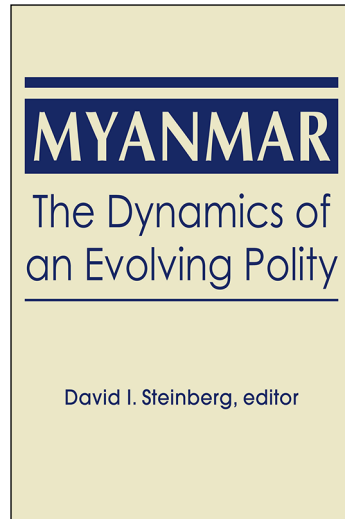


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**Myanmar:  
The Dynamics of  
an Evolving Polity**

edited by  
David I. Steinberg

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# 1

## Contemporary Myanmar: Setting the Stage

*David I. Steinberg*

In the darker days of the 1990s, a dissident, perceptive Burmese colonel privately summed up the military's dominant role in Myanmar. "The play is over," he said, "but the audience is forced to remain in their seats and the actors refuse to leave the stage." As trenchant and accurate as that characterization was at the time, and in spite of many dire predictions that the denouement of the tragedy that was Burma/Myanmar had no end in sight, a new era belatedly dawned in 2011. The audience no longer remains forcibly glued to their seats, although the actors may wish to continue to control the drama's action. More a type of experimental theater, audience participation has transformed the immediate scene with a cast expanded and the script blurred. Observers outside the theater anxiously watch, and the political drama critics are conflicted.

The audience could not exit the *tatmadaw's* (armed forces') previous abject performance, and in some sense and for multiple reasons, the actors recognized that the script had to be at least partly rewritten, perhaps to continue to give themselves the starring roles, but with an expanded cast. Whether this will satisfy the audience or the internal and external critics remains unclear.<sup>1</sup> A final curtain is unknown, and even unscripted. Myanmar has undergone profound changes from which reversion to the old, military-authored drama is no longer completely possible. However, naively hopeful aspirations of the military's retirement to the barracks and that the tortuous road to modified democracy is open, clear, and inevitable are equally uncertain and indeed implausible. Beliefs that the drama will end as comedy, not tragedy, are widespread. But more likely, the play will simply continue, with crises and lulls, to no apparent final denouement, for realities and changing circumstances interdict the best-laid, scripted plans of states or nations, and especially those in the process of transition. Change and uncertainty are inevitable. "Happy endings, nice and tidy," as *The Threepenny Opera* reminds us, are only "learned in school."

The international euphoria over the “opening” to the West has led to effusive optimism, business and recreational tourism and exploration, rising prices, increasing foreign assistance, instant analyses, and ephemeral experts. Long prone to be a *tabula obscura* with few authoritative statistics not polluted by political whims or considerations, Myanmar has become more accessible, although accurate data are often still unavailable. Although access has become easier, many have been led to focus inadvertently on that society through ethnocentrically tinged lenses reflecting our own premises and hypotheses, most of which have remained untested. Most analysts lack the longitudinal knowledge, comparative experience, and disciplinary training to ponder the longer range issues facing that country—important because of its strategic location, size, diverse peoples and cultures, history, and potential.

Some important foreign groups and individuals have called for moderation, even skepticism, in acceptance of and assistance to a regime they regard as still suspect, having advocated “regime change” leading to a civilian-dominated government for some score of years. Others argue that, although the reforms are likely to be uneven and unsynchronized, support for positive changes in all fields will create expanded, vested interests in such changes, deterring the dangers of their being rescinded. Debate between these opinions is evident in the world’s major capitals, with important policy implications. This volume will contribute to understanding some of the essential and basic issues involved in the future of Myanmar.

At this critical juncture in early 2014, a group of seasoned, expert observers of Myanmar from a variety of countries, multiple disciplines, and quite divergent viewpoints have written on what they regard as some of the important, continuing issues that Myanmar faces if it is to transition into a nation that uplifts the lives of its diverse peoples. These are considered opinions on more basic questions or problems that are unlikely to make the evening news or the latest tweets. They are, however, fundamental conundrums that the multiple societies that are Myanmar will have to face to achieve the goals that those diverse peoples have articulated for themselves. They are the issues of which foreign policy and business executives must be cognizant to be effective. This introduction provides the societal background leading to the political changes since 2011, the reform efforts, and a volume synopsis that will prove helpful to those internally and those externally involved in Myanmar policy affairs. It is addressed to serious observers of that society, and to those who wish to make comparative observations and studies of transitional states and their evolutionary issues. No attempt has been made here to enforce any analytical, political, or social framework onto this volume, as we have attempted to reflect the divergence of views that has been evident in modern studies of this important country.

## On Names: Burma vs. Myanmar

No issue has been more confusing to the uninitiated, and more polarizing to those who are conversant with that society, than the name of the state. *Burma* was the Anglicized name of the country in the colonial period, and on independence in 1948, it was officially known as the *Union of Burma*. In Burmese, however, it was called *Myanmar Naingantaw*—“the Royal Country of Myanmar,” a millennial-old term from classical inscriptions. The name of the state has changed several times: the Union of Burma, the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, the Union of Myanmar, and its present designation since 2011, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

In July 1989, the military junta, known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), changed the name to Myanmar. The United Nations (UN) adopted this designation, as did most countries. The Burmese opposition led by Aung San Suu Kyi, followed by a number of states—most conspicuously the United States—continued to use Burma because they believed the perpetrators of the changed name were not politically legitimate. The use of either term thus became a surrogate indicator of political persuasion. Here, without political intent, Myanmar is essentially used, but at the discretion of each author. Burma may be employed for the earlier period, and Burma/Myanmar for continuity. Citations remain as in the original. Some authors will use *Burmese* to designate a citizen of that state, the language, and as an adjective. Other names have been changed (see Appendix B). The majority ethnic *Burmans* are now call *Bamah*.

## The Heritage of Authoritarian Rule

For two generations Burma/Myanmar had effectively been under military control. It was directly administered under martial law regimes (1962–1974, 1988–2011), and indirectly through the military’s chosen channel of control—the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP, 1974–1988). The military heritage in this country is, thus, exceptionally strong, and its national imprimatur has been one of the longest in the international modern era. Even in the civilian period from independence (1948–1962), military influence was profound; it saved the state from disintegration through political and ethnic rebellions and directly administered the country for eighteen months (1958–1960). There have been three coups d’état: a constitutional one in 1958 forced on a civilian administration to prevent a civilian civil war, the 1962 coup that was to enshrine military control perpetually and hold the fissiparous state together, and the coup of 18 September 1988 to shore up the previous, failed military-controlled government. Based on disdain of civilian politicians, whom the *tatmadaw* believed were corrupt, inefficient, lacking developmental skills or foresight, unpatriotic, and capable

of sacrificing the unity of the state to special ethnic or economic interests, the military designed a set of systems that would ensure for perpetuity both its effective control over state power and its autonomy.<sup>2</sup>

That control was made manifest in 2008 in the formation of a new constitution—the third in the state’s history. The first was in 1947 just prior to independence, and the second in 1974, which established a single-party totalitarian system based on an Eastern European model in the Cold War era. The newest constitution, under which the state now operates, ensures the leading role of the *tatmadaw* in the state, its autonomy, key cabinet positions, its ability to revert to military control in a crisis, prevention of criminal charges against any individual in previous administrations for actions taken in their official capacities, and 25 percent active duty military in all parliaments, national and local. It was passed by a clearly manipulated referendum in May 2008 (with 92.4 percent approval) and after a long (since 1993), heavily scripted, tortuous, and prolonged formation process of writing under severe restrictions. It was in response to the national elections of 1990 won by the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) with 80 percent of the seats and 57 percent of the votes—an election the purposes of which are still debated but the results of which were ignored by the military administration.<sup>3</sup>

In 2004, the then head of state, President (General) Than Shwe, and his prime minister, General Khin Nyunt, declared a seven-point path to what was called “discipline-flourishing democracy.” The government inaugurated on 30 March 2011 was the culmination of that process. Western governments were skeptical, having stressed the lack of human rights and the varied house arrest of the democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi, who became a Nobel laureate in 1991 and who was extremely popular in many circles both inside the country and internationally. US policy for much of this period was “regime change”—honoring the results of the 1990 elections and returning government to civilian control after about half a century of military domination.

The totalitarian rule by junta from 1988, first by the SLORC until 1997 and then by the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), resulted in authoritarian control (the socialist ideology of the BSPP had been abandoned), with extensive restrictions on civil rights, widespread human rights abuses, and a continuation of the unitary state. Successful attempts were made, however, to broker cease-fires with seventeen ethnic rebellions. These were respites from killing but far from peace treaties that have yet to be negotiated. The question of some fair, in some Burmese sense, distribution of power and resources among the majority Burman population and a variety of ethnic groups remains unresolved.

Public dissatisfaction over military administration prompted demonstrations following the 1988 coup—demonstrations that were brutally sup-

pressed. Some 3,000 were said to have died in the failed people's revolution of 1988 and its suppression, although no definitive figure is yet possible. Sporadic unrest followed, including incipient riots by students that prompted the regime to close sporadically many educational institutions for long periods. Wholesale arrests of opposition figures or simply those identified as antistate were endemic, while Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest for much of the period. A major confrontation and resulting deaths with her followers at Depayin in Central Myanmar in 2003 prompted outrage and additional US sanctions that year, as did the Buddhist *sangha* (clergy) demonstrations in the fall of 2007. The *tatmadaw* has continuously evoked the specter of "chaos" as threatening their primary objective—the unity of the state and their continued political control.

Although in popular international parlance the Myanmar state was called isolated, this was inaccurate, as closer ties with the Chinese and improved relations with India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) occurred over this period. To the West, however, Myanmar (still referred to in the United States as Burma) was a pariah, thuggish state, and an "outpost of tyranny." Buoyed by an effective human rights lobby and expatriate Burmese activists, the previous stigma of an undesirable regime made positive modifications in Western policies toward that state difficult. The US administration under President Barack Obama effectively began to move US policy from "regime change" to what might be called "regime modification," officially known in the US Department of State as "pragmatic engagement"—high-level contacts but with the continuation of a complex set of sanctions.<sup>4</sup>

### On the Cusp of Change

On 30 March 2011, a new government was inaugurated—the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Called "quasi-civilian" by some official sources in the United States, it was highly reminiscent of the previous military administrations in terms of its personnel, most of whom were retired *tatmadaw* members. It was elected in grossly and blatantly manipulated elections in November 2010, which in turn had been based on a constitution that had obviously been fraudulently imposed by the military junta through a two-stage referendum in May 2008. Expectations among many Burmese and among most Western observers were skeptical at best, even dour. Although China commented favorably on the process, the United States and many Western nations decried what they described as a flawed, illegitimate government based on highly dubious premises.

If the senior government officials seemed overly familiar to many foreign analysts, the programs quickly announced were not. Whatever the accuracy of the claim of a "roadmap to democracy," internal and external



observers were surprised by the extent and vigor with which that new administration pushed the reform process. The release of political prisoners seriatim; extensive relaxation of censorship; new freedoms for labor, the media, and for demonstrations; extensive and vigorous debates in the various *hluttaws* (parliaments); important economic and monetary reforms; formation of a human rights commission; an invitation to the Burmese diaspora to return; and foreign policy liberalization came with astonishing speed after a half-century of authoritarian, sclerotic military rule. President Thein Sein, former general and prime minister under the junta—the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)—personally attended an antipoverty seminar where he heard, contrary to normal practice since the military coup of 1962, direct and severe criticisms of previous military rule. He met personally with opposition leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been released from house arrest immediately following the 2010 elections. She was later elected to the parliament in the by-elections of 1 April 2012, which in contrast to those of 2010 were free and fair. Some *modus vivendi* seemed to have been reached between the two, reassuring those in the West to whom she had become the world's democratic avatar.

These widespread reforms, ironically mandated by a government that many in the West regarded as illegitimate, were coupled with an important omission: the administration had wisely shelved the junta's previous, ill-conceived plan to castrate the dissident ethnic armed forces and militias under the "border guard forces" plan by integrating all of them into the *tat-madaw*. The most important ethnic armies, aggregating some 50,000 to 100,000 troops, refused to accept this plan, although some minor rebel battalions did (see Chapter 7). Instead, the administration began serious negotiations for new cease-fires with the major ethnic forces to formulate peace agreements. Ethnic issues, specifically the integration of the peripheral minority regions and peoples into a Burmese nation with an overarching national ethos, has been the single most important problem facing the state since its independence in 1948. The issue of a unitary or federal state has been, and remains, central to creating a national identity.<sup>5</sup> Never resolved, never even effectively addressed, the ethnic problem began to be negotiated seriously for the first time under the new government, and with some success, although a number of remaining and acute problems are yet to be resolved. Yet, vested interests within government and insurgencies may not wish peace to evolve that would threaten their goals, power, or economic rents.

Ethnic issues are intensely complicated by religion. The Burman (called *Bamah* by the present government) ethnic majority, the traditional rulers of what is now Myanmar, are distinctly Buddhist and number some two-thirds of the population, the remainder split among many large and smaller ethnic groups, generally inhabiting the porous, ethnically indistinct

border regions.<sup>6</sup> Some have adopted Christianity, especially the Chin, Kachin, and a significant number of the Karen. The Rohingya, an important Muslim minority on the Bangladesh border, remain stateless. The government refuses to use the term *Rohingya*, referring to the group as *Bengali*.<sup>7</sup> Other Muslims are spread throughout the major cities and towns of the state. Although constitutional provisions and public statements call for respect for ethnic cultures, religions, and languages, this has been more cant than reality. President Thein Sein has repeatedly called for respect for all peoples and cultures, but the military's previous attempts at cultural "Myanmafication" have been evident for over two decades.

Myanmar's foreign policy also began to be transformed. The popular media had pictured Myanmar as a "client" state of China, and this seemed reinforced when in May 2011 President Thein Sein chose Beijing as his first official state visit. There he signed a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership, a relationship never before proclaimed between those two states.<sup>8</sup> Yet the characterization of Myanmar cast inextricably in China's orbit proved to be wrong. In September 2011, President Thein Sein stopped Chinese construction of the US\$3.6 billion Myitsone dam because of Myanmar popular opinion. Internally, anti-Chinese sentiment began to grow. Overtures to the United States had begun as early as March 2009 and culminated with the appointment of a special envoy and later ambassador to Myanmar (a post vacant since 1990) and the visits of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in December 2011 and President Barack Obama in November 2012. The gloom in Beijing and the euphoria in Washington over the Obama administration's only foreign policy "success" in East Asia was probably premature on both accounts.

Myanmar exists in a context of regional importance. It chaired ASEAN in 2014 for the first time—a role that the United States had sought to deny Myanmar for a decade. Myanmar is essential in the Sino-Indian rivalry because of its littoral on the Bay of Bengal, its proximity to the disputed territory of Arunachal Pradesh occupied by India and claimed by China, the political fragility of numerous rebellions in Northeast India bordering Myanmar, its natural resources, and India's "look east" policy toward Southeast Asia. In the context of "rising China," Myanmar plays a role, at least as interpreted by the Chinese, in the US "pivot" to East Asia.<sup>9</sup> Japan views a strong Chinese presence in Myanmar as strengthening China at Japan's expense. At the same time, the Republic of Korea seeks to assure itself of Burmese markets and resources and to counter Japan's and North Korea's potentials there. Thailand, Burma's traditional enemy, remains the second largest investor in Myanmar, which supplies Thailand through a land and underwater gas pipeline with 25 percent of its electricity.

All these factors will come into focus through the lens of the planned 2015 general elections in Myanmar that will bring a new dynamic to inter-

nal politics and external relations. How these will be conducted; whether changes in the constitution will occur, and if so, what kinds of changes; how the peoples of Myanmar will view the results; and how foreign powers will react to these critical elections are all likely to be determining factors in the following five years before the next electoral cycle. This study, however, will look beyond the elections, and indeed beyond the next political cycle, to examine some of the more fundamental forces that have and will continue to affect that society.

### **Purpose and Structure**

The purpose of this volume is to analyze beyond the immediate. The problems attendant on the 2015 elections and the events leading up to them have captured the attention of many foreign observers, but they are manifestations of more structural issues facing the society and its internal and external dilemmas; many go unrecognized even by those concerned with this important society. No single volume can encompass all the enduring, myriad questions that are likely to lie dormant in any tumultuous present.

This volume is divided into fourteen chapters, all of which intellectually are related, and divided into three groups: the political realm, issues of socioeconomic development, and international relations. It begins by analyzing the coercive forces that have played such critical roles since Burmese independence. It then moves to examine the relatively open legislative process that has been in effectual abeyance since 1962. Concepts of law and justice and the role of Buddhism form important chapters and question foreign characterizations of these issues in Myanmar. The volume proceeds to explore the economic plans and realities before moving into the issue of ethnic questions that have remained especially salient to the effectiveness of this complex polity. These are followed by consideration of the state in relation to China and the United States—two powers strongly influencing (positively or negatively) the future of Myanmar.

International concentration on the role of the military in Myanmar has been a natural consequence of *tatmadaw* rule in various guises since 1962. Yet the forces of coercion are more widespread, and as an ostensibly civilian or civilianized government has taken over since 2011, the expanded role of the police has become more evident. Although controlled by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which under the constitution must be led by a uniformed army officer, their role is broadened as the military, at least titularly, remains in the barracks. It also becomes more complex with the introduction of more freedoms for the individual. Andrew Selth examines the issues connected with these forces of coercion and their likely future roles in Myanmar society.

David Steinberg explores the continuing role of the military in Myanmar and examines the likely evolution of its predominant control in

that society. He considers the control by the *tatmadaw* over all avenues of social mobility as unique in Asia—quite different from the military in Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and South Korea, all of which have been dominated for various periods by their local militaries. This ensures a continuing prominence of the military unless other avenues are open to a broad spectrum of the peoples in that society. Manifestations of military prominence in the parliaments or cabinets are representative of a far more profound phenomenon and have important policy implications for domestic and foreign programming.

The reintroduction of the legislative process, in abeyance since 1988 and with some autonomy from the executive branch since 1962, has created a new dynamic which Renaud Egreteau examines. The formation of regional and state *hluttaws* (essentially provincial parliaments), a hitherto unknown element in the history of Burma/Myanmar, creates new opportunities for expressing and resolving local needs, so often ignored by the previous unitary state. The new tension between the executive and legislative branches of the government indicates the beginnings of a type of pluralism, a necessary but messy process. However, parliaments have to move beyond influencing policies to making policies—administrative, implementation, and intellectual jumps that are likely to take both time and rethinking of some of the dynamics of governance.

A standard ideological mantra among foreign observers of Myanmar is the need for the “Rule of Law,” conceptually conceived in capital letters. Foreign aid organizations often regard this as a programmatic goal to which they will provide support. The issue of the role of law in Myanmar societies is far more complex than the simple concept of an independent judiciary, which is a state-articulated goal. In contrast to the Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman traditions in the West that are relatively seamless, non-Western states, especially those that have undergone a fragmenting colonial experience built upon disparate customary and religious concepts, often have traditions in conflict with these supposedly “international norms.” Elliott Prasse-Freeman considers the inherent tensions between Burmese customary concepts and practices and Western concepts of law and justice, and how even these foreign precepts could be used to subvert the very goals toward which the rule of law is devoted.

Matthew Walton examines the teachings, practices, and rhetoric of Buddhism and their impact on democratic thinking in Myanmar, as well as related issues that may inhibit pluralistic growth. These ideas are historically salient. The reemergence of an exclusionary Buddhist nationalism could undermine the integration of the extensive minority religious communities in the state, and communal relationships within the Burman areas and in the periphery. Yet some Burmese interpretations of Buddhism also offer resources for strengthening democratic practice in Myanmar. These ideas are also relevant. They could support the integration of the extensive minor-

ity religious communities in the state, and advance communal relationships within the Burman areas as well as on the periphery.

Economic planning has had a long but undistinguished history in Burma/Myanmar beginning in the early 1950s. The first major plan—covering the period 1953 to 1960—was designed with US assistance and was followed by a series of five-year plans under the socialist government of Ne Win and the authoritarian regime presided over by Than Shwe. These plans were so marred by political manipulation of data that in 1987 Ne Win himself complained that they were useless because of the intentional falsification of data. The past is not a necessary prelude, however. The government of President Thein Sein, assisted by a variety of external economic specialists and institutions, has produced a twenty-year plan that will address a variety of new economic and social challenges, as well as the legacy of past failures. Lex Rieffel in his chapter discusses these challenges, which will have a profound impact on Myanmar's economic prospects.

Although economic planning has been prevalent, major macroeconomic reforms have been recently instituted. While Myanmar's growth rate has markedly increased through extractive industries, the positive effects of economic reform have yet to filter down to the populace as a whole. Moe Thuzar and Tin Maung Maung Than examine the gap between macroeconomic and microeconomic indicators, as well as their effects on the population.

An enduring issue since independence has been the question of land rights and land ownership. For nationalistic reasons, the state has been the residual owner of all land since independence. This policy has resulted in economic disaster for farmers who have not been able to plant what they like or use land as collateral for credit. In the upland areas, traditional systems of land use have not been recognized by the state, a system that has enabled the seizure of land for other uses. Exploitative use of eminent domain by the state and its organs, including national and local *tatmadaw* units, have created intense resentment and led to attempts to resolve this continuing problem through legislation and other means. Christina Fink considers this issue that is of profound importance to the peasantry.

The "peace process," the contemporary vision of ensuring some form of acceptable majority-minority relationships, is shorthand for attempting to solve the most enduring problem facing the state—one that has existed from independence. This process seeks to create some equitable, in Myanmar terms, distribution of power and assets among the diverse peoples of that country. More a state than a nation with an overarching sense of national ethos necessary for multicultural societies, Myanmar now seeks to transform armed insurrections and fragile cease-fires into a national peace and to end the ethnic strife that has gripped the country since 1948. The civilian government of U Nu (1948 to 1962) never resolved the issue, and the mili-

tary under General Ne Win and the subsequent *tatmadaw* rule of the SLORC and SPDC exacerbated the problems. The present apparent willingness to explore options and negotiate offers the most plausible opportunity for progress in over half a century. The ethnic issue is addressed through two chapters of this volume. Martin Smith analyzes the problem, while Ashley South considers the ramifications of the efforts. The problem is made more complex because of the history of foreign involvement, support, and sympathy for many of the rebellions and their adherents.

The popular portrayal of Myanmar as dependent on China, until its foreign policy shifted after 2011, was an overstatement and neglects the mutuality of the relationship. Yun Sun argues that the two decades between 1990 and 2011 represent a deviation from Myanmar's traditional, neutralist non-aligned foreign policy. Due to internal constraints and external isolation, Myanmar developed an overwhelming dependence on China for political and economic support. Confident in its advantaged position in the bilateral relations, China invested in a series of economic and strategic initiatives in Myanmar, which enhanced China's dependence on its neighbor. The two countries therefore formed an unbalanced, asymmetric mutual dependence. Myanmar's political reform and improvement of relations with the West largely freed the country from its previous dependence on China. This has resulted in an awkward position for China with economic and strategic investments at the mercy of the Myanmar government. China still enjoys influence and leverage in Myanmar, most importantly through its economic strength and ties with the border ethnic groups. In the foreseeable future, China will have to navigate a delicate balance between implicit coercion and explicit inducement to repair the damaged ties for optimal results.

As Sino-Burmese relations have been altered, so US-Burmese relations have shifted over the past several years. The various internal and external lobbying groups, including Burmese expatriates, with success across the political spectrum have affected what the US Department of State and the White House can politically recommend. Jürgen Haacke analyzes the forces that affected that shift and the internal pressures within the United States.

Two generations ago, Western observers described societies that seemed suspicious of foreigners, were quite different from the West, or were difficult of access, as "inscrutable." This was in reality a statement of the West's hubris, ignorance, and unwillingness to learn about those societies. Those days are happily over, but we often linger with misconceptions and apply our own sociopolitical and economic prejudices to other societies as policies are formulated. We have come a considerable way toward overcoming our conceptual mal-heritages, but we still must remain vigilant. This volume is an effort to explore some of the less obvious issues in our understanding of an important society. It is in part an effort to reexamine our premises and hypotheses about what Burma/Myanmar was and has become.

We will commit many sins of omission. Issues of space and financing prohibit extensive exploration of numerous other dilemmas that will determine the well-being of the people and the quality of governance. Our consolation is that as the interest in Myanmar has so vastly expanded, a large number of professional and casual observers, especially those inside that state, will continue to identify issues that it must address. So to our readers we apologize in advance for those questions that here remain unaddressed. In the concluding chapter, we will briefly recognize their importance, and in good, everlasting academic fashion, call for more research on these important problems.

## Notes

1. A poll conducted in the spring of 2014 indicated that 88 percent of the people generally approved of what the government was doing and its direction, 76 percent felt that democracy was the better form of government, and 62 percent that democratic governance had improved. International Republican Institute, "Survey of Burma Public Opinion December 24, 2013–February 13, 2014" (Washington, DC). How representative that was, and given the mercurial nature of Myanmar politics, it may offer little in considering longer-range guidance for trends in that society.

2. It should be remembered that the 1958–1960 Burmese military government was regarded in Western political science circles as something of a third world model for effective, if authoritarian, administration. The social science literature during that Cold War period favored military regimes, in part because they were anticommunist.

3. The opposition, followed by the United States and the EU, claimed it was for a new parliament, but the junta insisted it was for a constitutional convention that would write a new constitution. In any case, the junta ignored the results and attempted to control the process of constitutional writing by declaring that any non-governmental attempts to do so were illegal. The process may have been accelerated by the junta's concerns about political stability if they did not move expeditiously on the constitution after the so-called Saffron Revolution of the fall of 2007.

4. There is an extensive literature on this period from diverse vantage points.

5. See David I. Steinberg, "The Problem of Democracy in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar: Neither Nation-State nor State-Nation?" *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2012): 220–237.

6. A controversial comprehensive census was undertaken in March–April 2014, but the issue of ethnicity both conceptually and in numbers is unlikely to be resolved.

7. Derek Tomkin, "The 'Rohingya' Identity—British Experience in Arakan 1826–1948," *Network Myanmar* (9 April 2014).

8. For the text, see David I. Steinberg and Hongwei Fan, *Modern China-Myanmar Relations: Dilemmas of Mutual Dependence* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2012), Appendix 5.

9. See David I. Steinberg, "China-Myanmar Managing Influence: The Mutual Dependencies of the 'Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership,'" in Evelyn Goh, ed., *Rising China* (forthcoming).