**Back to Galactic Polity? The Kachin Margin as a Contemporary Equivalent of *Mandala* Political System in Burma**

*Everything that needs to be said has already been said.*

*But since no one was listening, everything must be said again*

*Andre Gide*

The Kachin crisis/conflict in Burma is well-recorded. The political, or maybe geopolitical, consequences of this KIA-Tatmadaw struggle are less so. The KIA with her controlled area, a de facto quasi-state, creates a new political configuration of an informal buffer zone between Burma and China. This is, however, not only a temporary, political buffer zone that may survive or vanish in accordance with the dynamism of current political circumstances. This situation is much more interesting if one looks at it from a longer, historical perspective. Then one can see the similarities with pre-colonial patterns of power, the *mandala* system.

**Theoretical Introduction**

This paper looks at Burmese-Kachin conflict from the perspective of political science. Applying Western theoretical concepts to Burmese conditions, though inevitable, is always risky: one must find adequate school to local conditions. In Burma the most important local factor that must be applied to and taken into consideration, is the influence of Buddhism. Buddhist political thinking is predominant here; it has shaped the ways in which Burmese political elites made sense of politics. As Matthew Walton has shown, “being embedded in the Theravāda moral conception of the universe, Burmese Buddhists understand the political as a sphere of moral action, governed by particular rules of cause and effect”. These moral actions include “a particular conception of human nature, an understanding of the universe as governed by a law of cause and effect that works according to moral principles, a conception of human existence as fundamentally dissatisfactory”[[1]](#footnote-1). This pessimistic understanding of human existence links Burmese elites thinking with classical political realism, where politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature which is not understood as the one of goodness[[2]](#footnote-2). That is why political realism fits well with Burmese elites’ political actions: Burma’s military men-turned-state builders have been behaving as they would perceive the international system as anarchic, based on power politics and consequently built on an “organized hypocrisy” rule, a place where logic of expected consequences prevails over logic of appropriateness[[3]](#footnote-3). Probably the most frank example of the Burmese army establishment’s realistic approach came from Colonel Maung Maung in 1950s, who criticized U Nu’s policy by saying “U Nu thinks we can make friends with everybody (…) Friendliness is okay but we need to have a big stick”[[4]](#footnote-4). There are, however, more modern examples. The words attributed to Than Shwe expressed in Palmerston-style: “there is no such thing as an eternal enemy or friend. We are not kissing China because we love China”[[5]](#footnote-5) indicate clearly this way of thinking. Although since 2011’s reform, the language of (post) junta dissidents changed into a more internationally accepted, the statesmen should be judged by actions, not words. And these actions reveal a deeply realistic approach to politics, though embodied in local, Buddhist understanding and discourse. The outcome, however, is the same: in spite of impressive shifts since the beginning of “Burmese thaw”[[6]](#footnote-6) (particularly in economic and social spheres) not much has changed in Burma's political sphere. The army stays in power and Tatmadaw’s dominant position remains unchallenged. What they want to achieve is to become “country’s legitimate guide on the way to a modernized economy”[[7]](#footnote-7). So far they succeeded: Burmese state can still be classified as praetorian[[8]](#footnote-8) and the post-junta government as “armed bureaucrats”[[9]](#footnote-9). Internationally, the generals-turned-democrats continue to adopt the balancing of powers policy, one of the two main realistic approaches to foreign policy[[10]](#footnote-10), deeply embedded in Burmese political tradition. The regime's post-2011 opening up to the world may then be regarded as a modern equivalent of king Mindon’s balance of powers foreign policy.

In understanding of the current dynamics of Burmese-Kachin conflict this article uses the traditional approach of political realism that “appeals to historical precedent rather that abstract principle”[[11]](#footnote-11). History here, or historical tradition to be exact, is essential to understand the dynamism of modern processes. Political realism therefore dismisses “a modernistic prejudice that takes for granted the superiority of the present over the past”[[12]](#footnote-12). No political event takes part in historical vacuum: the past inevitably influences the present. Historical tradition in Burma, as in other authoritarian countries, is solidified on three levels. First, on behavioral level where narrow circle of elites communicate in formal and informal ways. Second, on institutional level: here institutions keep and transfer the solidified ways, formal and informal, of governance and political customs. Third, on structural level: here deeply rooted structures of political culture maintain the consistency of attitudes of both rulers and ruled. To summarize these thoughts, one may say that the pre-colonial historical tradition is important, because it helps us to understand the Burmese elites’ way of thinking. The mentality of Burmese army elites is being shaped by many factors, but mostly by these traditional, pre-colonial patterns of power. Therefore it is so important to remind them.

In the researched area, the historical tradition that must be examined and remembered is the tradition of precolonial Burma, or the “galactic” polity, for in a way it repeats itself in the modern Burmese-Kachin conflict.

**The pre-colonial *mandala* system**

In the pre-colonial states of Southeast Asia, including Burma, power in the absence of concept of rigid, demarcated borders or the radial fashion of contemporary states, emanated and radiated out in concentric circles radiating from the center, the capital, the throne and the monarch[[13]](#footnote-13). Authority was the strongest at the capital city and weakened as the distant from the center grew. On the margins it met and overlapped with other waves of concentric power emanating from other, similar centers of power, with greater or lesser strength, thus “creating a patchwork of often overlapping *mandalas* (circles)”[[14]](#footnote-14). The borders of these zones were blurry and flexible and dependent on the current power of monarchs. The minor players could switch their loyalties from one encroaching power to another, keep their autonomy and – on favorable times – even be able to maneuver their independence. Although the individual policies differed, the framework remained strong, until the appearance of Western colonialism, unchallenged. It was a system of a series of expanding and contracting zones of influence, zones of overlapping authorities that has been described as the “mandala system”[[15]](#footnote-15), as the “galactic polity”[[16]](#footnote-16) or as the “solar polity”[[17]](#footnote-17).

In theory the power of the king at the top of the complex, hierarchical, personalized along patron-client relations society was absolute; in practice he had only a tenuous control over his peripheral subject. His power was limited by objective factors, the main one being geography. The Burmese state only penetrated sections of the claimed territory. Much remained under the cover of dense jungle[[18]](#footnote-18). Low population-to-land ratio, particularly in the peripheral area, made the linkage between the center and the peripheries weak[[19]](#footnote-19). No effective communication could be maintained because of long distance and time needed to cover the distance. The lack of well-established network of local administrative infrastructure made the authority of the king impossible to be maintained consistently[[20]](#footnote-20). The real power remained in the hands of local rulers: tributary chiefs, princesses and kings. They accepted or resisted Burmese (or Thai or other) sovereignty but never lost their autonomy. The Burmese king could expand his authority by offering protection and developing tributary relations with lesser political figures at the end of his reach, but there was always a threat that these minor players could switch their loyalty[[21]](#footnote-21). In these circumstances, as geographical conditions severely restricted the enforcement power of the king to enforce his authority, he could count on his charisma only. A strong ruler could attract new tributaries, and would have strong relationships over his existing tributaries. A weaker ruler would find it harder to attract and maintain these relationships[[22]](#footnote-22). Given the diffuse nature of power in the pre-colonial state, the maintenance of the central control was extremely difficult and of great importance to the kingdom were the charisma of the monarch and the ratification of the kingdom’s legitimacy created by customary religious beliefs and practices[[23]](#footnote-23). Of course, there was always another option. The king could, and sometimes did, resort to occasional brutality and exemplary punishment (such as burning the whole villages and massacre of all villagers) to remind that none should challenge his power and authority[[24]](#footnote-24). These measures, however, were costly and because of this implemented only in extraordinary occasions. Therefore, usually, the minor players: tributary chiefs etc. accepted the sovereignty of Burmese (or other) monarch only nominally, but remained de facto autonomous. It was possible, too, because the patron-client relationship was not necessarily exclusive. An entity in border areas might pay tribute to two or three stronger powers. The tributary ruler could then play the stronger powers off against each other in order to minimize interference by either one, while for the major powers the tributaries served as a buffer zone to prevent direct conflict between them.

Usually the Burmese king just wanted the tributary chiefs to accept the status quo: an unwritten hierarchy with him at the apex: these lesser entities were viewed by Burmese kings as their principal tributaries. Burmese monarch showed little interests in these lands and had no desire to impose his direct authority. Their interference with the tributary's domestic affairs was minimal: for example tributary chief usually was able to retain his own army and powers of taxation[[25]](#footnote-25). It was only the Irrawaddy valley that the Burmese kings cared for and really controlled. The overwhelming proportion of their subject lived in the dry zone, the core, the heart of the Burmese kingdom since Pagan times[[26]](#footnote-26). The peripheries were non important as long as they accepted the status quo by following the non-permanent, no-bureaucratic allegiances such as sending tribute missions, marriage alliance and military forces[[27]](#footnote-27). The Burmese king just wanted the tributary chiefs to attend regular homage ceremonies, bring tribute of gold and silver and provide daughters for his apartments. As the distance from the capital grew, however, kings’ authority became more and more negligible and the more distant entities were all but independent[[28]](#footnote-28). These lands formed the last, third zone, emanating from the Burmese center, their economic surplus was marginal, so as long as they posed no threat to the central authority – and usually they did not – kings allowed them to conduct their affairs undisturbed[[29]](#footnote-29). There existed an unwritten arrangement – in exchange for acknowledging the suzerainty of the Burmese king, providing soldiers, and giving tribute, minorities lived under their own rulers, according to their own laws and traditions, practiced their own religions and cultures, and used their own language – the Burmese “made no effort to assimilate minorities”[[30]](#footnote-30). Moreover, the tributary rulers were permitted to maintain the symbols of office and legitimacy in their own courts as if they were lesser versions of the central kingdom[[31]](#footnote-31) . This pattern reflected the ideological and legitimizing superstructure of the pre-colonial kingdom. The king was at the center and the most distant hill-peoples and their tributary chiefs were the peripheries, which was in accordance with the cosmological and religious order[[32]](#footnote-32). The king stood at the apex of society in accordance with the cosmological order. King’s power was a reflection of the moral authority emanating from the concept of monarchy. He, being the lord of all life, was morally superior to the people thanks to his *hpoun*. He became the king because in previous incarnations he earned enough merits to make his *karma* the best of any in the land. Therefore it was safe and wise to entrust all power on him (men abandoned all of their rights to the kingdom in exchange for total protection)[[33]](#footnote-33). King’s power was justified by his ability to maintain order and to uphold the *dhamma*[[34]](#footnote-34); and by the idea of *cakkavatti*, a universal monarch or world conquer[[35]](#footnote-35). As a *cakkavatti,* the king laid claim to being the supreme ruler on earth, but as a universal monarch, not just one of several equally sovereign monarchs, he was obliged to ensure that within his domain other, lesser monarchs were allowed to exist[[36]](#footnote-36). However, as long as these minor monarchs possessed no threat to challenge his supremacy, and their lands possessed no important sources of wealth that Burmese kingdom could easily annexed, the Burmese king had no justification for their elimination or the incorporation of their subject under his direct authority[[37]](#footnote-37). That is why the tributary entities were not absorbed into the Burmese kingdom.

**An Outlook of Contemporary Kachin Conflict from Political Perspective**

Today Kachin state in Burma state has a very complex political situation. There has been fighting between KIA and Tatmadaw since 1961, intermitted by temporary ceasefires (most notably the one in 1993-2011 years). Most of the region is under control of the central Burmese government, with Kachin state’s capital – Myitkyina – most notably. The KIA controls the strip of land on the southern part of Kachin state along the border with China (where lives another few hundred thousands ethnic Kachins, or Jingpho). On her territories KIA has set a de facto quasi-state with her own administration, independent from Burmese control. Since 2013 the situation has remained constant, with temporary clashes and negotiations coming in turns. It is a situation of “no war no peace” that prologues until now.

One of the most important political consequences of Kachin conflict is the disclosure of the façade character of the Burmese post-2011’ reforms. The best indicator of army’s genuineness of reforms is its attitude towards minorities, in this case Kachins. It was the minorities that have always paid the highest price for political instability in Burma[[38]](#footnote-38). Also the government's attitude towards Kachin movement[[39]](#footnote-39) seen from a domestic perspective reveals the façade character of Burmese political transformation. It is not surprising that the army broke the cease-fire in June 2011; just three months after Thein Sein assumed the presidency[[40]](#footnote-40) and launched the – unseen for such scale for years[[41]](#footnote-41) – major offensive on Laiza in December 2012.[[42]](#footnote-42) That was the very year of among others, lifting of Western sanctions and ASSK’s first trip abroad (to mention the major events only). Even now, when there are talks about a national cease-fire, and the government is even prone to accept the forbidden word ‘federalism’, fights against KIA temporarily resume in Kachin state.

This proves that “two Burmas” paradigm[[43]](#footnote-43) is being reborn in Burma in a new version – “one Burma” is represented by dynamically changing Burmese society in the “Burma proper”. Here one can see the modern dynamism of Rangoon and Mandalay, the influx of foreign capital, the re-emergence of cosmopolitanism in urban spheres, the growing awareness of Burmese society, and the very shy first signs of civil society. This “one Burma” is the better face of the country, the one that tries to transform and move forward. This is, however, not the only one. The “other Burma” means underdeveloped and underfinanced ethnic minority regions, particularly the Kachin state, where not much has changed and transformation is more virtual than real and Tatmadaw has been behaving as nothing changed since 2011. We can observe this phenomenon because Kachins from KIA/KIO are *Tatmadaw*’s biggest opponent – commercial and political.

The Kachins attitude towards Naypyidaw is being perceived by the Burmese state as threatening. On its controlled territories KIA has set up a de facto quasi-government or quasi-state, “a legitimate ethnic mini state”, with its own administration, security apparatus, free health care, educational system, access to international communications and “reliable utilities - which is more than can be said for the Burmese government”[[44]](#footnote-44). Moreover, thanks to trade with China, KIA’s capital, Laiza, sees 24-hour electricity without blackouts, the emergence of a local TV station, and “other benefits unthinkable in the rest of the underdeveloped Kachin state”[[45]](#footnote-45). Most important though, is that KIO was able to reconstruct itself as a legitimate, national entity that represents the Kachin nation in opposition to, perceived as discriminatory, “state's cultural, language and religious policies, all of which promote the majority Burmans' Buddhist way of life”[[46]](#footnote-46). Thanks to KIO’s quasi-state, the Kachins are basically introducing an alternative nation-building project.

**Back to *mandala* system?**

One may ask what do *mandala* system and current Kachin situation have in common? At first sight it seems intellectually reckless: how can one combine pre-colonial times with contemporary issues? However, if one puts aside “the decoration” and concentrate on the model, then one can see the similarities.

The decoration indeed changed in the meantime. There is lo longer Burmese monarchy which means that the Burmese leaders are no longer in possession of the moral authority emanating from the Buddhist king. The Kachins developed from a hill tribe into a conscious nation or ethnic group. Most importantly, majority of them accepted Christianity which changed their value system and political culture and separated them from the Burmese center[[47]](#footnote-47). And, finally, in pre-colonial times there was no attempt to Burminize and Buddhisize the minorities, whereas since 1988 the Burmese government has been implementing the policy of myanmafication[[48]](#footnote-48).

Therefore, at first sight, almost everything changed. However, when looking closely, similarities emerge. First, the Burmese center does not control this Kachin margin. As the Tatmadaw is unable to crush KIA military, it must find a new way to re-incorporate KIA margin into Burmese state. Second, there is another zone of authority influencing the Kachin margin: China. We can observe a process, where this margin is gradually gravitating towards China. Third, one can observe a process, where the KIA buffer zone is located between two concentric ways of power: Burmese and Chinese. In other words, it is the old *mandala* system in new decorations.

The KIA territory is outside the control of Burmese central government. Despite several attempts, most notably in late 2012 and in the beginning of 2013, Tatmadaw has been unable to crush KIA. The Kachins are fighting on their territory which favorites their guerilla struggle. They may fight there long, very long and they have where to withdrawal if the worst (Laiza’s fall) ever happen. Although the Burmese generals would like to crush them in the way they annihilated KNU and Manerplaw two decades ago, the prospects of this scenario seem remote now, and will be so as long as China unofficially back KIA (see: below). So, the military scenario, Tatmadaw’s preferable way of dealing with ethnic minorities, is out of question here, at least now.

Therefore Burmese government must find another way to re-incorporate these territories. The ceasefire agenda seems to be intended to solve this issue. The ceasefire system introduced in other margins after 1988 (Wa, Karen, Shan, Karenni etc.) that was in essence the military trust that allowed all ceasefire groups to continue controlling their forces and territory[[49]](#footnote-49), seems to remind the old mandala system as well. Although the central government regained the official control over these territories, the former guerillas were allowed to retain their guns and symbols. They de facto administer their land autonomously, though they accept the Burmese suzerainty. In general, the ceasefire scenario must be considered Burmese generals success. It gave a new impetus to solving the ethnic question, on the army’s conditions, of course.

In the KIA case, however, it would be difficult to follow this scenario, because the main idea behind ceasefires agenda is that the minorities accept the rules of the game set by the Burmese army: accepting the Tatmadaw’s unitary vision of state, her dominance in Burmese political system and her privileged economic position. In return for promised investments and grants given to peripheral regions, the government wants, in a short term, to buy minorities’ calm and, in a long term – to assimilate them with the rest of the country and to create a new, modern nation: a Myanmar one. This is an antithesis of federalism, based on giving the minorities’ autonomy and rights. But the elites of those ethnic minorities that accepted ceasefires decide that this option is better than prolonged struggle because it gives them new options and chances. They are like those tributary states in the past that accepted the suzerainty of Burmese monarch and tried to maneuver as much space for them as possible.

Kachins, however, are too strong to accept Tatmadaw’s modus operandi and KIA has contradicting economic interests with Tatmadaw. KIA insists on federalism which is the antithesis of Tatmadaw’s vision of state. This federal goal seems illusionary in Burmese conditions, but this may also be KIA’s bargaining tactic: to demand more in order to achieve less. Their bargaining position is not bad: Kachin margin is politically and economically independent from the Burmese center. Therefore, in negotiations between Tatmadaw and KIA, the Tatmadaw’s generals will have to provide Kachins something attractive. Something that will make Kachin margin gravitate towards Burma again.

So far, it gravitates towards another zone of influence: Chinese. If the Kachin issue was only a domestic issue, the KIA quasi-state would probably have ended up as *Kawthoolei* did – annihilated by prevailing power of *Tatmadaw*. Thanks to a tacit acquiescence – and help – from the Chinese patron, however, KIO can withstand the military superiority of *Tatmadaw* and hold on for long. This has far-fetching consequences. The ethnic issue in Burma has a great importance for China. Burma is crucial to Beijing out of many combined reasons: domestic, national and international[[50]](#footnote-50). Development of Yunnan (part of *xibu dakaifa* strategy), going out policy (*zou chu qu*), Two Ocean Policy, String of Pearls and Malacca Dilemma – to mention the major ones only – all more or less compromise Burma’s ethnic minorities dimension. Southeast Asia is of primary importance to China as an emerging global second superpower,[[51]](#footnote-51) and Burma is a vulnerable point here, particularly after US pivot to Asia and Naypyidaw’s newly rapprochement with the West.

Moreover, China still tends to perceive Burma through the Sinocentric lenses: this attitude does not involve any significant political control from China, but does require Burma to recognize an unwritten hierarchical structure with Chine at the apex. This is, in fact, also a kind of “*mandala* system” equivalent. As Naypyidaw’s balancing policy after 2011 have challenged these unwritten rules of game, Beijing finds “the ethnic card” as the useful option to warn Burmese generals not to be “21th century’s Yelang”[[52]](#footnote-52). China plays a policy of using minorities as a tool to influence the central government, what the events of winter 2013 have showed[[53]](#footnote-53). By using a carrot and stick approach[[54]](#footnote-54), China took control of that crisis. Beijing made a big step toward fulfilling its strategic goal of building strong relations with central government by openly supporting political stability in Burma while simultaneously trying to maintain the balance of power within Burma by working out role of an arbiter between Burmese center and ethnic peripheries.

It is not in Chinese interest to see a strong Burma with national reconciliation and settled ethnic issue, because Chinese interest might suffer then (see: Myitsone dam story). On the other hand, a destabilized, torn Burma with a restarted civil war is even a worse scenario: it threatens Beijing’s strategic energy projects. China, therefore, aims to create a ‘controlled instability’ in Burma: let there be enough unstable to hold Burmese generals in check, but not so unstable to get out of control. KIA proves to be a perfect tool here. It is strong enough to withstand Tatmadaw for long and weak enough to be depended on China. For KIA it means that any dreams about checking or balancing Tatmadaw’s agenda must be filtered through the economic dependence on China and, consequently, Chinese interests.

Beijing’s ability to become a mediator in Burma’s center-periphery conflict is first and foremost the result of its economic dominance in Burma. Thanks to the border trade and unrestrained local contacts, the borderland between China and Burma in last two decades turned into a dynamic place, almost a free trade zone beyond Naypyidaw’s control. The ethnic minorities’ lands – including Kachins’ – on the borderlands became “mini-Chinas”, places increasingly tied economically and socially, to Yunnan. That means Kachins are becoming more and more linked to China. They use Chinese electricity, TV, internet and mobile phones. They send children to Chinese schools, undergo treatment in China, spend vacations and honeymoons there, have Chinese names, speak Chinese, listen to Chinese pop music, they even know well Chinese celebrities and enjoy Chinese popular culture. In short, Kachins are extremely vulnerable to Chinese cultural “soft power”, which is much more attractive than the Burmese and therefore – more effective.

**Conclusions**

The political outcome of the shown situation is that the Chinese zone of influence is much stronger that Burmese. In other words, the Chinese *mandala* is more attractive than Burmese one. As in pre-colonial times, China does not want to conquer or claim the suzerainty of the tributary entity. Beijing just wants them to accept the unwritten rules, with China at the apex, and with Chinese interests secured. So far KIA accepts these rules, for KIA China gives more place to maneuver than Burma. KIA policy here reminds those tributary entities in the past that tried to find as much space and autonomy between overlapping political zones of influence, or *mandalas*, as possible. The result might be called “back to the past”, to the situation where informal relations that remind the pre-colonial *mandala* system matters more that “hard” political indicators: borders, sovereignty, control over terrain.

Due to these conditions, Burma may not necessarily ‘lose’ those lands in a formal way to China but it will see them increasingly gravitate towards it – they may become a foreign outpost in a neighboring country, and the centre of an expanding zone of influence[[55]](#footnote-55). Because the Chinese weave is clearly stronger, this means the end of dreams of rebuilding the Burmese glory. Therefore finding a new way to re-incorporate the Kachin margin is one of the most urgent tasks that Tatmadaw must face in her ambitious plan of “building a new, modern, developed nation”.

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1. Matthew J. Walton, *Politics in the Moral Universe: Burmese Buddhist Political Thought*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Washington 2012, p. 2-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hans M o rg e n t h a u, *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York

   1948, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*,( New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 1-9, quoted in Maung Aung Myoe, *In the Name of Pauk-Phaw. Myanmar’s China Policy Since 1948*, (ISEASS:Singapore, 2011), p. 3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mary Callahan, *Making Enemies. War and State Building in Burma*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press,2003), p. 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Benedict Rogers, *Than Shwe*. *Unmasking Burma’s Tyrant*, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2010), p.139. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I prefer to call the changes in Burma “Burmese thaw” instead of “Burmese spring” (or by other names), because “thaw” indicates similarity with Khrushchev’s “political thaw” in USSR and this is a correct connotation, for changes is Burma are first and foremost regime’s liberalization. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Min Aung Hlaing’s speech at 2012 Armed Forces Day*, quoted in Renaud Egreteau, Larry Jagan, p. 474. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Renaud Egreteau, Larry Jagan, *Soldiers and Diplomacy in Burma. Understanding the Foreign Relations of the Burmese Praetorian State*, (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2011), p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Edward Feit, *The Armed Bureaucrats: Military-Administrative Regimes and Political Development*, (New York: Houghton Miffin, 1972). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliance*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 17. Burma, due to geography that dictates national policy (her “tender gourd factor”), since centuries have been forced to deal with stronger powers. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among*… p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. David Steinberg, *Burma: the State in Myanmar*, Georgetown University Press Washington 2000, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Oliver O. Walters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives,* SingaporeInstitute of Southeast Asian Studies 1982, p. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer : A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*, Cambridge University Press 1976, p. 52-132. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context c. 800-1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003–2009, p. 33 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma,* Cambridge University Press 2007, p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Michael Adas, *From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia*, in: Coparative Studies in Society and History, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Maung Maung Gyi, *Burmese Political Values. The Socio-Political Roots of Authoritarianism*, Praeger, New York 1983, p. 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Matthew J. Walton, *Politics in the Moral*… p. 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. David Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, 2003, p.45-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Robert H. Taylor, *State in Myanmar*, Singapore University Press 2009, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Maung Maung Gyi, *Burmese Political Values….*p. 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, University of Hawaii Press, 1994, p. 87. These words were of course written about Thai monarchs, but could easily be applied to Burmese conditions, too. The model remains the same. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Michael Aung-Thwin, Maitrii Aung-Thwin, *A History of Myanmar Since Ancien Times. Traditions and Transformations,* Reaktion Books*,* London 2012, 53-107. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Robert H. Taylor, *State in Myanmar…* p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Thant Myint-U, *The Making of…* p. 24-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Robert H. Taylor, *State in Myanmar…* p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Jospeh Silverstein, *The Evolution and Salience of Burma’s National Political Culture*, in: *Burma*. *Prospects for a Democratic Future*, ed. by Robert I Rotberg, Brookings, Washington DC 2000, p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Robert H. Taylor, *State in Myanmar…* p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Robert Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia*, in: The Far Eastern Quarterly, 2 Nov. 1942, pp. 15-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Robert H. Taylor, *State in Myanmar…* pp. 54-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Victor Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles: Anarchy and Conquest, c. 1580-1760*, Princeton University Press 1984, p. 67-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Michael Aung Thwin, *Divinity, Spirit and Human: Conceptions of Classical Burmese Kingship*, in *Centers, Symbols and Hierarchies: Essays on the Classical State of Southeast Asia*, ed. Lorraine Gesick, New Heaven, Yale University Press, pp. 54-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *World Conqueror…* pp. 46-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Robert H. Taylor, *State in Myanmar…* pp. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Martin Smith, *Burma. Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*,(Bangkok: White Lotus, 1999), p. 443. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. For a comprehensive, detailed research on Kachin movement, see: Mandy Sedan, *Being and Becoming Kachin: Histories Beyond the State in the Borderworlds of Burm*a, Oxford and London: Oxford University Press 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Bertil Lintner, *A well-laid war in Myanmar*, Asia Times Online, 02.02.2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Tatmadaw deployed nearly 25% of its battalions and used fighter planes and helicopter gunships, including Russian-made Mi-35s, called "flying tanks", which contradicted the official version of “willfulness of regional commanders”, Karin Dean, *Peace means surrender in Myanmar*, Asia Times Online, 24.01.2013,***The War in Kachin State: a Year of More Displacement and Human Rights Abuses*, Altsean Report, 08.06.2013.** [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Launched on Christmas – this single fact best illustrates that the military’s contempt for ethnic and religious diversity remains unchanged. Most of military believe that the ethnic minorities should “become” Buddhists; it would be beneficial for them and for the country then, Christina Fink, *Living Silence in Burma. Surviving Under Military Role*, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2009), p. 236. Although army’s ‘Buddhification’ process slowed its pace, their contempt for other religions remains high. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Mary Callahan, *Making Enemies*… p. 16 and 95-104 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Diana Markosian, Tyler Siem, *Burma: The War Goes On*, World Policy Institute, Vol. XXXI, No. 3, Fall 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Karin Dean, *Peace means surrender in Myanmar….* [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Jospeh Silverstein, *The Evolution and Salience…*p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Gustaaf Houtman, *Mental Culture in Burmese Crisis Politics. Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy*, (Tokyo: ILCCA, 1999), p. 53-66. For the attemps to Buddhisize the minorities, see: Christina Fink, *Living Silence….* p. 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Martin Smith, *Burma: insurgency*… p. 440. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. More, see: David I. Steinberg, Hongwei Fan, *Modern China-Myanmar Relations. Dilemmas of Mutual Dependence*, (Copenhagen: NAiS Press, 2011), p. 155-323. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. SE Asia’s strategic importance to China can be seen two fold: in defense terms – as a buffer zone, which is consistent with Chinese tradition of not allowing any alliance, or zone of influence, to form around China; or in offensive terms – as a place where Beijing wants to challenge US hegemony by pushing it out from this key region. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Yelang was an ancient kingdom on China’s southwestern border who dared to challenge China’s superiority, Thant Myint-U, *Where China….* p. 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Yun Sun, *Has China Lost Myanmar?*, “Foreign Policy” 15.01.2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Konbawza Win *If Laiza Falls, the Union of Burma is finished?* Kachinlands News 15.01.2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Here I paraphrase Carnegie Moscow director, Dmitri Trenin’s words, said about Sino-Russian relations, in particular about Chinese policy towards Russian Far East. Comparisons with Burma are striking. Dmitri Trenin, *True Partners? How Russia and China Sees Each Other*, (Moscow: Carnegie, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)