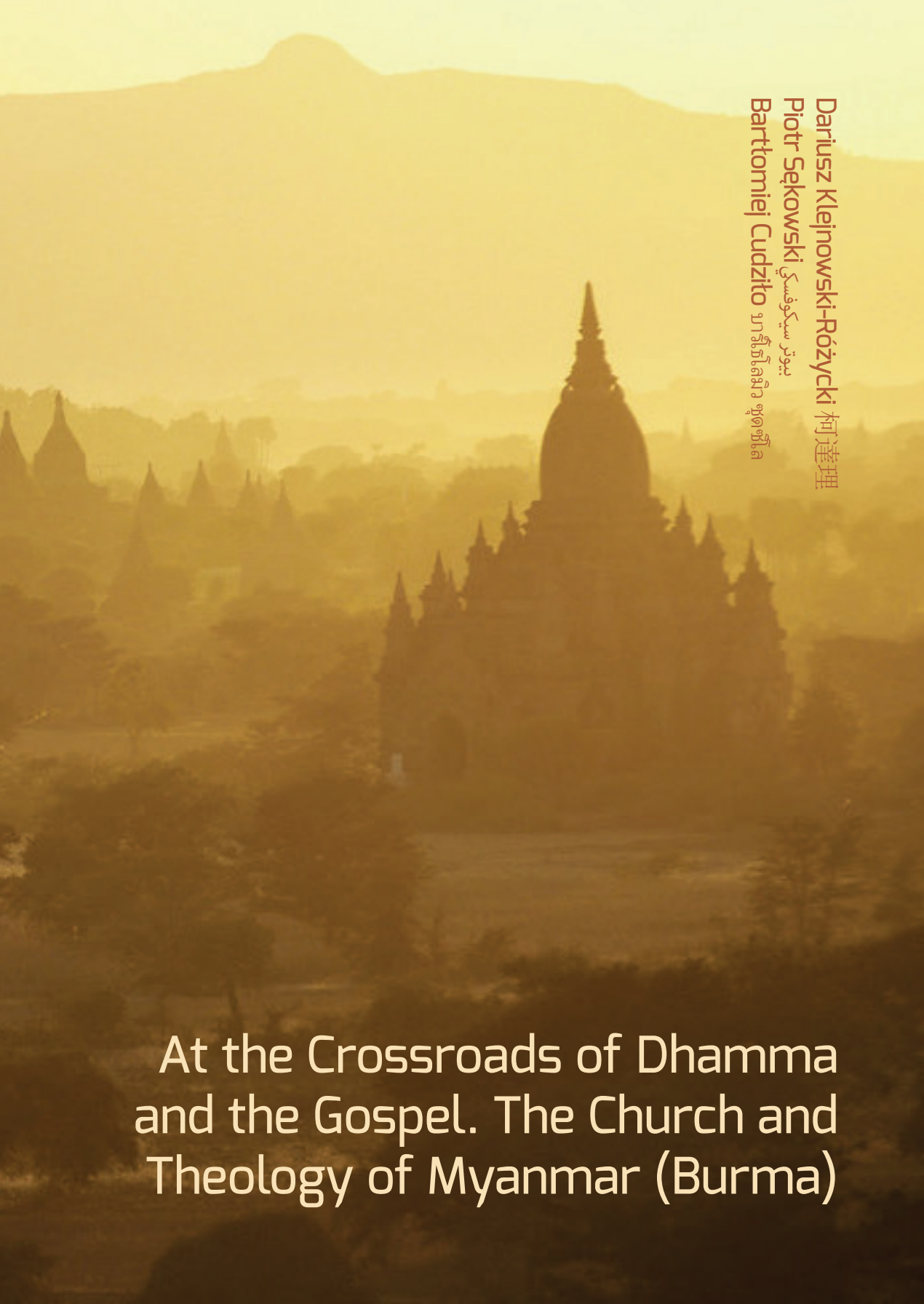

Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki 柯達理
Piotr Sękowski بيوتر سيكوفسكي
Bartłomiej Cudziło บาร์โธโลมิว ซุดซีโล

At the Crossroads of Dhamma and the Gospel. The Church and Theology of Myanmar (Burma)

Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki 柯達理
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Institute for Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East
Publishing House of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole

Opole 2026

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This research work is funded by budget resources for science within the grant of the Institute for Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East. Program/Project: *The Encounter of Christianity with the Cultures of Asia*. Competition: *001 Asia-Europe: Symbols – Values – Religions, Politics – Law – Economy*. Grant title: *Burma (Myanmar): Church and Theology*. Grant number: *SHENXUE 0002.2025*

Reviewer:
prof. dr hab. Józef Majewski (University of Gdansk)

Correction:
Magdalena Clear (Australia)

Typesetting, graphic design, and DTP:
Urszula Mazurowska

Series:
Asian Studies 3

Series Editors:
Piotr Sękowski
Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki

ISBN: 978-83-962508-4-1 (SHENXUE)
ISBN: 978-83-67399-48-7 (WTUO)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.25167/9788367399487
ISSN: 3072-5372

Publishers:
Institute for Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East
Publishing House of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole

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We dedicate this work to our School Pupils,
University Students, and Doctoral Candidates

INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia is a fascinating maze of intersecting cultures, civilizations, religions, and states. Christianity, which – although it reached this region of the world as early as antiquity – is still perceived, due to historical and wartime events, as a foreign religion, a "religion of invaders," in some way threatening the native identity. Burma, a magnificent country with a centuries-old tradition, also inherits these fears and prejudices that accompany many nations of Southeast Asia.

This study is part of a series of similar research projects dedicated to the Churches and theology of Southeast Asia. One of the key reasons for undertaking this research is to respond to the needs of the audience: on the one hand, both Polish-language and global scholarly literature contain relatively few works dedicated to this topic; on the other hand, Asia is entering the Western world with unprecedented intensity, yet it remains largely unknown to it.

At this point, two significant elements that influenced the creation of this series of studies should be mentioned. The first is the Institute for Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East (shenxue.pl), co-founded by the authors of this work[1].

1 More on the Institute for Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East in: Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki 柯達理 et al., *Study of Asian Theology. Studium Teologii Azjatyckiej*, ed. Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki, Studia Azjatyckie (Instytut Badań nad Teologią i Duchowością Dalekiego Wschodu. Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2021); Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki 柯達理, "Niepokojący Wschód Azjatyckiej Teologii. Wprowadzenie Do Studium [The Disturbing Rise of Asian Theology. Introduction to the Study]," in *Study of Asian Theology. Studium Teologii Azjatyckiej*, ed. Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki, Studia Azjatyckie (Instytut Badań nad Teologią

The second is the Christian Oriental Studies program, which has been operating for years at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole, where students show keen interest in the themes discussed in this book[2], and where the authors of this study serve as lecturers.

The primary source texts and essential materials for this research are publications by native Burmese theologians, as well as pastors and church hierarchs. These are most often theses and dissertations written at Western universities, but also media reports available in the virtual space, which have been documenting the state of the Church in Southeast Asia, including Burma, for years.

Additionally, works in the fields of history and politics provide valuable insights into the historical-political background and the socio-cultural context in which Christianity operates in Burma. All these sources can be found in the bibliographic section of this study.

The state of research (*status quaestionis*), as we have already mentioned, is extremely limited, and the quality of publications concerning the Church in Burma – especially those on native theology and theologians – often leaves much to be desired. For this reason, studies on the Church, Christianity, and theology in individual Southeast Asian countries appear to be, in a certain sense, pioneering and innovative. In Polish-language literature, they are often the only ones of their kind.

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i Duchowością Dalekiego Wschodu. Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2021); Piotr Sękowski, "Sufizm. Mistyczny Wymiar Islamu Jako Możliwe Miejsce Spotkania z Chrześcijaństwem [Sufism: The Mystical Dimension of Islam as a Possible Meeting Point with Christianity]," in Studium Teologii Azjatyckiej. Study of Asian Theology, ed. Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki, Studia Azjatyckie (Instytut Badań nad Teologią i Duchowością Dalekiego Wschodu. Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2021).

2 *Kościół w Birmie [Vitaly Zatylnyy]*, directed by Teologia Azjatycka, performed by Vitaly Zatylnyy, 2024, 50:44, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPCx-Nb5qKs.

The problem of this study can be formulated through a series of questions: What is the history of Christianity in Burma, both in its Catholic form and other denominations? How has Christianity situated itself within the native cultural context, and what are the key characteristics of that culture (languages, ethnic groups, political systems, religions…)? What is the structure of the Catholic Church in Burma, which hierarchs are significant, and what challenges does the contemporary Church face? Has Burma produced any noteworthy theologians, and if so, who are they? Can one speak of distinctive characteristics of Burmese theology?

These are complex questions, and answering them constitutes the scientific objective of this study. As a research hypothesis, this aims to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of Christianity, the Church, and theology in Burma, forming a basis for further, in-depth, and specialized research. Even at this stage of our study, it is evident that addressing these issues is significant for the development of theology, Church history, and the study of the historical development of Southeast Asia.

The method we have adopted is essentially a consistent development of the theme "Church and Theology of Burma (Myanmar)" and is reflected in the structure of this work. Hence, the first part of the study emphasizes Burma itself – its history, culture, and politics. The second part analyzes Christianity as it functions in Burma, exploring its history, various Churches (with particular focus on the Catholic Church), and its relationship with the native culture and religions.

The third part, which was of particular importance to us and is simultaneously the most challenging due to the scarcity of sources and its underdevelopment in global scholarship, focuses on theology in the context of Burma. On the one hand, it characterizes the specificity of Burmese theology, while on the other, it discusses the most well-known Burmese theologians from various denominations. Naturally, this "catalog of theologians" will evolve over time, expanding and serving as fertile ground for

future research. This section also constitutes the most innovative part of the publication.

A brief summary of our research concludes the study. One of the greatest challenges was gathering both primary and secondary sources, especially in the Burmese language, analyzing them, and drawing conclusions for this study. Additionally, many of our reflections refer to the poetically formulated title of this work, aiming to make it more accessible and engaging to the reader's imagination.

In the bibliography, we did not separate individual sections, as it is exceedingly difficult to determine what served as a primary source and what functioned as a secondary reference. For the same reason, we did not distinguish between online texts and printed publications, recognizing that in today's world, digital sources are treated on par with print editions and, in many cases, exert an even greater influence than works published on durable media[3].

Another challenge – common in languages written in non-Latin scripts – was the transcription and transliteration of Burmese. To address this, we followed the "Rules for the Latinization of the Burmese Language" published on the official website of the Polish government's "Service of the Republic of Poland," which provides a sufficiently clear approach to this issue[4]. We are Polish, and therefore, naturally, we were more inclined to refer to studies written in our native language.

---

3 The Authors have considered the Wikipedia entries on persons and topics used in this book to be academically reliable and trustworthy. For more on the use of Wikipedia in scholarly research, see: Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki, *Szalosz regalim. שלוש רגלים פסח שבועות סוכות. Jezus Chrystus spełnieniem świąt pielgrzymkowych Izraela [Shalosh regalim: Pesah, Shavuot, Sukkot.שלוש רגלים פסח שבועות סוכות. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Israel's pilgrimage holidays]*, ICON (Śląska Szkoła Ikonograficzna, 2018), 17–18.

4 Sylwia Gil, "Zasady latynizacji języka birmańskiego. Zasady latynizacji – Komisja Standaryzacji Nazw Geograficznych poza Granicami Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – Portal Gov.pl," Komisja Standaryzacji Nazw Geograficznych poza Granicami Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1970, https://www.gov.pl/attachment/62f221ab-3eb8-43a4-a3cc-fd5229c9d396.

We consistently adhered to the Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition, full note format, despite its inherent limitations.
This study has brought us great scholarly joy, which we also wish for our readers. “And this is only the beginning…”

CHRISTIANITY AMONG A THOUSAND PAGODAS AND A MILITARY JUNTA: THE CHURCH AND THEOLOGY OF MYANMAR (BURMA)

In the heart of Southeast Asia, in a country known as the "Land of a Thousand Pagodas," Christianity faces challenges imposed both by the dominance of Buddhist culture and the unstable political system under military junta rule. Burma (Myanmar), rich in history and ethnic diversity, holds subtle yet significant traces of Christian missionary activity dating back to colonial times.

How does Christian theology develop in the context of Theravada Buddhism and the unique Burmese spirituality? What role does the Catholic Church play in a multireligious society as it seeks to build bridges between traditions in the shadow of dictatorship? These questions serve as a starting point for reflecting on the fate of Christianity in a country with one of the world's most profound spiritual traditions[5].

---

5 Every civilization, and even every country, has its own specificity – historical, linguistic, cultural, and so on – into which Christianity is "incarnated." Therefore, it is justified to speak of a "Burmese theology". Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki 柯達理, "Teologia Chińska. Szansa Czy Zagrożenie? [Chinese Theology. Opportunity or Threat?]," *Studia Salvatoriana Polonica* 16 (2022): 129–43; Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki 柯達理, "Co to Jest Teologia Chińska? [What Is Chinese Theology?]," paper presented at [International Conference: Lower Silesia – Poland – Asia. Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow] Konferencja Międzynarodowa: Dolny Śląsk – Polska – Azja. Wczoraj. Dziś. Jutro, Uniwersytet Wrocławski, June 30, 2021; Michał Sadowski, "*Piotr Sękowski, Chrystologia Arabska. Pierwsze Syntezy Wyznań Pochalcedońskich*, Wydawnictwo SEKO, Gliwice 2016, Ss. 178 (ISBN 978-83-943476-0-4)," *Teologia i Człowiek* 37, no. 1 (2017): 231, https://doi.org/10.12775/TiCz.2017.015; Piotr Sękowski, *Chrystologia arabska: pierwsze syntezy wyznań pochalcedońskich [Arab Christology: The First Syntheses of Post-Chalcedonian Confessions]*, with Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki and Norbert Widok, Arabica (SEKO, 2016); Piotr Sękowski, *Chrześcijańska Teologia Islamu Louisa Massignona [Christian Theology of Islam by Louis Massignon]*, Arabica (SEKO, 2024).

1. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

1.1. History of the State

Burma (Myanmar) is a country with a rich and turbulent history, whose roots trace back to the 9th century with the rise of the Pagan Kingdom, the first unified Burmese state. Under the rule of Anawrahta (1044–1077), the country's cultural identity took shape, and Theravada Buddhism, introduced from India, became the dominant religion, significantly influencing social and political structures. The fall of Pagan in the 13th century, triggered by Mongol invasions, marked the beginning of a period of political fragmentation[6].

In the 16th century, the Taungoo Kingdom, under the rule of Bayinnaung, reached the height of its power, forming one of the largest empires in Southeast Asia. Its collapse led to another period of instability, which ended in the 18th century with the rise of the Konbaung Kingdom, the last Burmese monarchy. However, as a result of the three Anglo-Burmese Wars (1824–1885), the country was incorporated into the British Empire as a colony. British rule brought modernization but also intensified ethnic tensions, which later influenced the development of independence movements[7].

Independence, achieved in 1948 under the leadership of Aung San, brought a brief period of democratic governance. However,

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6 *Wikipedia, wolna encyklopedia*, "Pagan (Mjanma)," August 30, 2024, https://pl.*Wikipedia*.org/w/index.php?title=Pagan_(Mjanma)&oldid=74650228.

7 Michael W. Charney, *A History of Modern Burma* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010).

the 1962 coup d'état, led by General Ne Win, established a military dictatorship and led to the country's economic decline. The following decades were marked by repression and deep social inequalities[8]. Attempts at democratization in 2011 resulted in temporary reforms, but in 2021, the military once again seized power, further deepening the political crisis. Today, Myanmar remains an authoritarian state, plagued by ethnic and social conflicts.

In 1989, the military government changed the country's name from "Burma" to "Myanmar," aiming to emphasize a break from the colonial past[9]. The name "Myanmar" is a more formal equivalent of the traditional "Bama," which had long been used in the Burmese language. This decision was intended to symbolize the country's ethnic diversity, but it was initially rejected by parts of the international community as imposed by an undemocratic regime. Today, both names are used interchangeably, depending on the context[10].

1.2. Ethnic and social composition

Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Southeast Asia, comprising over 135 recognized ethnic groups.

8 *Twilight Over Burma [Zmierzch nad Birmą]*, Dramat, produced by SK Filmproduktion, KGP Kranzelbinder Gabriele Production, directed by Sabine Derflinger (Global Screen (dystrybucja międzynarodowa), ORF (dystrybucja telewizyjna w Austrii), 2015), 98 min., https://www.filmweb.pl/film/Zmierzch+nad+Birm%C4%85-2015-763696.

9 *Burma VJ: Reporter i et lukket land*, Documentary Film, produced by Lise Lense-Møller, directed by Anders Østergaard (Dogwoof Pictures (Wielka Brytania), Oscilloscope Laboratories (USA), 2008), 84 min., https://www.filmweb.pl/film/Birma+VJ-2008-500407.

10 Michael Aung-Thwin and Maitrii Aung-Thwin, *A History of Myanmar since Ancient Times: Traditions and Transformations*, 2nd ed. (Reaktion Books, 2013).

The dominant group is the Burmese (Bamar), constituting 68% of the population and playing a central political and cultural role. Other significant communities include the Shan (9%), Karen (7%), Rakhine (4%), as well as smaller groups such as the Kachin, Chin, and Mon. Relations between these groups have historically been tense, and contemporary conflicts, including the persecution of the Rohingya, highlight divisions and inequalities.

The majority of the population lives in rural areas, where agriculture, particularly rice cultivation, is the dominant source of livelihood. Urbanization is limited – only 30% of the population resides in cities, with Rangoon (Yangon) and Mandalay as the main urban centers. Higher education and industry are also concentrated in cities, leading to significant disparities between urban and rural areas. The lack of access to education and infrastructure in rural regions contributes to the persistence of poverty, particularly among ethnic minorities[11].

1.3. Culture and religion

The main language in Myanmar is Burmese (Bamar), which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language family and is closely related to the languages of northeastern India and Tibet. Its tonal nature and complex writing system, derived from the Mon-Khmer script, make it a unique language in the region. However, many ethnic groups speak their own languages, such as Shan, Karen, or Kachin, reflecting the country's ethnic diversity.

Myanmar's culture is inextricably linked to Theravada Buddhism, practiced by about 87% of the population. Buddhist monks play a central role in social life as spiritual guides, while

11 Jacques Bertrand et al., *Winning by Process: The State and Neutralization of Ethnic Minorities in Myanmar* (Southeast Asia program publications, an imprint of Cornell university press, 2022).

temples and pagodas serve as places of worship and social integration. Festivals such as Thingyan (New Year) and Thadingyut (Festival of Lights) bring communities together and reflect the country's rich spiritual tradition. Besides Buddhism, Christianity (6%), Islam (4%), Hinduism, and animism are also present in the country, adding further depth to its spiritual mosaic.

1.4. Symbols and National Identity

Myanmar's national identity is expressed through its architecture, art, and religious symbols. The Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, a gilded stupa housing Buddhist relics, serves as the spiritual heart of the country and its most important national symbol. Other significant sites include the temples of Pagan and the Golden Rock in Kyaiktiyo, which embodies both religious faith and traditional symbolism.[12]

Traditional Burmese dance, known for its precision and aesthetic refinement, along with marionette puppetry used to convey myths and historical narratives, are integral elements of the nation's artistic heritage.[13] In literature, the works of U Thant[14] and other contemporary authors highlight spiritual values and socio-political themes.

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12 William J. Topich and Keith A. Leitich, *The History of Myanmar*, The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations (Greenwood, 2013).

13 *Burma Storybook [Birma – kraj poezji]*, Documentary Film, produced by Corinne van Egeraat, directed by Petr Lom, 2017, 81 min., https://www.filmweb.pl/film/Birma+%E2%80%93+kraj+poezji-2017-783110.

14 U Thant, *View from the UN*, 1st ed (Doubleday, 1978). Sithu U Thant (1909–1974) was a Burmese diplomat and politician who served as the third Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1961 to 1971. During his tenure, he played a key role in mediating the Cuban Missile Crisis, advanced efforts toward nuclear disarmament, and promoted the process of decolonization worldwide.

In the political sphere, Anawrahta[15] and Bayinnaung[16] remain historical icons, while Aung San and his daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi[17], symbolize the struggle for independence and democracy. Religious symbols such as stupas and Buddha statues reflect the synthesis of Buddhism and local animist beliefs, forming the foundation of the nation's spiritual and cultural identity.

15 Anawrahta Minsaw (1014–1077) was a king and the founder of the Pagan Kingdom, which unified the diverse regions of Burma into the first cohesive state. His reign established Theravada Buddhism as the dominant religion in the country and initiated a period of cultural development, marked by the construction of monumental temples in Bagan.

16 Bayinnaung (1516–1581) was a king of the Taungoo dynasty, known as one of the most powerful rulers in the history of Southeast Asia. During his reign, the Taungoo Kingdom reached its greatest territorial extent, encompassing large parts of Burma, Siam, Laos, and Manipur, making it one of the largest empires in the region.

17 *The Lady*, Biograficzny, Dramat historyczny, produced by Virginie Besson-Silla et al., directed by Luc Besson (Entertainment Film Distributors (Wielka Brytania), EuropaCorp (Francja), Cohen Media Group (USA), Monolith Films (Polska), 2011), 135 min., https://www.filmweb.pl/film/Lady-2011-612199.

2. POLITICAL SYSTEM

2.1. Governance and power

Myanmar's political system is dominated by authoritarian military rule, which largely shapes the structure of the state. Following the 2021 coup, power was seized by the Tatmadaw, the armed forces, which overthrew the democratically elected government of the National League for Democracy. Although the country is officially classified as a republic, in practice, the key branches of power – executive, legislative, and judicial – remain under full military control.

Executive power is concentrated in the hands of the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Min Aung Hlaing, who serves as both head of state and head of government. Legislative power formally belongs to the Assembly of the Union, composed of two chambers: the House of Representatives and the House of Nationalities. However, one-quarter of parliamentary seats are constitutionally reserved for the military, ensuring that the Tatmadaw maintains significant influence over the legislative process. Following the coup, parliamentary activity was suspended, and the military assumed full control of the government.

At the regional level, the country is divided into fourteen administrative regions and states, which reflect both ethnic dominance and the central government's interests. However, the powers of local authorities are severely restricted, leading to ethnic tensions and inequalities in resource management. The current political system, based on military centralization, does not allow for political pluralism or democratic mechanisms.[18]

18 Adam Simpson and Nicholas Farrelly, eds., *Myanmar: Politics, Economy and Society*, 2nd ed. (Taylor & Francis, 2024).

2.2. State-religion relations

The relationship between the state and religion in Myanmar is deeply rooted in the historical dominance of Theravada Buddhism, which is practiced by approximately 87 percent of the population. Buddhism serves not only a spiritual function but also a political and cultural one, acting as a tool for legitimizing authoritarian rule. The Tatmadaw presents itself as the guardian of Burmese national tradition, which is reflected in its open support for Buddhism, including the funding of temples, ceremonies, and the monastic community.

At the same time, the state marginalizes religious minorities, including Christians and Muslims, often perceiving them as a threat to national unity. The policy towards the Muslim Rohingya, who are accused of undermining national identity, is an example of systemic discrimination and violence. Christians, who make up about 6 percent of the population, also face exclusion, though to a lesser extent than Muslims.

The Catholic Church, present in Myanmar since the sixteenth century, plays an important role in education and social work, particularly among ethnic minorities such as the Karen and Kachin. However, Catholic communities in conflict-affected regions, such as Kachin State, often experience repression, including the destruction of religious sites. A notable moment of international attention on the plight of religious minorities was Pope Francis' visit to Myanmar in 2017, during which he called for peaceful coexistence and respect for human rights.

2.3. Key political figures

Myanmar's politics are shaped by key figures who represent different approaches to state-religion relations. General Min Aung Hlaing, the commander of the armed forces and leader of

the military junta, plays a dominant role in governing the state. He uses Buddhism as a tool to legitimize his power, portraying the Tatmadaw as the defenders of Burmese national tradition. His policies toward religious and ethnic minorities, based on repression and marginalization, further deepen social divisions.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and leader of the National League for Democracy.[19] Her government from 2011 to 2021 was an attempt at democratic reform and interfaith dialogue. However, her silence on the persecution of the Rohingya weakened her international reputation. Following the 2021 coup, Suu Kyi was imprisoned, effectively removing her from the political arena.[20]

A radical approach to state-religion relations is represented by Ashin Wirathu, a nationalist Buddhist monk who promotes anti-Islamic rhetoric and supports the actions of the Tatmadaw. His activities exacerbate interreligious tensions and contribute to the further exclusion of minorities.

Opposing this instrumentalization of religion is Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon and the first Burmese cardinal, who actively promotes interfaith dialogue. His advocacy for minority rights and peaceful coexistence makes him an important voice in state-religion relations, particularly in the context of Pope Francis' visit to Myanmar in 2017.

19 *Beyond Rangoon [Ucieczka z Rangunu]*, produced by John Boorman and Eric Pleskow, directed by John Boorman (Columbia Pictures, 1995), 100 min., https://www.filmweb.pl/film/Ucieczka+z+Rangunu-1995-4143/descs.

20 Aung San Suu Kyi, *Letters from Burma* (Penguin Books, 2010).

3. CHRISTIANITY

3.1. History of Christianity

Christianity in Myanmar has a centuries-old history dating back to the sixteenth century, when the first European missionaries, primarily Portuguese, reached the region during a period of commercial and colonial expansion. Initially, missionary activity was limited to Catholicism; however, with the advent of British rule in the nineteenth century, Christianity diversified considerably, experiencing a dynamic growth of Protestant missions as well.

The incorporation of Burma into the British Empire (1824–1885) created favorable conditions for intensified missionary work. Protestant missions played a crucial role in evangelizing ethnic minorities such as the Karen, Kachin, and Chin peoples, who viewed Christianity as an instrument of emancipation and modernization, counterbalancing the Buddhist dominance of the Burmese majority. Adoniram Judson, an American Baptist, emerged as one of the most significant figures of this period. As the first Protestant missionary in Southeast Asia, he translated the Bible into Burmese, laying the foundation for the growth of local Christian communities. Judson left not only an enduring religious legacy but also initiated traditions of education and medical missions among the Karen people, significantly influencing the development of these communities. Health or medical missions are a form of missionary activity that combines evangelization with the provision of medical assistance through the establishment of hospitals, care centers, preventive health programs, and sanitary education. Protestant missionaries developed integrated educational and health programs, treating care for the body as an

integral part of missionary service and a means of building trust among the highland peoples. This was an important element of inculturation in a society that to this day connects spiritual and physical health, one expression of which is the well-known tradition of Thai massage.

Protestant missions were continued by other prominent missionaries, such as G. D. Boardman, E. L. Abbott, and J. H. Vinton, who from the mid-nineteenth century concentrated on converting mountain tribes and introducing integrated educational and health-care programs. The Baptist Missionary Convention, established in 1865, played a pivotal role in coordinating missionary activities throughout Myanmar, cooperating with various missionary societies dedicated to evangelizing particular ethnic groups. Protestant missions were further reinforced by the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which conducted missionary work in Rangoon and northern Burma from 1859, as well as by initiatives like the Bible Churchman's Missionary Society, active since 1924.[21]

In the twentieth century, both Catholicism and Protestantism in Myanmar developed under the influence of missionaries as well as local religious leaders. Christianity's impact extended beyond the spiritual sphere, reaching into social domains such as education, healthcare, and economic development. Many missions operated schools, hospitals, and other social institutions, which played a crucial role in rural and mountainous regions where access to government services was limited. Methods such as those introduced by Presbyterian missionary J. L. Nevius promoted collaboration between mission centers and educational and medical initiatives, significantly strengthening local communities' capacity for independent development.

During military rule in the second half of the twentieth century, Christianity, like other minority religions, faced repression

21 Stanisław Turbański and Zygmunt Zieliński, "Birma," in *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. 2 (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1995).

from the state. Christian churches were often perceived as instruments of foreign influence, leading to severe restrictions on their activities. The situation was particularly difficult in conflict-affected areas, such as Kachin State, where Christian communities experienced violence, forced displacement, and the destruction of churches.

Today, Christianity is one of the main minority religions in Myanmar, comprising approximately 6% of the population. It includes adherents of various traditions, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodoxy, and free churches. Christian communities play a significant role both spiritually and socially, especially among ethnic minorities. Despite theological differences, Christians in Myanmar often unite when facing common challenges, including religious discrimination, legal restrictions, and violence in conflict regions.

Relations between Christianity, Theravada Buddhism, and the state in Myanmar reflect historical tensions and structural inequality. Buddhism, deeply rooted in Burmese national identity, constitutes a central element of social and political life, while Christianity is perceived as a foreign religion associated with colonialism and Western influence. Buddhism is frequently utilized by the state as a political tool, reinforcing the narrative that Myanmar's Buddhist character must be protected against external influences.[22] Christian communities, particularly in regions such as Kachin State, continue to suffer from the destruction of places of worship, forced displacements, and violence perpetrated by the military.

22 Arthur P. Phayre, *History of Burma Including Burma Proper, Pegu, Taungu, Tenasserim and Arakan: From the Earliest Time to the End of the First War with British India* (Orchid Press, 1998).

3.2. Catholic Church

The history of Catholicism in Myanmar dates back to the sixteenth century, when Portuguese missionaries arrived in the territory then known as Burma during a period of commercial expansion. The first contact with the local population was established by Father Gaspar da Cruz, a Dominican who visited the Kingdom of Pegu in 1554. Missionary activity at that time primarily consisted of pastoral care for Portuguese colonists, and its development faced numerous difficulties due to local political conflicts and lack of institutional support. Dominican, Franciscan, and Jesuit missionaries carried out pastoral work under the patronage of Portuguese rulers.[23] In the seventeenth century, Catholic missionary activity continued under the Jesuits, though attempts to establish missions in strategic regions of the country were hindered by political instability and shifting influences of European colonial powers.

The second period of evangelization (1721–1830) was marked by the growing influence of England on the economic and political life of Burma. During this period, Barnabite missionaries such as Sigismondo de Calchi and Giuseppe Vittoni worked in the country, contributing to the establishment of the Apostolic Vicariate in Ava. Despite these efforts, the shortage of missionaries and ongoing civil wars hindered the development of missions, while the Anglo-Burmese War of 1824–1825 ultimately led to their complete collapse.

The third period (1830–1839) was brief and limited to missionary activities conducted by the Piarists. It was only in the fourth period (1839–1856) that the mission was entrusted to the Oblates from Turin. The Oblates undertook evangelization efforts under challenging conditions, but their mission was brought to an end by the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1851–1852).[24]

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23 Marian Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła Katolickiego. 3. Czasy Nowożytne 1517-1758* (Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1989), 3:231.

24 Marian Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła Katolickiego. 3'. Czasy Nowożytne 1758-1914*, 3' (Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1991), 163–65.

The fifth period of evangelization began in 1856 when missionaries from the Paris Foreign Missions Seminary (Missions Étrangères de Paris, MEP), led by Bishop Paul Ambroise Bigandet, assumed responsibility for the missions in Burma. Bigandet, the apostolic vicar, played a crucial role in building the structures of the Catholic Church in Burma and developing education, earning the respect of both the local population and colonial authorities. In 1866, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith divided Burma into two apostolic vicariates – Southwestern and Central – enabling more effective missionary organization. In 1870, further vicariates were established, and in 1879, the Eastern Vicariate was formed and entrusted to missionaries from the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions in Milan. During this period, missionaries established schools, parishes, and medical centers, enjoying full religious freedom under British colonial rule. By 1914, the Catholic population in Burma had grown to 84,000.

The sixth period began with Burma's independence in 1948. Although the constitution guaranteed religious freedom, Buddhism was recognized as the state religion, contributing to the marginalization of Christianity. In 1965, the government nationalized schools, hospitals, and other institutions previously run by the Church. In 1966, foreign missionaries were forced to leave the country, significantly limiting opportunities for further evangelization. Despite these challenges, the Church focused on training local clergy. In 1954, the first Burmese bishop, Joseph U Win, was ordained, and in 1955, a permanent church structure was established, creating metropolitan sees in Rangoon and Mandalay, along with additional dioceses.[25]

In the twentieth century, the Catholic Church in Burma developed amidst a challenging political context characterized by ethnic conflicts and authoritarian military rule. The Church became actively involved in humanitarian aid and education, particularly

25 David M. Cheney, "Dioceses in Myanmar (Includes Historical)," Catholic-Hierarchy, accessed January 26, 2025, https://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/dmm.html.

in rural and mountainous regions where the state did not provide basic services. Catholic religious orders operated schools, hospitals, and other social institutions, thus remaining a crucial element of social life.

Today, Catholicism in Myanmar, comprising approximately 1% of the population, continues to serve both spiritual and social roles, promoting values of dialogue, peace, and solidarity. The Church remains an important supporter of ethnic minorities such as the Karen, Kachin, and Chin peoples, who often associate their faith closely with their cultural identity. A contemporary symbol of this commitment is Archbishop Charles Maung Bo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar, who was created cardinal by Pope Francis in 2015. Cardinal Bo actively promotes interreligious dialogue and human rights, giving the Catholic Church in Myanmar a distinctive role in reconciliation and community-building processes. The Catholic Church's contribution to the spiritual and social life of Myanmar demonstrates the strength of faith and commitment of both missionaries and local believers, who have built a resilient community capable of facing numerous historical and political challenges.[26]

Although constituting a small religious minority, the Catholic Church in Myanmar has profoundly shaped the spiritual and social landscape of the country over centuries through remarkable individuals and the testimonies of faithful believers, who courageously expressed their faith in the face of adversity.[27] One such figure was Bishop Alexander Cardot, a French missionary, served as Apostolic Vicar from 1893 to 1925. His contributions to education, church organization, and social assistance left a lasting impact on the Catholic community. Likewise, Father Clement Bonhomme, a missionary among the Karen people, played a crucial role in evangelization and the development of local

26 Turbański and Zieliński, "Birma."

27 Alexander McLeish, *Christian Progress in Burma* (World Dominion Press, 1929).

communities in the nineteenth century.[28] Sister Mary Agnes, a religious sister from Rangoon, provided an extraordinary witness of faith by dedicating her life to caring for the sick and the poor in the 1950s and 1960s. Her work strengthened the local Catholic community, making her a lasting symbol of compassion and dedication.

In the context of Myanmar's (formerly Burma's) Catholic heritage, particular significance is given to the figures of the Blessed and the Servants of God, whose lives and martyrdom reflect deep faith and dedication to the mission of evangelization under difficult socio-political circumstances. Blessed Isidore Ngei Ko Lat (1918–1950), the first Burmese Blessed, was a lay catechist who, together with the Italian missionary Mario Vergara, was murdered on 24 May 1950 in Shadaw, Kayah State, out of hatred for the Christian faith. Both were beatified in 2014. Another prominent figure is Blessed Alfredo Cremonesi (1902–1953), an Italian missionary of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME), who served for 28 years in remote villages of Myanmar, offering both spiritual and material assistance. He was killed on 7 February 1953, murdered by soldiers who suspected him of cooperating with guerrilla fighters. His beatification took place in 2019. Also worth mentioning is Blessed Clemente Vismara (1897–1988), who worked for 65 years in the forests of Myanmar, caring for orphans, widows, and the poor, especially among the Akhà and Ikò peoples. He was beatified in Milan in 2011. These figures are not only witnesses to deep faith and sacrifice, but also symbols of the perseverance and strength of the Catholic Church in Myanmar, which, despite many challenges and persecutions, remains a living witness to the Gospel.

The relationship between the Catholic Church in Myanmar and the universal Church is characterized by close cooperation and mutual support, vividly exemplified by Pope Francis's historic

28 P.G. Charles, "Die Kirchen in Burma," *Allgemeine Missionsnachrichten* 33 (1953): 9–12.

visit to the country. From 27 to 30 November 2017, Pope Francis visited Myanmar, becoming the first head of the Catholic Church to visit the nation. During his stay, he met with state authorities, representatives of various religions, and members of the local Catholic community, emphasizing the importance of interreligious dialogue, peace, and reconciliation in a nation deeply affected by ethnic and religious conflicts.

3.3. Structure and Hierarchy

The Catholic Church in Myanmar currently consists of three metropolitan sees: Yangon, Mandalay, and Taunggyi.[29] The Archdiocese of Yangon (with suffragan dioceses: Hpa-an, Mawlamyine, Pathein, Pyay), the oldest and most influential ecclesiastical unit in Myanmar, covers not only the country's economic capital but also regions of strategic importance for pastoral and social outreach. It is led by Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, appointed Archbishop in 2003 and elevated as Myanmar's first-ever cardinal in 2015. Cardinal Bo is a pivotal figure not only for the local Church but also across the Asian Church, actively advocating for interreligious dialogue, human rights, and reconciliation within a divided society, with his pastoral teaching recognized as theologically significant throughout Asia.

The Archdiocese of Mandalay (with suffragan dioceses: Banmaw, Hakha, Kalay, Lashio, Mindat, Myitkyina), covering the central part of the country, plays a significant role in regions of great historical and cultural importance. Archbishop Marco

29 David M. Cheney, "Catholic Church in Myanmar," Catholic-Hierarchy, accessed January 25, 2025, https://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/mm.html; David M. Cheney, "Current Dioceses in Myanmar," Catholic-Hierarchy, accessed January 25, 2025, https://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/dmm2.html.

Tin Win,[30] serving as Metropolitan since 2019, oversees the Church's activities in this religiously and ethnically diverse region, with a particular focus on supporting local communities affected by economic hardships.

The Archdiocese of Taunggyi (with suffragan dioceses: Kengtung, Loikaw, Pekhon, Taungngu), situated in the mountainous regions of the country's southeast, covers dioceses inhabited by ethnic minorities such as the Karen and Shan peoples. Archbishop Basilio Athai,[31] serving since 2016, is deeply committed to advancing education and charitable initiatives tailored to meet the needs of rural populations, who are often excluded from state services.

3.4. Relations between Christianity and Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar

Christianity depicted among thousands of pagodas is not only a romantic image but also a difficult challenge of coexistence between different traditions marked by historical prejudices. Achieving harmonious coexistence and mutual respect demands committed effort from both sides.

3.4.1. Historical tensions

Relations between Christians and Buddhists in Burma have been shaped by a complex history. Buddhism has long been integral to

30 David M. Cheney, "Archbishop Marco Tin Win," Catholic-Hierarchy, accessed January 26, 2025, https://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/btinwin.html.

31 David M. Cheney, "Archbishop Basilio Athai," Catholic-Hierarchy, accessed January 26, 2025, https://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bathai.html.

Burmese identity – monks played a central role in education and social life. When Christian missionaries arrived alongside British colonial powers in the nineteenth century, many Buddhists perceived this as a threat to their religion and culture. During British colonial times, Christian missions established schools and institutions, which Burmese Buddhists perceived as a threat to their own faith and national identity – already in the 1930s, Buddhist students protested against mandatory Bible lessons in mission schools. During the nationalist independence movements, Christianity was frequently identified with Western dominance (the slogan "3M: Merchant, Military, Mission" symbolized, in the eyes of Burmese nationalists, a threefold mechanism of colonization).[32] These factors led to deeply rooted prejudices: on one side, Christians were viewed as "foreign agents" of the West; on the other, the Buddhist majority increasingly equated Burmese identity exclusively with their religion, marginalizing other faiths.

3.4.2. Contemporary situation

Today, Myanmar's constitution theoretically guarantees religious freedom, yet religious tensions persist in practice. Buddhist nationalism has intensified periodically, exemplified by movements such as *Ma Ba Tha* among Buddhist monks in the past decade,[33] which promoted legislation restricting conversions and interfaith marriages. Christian ethnic minorities – particularly in Chin, Kachin, and Kayah States – have suffered due to conflicts with the military. While these conflicts have political and ethnic

32 Samuel Ngun Ling, "Challenges, Problems, and Prospects of Theological Education in Myanmar," *CTC Bulletin. Bulletin Of The Program Area On Faith Mission And Unity [Theological Concerns] Christian Conference Of Asia* 22, no. 1 (2006): 28–39, https://cca.org.hk/ctc/ctc06-01/ctc06-01e.htm.

33 Wikipédia, "*Ma Ba Tha*," March 10, 2023, https://fr.Wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ma_Ba_Tha&oldid=202163908.

roots, religious differences have complicated reconciliation efforts, pitting Burmese nationalist soldiers against minority Christian rebels. Human rights organizations have documented instances of church destruction and discrimination against Christians.[34]

Despite these challenges, dialogue is gradually increasing. Both Christian leaders and many Buddhist monks recognize that the country's stability depends on harmony between religions. Since the 1990s, dialogue seminars have been regularly organized – for instance, the Myanmar Council of Churches engages in discussions with Buddhists, and Catholics participate in interfaith peace forums. Cardinal Bo and other bishops frequently join Buddhist monks in prayer for peace.[35] Local charitable initiatives have emerged, bringing together followers of different religions (such as aid for cyclone victims or people displaced by conflict).

3.4.3. Theological Dialogue

At the theological level, Burmese Christians seek points of convergence with Theravada Buddhism. Many highlight shared values: Buddhist mettā (loving-kindness) and karuṇā (compassion) closely parallel the Christian love of neighbor (agapé).[36] Christians appreciate Buddhist ethics and monastic life as expressions of the pursuit

34 "A Dedicated Bible College Serving the Myanmar Diaspora | Judson Education Center," accessed February 27, 2025, https://www.jecbc.org/.

35 John L. Allen Jr., "Catholic Cardinal Bo May Be Key in Majority Buddhist Myanmar," La Salette Missionaries, Province of Mary, Mother of the Americas, February 15, 2021, https://www.lasalette.org/article/scripture-social-teaching/2354-catholic-cardinal-bo-may-be-key-in-majority-buddhist-myanmar.

36 Ciin Sian Khai, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue. A Way Toward Peaceful Co-Existence in Myanmar*, with Ulrich Dehn, Studien Zu Interkultureller Theologie an Der Missionsakademie 8 (Missionshilfe Verlag, 2015), 206, https://tagungshaushamburg.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/8_SITMA.pdf.

of spiritual perfection. Some Buddhists, in turn, have begun viewing the churches as partners in addressing social issues, rather than rival sects.

Theologians such as Ciin Sian Khai propose a concrete methodology for dialogue: Christians and Buddhists should collaboratively address common social challenges (poverty, violence, inequality), building practical solidarity. Doctrinal dialogue – for example, on the nature of God versus the concept of nirvana – exists but is not a priority. More important are the "dialogue of life" and the "dialogue of the heart." These approaches align with a broader trend in Asian theology emphasizing relationship-building and mutual learning rather than theoretical disputes.

3.4.4. Inculturation and Buddhism

A distinctive aspect of these relations is the integration of Buddhist cultural elements into Christian practice – not implying syncretism, but genuine inculturation. Archbishop Tin Win exemplifies this approach, utilizing Burmese religious symbols within the Catholic Church and adapting meditation practices. In certain Catholic monasteries in Myanmar, sisters incorporate periods of silence and meditation inspired by Buddhism, recognizing contemplation of truth as common ground between both traditions. Protestant churches also pursue inculturation; biblical translations and hymns incorporate terminology resonant with the Buddhist worldview, replacing technical theological terms with expressions familiar to Buddhists (such as truth, path, enlightenment – reflecting Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life). This significantly reduces the distance between the two religions.

3.4.5. Mutual perceptions

Thanks to these efforts, mutual attitudes are slowly changing. Increasingly, Buddhist leaders publicly acknowledge the contributions of Christians in education and healthcare – historically, missionaries founded many hospitals and schools. Christians, on their part, are learning to appreciate Theravada spirituality, such as the moral discipline of monks or the practice of generosity (dāna). Nonetheless, there remain theological differences that are challenging to reconcile – for example, Christianity's belief in a personal God versus Buddhism's conception of an impersonal Absolute and the law of karma. However, these differences need not lead to hostility, provided each side maintains a spirit of dialogue. As one Burmese theologian expressed it, dialogue should also deepen one's own faith – a Christian, through dialogue with Buddhists, may better understand what the Gospel truly means to him, while a Buddhist can reflect more deeply on how his tradition understands love and compassion.[37]

3.4.6. Perspectives

Christian-Buddhist relations in Myanmar are evolving from mutual suspicion toward greater cooperation. Though tensions fueled by extremists still occasionally arise, the mainstream among both Christians and Buddhists increasingly favors peaceful coexistence. Christian theology in Burma has significantly contributed to this rapprochement by emphasizing universal values, humility regarding its own history, and a commitment to serving society as a whole, regardless of religious affiliation. As one Burmese author stated, the Church is called to be "salt and light" in the nation, meaning fully Christian and fully Burmese at the same time.[38] This

37 Ciin Sian Khai, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, 204.

38 Marco Tin Win, "Long Journey Ahead for Inculturation in Myanmar | Features [Interview with Archbishop of Mandalay, Marco Tin

process is ongoing, yet thanks to the determination of theologians and ordinary believers alike, Christianity in Myanmar is gradually establishing itself as a genuinely indigenous religion,[39] open to dialogue with the dominant Buddhism.

Win]," *Commentary | Sunday Examiner*, August 21, 2020, https://www.examiner.org.hk/2020/08/21/long-journey-ahead-for-inculturation-in-myanmar/features/.

39 Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki 柯達理, "The Chinese Rites Controversy and Its Relevance," *Studia Oecumenica* 24 (2024): 231–44, https://doi.org/10.25167/so.5718.

4. THEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF MYANMAR

4.1. Characteristics of Burmese Theology

4.1.1. Religious and Cultural Context

Myanmar (Burma) is a country dominated by Theravada Buddhism – approximately 88% of the population are Buddhists, while Christians constitute only about 6%.[40] Christianity has primarily spread among ethnic minorities (such as the Karen, Kachin, Chin, and others), whereas among ethnic Burmese (Bamar), nearly everyone is Buddhist[41]. In Burmese society, a saying has emerged: "To be a true Burmese, one must be Buddhist."[42] For this reason, Christianity is sometimes perceived as a foreign (Western) religion, associated with the colonial period. Many Burmese Buddhists even today view Christianity through the prism of "Western cultural imperialism" and link it with past colonial influences.[43] During British colonial rule, Christian missions established schools and institutions, which Burmese Buddhists perceived as a threat to

40 Allen Jr., "Catholic Cardinal Bo May Be Key in Majority Buddhist Myanmar."

41 Ling, "CTC Bulletin"; Ciin Sian Khai, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*.

42 Ciin Sian Khai, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*.

43 Grace Ji-Sun Kim, "Samuel Ngun Ling, *Communicating Christ in Myanmar: Issues, Interactions, and Perspectives*," Free Online Library, 2024, https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Samuel+Ngun+Ling%2C+Communicating+Christ+in+Myanmar%3A+Issues%2C…-a0209405518; Samuel Ngun Ling, *Communicating Christ in Myanmar: Issues, Interactions, and Perspectives* (Association for Theological Education in Myanmar, 2005), https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Samuel+Ngun+Ling%2C+Communicating+Christ+in+Myanmar%3A+Issues%2C…-a0209405518.

their faith and national identity – already in the 1930s, Buddhist students protested against compulsory Bible lessons in missionary schools. After gaining independence (1948), strong Buddhist nationalism continued to view Christianity suspiciously, labeling it a potential "colonial remnant."[44]

4.1.2. Challenges and Theological Themes

4.1.2.1 Double Minority

Thus, Christian theology in Myanmar develops within the context of being a minority religion, often a double minority – both religious and ethnic. The primary challenge is contextualization and inculturation of faith: how to express the Christian message in a manner understandable and deeply rooted in the Buddhist Burmese culture. In the past, attempts at "Burmese-izing" Christianity were primarily focused on external forms (such as using local costumes in nativity plays, ethnic music in hymns, etc.), without deeper reference to theological content. Contemporary theologians emphasize that it is not enough to dress the Gospel in local costumes – one must also engage in dialogue with the Buddhist understanding of life, death, the person, and ultimate reality, as these deeply shape the worldview of the majority society.[45]

4.1.2.2. Contextualization and Inclusivity

Thus, a distinctive feature of Burmese theological reflection has become openness to interreligious dialogue – especially Christian-Buddhist – and openness to the country's multiculturalism. This theology is often referred to as contextual or inclusive theology. Already in the 1970s, the Burmese theologian U Khin Maung

44 Ling, "CTC Bulletin."
45 Ling, "CTC Bulletin."

Din argued that building an indigenous Christian theology must take into account: (a) the Gospel message, (b) religious experiences and concepts of Buddhism (and other Eastern religions), and (c) contemporary social and political realities.[46] This implies that, alongside the Bible and Tradition, theological reflection in Myanmar should also include context: the beliefs of the majority and the nation's situation. Christian theologians incorporate extra-biblical elements into their reflections, critically drawing from the wisdom of other religions (especially Buddhism), as well as folk traditions and experiences of the people.

4.1.2.3. Theology of Liberation and Peace

Another significant thread is the theology of liberation and peace within the context of political oppression and ethnic conflicts. For decades, Myanmar suffered under military dictatorship, and armed conflicts particularly affected regions inhabited by Christian minorities. Theologians ponder how the Gospel speaks into situations of poverty, injustice, and violence. There is a call to develop a socially engaged public theology – one that speaks on national issues, promotes peace, reconciliation, and human rights.[47] For instance, contemporary publications discuss the role of the Churches in advocating for social justice and minority rights in Burma.[48] Many theologians emphasize the necessity of

46 Khin Maung Din, "Some Problems and Possibilities for Burmese Christian Theology Today," in *Christianity and the Religions of the East: Models for a Dynamic Relationship*, 2. print, ed. Richard W. Rousseau, Modern Theological Themes 2 (Ridge Row Press, 1987), 78.

47 Lal Tin Hre and David Selvaraj, eds., *Toward a Public Theology in Myanmar* (Fortress Press, 2023); Eva Harasta, *Resisting Exclusion: Global Theological Responses to Populism*, 1st ed, with Simone Sinn, LWF Studies, v. 1 (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019).

48 Samuel Ngun Ling, „The Church and Social Justice: The Peaceful Struggles of Minority Christians in Myanmar", w *Resisting Exclusion: Global Theological Responses to Populism*, red. Eva Harasta i Simone Sinn, 1st ed, LWF Studies, v. 1 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019), 159–65.

critically analyzing connections between religion and nationalism and addressing themes of forgiveness and the healing of historical memory between communities.[49]

4.1.2.4. Theological Education

Another challenge is theological education and lay involvement. Khin Maung Din noted that missionaries introduced a model in which theology was pursued solely by seminary professors, creating an intellectual gap between the clergy and the faithful. Today's leaders therefore strive to make theology a shared endeavor, encouraging laypeople to reflect on their faith in their own contexts, ensuring theology does not become detached from the universal Church's lived experience.[50]

4.2.Selected Theologians

Theology in Myanmar is a relatively young discipline, still in its developmental phase. Among theologians, it is difficult to find names whose reflections have broad impact and significant influence on national or international awareness. Additionally, many theologians (particularly Catholic) are primarily pastors or church hierarchs, who apply theology to the current needs of their country and times. Many Burmese theologians are not academic doctors creating formal works but rather practitioners attempting to find their way with the message of Christ amid thousands of Buddhist pagodas and a military junta. Nevertheless, a few prominent names and works can be identified, forming a distinctive mosaic of emerging local theology.

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49 Ciin Sian Khai, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue.*

50 Ling, "CTC Bulletin."

4.2.1.1. U Khin Maung Din

U Khin Maung Din (Burmese: ဦးခင်မောင်ဒင်; 1926–2002) is considered a precursor of Burmese contextual theology. A lay theologian (philosophy lecturer at Rangoon University and honorary lecturer in Christian ethics) and an ecumenical activist, he was among the first to analyze the issue of "Burmese theology" in the 1960s and 1970s. Among his publications is the article "How to Feed His Lambs: The Problem of Burmese Christian Theology Today," published in the International Review of Mission in 1976.[51] In this work, he argued that the theology inherited from Western missionaries was unsuited to the local context, and it was necessary to seek an indigenous expression of faith.[52] Khin Maung Din highlighted both problems and possibilities for developing native theology – expanding this theme further in his essay "Some Problems and Possibilities for Burmese Christian Theology" (1976).[53] His writings were collected and published by the Myanmar Council of Churches in the volume Collections of Professor U Khin Maung Din's Papers & Articles (Yangon, 2002).[54] These ideas significantly influenced the younger generation of theologians. He is described as a "quiet, unsung, but distinguished Burmese theologian," one of the first to argue that theology in Myanmar must

51 Khin Maung Din, "How To Feed His Lambs: The Problem of Burmese Christian Theology Today," *International Review of Mission* 65, no. 258 (1976): 151–63, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.1976.tb03047.x.

52 Khant Kham Zam, *Burmese Nationalism and Christianity in Myanmar* (Faculty of Concordia Seminary, 2016), https://fliphtml5.com/rrlzh/oeli/Burmese_Nationalism_and_Christianity_in_Myanmar_-by_Zam_Khant_Kham/250/.

53 Khin Maung Din, "Some Problems and Possibilities for Burmese Christian Theology," in *What Asian Christians Are Thinking: A Theological Source Book*, ed. Douglas J. Elwood (New Day Publishers, 1976); Zam, *Burmese Nationalism and Christianity in Myanmar.*

54 Khin Maung Din, ခင်မောင်ဒင်ပါမောက္ခ၏ စုစည်းထားသော စာတမ်းများ *[Collected Papers of Professor Khin Maung Din]* (Myanmar Christian Council, 2002).

learn not only from the Bible but also from extra-biblical religious traditions (such as Buddhism) and the socio-political realities of the country.[55]

4.2.1.2. Samuel Ngun Ling

Rev. Dr. Samuel Ngun Ling (born ca. 1955) is the best-known contemporary Protestant theologian from Myanmar. He belongs to the Chin people and is a Baptist pastor. He serves as a professor of systematic theology and director of the Judson Research Center at the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) in Yangon.[56] He also served as rector (president) of MIT, the country's main inter-denominational theological seminary.[57] Samuel Ngun Ling received his doctorate abroad and focuses his research on contextual theology, interreligious dialogue, and theological responses to globalization and pluralism. His key publication is the book *Communicating Christ in Myanmar: Issues, Interactions, and Perspectives* (ATEM, Yangon, 2005).[58] This work (275 pages) presents Myanmar's historical, religious, and social context and emphasizes dialogue with Eastern religions. Ling points out that Buddhism is deeply embedded in Myanmar's culture; thus, for Christianity to play a positive role in national life, it must overcome past attitudes of aversion or superiority toward Buddhist culture. In other words, the Church should fully respect and integrate elements of indigenous spirituality instead of seeing them as threats. Ling also analyzes post-colonial challenges, noting that many Buddhists still associate Christianity with the colonial period, hindering evangelization.

55 Ling, "CTC Bulletin."

56 Samuel Ngun Ling, "Globalization and Asian Theology: A Burmese Christian Perspective," *CTC Bulletin. Bulletin Of The Program Area On Faith Mission And Unity [Theological Concerns] Christian Conference Of Asia* 20, no. 2 (2004): 32–39, https://cca.org.hk/ctc/ctc04-02/ctc04-02f.htm#:~:text=1,RAYS%2C%20MIT%20Journal%20of%20Theology.

57 *MBC – Myanmar Baptist Convention*, n.d., accessed February 27, 2025, https://mbc-1813.org/?lang=en.

58 Ling, *Communicating Christ in Myanmar: Issues, Interactions, and Perspectives*.v

Critics suggest that although he acknowledges this issue, he could more fully develop theoretical foundations of postcolonial theology and propose concrete strategies to address this burden. Apart from this book, Samuel Ngun Ling has published numerous academic articles – on theological education ("Challenges, Problems, and Prospects of Theological Education in Myanmar," 2006),[59] Buddhist-Christian dialogue ("Buddhist-Christian Relations in Myanmar: An Overview," 2017),[60] and ethnic minorities' situation ("Voices of Minority Ethnic Christians in Myanmar," 2003).[61] He is also active ecumenically, editing the theological journal RAYS: MIT Journal of Theology and participating in Asian theologians' associations.

4.2.1.3. Saw Hlaing Bwa

Prof. Dr. Saw Hlaing Bwa is a leading theologian from the Karen ethnic group (as indicated by the name "Saw"). He earned his doctorate in systematic theology from the University of Regensburg, Germany (2003).[62] Currently, he is a professor at the Myanmar Institute of Theology and former director of the Judson Research Center (successor to Samuel Ngun Ling).[63] His specialization is interreligious dialogue. In his publications, he argues that genuine peace for Myanmar's future requires sincere dialogue between Buddhists and Christians, given religious and

59 Samuel Ngun Ling, "The Church and Social Justice: The Peaceful Struggles of Minority Christians in Myanmar," in *Resisting Exclusion: Global Theological Responses to Populism*, 1st ed, ed. Eva Harasta and Simone Sinn, LWF Studies, v. 1 (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019).

60 Samuel Ngun Ling, "Buddhist-Christian Relations in Myanmar: An Overview," in *Buddhist and Christian Attitudes to Religious Diversity*, ed. Hans-Peter Großhans et al. (Ling's Family Publication, 2017).

61 Ling, "Globalization and Asian Theology."

62 Saw Hlaing Bwa, "Why Interfaith Dialogue Is Essential for Myanmar's Future," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 13, no. 4 (2015): 71–78, https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2015.1104959.

63 "Response of Myanmar Religious Communities," Columbia SIPA, accessed February 28, 2025, https://www.sipa.columbia.edu/communities-connections/events/response-myanmar-religious-communities.

ethnic tensions. Among his publications is the article "Why Interfaith Dialogue is Essential for Myanmar's Future," published in *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* (2015).[64] There, he presents the thesis that building a peaceful future for the country cannot bypass dialogue between the dominant Buddhists and minority religions. Saw Hlaing Bwa argues that this dialogue should focus on practical cooperation and understanding rather than theoretical doctrinal debates, reflecting a general Burmese theological tendency toward emphasizing relationships and common good.[65] His academic engagement and activities demonstrate that the Church in Myanmar views its role as a bridge between different religions within society.

4.2.1.4. Ciin Sian Khai

Rev. Dr. Ciin Sian Khai (born 1975) represents the younger generation of Protestant theologians, belonging to the Zomi (Chin) people. He is a Baptist pastor and scholar. He studied theology in Myanmar (B.Th. at Zomi Theological College, M.Div. at MIT) and Europe, earning his doctorate in Protestant theology from the University of Hamburg (2015).[66] Khai situates dialogue within a specific historical context – recalling the tumultuous history of Christian-Buddhist relations in Burma, from colonial times (the slogan "Missionaries, Merchants, and Military" encapsulating Buddhist fears about foreign influences) to contemporary events.[67] He examines how historical memory influences current prejudices and how healing might occur through sincere dialogue. Importantly, he conducted interviews with Burmese Buddhists

64 Saw Hlaing Bwa, "Why Interfaith Dialogue Is Essential for Myanmar's Future," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 13, no. 4 (2015): 71–78, https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2015.1104959.

65 "Buddhist-Christian Dialogue: A Way towards Peaceful Coexistence in Myanmar," *Columban Interreligious Dialogue*, 2015, https://columbanird.org/buddhist-christian-dialogue-a-way-towards-peaceful-coexistence-in-myanmar/.

66 Ciin Sian Khai, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue.*

67 Ciin Sian Khai, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, 280.

and Christians, probing their mutual understanding and willingness to approach each other – the fact that only eight respondents participated underscores the delicacy of the subject.[68] Based on this research, Khai proposes three dialogue principles: (1) integral dialogue, addressing socio-political realities (e.g., poverty, conflict, discrimination); (2) relationship and trust-building rather than doctrinal dispute; (3) reciprocal dialogue, prompting each faith's adherents to critically reflect upon their beliefs and better understand their own and their partner's traditions. These conclusions highlight the ethos of Burmese theology: dialogue as a common path toward deeper truth and peace. Apart from interfaith dialogue, Khai addresses religious freedom and minority rights. His publication Rediscovering Religious Human Rights in Myanmar: A Myanmar Christian Perspective (2012) analyzes Churches' role in defending religious freedom in Myanmar's context.[69] His academic work is an example of how theologians from Myanmar combine scholarly reflection with engagement in dialogue and human rights advocacy.

4.2.1.5. Pum Za Mang

Dr. Pum Za Mang (Burmese: ပုမ်ဇမန်) is a distinguished Baptist theologian and scholar of world Christianity, born in Thantlang in Chin State, Myanmar.[70] Currently, he serves as an associate professor at the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) in Yangon, where he specializes in World Christianity studies.[71] He received theological training at Princeton Theological Seminary (Master of Arts)

68 Ciin Sian Khai, *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, 239–84.

69 *Rediscovering Religious Human Rights In Myanmar: Ciin Sian Khai*, with Ciin Sian Khai (LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2012).

70 Pum Za Mang, "More Than Manipur: Tribal Christians Divided by Borders Yet United in Faith," Christianity Today, September 14, 2023, https://www.christianitytoday.com/2023/09/kuki-chin-mizo-christianity-manipur-india/.

71 Dave Koehler, "Pum Za Mang," Overseas Ministries Study Center, August 2, 2023, https://omsc.ptsem.edu/pum-za-mang/.

and earned his doctorate at Luther Seminary.[72] He is one of the most recognized Protestant theologians in Myanmar.[73]

Dr. Pum Za Mang's research focuses on the interrelations between religion, ethnicity, and nationalism in Myanmar's context. His studies explore how Buddhism influenced Burmese nationalism before and during the colonial era,[74] and how Christianity shaped ethnic identity among Myanmar's minority groups.[75] Dr. Pum Za Mang is also actively engaged in interreligious dialogue and the analysis of ethnic conflicts in Myanmar, examining Christian responses to political and religious tensions in the country.[76] His academic contributions significantly enrich the understanding of Christianity in Southeast Asia and shed light on the complex relations between religion and politics in Myanmar. His works provide not only analysis of challenges but also practical solutions for interreligious and social dialogue.

4.2.1.6. Lahpai Awng Li

Rev. Dr. Lahpai Awng Li (Burmese: လှိုင် အောင်လီ) is an esteemed Protestant theologian from Myanmar, affiliated with the Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC), the largest Baptist organization in the country. He is a professor at the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) in Yangon, specializing in contextual theology and interreligious dialogue, particularly in relations between Theravada Buddhism and Christianity.

72 *The Pandemic in Burma – Corona Chronicles: Voices from the Field*, n.d., accessed January 10, 2025, https://covid-19chronicles.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/post-017-html/.

73 Koehler, "Pum Za Mang."

74 Pum Za Mang, "Religion, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in Burma," *Journal of Church and State* 59, no. 4 (2017): 626–48, https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csw074.

75 Pum Za Mang, "Christianity and Ethnic Identity in Burma," *Journal of Church and State* 61, no. 1 (2019): 78–105, https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csy002.

76 Pum Za Mang, "Christian Responses to Conflict in Burma," *Journal of World Christianity* 12, no. 1 (2022): 70–89, https://doi.org/10.5325/jworlchri.12.1.0070.

He studied theology at Luther Seminary in the United States, where he earned a doctorate in public theology. He has authored numerous scholarly publications focused on the inculturation of Christianity and its role in a multi-religious society.[77] One of his key articles is "Christian-Buddhist Dialogue: Challenges and Opportunities in Myanmar,"[78] in which he analyzes both difficulties and opportunities for dialogue between Christians and the Buddhist majority, highlighting historical tensions and contemporary possibilities for mutual respect. He collaborates with international organizations dedicated to peacebuilding and ethnic conflict resolution.[79]

Through his academic and pastoral work, he makes a substantial contribution to reflections on the Church's role in multi-religious Myanmar. His activities promoting dialogue and contextualizing theology to social realities make him one of Southeast Asia's leading theologians.

4.2.1.7. Other Protestant Theologians

There are many other Protestant theologians, among whom one should mention figures such as Simon Pau Khan En, Eh Tar Gay, Lahpai Zau Lat, Anna May Say Pa, Aye Nwe, K. Zau Nan, Umnai Kui, Moe Moe Nyunt, Maung Maung Yin, La Seng Dingrin, and Edmund Za Bik. Most of them come from ethnic minority groups (Karen, Kachin, Chin, Lisu, Lahu) and are affiliated with

77 Lahpai Awng Li [လဖုံင် အောင်လီ)], "Public Theology in a Multi-Religious Society: The Role of the Church in Myanmar," *Studies in World Christianity* [ကမ္ဘာ့ခရစ်ယာန်လေ့လာမှုများဂျာနယ်] 25, no. 2 (2019): 189–204, https://www.euppublishing.com/loi/swc.

78 Lahpai Awng Li [လဖုံင် အောင်လီ)], "Public Theology in a Multi-Religious Society: The Role of the Church in Myanmar," *Studies in World Christianity* [ကမ္ဘာ့ခရစ်ယာန်လေ့လာမှုများဂျာနယ်] 25, no. 2 (2019): 189–204, https://www.euppublishing.com/loi/swc.

79 Lahpai Awng Li [လဖုံင် အောင်လီ], "Faith and Ethnic Identity in Myanmar's Conflict Zones," *International Journal of Public Theology* [ပြည်သူ့သိက္ခာဝင်လေ့လာရေးဂျာနယ်] 13, no. 4 (2021): 370–86, https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-12341567.

active Baptist, Methodist, or Evangelical denominations, which are particularly dynamic in Myanmar. It is also significant that the works of many of these theologians are published in English, making them accessible to a broader audience. Additional names of Protestant theologians from various denominations continue to emerge as well.[80]

Dr. Aung Htoo (Burmese: အောင်ထူး) teaches theology at the Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (MEGST), specializing in relations between the Gospel and Burmese Buddhism. In works such as "The Gospel, Apologetics, and Worldview: A Correlation and Challenges in the Burmese Context," he reflects on how to effectively present the Gospel in Myanmar.[81]

Prof. Dr. Naw Eh Tar Gay (Burmese: နော်အဲတာဂေး), from the Baptist Church, is the President of the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) in Yangon and a scholar specializing in New Testament and gender studies.[82] As the former director of the Gender Studies Center, she promoted reflection on inclusivity within Christianity.[83]

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80 Samuel Ngun ling et al., eds., *Theology Under the Bo Tree: Contextual Theologies in Myanmar* (Myanmar Institute of Theology, 2014).

81 Aung Htoo [အောင်ထူး], "The Gospel, Apologetics, and Worldview: A Correlation and Challenges in Myanmar," *MEGST Journal of Christian Thought and Praxis* 2 (2022): 47–60, https://megst.org/2023/01/18/the-gospel-apologetics-and-worldview-a-correlation-and-challenges-in-myanmar/; Aung Htoo [အောင်ထူး], "A Leadership Wheel in Myanmar: A Personal-Theological Reflection," *MEGST Journal of Christian Thought and Praxis* 2 (2022): 104–24, https://megst.org/2023/01/18/the-gospel-apologetics-and-worldview-a-correlation-and-challenges-in-myanmar/.

82 "Prof. Dr. Naw Eh Tar Gay – Radical Renewal: Witnessing to a New Heaven and a New Earth – Join Us in Amsterdam at the 20th Believers Church Conference!," 2025, https://www.believerschurchconference.com/?view=article&id=48&catid=10.

83 Naw Eh Tar Gay [နော်အဲတာဂေး], "Women in the New Testament: A Gender Perspective," paper presented at Believers Church Conference Proceedings, Amsterdam, 2018; Naw Eh Tar Gay [နော်အဲတာဂေး], "Authority and Submission in Some New Testament Letters: Postcolonial Feminist Reading from Myanmar" (Department of Theology and

Dr. Stephen Vum Cung Nung (Burmese: စတီဗင်ဗွမ်စုန်နုန်း) is the head of the Department of Intercultural Studies at the Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology.[84] His research focuses on intercultural theology and ecumenism.[85] Also notable theologians at this institution are Dr. Daniel Ciin Suan Piang (Burmese: ဒနီယယ်စဉ်စွမ်ပန်) and Dr. David van Lian (Burmese: ဒဂေးဗစ်ဗန်လင်း).

4.2.2. Catholic Theologians

For many years, the Catholic Church in Myanmar lacked a developed indigenous academic theology – most priests received their formation abroad, and theological reflection primarily took the form of pastoral letters or homilies. Nonetheless, recent decades have seen the emergence of significant Catholic thinkers and leaders who address themes of inculturation[86] and interreligious dialogue, aligned with paths laid down by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). Since the 1970s, the FABC has advocated a "triple dialogue" for the Church in Asia: with the poor, with culture, and with non-Christian religions.[87] Burmese Catholic theologians strive to follow these guidelines.

Religion College of Arts and Law The University of Birmingham, 2011), https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/2981/1/Gay11PhD.pdf.

84 *Dr Stephen Vum Cung Nung – MEGST*, n.d., accessed March 1, 2025, https://megst.org/about-us/faculty/517-2/.

85 Stephen Vum Cung Nung [စတီဗင်ဗွမ်စုန်နုန်း], "Intercultural Theology in Myanmar," *MEGST Journal of Christian Thought and Praxis* 1 (2020): 14–27.

86 Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki 柯達理, 中国的神学。*Teologia chińska. Uwarunkowania kulturowe pojęć trynitarnych [Chinese theology. Cultural determinants of the Trinity concepts]*, Ekumenizm i Integracja 27 (Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2012), 59–87.

87 Tin Win, "Long Journey Ahead for Inculturation in Myanmar | Features [Interview with Archbishop of Mandalay, Marco Tin Win]."

4.2.2.1. Marco Tin Win

Archbishop Marco Tin Win (born 1960) is a leading Catholic advocate of inculturation in Myanmar. Currently Archbishop of Mandalay (since 2019), he previously served many years as a priest and formator. After studying theology in Rome and obtaining his licentiate, he returned and pioneered efforts in liturgical inculturation and popular devotion within the Burmese Church. As early as 2002, as a priest in Mandalay, he organized the first Nativity scene and Christmas crib in Burmese style: figures of the Holy Family and shepherds featured Asian characteristics and traditional Burmese attire,[88] replacing typically Western depictions. He commissioned a Buddhist artist to create these sculptures – a gesture of bridge-building with the Buddhist community. Tin Win understood that as long as liturgical language and forms remained foreign to local culture, Catholics would be perceived as foreigners in their own country. Over time, he expanded these efforts: he began celebrating Masses incorporating local instruments and melodies, introduced elements of Burmese symbolism, and – to give testimony of cultural rapprochement – even shaved his head like a Buddhist monk, symbolizing renunciation of worldly vanity in Asian culture. Initially, this met resistance from some clergy and laity – some feared it was "too Buddhist," and that the priest "resembled a Buddhist monk." Tin Win himself explained that it was not about imitating Buddhism, but about fully embracing one's own culture in living out the faith: "Buddhism thoroughly permeates Burmese culture… If we do not embrace in our Catholic practice what is good in our native culture, we will always remain strangers to others."[89] In his view, only when Catholics become truly "Burmese" in expressing their faith, will they be accepted and evangelize more effectively. Archbishop Tin Win also vigorously promotes interreligious dialogue – frequently visiting Buddhist

88 Tin Win, "Long Journey Ahead for Inculturation in Myanmar | Features [Interview with Archbishop of Mandalay, Marco Tin Win]."

89 Tin Win, "Long Journey Ahead for Inculturation in Myanmar | Features [Interview with Archbishop of Mandalay, Marco Tin Win]."

monasteries, organizing meetings with monks, and conducting dialogue training for clergy and laity across various dioceses. He has authored several books in Burmese, including works on interreligious dialogue (the first in 1998, when the term "dialogue" was entirely new to the local community) and inculturation. His principal theological work on inculturation, published after years of research, appeared in print in 2015.[90] Archbishop Marco Tin Win's efforts make him one of the most influential Catholic theological voices in contemporary Myanmar – combining solid intellectual preparation with the courage to implement reforms in Church life.

4.2.2.2. Charles Maung Bo

Cardinal Charles Maung Bo (Burmese: ချားလ်မောင်ဘို), born on October 29, 1948, in Monhla in the Mandalay region, is Myanmar's first cardinal (created in 2015) and longtime Archbishop of Yangon (Rangoon).[91] His pastoral, social, and theological activities have shaped the contemporary identity of the Catholic Church in Myanmar.

He began his spiritual formation with the Salesians of Don Bosco and was ordained a priest on April 9, 1976. Over the years, he has been deeply engaged in pastoral ministry, education, assistance to the poor, and building interfaith relations. In 1990, he was appointed Bishop of Lashio Diocese, in 1996 Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Yangon, and in 2003 Metropolitan Archbishop of Yangon.

As a Catholic leader in a predominantly Buddhist nation, Cardinal Bo has become a pivotal figure in interreligious dialogue. He frequently leads interfaith prayers and issues joint statements with Myanmar's religious leaders. Though Catholics constitute only about one percent of the population, Cardinal Bo is

90 The title in Burmese; this work collects his experiences and theological justification for inculturation.

91 *Wikipedia*, "Charles Maung Bo," November 20, 2024, https://en.*Wikipedia*.org/w/index.php?title=Charles_Maung_Bo&oldid=1258488111.

recognized as "a public voice of religion" in the country.[92] In the spirit of teachings from the Popes and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, he calls for mutual respect among religions and cooperation for national reconciliation.[93]

Following the military coup in 2021, he called upon Buddhists, Christians, and other communities to engage in dialogue and forgiveness, emphasizing that violence can only be overcome through spiritual values of love and compassion, shared by both Christianity and Buddhism.[94] His sermons and pastoral letters regularly address human rights, poverty, education, and ethnic reconciliation. In 2010, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar published a letter titled "Living the Gospel in a Multireligious Society," emphasizing the missionary task of bearing witness to Christ while respecting the Buddhist majority's traditions.

As president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences since 2019, he emphasizes synodality and solidarity with the poor, calling for the Church to stand alongside those most in need and to actively engage in social justice. On the FABC's 50th anniversary, he reminded that the Church's mission is to incarnate the Gospel in the real-life struggles of people.

Synodality is central to his vision of the Church – not merely as a structure but as a spiritual dynamic enabling collective responses to contemporary challenges. During the Synod on Synodality in 2024, he emphasized the necessity of forming the Church as a community of dialogue, giving special care to the poor.[95]

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92 Allen Jr., "Catholic Cardinal Bo May Be Key in Majority Buddhist Myanmar."

93 "Myanmar's Cardinal Bo: 'Peace Is Possible, Dialogue Is the Only Way' – Vatican News," October 18, 2024, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2024-10/myanmar-interview-cardinal-bo-conflict-prayer-pope-dialogue.html.

94 Herald Malaysia Online, "Cardinal Bo Calls for Reconciliation amid Myanmar's Turmoil," Herald Malaysia Online, accessed March 1, 2025, http://www.heraldmalaysia.com/index.php.

95 Cardinal Charles Maung Bo Myanmar, "FABC 50: A Call to Be 'Church of the Poor… Church in Dialogue,'" *Catholic News in Asia | LiCAS.News*

Prayer is an essential element of his ministry. In his 2024 Holy Week message, he called for "kneeling in solidarity" with the suffering, underlining the spiritual dimension of unity. In his theology, prayer transforms both individuals and societies.[96]

The prophetic dimension of his teaching manifests in proclaiming hope. In his homily during the Synodal Mass in 2023, he referred to the Synod as a "long march of hope for all humanity," presenting the Gospel as a source of world transformation through love and solidarity.[97]

His theology arises from active engagement with social and religious issues in Myanmar and throughout Asia, blending spiritual reflection with practical action. He offers a vision of the Church as a community actively responding to contemporary needs.[98] Through his ministry, he has become one of Asia's most influential voices in pastoral and social Catholic theology.[99]

4.2.2.3. Felix Lian Khen Thang

Bishop Felix Lian Khen Thang (Burmese: မန္ဒခတ္တုက်လင်းကမ်းတာန်း), president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar

| *Licas News*, October 30, 2022, https://www.*LiCAS.News*/2022/10/30/fabc-50-a-call-to-be-church-of-the-poor-church-in-dialogue/.

96 "Myanmar's Cardinal Bo: In Wounded World, Let Us Kneel in Solidarity – Vatican News," March 26, 2024, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2024-03/myanmar-cardinal-bo-in-wounded-world-lets-kneel-in-solidarity.html.

97 CNA, "Cardinal Bo: Synod on Synodality Is 'a Long March of Hope for All Humanity,'" Catholic News Agency, accessed January 10, 2025, https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/255778/cardinal-bo-synod-on-synodality-is-a-long-march-of-hope-for-all-humanity.

98 Chainarong Monthienvichienchai Thailand, "Myanmar's Cardinal Bo Calls for Synodality with Poor at Vatican Synod," *Catholic News in Asia* | *LiCAS.News* | *Licas News*, October 9, 2024, https://www.*LiCAS.News*/2024/10/09/myanmars-cardinal-bo-calls-for-synodality-with-poor-at-vatican-synod/.

99 "Myanmar's Card. Bo Reminds Religious Leaders about Their Role in Dialogue, Peace," accessed March 1, https://www.myspiritfm.com/News?blogid=8267&view=post&articleid=158814&link=1&fldKeywords=&fldAuthor=&fldTopic=0.

and ordinary of the Diocese of Kalay, is one of the most important contemporary leaders of the Catholic Church in Myanmar.[100] Born in Chin State, a region with a predominantly Christian population, Bishop Felix has played a key role in developing contextual theology and promoting peace and reconciliation among Myanmar's diverse ethnic and religious groups.[101]

After completing minor seminary studies in Pyin U Lwin, he studied philosophy and theology at St. Joseph's Major Seminary in Yangon. Simultaneously, he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Yangon in 1984. He was ordained a priest on February 23, 1990, and served as parish priest in Saizang until 1992.

In 1992, he was sent to Rome, where he studied canon law at the Pontifical Urbaniana University, earning a doctorate. At the same time, he attended the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, preparing for diplomatic service. Between 1997 and 2004, he worked in Vatican diplomacy, serving in apostolic nunciatures in Madagascar, Bangladesh, and Morocco.

On March 3, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI appointed him auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Hakha and titular bishop of Fesseë. He received episcopal consecration on May 6, 2006, from Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio. On May 22, 2010, he was appointed the first bishop of the newly created Diocese of Kalay, and his installation took place on June 29, 2010.

Since 2014, he has served as president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar, actively participating in international episcopal conferences and bishops' synods. His commitment to

100 David M. Cheney, "Bishop Felix Lian Khen Thang," Catholic-Hierarchy, accessed January 25, 2025, https://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bkhen.html; "Bishop of Kalay Diocese Felix Lian Khen Thang," UCA News, accessed January 25, 2025, https://www.ucanews.com/directory/bishops/bishop-khen-thang/302.

101 *Wikipedia, wolna encyklopedia*, "Felix Lian Khen Thang," July 17, 2024, https://pl.*Wikipedia*.org/w/index.php?title=Felix_Lian_Khen_Thang&oldid=74300522.

promoting peace and reconciliation among diverse ethnic and religious groups in Myanmar is widely recognized.[102]

Bishop Felix Lian Khen Thang is the author of several academic articles addressing key challenges facing the contemporary Church in Myanmar. His theological reflections focus on Church-state relations, the Church's role in reconciliation among ethnic groups, and the inculturation of Christianity in Myanmar's culturally and religiously diverse context.

In his work, "The Role of the Church in Reconciliation in Myanmar," Bishop Felix analyzes the Catholic Church's role in fostering interreligious dialogue and mitigating ethnic conflicts, particularly in regions inhabited by Christian minorities.[103]

As president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar, Bishop Felix actively participates in international episcopal conferences and bishops' synods. His contributions to international forums, such as the Synod for the Amazon and meetings of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), are recognized as significant voices in discussions on the future of the Church in Asia.[104]

4.2.2.4. Other Catholic Theologians

It is worth noting that in recent years, Catholic laypeople have also undertaken theological studies and publications. The first academic works by Burmese religious sisters and catechists are appearing, dealing with issues such as inculturation of catechesis and Catholic social teaching in the Myanmar context. However, bishops and priests, such as those mentioned above, continue to

102 Joseph Lian Khen Thang, "Ethnic Diversity and Christian Witness in Myanmar," *International Journal of Public Theology* 12, no. 3 (2020): 150–72, https://brill.com/view/journals/ijpt/ijpt-overview.xml.

103 Joseph Lian Khen Thang, "The Role of the Church in Reconciliation in Myanmar," *Asia Journal of Theology* 35, no. 2 (2019): 200–221, https://ajt.atesea.net/.

104 Joseph Lian Khen Thang, "Pastoral Challenges in Myanmar: Reflections on the Role of the Laity," *Studies in World Christianity* 28, no. 1 (2021): 25–45, https://www.euppublishing.com/loi/swc.

play the leading role. Among other theologians from Myanmar, the following figures should be noted:

Father Paul Lwin (Burmese: ပေါလ်လွင်) is a Catholic theologian who focuses on building interreligious bridges in the multi-religious context of Myanmar. His work, *Christian-Buddhist Dialogue in Myanmar*,[105] analyzes the potential of dialogue between Christianity and Theravada Buddhism as a tool for reconciliation in a country where religious diversity often leads to tensions.

Sister Agnes Nwe Oo (Burmese: အဂ္ဂနက်စ်ငွေရိုး) is a Catholic theologian who concentrates on education and spiritual formation in Myanmar. In her work, *Education and Faith Formation in Myanmar*,[106] she explores how Christian spiritual formation can support the development of local communities in a country dominated by Buddhism.

Father Michael Aung (Burmese: မိုက်ကယ်အောင်) is a Catholic theologian involved in reflection on the role of laypeople in the Church. His work, *The Role of the Laity in the Church of Myanmar*,[107] discusses how laypeople can play a key role in building Christian communities within a multi-religious society.

105 Paul Lwin [ပေါလ်လွင်], *Christian-Buddhist Dialogue in Myanmar* (Myanmar Catholic Press, 2016).

106 Agnes Nwe Oo [အဂ္ဂနက်စ်ငွေရိုး], *Education and Faith Formation in Myanmar* (Myanmar Catholic Press, n.d.).

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5. SUMMARY: PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

Christianity in Myanmar develops under the shadow of Buddhist cultural dominance and an authoritarian military regime shaping the country's social and political relations. Despite marginalization, the Christian Church, especially among ethnic minorities, remains an important social and religious actor. Its history dates back to colonial times when Catholic and Protestant missionaries introduced the faith among local communities, often associating Christianity with resistance against Burmese dominance. Today, Christianity accounts for approximately 6% of the population and plays a vital role in education, charity work, and interreligious dialogue.

The future perspectives of Christianity in Myanmar depend largely on its capacity for adaptation and contextualization within the local environment. Contemporary Burmese theology emphasizes dialogue with Buddhism, highlighting shared values such as mercy and concern for the poor. Theologians such as Samuel Ngun Ling and Archbishop Marco Tin Win stress the necessity of inculturating Christianity so it can be perceived as an integral part of Burmese identity rather than a foreign element associated with colonialism. In this context, the Church actively engages in social initiatives, including education and mediation in ethnic conflicts, seeking to be the “salt of the earth” in a country filled with tensions.

The limitations and difficulties faced by the Church result primarily from political and social conditions. The military junta enforces repressive policies against minorities, while Buddhist nationalism fuels resentment against Christianity. In many regions, Christian communities are viewed as threats to Burmese national

unity, leading to church destruction, persecution, and restrictions on pastoral activities. An additional challenge is the lack of developed indigenous academic theology, causing theological reflection often to rely on adapting Western thought to local realities.

Opportunities for the development of Christianity in Myanmar arise from the increasing role of the Church in social and educational activities. The Catholic school in Mandalay, humanitarian projects supported by the Church, and interreligious dialogue led by Cardinal Charles Maung Bo demonstrate that Christianity can be not only a spiritual alternative but also an institution working for the common good. Ecumenical movements and cooperation with Buddhist monks may help reduce historical prejudices and create space for peaceful coexistence.

The Universal Church can learn much from the Church in Myanmar, especially in the areas of contextual theology and inculturation. Christianity in Myanmar shows how the Gospel can be proclaimed in ways rooted in local traditions, avoiding cultural and political conflicts. Also significant is the experience of Burmese Christians in building dialogue with the dominant religion – their ability to establish relationships with Buddhist spiritual leaders can serve as an inspiration for other Churches operating in multireligious environments.

The Christian Church in Myanmar resembles a solitary pilgrim among golden pagodas, walking a path of hope and patience. Unable to afford confrontation, it must seek ways to be a light amid shadows of oppression. Amid palms and temples, between ancient monasteries and the ruins of burned churches, the voice of Christianity remains quiet but unextinguished. In the morning sunlight reflecting off the golden dome of Shwedagon Pagoda, small Christian communities gather for prayer, believing the Gospel is a force that cannot be destroyed – even in a land where a thousand pagodas remind one of eternity, and the military of the transient nature of human power.

6. APPENDIX

In Thailand, the dominant religion is Theravada Buddhism. Theravada (Pāli: थेरवाद theravāda; Sanskrit: स्थविरवाद sthaviravāda; literally "doctrine of the elders") is the oldest existing school of Buddhism among the early Buddhist schools. Its followers are called Theravadins (Sanskrit: theravādin, lit. "those proclaiming (-vādin) [what is taught by] the elders" (thera), that is, masters or teachers deriving their teachings directly from the Buddha). This form of Buddhism is often colloquially referred to as Hinayana, meaning Lesser/Inferior/Subordinate Vehicle. Below are characteristics distinguishing Theravada Buddhism from Mahayana (Great Vehicle).

6.1. Theravada Distinguishing features of Theravada Buddhism

6.1.1. Textual Basis

- Theravada Buddhism is based on the **Pāli Canon** (Tipitaka), recognized as the oldest collection of Buddhist scriptures.
- These texts are considered authentic teachings of the Buddha and form the doctrinal foundation of the Theravada tradition.

6.1.2. Spiritual Goal

- The primary goal of Theravada practice is attaining **nirvana**, defined as complete liberation from the cycle of birth and death (samsara).

- Theravada emphasizes personal liberation and self-perfection through individual practice, distinguishing it from Mahayana, which emphasizes the salvation of all beings (the bodhisattva ideal).

6.1.3. Role of Monks

- Monks (bhikkhus) play a central role in Theravada as guardians of teachings and models for lay followers.
- Monks observe strict disciplinary rules (Vinaya) and are considered the most likely to attain nirvana due to their intensive meditation practice and study of Buddha's teachings.

6.1.4.Philosophy and Practice

- Theravada emphasizes **Vipassana** practice (insight meditation), intended to lead practitioners to profound insight into the nature of reality.
- The teachings concentrate on the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Noble Eightfold Path** as fundamental principles leading to liberation.

6.1.5. Metaphysical Minimalism

- Compared to Mahayana, Theravada avoids elaborate metaphysical speculation, focusing instead on practical guidance for spiritual life.
- It has not developed the extensive pantheon of bodhisattvas or deities characteristic of Mahayana Buddhism.

6.1.6. Geography and Cultural Influences

- Theravada dominates in Southeast Asian countries such as **Thailand**, **Sri Lanka**, **Burma (Myanmar)**, **Cambodia**, and **Laos**.

- Its practices and ceremonies are closely tied to local cultures, influencing the diversity of rituals and traditions.

6.2. Differences Between Theravada and Mahayana

Aspekt	Theravada	Mahajana
Spiritual Goal	Personal liberation (arhat)	Salvation of all beings (bodhisattva)
Texts	Pāli Canon	Mahayana Sutra
Metaphysics	Metaphysical minimalism	Rich pantheon of bodhisattvas and Buddhas
Practice	Vipassana, individual meditation	Meditation and devotion to bodhisattvas
Geography	Southeast Asia	Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia

Thus, Theravada Buddhism distinguishes itself through doctrinal simplicity, an emphasis on personal responsibility in spiritual practice, and strong ties to local traditions of Southeast Asian countries. This approach makes Theravada one of the most traditional forms of Buddhism, striving to preserve the Buddha's teachings in their original form.

6.3. Recommended Films

Cinema is not only a form of artistic expression, but also a carrier of culture, memory, and truth about the world. As a spiritual and aesthetic heritage, film has the power to reveal what is invisible to the eye – the dramas of human fate, the beauty of nations, the complexity of history, and the spiritual tensions hidden within specific social and political contexts.

In the case of Myanmar (Burma), the art of film plays a special role in bringing closer the multifaceted reality of this country: its spirituality, suffering, courage, identity, and struggle with fate. Both feature films and documentaries can serve as a path to a deeper understanding of the Burmese people, their culture and faith – at times presented poetically, at other times through brutal realism, or yet again as a symbol.

The following list is intended to encourage the exploration of Burma through the lens of cinema – as a tool of contemplation, empathy, and knowledge. It includes selected titles available in Europe, offering a cross-sectional thematic and aesthetic perspective. However, the list does not claim to be exhaustive. Contemporary Burmese cinema, especially from the 1960s–1980s, remains largely inaccessible outside the country, limited by censorship or the lack of translations. Spiritual films, diaspora productions, and animated works – which also deserve attention – are likewise difficult to find. For this reason, this catalogue is open and evolving in nature – it constitutes a point of departure for further gathering, discovery, and organization of films related to Myanmar.

To facilitate reading and reflection, the titles have been grouped thematically according to dominant motifs and messages. The adopted structure comprises five main categories:
(1) War and Colonialism – films portraying Burma in the context of World War II and colonial legacy.
(2) Spirituality and Monasticism – stories about the lives of monks, inner transformation, and the spiritual dimension of daily life.

(3) Society and Migration – social cinema addressing issues of poverty, migration, exclusion, and everyday life.
(4) Politics, Resistance, and Repression – testimonies from the times of military dictatorship, protests, and the struggle for freedom.
(5) Culture, Poetry, and Memory – contemplative, poetic, and symbolic works showing the beauty and depth of Burmese identity.
The next sections will present a list of films assigned to each of the categories.

6.3.1. War and Colonialism

War left deep scars in Burma (Myanmar), and World War II in particular marked itself in the collective memory through the Japanese occupation, the operations of the Allied forces, and the tragedies experienced by the local population. Films in this category depict Myanmar primarily as a theatre of military operations, a space of imperial confrontation, and at the same time a place of suffering for ordinary people – soldiers and civilians, allies and enemies, monks, women, and partisans.

These narratives most often present a Western perspective: British or American, through which Myanmar is not yet portrayed as an autonomous subject of history, but rather as a backdrop to dramatic moral and strategic decisions. Nevertheless, specific locations are shown – the jungle, bridges, prisoner-of-war camps, rivers – which acquire a symbolic dimension and become a stage for questions about the meaning of struggle, loyalty, sacrifice, and the boundaries of humanity.

Some of these films include the theme of Burmese allies – such as Kachin troops or local villagers – but their role remains marginal and insufficiently told. All the more reason to revisit these works today, in order to discern not only their military significance but also the way in which they helped construct the image of Burma in Western cinema.

6.3.1.1. The Bridge on the River Kwai

Dir. David Lean, 1957, United Kingdom / USA; feature film, 161 min., English and Japanese.

An epic story about British prisoners of war forced by Japanese occupiers to build a railway bridge in occupied Burma during World War II. The film explores the complex relationship between the honorable Colonel Nicholson and the Japanese camp commander, addressing themes of morality, pride, and the absurdity of war. Winner of 7 Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director.

6.3.1.2. Merrill's Marauders

Dir. Samuel Fuller, 1962, USA; feature film, 98 min., English.

A film based on the true story of the American special unit "Merrill's Marauders," which conducted a daring raid on Japanese positions in Myitkyina during the Burma Campaign of 1944. It portrays the hardships of jungle warfare and the soldiers' determination in the face of overwhelming enemy forces.

6.3.1.3. Never So Few

Dir. John Sturges, 1959, USA; feature film, 124 min., English.

The story of Captain Tom Reynolds, the commander of an American OSS unit who collaborates with Kachin guerrillas in fighting the Japanese. The film combines elements of action, romance, and politics, portraying the complexity of Allied operations in Southeast Asia.

6.3.1.4. Objective, Burma!

Dir. Raoul Walsh, 1945, USA; feature film, 142 min., English.

American paratroopers are dropped into Japanese-occupied Burma with a mission to destroy a radar station. After completing the task, they must make their way through the jungle while evading enemy patrols. Though fictional, the film is inspired by the real-life operations of the "Merrill's Marauders" unit.

6.3.1.5. Yesterday's Enemy

Dir. Val Guest, 1959, United Kingdom; feature film, 95 min., English.

A British patrol, cut off from the main forces during the Burma Campaign, occupies a Japanese-held village and faces a moral dilemma: whether to torture civilians to extract information about the enemy. The film explores questions of wartime ethics and the limits of human conscience under extreme conditions.

6.3.2. Spirituality and Monasticism

Buddhist monks in Myanmar constitute not only the spiritual elite, but also the cultural and social heart of the nation's life. For centuries, Burmese monasticism has shaped the religious, ethical, and educational imagination, serving simultaneously as a path of asceticism, a refuge from violence, and an expression of resistance to injustice. Cinema devoted to this theme introduces the viewer to a world of silence, penance, ritual, and inner transformation.

Films in this category are not merely portrayals of monastic life – they are spiritual parables. The monk appears not only as a religious figure, but as a sign: resistance to evil, the choice of radical poverty, the pursuit of transcendence. Myanmar is depicted as a country where spirituality is interwoven with daily life, and the monastery becomes a space for healing, transformation, and reconciliation.

These works lead toward contemplation – not always through spectacular narrative, but through slowness, symbolism, and the deeply rooted rhythm of the Buddhist world.

6.3.2.1. Biruma no tategoto; The Burmese Harp

Dir. Kon Ichikawa, 1956, Japan; feature film, 116 min., Japanese language.

A classic of Japanese cinema, telling the story of a soldier in the Imperial Army in Burma who, after the surrender, does

not return to Japan but becomes a monk. Wandering through the country, he searches for the bodies of fallen comrades in order to bury them with dignity. The film is a meditation on death, guilt, and forgiveness – conveyed without words, through image and music.

6.3.2.2. 14 Apples

Dir. Midi Z., 2018, Myanmar / France; documentary film, 84 min., Burmese language.

A semi-documentary story of a young man who, after a mental illness, retreats to a monastery for fourteen days. As a form of spiritual purification, he eats only apples, remains silent, prays, and embraces asceticism. The film presents spirituality not as an idea, but as a practice – difficult, bodily, and everyday.

6.3.2.3. The Monk

Dir. The Maw Naing, 2014, Myanmar; feature film, 95 min., Burmese language.

The story of a young novice, Zawana, who lives in a provincial monastery. When his mother falls seriously ill, he must decide whether to leave the monastic life to care for her. The film portrays the clash between the ideal of spirituality and the realities of life, posing questions about freedom, love, and responsibility.

6.3.3. Society and Migration

Contemporary Myanmar is a country marked by deep ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity, shaped by poverty, isolation, and political instability. Social cinema portraying the daily lives of its people – their work, unemployment, family relationships, and dreams – allows us to perceive both the drama and dignity of ordinary individuals. A particularly significant theme in this category is migration: internal and external, legal and illegal, voluntary and forced.

These films often depict young people – standing at the threshold of important decisions, torn between the hope for a better life abroad and a sense of duty to their loved ones and traditions. Some films are stark and formally austere, while others are impressionistic and tender. What unites them is the perspective "from below" – a view from within Burmese poverty, longing, loyalty, frustration, and loneliness.

This kind of cinema does not judge, nor does it seek quick solutions – it rather listens, accompanies, and observes patiently.

6.3.3.1. Poor Folk

Dir. Midi Z, 2012, Myanmar / Taiwan; feature film, 105 min., Burmese and Chinese.

The story of a Burmese couple living in China with semi-legal status. In order to survive, the girl becomes a drug smuggler. The film portrays the desperation of migrants and the breakdown of human bonds in a world where morality is subordinated to survival.

6.3.3.2. Return to Burma

Dir. Midi Z, 2011, Myanmar / Taiwan; feature film, 84 min., Burmese and Chinese.

The first film made in Myanmar after the lifting of censorship. The protagonist returns to his hometown after working abroad and faces social stagnation, lack of prospects, and youthful frustration. The austere style and quiet camera accentuate the suffocating tension of being suspended between past and future.

6.3.3.4. A Thousand Fires

Dir. Saeed Taji Farouky, 2022, Myanmar / France / Switzerland; documentary film, 90 min., Burmese language.

A portrait of a family manually extracting oil in a Burmese village. The observational style captures the rhythm of daily life, the silence of labor, and the uncertainty of the younger generation.

The film is both intimate and universal – about the inheritance of hope and burden.

6.3.3.4. From Bangkok to Mandalay

Dir. Chartchai Ketnust, 2016, Thailand / Myanmar; feature film, 120 min., Thai and Burmese languages.

After her grandmother's death, a young Thai woman receives a bundle of unopened letters and sets out on a journey across Myanmar. Traveling from city to city, she encounters people, stories, and the meaning of impermanence. The film blends elements of melodrama and contemplative road cinema.

6.3.3.5. Ice Poison

Dir. Midi Z, 2014, Myanmar / Taiwan; feature film, 95 min., Burmese and Chinese languages.

A young farmer from the Myanmar–China border tries to escape poverty by turning to methamphetamine trafficking. Together with a girl from the Chinese diaspora, he enters the illegal trade, hoping for a better life. The film's austere, minimalist style highlights the characters' moral dilemmas, loneliness, and struggle to survive in a world with no future.

6.3.4. Politics, Resistance, and Repression

The History of Myanmar is marked by long decades of military junta rule, censorship, repression, and struggle for freedom. In this context, cinema becomes a form of testimony – often created in secret, at the risk of life, without professional equipment, but with an inner necessity to give voice to those who were silenced. Films in this category document the drama of individuals confronting a totalitarian state, telling stories of the heroism of ordinary people and suffering that has nowhere to hide.

These works portray protests, prisons, executions, but also fidelity, tenderness, and spiritual resistance. The filmmakers are

often exiles, dissidents, or anonymous witnesses of history. This kind of cinema not only depicts the regime but also becomes its opponent – an attempt to preserve memory, names, and dignity. The viewer is invited not so much to follow a narrative as to experience an inner shock.

6.3.4.1. The Lady

Dir. Luc Besson, 2011, France / United Kingdom; feature film, 132 min., English language.

A biographical story of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese opposition leader, wife, and mother who devoted her life to the freedom of her nation. The film portrays her solitude, inner strength, and her relationship with her husband, an Oxford academic. Michelle Yeoh stars in the leading role.

6.3.4.2. Burma VJ: Reporting from a Closed Country

Dir. Anders Østergaard, 2008, Denmark / Norway; documentary film, 85 min., Burmese language.

Footage smuggled by young journalists during the monks' protests in 2007. The film combines handheld camera recordings with reconstructions. Nominated for an Academy Award, it is a documentary about courage in times of silence.

6.3.4.3. Myanmar Diaries

Dir. Myanmar Film Collective, 2022, Myanmar / Netherlands / Norway; documentary film, 70 min., Burmese language.

A series of short pieces blending documentary, performance, and poetry. It portrays life after the 2021 military coup, from street protests to the trauma of imprisonment. Filmed anonymously by a group of creators working under the threat of repression.

6.3.4.4. Rays of Hope

Dir. Ko Pauk, 2023, Myanmar; documentary film, 105 min., Burmese language.

An autobiographical account of the director's journey as he leaves behind a career in theatre to join the resistance movement. The camera follows his decisions, doubts, and transformation – from artist to fighter. A poignant portrait of revolutionary conscience.

6.3.4.5. Broken Dreams: Stories from the Myanmar Coup

Dir. The Ninefold Mosaic, 2023, Myanmar; feature film (anthology), 128 min., Burmese and English languages.

Nine stories depicting the lives of ordinary people after the 2021 military coup. The film portrays the everyday reality of fear, hope, and resistance. Winner of the NETPAC Award at the Kolkata Film Festival.

6.3.4.6. Losing Ground

Dir. Anonymous, 2023, Myanmar; short documentary film, 23 min., Burmese language.

An intimate portrayal of young residents of Yangon trying to find their footing in the aftermath of the coup. Subtle and sensitive, filmed in an observational style – without commentary, yet rich in emotion.

6.3.4.7. Twilight Over Burma

Dir. Sabine Derflinger, 2015, Austria / Germany; feature film, 90 min., English and German languages.

An adaptation of the autobiography of Austrian student Inge Sargent, who became the wife of a Shan prince. After the military coup, her husband disappears, and she is expelled from the country. The film is banned in Myanmar.

6.3.4.8. Beyond Rangoon

Dir. John Boorman, 1995, USA; feature film, 100 min., English language.

An American tourist is accidentally caught up in the 1988 uprising. Her journey through Burma becomes a passage through

violence, courage, and witness. The film is based on true events and features music by Hans Zimmer.

6.3.4.9. They Call It Myanmar: Lifting the Curtain

Dir. Robert H. Lieberman, 2012, USA; documentary film, 84 min., Burmese and English languages.

A clandestinely filmed documentary about everyday life in Myanmar, composed of smuggled footage and interviews with locals. Poetic narration and imagery create a portrait of a nation suffocated by its rulers.

6.3.5. Culture, Poetry, and Memory

Films in this category portray Myanmar as a space of spiritual depth, contemplation, and symbolism. These are not stories about events, but rather about the inner landscapes of a nation: poetry as a form of endurance, culture as nonviolent resistance, memory as the indelible core of identity. Often, they speak not through classical narrative but through impression, image, silence, rhythm, and color.

These films carry a subtle longing – for freedom, for community, for dignity. Myanmar appears as a land whose beauty has been dimmed, but not extinguished. Poetry and art become a means of survival – not only for individuals, but for the entire nation. This is a distinctive kind of cinema: quiet, yet resonant. Brave, yet without shouting.

6.3.5.1. Burma Storybook

Dir. Petr Lom, 2017, Netherlands / Norway / Myanmar; documentary film, 81 min., Burmese language.

A poetic portrait of Burmese poet Maung Aung Pwint, a former political prisoner. The film explores his life, reflections, and the role of poetry in a society emerging from censorship and fear. It interweaves images of contemporary Burma with poems as an intimate form of narration.

6.3.5.2. MA – Cry of Silence

Dir. The Maw Naing, 2024, Myanmar / South Korea / Singapore / France / Norway / Qatar; feature film, 74 min., Burmese language.

The story of an 18-year-old girl working in a garment factory who joins a strike following the military coup. The film blends social realism with meditative silence – focused on the face, gesture, and breath. A symbolic portrayal of a voiceless young generation.

6.3.5.3. The Venerable W.

Dir. Barbet Schroeder, 2017, France / Switzerland; documentary film, 100 min., Burmese and French language.

A portrait of the Buddhist monk Wirathu, known for his nationalist and anti-Muslim rhetoric. The film contrasts the image of spirituality with hatred, asking whether religion can become a source of violence. Aesthetically minimalistic, philosophically disturbing.

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SUMMARIES

Summary (English)

Myanmar is a country characterized by the dominant role of Theravāda Buddhism, pronounced ethnic tensions, and an authoritarian political system based on military junta rule. Christianity operates in this context as a religious minority, historically associated with colonialism and regarded as culturally foreign. Most Christians belong to ethnic minority groups, which results in double marginalization – both religious and ethnic.

The Catholic Church in Myanmar has a developed organizational structure with local dioceses and a hierarchical system in which Cardinal Charles Maung Bo plays a significant role. His work includes education, social mediation, the defense of human rights, and dialogue with Buddhism. Other Christian denominations, mainly Protestant, are also present, particularly in regions inhabited by the Kachin, Chin, and Karen peoples.

Relations with Theravāda Buddhism are complex – ranging from historical tensions to contemporary forms of coexistence and attempts at dialogue. The inculturation of Christianity takes the form of adapting liturgy and spirituality to the cultural codes of Myanmar. A debate continues regarding the limits of this inculturation in relation to Catholic doctrine.

Theology in Myanmar develops under conditions of limited access to resources, political oversight, and an environment threatened by violence. Key themes include the identity of religious minorities, contextualization of faith, the spirituality of suffering and reconciliation, liberation theology, theological education, and

peace. Prominent figures include Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling, and Pum Za Mang.

Although theological publications by local authors are few in number, they are often produced at foreign universities and constitute significant testimony to local theological reflection. Research on the Church and theology in Myanmar remains scattered and in need of systematization.

Streszczenie (Polish)

Mjanma to państwo o dominującej roli buddyzmu Theravāda, silnych napięciach etnicznych oraz autorytarnym systemie politycznym opartym na rządach junty wojskowej. Chrześcijaństwo funkcjonuje w tym kontekście jako religijna mniejszość, kojarzona historycznie z kolonializmem i uznawana za element obcy kulturowo. Wśród chrześcijan przeważają mniejszości etniczne, co skutkuje podwójną marginalizacją – religijną i etniczną.

Kościół katolicki w Mjanmie ma rozwiniętą strukturę organizacyjną z lokalnymi diecezjami i hierarchią, w której istotną rolę odgrywa kard. Charles Maung Bo. Jego działalność obejmuje edukację, mediację społeczną, obronę praw człowieka oraz dialog z buddyzmem. Funkcjonują również inne denominacje chrześcijańskie, głównie protestanckie, aktywne w regionach zamieszkanych przez ludy Kaczin, Czin i Karen.

Relacje z buddyzmem Theravāda są złożone – od napięć historycznych po współczesne formy współistnienia i próbę dialogu. Inkulturacja chrześcijaństwa przybiera formy adaptacji liturgii i duchowości do kodów kulturowych Mjanmy. Trwa debata nad granicami tej inkulturacji w relacji do doktryny katolickiej.

Teologia w Mjanmie rozwija się w warunkach ograniczonego dostępu do zasobów, pod nadzorem politycznym i w przestrzeni zagrożonej przemocą. Wśród kluczowych tematów wyróżniają się: tożsamość mniejszości religijnych, kontekstualizacja wiary,

duchowość cierpienia i pojednania, teologia wyzwolenia, edukacja teologiczna i pokój. Do wybitnych postaci należą m.in. Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling i Pum Za Mang.

Publikacje teologiczne rodzimych autorów, choć nieliczne, często powstają na uniwersytetach zagranicznych i stanowią istotne świadectwo lokalnej refleksji teologicznej. Badania nad Kościołem i teologią Mjanmy pozostają rozproszone i wymagają systematyzacji.

အကျဉ်းချုပ် **(Burmese)**

မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသည် သာသနာရေးအရ သာသနာရေးအရေးကီးသော ထရေဝါဒဗုဒ္ဓဘာသာ၏ ထိပ်တန်းအခန်းကဏ္ဍဖြစ်ပြီး၊ တိုင်းရင်းသားအစုအဖွဲ့များအကြား အင်အားကီးသော အငြင်းပွားမှုများနှင့် စစ်တပ်အုပ်ချုပ်မှုအပေါ် အခြေခံထားသော အာဏာပိုင်နိုင်ငံရေးစနစ်တို့ကြုံ့ ထင်ရှားနသေည်။ ခရစ်ယာန်ဘာသာသည် အနည်းအစုအဖွဲ့တစ်ခုအဖြစ် ရှိပြီး၊ သမိုင်းဆိုင်ရာအားဖြင့် ကိုလိုနီအုပ်ချုပ်မှုနှင့် ဆက်နွယ်နကေြာင်း အများက သတ်မှတ်ကသြည်။ ခရစ်ယာန်ဘာသာကို လက်ခံသူများအနက် တိုင်းရင်းသားအနည်းစုများ ပိုများသောကြုံ့၊ သာသနာရေးနဲ့ တိုင်းရင်းသားအခြအေနများအကြား တစ်ခါတစ်ရံ ဆန့်ကျင်မှုတွကို ကြုံတွ့ရသည်။

မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရှိ ကက်သလစ် ဘုရားရှိခိုးကျောင်းများတွင် ဒသေခံ ဒိုင်အဇ္ဈစစ် အဆင့်အလိုက် အုပ်ချုပ်မှုဖွဲ့စည်းပုံရှိပြီး၊ ကတ်ဒင်နယ် Charles Maung Bo သည် ထိပ်တန်းအခန်းကဏ္ဍကို တာဝန်ယူထားသည်။ သူ၏ အလုပ်များတွင် ပညာရေး၊ လူမှုရေးအဇေးချမ်းရေး၊ လူ့အခွင့်အရေးကာကွယ်မှုနှင့် ဗုဒ္ဓဘာသာနှင့်သဘေဆွးနွေးမှုများ ပါဝင်သည်။ အခြံ ခရစ်ယာန်အဖွဲ့အစည်းများ၊ အထူးသဖြင့် ပရိုတက်စတန်ဘာသာသည် Kachin၊ Chin နှင့် Karen တိုင်းရင်းသားများနထေိုင်သည့်ဒသေများ၌လည်း တက်ကြွာပါဝင်သည်။

ထရေဝါဒဗုဒ္ဓဘာသာနှင့် ခရစ်ယာန်ဘာသာတို့အကြံ ဆက်ဆံရေးများသည် သမိုင်းအကွဲအပြဲများမှ စ၍ ယနဲ့ခေတ်တွင် ပူးပေါင်းနထေိုင်မှုနှင့် ဆွးနွေးမှုများအထိ ရှုပ်ထွေးတည့်နသေည်။ ခရစ်ယာန်ဘာသာသည် မြန်မာယဉ်ကျေးမှုကုဒ်များနှင့် ကိုက်ညီစရေန် ဘာသာရေးပွဲစဉ်များနှင့် စိတ်ဓာတ်ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာများမှာ လိုက်လျာမှုကို ပြင်ဆင်စသေော အရာ

ဖစ်သည်။ ထိုဝင်ရောက်မှုသည် ကက်သလစ်သီအိုရီနှင့် ပတ်သက်သည့် ကန့်သတ်ချက်များအပေါ် ဆွေးနွေးမှုများကို ဆက်လက်ဖစ်စေသေည်။

မန်မာနိုင်ငံရှိ သီအိုရီရေးရာသည် အရင်းအမစ်များ၌ ကန့်သတ်ချက်ရှိပီး၊ နိုင်ငံရေးအုပ်ချုပ်မှုအောက်၌ တိုးတတ်မှု ဖစ်တည်ရာတွင် အန္တရာယ်များ ရှိသည်။ အဓိကအကြင်းအရာများမှာ သာသနာရေးအနည်းစုများ၏ ကိုယ်ပိုင်အထောက်အထားများ၊ ယုံကည်မှု၏ အခြအနေ၊ နာကျင်မှုနှင့် ပန်လည်သင့်မတ်မှု စိတ်ဓာတ်၊ လွတ်မြက်ရေးသီအိုရီ၊ သီအိုရီရေးရာ ပညာရေးနှင့် ငိမ်းချမ်းရေးတို့ဖစ်သည်။ ထင်ရှားသော ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်များအနက်မှာ Marco Tin Win၊ Felix Lian Khen Thang၊ Samuel Ngun Ling နှင့် Pum Za Mang တို့ပါဝင်သည်။

ဒသေခံစာရေးသူများ၏ သီအိုရီရေးရာ စာတမ်းများသည် နည်းပါးသော်လည်း ပိုမိုများသောအားဖင့် နိုင်ငံခြားတက္ကသိုလ်များမှ ထုတ်ဝေကပြီး၊ ဒသေခံသီအိုရီရေးရာအတွေးအခေါ်များအတွက် အရေးပါသက်သေဖစ်နသေည်။ မန်မာနိုင်ငံရှိ ဘုရားရှိခိုးကျောင်းနှင့် သီအိုရီရေးရာအပေါ် သုတသေနများတွင် ပန်လည်စိစစ်နှင့် စနစ်တကျလေ့လာမှုများလိုအပ်သည်။

Résumé (French)

Le Myanmar est un pays marqué par le rôle prépondérant du bouddhisme Theravāda, par de fortes tensions ethniques et par un système politique autoritaire fondé sur la domination d'une junte militaire. Le christianisme y fonctionne comme une minorité religieuse, historiquement associée au colonialisme et perçue comme culturellement étrangère. La majorité des chrétiens appartient à des groupes ethniques minoritaires, ce qui entraîne une double marginalisation – religieuse et ethnique.

L'Église catholique au Myanmar dispose d'une structure organisationnelle développée, avec des diocèses locaux et une hiérarchie dans laquelle le cardinal Charles Maung Bo joue un rôle important. Son action comprend l'éducation, la médiation sociale, la défense des droits de l'homme et le dialogue avec le bouddhisme. D'autres confessions chrétiennes, principalement

protestantes, sont également présentes, en particulier dans les régions habitées par les peuples Kachin, Chin et Karen.

Les relations avec le bouddhisme Theravāda sont complexes – allant des tensions historiques aux formes contemporaines de coexistence et aux tentatives de dialogue. L'inculturation du christianisme se manifeste par l'adaptation de la liturgie et de la spiritualité aux codes culturels du Myanmar. Un débat est en cours sur les limites de cette inculturation en lien avec la doctrine catholique.

La théologie au Myanmar se développe dans des conditions de ressources limitées, sous supervision politique et dans un environnement exposé à la violence. Les thèmes clés incluent l'identité des minorités religieuses, la contextualisation de la foi, la spiritualité de la souffrance et de la réconciliation, la théologie de la libération, l'éducation théologique et la paix. Parmi les figures importantes figurent Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling et Pum Za Mang.

Les publications théologiques d'auteurs locaux, bien que peu nombreuses, sont souvent élaborées dans des universités étrangères et témoignent d'une réflexion théologique locale significative. La recherche sur l'Église et la théologie au Myanmar reste dispersée et nécessite une systématisation.

Resumen (Spanish)

Myanmar es un país caracterizado por el papel dominante del budismo Theravāda, fuertes tensiones étnicas y un sistema político autoritario basado en el gobierno de una junta militar. El cristianismo opera en este contexto como una minoría religiosa, históricamente asociada con el colonialismo y considerada culturalmente ajena. La mayoría de los cristianos pertenece a grupos étnicos minoritarios, lo que provoca una doble marginación – religiosa y étnica.

La Iglesia católica en Myanmar tiene una estructura organizativa desarrollada, con diócesis locales y una jerarquía en la que el cardenal Charles Maung Bo desempeña un papel importante. Sus actividades incluyen la educación, la mediación social, la defensa de los derechos humanos y el diálogo con el budismo. También existen otras denominaciones cristianas, principalmente protestantes, activas en regiones habitadas por los pueblos kachin, chin y karen.

Las relaciones con el budismo Theravāda son complejas: abarcan desde tensiones históricas hasta formas contemporáneas de convivencia y esfuerzos de diálogo. La inculturación del cristianismo se manifiesta en la adaptación de la liturgia y la espiritualidad a los códigos culturales de Myanmar. Existe un debate continuo sobre los límites de dicha inculturación en relación con la doctrina católica.

La teología en Myanmar se desarrolla bajo condiciones de acceso limitado a recursos, supervisión política y un entorno amenazado por la violencia. Los temas clave incluyen la identidad de las minorías religiosas, la contextualización de la fe, la espiritualidad del sufrimiento y la reconciliación, la teología de la liberación, la educación teológica y la paz. Entre las figuras destacadas se encuentran Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling y Pum Za Mang.

Las publicaciones teológicas de autores locales, aunque escasas, suelen elaborarse en universidades extranjeras y constituyen un testimonio significativo de la reflexión teológica local. La investigación sobre la Iglesia y la teología en Myanmar sigue estando dispersa y requiere sistematización.

摘要 **(Chinese)**

缅甸是一个长期以来由军政府统治、以上座部佛教占主导地位、民族紧张局势严重的威权政治体系国家。在这种背景

下，基督宗教作为一个宗教少数群体存在，历史上曾与殖民主义相关联，并被视为一种文化上的“外来者”。缅甸多数基督徒来自少数民族群体，因此面临宗教与族群的双重边缘化。

缅甸天主教会具备较为完善的组织架构，下辖本地教区，设有层级制度。其中，查尔斯·缪昂·博枢机（Charles Maung Bo）发挥关键作用。他的工作涵盖教育、社会调解、人权捍卫以及与佛教的对话。其他基督教派（主要为新教）也活跃于克钦族、钦族和克伦族等少数民族集中地区。

基督宗教与上座部佛教的关系历史复杂，由过去的紧张对立发展到当代的共处与对话尝试。基督信仰的本地化体现在仪式、灵修生活以及文化取向的融合，以更好地契合缅甸的文化语境。有关此类本地化在天主教教义范围内的界限，仍处于持续探讨中。

缅甸神学的发展处于资源有限、政治管控严格与暴力威胁下的环境中。主要议题包括宗教少数群体的身份认同、信仰的本地化、苦难与和解的灵修、解放神学、神学教育与和平建设。重要的神学人物包括 Marco Tin Win、Samuel Ngun Ling、Felix Lian Khen Thang 及 Pum Za Mang。

尽管本地神学著作数量有限，但许多研究多发表于国外高校期刊，体现缅甸语境下的神学反思。缅甸教会与神学相关的研究仍较为分散，有待进一步系统化。

الملخص (Arabic)

ميانمار هي دولة تتميز بالدور المهيمن للبوذية التيرافادية، والتوترات العرقية الشديدة، ونظام سياسي استبدادي قائم على حكم المجلس العسكري. يعمل المسيحيون في هذا السياق كأقلية دينية، ويرتبطون تاريخيًا بالاستعمار ويُنظر إليهم على أنهم عنصر أجنبي ثقافيًا. ينتمي غالبية المسيحيين إلى مجموعات عرقية أقلوية، مما يؤدي إلى تهميش مزدوج - ديني وعرقي.

تتمتع الكنيسة الكاثوليكية في ميانمار بهيكل تنظيمي متطور، مع أبرشيات محلية وتسلسل هرمي تلعب فيه شخصية الكاردينال تشارلز ماونغ بو دورًا مهمًا. تشمل أنشطته التعليم، والوساطة الاجتماعية، والدفاع عن حقوق الإنسان، والحوار مع البوذية. توجد أيضًا طوائف مسيحية أخرى، لا سيما البروتستانتية، تنشط في المناطق التي تسكنها شعوب كاشين وتشين وكارين.

العلاقات مع البوذية التيرافادية معقدة – تتراوح بين التوترات التاريخية وأشكال التعايش المعاصرة ومحاولات الحوار. تتجلى عملية تكييف المسيحية مع الثقافة المحلية من خلال مواءمة الطقوس والحياة الروحية مع الرموز الثقافية في ميانمار. ويستمر النقاش حول حدود هذا التكيّف فيما يتعلق بالعقيدة الكاثوليكية.

تتطور اللاهوت في ميانمار في ظروف من شُح الموارد، وتحت إشراف سياسي، وفي بيئة مهددة بالعنف. وتشمل الموضوعات الرئيسية هوية الأقليات الدينية، وتوطين الإيمان، وروحانية الألم والمصالحة، ولاهوت التحرير، والتعليم اللاهوتي، والسلام. من بين الشخصيات البارزة: ماركو تين وين، فيليكس ليان خين تانغ، صامويل نغون لينغ، وبوم زا مانغ.

وعلى الرغم من قلة المنشورات اللاهوتية المحلية، فإنها غالبًا ما تُكتب في جامعات أجنبية وتشكل شهادة مهمة على التفكير اللاهوتي المحلي. لا تزال الأبحاث حول الكنيسة واللاهوت في ميانمار متفرقة وتتطلب تنظيمًا منهجيًا.

Резюме (Russian)

Мьянма – это страна, в которой доминирует тхеравадинский буддизм, наблюдаются серьёзные этнические напряжённости и действует авторитарная политическая система, основанная на власти военной хунты. Христианство в этом контексте функционирует как религиозное меньшинство, исторически ассоциируемое с колониализмом и воспринимаемое как культурно чуждое. Большинство христиан принадлежит к этническим меньшинствам, что ведёт к двойной маргинализации – религиозной и этнической.

Католическая Церковь в Мьянме обладает развитой организационной структурой с местными епархиями и иерархией, в которой значительную роль играет кардинал Чарльз Маунг Бо. Его деятельность включает образование, социальное посредничество, защиту прав человека и диалог с буддизмом. Существуют также другие христианские конфессии, преимущественно протестантские, активные в регионах, населённых народами качин, чин и карен.

Отношения с тхеравадинским буддизмом сложны: от исторической напряжённости до современных форм

сосуществования и попыток диалога. Инкультурация христианства проявляется в адаптации литургии и духовной жизни к культурным кодам Мьянмы. Ведутся дискуссии о границах этой инкультурации в контексте католической доктрины.

Теология в Мьянме развивается в условиях ограниченного доступа к ресурсам, под политическим надзором и в среде, подверженной насилию. Основными темами являются: идентичность религиозных меньшинств, контекстуализация веры, духовность страдания и примирения, теология освобождения, богословское образование и мир. Среди видных деятелей – Марко Тин Вин, Феликс Лиан Кхен Тан, Самуэль Нгун Лин и Пум За Ман.

Несмотря на малое количество богословских публикаций местных авторов, они часто создаются в зарубежных университетах и представляют собой важное свидетельство локального богословского размышления. Исследования Церкви и теологии в Мьянме остаются фрагментарными и требуют систематизации.

Riassunto (Italiano)

Il Myanmar è un paese caratterizzato dal ruolo predominante del buddismo Theravāda, da forti tensioni etniche e da un sistema politico autoritario basato sul governo di una giunta militare. Il cristianesimo opera in questo contesto come una minoranza religiosa, storicamente associata al colonialismo e percepita come culturalmente estranea. La maggior parte dei cristiani appartiene a gruppi etnici minoritari, il che comporta una doppia emarginazione – religiosa ed etnica.

La Chiesa cattolica in Myanmar possiede una struttura organizzativa sviluppata, con diocesi locali e una gerarchia in cui il cardinale Charles Maung Bo svolge un ruolo significativo. Le sue

attività comprendono l'istruzione, la mediazione sociale, la difesa dei diritti umani e il dialogo con il buddismo. Esistono anche altre denominazioni cristiane, principalmente protestanti, attive nelle regioni abitate dai popoli Kachin, Chin e Karen.

I rapporti con il buddismo Theravāda sono complessi: dalle tensioni storiche alle forme contemporanee di convivenza e tentativi di dialogo. L'inculturazione del cristianesimo si manifesta nell'adattamento della liturgia e della spiritualità ai codici culturali del Myanmar. È in corso un dibattito sui limiti di tale inculturazione in relazione alla dottrina cattolica.

La teologia in Myanmar si sviluppa in condizioni di accesso limitato alle risorse, sotto sorveglianza politica e in un ambiente minacciato dalla violenza. I temi principali includono: l'identità delle minoranze religiose, la contestualizzazione della fede, la spiritualità della sofferenza e della riconciliazione, la teologia della liberazione, l'educazione teologica e la pace. Tra le figure di spicco si annoverano Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling e Pum Za Mang.

Le pubblicazioni teologiche di autori locali, sebbene scarse, sono spesso realizzate in università straniere e costituiscono una testimonianza significativa della riflessione teologica locale. Gli studi sulla Chiesa e sulla teologia in Myanmar rimangono frammentati e necessitano di sistematizzazione.

要約 **(Japanese)**

ミャンマーは、上座部仏教が支配的であり、深刻な民族的緊張と軍事政権による権威主義的な政治体制を特徴とする国である。このような状況の中で、キリスト教は宗教的少数派として存在し、歴史的に植民地主義と関連付けられ、文化的に異質なものと見なされている。キリスト教徒の大多数は少数民族に属しており、宗教的および民族的な二重の周縁化に直面している。

ミャンマーのカトリック教会は、地方教区と階層的な組織を有しており、チャールズ・マウン・ボー枢機卿が重要な役割を果たしている。彼の活動には、教育、社会的仲介、人権の擁護、仏教との対話が含まれる。他のキリスト教宗派、特にプロテスタントは、カチン族、チン族、カレン族の住む地域で活動している。

上座部仏教との関係は複雑であり、歴史的な緊張から現代の共存や対話の試みにまで及ぶ。キリスト教の文化的適応は、ミャンマーの文化的コードに即した典礼と霊性の調整として現れている。この適応の範囲とカトリック教義との関係については、現在も議論が続いている。

ミャンマーの神学は、限られた資源、政治的監視、暴力の脅威の中で発展している。主なテーマには、宗教的少数派のアイデンティティ、信仰の文脈化、苦しみと和解の霊性、解放の神学、神学教育、平和が含まれる。著名な神学者には、マルコ・ティン・ウィン、フェリックス・リアン・ケン・タン、サミュエル・ングン・リン、プム・ザ・マンがいる。

地元の神学者による出版物は少ないものの、しばしば海外の大学で執筆されており、地域の神学的思索の重要な証拠となっている。ミャンマーの教会と神学に関する研究は断片的であり、体系化が求められている。

Muhtasari (Swahili)

Myanmar ni nchi inayotawaliwa na Ubudha wa Theravāda, yenye mvutano mkubwa wa kikabila na mfumo wa kisiasa wa kiimla unaoongozwa na utawala wa kijeshi. Ukristo katika muktadha huu ni dini ya wachache, kihistoria ukihusishwa na ukoloni na kuchukuliwa kama kitu cha kigeni kiutamaduni. Wakristo wengi ni kutoka makabila madogo, jambo linalosababisha kutengwa mara mbili – kidini na kikabila.

Kanisa Katoliki nchini Myanmar lina muundo uliokamilika wa kiutawala, ukiwa na majimbo ya ndani na uongozi wa kihierarkia ambapo Kardinali Charles Maung Bo anashika nafasi muhimu. Shughuli zake zinajumuisha elimu, upatanishi wa kijamii, utetezi wa haki za binadamu na mazungumzo na Ubudha. Pia kuna madhehebu mengine ya Kikristo, hasa ya Kipentekoste, yanayofanya kazi katika maeneo yanayokaliwa na makabila ya Kachin, Chin na Karen.

Mahusiano na Ubudha wa Theravāda ni tata – kuanzia mvutano wa kihistoria hadi aina za sasa za kuishi pamoja na majaribio ya mazungumzo. Uhalishaji wa Ukristo unachukua sura ya kuzoea liturujia na maisha ya kiroho kwa misingi ya kitamaduni ya Myanmar. Kuna mjadala unaoendelea kuhusu mipaka ya uhalishaji huu kuhusiana na mafundisho ya Kanisa Katoliki.

Theolojia nchini Myanmar inakua katika mazingira yenye upatikanaji mdogo wa rasilimali, chini ya uangalizi wa kisiasa na katika maeneo yenye vitisho vya vurugu. Mada kuu ni pamoja na: utambulisho wa dini za wachache, muktadha wa imani, maisha ya kiroho ya mateso na upatanisho, teolojia ya ukombozi, elimu ya kitheolojia na amani. Miongoni mwa watu mashuhuri ni pamoja na Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling na Pum Za Mang.

Machapisho ya kitheolojia ya waandishi wa ndani, ingawa ni machache, mara nyingi huandikwa katika vyuo vikuu vya nje na ni ushahidi muhimu wa tafakari ya kitheolojia ya ndani. Utafiti kuhusu Kanisa na theolojia ya Myanmar bado ni wa vipande vipande na unahitaji kupangwa kwa utaratibu.

सारांश **(Hindi)**

म्यांमार एक ऐसा देश है जहाँ थेरवाद बौद्ध धर्म प्रमुख है, गहरे जातीय तनाव व्याप्त है, और सैन्य जुंटा द्वारा संचालित एक सत्तावादी राजनीतिक व्यवस्था है। इस संदर्भ में, ईसाई धर्म एक धार्मिक अल्पसंख्यक के रूप में कार्य करता है, जिसे ऐतिहासिक रूप से उपनिवेशवाद से जोड़ा

गया है और सांस्कृतिक रूप से विदेशी तत्व माना जाता है। अधिकांश ईसाई अल्पसंख्यक जातीय समूहों से संबंधित हैं, जिससे उन्हें धार्मिक और जातीय दोनों प्रकार की दोहरी उपेक्षा का सामना करना पड़ता है।

म्यांमार में कैथोलिक चर्च का एक विकसित संगठनात्मक ढांचा है, जिसमें स्थानीय धर्मप्रांत और एक पदानुक्रम शामिल है, जहाँ कार्डिनल चार्ल्स माउंग बो एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं। उनकी गतिविधियों में शिक्षा, सामाजिक मध्यस्थता, मानवाधिकारों की रक्षा और बौद्ध धर्म के साथ संवाद शामिल है। अन्य ईसाई संप्रदाय, मुख्यतः प्रोटेस्टेंट, काचिन, चिन और करेन जातियों द्वारा बसे क्षेत्रों में सक्रिय है।

थेरवाद बौद्ध धर्म के साथ संबंध जटिल है – ऐतिहासिक तनावों से लेकर समकालीन सह-अस्तित्व और संवाद के प्रयासों तक। ईसाई धर्म का सांस्कृतिक समावेश म्यांमार की सांस्कृतिक संहिताओं के अनुसार पूजा और आध्यात्मिकता के अनुकूलन के रूप में प्रकट होता है। इस समावेश और कैथोलिक सिद्धांत के बीच की सीमाओं पर बहस जारी है।

म्यांमार में धर्मशास्त्र सीमित संसाधनों की उपलब्धता, राजनीतिक निगरानी और हिंसा के खतरे के माहौल में विकसित हो रहा है। प्रमुख विषयों में धार्मिक अल्पसंख्यकों की पहचान, विश्वास का संदर्भीकरण, पीड़ा और मेल-मिलाप की आध्यात्मिकता, मुक्ति धर्मशास्त्र, धर्मशास्त्रीय शिक्षा और शांति शामिल हैं। प्रमुख व्यक्तित्वों में मार्को टिन विन, फेलिक्स लियन खेन थांग, सैमुअल न्गुन लिंग और पुम ज़ा मंग शामिल हैं।

स्थानीय लेखकों द्वारा धर्मशास्त्रीय प्रकाशन, यद्यपि कम है, अक्सर विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों में तैयार किए जाते हैं और स्थानीय धर्मशास्त्रीय चिंतन का एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रमाण प्रस्तुत करते हैं। म्यांमार के चर्च और धर्मशास्त्र पर अनुसंधान अभी भी विखंडित है और उन्हें व्यवस्थित करने की आवश्यकता है।

Resumo (Portuguese)

Myanmar é um país caracterizado pelo papel predominante do budismo Theravāda, por fortes tensões étnicas e por um sistema político autoritário baseado no governo de uma junta militar. O cristianismo funciona neste contexto como uma minoria religiosa, historicamente associada ao colonialismo e considerada um elemento culturalmente estranho. Entre os cristãos predominam as minorias étnicas, o que resulta numa dupla marginalização – religiosa e étnica.

A Igreja Católica em Myanmar tem uma estrutura organizacional desenvolvida com dioceses locais e uma hierarquia, na qual o cardeal Charles Maung Bo desempenha um papel importante. A sua atividade inclui educação, mediação social, defesa dos direitos humanos e diálogo com o budismo. Também funcionam outras denominações cristãs, principalmente protestantes, ativas nas regiões habitadas pelos povos Kachin, Chin e Karen.

As relações com o budismo Theravāda são complexas – desde tensões históricas até formas contemporâneas de coexistência e tentativa de diálogo. A inculturação do cristianismo assume formas de adaptação da liturgia e da espiritualidade aos códigos culturais de Myanmar. Está em curso um debate sobre os limites desta inculturação em relação à doutrina católica.

A teologia em Myanmar desenvolve-se em condições de acesso limitado a recursos, sob vigilância política e num espaço ameaçado pela violência. Entre os temas-chave destacam-se: identidade das minorias religiosas, contextualização da fé, espiritualidade do sofrimento e da reconciliação, teologia da libertação, educação teológica e paz. Entre as figuras de destaque estão Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling e Pum Za Mang.

As publicações teológicas de autores locais, embora escassas, são frequentemente produzidas em universidades estrangeiras e constituem um testemunho importante da reflexão teológica local. A investigação sobre a Igreja e a teologia em Myanmar permanece dispersa e requer sistematização.

요약 **(Korean)**

미얀마는 테라와다 불교가 지배적인 국가로, 심각한 민족 간 긴장과 군사 정권에 기반한 권위주의적 정치 체제를 특징으로 합니다. 이러한 맥락에서 기독교는 종교적 소수로 존재하며, 역사적으로 식민주의와 연관되어 문화적으로 이질적인

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현지 저자들의 신학 출판물은 드물지만, 종종 해외 대학에서 작성되며 지역 신학적 성찰의 중요한 증거를 제공합니다. 미얀마의 교회와 신학에 대한 연구는 여전히 분산되어 있으며 체계화가 필요합니다.

Santrauka (Lithuanian)

Mianmaras yra šalis, kurioje dominuoja theravādos budizmas, vyrauja stiprūs etniniai konfliktai ir veikia autoritarinė politinė sistema, pagrįsta karinės chuntos valdžia. Krikščionybė šiame kontekste funkcionuoja kaip religinė mažuma, istoriškai siejama su kolonializmu ir laikoma kultūriškai svetima. Dauguma krikščionių priklauso etninėms mažumoms, todėl patiria dvigubą marginalizaciją – tiek religinę, tiek etninę.

Katalikų Bažnyčia Mianmare turi išplėtotą organizacinę struktūrą su vietinėmis vyskupijomis ir hierarchija, kurioje svarbų vaidmenį atlieka kardinolas Charles Maung Bo. Jo veikla apima švietimą, socialinę mediaciją, žmogaus teisių gynimą ir dialogą su budizmu. Taip pat veikia kitos krikščioniškos konfesijos, daugiausia protestantiškos, aktyvios regionuose, kuriuose gyvena kačinai, činai ir karenai.

Santykiai su theravādos budizmu yra sudėtingi – nuo istorinių įtampų iki šiuolaikinių sambūvio formų ir dialogo bandymų. Krikščionybės inkultūracija pasireiškia liturgijos ir dvasingumo pritaikymu prie Mianmaro kultūrinių kodų. Tęsiasi diskusijos dėl šios inkultūracijos ribų, susijusių su katalikų doktrina.

Teologija Mianmare vystosi ribotų išteklių sąlygomis, prižiūrima politinės valdžios ir smurto grėsmės aplinkoje. Pagrindinės temos apima religinių mažumų tapatybę, tikėjimo kontekstualizavimą, kančios ir sutaikymo dvasingumą, išlaisvinimo teologiją, teologinį švietimą ir taiką. Tarp žymiausių asmenų yra Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling ir Pum Za Mang.

Nors vietinių autorių teologinių publikacijų yra nedaug, jos dažnai kuriamos užsienio universitetuose ir yra reikšmingas vietinės teologinės refleksijos liudijimas. Tyrimai apie Bažnyčią ir teologiją Mianmare išlieka fragmentiški ir reikalauja sisteminimo.

Összefoglalás (Hungarian)

Mianmar egy olyan ország, ahol a theravāda buddhizmus dominál, jelentős etnikai feszültségek vannak jelen, és az autoriter politikai rendszer katonai junta uralmán alapul. Ebben a kontextusban a kereszténység vallási kisebbségként működik, amelyet történelmileg a gyarmatosítással hoznak összefüggésbe, és kulturálisan idegen elemként tekintenek rá. A keresztények többsége etnikai kisebbségekhez tartozik, ami vallási és etnikai kettős marginalizációhoz vezet.

A mianmari katolikus egyháznak fejlett szervezeti struktúrája van helyi egyházmegyékkel és hierarchiával, amelyben Charles Maung Bo bíboros fontos szerepet játszik. Tevékenysége kiterjed az oktatásra, a társadalmi közvetítésre, az emberi jogok védelmére és a buddhizmussal folytatott párbeszédre. Más keresztény felekezetek, főként protestánsok is működnek, különösen a kacsin, csin és karen népek által lakott régiókban.

A theravāda buddhizmussal való kapcsolatok összetettek – a történelmi feszültségektől a kortárs együttélés formáiig és a párbeszéd kísérleteiig terjednek. A kereszténység inkulturációja a liturgia és a lelkiség mianmari kulturális kódokhoz való igazításában nyilvánul meg. Folyamatban van egy vita az inkulturáció határairól a katolikus doktrínához viszonyítva.

A mianmari teológia korlátozott erőforrásokhoz való hozzáférés, politikai felügyelet és az erőszak fenyegetése mellett fejlődik. A kulcstémák közé tartozik a vallási kisebbségek identitása, a hit kontextualizálása, a szenvedés és a megbékélés lelkisége, a felszabadítás teológiája, a teológiai oktatás és a béke. Kiemelkedő személyiségek közé tartozik Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling és Pum Za Mang.

A helyi szerzők teológiai publikációi, bár kevés számban, gyakran külföldi egyetemeken készülnek, és jelentős tanúságot jelentenek a helyi teológiai reflexióról. A mianmari egyházról és teológiáról szóló kutatások továbbra is széttagoltak, és rendszerezésre szorulnak.

Rezumat (Romanian)

Myanmar este o țară în care budismul Theravāda joacă un rol dominant, caracterizată de tensiuni etnice puternice și un sistem politic autoritar bazat pe conducerea unei junte militare. Creștinismul funcționează în acest context ca o minoritate religioasă, asociată istoric cu colonialismul și considerată un element cultural

străin. Majoritatea creștinilor aparțin minorităților etnice, ceea ce duce la o marginalizare dublă – religioasă și etnică.

Biserica Catolică din Myanmar are o structură organizațională dezvoltată, cu dieceze locale și o ierarhie în care cardinalul Charles Maung Bo joacă un rol important. Activitatea sa include educația, medierea socială, apărarea drepturilor omului și dialogul cu budismul. Există și alte denominațiuni creștine, în principal protestante, active în regiunile locuite de popoarele Kachin, Chin și Karen.

Relațiile cu budismul Theravāda sunt complexe – de la tensiuni istorice până la forme contemporane de coexistență și încercări de dialog. Inculturația creștinismului ia forma adaptării liturghiei și spiritualității la codurile culturale ale Myanmarului. Se desfășoară o dezbatere privind limitele acestei inculturații în raport cu doctrina catolică.

Teologia în Myanmar se dezvoltă în condiții de acces limitat la resurse, sub supraveghere politică și într-un spațiu amenințat de violență. Printre temele-cheie se numără: identitatea minorităților religioase, contextualizarea credinței, spiritualitatea suferinței și reconcilierii, teologia eliberării, educația teologică și pacea. Printre personalitățile de seamă se numără Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling și Pum Za Mang.

Publicațiile teologice ale autorilor locali, deși puține, sunt adesea realizate în universități străine și constituie o mărturie importantă a reflecției teologice locale. Cercetările asupra Bisericii și teologiei din Myanmar rămân fragmentate și necesită sistematizare.

Sammanfattning (Swedish)

Myanmar är ett land där theravāda-buddhismen har en dominerande roll, präglat av starka etniska spänningar och ett auktoritärt politiskt system baserat på militärjuntans styre. Kristendomen

fungerar i detta sammanhang som en religiös minoritet, historiskt förknippad med kolonialism och betraktad som ett kulturellt främmande inslag. Bland kristna dominerar etniska minoriteter, vilket leder till dubbel marginalisering – både religiös och etnisk.

Den katolska kyrkan i Myanmar har en utvecklad organisatorisk struktur med lokala stift och en hierarki där kardinal Charles Maung Bo spelar en viktig roll. Hans verksamhet omfattar utbildning, social medling, försvar av mänskliga rättigheter och dialog med buddhismen. Andra kristna samfund, främst protestantiska, är också verksamma i regioner bebodda av folkgrupperna Kachin, Chin och Karen.

Relationerna med theravāda-buddhismen är komplexa – från historiska spänningar till samtida former av samexistens och försök till dialog. Inkulturationen av kristendomen tar sig uttryck i anpassning av liturgi och andlighet till Myanmars kulturella koder. En debatt pågår om gränserna för denna inkulturation i förhållande till den katolska läran.

Teologin i Myanmar utvecklas under förhållanden med begränsad tillgång till resurser, politisk övervakning och i en miljö präglad av våldshot. Bland de centrala teman som lyfts fram finns: religiösa minoriteters identitet, kontextualisering av tron, andlighet i lidande och försoning, befrielseteologi, teologisk utbildning och fred. Bland framstående personer märks Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling och Pum Za Mang.

Teologiska publikationer av lokala författare, även om de är få, produceras ofta vid utländska universitet och utgör viktiga vittnesmål om lokal teologisk reflektion. Forskningen om kyrkan och teologin i Myanmar är fortfarande fragmenterad och kräver systematisering.

Myanmar, Theravāda Budizminin baskın olduğu, güçlü etnik gerilimlerin yaşandığı ve askeri cunta yönetimine dayanan otoriter bir siyasi sistemin hüküm sürdüğü bir ülkedir. Bu bağlamda Hristiyanlık, tarihsel olarak sömürgecilikle ilişkilendirilen ve kültürel olarak yabancı bir unsur olarak görülen dini bir azınlık olarak varlık göstermektedir. Hristiyanlar arasında etnik azınlıklar çoğunluktadır, bu da hem dini hem de etnik açıdan çifte dışlanmaya yol açmaktadır.

Myanmar'daki Katolik Kilisesi, yerel piskoposluklar ve hiyerarşik bir yapı ile gelişmiş bir organizasyonel yapıya sahiptir; Kardinal Charles Maung Bo bu yapıda önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Onun faaliyetleri arasında eğitim, sosyal arabuluculuk, insan haklarının savunulması ve Budizm ile diyalog yer almaktadır. Ayrıca, Kachin, Chin ve Karen halklarının yaşadığı bölgelerde, çoğunlukla Protestan olan diğer Hristiyan mezhepleri de faaliyet göstermektedir.

Theravāda Budizmi ile ilişkiler karmaşıktır – tarihsel gerilimlerden, günümüzdeki birlikte yaşama biçimlerine ve diyalog çabalarına kadar uzanmaktadır. Hristiyanlığın kültüre uyarlanması, litürji ve maneviyatın Myanmar'ın kültürel kodlarına adapte edilmesi şeklinde gerçekleşmektedir. Bu uyarlamanın Katolik doktriniyle ilişkili sınırları üzerine bir tartışma sürmektedir.

Myanmar'da teoloji, sınırlı kaynaklara erişim, siyasi denetim ve şiddet tehdidi altındaki bir ortamda gelişmektedir. Öne çıkan başlıca konular arasında dini azınlıkların kimliği, inancın bağlamsallaştırılması, acı ve uzlaşmanın maneviyatı, özgürleştirme teolojisi, teolojik eğitim ve barış yer almaktadır. Öne çıkan isimler arasında Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling ve Pum Za Mang bulunmaktadır.

Yerel yazarların teolojik yayınları, sayıca az olmasına rağmen, genellikle yurtdışındaki üniversitelerde hazırlanmakta ve yerel teolojik düşüncenin önemli bir kanıtını oluşturmaktadır. Myanmar'daki Kilise ve teoloji üzerine yapılan araştırmalar hâlâ dağınık durumdadır ve sistematik bir düzenlemeye ihtiyaç duymaktadır.

خلاصه (Persian)

میانمار کشوری است که در آن بودیسم تراوادا نقش غالبی دارد، با تنش‌های شدید قومی و نظام سیاسی اقتدارگرایی که بر پایه حکومت یک شورای نظامی استوار است. در این زمینه، مسیحیت به عنوان اقلیت مذهبی فعالیت می‌کند که به طور تاریخی با استعمار مرتبط بوده و به عنوان عنصری فرهنگی بیگانه تلقی می‌شود. اکثر مسیحیان از اقلیت‌های قومی هستند، که منجر به حاشیه‌نشینی دوگانه مذهبی و قومی می‌شود.

کلیسای کاتولیک در میانمار دارای ساختار سازمانی توسعه‌یافته‌ای با اسقف‌نشین‌های محلی و سلسله‌مراتب است که در آن کاردینال چارلز ماونگ بو نقش مهمی ایفا می‌کند. فعالیت‌های او شامل آموزش، میانجی‌گری اجتماعی، دفاع از حقوق بشر و گفت‌وگو با بودیسم است. فرقه‌های مسیحی دیگر، عمدتاً پروتستان، نیز در مناطق سکونت اقوام کاچین، چین و کارن فعال هستند.

روابط با بودیسم تراوادا پیچیده است – از تنش‌های تاریخی تا اشکال معاصر همزیستی و تلاش برای گفت‌وگو. انکلتوراسیون مسیحیت به صورت تطبیق آیین‌ها و معنویت با کدهای فرهنگی میانمار انجام می‌شود. بحثی در مورد مرزهای این انکلتوراسیون در ارتباط با آموزه‌های کاتولیک در جریان است.

الهیات در میانمار در شرایط دسترسی محدود به منابع، تحت نظارت سیاسی و در فضایی تهدیدآمیز از خشونت توسعه می‌یابد. موضوعات کلیدی شامل هویت اقلیت‌های مذهبی، زمینه‌سازی ایمان، معنویت رنج و آشتی، الهیات رهایی‌بخش، آموزش الهیاتی و صلح است. از چهره‌های برجسته می‌توان به مارکو تین وین، فلیکس لیان خن تانگ، ساموئل نگون لینگ و پوم زا مانگ اشاره کرد.

انتشارات الهیاتی نویسندگان محلی، هرچند اندک، اغلب در دانشگاه‌های خارجی تهیه می‌شوند و گواهی مهم بر تأملات الهیاتی محلی هستند. تحقیقات در مورد کلیسا و الهیات در میانمار همچنان پراکنده است و نیاز به نظام‌مندی دارد.

Ikhtisar (Indonesian)

Myanmar adalah negara dengan dominasi agama Buddha Theravāda, ketegangan etnis yang tinggi, dan sistem politik otoriter yang dijalankan oleh pemerintahan junta militer. Dalam konteks ini, Kekristenan berfungsi sebagai minoritas agama, yang secara historis diasosiasikan dengan kolonialisme dan dipandang sebagai unsur asing secara budaya. Mayoritas umat Kristen berasal dari kelompok etnis minoritas, yang mengakibatkan marginalisasi ganda – secara agama dan etnis.

Gereja Katolik di Myanmar memiliki struktur organisasi yang mapan dengan keuskupan-keuskupan lokal dan hierarki, di mana Kardinal Charles Maung Bo memainkan peran penting. Kegiatannya mencakup pendidikan, mediasi sosial, pembelaan hak asasi manusia, dan dialog dengan agama Buddha. Denominasi Kristen lainnya, terutama Protestan, juga aktif di wilayah-wilayah yang dihuni oleh kelompok etnis Kachin, Chin, dan Karen.

Hubungan dengan Buddhisme Theravāda bersifat kompleks – dari ketegangan historis hingga bentuk-bentuk koeksistensi kontemporer dan upaya dialog. Inkulturasi Kekristenan mengambil bentuk adaptasi liturgi dan spiritualitas ke dalam kode budaya Myanmar. Perdebatan mengenai batas-batas inkulturasi ini dalam kaitannya dengan doktrin Katolik masih berlangsung.

Teologi di Myanmar berkembang dalam kondisi keterbatasan akses terhadap sumber daya, pengawasan politik, dan ancaman kekerasan. Tema-tema utama mencakup: identitas minoritas agama, kontekstualisasi iman, spiritualitas penderitaan dan rekonsiliasi, teologi pembebasan, pendidikan teologis, dan perdamaian. Tokoh-tokoh terkemuka meliputi Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling, dan Pum Za Mang.

Publikasi teologis oleh penulis lokal, meskipun jumlahnya sedikit, sering kali ditulis di universitas luar negeri dan merupakan kesaksian penting atas refleksi teologis lokal. Penelitian mengenai Gereja dan teologi di Myanmar masih tersebar dan memerlukan sistematisasi lebih lanjut.

Buod (Tagalog)

Ang Myanmar ay isang bansa kung saan nangingibabaw ang Theravāda Buddhism, may matitinding tensyong etniko, at isang awtoritaryong sistemang pampulitika na pinamumunuan ng isang militar na junta. Sa ganitong konteksto, ang Kristiyanismo ay gumaganap bilang isang relihiyosong minorya, na historikal

na iniugnay sa kolonyalismo at itinuturing na isang dayuhang elementong pangkultura. Karamihan sa mga Kristiyano ay kabilang sa mga etnikong minorya, na nagreresulta sa dobleng marginalisasyon – panrelihiyon at etniko.

Ang Simbahang Katolika sa Myanmar ay may maayos na estrukturang organisasyonal na may mga lokal na diyosesis at herarkiya, kung saan may mahalagang gampanin si Kardinal Charles Maung Bo. Kabilang sa kanyang mga gawain ang edukasyon, panlipunang pagpapagitna, pagtatanggol ng karapatang pantao, at diyalogo sa Buddhismo. Aktibo rin ang iba pang denominasyong Kristiyano, karamihan ay Protestante, sa mga rehiyong tinitirhan ng mga etnikong Kachin, Chin, at Karen.

Ang relasyon sa Theravāda Buddhism ay masalimuot – mula sa makasaysayang tensyon hanggang sa mga kontemporaryong anyo ng pakikiisa at pagsusumikap sa diyalogo. Ang inkulturasyon ng Kristiyanismo ay nagkakaroon ng anyo sa pamamagitan ng pag-aangkop ng liturhiya at espiritwalidad sa mga kultural na koda ng Myanmar. May nagpapatuloy na talakayan tungkol sa hangganan ng inkulturasyong ito kaugnay ng doktrinang Katoliko.

Ang teolohiya sa Myanmar ay umuunlad sa ilalim ng mga kondisyon ng limitadong akses sa mga mapagkukunan, pampulitikang pagbabantay, at panganib ng karahasan. Kabilang sa mga pangunahing tema ang: pagkakakilanlan ng mga relihiyosong minorya, kontekstuwalisasyon ng pananampalataya, espiritwalidad ng pagdurusa at pakikipagkasundo, teolohiya ng pagpapalaya, edukasyong teolohikal, at kapayapaan. Kabilang sa mga kilalang personalidad sina Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling, at Pum Za Mang.

Bagama't kakaunti ang mga publikasyong teolohikal mula sa mga lokal na may-akda, kadalasan ay isinusulat ang mga ito sa mga pamantasan sa ibang bansa at nagsisilbing mahalagang patotoo ng lokal na teolohikal na pagninilay. Ang mga pag-aaral tungkol sa Simbahan at teolohiya sa Myanmar ay nananatiling magkakahiwalay at nangangailangan ng sistematisasyon.

Περίληψη (Greek)

Η Μιανμάρ είναι μια χώρα όπου κυριαρχεί ο Θεραβάντα Βουδισμός, χαρακτηρίζεται από έντονες εθνοτικές εντάσεις και διαθέτει ένα αυταρχικό πολιτικό σύστημα βασισμένο στη διακυβέρνηση στρατιωτικής χούντας. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, ο Χριστιανισμός λειτουργεί ως θρησκευτική μειονότητα, ιστορικά συνδεδεμένος με την αποικιοκρατία και θεωρούμενος ως πολιτισμικά ξένο στοιχείο. Οι περισσότεροι Χριστιανοί ανήκουν σε εθνοτικές μειονότητες, γεγονός που οδηγεί σε διπλή περιθωριοποίηση – θρησκευτική και εθνοτική.

Η Καθολική Εκκλησία στη Μιανμάρ διαθέτει ανεπτυγμένη οργανωτική δομή με τοπικές επισκοπές και ιεραρχία, στην οποία σημαντικό ρόλο διαδραματίζει ο καρδινάλιος Charles Maung Bo. Οι δραστηριότητές του περιλαμβάνουν την εκπαίδευση, την κοινωνική διαμεσολάβηση, την υπεράσπιση των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων και τον διάλογο με τον Βουδισμό. Λειτουργούν επίσης άλλες χριστιανικές ομολογίες, κυρίως Προτεσταντικές, ενεργές σε περιοχές που κατοικούνται από τους λαούς Κάτσιν, Τσιν και Κάρεν.

Οι σχέσεις με τον Θεραβάντα Βουδισμό είναι πολύπλοκες – από ιστορικές εντάσεις έως σύγχρονες μορφές συνύπαρξης και προσπάθειες διαλόγου. Η ενσάρκωση του Χριστιανισμού λαμβάνει τη μορφή προσαρμογής της λειτουργίας και της πνευματικότητας στους πολιτισμικούς κώδικες της Μιανμάρ. Διεξάγεται συζήτηση σχετικά με τα όρια αυτής της ενσάρκωσης σε σχέση με τη καθολική δογματική.

Η θεολογία στη Μιανμάρ αναπτύσσεται υπό συνθήκες περιορισμένης πρόσβασης σε πόρους, υπό πολιτική επιτήρηση και σε περιβάλλον απειλούμενο από βία. Μεταξύ των βασικών θεμάτων ξεχωρίζουν: η ταυτότητα των θρησκευτικών μειονοτήτων, η πλαισίωση της πίστης, η πνευματικότητα του πόνου και της συμφιλίωσης, η θεολογία της απελευθέρωσης, η θεολογική εκπαίδευση και η ειρήνη. Διακεκριμένες προσωπικότητες

περιλαμβάνουν τους Marco Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling και Pum Za Mang.

Οι θεολογικές δημοσιεύσεις των τοπικών συγγραφέων, αν και λίγες, συχνά προκύπτουν σε ξένα πανεπιστήμια και αποτελούν σημαντική μαρτυρία της τοπικής θεολογικής σκέψης. Η έρευνα για την Εκκλησία και τη θεολογία στη Μιανμάρ παραμένει κατακερματισμένη και απαιτεί συστηματοποίηση.

Summarium (Latin)

Myanmar est civitas in qua Theravāda Buddhismus praevalet, cum validis tensionibus ethnicis et systemate politico auctoritatum, quod in regimine iuntae militaris fundatur. Christianismus in hoc contextu ut minoritas religiosa existit, historice cum colonialismo coniunctus et ut elementum culturaliter alienum habitus. Inter Christianos plerique ad minoritates ethnicas pertinent, quod ad duplicem emarginationem – religiosam et ethnicam – ducit.

Ecclesia Catholica in Myanmar structuram ordinatam evolutam habet cum dioecesibus localibus et hierarchia, in qua Cardinalis Carolus Maung Bo munus praecipuum agit. Eius opera educationem, mediationem socialem, defensionem iurium humanorum atque dialogum cum Buddhismo complectitur. Aliae denominationes Christianae, praesertim Protestantes, etiam in regionibus a populis Kachin, Chin et Karen inhabitatis activae sunt.

Relationes cum Theravāda Buddhismo complexae sunt – ab historicis tensionibus ad formas hodiernas coexistentiae et conatus dialogi. Inculturatio Christianismi formas liturgiae et spiritualitatis ad codices culturales Myanmar accommodatas sumit. Disputatio de limitibus huius inculturationis respectu doctrinae Catholicae perstat.

Theologia in Myanmar sub condicionibus accessus limitati ad facultates, sub vigilantia politica et in spatio vi subiecto evolvitur.

Inter themata praecipua eminent: identitas minoritatum religiosarum, contextualizatio fidei, spiritualitas doloris et reconciliationis, theologia liberationis, educatio theologica et pax. Inter personas eminentes sunt Marcus Tin Win, Felix Lian Khen Thang, Samuel Ngun Ling et Pum Za Mang.

Publicationes theologicae auctorum indigenorum, quamquam paucae, saepe in universitatibus externis fiunt et testimonium significans reflexionis theologicae localis praebent. Investigationes de Ecclesia et theologia in Myanmar adhuc dispersae sunt et systematizationem requirunt.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki (Chinese: 柯達理), priest of the Gliwice diocese, sinologist, pianist, iconographer, professor at the University of Opole, habilitated doctor of theological sciences in the field of dogmatics and ecumenism, Rector of the Silesian School of Iconography, Director of the Institute of Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East, head of doctoral studies in theological sciences at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole, lecturer at the Poland-China Cooperation Center "Confucius Institute" at Opole University of Technology, co-founder of the Sinicum Association of Michał Boym SJ, curator of the international think-tank Catechetical Definitions, church censor of the Gliwice diocese. He studied in Lublin, Krakow, Paris, London, Beijing and Taipei. His research interests and publications mainly concern dogmatic theology (Christology), icon theology, theology of art, Chinese and Asian theology.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8388-702X
Affiliation: University of Opole (Opole)
e-mail: dspjkr@gmail.com

Piotr Sękowski (Arabic: بيوتر سيكوفسكي) – a presbyter of the Diocese of Gliwice, Doctor of Theological Sciences specializing in dogmatic theology, religious studies, and interreligious dialogue; Arabist, Islamologist, and Massignonologist. He is a postdoctoral researcher at the Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica in Rome, Chair of the Audit Commission of the Institute for Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East (Arabic Section), Dean of the Faculty of Mosaic of the Life-Giving Tree of the Holy Cross at the Silesian School of Iconography, Prosecutor of SEKO Publishing House, Curator of the International Think Tank Catechetical Definitions, Director of the Polish Section of Badaliya, Lecturer at the Faculty of Theology, University of Opole, former National Leader of Gioventù Studentesca within the Comunione e Liberazione Movement in Poland. He is also a member of the Sinicum Association Michał Boym SJ, the Society of Dogmatic Theologians, and the "Friends of Deir Mar Musa" Association (خَليل دير مار موسى الحبشي, Ḫalīl Dayr Mār Mūsā al-Ḥabašī). He has studied in Milan, Rabat, Cairo, Paris, and Lyon. His academic research and publications focus on Christian-Muslim dialogue, Arab Christianity, and Islamic theology.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8119-717X
Affiliation: Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica (Roma)
e-mail: pgfseko@gmail.com

Bartłomiej Cudziło (Thai: บาร์โธโลมิว ซุดซิโล) – a presbyter of the Archdiocese of Katowice, affiliated with the University of Silesia, holding a Master of Theology degree in biblical studies and ecumenism. A multiple-time recipient of the Rector's Scholarship for Best Student at the University of Silesia, he completed an internship in Zambia in 2014. He is the Chancellor of the Institute for Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East and a member of the Sinicum Association named after Michał Boym, SJ, which assists the Church in China. His research focuses on independent Christian churches, the Pentecostal movement, and Asian theology and culture, particularly in relation to the Churches of Thailand. He is an experienced traveler and guide, specializing in Southeast Asian countries with particular expertise in Thailand.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6518-8903
Affiliation: University of Silesia (Katowice)
e-mail: bartlomiej.cudzilo@gmail.com

IN PREPARATION

The project, carried out by the Authors, encompasses the following studies, which will be published in varying order. The titles of the planned publications as well as the languages in which they will appear may be subject to change. The project involves students of Christian Oriental Studies at WTUO, who are preparing materials on Christianity in Southeast Asia, published on the YouTube channel of the Institute for the Study of Far Eastern Theology and Spirituality: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLELkJ3_IJpg9rG5B_CVhDEf2JZQ27joIp (The Church in Southeast Asia) and https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLELkJ3_IJpg83O8DG5I-JeynRyOgMq-8No (Christianity in the Far Eastern Context).

Planned titles:

1. Christianity in the Kingdom of Oil and Islam: Church and Theology in Brunei
2. Christianity in Latin Asia: Church and Theology in the Philippines[108]
3. Christianity in the Islands of the World's Largest Islam: Church and Theology in Indonesia
4. Christianity in the Kingdom of the Khmer: The Church and Theology of Cambodia[109]

108 Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki, "Chrystologia na Filipinach [Christology in the Philippines]," *Studia Oecumenica* 23 (2023): 283–96, https://doi.org/10.25167/so.5390.

109 Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki [柯達理] et al., "Christianity in the Kingdom of the Khmers: The Church and Theology of Cambodia [Chrześcijaństwo w królestwie Khmerów. Kościół i Teologia Kambodży]," *Nurt SVD* 159, no. 1 (2026): 8–37.

5. Christianity in the Socialist Kingdom on the Mekong: Church and Theology in Laos[110]
6. Christianity in the Muslim Federal Kingdom: Church and Theology in Malaysia
7. Christianity Among a Thousand Pagodas and Military Junta: Church and Theology in Myanmar (Burma)[111]
8. Christianity in the Asian Tiger: Church and Theology in Singapore
9. Buddhist Christianity in Thailand: Church and Theology[112]
10. Christianity in the Young Catholic Land and Dawns of Freedom: Church and Theology in East Timor
11. Christianity in the Socialist State of the Dragon: Church and Theology in Vietnam

110 Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki [柯達理] et al., "Christianity in the Socialist Kingdom on the Mekong: The Church and Theology of Laos," *Teologia w Polsce. Nowa Seria 19*, no. 1 (2025): 93–118, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31743/twp.2025.19.1.05.

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112 Dariusz Klejnowski-Różycki et al., "Buddyjskie chrześcijaństwo Tajlandii. Kościół i teologia [Buddhist Christianity of Thailand. The Church and Theology]," *Nurt SVD* 157, no. 1 (2025): 41–69.

PATRONS

Augustyn Jurek
Azzimonti Mauro
Babiak Wojciech
Binda-Kiszczak Natalia
Borecka Alicja
Cocozza Sara
Cudziło Bartłomiej
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ISBN: 978-83-962508-4-1 Institute for Research on Theology and Spirituality of the Far East
ISBN: 978-83-67399-48-7 Publishing House of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole
DOI: https://doi.org/10.25167/9788367399487
ISSN: 3072-5372