

Recent Books on Myanmar – Feb 2021

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History

Mandalay and the Art of Building Cities in Burma / François Tainturier
Singapore: NUS Press, 2021
xxiv, 232p.

Includes Index ; Bibliography
9789814722773

1. Mandalay (Burma) – History.
2. Mandalay (Burma) – Civilization.
3. City planning – Burma – Mandalay – Religious aspects – Buddhism.
4. City Planning – Burma – Mandalay – History.
5. Buddhism and state – Burma – Mandalay – History.

\$ 42.00 / HB
948gm.

Drawing on original Burmese texts and illustrations, recent scholarship and mapping, *Mandalay and the Art of Building Cities in Burma* argues that the founding of Mandalay shifted critically in emphasis and scale from a protocol that established the royal city as a ‘cosmic city’ to one that materialized the royal capital as a sanctuary. In the process, the founding protocol used Buddhist narratives as models for action and drastically altered patterns of spatial order prevalent at former royal capitals.

The book renews scholarly discussion on Southeast Asian urban traditions and offers a critical investigation into the ‘cosmic’ dimensions of one of the region’s centers of power. It provides further insight into how rulers articulated lineage, power, and promotion of Buddhism by creating potent landscapes. The systematic planning of Mandalay and construction of its potent landscape constituted the expression, not

formulated in words but in tangible form, of the throne's claim of Burma as a 'Buddhist land' (Buddha-desa) at a time when Lower Burma had been annexed by non-Buddhist believers.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=746095>

Politics

The Wa of Myanmar and China's Quest for Global Dominance / Bertil Lintner

Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2021

viii, 272p. ; 14x21cm. ; Black & White illustrations

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9786162151705

\$ 28.00 / PB

328gm.

The United Wa State Army (UWSA) is a non-state armed group that administers an autonomous zone in the difficult to reach Wa Hills of northeastern Myanmar. The UWSA was formed in 1989 after the hilltribe rank-and-file of the insurgent Communist Party of Burma (CPB) expelled its mostly Burman leadership as part of mutiny. The group has grown into the largest and best-equipped military non-state actor in the Asia-Pacific region. As China expands its geopolitical interests across Asia through the Belt and Road Initiative, the Wa have come to play a pivotal role in Beijing's current efforts to extend its influence in Myanmar.

In *The Wa of Myanmar and China's Quest for Global Dominance* Lintner provides a rare, close-up look of a little-known people. He was the only foreign journalist to visit the Wa areas when controlled by the CPB and has returned there since. In a book relevant to current debates about geopolitics in Asia, the illicit drug trade, Myanmar's decades-long civil wars and ongoing efforts to negotiate a settlement, Lintner traces the history of the Wa Hills and the struggles of its people.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=750373>
