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Myanmar's Muslim Mosaic and the Politics of Belonging

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Chapter 2: Myanmar's Muslim Mosaic and the Politics of Belonging

Melissa Crouch

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the study of Islam and Muslim communities in Myanmar.[1] I use the 2014 census as a lens through which to open up the politics of belonging in Myanmar. I then provide an overview of what I call Myanmar's 'Muslim mosaic', that is, its diverse Muslim communities. I suggest that we need to move away from rigid ethnic-based assumptions of Muslims in Myanmar and reframe our understanding along a continuum of relations with the state in terms of those who identify first or equally as 'Burmese' at one end, and those who identify primarily as 'Muslim' at the other.

[1] This research builds on my previous experience since 2007 working with various non-government organisations that supported the settlement of the Burmese refugee community in Southeast Melbourne. It is informed by field trips to the refugee camps on the border of Thailand and Myanmar, where approximately 10 percent of the refugee population are Burmese Muslim (TBBC 2010). It is also based on field research and interviews with a range of Muslim religious leaders, community leaders, lawyers and youth in Shan State, Mandalay, Naypyidaw and Yangon, Myanmar; and also in Singapore. In order to ensure anonymity, some names mentioned in this chapter have been changed. I am grateful to Nick Farrelly and Kerstin Steiner for their comments on an earlier version of this chapter, and for the opportunity to present this paper at the Australian National University in April 2015. All errors in this chapter are my own.

I then identify important areas for research, while acknowledging both the contribution and the limits of the existing literature. The chapter is structured around four key themes: the history of the Muslim community; Muslim political engagement; Muslims in times of crisis; and the practise of Islam. My argument in this chapter is that, in order to reconceptualise our understanding of the politics of belonging, and expand our understanding of Muslims and the state in Myanmar, we need to make two movements. First, we need to move away from characterising Islam in Myanmar as violent, hostile and strange. To place Islam on an equal footing with other religions in Myanmar will inevitably require displacing Buddhism from its privileged position as a supposedly 'non-violent' religion.[2] Second, the study of Islam in Myanmar needs to be acknowledged and welcomed into wider academic discussions on Islam and the state. That is, rather than studying Muslims in Myanmar as an isolated anomaly, in this era of transnational Islam we need to reposition the study of Muslims in Myanmar as an important 'Islamic crossroads' between Central, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

The Politics of Belonging

There is no data available on the numbers of Muslims in Myanmar today. It is estimated that between four to ten percent are Muslim, and that the Muslims of Myanmar are a diverse group both ethnically and geographically. Even if the conservative government estimate of four per cent of the population is correct, this means that Myanmar has a higher percentage of Muslims in comparison to both Thailand and the Philippines (Selth 2004), two other minority

[2] The literature by Jerryson and Juergensmeyer (2010), Jerryson (2011) and Elverskorg (2013), emphasise the reality of and capacity for violence in Buddhism, although this approach has not yet informed inquiry in the context of Myanmar.

Muslim contexts in the region. Yet in comparison to scholarship on the Muslim communities of Thailand[3] and the Philippines,[4] we have only a fraction of the research available on Muslims in Myanmar.

In March 2014, a national census was held in Myanmar in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund. Provisional results did not reveal religious affiliation, but the population was found to be 50 million (far short of previous government figure of 60 million). An estimated 1.2 million (including many in Rakhine State) were not included in the 2014 census (Republic of the Union of Myanmar 2014). The census provides one lens through which to understand the politics of belonging for Muslims in Myanmar, particularly because of its connection to the project of nation-building and nationalism in this time of political transition.

In the led up to the census, the international commentary primarily focused on the categories the state would use to identify a person's religion and ethnicity, and specifically whether the government would allow a person to identify themselves as 'Rohingya'. But there was little coverage of Muslim responses to the census. This is despite the fact that, in the lead up to the census, there was fierce discussion and debate *within* Muslim communities about what categories they wanted to use to define their religious and ethnic status in the census. Representatives of the Muslim community were summoned to Naypyidaw for 'consultations' with government officials in regards to the census. Yet in these meetings they

[3] On Muslims of Thailand, see for example Leyland 2009; Funston 2010; McCargo 2012; Jerryson 2011; Liow 2009; Brown 2013.

[4] On the Muslims of the Philippines, the only major anthropological work is Kiefer 1972; on the politics of daily resistance see McKenna 1978; and on Islamic law in the Philippines see Hooker 1984: 231-245; Stephens 2011; Chiarella 2012.

were often told how the census would work and what categories would be used, rather than invited to give their opinion on what categories would be most appropriate.[5]

Prior to the census, the debates within Muslim communities varied. Many in the Burmese Muslim community were confused: they did not want to list their ethnicity as 'Burman', even if they were part Burman, because they felt that the ethnic category 'Burman' may be conflated by the government with 'Buddhists'. That is, to be Burman in Myanmar is to be Buddhist. Many who identify themselves as 'Burmese Muslims' felt that this may allow the numbers of Buddhists in the country to be over-estimated. On the other hand, as Muslims who take pride in their 'Burmeseness' – from the use of Burmese language, to Burmese clothing and culture, and ancestry- they wanted recognition that they belong to Myanmar too. As a compromise, some leaders from the Burmese Muslim community were advocating for the use of the term '*Pathi'* Muslim. This is a term that was used during the period of the kings. There have been attempts to revive the term in the past, such as in the 1960s, in order to carve out specific recognition for this group (Yegar 1972: 7, 80; 2002: 20). The term *Pathi* is today used in a broad sense to encompass Muslims of many different ethnic backgrounds in Myanmar, but particularly those with part-Burman ancestry (or ancestry of another recognised race in Myanmar).

From another perspective, some religious leaders from the Indian Muslim community issued a fatwa (Islamic legal opinion) to their community members to instruct and guide them on how to list their identity in the census. Part of their emphasis was simply that Muslims should not be afraid or hesitant to list their religious identity on the census. Some Indian Muslim leaders informed their followers that it was *haram* (forbidden) for a Muslim to fail to list their true religion on the census. Different debates again were held within the minority

[5] Interview with Muslim community leaders, Yangon, 13 November 2013.

Shiite community, with some Islamic religious leaders from Yangon advising that all Shiites should list themselves as 'Mogul Shia' on the census, although some Muslim Shiite leaders from Mandalay disagreed. Like the Burmese Muslim resurrection of the term '*Pathi'*, the use of 'Mogul Shia' was also an attempt to revert back to past categories – in this case the reference to Muslims who had migrated from the Mogul empire – in order to recreate and redefine their future as a community in Myanmar. There were also some Muslim organisations, such as the Kaman National Development Party, that announced they would conduct an independent census of their community (in this case, Kaman Muslims) to ensure they were not undercounted by the Burmese government and to combat any concerns that so-called 'Bengalis' had obtained Burmese identity cards with Kaman ethnic nationality by bribing officials (Narinjara 2013). This short insight into broader debates surrounding the 2014 census points to the more complex debates at the heart of how the state identifies and limits the public identity of Muslims, and the importance of equally considering how Muslims want to be identified by the state.

Myanmar's Muslim Mosaic

The anti-Muslim violence since 2012 has both exposed the limits of our understanding of Muslims from Myanmar, and the politics inherent in the categories used to define them. While Muslims in Myanmar have generally been categorised along ethnic lines (see for example Selth 2003; 2004), I argue that we can also consider Muslims in terms of their degree of affiliation or the manner in which they engage with the state.

Accommodating the State

On one end of the spectrum there are those who identify first as 'Burmese', and it is a sense of 'Burmeseness' – in terms of their language, dress and customs - that pervades and shapes their practise of Islam and their relations with the state. This includes the Zerbadi/Zerbadee[6], that is, those who are of mixed descent, whose grandparents were usually of an Arab, Persian or Indian father and Burman mother. They may also refer to themselves as simply 'Burmese Muslims' or 'Pathi' (explained above). The term 'Zerbadi'[7] was used during the colonial era and appears in court documents and census data. For example, in 1911 there were 59,729 'Zerbadis' recorded, and by 1931, this number rose to 122,705 (Mahajani 1960**:** 29), although the categories that the British used for Muslims in the various census it conducted were inconsistent. Even in the 1930s, however, the Burmese Muslims had lobbied the government not to use the term 'Zerbadi' but instead to use the term 'Burmese Muslim' in the census, because Zerbadi had negative connotations, and is widely perceived to be a derogatory term (Yegar 1972: 64). They felt that the term 'Burmese Muslim' also allowed them to identify with, and emphasise their connection to, the country of Burma and the movement for independence (Mahajani 1960: 23). At times, Burmese Muslims have been referred to by the demeaning term '*kala*'.[8] This term has even been used by some political leaders, such as

[6] Burmese Muslims generally dislike this term because it is derogatory and has negative connotations. In 1891, a population census taken by the British used the term 'Zerbadee' for Burmese Muslims. In 1941, the use of the term 'Zerbadee' was replaced with the term 'Burmese Muslim': Myo Win 2011.

[7] For the most comprehensive discussion of the possible origins of the term Zerbadi, see Yegar 1972: 33-34. Thant Myint U (2007: 51) claims that the word Zerbadi is derived from Persian word 'zir-bad', meaning 'below the winds', a reference to Southeast Asia.

[8] Yegar (1972: 6-7) provides the most useful review of the term *kala*/*kula*. Many others have also tried to define its precise origins, yet it may have come from multiple sources, such as the Sanskrit word *kula* (caste man), the term *kala* (black man) or the Burmese words *Ka La* (coming from overseas): Chakravarti 1971: 11.

General Ne Win during the socialist era,[9] and more recently by some local media when referring to the Rakhine conflict of 2012-2013.

In terms of status and occupation, many Burmese Muslims were well-known as public intellectuals, prominent members of government, civil servants, and businesspersons (Chakravarti 1971: 125). Yet most of our knowledge of Burmese Muslims only reaches up until the 1960s, before the full effects of Ne Win's socialist regime, and the post-1988 rule of the military junta. In contrast to the pre-1962 era, over the last few decades very few Muslims have entered the civil service, and those that have managed to get in have often remained in low positions, due to the difficulties of obtaining a promotion. While there are some wealthy Muslim businessmen in Myanmar today, it is perhaps more common now for Muslims to work as small-scale traders in private business, although there are still a handful of prominent businessmen who own construction companies, hotels and other businesses.

In terms of their customs, Burmese Muslims are notable for their insistence and emphasis on Burmese culture, at times over Islamic traditions and teachings, and this has been a cause of tension with other Muslim communities (Yegar 1972: 57-67). Since independence, some Muslims have worked hard to create a 'Burmese Muslim' identity by, for example, supporting Muslim women wearing traditional Burmese dress and leaving their head uncovered. These efforts are reflected in signs in some community buildings that specifically emphasise their 'Burmeseness'. For example, the Islamic Centre of Myanmar, an organisation known for its comparatively tolerant outlook, has a centre in downtown Yangon where a sign visible inside the entrance to the main room states that one of the key aims of the centre is to educate the Muslim community about the teachings of Islam in a way that is

[9] Noted by Huxley, 1990: 250, quoting Address to the Central Committee of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) Forward, 8-10-1982.

consistent with Burmese culture. It adds that this is to be done 'without gender discrimination', which is presumably a reference to the fact that the Burmese Muslim community insists that its women can and should wear Burmese clothing. This is considered to be contrary to what is permissible for Muslim women to wear according to traditional Islamic teachings.

The most prominent supporter of the 'Burmese Muslim' identity is the Islamic Religious Affairs Council (IRAC). The IRAC began in 1954, founded by U Khin Maung Latt, a politician and religious leader. It has 'consultative status' with the Ministry of Religious Affairs,[10] alongside four other national Islamic organisations.

Of all Muslims in Myanmar it is Burmese Muslims who generally have the closest affiliation with the state actors and institutions, and local culture, and identify themselves as 'Burmese' (although not necessarily ethnically 'Burman'). Aside from Burmese Muslims, there are Muslims who identify ethnically as one (or often more than one) national race of Myanmar and therefore as part of the Myanmar state. The Kaman Muslims are one group recognised by the government,[11] and most speak Arakanese. The history of the Kaman has been traced to the period of the Burmese kings when the Kaman served as archers (Yegar 2002: 24). One Kaman Muslim who attained a prominent position in the independence period was U Si Bu, a judge who, among other cases, sat on the trial of the assassination of General

[10] The Ministry of Religious Affairs in Myanmar was formed in 1989 (Matthews 1995). It is a poorly funded ministry in contrast to other departments (and in contrast to the Ministry of Religion in Indonesia, which is one of the most well-funded departments). Further, unlike in Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Myanmar only represents Buddhism and does not have a separate representative for Muslims, although it provides a nominal amount of funding to five Islamic organisations.

[11] There are several other ethnic groups that are Muslim, such as the Myedu, who claim that that they used to be recognised on the government list of ethnic groups, but have since been taken off the list.

Aung San. There is no scholarship on the Kaman to date, although the Kaman have risen to public consciousness due to the fact that the serious violence in Rakhine State in 2012 and 2013 also affected the Kaman community there.

Challenging the State

At the other end of the spectrum of Islam-state relations are Muslims who identify either with an ethnic group other than a recognised race of Myanmar, or who would perceive their identity as 'Muslims' of greater importance than, or at least equal to, their ethnic identity (as non-Burmese). The primary example here is the Indian Muslim community. The Indian Muslim communities in Myanmar today are much smaller than they were at the height of the colonial period. Between 1963 and 1967 alone, an estimated 300,000 Indians (most Muslim) were forced to flee Burma (Yegar 2002: 52), with little but the clothes on their back and a nominal amount of cash. Often Indians in Burma have been studied as a 'problem' and as a people group 'foreign' to Burma (for example, Khin Maung Kyi 1993; 2006). The status of Indian Muslims, particularly in terms of their role in the colonial economy, has been frequently discussed, although usually in the context of Indians generally and not Muslims specifically (Adas 1974; Chakravarti 1971; Taylor, 1993; Tin Maung Maung Than 1993; Mya Than 1993; Mahajani 1960; Egreteau 2011). There is a need to go beyond the negative stereotype of Indians and to consider the contemporary dynamics of the Indian Muslim community. The chapter by Phyu Phyu Oo (this volume) begins to take scholarly inquiry in new directions as she considers the position of Indian Muslim women and attitudes towards education for women.

A second group whose identity is perceived as a challenge by the state are the Rohingya,[12] who are referred to by some non-Muslims in Myanmar as 'Bengalis'. While the Rohingya insist that they should be recognised as a national race of Myanmar, the government has consistently failed to include them in its infamous list of 135 national races. The human rights situation for the Rohingya, who primarily live in northern Rakhine State where they form a majority in at least two townships near the border of Bangladesh, has occupied a particular concern of both scholars and advocacy groups over the past few decades (see for example Yegar 2002; Islam 2007; Selth 2003). The history of Muslims who today identify themselves as Rohingya in what is now known as Rakhine State dates back to the 9th century, and there are records from at least the 13th century onwards demonstrating their presence in the region (Yegar 1972: 1-17; 2002: 19-20). The situation of the Rohingya has raised acute concerns of statelessness, humanitarian aid, irregular migration and citizenship (discussed further below).

Muslims in Myanmar may also identify with a range of other ethnic groups and fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum of Islam-state relations. There are a small number of Panthay[13] or Chinese Muslims, who mainly live in north east Burma (Yegar 1966), although many moved to resource rich areas, major towns and centres of trade, including across parts of Shan State, Mandalay, Yangon, Moulmein, Myitkyina, among other areas (Forbes 1986). Some Muslims from Myanmar have also settled in China (see Egreteau 2012).

[12] For research on the Rohingya, see Yegar 2002: 19-72; Yegar 1972: 95-105; Selth 2004: 111-114; Fealy & Hooker 2006: 269-271. I acknowledge that the term Rohingya is contested, and that many in northern Rakhine State may not necessarily identify themselves as such. Yet in the absence of an alternative, and in recognition of the fact that many do identify themselves as Rohingya, I continue to use the term here.

[13] While the origins of the term 'Panthay' are unclear, Forbes (1986) suggests that the term 'Panthay' was derived from the term '*pathi'* (Muslim) and that its use emerged in the late 1800s.

Sometimes religious identity is defined geographically. For example, some Muslims living in Shan State may also be referred to, or refer to themselves, as 'Shan Muslims', for example, in 2013 it was reported that 'Shan Muslims' were also targeted when violence broke out in parts of Shan State.

In addition to Burmese Muslims, the Rohingya, the Kaman, the Panthay and Indian Muslims, there are a small number of the Pashu or Malay Muslims.[14] While I have inevitably charted the various communities along ethnic lines, these should not be considered mutually exclusive and it is true to say that most Muslims in Myanmar identify with more than one ethnic group. Many Muslims in Myanmar today have multiple backgrounds, and this is further complicated by the artificial identities assigned to them on their national identity card. For example, Muslims may have up to four categories listed on their national identity card such as 'Burmese-Muslim-Shan' (indicating that one parent was Burmese Muslim and the other was Shan), or 'Indian-Muslim' or 'Burmese-Mon-Muslim'.

I have reconceptualised the identity of Muslims of Myanmar as existing along a spectrum that at one end strives to accommodate the state through a 'Burmese Muslim' identity, and at the other end are Muslims who retain their (non-Burman) ethnic identity and are therefore perceived as a challenge to the image of the Burman-Buddhist state. From the individual identities of Muslims, I now turn to offer a new perspective on Islam-state relations in Myanmar.

Reconsidering Islam and the State in Myanmar

Before we can begin to take scholarship further, it is important to consider how the Muslims of Myanmar have been studied and represented in academic scholarship. In this section I

[14] See Fealy & Hooker 2006: 25; Selth 2004: 108.

draw together insights from the existing literature to map out current scholarly knowledge on the Muslims of Myanmar. It needs to be kept in mind that empirical research on Islam and the Muslim communities in Myanmar is thin and has suffered the same fate as Burma/Myanmar Studies generally due to the challenges raised by an extended period of military rule for both local and foreign researchers (Crouch 2014). I chart several areas: the history of Islam in Myanmar; Muslim engagement in national politics; Muslims in times of crisis; and the practise of Islam among Muslim communities. In doing so, I demonstrate the gaps that need to be filled, the biases that need to be addressed, and therefore a future agenda for the study of the Muslims of Myanmar.

The History of Islam in Myanmar

Historical accounts of Islam in Myanmar can be divided into three major phrases: Muslims during the time of the Burmese kings (pre-1885); Muslims under colonial rule in Burma (1885-1947); and Muslims during the period of parliament democracy (1948-1962). In terms of the first time frame, Muslims played an important role during the era of the Burmese kings, yet we only catch glimpses of this in scholarly literature. Yegar provides an important analysis and detailed description of the arrival and establishment of Muslim communities in Burma (1972). His work is perhaps the most extensive analysis to date that recognises the role and contribution of Muslims during the period of the Burmese Kings, including in the army (Yegar 2002: 19-20). Some scholars have referred in passing to Muslim traders and Muslim soldiers under the kings (see for example Liebermann 1984: 26, 29, 226). Other scholarly accounts have recognised the presence and contribution of Muslims during the period of the kings, such as the 'sizeable Islamic community' during the Ava period (Thant Myint U 2007: 11) and the favours that King Mindon did for the Muslim community during

his reign, such as build a mosque in Mandalay (2007: 136). This particular act of recognition by King Mindon is often raised by Muslims when discussing the history of relations between Muslims and the state today, in their attempt to affirm a sense of history of their community and belonging to the nation.

Events such as the construction of mosques are also occasionally noted in scholarship, such as the construction of the first mosque in Pegu by Muslim merchants in 1550s (Liebermann 1984: 28), or the construction of a mosque at Mrohaung in 1400s (Harvey 1925: 139). While some mosques and grave sites remain as potential reminders and relics of the past history of Muslims in Myanmar, these are also often sites of contest and violence. For example, in early 2014 it was reported in Burmese media that old grave stones of some famous Muslims were demolished by the Mandalay City Development Council. Two significant tomb stones had been demolished, but two still remain although they are in terrible condition and have been heavily vandalised. One of these is the tombstone of U Nu, who was the intelligence chief for King Badoun during the Konbaung Dynasty (1752-1885). The Shiite mosque in the same compound still stands, although it also remains in a dilapidated condition. Not far from the site of these tombstones is the famous U Pain bridge, a wooden bridge that is an iconic tourist destination in Mandalay. Less well-known is that U Pain, an advisor to King Mindon and who designed the bridge, was Muslim. In 2014 there were news reports in the *New Light of Myanmar* (the government-sponsored mouth-piece) that attempted to cast doubt on the legacy of U Pain, suggesting he was of bad character and spreading lies about his behaviour. These allegations were used to suggest that the bridge should be renamed which, alongside the demolition of the tombstones, would further wipe away these physical traces of Muslim history in the region. In a similar way to these physical acts of destruction, some scholarly accounts promote a history of Burma as a history of

Burmans, and almost make no mention of Muslims in the history of Myanmar (for example Aung-Thwin & Aung-Thwin 2012); this needs to be challenged and reconsidered.

Following on from the period of the kings, other scholarly accounts have focused on the colonial period and British colonial responses to Muslims in Myanmar. Keck (2009) provides a searing inquiry into, and rereading of, how colonial sources portrayed Muslims in Burma. He examines how colonial references from the period 1885-1914 took a particular view of the Muslim community, and more often than not were relatively silent regarding Islam in Burma. He identifies a number of common perceptions among colonial authorities, including that Muslims did not really 'belong' to Burma; that Islam was 'transitory' and 'alien' to Burma; that Muslims were somehow regarded as 'non-Burmese', despite the fact that Islam in Burma long preceded the arrival of the British; and that Islam was seen as a potential threat that may contribute to the end of the Burmese race. By uncovering these prejudges and common assumptions, Keck unmasks the reasons why Muslims were not the subject of a great deal of colonial writing in Burma. His genealogy of British colonial discourse shows that they contributed to the creation of this invisible minority. Keck's work provides a starting point for historians, and he builds on this in his chapter in this volume.

Muslim Political Engagement

The second important theme is the involvement of Muslims in the political life of Myanmar. Some Muslims in Myanmar have been active in the political arena and have made a vital contribution to national politics, both in the immediate post-independence period, and during the military period. These stories need to be recovered and emphasised in order to build a more positive discourse on the role of Muslims in public life and state building, rather than as a threat to the state.

Leading up to and during the period of parliamentary democracy there were several famous leaders and politicians who were Muslim. This time was marked by the activism of leaders from organisations such as the Burma Muslim Congress, which was affiliated with the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) (although this was later forced by U Nu to close in 1956); the Muslim Free Hospital, Yangon; and the Burma Muslim Student Association, based at the University of Yangon. In the lead up to independence, there were also key figures such as Sultan Mahmood (1897-1958), an Indian Muslim who was a member of the Legislative Council in 1936, and was later member of parliament for Buthidaung North (People's Literature Committee 1961: 83); U Pe Kin was a Burmese Muslim who attended the Pinlon conference of 1947; and U Aung Thin, who in 1939 went to London as a representative of Muslims at the Round Table Committee discussion on whether Burma should be separated from India. U Razak (also known as Abdul Razak) was cabinet minister in the interim government, Minister of Education and National Planning, and chairperson of the Burma Muslim Congress. On 19 July 1947, he was assassinated alongside Aung San and other cabinet members, and is commemorated annually on Martyr's Day (Myat Htoo Razak 2007).

Through the lives of these individuals, we catch a glimpse of the diversity and debate between Burmese Muslims and Indian Muslims. This was evident in the political participation of two prominent individuals, U Raschid and U Khin Maung Lat.[15] U Khin Maung Latt was a Burmese Muslim who had been active in the Students' organisations of Yangon University and had taken part in the students' strike of 1936. He worked as secretary

[15] Although profiles of these two individuals and their contributions are discussed in Yegar 1972, his book was focused on 'The Muslims of Burma'. There is no general history of Burma or its politics that spends significant time on Muslim leaders such as these men.

for U Razak before the later was assassinated. He held positions as the General Secretary of the All Burma Muslim Congress (1945); member of the Constituent Assembly 1947; Minister for Judicial Affairs (1950-1958); and chairperson of the Islamic Religious Affairs Council (Yegar 1972: 76; People's Literature Committee 1961: 74). When the AFPFL split in two, U Khin Maung Lat sided with the Stable Faction.

The views of U Khin Maung Lat were at times opposed by U Raschid, an Indian Muslim. He was the leader of the 1936 student boycott, and in 1939 an Executive Committee member of the Rangoon University Students Union. He became a prominent businessperson and in 1947 he participated in the Constituent Assembly. In the 1950s he held various ministerial positions, including as Minister for Housing and Labour (1952-53), Minister for Trade Development and Labour (1954-55), Minister for Mines (1956) and Minister of Commerce and Industry (1960) (Trager 1966; People's Literature Committee 1961: 138). In 1958 he was the Vice President of the Trade Union Council of Burma. It has been said that he was 'intellectually and technically one of the most qualified persons in Burmese political life' of his time (Butwell 1963: 153). Yet there were always some who voiced dissent for U Rashid and other Muslim leaders, simply because they were perceived to be 'Indian' and/or Muslim.

This is reflected in some profiles we have that are coloured by prejudice, such as a profile of U Raschid by Dr Maung Maung (2008), who became one of the most influential legal figures during the socialist regime. Although U Raschid was considered to be next in line when the first president of the Rangoon University Students Union resigned, Maung Maung (2008: 232) notes that there were concerns raised because Raschid was a '*kalah*'. Maung Maung tries to suggest that attitudes changed as the student movement grew and he depicts the university as a place 'where *kalah* meets Bamah' (2008: 237) a phrase which he

claims was intended in a 'spirit of unity'. The All Burma Students Union was formed after the 1936 strikes with Raschid as president, as well as president of the Rangoon University Students Union, which Maung Maung suggests was evidence that a shift in mindset had taken place. Yet Maung Maung evinces the common perception that Muslims were not 'liberal'. For example, he expressed surprise that Raschid and his wife 'though Muslim and devout ones too, had liberal views' (2008: 239). When Raschid was appointed as Minister of Labour under U Nu, Maung Maung observes that "…now and then, he came up against criticism that being a 'kalah' he favoured the 'kalah' or simply that being a 'kalah' he should not be in cabinet" (2008: 241). Maung Maung suggests that U Nu ignored these criticisms, although he admits that U Nu unsuccessfully attempted to force Raschid to adopt a 'Burmese name' as part of his project of Burmanisation. Maung Maung appears to try and advocate for the involvement of Muslims in politics: "In the Union cabinet today there are people of 'kalah' blood…and sad would be the day which sees Burma's affairs handled only by the narrow and limited circle of 'pure Burman'." (2008: 241). Yet these words ring hollow given that Maung Maung was a key part of the legal and political system under the socialist regime during which time Muslims faced severe impediments and disincentives to serving in government office.

Aside from Muslims in the parliamentary period, there is little that has been written on the role of Muslims in public life since the 1960s, although this may partly be because of the significant restrictions Muslims face in seeking employment or gaining promotion in the public service since them. However, Muslims were politically active in key moments of Myanmar's history since the 1960s. After the end of the socialist period in 1988 and the re-emergence of political parties, several Muslim-based political parties such as the Rohingya-based National Democracy Party for Development ran in the 1990 elections and several

Rohingya candidates were successful, although were never allowed to take office. Further, in 1988, the Muslim community in Mandalay was active in voicing their disagreement with the socialist regime and organised collective demonstrations and protests on behalf of the Muslim community. Yegar even suggests that the government response to Muslims who were involved in the 1988 democracy demonstrations was particularly harsh (Yegar 2002: 63).

There were Muslims in the All Burma Student Democratic Front (ABSDF) that formed in Thailand, and Muslims members of the NLD. One example is Ayub Khan, a Burmese Muslim who grew up in Yangon.[16] In addition to his Burmese name, he also has a Muslim name, like most Burmese Muslims do. His grandfather was from Pakistan, his grandmother was from Mon State. He was 16 years old at the time of the democracy uprising. In 1990, he was put in prison for his involvement in the democracy protests and ongoing political activities in the late 1980s, which became known as '8888', which refers to 8 August 1988. He was in prison for three years until 1993 when he then spent several years as a bodyguard for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. From 1996 until late 2002, he was put in prison again for his political activities, this time for another seven years. After being released from prison for the second time, he was married, and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended as the special guest of honour. In 2004, facing further risks for their political involvement, him and his wife fled to Thailand. He was involved with the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners (AAPP) based in Mae Sot, Thailand. In 2008, Ayub Khan and his family came to Australia as part of the humanitarian settlement program. Ayub Khan travels back to the Thai-Burma border frequently to support friends there and continue his work with the AAPP. In Melbourne, he is actively involved in the Australia Burma Society, an inclusive community organisation that supports the arrival of refugees and organises annual community festivals.

[16] Interview with Ayub Khan (not his real name), Melbourne, 14 January 2011.

He has also established his own Burmese grocery store with the support of the local council. In November 2013, he again acted as a 'body-guard' for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi when she made her first visit to Melbourne, a Muslim protecting the voice of democracy in Myanmar.

Muslim political engagement has continued to evolved rapidly in the new political environment. Since 2008, new parties have formed and in the 2010 elections there were several Muslim-based political parties, as well as several Rohingya who ran as members of the Union Solidarity and Development Party in constituencies in Rakhine State. Since 2011, several other Muslim-based political parties have emerged. This includes the United National Congress Party, formed by those who identify themselves as 'Pathi' Muslims, and the Kaman National Development Party (*Narinjara* 2013). This discussion of Muslim engagement in politics is taken further in the chapter in this volume by Farrelly.

Aside from formal political party affiliation, Muslims have engaged in the new political process in other ways, sometimes voluntarily and at other times involuntarily. For example, in August 2012, after the conflict occurred in Rakhine State, the President established a National Investigation Commission[17] and four of its 27 members were Muslim religious leaders, although none of the members were Rohingya. Some of the Burmese Muslims on the Rakhine Investigation Commission later stepped down from the Commission due to disagreements, and therefore did not contribute to the final report.[18] Another example is the constitutional amendment process. In November 2013, some Muslim lawyers submitted recommendations to the Constitutional Review Committee, and in their submission they emphasised the need for the right to freedom from discrimination and equal citizenship rights

[17] Presidential Notification 58/2012 on the establishment of the Rakhine Investigation Commission.

[18] Interview with Muslim members of the Rakhine Investigation Commission, Yangon, January 2013.

in the Constitution.[19] There is also need to consider whether and how Muslims have engaged with other independent bodies such as the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (see generally Crouch 2013a). For example, one of the members of the National Human Rights Commission was appointed as a member to the Rakhine Investigation Committee; but the Commission failed to initiate its own investigation.

Finally, there is a need for research on the responsiveness of non-Muslim members of parliament to minority groups, and the risks inherent in speaking out in support of Muslims. One such incident related to the 2013 visit by the UN Special Envoy to Meiktila, who was threatened when a mob attacked his car. The member of parliament for Meiktila Township, U Win Htein, (of the NLD) admitted to the local press that the UN Special Envoy had been attacked while visiting the area and condemned the attack. In response, he was accused of favouring Muslims and was threatened. Public sentiment in Meiktila against his action is such that he may be unlikely to be re-elected for the seat in Meiktila if he runs in the 2015 elections. The chapter by Farrelly in this volume begins the task of analysing Muslim engagement in politics in the contemporary period.

Muslims Beyond the State

A third critical theme is the study of Muslims beyond the state, that is, those who have been displaced due to conflict or who have fled to neighbouring countries, or sought asylum in third countries. I highlight the story of Burmese Muslims in Karen State here to emphasise the global realities of these issues and the regional and international implications of the denial of belonging.

[19] Submission is on file with the author.

There has been significant irregular migration of Muslims to parts of South Asia – including Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and even as far as the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia – and Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. Some have made their way as asylum seekers, or as recognised refugees through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), to Western countries, including the United States, New Zealand and Australia. Over the past decade, large numbers of refugees living in camps along the Thai-Burma border have been resettled in third countries.

In 2004, the Australian government significantly increased the number of refugees that it accepted through its Humanitarian Resettlement Program who were from Myanmar and living in the refugee camps on the border of Thailand and Myanmar. From 2004 to 2007, Myanmar has featured in the top ten countries from which people were granted offshore protection visas to Australia. Since 2007, Myanmar has consistently featured amongst the top two nationalities within the offshore Humanitarian Program (the other country consistently in the top two being Iraq) (DIAC 2013). While these refugees from Myanmar are scattered across Australia, many have settled in Melbourne. A significant percentage of Burmese refugees who settled in Southeast Melbourne are Burmese Muslims. The area in which they settled was already home to a handful of Anglo-Burman families, who fled Burma in the 1960s and 1970s; 8888 generation activists and their families who came to Australia for further study in the 1990s; and, since 2013, Rohingya asylum seekers who were usually detained at one of Australia's off-shore processing centres until their claims for asylum were found to be legitimate

The majority of Burmese Muslims in Melbourne are from villages in Karen State. Their journey is illustrated in the lives of Hassan and Salemar, a Burmese Muslim couple.[20]

[20] Interview with Hassan and Salemar (not their real names), Melbourne, 4 January 2011.

They come from Kyaikdon, a small village in what used to be a 'black' area[21] of Karen State, formerly under the control of the Karen National Union (KNU). In the 1990s, their village was repeatedly targeted and attacked by the military. As they lived in a KNU controlled area, some of the men fought with the KNU.[22] The military eventually swept through their village, burning houses and mosques, and forcing them, along with an estimated 4,000 other Muslims from surrounding villages, to flee.[23] They made the journey to Thailand along with their relatives and neighbours, and were among the first refugees to establish the camps in that area of the border of Thailand-Burma. They later settled in a camp that is today known as Nu Po, located a days' drive along 'death highway' (known for its dangerous bends), which winds its way to the border town of Mae Sot.[24] They lived in Section 11 of the camp, which is referred to by some non-Muslim camp residents as the 'Indian' section, although most of the people who lived there identified as 'Bama Muslim', not Indian.

Like many displaced families from Karen State, the camps became their reality and home for over ten years, while other family members lived there 15 or 20 years, and still others had their claims for asylum rejected as they were unable to pass the medical check,

[21] From the 1960s, the military labelled certain areas of the country 'black', where conflict with insurgents remained; 'brown' for areas that were under dispute; and 'white' for areas that were uncontested and without conflict. For example, the liberated part of Karen State was labelled a 'black' area. For more on this strategy see Smith 1999: 259-260.

[22] Yegar claims that a small Muslim armed group operated in Karen State in 1983, but there is no evidence to suggest this was the same community (2002: 60).

[23] See Images Asia, 1997; TBBC, 2010: 12, citing Supamart Kasem (1997) 'Cleric Says Mosques and Schools Torched: forced relocation of villagers reported' *The Bangkok Post*, 10 March 1997. This is briefly mentioned in Fink 2009a: 239-240.

[24] In 2009, it was estimated that approximately 10 percent of the refugee population on the border of Thailand and Burma were Burmese Muslim (TBBC 2010).

which means the camp is effectively their permanent home. During this time, Hassan was a camp medic and Salemar raised their three boys. Their two older sons attended school, where classes were taught in Karen language, although their first language was Burmese; they also learnt to recite the Qur'an at the mosque and adjacent *madrasa* in their section of the camp. Since 1997, over 10,000 Muslims have sought refuge in the camps in Thailand. Many did not have citizenship cards, although most at this time were able to register with the UNHCR. In 2007, Hassan and Salemar and their children were accepted as refugees to resettle in Australia as part of the government's humanitarian resettlement program.

As well as helping many family and friends settle in Australia who arrived after them, Hassan and Salemar are involved with the Burmese Muslim Community Association and assist in the organisation of annual festivals and religious events, including *Eid Ul-Fitr* and *Eid Ul-Adha*.[25] They have travelled back to the Thai-Myanmar border to support family and friends still living there, and they have sponsored some of their relatives to come to Australia. In 2012, they became Australian citizens, a fact they recount with obvious pride, as this is the first time they have ever been recognised as citizens of a country. Since 2013, they have also helped newly-arrived Rohingya asylum seekers in the area, despite the differences between Burmese Muslims and Rohingya in terms of language and culture. With the support of a local council program and a community organisation, Hassan and Salemar have founded a café serving Burmese food in Melbourne. In 2013, they were able to see Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on tour when she visited Australia for the first time. They long to visit Myanmar one day, yet like many Burmese Muslims in Melbourne, they feel that they are unable to return under

[25] *Eid* is the breaking of the fast after the end of Ramadan; *Eid Ul-Adha* is the celebration that marks the commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael.

present circumstances, particularly given that some of their relatives and contacts inside Myanmar have fled to countries such as Thailand and Malaysia.

This profile suggests that the scholarly gaze must not only look at urban populations, but extend to rural Muslim communities often beyond the reach of the state, such as the Muslims of Karen State, including in the liberated areas and on the Thai-Myanmar border. Our line of vision must not just consider Muslims within the territorial boundaries of Myanmar, but those on its borders as well as those scattered across the global. The challenges of finding a place to belong for the Muslims of Myanmar implicates a range of countries in the region and in the West, and therefore should be of concern to them.

The one issue that has captured the attention of the West is the predicament of the Muslims of northern Rakhine State, generally referred to as the Rohingya. Displacement has been a major issue for the Rohingya, even prior to independence. Due to the war in the 1940s, there were said to be 13,000 Rohingya in refugee camps in India and what was then Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) (Yegar 2002: 39). In 1962, many Rohingya Muslims were required to accept foreign registration cards, although some chose not to take these. The targeted campaigns of the government against the Rohingya were particularly fierce in the 1970s through Operation Naga (Yegar 2002: 55) and again in the 1990s, and both times this led to mass exodus to Bangladesh. While there were previous issues over citizenship, the introduction of the 1982 Citizenship Law is widely regarded as having effectively deprived the Rohingya of their citizenship, and remains a source of grievance today. The violence in beginning 2012 has been the most recent cause of displacement, and marked a critical low in Western humanitarian engagement in Myanmar after the Myanmar government forced all that were providing basic health care to displaced persons to leave the region. This has raised questions of international law, citizenship, irregular migration, and statelessness, and human

rights advocacy organisations shown concern for these issues.[26] In this volume, Cook captures the situation of the Rohingya and the regional dimensions of the crisis in more detail in his chapter on humanitarian aid in Myanmar.

One excellent example of sustained field research on displaced Rohingya communities, which stands out from other studies both for its methodological rigor and its originality, is Anwar's research on Rohingya migrants in Pakistan (Anwar 2013a; 2013b). I highlight Anwar's research here because it provides a crucial example of the kind of academic research that is needed, in contrast to top-down human rights analysis, or surface assessments of Myanmar's failure to adhere to international law. Anwar's sophisticated research project involved a significant period of field research in Pakistan and required critical language skills and cultural knowledge. She focused on the Rohingya community in Pakistan, which grew particularly after the 1960s when many fled Burma after Ne Win's military coup. She explores why the Rohingya made the decision to leave Burma and head to Pakistan, as well as why they had decided not to return to Burma. She highlights the longing for citizenship and the illusion of Pakistan as an imagined 'Islamic homeland'. She uses the migrants own narratives of fleeing Burma for Pakistan to explore ideas of belonging and return. She discusses the wide range of problems that the Rohingya community as migrants face when settling in Pakistan, and the lack of recognition they experience there. She demonstrates how they are marginalised economically and socially, and generally work in low wage or the informal labour sector, a far cry from their dreams of belonging to an Islamic homeland.

[26] There have been numerous reports by international organisations on the issue: see for example Human Rights Watch (2002, 2012, 2013b); International Crisis Group (2013); Physicians for Human Rights (2013a); and the Islamic Human Rights Commission (2005).

Aside from the issue of irregular migration, another reason that the Rohingya have been the focus of study is because of concerns of links between these communities and the broader global issue of terrorism. Our knowledge of armed Islamic groups in Myanmar is thin, and this is a reflection of the fact that there is little evidence of such groups. There was a mujahideen rebellion after independence in 1948, which was in armed conflict against the government (Yegar 2002: 39). It was only a small group of approximately 500 men, and did not have wide support (Yegar 2002: 40). At that time, many Rohingya, and Muslims, in Yangon in fact attempted to lobby the government to find a way to stop the mujahidin. While there were terrorist connections in the 1970s, these groups were again small in number and never a real threat to the government (Selth 2003; 2004), and there is no evidence of such groups today.

The Practise of Islam

The final theme is the practise of Islam by the Muslims of Myanmar. Most Muslims in Myanmar are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school of law,[27] although some follow the Shafi school of law, and there is also a smaller community of Shiites. Muslims therefore have more in common at a doctrinal level with Muslim communities in South Asia, compared to Muslim communities in Southeast Asia, as most of the later follow the Shafi school of law. There are almost no studies to date on the beliefs and practises of these Muslim groups.

One argument that has been raised by activists, journalists and scholars in relation to the challenges to the practise of Islam in Myanmar is the attempts by the majority-Burman elite to 'Burmanise' the Muslims of Myanmar (Berlie 2008). The term 'Burmanisation' is

[27] The Hanafi school is one of four schools of law and is prevalent across approximately one third of the Muslim world, including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon: Kamali 2008: 73.

used to refer to the aggressive and coercive promotion of Burman culture and Buddhist religion to the exclusion and suppression of Islam as a religion and culture. In this light, it is even more important that studies of the practise of Islam are undertaken.

Islamic education is one area of research that remains open to new inquiries and would benefit from comparative inquiry.[28] There are two main types of Islamic education in Myanmar, *madrasa* and *jameahs* (colleague or university), also known as *mauvli*[29] schools or *hafiz* schools, as well as *makthabs* (place of writing or learning) which are for young children. At each level, the standard of education in both is not comparable to the quality of similarly named education institutions in other countries (see Nyi Nyi Kyaw, n.d). The *hafiz* course is at least three years, while the *mauvli* program may run up to 10 years (Nyi Nyi Kyaw, n.d). The style and content of teaching in *madrasa* across Myanmar are generally similar to those in South Asia (Sulaiman 2008; Berlie 2008: 79-94). There is a common path to become a religious leader, with boys who can recite the *Qur'an* receiving the title of *hafiz*, then undertaking further study to become a *mauvli*, and often going to countries such as Pakistan, India or Malaysia for further study. The controversial 2013 report of the Rakhine Investigation Commission recommended state intervention in mosques and schools in Rakhine State, yet there is no evidence to support the claim that Islamic education institutions were one of the causes of the violence. Scholarship is needed in this area to promote understanding of the role and function that Islamic education institutions play in Myanmar, particularly given the dire state of the government education system.

[28] For an overview of Islamic legal education in Southeast Asia, see Hefner and Zaman 2007; and Noor et al 2008.

[29] There are several terms that are generally used interchangeably in Myanmar to describe an Islamic scholar who has received education beyond the level of a *hafiz*, including *mauvli*, *mawlawi*, and *mawlana*.

Many *madrasa* in Myanmar are located in mosques, yet most research to date has only documented the number of mosques that can be found in major towns and cities in Myanmar (Berlie 2008), rather than explore deeper questions about the function and significance of mosques for Muslim communities. Mosques are highly visible symbols and given that many of them were built during the colonial era, they remain signs of the vibrant Muslim community during the colonial period. One particular feature of mosques in Myanmar is that women are not permitted to enter (according to Hanafi practise). The exception is Shiite mosques or less than handful of Sunni mosques take a more open view and have a separately demarcated space for women within the mosque. Mosques can therefore be sites of exclusion for minorities (such as women) within Islamic communities, and research needs to be sensitive to sources of such internal barriers to belonging.

There is perhaps only one major city in Myanmar without a mosque – the new capital Naypyidaw. While most of the commentary on the move to Naypyidaw has speculated on motivations in terms of security, historical patterns of political leaders and superstition (Seekins 2011), one cannot help but contrast Naypyidaw to Yangon or Mandalay. The purposeful removal of the capital from Yangon has also led to the establishment of a capital with no overt traces of a Muslim population, nor of the influence of Indian traders on the economy and business. Muslim businessmen have also reported that they have not been allowed to purchase land in Naypyidaw, either for commercial or religious purposes.[30] The fact that Naypyidaw is under the direct control of the President according to the Constitution[31] implicates the executive and the government in this design and omission.

[30] Interview with Muslim businessmen, Yangon, 17 November 2013.

[31] See 2008 Constitution art 50, 284-287.

Neither *madrasa* nor mosques are regulated through national laws, although a system of Islamic personal law was introduced in Myanmar during the period of British colonialism. Based on the Anglo-Muhammadan law of British India, access to the courts to have disputes concerning family law deciding according to Islamic law is still practised today. This is an area in which Myanmar is both similar to and different from the rest of Southeast Asia. Although most countries in Southeast Asia do also recognise some form of Islamic personal law, Myanmar is the only country where cases concerning Islamic personal law are heard and determined by the general courts, rather than by a separate institution of Islamic Courts. The jurisprudence developed by the courts is based on classic Anglo-Muhammadan textbooks in English (Hooker 1984: 42-84), although we know little about the case law since the 1960s. The chapter by Crouch in this volume begins to fill a gap in this area.

The practise of Islam has been the subject of an important study of the refugee population on the border of Thailand and Burma, an estimated ten to twenty per cent of whom are Muslims and fled Burma in the 1990s (TBBC 2010). The Thailand Burma Border Consortium (2010) provides a thorough and informed account of the life and customs of Burmese Muslim refugees, which reflects on the life of these villagers more broadly. TBBC identifies a high degree of collectivism within the Muslim community; a strict adherence to conservative moral and religious codes; highly defined gender roles; the patriarchal nature of the community; and, the challenges Muslims face in the context of refugee camps dominated by Buddhist leaders. It demonstrates that up until this time, INGOs were unable to respond to the needs of the Muslim community because of a lack of basic awareness about Islam. For example, the fish paste supplied by (mostly Western and some Christian) INGOs was considered to be *haram* according to Muslims and was therefore not consumed. This contributed to the higher levels of malnutrition among Muslims in the camps compared to

non-Muslims. The challenges of humanitarian aid and the more recent development of aid provision by organisations from Islamic countries has posed new concerns, as discussed by Cook in this volume.

Conclusion

The Muslims of Myanmar clearly constitute an understudied area of research. I conclude my review of the literature by suggesting that future scholarship in this area must do two things in particular. First, we need to overcome the stereotype of Islam as violent or unusual in the context of Myanmar. To do this we need to displace the myth of Buddhism as an inherently peaceful religion. While I cannot survey the vast literature on Buddhism in Myanmar here,[32] one reason that the study of Islam in Myanmar has been absent from scholarship is because of the disconnect between our views on Islam and Buddhism. Buddhism has been studied in isolation and shielded from scholarly criticism for too long. I am not suggesting that Buddhism is not an important part of the study of Myanmar. On the contrary, just as Islam is critical to understanding the Indonesian local context, or Catholicism is vital to the study of the Philippines, Buddhism is clearly a central part of the study of Myanmar. Yet what this volume suggests is that we must be willing to reject both the rose-tinted glasses with which the West often views Buddhism, and the perception of Islam as a violent religion. Future scholarship must combat the stereotype that Islam is 'radical, bad and violent' and that in contrast Buddhism is 'peaceful, non-violent, and good' (Elverskog 2013). We must recognise

[32] For an extensive review of the literature on Burmese Buddhist law, which highlights the contributions of the late Professor Andrew Huxley and Dr Christian Lammerts in particular, see Crouch (2014). Some of the most well-known monographs on Buddhism in contemporary Myanmar include Sarkisyanz (1965); Schober (2010); Spiro (1967); Spiro (1977); and Spiro (1982).

that the tendency for violence can and does arise in any religion, including those who identify with Buddhism or who seek to use religion as a rallying point, and the evidence we have suggests that it is Buddhists (rather than Muslims) who are the main cause of violence and conflict in Myanmar.

The second aspect of my argument is related more broadly to the study of Islam in Asia. Muslims in Myanmar have been overlooked, ignored and forgotten in discussions and debates on Islam in both South Asia and Southeast Asia. We need to go beyond the assumption that Islam in Myanmar is peripheral and irrelevant, or the residue of a colonial past. Rather, we must begin to see the potential for the study of Muslim communities in Myanmar to offer fresh insights as a 'crossroads' for Islam between South Asia and Southeast Asia.

I conclude this chapter with a call for a new generation of scholars to interrogate the politics of belonging for the Muslim communities of Myanmar. There is a need for historians who are open to new perspectives on existing historical sources and, where possible, discovering and analysing new sources of historical evidence related to Muslim communities. There is a need for ethnographers and anthropologists to spend time in the field, to get to know these Muslim communities in a close and personal way in order to construct rich ethnographies of contemporary community dynamics. There is a need for religious studies and Islamic studies scholars to take the study of Islam in Myanmar seriously, and to use the linguistic and literary skills they have to open up this field to a deeper level of analysis. The chapters that follow in this volume constitute a small beginning that will hopefully be built on, clarified and extended in the future order to enhance our understanding of and appreciation for Myanmar's Muslim mosaic.