

Contents

Preface	9
Chapter I: The Buddhist Background of the Burmese Political Thought	19
1. A Note on Buddhism as Religious/Philosophical System	20
2. A Buddhist Perspective on Politics. An Introduction	22
3. A Buddhist Perspective on Politics from <i>Dīgha-nikāya</i> Collection of the <i>Tipiṭaka</i>	24
a) <i>Aggañña-sutta</i>	24
b) <i>Cakkavatti-sīhanāda-sutta</i>	27
c) <i>Mahā-sudassana-sutta</i> and <i>Siṅgāl'ovāda-sutta</i>	32
d) <i>Mahā-parinibbāṇa-sutta</i>	34
4. Buddhist Perspective on Politics from other <i>Pāli Canon</i> Texts	36
a) <i>Dhamma-pada</i> , <i>Mahāpadāna-sutta</i> and <i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>	36
b) <i>Vinaya-piṭaka</i> and <i>Gilāna-sutta</i>	38
c) <i>Āṅguttara-nikāya</i>	40
d) <i>Culla-vaga</i> , <i>Āṅgulimāla-sutta</i> and <i>Thera-gāthā</i>	41
5. A Buddhist Perspective on Politics from <i>Jātaka</i> Stories	43
a) <i>Bhadda-sāla-jātaka</i>	44
b) <i>Rājovāda-jātaka</i> and <i>Kurudhamma-jātaka</i>	45
c) <i>Mahā-suta-soma-jātaka</i>	47
d) <i>Te-sakuṇa-jātaka</i>	47
e) <i>Mahābodhi-jātaka</i> and <i>Mahā-ummagga-jātaka</i>	48
f) <i>Seyya-jātaka</i> and <i>Ekarāja-jātaka</i>	49
g) <i>Vessantara-jātaka</i>	50
h) <i>Hārīta-jātaka</i> and <i>Suvaṇṇakakkaṭṭa-jātaka</i>	51
i) <i>Mahāhaṃsa-jātaka</i> and the <i>Dasavidha Rajā-dhammā</i>	53
j) Aung San Suu Kyi on <i>Dasavidha Rajā-dhammā</i>	54
6. A Buddhist Perspective on Leadership	61
7. Aśoka as the Role Model of a Perfect Buddhist Ruler	64
8. A Buddhist Perspective on Politics from the Post-Canonical Texts	70
9. Aung San Suu Kyi on Buddhist Political Thought	72
10. Conclusion	75

Chapter II. The Burmese Political Thought	79
1. A Note on Burmese Buddhism	79
2. A Note on the Burmese Political Thought	80
3. The Precolonial Burmese Political Thought	83
4. Aung San Suu Kyi on the Five Evils	89
5. The Personalization of Power and the Importance of Unity	90
6. Burma's 19 th Century Buddhist Modernism	91
7. Aung San Suu Kyi on Precolonial Burma	92
8. The Burmese Colonial Political Thought	97
9. From Revival of Buddhism to the Burmese Anticolonial Nationalism	101
10. Aung San Suu Kyi on Colonial Burma	105
11. Between Socialism and Buddhism: the Late Colonial and Postcolonial Burmese Political Thought	112
12. Aung San Suu Kyi and the Postcolonial Burmese Political Thought	121
13. Conclusion	143
Chapter III: The Pivotal Figure of Aung San and His Legacy	145
1. Burma's Machiavellian Man of Destiny	145
2. From Aung San's Guidance to Aung San Amnesia	154
3. The Democratization of Aung San	160
4. Aung San and Buddhism	173
5. Suu Kyi's Karmic Credentials	178
6. Conclusion	189
Chapter IV: The Moral Democracy: The Political Thought of Aung San Suu Kyi	191
1. Non-Violence	191
2. Fear and Freedom from Fear: The Universalistic Message	209
3. Indigenization of Democracy and Human Rights	228
4. The Symbolic Alternative Seat of Authority	254
5. Democracy First	263
6. Educating the People	286
7. The Triad of Unity, Responsibility and Discipline	294
8. <i>Awza</i> and <i>Mettā</i> versus <i>Āṇā</i> and <i>Cetanā</i>	306

Contents

9. Minorities	327
a) “Mother of the Nation,” not a Feminist	327
b) Unity in Diversity under Burman Guidance	333
c) The Rohingya Trap	352
10. Post-2011: The Enforced Reconciliation	358
11. Conclusion	376
Conclusion. The Buddhist-Inspired Moral Democracy of Aung San Suu Kyi	379
Bibliography	403
Index of Names	434
The Burmese Summary	442

Gracyna Harasim-Gracjanowicz, an acclaimed Polish writer who visited Burma in 1952 at the invitation of U Nu's government, wrote in his diaries about “three features that shaped the character of proto-colonial Burmese elites”: conservatism in family life, “colonial snobism in Victorian dress” and a thin layer of Europeanism in their exterior outlook. The main theme of his observations was that the Burmese elites of the 1950s dressed and behaved in a Western manner, yet this was only a thin layer that covered a deeply ingrained local, Buddhist identity.

Aung San Suu Kyi's political thought is precisely like that.

There are two most important components of her political thought: Buddhism and democracy. One is local – Burmese and the other one is Western – international. For decades she was better known for the latter, and considered – only partially correct, as it has happened – as a Burmese propagator of universal values such as democracy. For Aung San Suu Kyi became a globally acclaimed, legendary “democracy icon”, who received a litany of international awards and prizes, with Nobel Peace Prize being the most important one. And then, in the mid-2010s, came shock and disbelief when Suu Kyi, politically jet on the spot by the Rohingya crisis, chose loyalty to her country over universal values. Consequently, admiration turned into condemnation, (at least in the West) and then to wide media coverage and opinion of Western elites “Burma's Gandhi” became “Burma's Mugabe”.

What was lacking all along, was a thorough analysis of her political thought that would, perhaps, spare some self-defeating illusions and wrong predictions, at least on the academic level. This book – to my best knowledge, the first ever monograph on

Jose S. Hualde, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and India* (London, 2nd edition, New York University Press, New York, 1958), p. 6.

Gracyna Harasim-Gracjanowicz, *Pamięć do Burmy [A Journey to Burma]*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteckiego, Kraków 1977 (reprint of 1984), p. 41.