

RESEARCH NOTES

Ro(d)gers: a Brief Addendum

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In my article concerning Ro(d)gers (Abbott, 2005), I inadvertently omitted a certain amount of information. As I have been contacted by a descendant who tells me that there is also a Rodgers in Australia who can trace his ancestry back to that renegade Englishman, the following additional information will no doubt be welcomed by these two people, and I hope will be of interest to others.

Readers will remember that Ro(d)gers claimed to have arrived in India aboard the HCS *Worcester*, which anchored in the Hooghly in 1782, probably in the August of that year. Bulley (1992) supplies some evidence of his activities between that landfall and his appearance in Amarapura fifteen years later.

Less than four years after arriving in India, Ro(d)gers turns up in Sumatra, where he first appears on 29 June, 1786. John Adolphus Pope, a young mariner at that time, was aboard the *Princess Royal* – a ‘country ship’ plying the shores of Southeast Asia – and noting his experiences in a series of letters. He recorded what happened that day while the ship was anchored at Gingham (modern Bireun, near the northern tip of Sumatra) and he was ashore:

I got on board about Noon and found while I was on shore that a Ketch under Pegu colours had arrived and that she was commanded by a Mr. Rogers, the man that had been our Chief Mate before Mr. J. came. (...) The Captain and he not being on good terms, I suppose he will not trouble us much. I have heard Captain F. say that he was a man of some talents but very unfit to be an officer. I don’t exactly know what he meant by this (Bulley: 69).

Unfortunately Pope does not say how long Rogers had been chief mate of the *Princess Royal*. Almost two years passed, and then the ship docked at Rangoon. Early in May 1788, when young Pope went ashore to deliver some cargo, Rogers reappeared:

I meet every day a number of French. There are near 50 settled here and some English, amongst them our Mr. Rogers. (...) This town seems to be a resort for people labouring under bad characters and for rogues of every description. The whole part of its European inhabitants are people of this description (Ibid: 116-117).

Rogers soon showed one sign of bad character by dragging the eighteen-year-old Pope through the town’s red-light district:

The Quarter appropriated for Courtezans called Jackaley is in the suburb to the west of the town. They are regularly licensed and the Master of so many (for they are slaves of various nations) is answerable for their good behaviour. You know I became acquainted with this by being forced to go through it on an excursion I made the other day with Mr. Rogers. They were in general very handsome ... I was gallantly offered to be introduced which I very ungallantly declined (Ibid: 119).

Pope was delighted, however, when Rogers took him to view the superb Shwe Dagon Pagoda. Thereafter Rogers does not figure in Pope’s letters, and almost a decade passes before the talented but tainted renegade reappears, this time in the Burmese capital, Amarapura. The second of a series of British envoys, the self-important Captain Hiram Cox, arrived there in 1797. Although he makes no mention of Rogers in his official journal, Cox says in his report to Calcutta:

To one man I have particular obligations (...) a Mr Rodgers, who has been eleven or twelve years in the country, and should I effect an establishment here I shall beg leave to recommend him as Burmha Translator and Head Interpreter to the Residency. Such an appointment will be absolutely necessary (Cox, 1812).

It is at this point that I can return the reader to my earlier article, the fifteen-year gap having been at least partly filled in. All that remains to be said is that, given Captain F's description of Ro(d)gers as 'a man of some talents but very unfit to be an officer', there can be no doubt that the Rogers recorded by Pope and the Ro(d)gers described by later figures such as Symes and Gouger are one and the same.

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REVIEWS

Yang Li (Jackie Yang). *The House of Yang, Guardians of an Unknown Frontier*. Sydney: Bookpress. 1997. xvi, 149 pp. Introduction, preface, maps, illustrations, appendices, index. Hardback.

The Mandarin-speaking Chinese peoples of Burma, whether Hui or Han, have been little studied, which is a cause for welcoming this book on the Han state of Kokang, bordering on Yunnan. It is written with passion, and with much intimate inside knowledge, and the maps, photographs and family tree are illuminating. However, the author is no professional historian. Although the book is based on British archives and oral sources, it is very lightly annotated, so that it is often unclear where information comes from. The chronology is jumbled, and the approach is personal, anecdotal and partisan. This is the story of a dynasty, rather than that of a state or people, and the author presents a somewhat questionable view of the benevolence of her family as rulers. Jackie Yang favours British colonialism for its indirect rule, and dislikes Burman nationalism for snuffing out regional autonomy and hereditary dynasties. For all these weaknesses, however, there is much here that can contribute to a better understanding of the fragmented history of northern Burma.

The House of Yang originated when a Ming loyalist, a tea trader by profession, fled westwards from the Qing advance in the mid-seventeenth century. He became a minor warlord in the marches of Yunnan, and kept the turbulent non-Chinese minorities under control. His descendants came to rule over a population that was mainly Han, and their little court was culturally oriented towards China. By the late eighteenth century, the Yang family had extracted recognition from the authorities in Yunnan, while simultaneously paying tribute to the Shan ruler of Hsenwi. After the British had forced China to accept the inclusion of Kokang in Burma in 1897, the House of Yang attempted to shake off the suzerainty of Hsenwi. Under the Pax Britannica, Kokang prospered by replacing tea with opium, gaining an exemption from the 1923 British prohibition on cultivating this crop, and hiring mules to the Indian army. With the arrival of the Japanese in 1942, the House of Yang threw in its lot with the Guomindang authorities in Yunnan, while staving off Chinese plans to annex the principality. This 'loyalty' was rewarded after the war, when Britain at last made Kokang a 'Shan State' in its own right in 1947. However, independent Burma 'betrayed' the spirit of the Panglong Agreement of 1946. After a brief Indian summer, the regime born of the 1962 coup dismantled the Shan States. Armed struggle in Kokang, from 1963 to 1968, was financed by smuggling opium to Thailand, and much of the population left for Thailand and Lashio. The Communist Party gained a precarious ascendancy in Kokang into the 1980s, and when the junta finally agreed to a measure of autonomy in 1990, the House of Yang was no more.

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Monique Skidmore. *Karaoke Fascism: Burma and the Politics of Fear*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2004.

In *Karaoke Fascism: Burma and the Politics of Fear*, Monique Skidmore seeks to understand how Burmese people have survived under authoritarian rule and managed the fear that the military regime engenders. In this, she undertakes an anthropological study of the creation of affect in the politics of everyday life. She argues that the regime's attempts to create a totalitarian military utopia have caused the Burmese people to fragment and silence themselves emotionally, but that they have been successful in exploiting the fissures in this campaign of fear and finding, if only symbolically, means of escape.

Skidmore takes as her premise that fear has become "the central affective element of urban life in contemporary Burma" (x) and the first few chapters are dedicated to understanding the means of production of this fear. She uses Michael Tausig's work on terror as theoretical model for this section, however Skidmore finds traditional anthropological methods inadequate to study affect in contemporary Burma. Given both the potential danger to informants of speaking with a foreigner about politics and the fear that discussing their vulnerabilities produced, Skidmore carefully limited her interviews to situations in which her informants felt safe, which were often restricted to brief reflections whispered in secret. In order to supplement this data, she proposes to read Burmese silences about fear and to intuit Burmese experiences of fear through her own emotional experiences of the same and similar situations. The first four chapters thus give us a picture of urban Burma during the year of her fieldwork—1996—the year of the extraordinary hit-and-run demonstrations and military repression. In this presentation we get an image of the paranoia, self-censorship and feelings of vulnerability the experiences of this year produce in the anthropologist. Through her informants' and her own experiences, she presents a picture of Burmese affect as characterized by a lack of trust, an uncertainty that means one cannot plan for the future and a vulnerability which collectively, she argues, have lead Burmese people to block external expression of emotion and to deny thinking about the fear that she understands to characterize Burmese life.

In chapter four, Skidmore moves from the catalog of the means of production of fear to an argument that the current regime is an aspiring, but yet unrealized fascist state. Working from late 20th century Marxist analysis of Fascism in Europe, she argues that the regime enacts a totalitarian strategy of social control which, relying on terror, seeks to subjugate all aspects of life to the goals of the state, repressing thought, criticism and creativity completely.⁷⁸ While the Burmese state has not realized this type of military utopia, she argues that the concern that it might become reality is forefront in the fear she studies. It remains only incipient fascism because the Burmese people have become adept at exploiting the fissures in the totalitarian project. The concept of karaoke fascism, from which the title is derived, is not simply that of the Burmese state imperfectly reproducing a European political form, but of Burmese people resisting the totalizing aspects of the regime's project by emptying themselves out emotionally while mouthing the words to the military's version of society.

Starting with chapter five, Skidmore leaves the specific description of affect and moves to a broader description of the cultural and symbolic modes of repression. Here Skidmore engages Walter Benjamin's insights into the nature of fascism and capitalist modernity to investigate the urban façade of wealth and consumption that has emerged in the past decade. She points out not simply the ways in which the new construction has been financed through drug trafficking but the hidden costs of this endeavor through her fieldwork with heroin addicts.

In chapter six, Skidmore engages Benjamin's argument that modernity has transformed the citizen into a consumer of empty dreams and spectacles and equally turned the body itself into a commodity for consumption. Skidmore uses this insight to investigate the phenomena of mass rallies and the regime's use the bodies of large groups of the population to demonstrate both their role in the promotion of the people's goals and the populations acceptance of their projects. Yet, as Skidmore argues both for mass rallies and in her studies of prostituted women in the new peri-urban towns, Burmese people find multiple routes of escape. They employ the various cultural and symbolic means at their disposal to send their souls and emotional selves away during the most acute moments of repression, ultimately defeating the totalitarian project. Here Skidmore provides a very detailed description of life in the town she calls New Fields to describe the various means, particularly religious and magical that Burmese people use to exploit the fissures and interstices in the military's project and ensure that its totalitarian ideals are never fully realized. The use of absurdity, magic, astrology, mediation, alchemy and games of chance of-

⁷⁸ In this section, Skidmore relies heavily on an article by Peter Sinclair on the capitalist nature of Fascism. The citation is one of a few from this section that are missing from the bibliography. It is: Peter Sinclair, "Fascism and Crisis in Capitalist Society," *New German Critique* 9 (Autumn 1976) 87-112.

fer a means of imagining alternative realities and possibilities and it is in the description of this Burmese subaltern religious world that the book really shines. Ultimately Skidmore is worried that these strategies may have fragmented Burmese people emotionally beyond possible future integration, but she demonstrates the ways in which they have successfully thwarted the totalizing aspects of the state.

Given the political nature of anthropology of contemporary Burma, emphasis in this book as in other recent studies regrettably falls on the extraordinary as opposed to the ordinary aspects of Burmese life. I found, however, the book was at its most insightful when it was focused on more mundane aspects. An example of this comes in the contrast between the first few lines of chapter one, which present stark and shocking images of a prostituted woman, a heroin addict and an impoverished mother and the thick descriptions of these groups presented in later chapters. The shock-value of the first lines leaves the reader skeptical of the argument they seek to present, whereas, the careful depiction of these groups in the later chapters is highly effective in communicating the everyday and structural violences of the current situation. When the emphasis or tone falls on the more exceptional the book is weaker. The period of Skidmore's fieldwork was an extraordinary moment in the history of the past eighteen years and this may be the reason that the scenes and emotions she describes take on a tone not recognizable to other scholars and residents of urban Burma. Likewise, it is the extraordinary nature of the experience for her that limits the method she proposes. Skidmore's method participates in a history of anthropology that intentionally places the anthropologist in the ethnography, however, in this case, the project doesn't account for the fact that what for her are exceptional experiences of fear and paranoia are realities that Burmese people have lived with for over a decade. In the same vein, I feel that her emphasis on the Burmese state as an incipient fascist state is less useful than the broader insights into the betrayals and totalizing trajectories of capitalist modernity for which the theorists she uses are better known.

The book however offers a wealth of insight when its emphasis is on the ordinary. Skidmore is unique among foreign anthropologists in gaining extended access to groups of the peri-urban poor, especially heroin addicts and prostituted women. Her insights into the nature of prostitution and the ways in which Burmese women survive the structural and mundane violence of poverty and prostitution are valuable contributions for those thinking about the position of women in Burmese society. Likewise her analysis of the use of religion, the occult and gambling contributes to the current work in the post-colonial studies that seeks to understand the ways in which people re-deploy symbols to try to shape their realities outside of hegemonic forces. Most important is her contribution to Burma studies in the engagement of contemporary critical theory, here Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt School of criticism, to understand the cultural and symbolic politics of the current situation. She provides an analysis that moves beyond a simple analysis of state-focused politics and economics to a broader level of cultural critique. It is in these, its best aspects, that we can hope the book represents the future of anthropological scholarship on Burma.

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Emma Larkin. *Secret Histories: Finding George Orwell in a Burmese Teashop*. London: John Murray. 2004.

Emma Larkin's *Secret Histories: Finding George Orwell in a Burmese Teashop* begins with her discovery that Orwell has the reputation in Burma of being a "prophet" due to his three most famous books: *Burmese Days*, *Animal Farm*, and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*. According to Larkin, "It is a particularly uncanny twist of fate that these three novels effectively tell the story of Burma's recent history" (p. 2). Larkin explains that the oppression of the entire population in Burma was "completely hidden from view" by information control carefully yet invisibly planted in every corner of Burma and cemented by the "vast network of Military Intelligence spies and their informers" and the "threat of torture and imprisonment." Larkin admits that the fear that ordinary Burmese face everyday was beyond imagination for an outsider and fits well with the psychological, social, and political landscape of Orwell's novels, which "explore the idea of individuals being trapped within their environment, controlled by their family, the society around them or an all-powerful government" (p. 4). Larkin's fascination with Orwell was further strengthened when she found that Orwell in his final days was trying to write another novel about Burma under the title of "A Smoking Room Story." Generally, Larkin's familiarity with Orwell's writings is impressive, bringing into the discussion other writings by Orwell including *The Road to Wigan Pier*, *Homage to Catalonia*, *The Clergyman's Daughter*, *Shooting an Elephant*, and *A Hanging*.

Although many researchers of Orwell underestimate the significance of his experience in Burma, Larkin suggests that Orwell's years in Burma provided a strong foundation for the perspectives that fueled his writing. Larkin thus embarked on a trip to Burma to "experience Burma as Orwell knew it" which she believed possible because "almost half a century of military dictatorship has given it the air of a country frozen in time" (p. 4). Larkin discovered, however, a much more bitter reality in contemporary Burma, "a real-life Nineteen Eighty-Four where Orwell's nightmare visions are being played out with a grueling certainty" (p. 4).

Larkin's story is based on her own interviews with students, former prisoners, publishers, intellectuals, refugees, and members of the Anglo-Burmese minority, as well as those who approached her, on their own initiative, with their own accounts. Larkin is fluent in Burmese and this is a real strength of the book, for she is fully able to grasp the reality and essence of life in Burma vividly through stories told by her interviewees. Larkin then weaves each of their stories into Orwell's world in which the life under a totalitarian regime where people (as well as animals) were constantly under Big Brother's surveillance and those who opposed the government faced severe torture. Chapters are divided according to the cities (Mandalay, the Delta region, Rangoon, Moulmein, and Katha) where Orwell spent his life in colonial Burma as one of the officers of the Imperial Police Force in the 1920s. In order to understand Orwell's life in Burma and how his experience influenced his writing, Larkin attempted to find locals who knew Orwell or his family and the houses where he resided or the buildings where he might have visited during his residence. In doing so, a parallel theme emerges in the story of Burma today as told by the people she interviewed.

In Chapter One, Larkin visited the last royal capital of Burma, Mandalay, where Orwell began his colonial career studying at the police training school. Larkin visited the colonial hill station of Maymyo (today, Pyin-Oo-Lwin), northeast of Mandalay, which Orwell had described as a nostalgic place reminding him of his English homeland. In both places, Larkin tells us that remnants of Orwell's Burma still linger. The building that housed the police training school, for example, is still being used to the present. Larkin locates the remains of Orwell's days in the building's haunted room in which a young, lonely British officer committed suicide, in the old colonial hotel built in "impressive mock-Tudor-style" in Maymyo, in the hotel restaurant's menu, and the dusty bar where British officers once drank the day (and night) away. But these are mere glimpses of another time. All that remains, Larkin finds, are derelict buildings, abandoned rooms, and many ghosts. This corresponds to the present condition of her interviewees, especially their dismal living conditions, the government having forgotten to take care of them.

In Chapter Two, Larkin visited the Delta region, a mud land and a mosquito heaven where no British colonial officers had wanted to dwell for very long. It was so miserable that one Burmese author whom Larkin talked with even believes that Orwell's experience in Delta was the catalyst for his transformation into an author ruled by pessimism. While in the Delta region, Orwell was posted at Myaungmya and Twante. From her research at the India Office Records (British Library), Larkin discovered that the time during which Orwell was stationed here was one of the most unsettling times for the British in Burma. Violence and crime, always attributed, correctly or incorrectly, to the "dacoits" was at its peak, making Burma "the most violent corner of the Indian Empire." According to Larkin, Orwell's superiors at both stations were famous "crime-busters" who were also skilled in shooting. Larkin suggests that this harsh colonial reality, witnessed first hand by Orwell, raised his doubts about the beneficial aspects of the imperial system.

Today, Orwell might have been just as wary of government rule in the Delta region. Larkin tells us that Burma's Big Brother is fully at work here, even in remote Myaungmya. Her arrival was reported immediately to the Military Intelligence (MI) and they swiftly appeared to investigate her purpose for visiting this town. Although Burma's Military Intelligence's method is not high-tech, Larkin assures the reader that "it is just as efficient." Larkin continually asked her friends how to distinguish MI agents or their informants from other people and the answers she collected reveal that everyone has their own method for doing so, ranging "from the ludicrous to the arcane." What becomes clear is that the peoples' preoccupation with the ubiquity of this secret network, and the belief that they are watched constantly in their daily lives, runs so deep that they are trapped in a state of paranoia. As one of her Burmese friends remarked, "it doesn't make any difference whether they have informers or not. It is enough that we believed that their informers are everywhere. After that, we start to do their work for them" (p. 63).

In Chapter Three, Larkin focuses on her experiences in Rangoon in the midst of the removal of the FEC (Foreign Exchange Certificate) from the market. Larkin's discussions with a Burmese friend reveals how the information-deprived people in Burma, at the time of special economic or political changes, have learned how to live safely by analyzing every available source of information, especially reading between the lines. Larkin's friend, Ko Ye, for example, explained to her that the Burmese were "experts at looking for what's not there" and they pay attention to what is missing because that absence is the key to tell the truth" (p.132). Ko Ye gave an example of the time of Burma's banking crisis when articles on the banking system suddenly disappeared from the leading economic magazines. That was an indicator that something big must be happening in the banking system. Further, Ko Ye informed Larkin that the Burmese do not miss any small change happening around them in their everyday life, because these slight changes are also great indicators and telltale signs of concealed events. Ko Ye's explanation of how to survive includes some measure of pride, since he discusses such a strategy in terms of a match of wit between the government and the people. Nevertheless, Larkin explains that she felt she was becoming immediately paranoid after adopting this 'Burmese' way of life, suggesting to the reader how mentally demanding it is to survive in a society where one has to watch everything constantly.

Chapter Four focuses on Moulmein, where Orwell's mother grew up and where he served in 1926 as the chief of the police headquarters. Larkin attempts to understand how Orwell's views, as a representative of the colonial empire, on racism began to tremble from time to time as Flory does in Orwell's *Burmese Days*. Larkin was interested in Orwell's ambivalence to racism, as he believed it to be a quintessential element of colonial society, yet was deeply appalled with colonial rhetoric that sustained it. Larkin's research on Orwell's life in Moulmein led her to an interesting fact that Orwell might have had an Anglo-Burmese cousin whom he never mentioned in his writings, which would complicate attempts to interpret Orwell's views on racism. Larkin further analyzed Orwell's ambivalence as revealed in his "love and hate relationship" with Kipling as well as in Orwell's essay, *Shooting an Elephant*. In *Shooting an Elephant*, Larkin explains, "Orwell writes how he was trapped between his own resentment toward the Empire and the Burmese peoples' resentment towards him" (p.177). Larkin continues this examination up to the final chapter: Katha, where Orwell was stationed and which Orwell used as a model for the setting of *Burmese Days*. Larkin concludes that Orwell had become a strong Empire hater by the time he served at Katha as he carried guilt for being a part of "the great despotic machine of empire" (p. 219). It was from this point that that Orwell's essence as a writer was born and it is this 'new' Orwell to whom contemporary Burmese relate. At the same time, Larkin does not let us forget that racism which existed in Orwell's time never disappeared but continued to take new forms, that is, the current regime's discrimination against non-Burman ethnic minorities.

Burma Studies, always representing a strange milieu of views, tends to move back and forth between engagement and disengagement with political activism and issues. Academics appear much more silent today on the negative aspects of the regime and the Burmese situation than several years ago, while expressions of sympathy or apology for the regime and its policies seem to be increasing. Critics, perhaps a silent majority, might be more cautious today because of disagreement on how to resolve Burma's current situation, admission of the futility of evoking change, fear of jeopardizing the safety of friends in Burma, or various professional risks. Whatever the reasons, this reviewer finds Larkin's attempts to remind us of the precarious life of Burma's population courageous.

One cannot help but feel sympathy for the Burmese in the face of the book's many stories of hardship and desperation. These stories may not contribute new information about the general living conditions of the Burmese population. Reports and other information made available by Amnesty International and the WHO, as well as numerous other international organizations (not to mention the Western press) have made this situation abundantly, even numbingly clear. Judging the book on these terms would be a superficial reading. The real value of this book does not lie in providing familiar stories but in putting them into a new context. Seemingly endless accounts of hardship told by the people whom Larkin interviewed help the reader to understand how the essence of Animal

Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four was so evident in Burma, not just in Orwell's time, but also in the present. As Larkin argues, this is the reason why the Burmese consider Orwell as a prophet of the emergence of Burma as it is today and as their storyteller and this is why stories of peoples' lives in contemporary Burma dwell on Orwell's writings and overlap with Orwell's protagonists. This is a fine book, recommended for both the general readership and academics interested in a people whose daily lives leave much to be desired.

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Russ Christensen & Sann Kyaw. 2006. *The Pa-O: Rebels and Refugees*. Chiangmai: Silkworm Books. ISBN: 978-974-9575-93-2. US\$ 22.50.

Given the paucity of published material on the ethnic group who are labelled Taungthu by the Burmans but call themselves Pa-O, this book is to be warmly welcomed. In fact it is, barring theses or dissertations, the first book on the Pa-O to be published in English. The Pa-O, a name cognate with Pwo, are generally considered to be a sub-group of the Karen. Although this book is a little slender (81 pages excluding notes and bibliography) it contains a great deal of information about the Pa-O, most of it right up-to-date and much of it gathered first-hand along the Thai-Burma border. The fieldwork was carried out over a four-year period by Christensen, a former US officer plainly committed to the Pa-O cause, with the invaluable help of Sann Kyaw, himself an ethnic Pa-O who has served with the Pa-O National Organisation as a signals officer.

The book begins with a glance at the tale of Weikja and Naga, the legendary ancestors of the Pa-O, a couple who emerge from two eggs. This story is very reminiscent of the folk-tale 'Master Born-of Egg' (see Gerry Abbott & Khin Thant Han, 2000: 198), a fact which may indicate a close kinship with the Mon. The book then moves on to a brief survey of references to the Pa-O in Burma's history, by the end of which we have reached page 14. The rest of the book deals with events from 1947 onwards, including the Pa-O rebellion. Here we come across the all-too-familiar fracturing into rival groupings: on page 29 alone, for instance, we see SSNLO, CPB, SSNLF, SURA, KMT and KNPP.

But the focus remains on the Pa-O, and sharpens in the succeeding chapters. We are taken through the tribulations and sufferings of one community, mainly at the hands of the Burmese army but also because of Thai government policy, as it is forced to relocate ten times in eighteen years. As a result of such hostility and upheaval, the Pa-O identity on the Thai side of the border is being eroded, while the communities still on Burmese soil are being hounded by the so-called People's Army.

The focus finally falls upon some individual survivors, who tell of their experiences in a chapter headed 'Six Pa-O voices.' Here are a few extracts:

My aunt said because I am Pa-O I should learn Pa-O...(12-year-old girl)

In 1996 my sister and three children died. My mother stayed with my brother. He was conscripted as a porter, got malaria, and in 1997 he died. In January 1998 my father died ... (23-year-old man)

We had no food. We cut down young banana trees and ate the hearts. (...) We had no meat for a month until I shot a large monkey. (30-year-old former soldier.)

My children, a daughter and two sons, were killed by government soldiers while they worked in the fields... (80-year-old Karen refugee)

I had twelve sons; nine have died. One was a Red Pa-O soldier and was killed in southern Shan State. I don't know whom they were fighting. (90-year-old woman)

The book ends with chapter-by-chapter notes, a useful bibliography and an index.

I felt that there was an occasional slight discontinuity, which may have resulted from welding together various articles on the Pa-O. Having outlined the origin-legend on page 1, for instance, the authors provide seven pages of historical information before telling us that "The legend focuses upon the Pa-O's migration" (p. 8). The gap led me to wonder whether this was indeed a reference to the Weikja/Naga tale or to some other legend. But this is a trivial matter. The authors and Silkworm Press are to be congratulated for updating our knowledge of a little-studied ethnic minority group and for highlighting yet again the inhumanity of the Burmese junta.

Reference

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