

The Role of the British in Shaping Burmese History

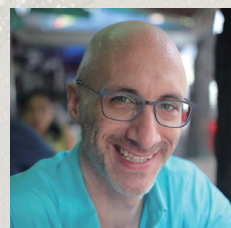
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Reservation
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Thursday 22 September 2022 13:30-15:00

3rd Floor, Mid-size Meeting Room Inamori Bldg

I consider how Burmese historians and intellectuals have internalized many of the ideas, practices, and interpretations related to Burmese history which the British brought to their colony starting in the early nineteenth century. I argue that the British created a new site for history, "Burma," for which they interpreted local sources to create a new, "national" history, and created new racial (today "ethnic") subjects: the Burmans, Mons and many others. Since Independence in 1948, these British constructions continue to shape Burmese intellectuals' understandings of themselves. However, pre-colonial continuities have remained, especially in how local scholars make their arguments. I also briefly touch on "intellectual decolonization" in Burma, with reference to similar processes in neighboring post-colonial countries, such as India and Indonesia.



Patrick McCormick

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Patrick McCormick has lived and worked in Southeast Asia for seventeen years, sixteen of them in Burma, before moving to Thailand in 2021. He has a PhD in Southeast Asian History from the University of Washington in Seattle. He was involved in a research project on language contact in and around Burma through the University of Zurich, and represented the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient in Rangoon for three years. He has also worked as a consultant on education and language policy. During his time at CSEAS, he is completing his book manuscript on the role of the British in shaping Burmese history.