Reproduced from Myanmar's Mountain and Maritime Borderscapes: Local Practices, Boundary-making and Figured Worlds, edited by Su-Ann Oh (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2016). This version was obtained electronically direct from the publisher on condition that copyright is not infringed. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior permission of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Individual chapters are available at http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg>.

MYANMAR'S MOUNTAIN AND MARITIME BORDERSCAPES

The **ISEAS** – **Yusof Ishak Institute** (formerly Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional centre dedicated to the study of socio-political, security and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic and economic environment. The Institute's research programmes are the Regional Economic Studies (RES, including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS).

ISEAS Publishing, an established academic press, has issued more than 2,000 books and journals. It is the largest scholarly publisher of research about Southeast Asia from within the region. ISEAS Publishing works with many other academic and trade publishers and distributors to disseminate important research and analyses from and about Southeast Asia to the rest of the world.

MYANMAR'S MOUNTAIN AND MARITIME BORDERSCAPES

LOCAL PRACTICES, BOUNDARY-MAKING AND FIGURED WORLDS

EDITED BY SU-ANN OH



First published in Singapore in 2016 by ISEAS Publishing 30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace Singapore 119614

E-mail: publish@iseas.edu.sg *Website*: http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

© 2016 ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

The responsibility for facts and opinions in this publication rests exclusively with the author and his interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views or the policy of the publisher or its supporters.

ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Myanmar's Mountain and Maritime Borderscapes : Local Practices, Boundarymaking and Figured Worlds / edited by Su-Ann Oh.

Papers originally presented at a Conference on Myanmar from the Margins, held in Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 14–15 November 2013.

- 1. Internal migrants—Myanmar.
- 2. Myanmar-Politics and government.
- 3. Myanmar—Boundaries.
- 4. Myanmar-Religious life and customs.
- I. Oh, Su-Ann.

II. Conference on Myanmar from the Margins (2013 : Singapore) DS528.7 M99 2016

ISBN 978-981-4695-76-3 (soft cover) ISBN 978-981-4695-77-0 (e-book, PDF)

Cover photo: Watercolour paintings on the front and back covers reproduced with kind permission of Su-Ann Oh

Typeset by Superskill Graphics Pte Ltd Printed in Singapore by Mainland Press Pte Ltd

Contents

List	t of Tables	vii	
List of Figures vii			
Ack	Acknowledgements in		
Not	Notes on Language, Terminology and Geographical Names x		
<i>Contributors</i> xii			
Abbreviations xix			
1.	Introduction Su-Ann Oh	1	
I. 2.	Overview of Myanmar's Mountain and Maritime Borderscape Electoral Sovereignty in Myanmar's Borderlands <i>Nicholas Farrelly</i>	e s 39	
3.	The Maritime Frontier of Myanmar: Challenges in the Early 21st Century <i>Maung Aung Myoe</i>	70	
II. 4.	Territorial Claims and Imagined Boundaries Burman Territories and Borders in the Making of a Myanmar Nation State <i>Maxime Boutry</i>	99	
5.	Ritual and the Other in Rakhine Spirit Cults <i>Alexandra de Mersan</i>	121	
6.	Rohingya Territoriality in Myanmar and Bangladesh: Humanitarian Crisis and National Disordering <i>Anders Bjornberg</i>	146	

III. 7.	. Social Organization and Border Economies The Culture and Landscape of the Humanitarian Economy among	
	the Karen (Kayin) in the Borderland of Southeast Myanmar and Northwest Thailand <i>Alexander Horstmann</i>	171
8.	Navigating Learning, Employment and Economies in the Mae Sot-Myawaddy Borderland Su-Ann Oh	191
IV. 9.	Mobile Practices and Moving Borders The Spatiality and Borderless-ness of Contentious Politics: Kachin Mobilities as Capability <i>Karin Dean</i>	215
10.	The Mule Caravans as Cross-Border Networks: Local Bands and their Stretch on the Frontier between Yunnan and Burma <i>Jianxiong Ma and Cunzhao Ma</i>	237
	Identity Construction and the Politics of Belonging "I Want to Stay Forever in You" <i>Decha Tangseefa</i>	261
12.	Life along the Naf Border: Identity Politics of the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh <i>Kazi Fahmida Farzana</i>	283
13.	Home of the Housekeeper: Will Shan Migrants Return after a Decade of Migration? <i>Amporn Jirattikorn</i>	306
14.	Moving on: Spaces of Engagement in the Kayah–Mae Hong Son Borderland <i>Carl Grundy-Warr and Chin Wei Jun</i>	323
	Institutionalized Identity and Border Practices The Chin State-Mizoram Border: Institutionalized Xenophobia for State Control <i>Bianca Son and N. William Singh</i>	353
16.	Tăi Buddhist Practices on the China-Myanmar Border <i>Takahiro Kojima</i>	369
Ind	ex	389

List of Tables

2.1	Characteristics of Borderland Constituencies, Sorted by	
	Border Length	41
2.2	Myanmar 2010 General Election Results in Borderland	
	Constituencies	45
2.3	Voter Density (per km ²) by Party Contesting	
	2010 General Election	56
3.1	Myanmar Waters	71
3.2	The Largest Offshore Gas Projects	86
3.3	Income from Yadana and Yetagun Projects	
	(Sale of Gas to Thailand) US\$ Million Fiscal	88
16.1	Number of Priests and Monasteries	373

List of Figures

1.1	Map of Upland, Lowland and Maritime Myanmar	9
1.2	Map of Natural Resources in Myanmar's Border Regions	15
2.1	Map of Borderland Constituencies	40
2.2	Map of People's Assembly 2010 Election Results in Borderland	
	Constituencies	44
2.3	Map of Concentration of Military Installations in Myanmar	59
2.4	Map of Incidents of Armed Conflict in Myanmar (2011–13)	60
2.5	Map of Myanmar's Border and Coastal Trade Zones	61
3.1	Map Showing Location of Three Islands under Dispute	74
3.2	Map Showing Grey Areas between Myanmar, Bangladesh	
	and India	77
3.3	Map Showing Myanmar's Claimed Territorial Waters	78
12.1	Drawing 1: Peaceful Rakhine State in the Distant Past	291
	Rohingya Song 1	292
12.3	Rohingya Song 2	294
	Drawing 2: Life in Rakhine State	296
12.5	Drawing 3: Life in Bangladesh — At the Nayapara Refugee	
	Camp	298
14.1	Part of the Mae Hong Son-Kayah (Karenni) Borderland where	
	We Carried Out our Research	327
14.2	Map Showing Estimated Areas of Kayah State Most Likely	
	Affected by Landmines	338
14.3	Playing Football at a Border Refugee Camp Near Ban Nai Soi	345
16.1	Map of Dehong Prefecture	370
16.2	Map of Məŋ Mau Basin	371
16.3	Migration of 38 Monks and 78 Novices in Ruili from 2004–09	376
16.4	Migration of Ven. V, Abbot of TS Temple	377
16.5	Migration of Ven. S, Abbot of HS Temple	378
16.6	Migration of Mr. T, Holu of TL Village	381

Acknowledgements

This book is the product of a conference on Myanmar's borders that took place in November 2013. It was organized and funded by the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore with administrative and financial support from Kyoto University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies "Southeast Asian Studies for Sustainable Humanosphere" Research Program, JSPS Asian Core Program "Asian Connections".

The conference, and hence this book, would not have been possible without the assistance of a number of people. Ambassador Tan Chin Tiong, Director of ISEAS, provided institutional support and Ooi Kee Beng helped in the development of the project. My heartfelt thanks go to them for supporting this project.

It was a pleasure to collaborate with Professor Yoko Hayami at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University who brought invaluable ideas and insights for which I am grateful.

Special thanks go to the various people who contributed to the conference as participants, discussants and moderators, in particular: Terence Chong, Kersten Duell, Lee Hock Guan, Kevin McGahan, Muhammad Arafat Mohamad, Rizwana Abdul Azeez, Song Jiyoung, Moe Thuzar, Bridget Welsh and Wu Keping.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Itty Abraham, Nicolas Lainez, Vatthana Pholsena, Robert Taylor, Moe Thuzar and Tin Maung Maung Than for their excellent and constructive suggestions during the development of the conference and the book. They gave generously of their time and counsel.

My gratitude goes to Betty Tan, Loh Joo Yong and Ramlee Othman for providing superb logistical support for the conference, and Li Ling Ling and Chin Mui Lan for their administrative help. I would also like to extend my thanks to Chiaki Abe and her administrative team at Kyoto University.

Veena Nair provided excellent editing and support for which I am truly grateful.

I would also like to thank the staff at the ISEAS Publishing under the leadership of Ng Kok Kiong for their professional and meticulous work. Special thanks go to the contributors of this volume, who participated unreservedly and enthusiastically and who generously gave their time and support throughout the various rounds of revision and editing.

Finally, it is with sadness that I write that one of the authors, Bianca Son, passed away in 2014. She had just been awarded her PhD from SOAS and was looking forward to a fine academic career. Her chapter was co-written with a colleague, N. William Singh, who took on the responsibility of completing the revisions.

Su-Ann Oh

Notes on Language, Terminology and Geographical Names

In this volume, "Burma" is used to refer to the country under British colonial rule up until 1989; "Myanmar" is used when referring to the country from 1989 onwards.

"Burmese" is used as an adjective, for example when referring to language and nationality. With regard to the names of ethnic groups, both former and current terms are used and presented as "Burman/Bamar", "Karen/Kayin" and so on.

Authors who have deviated from these conventions have made their preferences known in the endnotes of their individual chapters.

Contributors

Maxime Boutry obtained a PhD in Social Anthropology and Ethnology at the School for Higher Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS, Paris) in 2007, dealing with the appropriation of the marine environment by Burmese fishermen in the Tenasserim Region (southern Myanmar). His research questions the processing of Burmese identity through inter-ethnic relationships, and notably the interactions between Burmese fishermen and Moken (a few thousand sea gypsies inhabiting southern Myanmar and southern Thailand). Taking frontiers as "laboratories" where Burmese societies' adaptations to political, social, economical and cultural changes are shaped, he seeks to detect, through different scales of time and space, forms of continuity in the changes affecting Myanmar. In the meantime, his work fits with an applied anthropology on subjects such as Burmese immigration and human trafficking, as well as a reflection on humanitarian aid since cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar in 2008.

Anders Bjornberg is a doctoral student in Sociology at Binghamton University where his research interests include border studies, state formation, national sovereignty, and the sociology of colonialism. He is currently based in Dhaka, Bangladesh undertaking fieldwork for his dissertation on the sociopolitical dimensions of immigration between Myanmar and Bangladesh under grants from the Fulbright Program and the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies. He came to his current research interests through work experience in refugee resettlement in Chicago, USA where he helped recently arrived refugees and asylees secure social and economic stability.

Chin Wei Jun is a graduate researcher and teaching assistant in the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. Her current research concerns issues of "homeland" in relation to Karenni refugees.

Karin Dean is a senior researcher at the School of Humanities, Tallinn University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses and supervises Masters and Doctoral students. She is theoretically interested

CONTRIBUTORS

in conceptualizing borders, territorialities, cross-border networks and power relations, and empirically in the political geography of the Kachin in northern Myanmar and beyond, where she has conducted ethnographic research since 2000. She worked as an independent researcher/reporter based in Thailand from 1999 to 2007, and completed a PhD in Geography at the National University of Singapore in 2003.

Nicholas Farrelly is a Fellow in the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific at the Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, where he is also Director of the ANU Myanmar Research Centre. For the past 15 years, Nicholas has focussed on the study of ethnic minority issues in Myanmar's borderlands. After graduating from the ANU with First Class Honours and the University Medal, he completed Masters and Doctoral theses at Balliol College, University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. In 2006 he co-founded New Mandala, an academic website on Southeast Asian affairs. Based at the ANU, it provides daily analysis of social, cultural and political issues with particular attention to Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar. From 2013 to 2016, Nicholas held an Australian Research Council fellowship for a study of Myanmar's political cultures "in transition".

Kazi Fahmida Farzana is a Senior Lecturer in the College of Law, Government and International Studies at University Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia. Her research focuses on refugee studies and forced migration, contemporary political theories particularly citizenship and multiculturalism, politics and humanitarian issues in Myanmar and South Asia. Her works have appeared in journals such as *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, and *Asian Geographic*.

Carl Grundy-Warr teaches Geopolitics in the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. He has edited several books and written numerous papers on border issues and forced displacement.

Alexander Horstmann is an Associate Professor of Modern Southeast Asian Studies at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen and relates area studies to Multicultural Studies, Religion and Minority Studies. Topics that he explores are everyday multiculturalism, religious diversity, violence, humanitarianism, and diaspora/exile. His latest book, *Building Noah's Ark: Refugee, Migrants and Religious Communities* (2015) is concerned with the use of religion by refugee-migrants as a material and spiritual resource. Fieldwork for this project on humanitarian cultures was done in conjunction with the project cluster "Streams of Knowledge along the Thai-Burmese Border Zone: Multiple Dimensions of People, Capital and Culture", coordinated by Decha Tangseefa (Bangkok). A research grant by the Thailand Research Fund for this project is gratefully acknowledged. Further contributions on this topic appeared in *Journal of Refugee Studies, Moussons (Social Sciences Research on Southeast Asia), Journal of Borderlands Studies, Austrian Journal of Southeast Studies (ASEAS).*

Amporn Jirattikorn is a Lecturer at the Department of Social Sciences and Development at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. She received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Texas, Austin in 2008. Amporn's research interests are in the areas of media flows and mobility of people across national boundaries, focusing particularly on the movement of Shan migrants from Myanmar into Thailand. Amporn's recent publications have centred on the construction of migrant identities through media consumption, ethnic media production in Myanmar, and the formation of Shan nationalist consciousness.

Takahiro Kojima is an Associate Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the Department of International and Cultural Studies, Tsuda College. His first experience living in Myanmar was from 1999 to 2003. He went as a Japanese language teacher, and then studied Burmese at Yangon University of Foreign Languages for two years. During this period, he became a Theravada Buddhist monk twice. This experience led him to start academic research as a PhD student at Kyoto University in 2003. Initially he researched Buddhism and state in contemporary Myanmar, until 2005. After that he carried out fieldwork in a village of Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan, China, located on the China-Myanmar border, concerning religion and society among the Tai people from 2006 to 2007. He was awarded his doctorate from Kyoto University in 2010.

Cunzhao Ma is a local scholar in Zhihua village in Fengyi township in Dali city, western Yunnan Province, China. His specialty is local history studies, especially the history of the Hui and local caravans in western Yunnan. He has conducted long-term research on the oral history of muleteers since 2002, and has three books about caravans and local history published recently by Yunnan University Press and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jianxiong Ma is an Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Division of Humanities at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. His books include *The Lahu Minority in Southwest China: A Response to Ethnic Marginalization on the Frontier* and *Reinventing Ancestor: Ethnic Mobilization in China's Southwest Frontier and the Historical Construction of Lahu (in Chinese)*. His present research focuses on the historical formation of the Sino-Burma frontier and ecological conditions of cultural diversity and ethnicity in southwest China, especially in Yunnan Province.

Alexandra de Mersan is an Associate Professor at the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations (INALCO) school in Paris. She did her PhD in Anthropology on Arakanese society of Myanmar in 2005. Since then, she has been conducting research mostly on Buddhism and spirit cults, Buddhist statuary, mobility and migration, Arakan and the building of the nation.

Maung Aung Myoe received his PhD in Political Science and International Relations from Australian National University. He was a visiting fellow at the Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) and a post-doctoral fellow at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. Since 2010, he has been working at the International University of Japan. He teaches Foreign Policy Analysis and Southeast Asian International Relations. His research interests cover civil-military relations, foreign policy analysis, and politics and foreign relations in Myanmar. His recent publications include *Building the Tatmadaw: Myanmar Armed Forces since 1948* and *In the Name of Pauk-Phaw: Myanmar's China Policy since 1948*; both were published by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in 2008 and 2011 respectively.

Su-Ann Oh is a Visiting Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute who graduated from the London School of Economics and completed her doctorate at the University of Oxford. Her research focuses on forced migration, education, identity, Myanmar and the Thai-Burmese borderlands. She is currently writing a book on education in the refugee camps in Thailand. She is also on the board of directors of Room to Grow Foundation which provides basic necessities to unparented children on the Thai-Burmese border (http://roomtogrowfoundation.org/).

N. William Singh teaches Sociology at Pachhunga University College (Mizoram University), Aizawl, India. He did his research at Jawaharlal

Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi and Freie Universität, Berlin. He was a Junior Research Fellow, University Grants Commission (UGC) and a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Fellow. His PhD thesis submitted to JNU was entitled "Nature and Dynamics of Civil Society: Young Mizo Association of Mizoram". He has published his research works in reputable journals and as chapters in edited volumes of Routledge Press. He has presented papers in several International Conferences — South Korea, Vienna, Berlin, Hong Kong, New Delhi and also at national seminars in India. He has organized a conference on social dynamics and interfaces between tradition and modernity in Aizawl. His forthcoming book, *Becoming Something Else: Society and Change in India's Northeast*, will be released by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, United Kingdom (UK). At present, he is editing his PhD thesis for publication and writing a biography on Laldenga entitled "The Art of Dissent and Peacemaking: Laldenga of Mizoram".

Bianca Son Suantak completed her PhD in the Department of History, University of London's School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 2013. Her dissertation is entitled "The Making of the Zo: The Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki of Burma and India". During her studies, Bianca taught Research Methods for Historians as well as writing workshops. She also organized and convened three international academic conferences held in Thailand, SOAS and Vienna in 2009, 2011, and 2013 respectively. She contributed articles regularly to Chin and Zo organizations in Myanmar and in India.

Decha Tangseefa is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, Bangkok. His research interests are political theory, cultural studies, and critical international studies, especially relating to migration and the border. He has contributed to major anthologies and journals in Thai and English. Apart from teaching at Thammasat University, he has also been working with civil society on the Thai-Burmese borderland. From 2008 to 2011, he taught in a college in a refugee camp on the border. In the past few years, he has been working with the Shoklo Malaria Research Unit, University of Oxford scientists and their global networks helping with social science aspects of malaria mass drug administration. Currently, he is working on two English manuscripts. The first is a co-authored book on the Mae Sot special economic zone. The second, a single-authored book, is entitled *Human, Animal, and Thing: Paradox of Security along the Thai-Burmese Borderland*.

Abbreviations

ABSDF	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League
ALTSEAN	Alternative ASEAN Network
BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party
СВО	Community Based Organizations
CIDKP	Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People
CNF	Chin National Front
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
DKBA	Democratic Karen Benevolent Army
DoF	Department of Fisheries
EC	European Commission
EIP	English Immersion Programme
FBR	Free Burma Rangers
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ITLOS	International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
KBC	Kachin Baptist Convention
KED	Karen Education Department
KHRG	Karen Human Rights Group
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KNG	Kachin News Group
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army
KNLP	Kayan New Land Party
KNPLF	Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front
KNPP	Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU	Karen National Union
KNWO	Karenni National Women's Organization
KRC	Karen Refugee Committee
KSDC	Karenni Social Development Centre
KSWDC	Karenni Social Welfare and Development Centre
LMTC	Leadership and Management College

MAF	Myanmar Armed Forces (<i>Tatmadaw</i>)
MHIP	Mizo Women's Association
MN	Myanmar Navy
MNDAA	Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army
MNF	Mizo National Front
MNFF	Mizo National Famine Front
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOGE	Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MPSI	Myanmar Peace Support Initiative
MZP	Mizo Students' Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAMRA	Peace Accord MNF Returnees Association
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PLA	Patriotic Liberation Army
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SHRF	Shan Human Rights Foundation
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
TBBC	Thailand Burma Border Consortium
TBC	The Border Consortium
UMEHL	Union of Myanmar Economic Holding Limited
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNFC	United Nationalities Federal Council
UNHCR	United Nations Commissioner for Refugees
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WAMY	World Assembly of Muslim Youth
WH	Wide Horizons
YMA	Youth Mizo Association