



HISTORY GONE ROGUE

Journeys with an Unreliable Narrator

November 18 (Fri) 2022

15:30-17:00

Tonantei (Room 201), 2F, Inamori Foundation Building, Kyoto

NO
RESERVATION
REQUIRED

※ Language : English



SPECIAL SEMINAR ON SEA HISTORY

2022 November 18 (Fri) 15:30-17:00

Abstract

The triple exile of Prince Myingun of Burma (1844-1921) and his trespass of national boundaries and colonial empires places his story in an archival blind spot. His story does not belong in the hall of fame shared by his uncle, the Kanaung Prince – revered by the Burmese Military Government, or Tatmadaw, as a reformer and pro-military – or of rebels such as Saya San, who are lionized as anti-colonial, nationalist heroes. In school textbooks and national museums since 1962, Myanmar's military rulers have created a cult of martyrdom around Myingun's uncle, the Kanaung Prince, regilding his monuments with the same cosmetic fervor they have applied to the Shwedagon Pagoda. In this official narrative, Myingun is a traitor who assassinated a champion of military reform. To those who have grown up with these histories, and their screen version, Myingun is a 'bad fellow,' a 'murderer', even a 'stooge of the British.'

But military rule has taught most in Burma to question the official line, and other stories of Myingun persist, reverberating in song, in oral history. A letter from Prince Myingun in the Cambodian National Archives in Phnom Penh in 2004; a conversation with the late Princess Hteiksu Phaya-Gyi in Yangon in 2017, and a mothballed shirt in a military museum, all figure in this history of wildly divergent scales.

In this informal talk about her forthcoming book, *Kingdoms of the Mind: Burma's fugitive prince and the fracturing of empire* (Columbia University Press, forthcoming) Penny Edwards, Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley shares research strategies, her experiments with genre and her thoughts on history as an unreliable narrator.

About the speaker

Speaker

Prof. Penny Edwards

University of California, Berkeley



Penny Edwards is Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Her award-winning scholarship is grounded in thirty years of research in Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, and China and has made critical interventions in the study of nationalism, gender, and comparative colonialism. The recipient of the 2009 Harry J. Benda Prize for her book, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation* (Hawai'i University Press, 2007), she has authored thirty articles on Southeast Asian history and literature and has co-edited and guest edited eight volumes and special journal issues ranging from contemporary writing from Burma/Myanmar (*Mānoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writings*, 34, 2, Winter 2022) to memory in Southeast Asia (*Kyoto Review of South East Asia*, 2016) and Sino Cambodian migrations (*Cross Currents: Journal of East Asian History and Culture*, Fall 2012). Her translation of Soth Polin's novella *L'anarchiste* will appear with Gazebo Books, Sydney, in 2023.