to have recourse.



### Reasoning

1. **Do you share Daw Suu's "cautious optimism" about the prospects for democratisation in Burma? Why or why not?**
2. **Daw Suu quotes the UDHR in saying that the "rule of law" can protect human rights. What else do people need to do, besides following laws, in order to protect human rights? Why?**



# Review

- 1. Classify these people or groups as active resisters, passive resisters, reformers, violent revolutionaries, non-violent revolutionaries, and ceasefire groups (more than one answer might fit). Given what you know about Burma's histories, which group has been most successful in achieving their aims?**
  - a. Thakin Kodaw Hmaing
  - b. Saw Ba U Gyi
  - c. 1300 Revolution strikers
  - d. Thakin Thein Pe
  - e. U Win Tin
  - f. 1930s peasants
  - g. Nai Shwe Kyin
  - h. ABMA
  - i. AFO
  - j. U Ottama
  - k. NMSP
  - l. KIO
  - m. Ko Ba U
  - n. Ko Min Ko Naing
  - o. U Khin Maing Swe
  - p. Gen. Ne Win
  - q. Thakin Ba Tin
  - r. Shan State Steering Committee
- 2. Imagine a meeting between the following people and groups. What advice would they give each other on political strategies?**
  - a. Thakin Thein Pe and Thakin Ba Tin
  - a. Thakin Kodaw Hmaing and Saw Ba U Gyi
  - b. U Ottama and the ABMA
  - c. Ko Ba U and Ko Min Ko Naing
  - d. Daw Suu and 1938 oilfield workers
  - e. The Shan State Steering Committee and Gen. Ne Win
  - f. Nai Hong Sa and KIO
  - g. The people who signed the Manerplaw Agreement and the Nargis NGO workers
- 3. What ideas do you have for achieving political change that have you not read about in this unit? Why would they be useful in the case of Burma?**
- 4. You have read about opposition to the British colonial government, the Japanese occupation, the Parliamentary government, and the military regime. Why might opponents of these powers have required different strategies? Which strategies were appropriate for each? Why?**
- 5. Many alliances in Burmese history have fallen apart due to factionalism. Do you think there is a solution to this problem?**
- 6. How has completing this unit changed your beliefs about how to work for political change? How have they stayed the same?**



Theme

**10**



# **Burma** in the **World**



AS  
12A  
POSTAGE

# 1. How have geopolitical factors affected Burma?

Geopolitics is the study of how geography and politics influence a country's relationships with other countries. In ancient times, kingdoms in the region that is Burma today had many connections with the rest of the world. The mountains and jungles that surrounded these kingdoms made travel by land a bit difficult. However, these kingdoms still had alliances, wars, and cultural connections with each other and with other kingdoms in South Asia and Southeast Asia. Furthermore, because it was located on the Indian Ocean, with large rivers running through it, the region was a crossroads for trade between Europe and Asia.

In the colonial era, Burma became important to Europeans because it had trade routes to China. It was also important because it was between the British Empire in India and the French Empire in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. During World War II, Burma became a battleground between the Allies and Axis powers because of its location between territory occupied by Japan and Britain. During the Cold War between communist and capitalist powers, Burma was affected by competition between China and the US. Today, the international flow of information, goods, and people that we call globalisation makes Burma more connected than ever to world events. Today Burma is at the centre of a complex network of relationships involving powers

including China, India, Russia, the US, the EU, North Korea and Thailand.

Throughout these changes, governments of Burma have pursued different kinds of foreign policies (ways of interacting with other countries). During the Parliamentary era, Burma pursued a neutralist or "non-aligned" foreign policy in order to avoid choosing sides in the Cold War. From 1962 to 1988, Burma was isolationist. Leaders tried to avoid diplomatic and economic relationships with other countries. Since 1988, the government has welcomed foreign investors and participated in international trade and organisations such as ASEAN.

Other countries have also pursued various foreign policies toward Burma. For instance, Western countries have sometimes put economic and diplomatic sanctions on Burma, refusing to trade with them or talk to their diplomats. At other times, they pursued policies of constructive engagement, which try to provide Burma's leaders with economic opportunities in exchange for political change.

All of these factors have affected Burmese people living inside Burma and in exile. In this Theme you will learn more about how Burma fits into a globalised world. You can think about what kind of foreign policy Burma should pursue, and what policies foreign countries should have toward Burma.

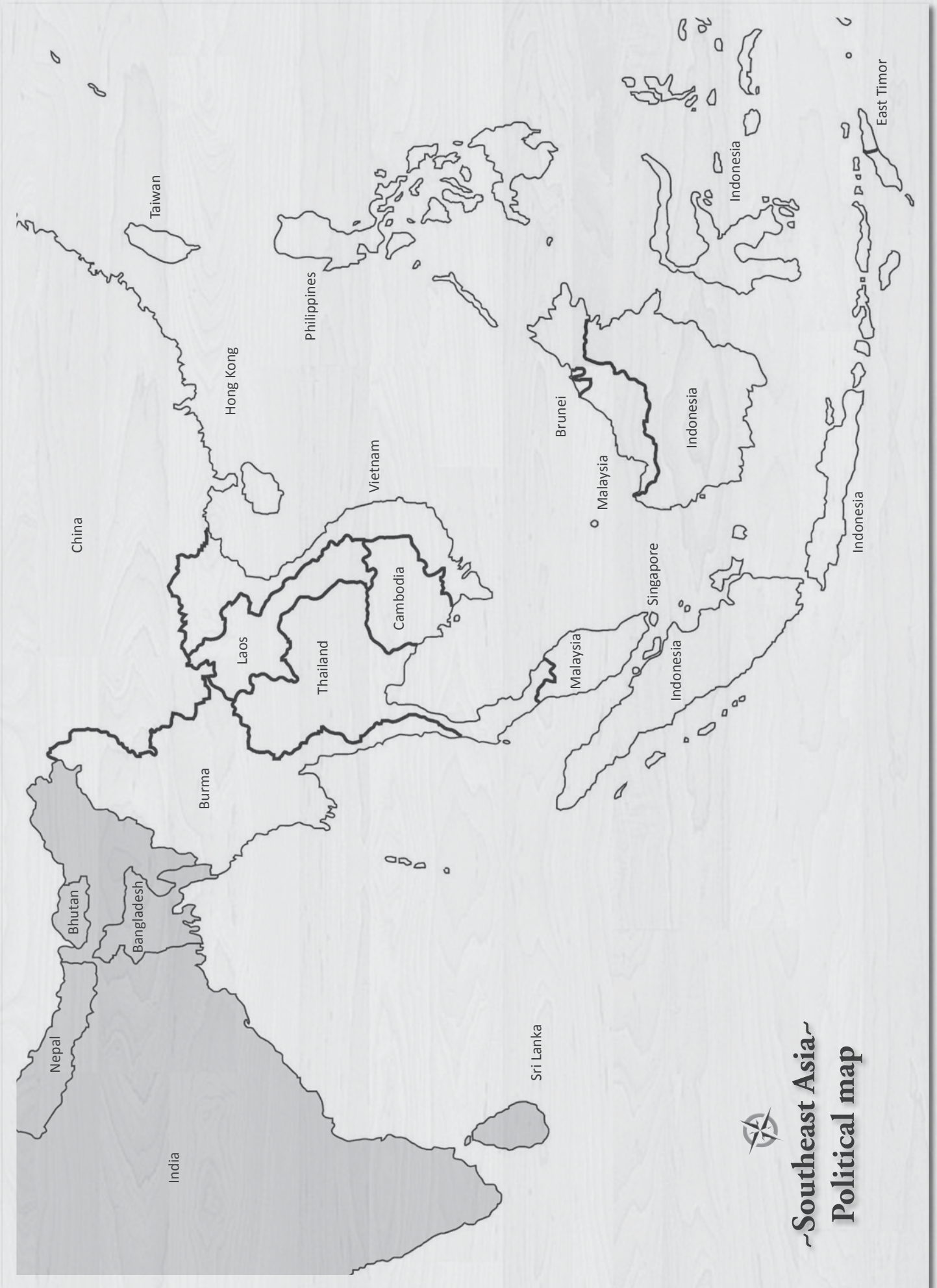
## Comprehension

### 1. Match the term with its definition

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| a. constructive engagement | 1. not choosing sides  |
| b. neutrality              | 2. when a country does not make connections with other countries   |
| c. geopolitics             | 3. a foreign policy of creating economic and diplomatic relationships with a country in order to change its policies |
| d. isolationism            | 4. the connections between geography and politics  |
| e. globalisation           | 5. the international exchange of people, goods, and ideas  |
| f. foreign policy          | 6. a country's way of interacting with other countries   |

## Reasoning

### 1. How do you think Burma's foreign policy and relationships with other countries currently affect the situation inside Burma?



~Southeast Asia~  
**Political map**

## 2. International trade before colonisation: How did it influence Burma's development?

Read  D8;  B-Sangermano; and  T-15th c. and 17th c;  M1, M2




### Comprehension

1. Sketch a map of the geographical features of Southeast Asia using the map on the previous page. (Use Maps 1 and 2 in the Source Book if you need help). Place Rangoon on the map, then draw arrows to show where the different products came from.
2. Look at the map you made. What geographical features made Rangoon a convenient trading centre?

### Reasoning

1. Were you surprised by the different national, ethnic and religious groups who lived in Rangoon in the 18th century? Why or why not?
2. Which of the products described here do you think were most important to Burma's development? Why?

## 3. Burma's geopolitical position: How did it influence the British to colonise Burma?

Read  D12;  B-Cranbourne, B-Lawrence; and  T-17th c., T-1863-1954, T-1858-1948




### Comprehension

1. You can infer from this letter that Britain's geopolitical reasons for colonising Burma included
  - a. making alliances with other European powers who had colonised Asia.
  - b. gaining access to China.
  - c. controlling the important port of Rangoon.
  - d. selling goods to the people who lived along the Irrawaddy River.
2. You can infer from this letter that Britain was worried that another colonising or imperial power would influence Burma. Use the timeline sections you read to figure out which one.
  - a. Portugal
  - b. the US
  - c. Holland
  - d. France

### Reasoning

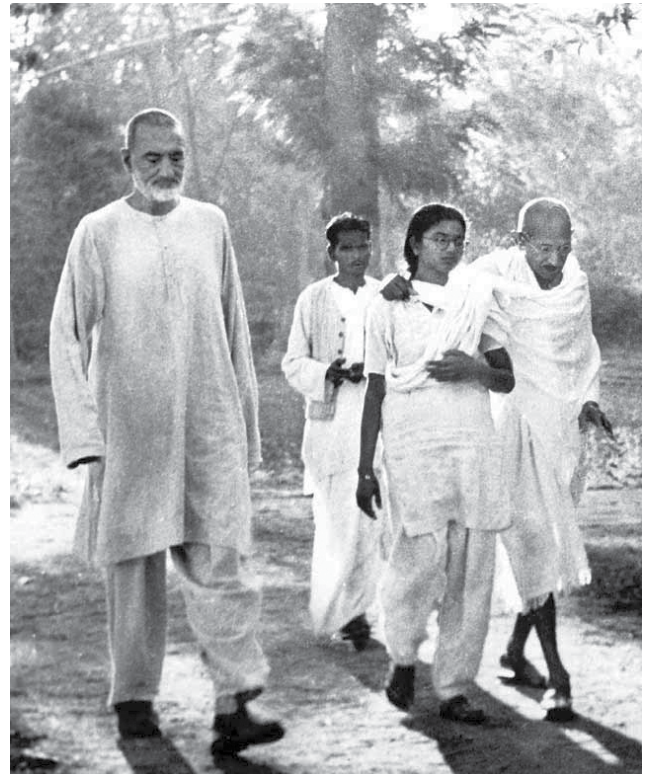
1. In the 1880s, the French began negotiating with the Konbaung Kingdom. Do you think this development influenced the British decision to annex Upper Burma, or would they have done that anyway?

## 4. Revolutions around the world: How did they influence Burmese nationalists?

Read  D36-on wun thar nus;  B-Ba Khine, B- wun thar nu; and  T-1910s, T-1775-1848.

### Comprehension

1. According to U Ba Khine, how did world events influence the situation in Burma?
  - a. Other countries revolted against their colonisers, so Burmese people started to think they could revolt against the British, too.
  - b. Because Britain colonised other countries, Burmese people wanted to build up an empire, too.
  - c. Other countries' unsuccessful revolts against their colonisers made Burmese people afraid to disobey the British.
  - d. Britain saw that no other countries were revolting against their colonisers, so they became less strict in Burma.





■ Ghandi (right) the leader of the Indian independence movement and icon of India. Badshah Khan (left) a native Afghan spiritual and political leader who, with Ghandi, became a prominent member of the Indian independence movement.

### Reasoning

1. U Ba Khine claimed that worldwide ideas about nationalism influenced Burma. What are some other ideas or events from abroad that have influenced Burma over the years? What ideas from inside Burma have influenced other countries?

## 5. Indian nationalism: How did it influence Burmese nationalism?

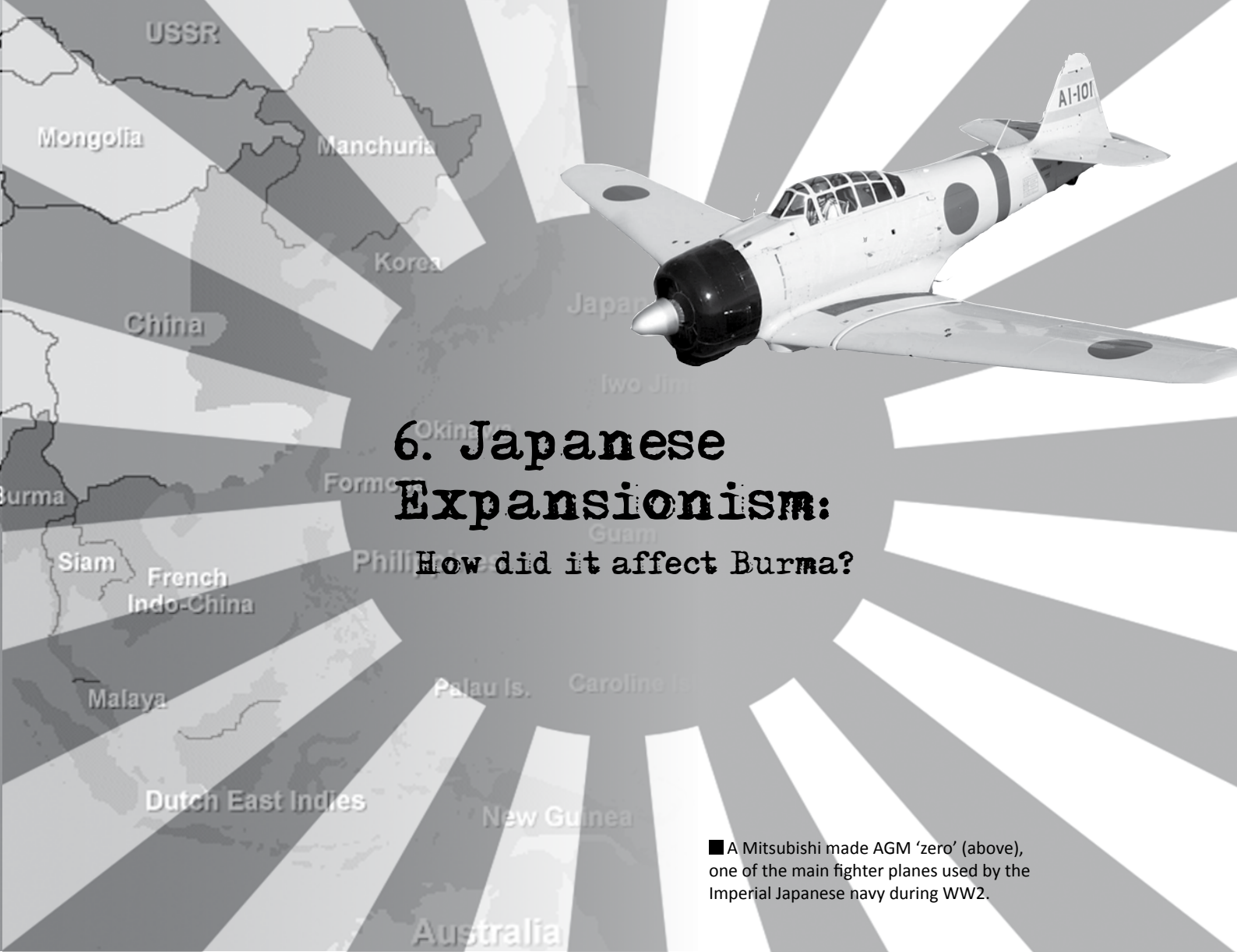
Read  D37;  B-Collis, B-Gandhi; and  T-1918-1923, T-1930

### Comprehension

1. Which of these statements are true according to Collis?
  - a. Most Burmese people felt solidarity with the Indians and supported their nationalist movement.
  - b. Indian nationalists created a path that Burmese nationalists could follow.
  - c. Burmese nationalists resented Indians because the British thought the Indians were more politically advanced and gave them self-government first.
  - d. Indian nationalists learned from the tactics of Burmese nationalists.
  - e. The British policy of putting Indians in positions of power over Burmese people caused tension between Indians and Burmese.

### Reasoning

1. What could have been the benefits of the Indian and Burmese nationalist movements working together?



## 6. Japanese Expansionism: How did it affect Burma?

■ A Mitsubishi made AGM 'zero' (above), one of the main fighter planes used by the Imperial Japanese navy during WW2.

Read D39; B-AFO, B-Allies, B-Axis Powers; T-1939-1945, 1942-1945, T-1944-1945; M5.




### Comprehension

- The AFO decided to cooperate with the British and the other Allies because**
  - they were against fascism wherever it occurred in the world.
  - they did not want to be part of the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.
  - they were upset with the way the Japanese had treated Burmese people.
  - all of the above.
- Look at M5. During WWII, the British wanted to aid nationalists who were fighting communists in China, while the Japanese wanted to expand their empire to include all of Asia. Why would Burma be strategically important to both Allied and Axis powers?**
  - Because Burma provided a route for the British to supply Chinese nationalists.
  - Because Thailand could easily be reached from Burma.
  - Because Burma provided access to the Indian Ocean.
  - Because both the British and the Japanese wanted to help Burma get independence.

### Reasoning

- Do you think the AFO's decision to turn against the Japanese and ally with the British was a good decision? Why or why not? Do you think it helped Burma get independence sooner or delayed independence? Why?**

## 7. Communist China: What was its relationship to Burma?

 D55;  B-Zhou Enlai, B-Nehru; and  T-1949-1985, T-1953-1955.




### Comprehension

1. According to the five principles, which actions would be acceptable for either China or Burma?
  - a. Invading the other country.
  - b. Trading.
  - c. Demanding changes in the other country's domestic policies.
  - d. Having diplomats visit the other country.

### Reasoning

1. What problems do you imagine could prevent China and Burma from following this policy of peaceful co-existence? (You can also use examples from your background knowledge.)

## 8. The Cold War: Why did Burma join the non-aligned movement?

Read  D56;  B-Nehru; and  T-1953-55.

### Comprehension

1. Decide if each statement is a fact, a theory or a belief.
  - a. If the world divides into two blocs, the chances of war will increase.
  - b. The US and Russia have atomic bombs.
  - c. It is degrading to follow the wishes of either the capitalists or the communists.
  - d. Keeping a neutral position would be humiliating.
  - e. If war occurs between capitalists and communists, India should join in right away on the side of the capitalists.
  - f. Countries in Asia and Africa were formerly colonised.

2. Which statements would Nehru agree with?



### Reasoning

1. Why do you think Burma joined India in being non-aligned? Was it a good decision? Why or why not?
2. Some say the Cold War ended in the late 1980s, when the USSR started negotiating with the US and Europe. Do tensions between China, Russia, the US and the EU still affect Burma today? If so, how? If not, why not?

■ From left: Propaganda painting of Chairman Mao, the National emblem of China, the Great Wall of China.



## 9. US anti-communist policies: How did they affect Burma?

 D60;  B-KMT, B-Chiang Kai-Shek




### Comprehension

1. Place the events in sequence according to the article. Which one is implied rather than stated in the article?
  - a. Chiang Kai-shek's KMT troops were marooned in Northern Burma.
  - b. Burmese troops found boxes of weapons with a symbol of the US government on it.
  - c. Burma sent a note of protest to the UN.
  - d. A US-built plane tried to drop supplies to KMT troops in Burma.
  - e. The US began supplying weapons and money to Taiwan to support the KMT in its battle against communist China.

### Reasoning

1. If you had lived in Rangoon in 1961, would you have joined the anti-US riot? Why or why not?
2. Did Burma's strategic importance in the Cold War give it power, or make it powerless? Explain.

## 10. Anti-Chinese riots: What were the causes and effects?

 D65;  B-CIA, B-Mao Zedong; and  T-1927-1950, T-1966, T-1967.

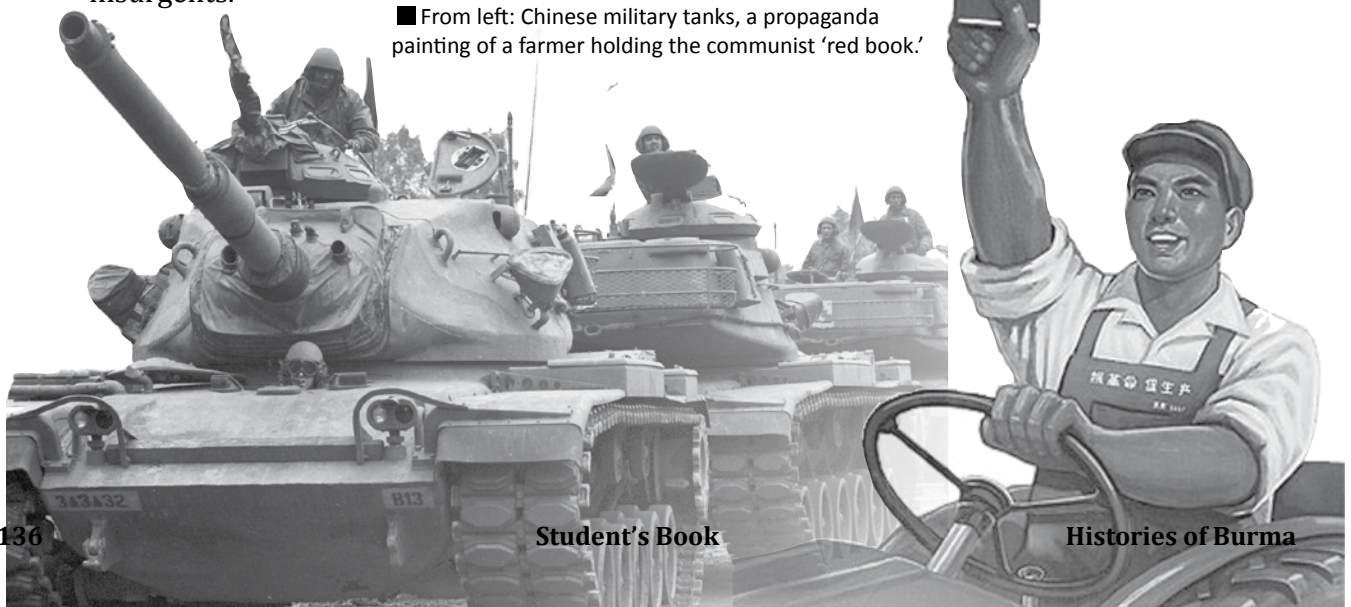
### Comprehension

1. Label each point an immediate cause, background cause, short-term effect and long-term effect of the riots.
  - a. China and Burma became enemies instead of allies.
  - b. Chinese officials gave Mao badges to Chinese students.
  - c. Chinese officials went to China to learn about Cultural Revolution.
  - d. Government told Chinese students not to wear Mao badges.
  - e. 80 Chinese people were killed.
  - f. Thousands of dollars in property was destroyed.
  - g. China started training Shan and Kachin insurgents.



### Reasoning

1. Why do you think the US CIA was gathering information about China-Burma relations?
2. Why do you think the Chinese students wore the Mao badges despite the government law forbidding them? Do you consider their actions a form of free speech? Why or why not?
3. During the riots, Burmese people attacked all Chinese people regardless of whether they wore Mao badges or not. What does this tell you about xenophobia?

■ From left: Chinese military tanks, a propaganda painting of a farmer holding the communist 'red book.'



**11. “External destructive elements”:** Why does the SPDC criticise Western and exiled media?

Read  D87;  B-BBC, B-DVB, B-RFA, B-SPDC, B-VOA; and  T-2003.

**Comprehension**

1. Label each statement a fact, theory, or belief. Then decide if the facts are correct or incorrect, if the theories are well-supported or poorly supported, and if the beliefs are widely held by Burmese people or not widely held. Choose which two of the points are implied rather than stated.
  - a. People attended a rally in support of the Seven-Step Roadmap to Democracy.
  - b. VOA, BBC, RFA and DVB make up news because they want to divide the government from the people.
  - c. VOA, BBC, RFA and DVB are bad media organisations run by evil people.
  - d. VOA, BBC, RFA and DVB broadcast news that does not reflect the views of the majority of Burmese people.
  - e. The Seven-Step Roadmap to Democracy is an excellent plan.

★ VOA, BBC-sowing hatred among the people

★ RFA, DVB-generating public outrage

★ Do not allow ourselves to be swayed by killer broadcasts designed to cause troubles

■ These words above were printed until recently on the back of every issue of the government newspaper ‘The New Light of Myanmar’. It has questioned the validity of Western and exiled-Burmese media groups broadcasting into the country.

**Reasoning**

1. What would you expect SPDC’s bias about BBC, VOA, RFA and DVB to be? Why? Do they display this expected bias?
2. How do you think the SPDC’s criticisms of these media organisations affects Burma’s relations with the countries where those organisations are based? (VOA-the US; BBC-the UK; RFA- the US; DVB- Norway) Why?

**Four political objectives**

- \* Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
- \* National reconsolidation
- \* Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- \* Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

**Four economic objectives**



- \* Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
- \* Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
- \* Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
- \* The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

**Four social objectives**

- \* Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
- \* Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
- \* Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
- \* Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

■ (Above) Government objectives until recently published on the front page of every issue of the ‘New Light of Myanmar’. They outlined the social, political and economic objectives of the ruling government.

## 12. International trade: How has Burma created economic and political alliances?

Read  D88; and  T-1997.

### Comprehension

1. Answer these questions or select the right word to make correct statements.
  - a. Between 2000 and 2006, trade with China increased/decreased.
  - b. Between 2000 and 2006, trade with industrialized countries increased/decreased.
  - c. In 2006, Burma imported most from which country? \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. In 2006, Burma exported most to which country? \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. In 2006, Burma traded more/less with the EU than the US.

### Reasoning

1. What do you think are the causes of the trading shifts shown in the chart?
2. What do you think were the effects of the trading shifts shown in the chart?

## 13. International humanitarian aid: How has it affected Burma?

Read  D93;  B-UN; and  T-2008.

### Comprehension

1. Match the perspective on international humanitarianism with the views in parts A, B, C and D of the document.
  - a. The international community should criticise the Burmese government more.
  - b. The international community should praise the progress that the Burmese government and civil society organisations are making.
  - c. The international community cannot effectively aid Burmese people because the government blocks its efforts.
  - d. The international community might not be needed as much to help Burma in the future because civil society organisations are on the rise.



■ Burmese soldiers unload food packages donated by international aid organisations shortly after Cyclone Nargis.

### Reasoning

1. What are some of the benefits of international aid in Burma? What are some of the drawbacks?
2. Which of these perspectives (a-d) do you think is most common inside Burma? Which one surprises you most, and why?

## 14. Sanctions vs. constructive engagement: How have they affected Burma?

 D91; and  B-Campbell.

### Comprehension

1. According to Campbell, which points show change? Which points show continuity?
  - a. The human rights situation in Burma is very bad.
  - b. The Burmese government is interested in engaging with the US.
  - c. The US has economic sanctions on Burma.
  - d. The US is pursuing high-level dialogue with representatives of the Burmese government.
  - e. The US is concerned about Burma's relationship with North Korea and its potential to develop WMDs.
  - f. The US supports a unified, peaceful and democratic Burma.

### Reasoning

1. Campbell states that the US is acting in its own national interest by pursuing engagement with Burma. Give some examples of how this policy could benefit the US.
2. Do you think the pragmatic/constructive engagement policy will be more successful than sanctions alone in promoting the US's goals in Burma?
3. Some people think that if Burma had a lot of oil or other resources that the US wanted, the US would try harder to get rid of the repressive regime. Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

## 15. Refugee resettlement: How have Burmese people spread around the world?

Read  D98; and  T-1980s, T-1990s-2000s

### Comprehension

1. Match the theory or belief (A-E) with the evidence provided for it by the refugees (1-5).
  1. In Burma, the government takes from people.
  2. The refugees were dependent on NGOs and aid agencies.
  3. Thai authorities would not let refugees leave the camp.
  4. The baby can deal with cold weather better than the adults.
  5. In Ireland more work is done by machines.
    - a. Ireland's government is better than Burma's.
    - b. Ireland is more developed.
    - c. Life in a refugee camp lacks freedom.
    - d. Many refugees receive international aid.
    - e. The younger generation will have an easier time adjusting to resettlement.

### Reasoning

1. Thousands of Burmese people have fled to Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia and India, where they live as refugees or migrants. How do you think the presence of these refugees affects the Burmese government's relationship with the Thai, Indian, Malaysian and Bangladeshi governments?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of resettlement, both for the refugees who resettle and for those who remain behind?
3. Besides refugee resettlement, how have Burmese people spread around the world?

# Review

1. How has Burma's geography and political situation made it important internationally? Explain your answer with examples from D12, D39, D60, D88, and D91.
2. Which country do you think affected Burma most over the past century? Britain, the US, China or some other country? Justify your answer using examples from the documents.
3. Which of Burma's past approaches to foreign policy (neutral, isolationist, engaged) do you think has been best for people inside Burma? Why?
4. What kind of foreign policy would you suggest for Burma today? Why?
5. How do you think other countries can help Burma's people? Specifically, what requests would you have for the US, China, Thailand, the EU, India, Japan or the UN?
6. How has completing this unit changed your perspective on Burma's relations with other countries? How has it stayed the same?