MOBILITY, SPACE AND POWER IN THE MAKING OF BURMA'S BORDERS, C.1880-1961

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SHORT ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the shifting ideas, definitions and negotiations around the borders between Burma, China and Siam (Thailand) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Extending the work of scholars of 'Zomia studies' and recent advances in borderlands historiography, it uses extensive archival research in Burma, Thailand, the US and the UK to examine the changing relations between borderland dwellers, empires and nation-states in Southeast Asia. In doing so it seeks to contribute to wider debates over the nature of nation-state-making, sovereignty and citizenship at the edges of states.

The following chapters make three main claims. The first is that contests for territory between diverse centres of power in the borderlands in the late nineteenth century show that border-making in 'Zomia' was a multi-directional rather than state-centred process. This thesis questions the apocryphal narrative of the 'anti-state' Wa and the ahistoric, state-escaping Lahu, by showing the varied territorial strategies of different groups of actors vying for control of the borderlands. The second claim is that the transnational mobility of people and things was central to border-making in the region. Smugglers who traded opium across borders in order to benefit from differences in colonial tax regimes paradoxically made international boundaries more rather than less relevant. Likewise peregrinations of preachers, converts and foreign missionaries in the early twentieth century caused external states to try to regulate the movement of people, thereby making the borders real. Thirdly, the thesis examines how people's ideas of borders shifted in the polarising world of the early Cold War. Borders meant different things to different groups, becoming nationalist symbols or zones of uncertain sovereignty. At the margins, borderland peoples' alternative spatial imaginings and political formations continued to challenge central states' certainties of 'geo-bodies' and 'imagined communities'.

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LONG ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis investigates the making of borders between Burma, China and Siam (Thailand) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It traces the shifting relations between borderland inhabitants, empires and nation-states in order to explain the variations in the development of different borders in the region. It triangulates from several perspectives to analyse border-making in the region, tracing the shifting locations of power on two different borders, cross-border flows of people and things across the region, as well as the making of internal borders within Burma.

Historians of this region today have been influenced by two recent, interrelated ideas. Scholars have interpreted Willem van Schendel's call for scholars to rethink dominant categories of analysis as a call for a new area studies – 'Zomia studies'. Van Schendel coined the term 'Zomia' to highlight the inadequacies of conventional area studies, which imposes arbitrary boundaries on fluid and complex situations. Scholars have instead taken the inhabitants of Zomia as a new object of analysis. James Scott has sought to explain Zomians' statelessness as a result of a conscious choice to escape lowland states which people made at some point in the pre-modern past. This thesis challenges some of the assumptions underlying these new paradigms. Making use of recent advances in borderlands history, this thesis analyses the historicity of his and other Zomia scholars' claims to a binary between lowland states and upland state-escaping societies.

Borderlands history as a method is useful to understand regions such as these. A comparative borderlands history in particular can offer insights into the nature of state-making and its failures in a complex region with multiple centres of power. Comparing the divergent trajectories of two different borders on the edge of Burma's Shan State can extend current theories of the making of nation-states, such as Thongchai Winichakul's influential study of the making of Siam's 'geo-body'. Peter Sahlins, the pre-eminent scholar of France and Spain's border in the Pyrenees, called on historians to follow anthropologists in tracing the self-Other identification of the nation at the border. A comparative study can show how and why this process developed in some places more than in others.

Writing a history of this region presents challenges for a historian looking for written sources. Before the 1920s and 1930s there are few written sources in most local languages. This thesis thus approaches the history of border-making in the region from a number of different perspectives and types of sources. Besides government documents, these sources include missionaries' correspondence, League of Nations opium commission reports, teak company records, Shan Sawbwas' (chiefs) writings and Rangoon newspapers. The chapters are both thematic and roughly chronological, with different bodies of sources framing the focus of each chapter.

The first chapter of this thesis analyses contests for territorial control in the borderlands in the late nineteenth century. The chapter centres on two borders of Keng Tung State in Burma's Shan State – the northern border with China and the southern border with Thailand. What were ostensibly boundary negotiations between external states – Britain, China and Siam – were in fact competitions for territory between multiple centres of power in the borderlands. Focusing on the different strategies of engagement of different groups of Wa and Lahu actors on the China-Burma and Siam-Burma border, this chapter highlights the

multi-directionality of contests for territorial control. Border-making was not a binary contest between external states. Some borderland polities retained their autonomy and the possibility of playing different powers off against each other. The chapter argues that the nature of the different natural resources to be found on the northern and southern borders of Shan State influenced the success or failure of local territorial tactics. Zomian-style 'escape' was not the only strategy that local actors chose to deploy, and where escape was used it was not always successful.

The second chapter furthers this analysis of Lahu and Wa actors in the borderlands. A mass Baptist conversion movement which began in the 1900s left a multitude of written sources. These enable a close focus on the movement of preachers and converts across the Burma-China and Burma-Siam borders. This chapter argues that the movement of people was central to the hardening of borders in the region. The continuing mobility of local preachers across the region was crucial to the Baptists' project of building a mass movement in the first decade of the twentieth century. At first, missionaries and converts challenged external states' territorial divisions, instead conceiving of territory in terms of sacred geographies. The Baptists and Presbyterians thus initially divided the region between themselves without regard to nation-state boundaries. Over time, however, external states' attempts to restrict the movement of missionaries and converts across the disputed borders forced them to cooperate more with states. Through education, in particular language education, missionaries working on either side of the border influenced state-making in the region.

The third chapter similarly examines cross-border mobility and border-making, focusing first on the history of international borders and second on the making of internal borders within Burma. Through studying the movement of goods between China, Burma and Siam, the chapter first shows how illicit border crossing by small-scale smugglers led external states to

attempt to control international borders in the region. Secondly, this chapter looks at how Burma's internal borders were made, through an analysis of the Keng Tung Sawbwa, Sao Kawng Kiao Intaleng's attempts to forge his own international trade relations in the 1920s and 1930s. The Sawbwa's attempts to sign trade deals with companies and governments in Siam and Malaya tested colonial frontier governance, highlighting the divergence in internal legal regimes between the Frontier Areas and the rest of Burma. At the same time large-scale smuggling between the Frontier Areas and the rest of Burma – including by the Sawbwa himself – both exploited internal borders, and led the colonial government to attempt to police them. Thus the system of graduated sovereignty, whereby citizenship and administration were differentiated within the nation, developed in the twentieth century, with long-term consequences for Burma's politics.

The fourth chapter continues this study of the development of graduated sovereignty within Burma, arguing that British interest in natural resource exploitation had the effect of amplifying local influence on state-making in the resource-rich borderlands in the twentieth century. Colonial ideas of borders as lines demarcating natural resources heightened the influence of local border-dwellers during this period. Border administration was necessary for resource exploitation, which meant that locals who negotiated with or opposed external states' and businesses' intervention could exert wider influence on the border-making process. Panthay Muslim elites hoping for an extension of British control over the Burma-China borderland were able to persuade the British into first sending a geological survey and subsequently attempting to directly govern the Wa hills in the 1930s. Wa leaders likewise made use of opportunities offered by a League of Nations Boundary Commission in the 1930s and the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry in the 1940s to demand less government intervention. The emphasis on border-dwellers' agency, a legacy of colonial-era

differentiated citizenship and sovereignty, was an added factor behind the British attempts to ensure frontier peoples' consent during independence negotiations.

The final chapter shows how after independence Burman politicians and the Rangoon press developed very different ideas of borders, with consequences for borderland-dwellers after independence. The emphasis on borders as lines demarcating claims to resources was replaced by ideas of borders as either fuzzy zones of uncertain sovereignty, or as symbolic lines demarcating the nation. Attempts to navigate the mid-century world of polarising international relations led Burman politicians and the Rangoon press to adapt their views of borders depending on the circumstances. Where they feared foreign intervention, as in the Kuomintang (KMT) occupation of Shan State in the 1950s, the Rangoon government was more likely to highlight the borders as symbolic lines surrounding an indivisible national body. When the government sought to maintain friendly relations with China, they depicted the border as a fuzzy zone of indeterminate sovereignty, downplaying the dispute with China over the location of the borderline. Politicians dismissed news of People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops' incursions across the border in 1956, attempting to persuade the public not to Other Burma's large neighbour. The government therefore depicted the border as a grey area of sovereignty, where PLA troops' occupation could be glossed over as unimportant, and small territorial swaps were preferable to a situation of hostility with a neighbouring power. Conversely those among the Rangoon press who feared China sought to emphasise the importance of the border as a symbolic line demarcating the body of the nation, much as the Siamese state saw the border according to Thongchai Winichakul's 1994 book *Siam Mapped*. Both of these views of borders had the effect of diminishing the influence of local border-dwellers on border-making, which was all the more ironic at a time that they were now theoretically equal citizens in the post-colonial nation.

The thesis makes three main claims. The first is that border-making in the late nineteenth century was not a binary process of negotiating between two states, but rather a multidirectional process involving multiple centres of powers in the borderlands. Scott's paradigm of state-escaping Zomians in flight is thus not sufficient to explain the complex competition for territorial control in the borderlands. The second claim is that the transnational movements of people and things are central to understanding how borders were made in the region. Circulations of illicit commodities such as opium, or of border-crossing missionaries and converts, caused external states to try to control their borders. Thirdly, this thesis argues that the Cold War context helps to explain how after independence the colonial idea of borders as lines surrounding claims to resources, which resulted in haphazard, contingent and differentiated frontier governance, was replaced by ideas of borders as symbolic lines surrounding the nation or at times as zones of indeterminate sovereignty. This study provides insights into the complex nature of sovereignty and citizenship in the region, vital to understanding the varied trajectories of border- and state-making at the margins of states.

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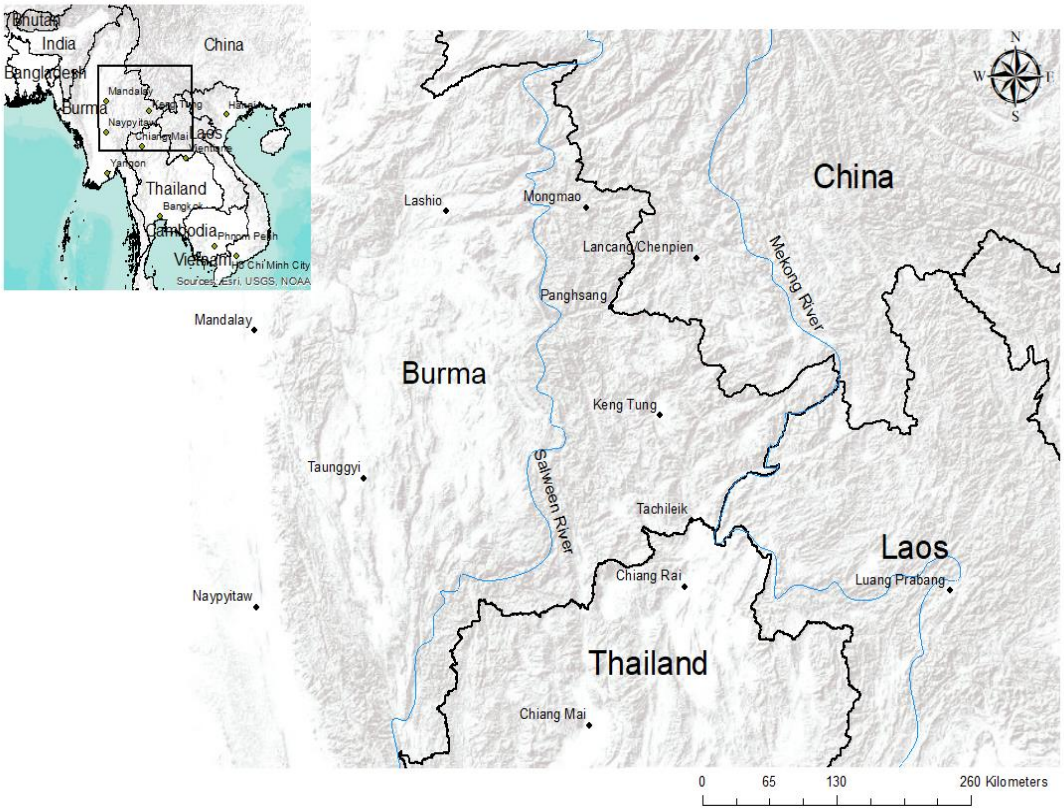
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Figure 1

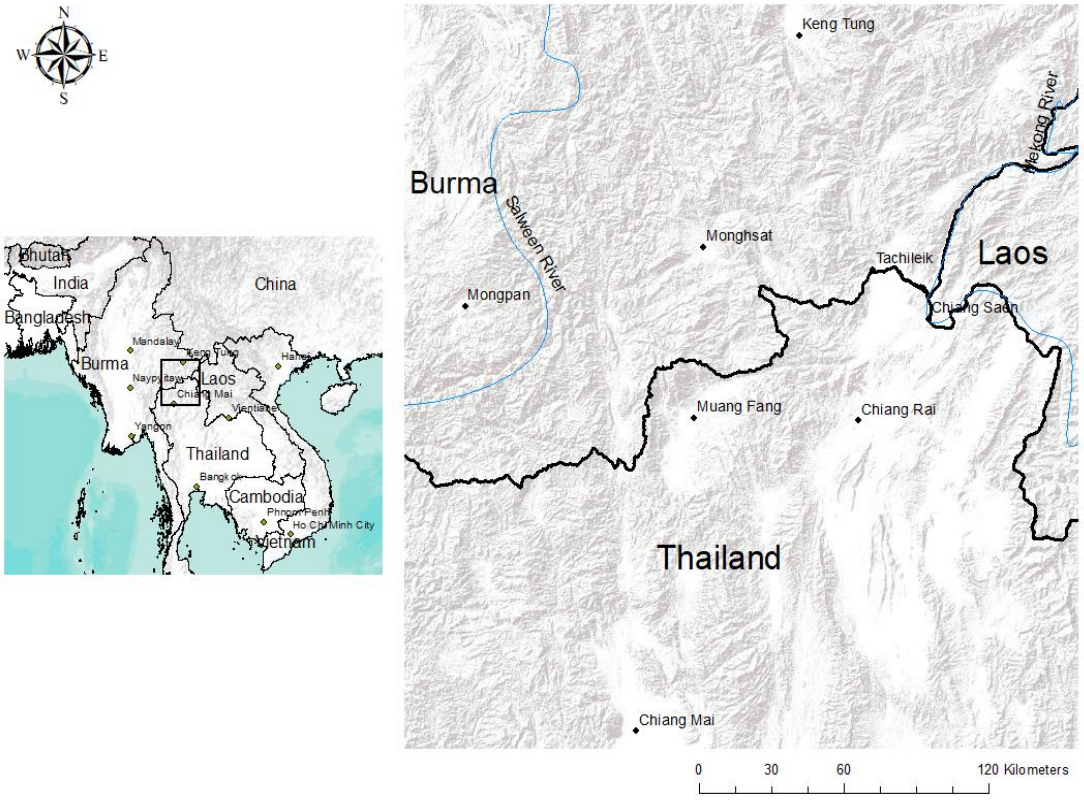
Map of the region



Source: Author.

Figure 2

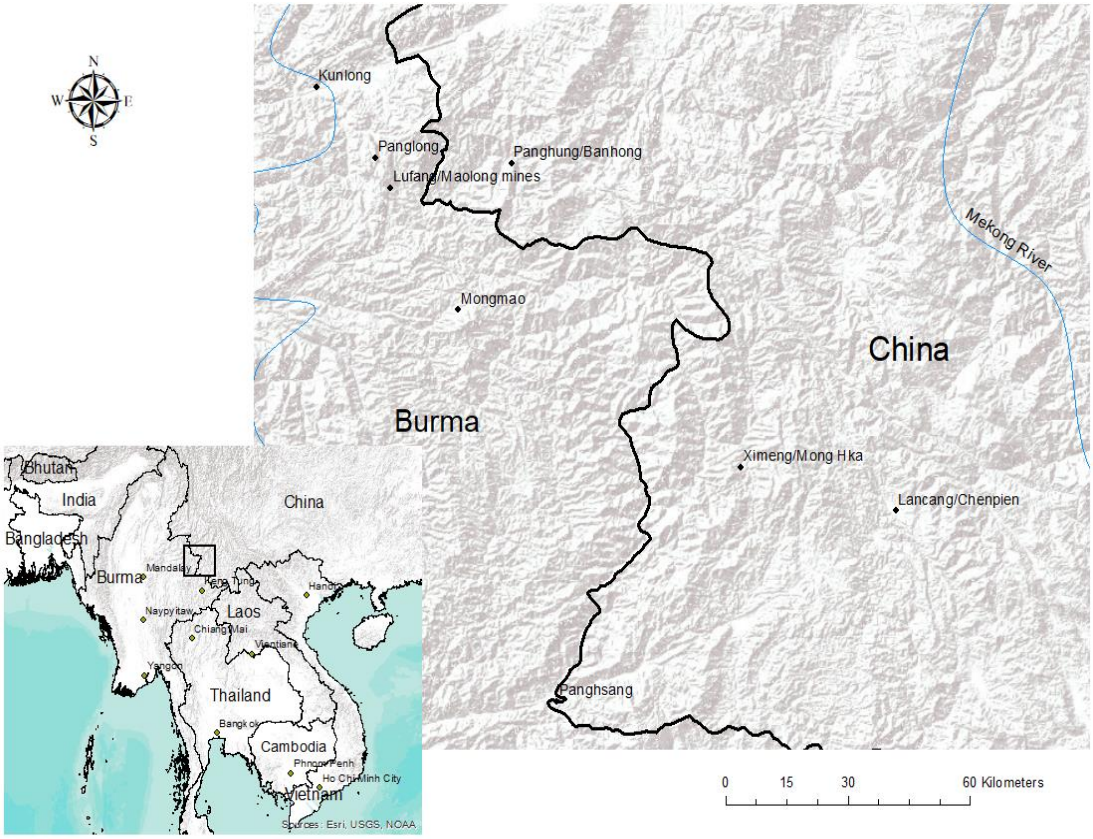
Map of the Burma-Thailand border



Source: Author.

Figure 3

Map of the Burma-China border



Source: Author.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the making of international borders in Burma's Shan State, southwest China and northern Siam in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It provides insight into a period which saw massive changes in the nature of political formations and the boundaries between them. In the mid nineteenth century the region was characterised by borderless polities, with overlapping margins. This was a mountainous region, sparsely populated, where multiple centres of power interacted in complex relations of alliance and conflict. The international border between Siam and Burma through the Shan states was agreed in the late nineteenth century, as external empires haggled over the forested hills. In the Wa country by contrast, local people maintained their autonomy into the twentieth century, and many parts of the boundary between Burma and China through the northern Shan states were still unmapped until the 1930s. The international border bisecting the Wa country was not agreed until 1960, solving the last of Burma's boundary disputes.

This thesis takes as its methodological starting point the need for a global and transnational approach to borderlands history. It has a dual focus. Firstly, it examines flows of people and things across the borderlands and their role in border-making. Secondly, this thesis traces the shifting locations of power in the borderlands over time. This includes a study of the effects of colonial frontier government and differentiated sovereignty on processes of border-making in independent Burma and China. Owing to the recent renaissance in borderlands history, and the new paradigm of 'Zomia' studies, fresh insight can be provided by these external studies into the case of border-making in the Burma-China-Thai borderlands.

This study provides several new insights through its close analysis of the making of the region's borders. Firstly, the 'Zomian' paradigm is not sufficient to explain the complex

relationships between centres of power in the borderlands. This work shows the shifting allegiances between different centres of power in the highlands, which combined sometimes to fight and sometimes to play off external powers against each other. This argument is also a corrective to borderlands history which often assumes the need for at least one colonial or external protagonist. Colonial powers were not the only actors with territorial ambitions in the borderlands.

Secondly, flows of people and goods across the borderlands, by making use of and transgressing boundaries in the region, were actually engaging with the hitherto imaginary international borders, and thereby helped to make the borders real. Flows of goods and people created borders, turning imaginary lines into lines which had a real effect. Invisible borders made smuggling profitable and allowed opium cultivators to escape suppression campaigns by migrating or moving boundary pillars. Borders made Lahu preachers from Burma into 'non-citizens' who could be, and in the 1910s and 1950s were, expelled from China. Even though the border was not policed, military expeditions crossing the disputed Wa border in the 1930s and 1950s caused international repercussions.

Third, the Cold War context of Burma's independence influenced shifting ideas of borders in the post-colonial era. Colonial-era graduated sovereignty, a consequence of colonial ideas of borders as lines demarcating resources, was replaced by Burman nationalists' ideas of borders as symbolic lines or zones. Shan Sawbwas' (princely rulers) memorandums defending their independence, political speeches by Burman nationalists, colonial documents on independence negotiations and newspaper articles in the Burmese nationalist press, show the complex negotiations over the borderlands between Burman nationalists and local leaders.[1] Through a study of Burman nationalists' writings/speeches and newspaper articles

[1] I have chosen to use the term 'local' rather than 'indigenous' or 'native', which were common in many primary and secondary sources. The term 'local' avoids implying how long a person or group has been living in

during the first years of independent Burma, this thesis shows how Burma's foreign policy regarding China during the first years of independence influenced the shift in Burman nationalists' perceptions of the borderlands, and led to an eventual border agreement in 1960.

This study can help us understand the politics of this region today, as well as giving wider insights into the nature of failed states and secession movements. The borderlands between China, Burma and Thailand have a long history of border disputes and separatist movements, of 'non-state spaces' such as those governed by drug lords or the remnants of the Chinese Nationalist troops, and of porous borders across which drugs and arms seep. After independence many parts of Burma's Shan State were governmental grey areas, neither completely in or out of the central Burmese government's control.[2]

Some of the protagonists of this thesis are from the Wa and the Lahu ethnic groups. These are two of the many different ethnic groups which live across the national borders in this region today. Other protagonists include Shan Sawbwas, British, Chinese and Siamese frontier officials, Chinese Nationalist KMT operatives in Yunnan and Burma, and Burman politicians in Rangoon. This thesis aims to triangulate from these varied perspectives, using a diverse range of sources including missionary, governmental and business records, in order to trace the making, and unmaking, of nations and borders in the region. To understand the imprecise fit between nations and states experienced by many postcolonial countries across the Global South, it is necessary to pay attention to the edges of their 'imagined communities'.[3] At the borders, such imaginings were tested by awareness of their unreality. Peter Sahlins called for historians to follow anthropologists who link the development and

a particular place. The term 'native' appears in this thesis in reported speech, in the context of the Baptist mass conversion movement, where the missionaries distinguished between 'native' preachers, which included Karen preachers, and 'local' preachers, namely Lahu and Wa.

[2] Mary Callahan, *Political Authority in Burma's Ethnic Minority States: Devolution, Occupation and Coexistence*, Washington DC: East West Centre, (2007), 13.

[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, New York: Verso (2006).

expression of ethnic, gender, class and national identities to the process of distinction and differentiation – of drawing boundaries between a collective self and an Other.[4] The borderland is a place where the self-Other definition of the nation is contested. In Sahlins' case study, borderland inhabitants drew for themselves the difference between French and Spanish Cerdanya, between French and Spanish citizens. The case of the Wa and Lahu is more complicated. A national self-Other distinction was neither imposed nor adopted, because the Wa and Lahu hills were not fully incorporated into the new nation-states.

METHOD

This thesis suggests a new way of doing global and transnational history. Global history responds to the need to understand globalisation, migration and flows. It is a close relative of transnational history, which has connotations of breaking out of the nation-state mould and aiming for a more comparative approach. Global history – that of global and regional flows – and transnational or comparative history can be brought together through borderlands history. Historians frequently argue for the importance of area studies for the study of movement, flows, processes, as it is vital that these studies are grounded in specific places and times.[5] Borderlands studies enables scholars to further question macro narratives of nation-states, through a locally-rooted study of transnational flows of goods and people. In many ways global forces did not transcend nation-states, they created them.[6] Colonial trade statistics show how opium traders, responding to different national drug regimes by trading or smuggling across borders, began to acknowledge the relevance of international borders. Likewise by using missionary sources, which reveal the regional connectivity of borderland

[4] Peter Sahlins, 'State Formation and National Identity in the Catalan Borderlands', in Thomas M. Hastings and Wilson Donnan, *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1998), 33.
[5] Willem van Schendel, 'Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 20 (2002), 665.
[6] Matthew Connelly in 'Conversation on Transnational History', *American Historical Review*, 111:5 (2006), 1452.

peoples before and after borders began to be demarcated, this thesis argues that the peregrinations of local preachers, converts and foreign missionaries caused external states to try to regulate the movement of people, thereby making the borders real. Writing a borderlands history which is informed by global and transnational history, by studying the contested movement of people and things at the margins of empires and nation-states, can give a new perspective on state- and border-making in Southeast Asia.

Peter Sahlins' work on borderlands history influenced a generation of scholars of borderlands. He argues that in the borderlands it is possible for historians to jump between the micro and the macro scales of history. In his work he connects the 'macroscopic' political and diplomatic history of France and Spain, and the 'molecular' history of Catalan village communities, rural nobles and peasants in the borderland. On the frontier, he says, these two histories come together, and they can be told as one.[7] This type of history can be furthered in the case of Southeast Asia, where the 'national' scale of history is less automatically central to many borderland peoples' historical experience. By bringing together the historiography of transnational flows and processes with that of Zomia studies and borderlands history, this thesis aims to shed light on how the movement of people and goods across the borderlands contributed to the making of nation-states and their discontents in Southeast Asia.

This transnational perspective will extend recent work on the history of border-making in Southeast Asia. Eric Vanden Bussche, in his recent thesis on the history of border-making in southwest China, has studied the downward extension of administrative control into the locality, as a key element of the study of state-making.[8] Eric Tagliacozzo's study of illicit commodity flows and border-making in maritime Southeast Asia has similarly focused on

[7] Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, Berkeley: University of California Press, (1989), xv.
[8] Eric Vanden Bussche, 'Contested Realms: Colonial Rivalry, Border Demarcation and State-Building in Southwest China, 1885-1960', unpublished PhD thesis, Stanford University, 2014, v.

the extension of state control into the borderlands.[9] Thongchai Winichakul's work on the making of 'Siam-on-the-map' focuses on understanding the making of the cartographic imagination of Siam through a study of lowland Siamese discourse.[10] By adding a transnational focus to these studies of state-making, this thesis will enable a closer examination of the shifting locations of power in the borderlands, rather than simply focusing on the expansion of a particular state.

BORDERLANDS HISTORY

One of the problems in doing borderlands studies and global/transnational history is identifying the subject of one's inquiry. To actually write a truly 'global' history is impossible. So how far does one follow the mobile things one is studying? Where does the borderland end? Mandy Sadan highlighted historians' lazy use of the term 'borderland' for areas far from the border itself. She preferred the term 'borderworld' to connote a zone where local people were aware of the existence of multiple neighbouring geographies.[11] People's interactions with the border were not determined simply by proximity to the demarcated tangible border on the ground but more by their awareness, in the case of the Kachin, of 'an alternative geography spanning at least three nation-states'. A borderworld is a zone fractured politically, culturally and socially by 'larger political geographies and different external perceptions'.[12]

Michel Baud and Willem van Schendel similarly ask how far we can say that the borderland extends 'inland' from the border. To answer this question, they identify three types of

[9] Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865-1915*, London: Yale University Press (2005).
[10] Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press (1994).
[11] Mandy Sadan, *Being and Becoming Kachin: Histories Beyond the State in the Borderworlds of Burma*, Oxford: OUP (2013), 5.
[12] Sadan, *Being and Becoming Kachin*, 5.

borderland, beginning with the border heartland, which abuts the border and is dominated by its existence. Second, there is the intermediate borderland, the region that always feels the influence of the border but in intensities varying from moderate to weak. And finally there is the outer borderland, which only under specific circumstances feels the effects of the border. In some circumstances this type of borderland can extend to entire countries.[13] Jumping scale, and switching protagonist, requires considering all three.

This thesis argues that this region at the intersection of the modern-day states of China, Myanmar, and Thailand has always been a borderland in the wide-angle definition of the term, driven by the central experiences of mobility and the entanglement of different centres of power in the region. In this sense, the border can extend further afield in the eyes of one protagonist than another. On grounds of imperial or national security, the British and the Burman nationalists painted the entire (former) 'Frontier Areas' as a risk zone due to the proximity of the border. From the perspective of the lowland state—colonial or national—the borderland looks more like a large area of land culminating in a borderline. This view of the borderland sees it as an in-between zone, often inhabited by citizens and non-citizens alike, by residents and resident aliens, culminating in a line whose main characteristic is the risk of transgression. From the perspective of locals, the borderland may be characterised by the presence of multiple centres of power, near and far. The competition for territory and resources is not necessarily dominated by the binary relationship between 'upland' and 'lowland' powers. The Wa and Lahu hills bordering Keng Tung State were characterised in the nineteenth century by shifting alliances and conflicts, between villages near and far, as well as with centres of power emanating from further afield.

[13] Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel, 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands', *Journal of World History* 8:2 (1997), 221.

Borderlands historians have been criticised for privileging the local over the global, for losing themselves in fine-grained descriptions of particular cases and failing to draw wider theoretical conclusions. Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett lament that for years borderlands historians told 'mostly small-scale tales', privileging 'local description over large-scale conceptualization'.[14] At the same time others have commented that a general 'border theory' is 'not only unattainable but undesirable'.[15] Anssi Paasi argued that individual borders are historically contingent and characterised by contextual features and power relations. A grand theory would be problematic 'not because borders are unique but because of the complexity of borders'.[16] Since the 1990s, when the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of globalisation led many scholars to herald the end of borders as we knew them, border studies have proliferated. By now, James D. Sidaway posits, there are diminishing marginal returns from more border case studies. In addition, a search for a general border theory is a chimera. 'We need now', Sidaway argued, 'not more border studies per se or more "border theory". [Rather] we need to think about how various bordering practices illustrate changing configurations of the social and political.'[17]

A new borderlands study has to ask what bordering practice (enclosing, demarcating, transgressing, exploiting) can tell us about for instance, sovereignty, or the making of nation-states, or the imprecise fit of nations and states. As well as explaining how these borders were made on the ground, this thesis also sets out to challenge nation-states' linear narratives of border-making. In the case of colonial and post-colonial Southeast Asia and southwest China, a borderlands perspective can highlight conflicts between different territorial imaginings, and contradictions in the attempted application of Western geopolitical worldviews to colonial

[14] Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, 'On Borderlands', *Journal of American History,* (2011), 339.
[15] Anssi Paasi, 'Borders, Theory and the Challenge of Relational Thinking', in Corey Johnson et al., 'Interventions on Rethinking "The Border" in Border Studies', *Political Geography*, (2011), 62.
[16] Paasi, 'Borders, Theory and the Challenge of Relational Thinking', 62.
[17] James D. Sidaway, 'The Return or Eclipse of Border Studies? Charting Agendas', *Geopolitics*, (2011), 974.

states, which spurred contradictions within categories such as nation, state, citizenship, inclusion, identity. A borderlands study can tell us about how haphazardly the British governed Burma, always reacting to events, (counter to the typical view of local actors continually reacting to British colonialism), which resulted in a patchwork of governance styles, and set up multiple political problems for the future independent government.

THE SETTING OF THE THESIS

This study is focused on areas which the historian David Bello, in the context of Yunnan's nineteenth-century borderlands, called an outer frontier zone and vacuum of authority.[18] Here, in the mountainous borderlands at the extremities of the influence of the Qing empire and the Konbaung and Siamese monarchies, the historian Pat Giersch described how the 'thickening web' of one expanding empire became entangled with that of another.[19] The Qing efforts to extend their influence across their frontier zones confronted the British desire to claim any territories which had previously, before the annexation of upper Burma in 1885, paid allegiance to the Burmese monarchy at Ava. Similarly the Siamese monarchy's late nineteenth century centralisation of power over its northern tributaries clashed with British attempts to control the Shan states. Contests for control of the borderland were nothing new to these highlands. State chronicles of lowland principalities such as those of Shan leaders, or 'northern Thai' leaders of Chiang Mai and Nan, claimed power for themselves, often based on relative wealth, listing tribute relations and wars against neighbouring polities. A number of different ethnic communities lived interspersed across the region.

The Wa today are known as a heavily-armed and populous ethnic minority living across the Burma-China border, who have long demanded autonomous statehood within the Union of

[18] David A. Bello, 'To Go Where No Han Could Go for Long: Malaria and the Qing Construction of Ethnic Administrative Space in Frontier Yunnan', *Modern China* 31:3 (2005), 287.
[19] C. Pat Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2006), 124.

Myanmar. Foreign journalists tell sensational stories of drug lords and casinos.[20] Exoticised by foreign media, depicted as secretive and reclusive, the Wa make no secessionist claims, but have de facto sovereignty within the Union of Myanmar.[21] The United Wa State Army (UWSA), which governs the Wa region, in 2019 celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of its establishment.[22] In 1989 Wa foot soldiers of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) mutinied against the CPB leadership and founded the UWSA.[23] The CPB, led by Maoist ethnic Burmans, had been in the Wa hills since the late 1960s. Wa State's relations with China are notably close. China is the main market for Wa exports of rubber and minerals, as well as a source of investment.[24] Many Wa are bilingual and have both a Wa and a Chinese name.[25]

There is no similarly identifiable 'Lahu land'. Lahu people today live in communities widely dispersed around the borderlands of Yunnan, northern Burma, Laos and northern Thailand. At the centre of the Golden Triangle, the Thai-Burma borderland has long been the home of ethnic militias and drug traffickers, but the area has never been as formally independent from central governments as the Wa region. In the 1960s a short-lived separatist movement demanded a Lahu state, but for the majority of Lahu, their land and villages have simply been the site of other groups' battles.[26] In Thailand many parts of the mountainous border areas remained until the 1970s and 1980s outside central government control. KMT troops,

[20] Andrew Marshall and Anthony Davis, 'Soldiers of Fortune', *Time*, 16 December 2002, [accessed 16 May 2019, URL: http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2056076,00.html].
[21] Andrew Ong, 'Producing Intransigence: (Mis)understanding the United Wa State Army in Myanmar', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 40:3 (2018), 452.
[22] 'UWSA Expected to Show Off Enhanced Arsenal at 30th Anniversary Parade', *The Irrawaddy*, 10 April 2019, [accessed 15 May 2019, URL: https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/uwsa-expected-show-off-enhanced-arsenal-30th-anniversary-parade.html].
[23] Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Burma*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1990), 40.
[24] Magnus Fiskesjo, 'Mining, History, and the Anti-State Wa: The Politics of Autonomy between Burma and China', *Journal of Global History*, 5:2 (2010), 254.
[25] Magnus Fiskejo, 'The Fate of Sacrifice and the Making of Wa History', University of Chicago unpublished PhD thesis, (2000), 47.
[26] Sombat Boonkamyeung, 'The Lahu Symbolic Universe and Reconstruction of Ethnic Identity', in Hayashi Yukio and Aroonrut Wichienkeeo (eds), *Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Making of Mainland Southeast Asia and Southwestern China*¸ Bangkok: Amarin Publishing (2002), 129.

Burmese rebel groups, Thai Communists and American CIA operatives all lived, and fought, scattered across Thailand's northern borderlands through the mid-twentieth century.[27] Groups built gambling dens and small-scale drug refineries which the forces of the central government found difficult to suppress or destroy completely.[28]

The highlands have long been a zone of conflict and conciliation between powers great and small, a place of great socio-cultural fragmentation. Historians have tried to understand the nature of power in the highlands. O.W. Wolters borrowed the concept of 'mandala' – implying concentric circles of royal influence – from South Asian historiography to describe Ayudhya.[29] Aidan Southall applied the concept of 'segmentary state' to early modern Asian and African societies, describing a situation where a changing periphery was under ritual suzerainty while only the core was under political sovereignty.[30] Stanley Tambiah, historian of Ayudhya, coined the term 'galactic polity' to signify a similar fluidity of political and ritual relations between core and periphery.[31]

The emphasis on the fuzzy nature of highland governance employed by historians of Southeast Asia contrasts with the descriptions found in the historiography of the Ming and Qing empires' frontiers. The formalised nature of many of the types of Ming and Qing governance (such as the *tusi*, or 'native chieftain', system) in these borderlands means that historians of China are more likely to describe political relations in the region as tributary

[27] Wen-Ching Chang, 'The Case of the KMT Yunnanese Chinese in Northern Thailand', *International Migration Review*, 35:4 (2001), 1093.
[28] Boonkamyeung, 'The Lahu Symbolic Universe and Reconstruction of Ethnic Identity', 125.
[29] O.W. Wolters, 'Ayudhya and the Rearward Part of the World', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 3 & 4 (1968), 174.
[30] Aidan Southall, 'The Segmentary State in Africa and Asia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30:1 (1988), 52.
[31] Stanley J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1976), 102; Stanley J. Tambiah, 'The Galactic Polity: The Structure of Traditional Kingdoms in Southeast Asia', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 293:1 (1977), 69.

systems or indirect rule.[32] On the ground, local actors such as Lahu, Wa and Shan people negotiated these multiple relationships in real time.[33] The overlap of institutions of imperial control meant that some Shan officials who as 'tusi' leaders provided militiamen to the Qing also, as Sawbwas, paid tribute to the Burmese kings.[34]

Keng Tung is central to this thesis, as a trade node that connected the northern and southern borders of Burma's Shan State, as well as a hub for opium trade, missionary activity, and the colonial frontier government. Prior to its submission to British rule during the 1880s 'pacification' of Upper Burma it was a principality which gave allegiance to multiple overlords. Lying between Burma and Yunnan, Keng Tung paid tribute to both the Burmese and Chinese overlords, and sometimes to Siam, while at the same time it had its own tributaries in Sipsong Panna.[35] The Keng Tung chronicles document the state's relations between surrounding empires and principalities down to the mid-nineteenth century.[36] The chronicles' nineteenth-century entries contain lists of tribute payments, marriage alliances and Keng Tung's raids to capture other states' populations. These exemplify the relational forms of power that existed in the borderlands.

Common conceptions of the nature of state-making in Southeast Asia often centre on how the nature of rulership changed from a pre-modern emphasis on controlling people to the modern concept of controlling territory. In the absence of territorial boundaries, government institutions or settled populations, Anthony Milner demonstrated how *kerajaan*, the concept

[32] Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F Siu, Donald Sutton (eds), *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity and Frontier in Early Modern China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, (2006), 4.
[33] Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 124.
[34] Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 124.
[35] Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 97.
[36] Sao Saimong Mangrai, *The Paedang Chronicle and the Jengtung State Chronicle Translated*, University of Michigan (2002); Volker Grabowsky and Renoo Wichasin, *Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng: A Tai Lu Principality of the Upper Mekong*, Honolulu: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawaii (2008); David K Wyatt and Aroonrut Wichienkeeo, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books (1995); David K Wyatt, *The Nan Chronicle*, Ithaca: Cornell University SE Asia Program (1994).

of 'being in the condition of having a Raja', was the defining feature of the Malay states' governance. Where land was plentiful and migration was common, the 'quest for subjects' was the main preoccupation of rulers.[37] Thomas M. Hastings and Wilson Donnan have showed how this dynamic can be found in Africa as well as in Southeast Asia. As land came to be seen as more valuable and scarce, rulers' focus changed from seeking to control maximum numbers of mobile people, to seeking to demarcate and control territory.[38] James Scott builds on this argument, arguing that the control of a settled base of taxable, conscript-able manpower was the main determinant of political power and the first prerogative of premodern Southeast Asian states.[39] Only by 'scouring its periphery' for people to take captive, he argues, was a growing state able to build the population base necessary to defend its core. Inter-state wars resembled large-scale slave raids, with the main aim being to seize as much of the other's population to resettle in one's own valleys.[40] This pattern of forced settlement is central to Scott's thesis concerning 'Zomia', which is the centre of the next intervention of this thesis.

THE QUESTION OF ZOMIA

In search of such new centres of study, scholars of upland Southeast Asia have recently been captivated by a new paradigm, which is fast becoming orthodoxy for the field. That paradigm—the launch of 'Zomia studies'—is the target of the next historiographical intervention of this thesis. Willem van Schendel coined the term 'Zomia' in 2002 as a way to challenge academics' unthinking acceptance of area studies as a unit of analysis. He called for academics to take the fine-grained knowledge for which area studies is best known and

[37] Anthony Crothers Milner, *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982), 8, 27.
[38] Thomas M. Hastings and Wilson Donnan, *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1998), 8.
[39] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, (2009), 64.
[40] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 86.

to apply it to different kinds of spaces, scales, borders and flows. He chose the uplands of Southeast Asia, southern China and south Central Asia to demonstrate his idea. Its inhabitants, whom he called 'Zomians', had in common many of the social and linguistic attributes which bound other academic areas. However, precisely because of its inhabitants' shared marginality, Zomia had never 'made it' as a world area, as a site of knowledge production.[41]

Van Schendel argues that today Zomia's prime political characteristic is that it is on the margins of 'ten valley-dominated states with which it has antagonistic relationships'.[42] Some take this further, and argue that the experience of upland peoples during the making of lowland states centred on efforts to 'escape' the reach of the state. According to this idea of an upland-lowland binary, highland people's autonomy during the period is explained by their having, at some point in the past, chosen to flee from predatory lowland states. This description of highland people escaping the making of states was built on the work of the anthropologist Pierre Clastres. In his 1972 work, *Society Against the State,* Clastres argued that primitive Amerindian societies chose to abandon fixed settlements and sedentary agriculture in order to avoid incorporation into the state. These societies were capable of larger economic surplus and larger-scale political order, he argued, but purposely chose an egalitarian social order, with chiefs having little or no power over people.[43] Historians, anthropologists and political scientists have applied this idea of 'statelessness' to political formations around the world.

The political scientist James Scott applied Clastres' anarchist political model to upland Southeast Asia. He argued that Zomia is a place where the hill populations actively resisted

[41] van Schendel, 'Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance', 653.
[42] van Schendel, 'Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance', 654.
[43] Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State,* Oxford: Blackwell (1977).

incorporation into the classical state, the colonial state and the nation-state. This pattern of resistance and escape, Scott argued, is most clearly apparent in the period after World War II, when Zomia became the site of secessionist movements, millenarian rebellions and armed opposition to lowland states.[44] Scott reads back this history of highland autonomy into the past. His major point is that, at some point in the past, Zomians actively chose to escape from lowland sedentary states, moving into the hills where the 'friction of terrain' protected them from taxation, conscription, and the other predatory attributes of early states. 'Far from being "left behind" by the progress of civilisation in the valleys, they have, over long periods of time, chosen to place themselves out of the reach of the state.'[45]

Numerous scholars have reflected on, defended and critiqued the concept of Zomia in the ten years since Scott brought the term into the mainstream. Scholars have in particular made use of the 'state-escaping' aspect of the idea, for instance in studies of illicit opium, statelessness, and border-crossing traders and migrants.[46] Others have taken Zomia further afield, seeing 'Zomian' characteristics in marine nomads such as the Moken of Myanmar's maritime borderlands, a 'watery Zomia'.[47] Critics of Scott's use of the concept of Zomia highlight among other things his tendency to engage in ahistorical cherry-picking of evidence, his monocausal and ironically state-centred explanations for complex phenomena, and his

[44] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 19.
[45] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 19.
[46] Bobby Anderson, 'Zomia's Vestiges: Illegible Peoples and Legible Crimes in Omkoi, Northwest Thailand', *South East Asia Research*, 26:1 (2018), 38-57; Sarah Turner, 'Borderlands and Border Narratives: A Longitudinal Study of Challenges and Opportunities for Local Traders Shaped by the Sino-Vietnamese border', *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010), 265-287; Soe Lin Aung, 'The Friction of Cartography: On the Politics of Space and Mobility among Migrant Communities in the Thai–Burma Borderlands', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 29:1 (2014), 27-45; Edward Peter Stringham and Caleb J. Miles, 'Repelling states: Evidence from upland Southeast Asia', *Review of Austrian Economics* 25 (2012), 17-33.
[47] Su-Ann Oh, 'Introduction', 10; Olivier Ferrari, 'Borders and Cultural Creativity: The Case of the Chao Lay, the Sea Gypsies of Southern Thailand', in Frédéric Bourdier, Maxime Boutry, Jacques Ivanoff and Olivier Ferrari (eds), *From Padi States to Commercial States: Reflections on Identity and the Social Construction Space in the Borderlands of Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (2015), 119-140.

dependence on an overly simplistic binary between lowland 'state' and upland 'non-state' people.[48]

A problem with some of the historiography of Zomia is its tendency to essentialise aspects of Zomians' pasts. It reduces the region's inhabitants to uncivilised, recalcitrant outsiders, inhabitants of a forgotten 'periphery of a periphery'.[49] One way to correct for this is to investigate the main narrative of Zomia's statelessness through a study of power and agency in the borderlands. Through trading with towns such as Keng Tung, mobile people were connected to lowland states. By utilising the new borders between states, whether for refuge or for trade, and by making use of or resisting state and non-state religions, Zomians were actively engaging with states, not escaping from them. This thesis calls into question the paradigm of stateless escapism on the part of these borderlands' inhabitants, the so-called Wild Wa and the generally-ignored Lahu. By showing the nature of their alliances, disputes and negotiations between themselves and with external entities all competing for power in the borderlands, this thesis examines the effects of these brokerages and contestations on state- and border-making in the borderlands. Groups of Wa, rather than existing in a vacuum of authority, instead sometimes combined in supralocal military and diplomatic alliances. Wa and Lahu people's networks of cross-border trade and evangelical religion challenged the new borders which lowland empires and states were negotiating across the region. This study rejects the apocryphal narrative of the so-called anti-state Wa, who supposedly repulsed

[48] Hjorleifur Jonsson, 'Above and Beyond: Zomia and the Ethnographic Challenge of/for Regional History', *History and Anthropology*, 21:2, (2010), 191-212; Bernard Formoso, 'Zomian or zombies? What future exists for the peoples of the Southeast Asian Massif?', *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010), 313-332; Mandy Sadan, 'Review of *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, (review no. 903)' *Reviews in History*, [accessed 3 April 2019, URL: https://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/903]; Victor Lieberman, 'A Zone of Refuge in Southeast Asia? Reconceptualizing Interior Spaces', *Journal of Global History*, 5:2 (2010), 333-346.

[49] Naoko Kumada, 'Margin to Mainstream, Periphery to Centre: Geopolitics and the Anthropology of Burma and the Silk Roads', *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 3:3 (2018), 260.

external powers and rejected state-formation.[50] It also suggests a new way to study Zomia, avoiding essentialising Zomians' pasts as stateless or state-escaping.

STATES IN ZOMIA

One way to avoid such essentialism is to not privilege one political formation as normative versus other political formations. A multitude of local as well as external centres of power contested territorial control in the borderlands. Border-making was not a competition between two lowland powers, but rather a multi-focal, multi-directional process. It helps here to recognise the blurred boundaries of the categories 'state' and 'non-state'.[51] Rather than focusing on the 'state', Karl Hack advocates for the 'system of power' as an analytical framework.[52] Seeing expressions of power in terms of differing modes of exerting territorial control is another way to better understand politics in the borderlands. Studying Wa political strategies, especially beside the Lahu's, can shed light on the different mechanisms by which people living in the borderlands attempted to challenge external states' projects of territorialisation in the hills. The literature on indigenous territoriality is well-developed in the historiography of North American borderlands.[53] This thesis examines questions of power and agency in local people's and foreigners' political strategies, as well as their ideas of distinctions between 'inside' and 'outside' the state, between the 'national' and the 'inter-' or 'trans-' 'national', binaries from which scholars today are only beginning to try to escape. This focus on territoriality can explain why the border (as an imaginary line) was so easily settled between Siam and Britain, but was not agreed until 1960 in the Wa hills.

[50] Fiskesjo, 'Mining, history, and the Anti-state Wa: the politics of autonomy between Burma and China', 245.
[51] Sadan, *Being and Becoming Kachin*, 46 fn. 17.
[52] Karl Hack with Tobias Rettig, 'Imperial systems of power, colonial forces and the making of modern Southeast Asia', in Karl Hack and Tobias Rettig (eds), *Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia*, London: Routledge (2006), 8.
[53] Patricia Albers and Jeanne Kay, 'Sharing the Land: A Study in American Indian Territoriality', in Thomas E. Ross and Tyrel G. Moore, *A Cultural Geography of North American Indians,* Boulder: Westview Press, (1987), 47-92; Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press (1992).

This thesis offers a corrective to the view, often common in borderlands history, that there has to be at least one external colonial protagonist for somewhere to be a borderland.[54] Showing the complexity of borderland politics before colonial and nation-state actors arrived on the scene is also a way to avoid empire- and nation-centred teleologies. Even when empires and nation-states extend their influence into the borderlands (and they are hard to avoid, especially for historians using external, 'deck-of-the-gunboat' style sources) it is possible to centre the agency of local actors in the story.

The risk in telling a history of the making of borders, whether on a transnational or any other scale, is of simply telling yet another narrative of the making of the nation-state from a new perspective. For instance, Baud and van Schendel's idea for a new borderlands history does not completely escape from this state-centred vision. Instead of asking how states have dealt with their borderlands, they instead call for historians to ask 'how borderlands have dealt with their states'.[55] In that analysis, however, the protagonists are the same, the binary between states and borderlands are the same, and only the question is different. Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett outline the problem at hand. Taking stock of the field of borderlands history in 2011, they called for historians to escape their *idée fixe* of 'simply tracing the balance between imperial and national power, and local resistance and resilience'. The challenge, they argued, is to find ways to reconcile old empire-centred and nation-centred narratives with indigenous and nonstate space and territoriality. Historians must 'link borderlands to European and indigenous power, envision new cores, and embrace more nuanced definitions of power.'[56]

[54] Hämäläinen and Truett, 'On Borderlands', 352.
[55] Baud and van Schendel, 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands', 235.
[56] Hämäläinen and Truett, 'On Borderlands', 352.

In the Wa country, scholars have identified some power centres as state-possessing, literate and densely-populated, such as the historic Hulu Kingdom at Banhong.[57] Other parts of Wa country – sometimes known as the 'interior' or 'central Wa', or 'wild Wa' – were more egalitarian. Scholars have argued that some of these Wa political systems were purposely 'anti-state'.[58] Magnus Fiskesjo argued that the central Wa area experienced the opposite of state formation. Apart from two localised historic experiments in Shan-style kingship, he argues, the Wa had no kings, no army and no state. Occasionally, non-hereditary individual leaders rose to contingent challenges of war and foreign affairs, but 'none had the power to order fellow Wa around'.[59]

These arguments are problematic because they assume a binary between territorial nation-states and egalitarian stateless societies. They also assume a linear movement from simple to complex political formations. Discussions of secondary state formation and mimicry imply an evolutionary framework, where complex states develop out of more primitive egalitarian societies. Hjorleifur Jonsson criticises historians who imply an evolution from simple societies to complex states, writing that:

The idea that a people (an ethnic group or otherwise) are kin-based or egalitarian rests on often unstated evolutionary premises. Some scholarship has charted a ladder, with particular steps from simplicity to complexity (band, tribe, chiefdom, state; egalitarian, ranked, stratified). Other work has assumed a binary, such as that found in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's 1940 work, *African Political Systems*, which suggested there were two kinds of

[57] Chit Hlaing (F. K. Lehman), 'The Central Position of the Shan/Tai Buddhism for the Socio-Political Development of Wa and Kayah Peoples', *Contemporary Buddhism*, 10:1 (2009), 18.
[58] Fiskesjo, 'Mining, History, and the Anti-State Wa', 245.
[59] Fiskesjo, 'Mining, History, and the Anti-State Wa', 245.

societies in Africa: stratified and territorial societies that constituted states and lineage societies that tended to be leaderless or acephalous.[60]

There was not necessarily a binary or an evolution between states and non-state societies. Fiskesjo admits that the Wa engaged in 'some of the worst sins of the states that surrounded them', such as war, slavery, and the forced extraction of tribute or taxes.[61] But he maintains his theory of the 'activist statelessness' of the central Wa, arguing that their politics represented the 'antithesis of state formation'. His theory discounts the possibility that there could also be political formations with features common to both territorial states and egalitarian societies.

Jonathan Friedman puts the differences in Wa political systems down to a model based on population density. The people he identifies as the interior, headhunting Wa, or Kawa, had the highest population density and the greatest number of densely-concentrated, highly-populated villages. These 'interior' Wa polities expanded continually outwards, but as they did so their settlements became more dispersed and their military organisation weaker. Settlements which had formerly been headhunting, interior Wa began to live by the proceeds of tribute and to assimilate with the surrounding cultures. These 'Lawa' often became Buddhist, and had hereditary kings, while the interior Wa continued to make war with them.[62] This structuralist analysis, like Edmund Leach's argument for an oscillatory dynamic in Kachin society, falls prey to accusations of eliding local histories.[63]

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[60] Hjorleifur Jonsson, 'Stexit? Southeast Asian pluralism, statelessness and exclusive identities', *Anthropology Today*, 33:6 (2017), 4.
[61] Fiskesjo, 'Mining, History, and the Anti-State Wa', 263.
[62] Jonathan Friedman, *System, Structure and Contradiction: The Evolution of 'Asiatic' Social Formations*, Walnut Creek: Altamira (1998), first edition 1979, 269.
[63] E.R. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*, London: G Bell and Sons Ltd. (1954); Mandy Sadan, 'Translating *Gumlau*: History, the 'Kachin' and Edmund Leach', in Francois Robinne and Mandy Sadan (eds), *Social Dynamics in the Highlands of Southeast Asia: Reconsidering* Political Systems of Highland Burma *by E.R. Leach*, Leiden: Brill (2007), 68.

The nature of the Lawa states in the Wa country contradicts Friedman's point that the trend towards hierarchy collapsed as society became unstable. Instead instability, caused by external threat, produced hierarchy by mutual agreement of the leaders. Charles Tilly is more correct in this case (wars make states) than Friedman (instability caused by environmental degradation led to collapse of hierarchy).[64] Tilly's argument connecting war and state-making has been applied to lowland states in Southeast Asia, but its relevance to upland state-building has been overlooked. Scott adapted Tilly's adage to argue for the power of lowland states in Southeast Asia, arguing: 'States make wars and wars – massively – make migrants'. Scott cited such examples as the two Burmese invasions of Siam (in 1549-1569 and in the 1760s) as having long-lasting demographic impacts, through conscription, epidemics, famine, and resulting depopulation of the defeated kingdom.[65] Fears of conscription as well as of the demands of the marching army sent the population of lower Burma fleeing into the hills, far from the state core and the king's marauding army.[66] In fact Tilly's thesis applies just as well to the important role of war, or the threat of war, in influencing upland people's political strategies, as to lowland wars causing refugees to flee into the hills, as Scott uses it. In the 1890s, observers noted that the Wa lived 'in a chronic state of armed defiance. … Warlike and formidable, well armed, with heavily-fortified villages, … they could very rapidly gather a large force for offence or defence'.[67] Polities such as these defy easy categorisation. Fulfilling Weber's basic definition of statehood, yet rejecting many of the attributes which are typically understood to define a state, the political formations of the Wa require us to nuance our categories of 'states' and 'stateless societies'. The notion of an evolutionary

[64] Charles Tilly, 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime', in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1985), 172.
[65] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 146.
[66] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 147.
[67] Minute by Donald Smeaton, Officiating Chief Commissioner Burma, 2 Jun 1896, 'The Settlement of the Wa States', in 'Expedition to Wa country, 1896-1898', 3391, Myanmar National Archives.

framework, whereby some political formations do not yet fulfil the ideal-type Weberian model (with the implication that they might progress towards and one day achieve this end goal) does not adequately explain Wa politics.

In the late nineteenth century, in the face of the colonial governments' race for resources, some Wa leaders, variously known as 'Lawa' or 'tame Wa', banded together into confederacies for mutual defence and to attempt diplomatic negotiations with external states. There were several confederacies of these Lawa village groups, on the border of East Manglun in the south of the Wa country, around Mongmao in the middle of the Wa country, and around Banhong and the Maolong mines to the north. They were ultimately successful in maintaining their control of the hills in the face of different empires' attempts to territorialise the hills. The Lawa's political organisation was more complex than that of just war chiefs. They had more power over people, were better at controlling territory, were better able to extract tribute, had a common religion, and had hereditary kingship, which implied a division of society between kings and commoners, based on reaping the rewards of the 'soft life' of racketeering.[68] This type of political formation mirrors Charles Tilly's definition of states as protection rackets. War-making was not the only factor contributing to the Lawa building supralocal political structures; the Lawa also built up a ruling class as a result of extracting rents from surrounding Shan states. Wa territoriality fulfils the Weberian definition of statehood, but their polities were of a different kind to the Western norm, being instead fluid and contingent, based on alliances between leaders.[69]

Scott admits that historically there have been states in the hills, where a fertile plateau and/or a key node in the overland trade routes made it possible. He describes instances of secondary

[68] Tilly, 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime', 172.
[69] On Weber's conception of the state as a monopoly of the use of legitimate force over a given territory see Max Weber et al, *From Max Weber: Essays on Sociology*, New York: Routledge, (2009), 48.

state formation when petty chiefs followed the formula of kingship based on Indian conceptions of royalty. Confederacies of villages which existed in the hills for the purposes of trade and warfare he argued resembled limited associations of nominal equals rather than permanent claims to authority. Occasionally, chiefs aiming to legitimate supra-village rule would borrow regalia, titles, and ceremonies from the lowland Indic courts, or from the Han-Chinese imperial order to the north. These borrowings from lowland state-making formulas were attempts to institutionalise the charismatic leadership typical of hill chiefs, and to turn a 'leader with followers into a Ruler with Subjects'.[70] Scott also mentions how an upland chief could sometimes serve as an intermediary for negotiating compacts with lowland powers, organising tribute and trade, or protecting against lowland raids for slaves.[71] But Scott ultimately discounts such instances of supravillage organisation, kingship and diplomacy for not fitting his theory of a state and non-state binary.

In this context the historical political organisation of Lahu people was very different from that of the Wa. At the turn of the nineteenth century, most Lahu lived as nomadic swidden, or 'taungya', farmers in the hills in between lowland principalities such as Keng Tung, Sipsong Panna and Chiang Mai. On the Siam-Burma border in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, foreign companies rushed to extract teak from the hills. Swidden farmers were largely unable to extract value from teak, which required elephants to drag logs down to the rivers. This meant that foreign companies or states with the capital and resources that were needed to monetise teak could ignore local farmers' demands.

The Lahu in the late nineteenth century found themselves in a totally different negotiating position vis-à-vis the external powers that began to try to tighten control over the highlands. Without the Wa's density of population, fortified villages and mineral wealth, the Lahu were

[70] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 113.
[71] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 113.

largely unable to form alliances to negotiate with external colonial powers entering the highlands. Whether or not their ancestors had at some historical moment chosen to escape lowland states and move to the hills, as Scott argues, in the nineteenth century their politics corresponded to the 'escapist' paradigm promulgated by Scott, as their leaders tactically switched allegiance to different lowland states. Many Lahu people's lifestyle likewise matched their flexible politics, with villages built hidden under the brows of hills, only visible to military expeditions when they stumbled over them.

In the late nineteenth century, when the British and Siamese began to extend state control over the Shan states, the Lahu were still relatively recent immigrants to the area. In several waves over the nineteenth century, triggered initially by failed uprisings in the Yunnan borderlands at the turn of the eighteenth century, Lahu people migrated southwards across the Shan states.[72] The Qing's violent suppression of several Lahu rebellions in the late eighteenth and again in the late nineteenth centuries drove the Lahu to migrate out of Yunnan.[73] The Lahu have a story that their original homeland was in China. This story of the Lahu valley state in Yunnan and the subsequent migration of the Lahu out of it are mentioned in British colonial records in 1893, not long after the first documented mass southward migrations of Lahu people from Yunnan. The Lahu ruler of Mong Hka (today Ximeng), in a meeting with a British official, James George Scott, said that the Lahu once lived in their own valley kingdom in Yunnan.[74] A couple of centuries ago, he said, the Chinese drove them out. One group went down the Mekong and settling as far south as Chiang Mai, another went

[72] Anthony R. Walker, *Merit and the Millennium: Routine and Crisis in the Ritual Lives of the Lahu People*, New Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation (2003), 85.
[73] Walker, *Merit and the Millennium*, 79-83.
[74] To clarify, James George Scott and James C. Scott are two very different people. The first was a colonial administrator, who became an 'expert' on the Shan states after the British annexation and so-called Pacification of Upper Burma in 1885. The second, James C. Scott, is a political scientist at Yale University.

west and scattered themselves over the western Shan states, and the third settled at Nan Cha in Yunnan, whence they spread northwards to Mong Lem.[75]

The Lahu living in the Burma-Siam borderlands in the 1880s were the descendants of these refugees from Yunnan. At the time that the British and Siamese were extending state penetration into the highlands, some Lahu leaders tried 'escapist' tactics. These tactics failed to work in the new context of border-making as drawing lines between homogeneous settled populations, when the Lahu were overlooked, divided and their forests annexed. Their political choices meant they were ultimately ignored when it came to the border negotiations between Siam and Britain. Tactics such as claiming territory temporarily, strategically shifting allegiance to different lowland rulers, and frequently migrating in order to rest the soil or avoid meeting state officials did not fit new definitions of sovereignty as rule over settled populations. The British and Siamese simply ignored the Lahu's affiliations in making their decisions over the border. The Lahu's nomadic lifestyle contradicted the new imperative, which was to try to draw lines between settled populations and to extradite people of different ethnic groups if need be. The Lahu's continuing border-crossing nomadic existence highlighted the contradictions in this stated policy.

The history of the making of nation-states in the region has yet to acknowledge the complexity of politics in the borderland, irreducible to a simple binary of highland and lowland state systems. Taking a pan-borderlands approach enables this focus on how Zomian people's own centres of power interacted both with each other and with outside powers in the region. Binaries of state and non-state are not sufficient to explain Zomian political formations and alliances.

[75] James Scott, Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, to the Chief Commissioner of British Burma, Camp Mong Hka, 19 February 1893, Chinese encroachment in the neighbourhood of Mong Hka, 8931, Myanmar National Archives.

CONTESTED MOBILITY OF PEOPLE AND THINGS

The second overarching theme of this thesis centres on the contested mobility of people and commodities across the highlands and their role in bounding new nation-states in upland Southeast Asia at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This thesis suggests that these networks and flows were crucial to the process of bounding territories. Studying things, ideas and people in motion offers a new transnational view of state-building in the highlands. This comparative pan-borderlands approach extends the current nation-state-centred focus of Southeast Asian borderlands historiography. This builds on the work of Eric Tagliacozzo on nineteenth-century Dutch efforts at border control in the Dutch East Indies. Cross-border disputes created by moving things and people are best examined in a more transnational light. These disputes at the margins are fundamental to how nation-states were formed and continually reconstituted.

Properly decentring the nation is difficult, as it requires us to rethink dominant and different narratives of causation given by historians of each nation. Yet centring the periphery in this context is vital, as any national narrative will fail to explain the historical experience of many people living in borderlands. The Lahu's multitude of endo- and exonyms hints at the plurality of their relations with lowland states. They are commonly called 'Luohei' by Chinese, and 'Mussur' by Thai and Shan (from whence 'Muhso' by British colonial officials).[76] Lahu history therefore does not fit easily into standard historical narratives. For a long time history's scale has been reflexively national. It is only relatively recently that historians have fully confronted this issue. Richard White notes how history as a discipline is 'the child of the nation-state', and how historians have 'almost automatically' used it as

[76] Thein Tun Oo, 'The Myths: An Understanding of Genesis Creation from Lahu Tradition', unpublished MDiv thesis, Myanmar Institute of Theology, 2013, 49; Ma Jianxiong, 'Marginalisation and Exit: The Collapse of Social Life among the Lahu Minority in Southwest China', unpublished PhD thesis, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 2007, 108; Anthony R. Walker, 'The Divisions of the Lahu People', *Journal of the Siam Society,* 62:2 (1974), 255.

the preferred scale for their work.[77] Even local and regional histories are frequently national histories in disguise, White argues. Their standard of comparison remains the nation. But, White cautions, recent attempts to turn attention to other scales, particularly the global, risk equally erasing other scales, just as the focus on the national had.[78] There is a way for transnational historians to study cross-border flows without erasing the national scale. Christopher Bayly suggested the answer in the context of a critique of historians who unquestioningly use the term 'transnational' to describe processes in the era before nations became dominant. He argued that on the contrary, nations are not things that transnational history should try to transcend, but rather nations should be seen as (rather late) products of the forces studied by transnational historians.[79] This thesis takes up his invitation to study how cross-border flows influenced the making, and unmaking, of nations.

Eric Tagliacozzo, historian of Indonesia, has studied the role of border-crossing commodities in the making of borders in Southeast Asia. He shows how over the nineteenth century, external powers were gradually drawn in to the highlands by new demands for the region's natural resources, and how this engendered a new conception of land ownership and sovereign borders. He shows the interplay of commodities in motion and the making of boundaries, arguing that trade made some borders especially contested. Boundary production and boundary transgression were two sides of the same coin.[80] Tagliacozzo is interested in the interaction between politics, commodity flows and frontiers, and how each shaped the other over the nineteenth century. While he criticises Michael Adas and Fred Riggs' lowland rice basin-centred histories of Southeast Asia, and Thongchai Winichakul and Thant Myint-U's more recent court-centred histories, he nonetheless writes about border-crossing from a

[77] Richard White, 'The Nationalisation of Nature', *Journal of American History* 86:3 (1999), 979.
[78] White, 'The Nationalisation of Nature', 979.
[79] Chris Bayly, 'Conversation on Transnational History', *American Historical Review*, 111:5 (2006), 1449.
[80] Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, 3.

central state perspective.[81] He has focused on British actions in the region, with some discussion of the 'indigenous response' by the Siamese and Burmese monarchies. The basic structure of his article on the subject of the borders of Burma and Siam reflects his state-oriented method. He divides his article into two halves – 'England and Burma' and 'England and Siam'. Tagliacozzo focuses on British, Burmese and Siamese government interests in order to show how commodity flows shaped frontier-making and vice versa. From a central state perspective, some frontiers were seen as more politically troublesome or economically desirable than others. He argues that government interest in the frontier dictated the 'pathways of indigenous action'.[82] A more transnational approach, focusing on the movement of people and things across the borderland, adds to our understanding of border-making in the region by recognising the limitations of European influence on the process and highlighting not only contingency but the agency of people in the borderlands. The recent emphasis on process geographies as a technique to study Zomia could extend Tagliacozzo's work on smuggling. Unlike 'trait geographies', which focus on specific shared attributes such as language or culture, process geographies invite an examination of large-scale motions and interactions.[83] This thesis applies this technique to study the mobility of people as well as things, connecting both to a study of frontier governmentality in order to explain the development of borders *within*, as well as around, Burma. Following the people and commodities whose border-crossing was contested reveals how far. mobility was central to the process of border-making in the region.

[81] Michael Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier, 1852–1941*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, (1974); Fred Riggs, *Thailand: The Modernisation of a Bureaucratic Polity*, Honolulu: East-West Centre Press, (1966); Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*; Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2001).
[82] Eric Tagliacozzo, 'Ambiguous Commodities, Unstable Frontiers: The Case of Burma, Siam, and Imperial Britain, 1800–1900', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46:2 (2004), 356.
[83] C. Patterson Giersch, 'Across Zomia with Merchants, Monks, and Musk: Process Geographies, Trade Networks, and the Inner-East–Southeast Asian Borderlands', *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010), 217.

Cross-border religious networks across the highlands contested, and thereby shaped, the making of borders in the region. Protestant Christianity spread across the region on pre-existing networks of itinerant millenarian preachers, first among Lahu people and soon to Wa. A Baptist mass conversion movement in the early years of the twentieth century spread initially along networks which originated in the Lahu Mahayana Buddhist millenarian movement of the eighteenth century. Baptist messianism was influenced by the Lahu's millenarian Buddhism, but Buddhism also provided the network of itinerant preachers, and the supra-village organisation, for it to spread among other Lahu, despite Lahu communities being dispersed over large distances. Scholars of Lahu millennialism have not studied how external states contested the cross-border movements of Christian preachers. Debates between lowland states over the freedom of movement of not just American and Karen missionaries, but also Lahu and Wa preachers, helped to reify the disputed national borders, which had hitherto existed only on maps.

Missionaries working in the highlands had their own ideas of territorial divisions, which for many years had little crossover with national divisions. They instead conceived of the land in sacred, biblical terms, speaking of 'vast fields' of people waiting to be converted. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Baptist and Presbyterian missionaries working in the northern and southern borders of Keng Tung State were consumed by arguments between the two denominations over the division of the mission field. Baptists and Presbyterians grappled with the question of how to divide up a region that was scattered with multiple different ethnic groups, who lived interspersed with one another yet spoke different languages. Presbyterians wanted to split the territory by linguistic groups, while Baptists wanted to split it by ethnicity and topography. International borders were initially irrelevant to their thinking, as the two denominations agreed to draw borders along caravan trails. The Burma-China border became an annoyance for the Baptists over the first decades of the twentieth century, when their

attention was drawn from Burma's Shan states to the possibilities of 'the China field', and they hoped to convert the Lahu and Wa living in Yunnan. The mission field on the Siamese-Burmese borderland was ultimately divided along national lines, and the Presbyterians remained at their base in Chiang Mai and worked with the Lahu living in Siam. The mission field across the Qing-Burmese borderland was not divided at all but worked by one family. The 1930s saw increasing Chinese and British state presence on either side of the border. Both sets of missionaries began to adapt to the newly intrusive state presence by cooperating with states.

Comparing Baptist sources, which were focused on expanding the mission territory across the region from British Burma to the Wa and Lahu living in Yunnan, to Presbyterian sources, which show the missionaries' policy of working within the nation-state, also indicates the possible origins of the differential development of each borderline. The hardening of the Burmese and Chinese border began as the Qing and British started to stop Baptist missionaries and preachers continually trying to work across the borderlands. The Baptists constantly tested the porosity of the Yunnan border, with Lahu and Wa preachers continuing for years to cross the border and escape the reach of both states, until in the 1910s both governments expelled non-citizen Christians. The Presbyterian missionaries' philosophy of missionary education within national boundaries, on the other hand, aimed in the early decades of the twentieth century to make Thai citizens of the Lahu. This episode demonstrates how, as the question of citizenship came into focus in the borderlands of each country over the period, missionaries' different approaches to language and education – variously emphasising transnational or national ties – had a real effect. The Burma-China border was shaped by the contested movement of preachers and missionaries, as missionaries frustrated British and Chinese attempts to control their trips across the disputed border. The

transgressing of borders could therefore lead to their reification, as invisible lines demarcating citizens from non-citizens.

Circulations of illicit goods had similar effects on border-making as people transgressing borders. Opium was a major commodity traded across the highlands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Smugglers who transported opium between states as a way to benefit from differences in national tax regimes paradoxically made the international boundaries more rather than less relevant. Colonial states in Southeast Asia were built on opium revenues. The system of opium monopolies set up in the nineteenth century involved companies tendering for the right to tax the retail sale of opium in a given territory. This system made huge profits available to smugglers who could undercut the monopolists' prices, which further encouraged both cultivation in upland Southeast Asia and southwest China, and trafficking of opium across the region.

A network of long-distance trade routes threaded through the highlands, connecting local trade routes to distant principalities and empires. Traders, mostly from Yunnan, leading caravans of mules, crisscrossed the highlands and continued to do so after borders began gradually to harden around the turn of the twentieth century. At the same time, the direction of this trade changed with the increasing presence of external powers. The pre-colonial caravan trade had branched out from Kunming and Dali in Yunnan into remote areas around the highlands. The growth of international maritime trade and the growing ability of Rangoon and Bangkok to control their hinterlands led to the connection of the caravan trade with international commerce.[84] Zomians in motion were increasingly connected to global systems and not, as Scott would have it, always in flight. The trade between Keng Tung and China is one example. Goods imported from China included silk, iron pots, salt, honey and straw hats;

[84] Ann Maxwell Hill, *Merchants and Migrants: Ethnicity and Trade among Yunnanese Chinese in Southeast Asia*, New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies (1998), 35.

exports to China comprised tea, ivory, rhinoceros horns, birds' wings and feathers, and cotton.[85] Traders made use of the spread of borders across the region. Trade in commodities such as opium was encouraged by the windfalls available to smugglers in French opium monopolies in French Indochina. At the same time cross-border smuggling challenged borders' existence, by avoiding attempts to tax or control illicit goods. Tagliacozzo has looked at the role played by illicit trade in the strengthening of state borders in insular Southeast Asia. He describes the border as a technological project, 'woven from imperial fears and ambitions'.[86] A locally rooted approach would extend his argument, resting as it does on the power and agency of states (and the Dutch state in particular). Showing how locals negotiated with the states on both sides, rather than just how one state extended its reach, will give another perspective on the making of the border.

Zomian-themed studies have focused on the 'friction of terrain' which continues to enable opium growers in the region – widely known today as the so-called 'Golden Triangle' – to avoid the reach of the state's demands.[87] They have tended not to pay sufficient attention to the mechanisms by which highland dwellers, in order to actually profit from cultivating opium, were connected to external states and wider regional economies. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Panthay Muslims at Panglong, a village in the Wa country, were key to integrating the Wa hills into the wider regional economy. Descendants of families who had fled Yunnan after the defeat of the Panthay rebellion in 1873, by the 1930s the Panthay traders were financed by Singapore Chinese, with a population of around 5,000 and approximately 1,500 opium transport mules. From the Wa hills they transported opium into

[85] Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 212.
[86] Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, 108.
[87] Bobby Anderson, 'Forestry, Illegibility and Illegality in Omkoi, Northwest Thailand', *Forest and Society*, 1:2 (2017), 107.

French, British and Siamese territory.[88] Similar centres for trading goods into and out of the Wa country included Mongmao and the Shan village of Nahpan, rich villages in the middle of Wa country. In the case of Mongmao in the early twentieth century, surrounding Wa leaders recognised the importance of the state for their trade, and came to a mutual agreement whereby this village was not to be raided by any Wa group, on penalty of a fine.[89] Nahpan, a Shan colony and wealthy trading centre, was equally respected. When British officers visited in 1897 they reported: 'The chief Shan colony met with was at Na Hpan. These men are great traders, and are very well off and quite capable of defending themselves against the neighbouring Was, although these all own Ngek Lek as their sawbwa. The facts of their paying only such a small tribute as 60 baskets of rice annually to the Was and of their village being entirely unstockaded go to prove that they are held in great respect by the Was.'[90] The long-distance cross-border trade, which exploited differential tax regimes across the region, connected opium growers to the regional economy. Villages of Shan and Panthay traders were central to providing these services, and Wa opium growers respected their role and protected them.

South of the Wa country, Keng Tung town was a major transit point for opium passing from southwest China and northern Burma southwards to Siam and the Straits Settlements. The 1930s saw fierce debates between the Keng Tung Sawbwa and the British Government of Burma over the opium trade through Keng Tung State. The Sawbwa, who was personally involved in smuggling opium, wanted to legalise and tax the trade. These discussions were part of a wider debate at the time regarding the independence of the so-called 'Frontier

[88] G.E. Harvey, 'The Wa People of the Burma-China Frontier', in G.F. Hudson (ed), St Antony's Papers 11, Far Eastern Affairs, No. 1, London: Chatto & Windus (1957), 129.
[89] 'Information from a Wa friendly, Mahayawt Hkam', in G.E. Barton, *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary*, Rangoon: Government Printing and Stationery (1933), 95.
[90] Report of the Intelligence Officer Accompanying the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on his Tour in 1896-97, Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Rangoon: 1897, IOR/L/PS/2095, British Library.

Areas'. The British had always governed these parts of Burma separately to the rest of the country. The leaders of the states which made up the Frontier Areas each had control over their states' domestic affairs, overseen by a British advisor. In the 1930s the Keng Tung Sawbwa, through the debate over the opium trade, demanded more freedom to set his own foreign policy. Border affairs were becoming foreign affairs. Yet at the same time as the British were trying to smooth internal borders within Burma, in this instance by contesting the Sawbwa's right to make his own foreign policy, the continuing internal differences in the laws on opium taxation resulted in the phenomenon of illicit smuggling across Burma's internal borders. Contested circulations of opium *intra*-nationally as well as *inter*-nationally forced local and colonial powers to confront the contradictions inherent in the haphazard nature of governance in Burma.

DECENTRING THE NATION

These contradictions in frontier governance had long-term consequences for Burma. The third theoretical intervention of this thesis concerns the shift in views of border-making and frontier governance from the colonial era to the early years of independence. The colonial demand for resources had the effect of amplifying local agency. Always reacting to events on the ground, colonial officials developed a patchwork of systems of frontier administration. This differentiated sovereignty extended beyond just the division between the frontier/excluded areas and the rest of Burma. Within the Frontier Areas too there were gradations of sovereignty. Nationalist Burman politicians and press reacted in different ways to the legacies of colonial differential frontier governance. The Cold War context frames divergent views of the border after independence, from a symbolic line embodying the nation, to a remote zone of indeterminate sovereignty. In this way haphazard colonial governance and institutionalisation of difference contributed to post-colonial political problems.

Borderlands history can reconfigure the post-colonial nation-state's teleologies by revealing continuities and persisting legacies. In this thesis, by approaching events and processes in the borderlands from a comparative perspective we can see 'how imperfectly the fledgling heirs to empire imposed their modern logic of incorporation and control on those they claimed as citizens and subjects'.[91] Aihwa Ong has developed the concept of 'graduated sovereignty', which applies to places that are unevenly integrated into systems of state power and global capital. There, in what she calls a system of 'variegated citizenship', the state treats some of the population differently, introducing further fragmentation on top of categories of race, ethnicity, class and gender.[92] Ong applies her concept to places such as industrial zones, where indigenous inhabitants were differentially treated by Southeast Asia's 'strong states' in an age of neoliberalism and globalisation, or Malaysia's political and economic concessions to indigenous *bumiputra,* but the term can apply as well to the colonial era.

The concept of citizenship was not homogeneous. Even within the Frontier Areas, sections of the population and swathes of territory were administered separately. Some of these differences came about as a product of the process of border-making. Contested sovereignty, and contested definitions of sovereignty, were resolved (on paper) on the Siam-Burma border, but not on the border through the Wa hills. The British and Siamese Boundary Commissioners in the late nineteenth century negotiated between different definitions of sovereignty. Eventually they agreed to define citizens by birth in defined territory. Inhabitants who did not match ethnic definitions were to be extradited. Of course this was not carried out comprehensively. Moreover, nomadic people such as the Lahu contradicted this new territorial imaginary entirely. In the Wa country, repeated attempts at border-making in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries failed to create agreement on citizenship or

[91] Hämäläinen and Truett, 'On Borderlands', 359.
[92] Aihwa Ong, 'Graduated Sovereignty in Southeast Asia', *Theory, Culture and Society,* 17:4 (2000), 57.

sovereignty. Down to the present day the Wa region has seen no standard teleology of empire- and nation-making, where centres impose control and citizenship on former outsiders.

Some have argued that such fragmented sovereignty was inherent to empires. Eric Beverley, writing on frontier governmentality, argues that nineteenth-century European colonialism produced a 'textured and uneven legal terrain, rather than homogeneous imperial units'. The fragmentation of sovereignty between empires and subordinated states created frontier zones that 'unsettled the workings of governance'.[93] This thesis shows how the administration of the Shan States reflected the ad hoc approach the British took to frontier governance. Keng Tung State, as one of the Federated Shan States, was part of the so-called Frontier Areas. The Frontier Areas were governed separately from the rest of Burma, known as Ministerial Burma. The Shan Sawbwas supposedly had control over their internal affairs, overseen by British administrators. The Wa hills were treated separately again, retaining their autonomy despite British claims to the territory. Global historians often associate the turn of the nineteenth century with the culmination of imperial consolidation in Asia and Africa, but in fact empires remained heterogeneous entities, coping with contested external frontiers and sovereign polities within their domains.[94] Ann Laura Stoler asserts that empires, or 'imperial formations', are 'macropolities', whose 'technologies of rule thrive on the production of exceptions and their uneven and changing proliferation'. Critical features of imperial formations, she argues, include 'harboring and building on territorial ambiguity, redefining legal categories of belonging and quasi-membership, and shifting the geographic and demographic zones of partially suspended rights'.[95] A comparative study of the different borders of the Shan states – internal and external – and the negotiations over frontier

[93] Eric Lewis Beverley, 'Frontier as Resource: Law, Crime, and Sovereignty on the Margins of Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 55:2 (2013), 272.
[94] Beverley, 'Frontier as Resource: Law, Crime, and Sovereignty on the Margins of Empire', 242-3.
[95] Ann Laura Stoler, 'On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty', *Public Culture*, 18:1 (2006), 128.

governance, can therefore ask questions such as: how far did 'stateless' territories and ethnically diverse peoples in the borderlands become part of colonial empires and modern nation-states? This study can help us understand how the legacies of colonial frontier governance, based as it was on the institutionalisation of difference within the country, shaped the border politics of independent Burma.

The gradations of sovereignty and citizenship in the borderlands raises questions with regard to the famous work by the historian of the making of Siam's borders, Thongchai Winichakul. He explained the creation of Siam's borders as an exercise in moulding the cartographic imagination of a nation. When seen from the perspective of the borderlands, his work raises several questions which this thesis will address. Thongchai Winichakul coined the phrase the 'geo-body' of the nation to describe the Siamese discourse around 'putting Thailand on the map'.[96] He has examined how the idea of the national geo-body replaced previous geographies of overlapping margins between polities. He describes the emergence of the geo-body of Siam as a displacement of indigenous concepts of political space by the modern cartographic imagination of the nation at various moments, both by foreign powers and by the Siamese themselves.[97] One place where his work has raised questions has been in the role of mapping as a hegemonic discourse at the margins of the state. Historians have pointed out that this discourse never became as hegemonic as his sources would make it appear. Critics cite for instance the continuing presence in Thailand today of no less than eighty minority languages. Richard O'Connor has written of Winichakul's tendency to overemphasise the influence of court-centred and textual representations of reality. O'Connor posits that 'while he [Winichakul] gets the Siamese elite right, he slights the Tai beyond Bangkok'.[98] This

[96] Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 3.
[97] Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 108.
[98] Richard O'Connor, 'Review: Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation, by Thongchai Winichakul', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 56:1 (1997), 280.

overstating of the influence of the Siamese elite comes naturally from the types of sources Winichakul uses, from geography textbooks to royal poetry. The peripheries of the nations whose imagined geo-bodies Winichakul explains have often been marked by resistance to these narratives. He explains admirably nation-building's successes, but fails adequately to address its failures. The work that Winichakul has begun – directing historians to explore indigenous conceptions of space and how they were displaced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – can be furthered by exploring how these conceptions in some places held out against the otherwise homogenising influence of lowland nation-states. The sources which this thesis uses bring into question the extent to which modern mapping successfully overrode the ambiguities of pre-existing notions of sovereignty. It is only by paying attention to these sub-narratives that the variable successes of state penetration can be understood.

Viewed from the periphery the concept of national geo-bodies was honoured more in the breach. Disputes over the extent of the Frontier Areas' independence from Burma 'proper' shaped Burman nationalists' perceptions of border politics. The differential administration of populations within the Frontier Areas further influenced future relations between centre and periphery. The British tried to reconcile the contradictions between their desire to rule over homogeneous bounded territory and their desire to deal with ethnic groups separately by creating internal borders. The contingent, haphazard and often contradictory nature of frontier governance had lasting legacies in the uneven state penetration and continuing autonomy of some spaces on the margins of the new nation-states into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The legacies of colonial-era differentiated sovereignty influenced Burman government and newspapers' ideas of borders as either symbolic lines surrounding the national body, or remote zones of fuzzy sovereignty.

THESIS OUTLINE AND SOURCES

This thesis is organised chronologically, to follow the making of borders in the region from the 1880s to the 1950s. Each chapter centres around different bodies of sources, from colonial government sources, opium trading statistics and League of Nations reports, through American missionary correspondence to Burman nationalist speeches and newspapers. Each also considers different moments in the history of the borderlands. Choosing to structure the thesis around types of sources as well as chronological moments allows a more panoramic, pan-regional approach. Similarly letting different protagonists guide each chapter enables a triangulation from different perspectives. The paucity of local-language written sources (both Lahu and Wa were first written down by missionaries in the early twentieth century) is a problem facing any attempt to centre a narrative in the borderlands. Certain sources such as G.E. Harvey's *Wa Precis* need to be used creatively in this context.[99] Beginning with the boom in teak extraction in northern Siam and the Shan states in the 1890s and subsequent boundary negotiations, this thesis makes extensive use of colonial sources such as the Scott papers in Cambridge University Library, the Harvey papers in Oxford University's Weston Library, and the Government of Burma and Government of India papers in the Myanmar National Archives, the Oxford Oriental Institute and the British Library. Additional information on teak extraction came from the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation papers in the London Metropolitan Archives. Missionaries' correspondence relating to the Yunnan-Burma-Siam borderlands is located in the Young papers at the American Baptist Historical Society archives in Atlanta, Georgia and the North Laos Mission papers at the American Presbyterian Mission archives in Payap University, Chiang Mai. Colonial records again play a role in the chapter on the Keng Tung Sawbwa's cross-border business dealings, as do the

[99] G.E. Harvey's *Wa Precis* is an edited summary of mainly government sources relating to the Wa, dating from the 1800s to 1931 and compiled just before the fiasco of the Pang Long expedition in 1933. Formerly the Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, Harvey retired from the Government of Burma in 1932 and was a lecturer in Burmese language and history at Oxford from 1936 to 1942.

League of Nations Opium Commission records in the Bodleian Law Library, Oxford. For the post-independence parliamentary democracy period in Burma, this thesis uses different sources again. Pamphlets from Ludu library in Mandalay, and newspapers and politicians' speeches from the collections at Mandalay University form the backbone of this chapter – in this democratic period, unlike in the colonial era, border issues were debated in the public sphere.

The first chapter examines border-making in the Lahu and Wa borderlands in the 1880s-1900s. The nature of Lahu and Wa centres of power evolved over the period, as the borderland became a resource frontier for external empires. The type of natural resources in the area affected local people's political power. The Lahu people living in the teak-rich hills between the southern Shan and northern Thai states were nomadic swidden farmers. In this borderland, teak was in high demand by the turn of the nineteenth century, after British logging companies had exhausted the forests of Lower Burma. However, the value of teak was hard to realise without the capital investment needed for elephants. When local people lived by subsistence agriculture they often could not afford to monetise the valuable teak resources surrounding them, and were easily ignored in the process of border-making. Where highland-dwellers were able to control or extract the resources of the borderlands, on the other hand, they more easily controlled the agenda in disputes over the ownership of the land. This was the case for the people living on the Burma-Yunnan border. Mines were more easily worked in artisanal ways by local people compared to the capital-intensive nature of teak exploitation. Wa and Lahu communities living in the Qing-Burmese borderlands further north were wealthier and their populations denser. Besides mines, they also exported much larger quantities of opium than people living in the hills of the northern Thai border, which also gave them comparatively greater autonomy. Through a comparative history of two boundary negotiations – one on the Burma-Siam frontier in 1888-92 and another on the

Burma-China frontier in 1897-99, this chapter interrogates the assumption that external powers were the only powers with territorial ambitions in the highlands. People living on the Yunnan border practiced the same territoriality as the external empires. They were able to play the powers off against each other, or prevent the British and Qing from entering the borderland altogether. Ultimately, the Wa's tactics of engaging with external states was a more effective way of ensuring autonomy, compared to the nomadic Lahu's ultimately unsuccessful decision to flee from the Boundary Commission.

The second chapter similarly combines a global historical approach with a local history of state-making. This chapter uses missionary sources to show the role that missionaries' and converts' cross-border networks played in border-making in the 1900s and 1910s. In the more volatile and contested borderlands in the northern Shan states, missionaries represented a threat to external states which were trying to maintain the fiction of governing. The British and the Qing tried to prevent missionaries entering those contested areas of the border which each claimed to govern but which were in fact autonomous, as the murder of foreigners could be used by one state to prove the other's lack of control over the territory. Instead, local converts crossed the border, which for them was in practice invisible. The connectivity of local people's networks across the highlands was crucial to the project of building a mass movement across the borderlands in this first decade of the new century. Missionaries who challenged states' claims to sovereignty over effectively autonomous and ungoverned territory were quickly banned from crossing the new border, but local networks which criss-crossed the borderlands continued unimpeded, for now, by the new divisions. The implications for state-making were twofold: missionaries had revealed the fact that the highlands were in fact ungoverned and autonomous, and border-crossing converts had revealed the irrelevance of lowland states' 'geo-bodies'. In contrast, missionaries in the borderlands of northern Siam and Burma had a different relationship to projects of state

formation. Rather than being excluded from the borderlands in case they revealed the lack of state control, in Siam missionaries in the early twentieth century were wrapped up in the Siamese project of state-building. The Siamese monarchy encouraged Presbyterians missionaries in northern Siam to teach local people the standard Thai dialect and to teach them to read Thai script. Presbyterians working in Siam evinced a territorial imagination that was more guided by nation-state boundaries than their more transnationally-minded Baptist counterparts in the Burma-China borderlands. The Presbyterians wrote about the importance of educating good Siamese citizens, bringing northern Siamese Christians to visit the nation's capital, and singing the national anthem when parting with visiting Burmese Christians at the border. Over time, however, Baptists working in Burma and China began to cooperate more with the external projects of state-making on either side of the border, as secular geographies began to override their former sacred geographical imaginations.

The third chapter examines cross-border flows of opium in the 1910s and 1920s from two perspectives. First, the chapter analyses how local people, by profiting from the differences in the British, Chinese, Siamese and also French drug and tax regimes, helped make borders a reality across the region. Smugglers responded to differences in national drug regimes by trading opium across borders, and growers themselves adapted their cultivation or even themselves migrated across international borders. These actions paradoxically helped to strengthen, in their attempts to transgress, the new borders. The cross-border trade in opium highlights the role local actors played in the making of borders, by challenging the legitimacy of the borders that were being decided by imperial powers. Examining opium cultivation and trade in these borderlands from a global perspective shows how fluctuations in the global and regional prices of opium affected local trends in trade and cultivation. This chapter shows how local people in the highlands were in fact integrated into, rather than escaping from, the wider economy. Secondly, this chapter analyses disputes between the Keng Tung Sawbwa,

Sao Kawng Kiao Intaleng, and the British Government of Burma in the 1920s and 1930s concerning, among other things, the Sawbwa's cross-border trade in opium from Keng Tung to Siam and his attempts to sign cross-border business deals with foreign companies. This was the period when border affairs began to be truly 'foreign' affairs. Debates over the Sawbwa's desire to conduct his own foreign policy with Siam highlight how the patchwork of colonial administration in the Frontier Areas evolved haphazardly, always reacting to events locally. The regime of differentiated sovereignty within Burma characterised the colonial approach to governing the borderland. These disputes with the Shan Sawbwas over conducting their own foreign policy would have future implications for Burma's politics at independence.

The fourth chapter considers the implications of the different ideas of the border held by the colonial government and borderland inhabitants. The border began to be useful not just to colonial powers seeking to territorialise the borderlands as a resource frontier, where their primary goals were to control, demarcate and exploit the territory, but also to borderland inhabitants themselves. Afraid of increasing Chinese state penetration into the borderlands, Panthay elites made use of the heightened British interest in the Wa region in the early twentieth century to persuade colonial administrators to extend administration into the borderlands. The exact location of the border began to take on increased importance, both for the Panthays seeking protection from the Chinese, and for the British looking to control mines, as the disastrous British mining expedition to Pang Long caused an international incident. This chapter shows how the government's focus on borderland resource extraction had the effect of amplifying local agency, contributing to the contingent and multi-layered systems of frontier governance.

The final chapter shows how the Cold War context explains differing views of borders in independent Burma. The Rangoon government, when afraid of US-backed KMT occupation of Shan State in the 1950s, sought to emphasise the border as a symbolic line demarcating the sovereign nation. By contrast when PLA troops crossed the border in the 1950s the Rangoon government emphasised that the border through the Wa hills was a grey area of fuzzy sovereignty. There was a mismatch between top-down nationalist ideology, which sought to prevent people from Othering foreign allies, and the anti-China nationalist press such as the *Nation*, which saw the border as a line around the anthropomorphised body of the nation. The Rangoon government was happy to sign a border agreement with China in 1960, even though it entailed a loss of territory, as it cemented Burma's relations with an allied neighbour.

This thesis thus seeks to understand border-making in the region as a multi-focal process. By tracing the historical centres of power in the Wa and Lahu hills back before the moment of decolonisation to the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this research questions the validity of the narrative of state-escaping Zomians. At the turn of the century Wa and Lahu systems of power were not frozen in time, unchanging and state-avoiding, but rather were in complex allegiances and conflicts with each other, and increasingly with external states. Cross-border movements of people and goods across the turn of the century likewise engaged with the boundaries which external states had only imagined. Through interactions with Qing, British and Siamese officials and Boundary Commissions, with American missionaries in the highlands, and with lowland states' regulatory regimes, Wa and Lahu people negotiated power in the borderlands. Cross-border trade in illicit commodities shaped borders in the region, increasing the relevance of internal as much as external borders. The uneven and contingent nature of frontier governance, where internal lines divided territory within Burma and differentiated sections of the population, affected the border politics of independent

Burma. When necessary, as when the Rangoon government wanted to minimise the significance of troop incursions by an allied power, the borderlands could be depicted as fuzzy zones of unclear sovereignty. This contrasted with the anti-China *Nation*'s views of the border as a symbolic and inviolable line around the nation. Developing international polarisation after independence led Burman politicians to accept territorial swaps in order to come to an agreement with China over the Wa border. A historical study of the interactions of different local and external political formations, and the role of mobile people and goods, can help to understand border-making and the uneven penetration of external states in Southeast Asia's highlands. Given how much of the highlands remain a place of contested political, economic, and religious allegiances – spurring concern and activity near and far – it is crucial that historians understand how borders were contested in the region. We can thus understand how people were or were not incorporated into the new nation-states of the twentieth century.

1. TERRITORIALISATION IN 'NON-STATE' SPACES: BORDER-MAKING ON THE EDGES OF STATES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the successes and failures of border-making in Burma's northern borderlands in the late nineteenth century. British Burma, Siam and Qing China engaged in competitive attempts to territorialise the highlands in order to claim for themselves the resource-rich territories. Competitive territorialisation was not just between states, but also between states and local actors. Examining how local as well as external state actors interacted to assert territorial claims provides a corrective to studies of state-making which focus on state centres. These border disputes can tell us about shifting ideas and practices of state-making, sovereignty and citizenship in the period. Territorialisation in order to gain exclusive state control of forests and mines required overturning local modes of sovereign rule in favour of a definition of sovereignty as exclusive rule over ethnically-homogeneous contiguous territories. A comparison of two places on Burma's borders – the Lahu hills on the border with Siam, and the Wa hills on the border with China – illustrates how external powers' attempts to impose this new kind of territorial sovereignty succeeded, and how they failed.

Studying contests for territory at the margins of states can show how border-making was a multi-directional process rather than a one-way story of state penetration. It is only by paying attention to the multiple centres of power that we can understand the variable successes of state penetration in the highlands. The multiplicity of local as well as colonial territorial strategies leads us to question the 'escapist' paradigm within which historians and political scientists have described upland Southeast Asian political systems. This chapter shows how some groups engaged with, rather than escaping from, external states, and how engagement was often more successful than escape. Wa and Lahu people chose different political

strategies in the face of lowland empires' attempts to penetrate the Sino-Burmese borderlands. Different types of interactions with lowland states produced different outcomes. The Wa's territorial strategies succeeded (in part due to a different resource landscape), while those of the Lahu failed, at countering the expansion of lowland states' territorialisation of the highlands. This chapter argues that the availability of 'lootable' natural resources played a role in enabling or constraining the political agency of borderland dwellers. The variations in Wa and Lahu political strategies in this period resulted in different levels of empowerment of local actors, the effects of which we can still see today.

Highland dwellers' methods of asserting territoriality in the face of state penetration sometimes involved building supra-local diplomatic and military structures. The Zomian statelessness paradigm is inadequate to explain the complex and varied nature of local territoriality. In the late nineteenth century, some Wa groups developed supralocal polities, built on the spoils of tribute and lootable resource wealth, in order to deal with the threat from lowland expansionist states seeking resources in the highlands. These political organisations challenge the commonly accepted paradigm of Zomian statelessness. Lahu people on the other hand were surrounded by 'unlootable' teak. Teak was highly valuable to British and Siamese timber companies in the nineteenth century, but the Lahu were unable to monetise this resource, as extraction required large capital investment. Their lifestyle – from swidden agriculture, to living in unfortified hidden villages, to a politics of strategically shifting allegiance – seems to mirror that which James C. Scott posited as 'escapism'. Without intervening for or against Scott's main argument regarding historic migration to the highlands, this thesis uses his concept of 'escape' only in cases where it is applicable to particular groups of actors at particular conjunctures, rather than to characterise entire populations. In any case, the Lahu's political tactics – switching allegiance, or moving on to other hills – meant they could be ignored by the lowland powers who in the late nineteenth

century were penetrating the hills to claim resources. In their case, and counter to some theorisation of upland politics, escape did not pay off. When lowland states in the late nineteenth century came to apportion the forested highlands between them, the Lahu hills were divided, and government rules restricted local use of the newly-declared state forests.

The varying success of local and external actors' attempts at asserting territoriality is the focus of this chapter. The chapter argues that territoriality is key to understanding the contest for natural resources in the borderlands. Border-making was a multi-directional process, with multiple actors deploying different territorial strategies. The geographer Robert Sack describes territoriality as an attempt by an individual or group to establish control over an area as a means of controlling access to things and relationships. Sack strove to make it understood that he thought territoriality applied to all kinds of spaces, from playgrounds to prisons, but sociologists and historians have since focused on the national scale.[100] Political geographers have employed his definition to point out the ways in which states have used territorial strategies such as mapping, declaration of state forests, and surveys to control people and resources within bounded territories, often in order to generate revenue and facilitate penetration of capital.[101] James C. Scott extended this line of thinking to include many more of the methods states used to control or bound people and resources within a territory. He centred on authoritarian examples of state projects, including the Great Leap Forward in China, collectivisation in Russia, compulsory villagisation in Tanzania, Mozambique and Ethiopia, failed agricultural schemes in the Third World, and new cities (Brasilia, Chandigarh).[102]

[100] Robert Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1986), 20.
[101] Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso, 'Territorialization and State Power in Thailand', *Theory and Society*, 24:3 (1995), 385; Kundan Kumar and John M. Kerr, 'Territorialisation and marginalisation in the forested landscapes of Orissa, India', *Land Use Policy* 30 (2013), 885.
[102] James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 4-6.

Thongchai Winichakul added 'nation' into the mix, extending Sack's idea of the socially-constructed nature of territory to show how a national territory could be all of these state/legal/institutional things, and more. A national territory, or 'geo-body', also conveyed feelings of pride, loyalty, and love. He criticises previous studies of territory for focusing on disputes, and for presupposing the existence of national territories in their modern form.[103] In fact, at a time when territorial states in their modern form were not yet dominant, studying how state territorialisation projects sometimes came unstuck in the liminal spaces between lowland states/empires can tell us much that is lost in a lowland-centred study of state-making. Winichakul's argument is sometimes overly swayed by texts that display the hegemony of lowland centres. Studying boundary disputes and reversals of state territoriality in the borderlands can show how in fact multiple groups of local actors, with varying success, attempted strategies of territoriality, with long-lasting consequences for the borderlands.

The first section of this chapter examines how two external powers – Siam and British Burma – were attracted by the highlands' natural resources in the late nineteenth century. In order to claim the rich teak forests of the highlands, both the British, after annexing Upper Burma in 1885, and the Siamese monarchy at Bangkok, attempted to expand their control over their former tributary states. Both powers focused on asserting exclusive claims to territory, and thereby gaining ownership of the rich teak forests. As the two powers discovered, the upland princely states often paid allegiance to multiple lowland and upland powers at once, making it difficult to understand what territory belonged to whom.

The subsequent Siam-Burma border negotiations of 1887-1889, covered in the second section of the chapter, were a negotiation between different definitions of territorial sovereignty. Both sets of Boundary Commissioners tried to overturn existing methods of rule over the

[103] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped,* 17.

borderlands in favour of their own conceptions of territorial sovereignty. The resolution of the Burma-Siam negotiations over the Shan states marked a shift in theories of sovereignty. The prior political system of tributary states paying allegiance to multiple powers was discarded, as was the concept of rulers governing groups of mobile people rather than governing bounded territory. The Siamese and British agreed on a concept of sovereignty as exclusive rule over ethnically-homogeneous contiguous territories. Mobile swidden farmers such as the Lahu did not fit this new definition of citizenship. Lahu inhabitants' concept of territorial control as temporary occupation was overruled, and the Lahu who inhabited the borderlands lost control of the forests, becoming subject to increasing state penetration and nationalisation of the forests.

The third section of the chapter moves geographically north to the Wa hills on the Burma-Qing border. The process of extracting minerals – in this case gold, silver and lead – differed from that of teak. Local groups of Wa could benefit from exploiting minerals in small-scale ways. In the eighteenth century villagers taxed Chinese silver miners, and in the nineteenth century groups of Wa miners extracted lead from the leftover slag. In order to control mineral resources, from a state perspective, however, required territorial control, demarcation and enforced exclusive access.

The fourth section examines how multiple groups of actors in the Wa hills organised in order to retain exclusive territorial sovereignty over the hills during the 1890s. As the British and the Qing sent Boundary Commissioners to the Wa country in the 1890s to decide amongst each other how to divide the territory, groups of local Wa combined to pursue territorial strategies of their own, ultimately foiling lowland states' territorial ambitions in the Wa hills. In this period Wa groups, unlike the Lahu living on the Burma-Siam border, sought to engage with the external state actors entering the Wa hills. These tactics force us to re-think current

scholarship on state-making in highland Southeast Asia, which assumes the Wa to be both 'stateless' and 'state-escaping'. Wa territorial strategies entailed common action, which historians and political scientists have hitherto dismissed as exceptions to their theories of state-escaping highland peoples. The joint Burma-China Boundary Commission, which ran from 1897 to 1899, also shows the differences in British and Qing methods of claiming territory. The British method tended towards the use of firepower, and the Qing's towards symbolism and the power of suggestion. The negotiations themselves highlight the contested concept of a 'natural' boundary. As they compared maps, both sets of negotiators talked past each other, unable or sometimes unwilling to understand each other's ideas of border-making.

The final section shows how in the 1900s, after a decade of attempts, the British dropped their efforts to demarcate and control the Wa hills. Thus, lowland states were not the sole drivers of territorialisation in the Wa or the Lahu hills nor were they always able to force territorialisation on these regions. The multiplicity of territorial ambitions in the hills has had a lasting impact on the sovereignty of these liminal spaces.

TERRITORIALISATION IN THE BURMA-SIAM BORDERLANDS

Rocketing demand for timber in the late nineteenth century, to make up for the declining availability of European oak, brought several large timber companies to the teak-rich highlands of northern Siam and the British Shan States. In 1842, British timber cutters were already flocking into the Shan forests, and timber companies requested a British agent in the Shan States. By the 1870s the forests of Lower Burma had been depleted and British companies focused on the forests of the inland hills.[104] The volume of teak exported from Bangkok to Europe between the mid-1880s and 1890 more than doubled.[105] Macauley, a

[104] Raymond Leslie Bryant, 'Contesting the Resource: The Politics of Forest Management in Colonial Burma', unpublished PhD thesis, SOAS, 1993, 51.
[105] R.H. Macaulay, *History of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, 1864-1910*, London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. (1934), 51.

historian of the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation, wrote of a 'scramble for timber' in the northern Siamese regions of Chiang Mai, Lakon, Prae and Nan in the 1890s. 'After 1896 our men seem to have got it into their heads that we wanted to secure timber at all costs and the business got quite out of hand.'[106] The Bombay Burma Trading Corporation's stake in Siam came to 6,000,000-7,000,000 rupees, not including the Salween forests where the company had invested 4,800,000 rupees in logs and advances to foresters.[107]

Britain in the late nineteenth century witnessed a huge rush to discover new markets and sources of natural resources overseas. Economic factors in Britain in the late nineteenth century may explain the capital export overseas. In the context of Africa, Sanderson identified multiple reasons that combined to trigger the rapid partitioning of the continent between the powers, one of which was the 'Great Depression' of the late 1870s and early 1880s, caused by domestic industrial capacity outstripping domestic and foreign demand. During the consequent 'consumer famine' of the 1870s, attempts to open supposedly lucrative markets in the interiors of far-off continents seemed increasingly attractive.[108] P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins see these forces as driving the 'expansion' of Britain. They argue that, despite China being one of Britain's more minor trading partners, the surplus generated by existing commerce in the closing years of the century made a useful contribution to the balance of payments, and the potential, especially for finance and services, was irresistible.[109] Historians dispute whether Britain's nineteenth century capital export was in fact 'pulled' to resource-rich overseas economies, rather than 'pushed' by the production climacteric in Britain causing Britons' natural tendencies to save to be directed overseas. Whatever the sources of

[106] Macaulay, *History of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation*, 58.
[107] Macaulay, *History of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation*, 63.
[108] G.N. Sanderson, 'The European Partition of Africa: Origins and Dynamics, in Roland Oliver and G. N. Sanderson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Africa, Vol. VI: From 1870 to 1905,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1985), 96.
[109] P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688 – 1914,* London: Longman (1993).

Britain's late nineteenth century investment overseas, what was remarkable was its sheer size. 'Never before or since has one nation committed so much of its national income and savings to capital formation abroad.'[110]

The nineteenth-century exploration of continental interiors, in the hope of exploiting their natural resources, formed the wider context of external states' penetration into the highlands in this period. Mary Louise Pratt describes a mid-nineteenth century shift in 'planetary consciousness', which was expressed in the turn away from maritime exploration and towards the interiors of continents. This was a new territorial phase of capitalism propelled by the search for raw materials, the attempt to extend coastal trade inland, and national imperatives to seize overseas territory in order to prevent its being seized by rival European powers.[111] Inter-imperial competition was another key driver of the rush to find markets and resources overseas in the nineteenth century. The British saw the transcontinental railways being built by the US and Russia, and worried that rival Powers were overtaking them in the race to reach internal markets and natural resources. The competition with France to reach China from Southeast Asia intensified in the late nineteenth century. One commentator worried that France was 'playing her role in China with great skill', as the Powers staked out territory in China.[112] Another predicted that China was going to be 'smashed up and divided among the powers one of these days'.[113]

Logging companies were early advocates of lowland states' territorialisation in the highlands. For the first half of the nineteenth century, companies working in the British provinces of Lower Burma as well as in as yet un-colonised Upper Burma established logging concessions

[110] Michael Edelstein, 'Foreign Investment, Accumulation and Empire, 1860-1914', in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. II: Economic Maturity, 1860-1939*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2004), 191.
[111] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge (1992), 9.
[112] *Straits Times*, 28 March 1898.
[113] *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 19 December 1898.

directly with local princes. Similarly in what is now northern Thailand, northern Thai chiefs, despite paying tribute to Bangkok, were quite autonomous. Chiefs independently granted logging concessions to foreign timber companies.[114] Until the 1890s the forests of northern Siam were the property of the chiefs of Chiang Mai, Lakon, Phrae and Nan, and foreign nationals had to request chiefs' permission to work the forests.[115] Timber companies' demands were often the motivation which first led lowland states to extend territorialisation into the highlands. Companies lobbied states to protect them from issues such as local princes leasing land to multiple companies.

When the British annexed Upper Burma in 1885 they attempted to claim sovereignty over the natural resources of Burma's former tributaries, but they immediately encountered the complicated politics of the uplands. A mosaic of political relationships characterised the pre-colonial period in the Burma-Siam and Burma-Qing highlands. The area was governed by a mix of mostly lowland Shan princes, known as *Sawbwas*, and mountain-dwelling 'circles' of semi-independent chiefs. Many of these chiefs paid allegiance to multiple rulers at once. 'Most confusing for the British was the fact that a subject of a local authority could be at the same time a subject of another authority. This posed a problem in judging what belonged to whom, since there was usually more than one power exercised over a given people who occupied a single area.'[116]

Shortly after deposing the last of the Konbaung kings and annexing Upper Burma, the British asked Burmese Ministers for a list of the Shan States which had been subject to Upper Burma at the time of the annexation. Further conversations revealed 'complications', as the subsequent report put it. Some of the states said to be tributary to the former kings of Burma,

[114] Macaulay, *History of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation*, 53.
[115] Macaulay, *History of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation*, 51-53.
[116] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 73.

they discovered, were 'small tracts under the control of powerful neighbours'. Many were claimed by both Siam and Burma, or by dependencies of either.[117] The first response of the British in newly-annexed Upper Burma in 1885 was to deny tributary states the right to give dual allegiance to multiple powers. The Government of Burma also asked Siam for a joint Boundary Commission to settle their common boundary in the southern Shan States.[118]

In 1889 one British official tried to interpret the foreign relations of Keng Hung, one of the largest of the Trans-Salween states:[119]

> 'The ruler bears a Chinese title, Hsuan-Wei Ssu (the officer for diffusing tranquillity) … Nevertheless I am assured by Chinese traders that there are not and have never been Chinese officials in Keing Hong [Keng Hung] town or territory. The Hsuan-Wei Ssu is regarded as practically independent and is treated as a person of great consideration. An antithetic Chinese official informed Mr Bourne that the Hsuan-Wei Ssu was "civil in front, military behind, Chinese on the left hand and Burmese on the right."'[120]

As discoveries of the rich resources of the highlands had made the land increasingly valuable over the late nineteenth century, lowland powers seeking control over territory disregarded these kinds of multiple sovereignty.

The governments of Burma and Siam gradually regulated the system of forest leases. In 1874 a treaty between Britain and Siam set up a border police, a judge in Chiang Mai and a new system of leasing forests.[121] The treaty stipulated that all travellers between British Burma and those Siamese states had to carry passports and pay duties. The Prince of Chiang Mai

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[117] Thirkell White, Secretary for Upper Burma to the Chief Commissioner, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Mandalay, 24 December 1886, in Printed letters and map from H Thirkell White, Secretary for Upper Burma, to the Chief Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department concerning the definition of the Shan States and their boundaries, Mss Eur F278/59, British Library.
[118] Thirkell White, Secretary for Upper Burma to the Chief Commissioner, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Mandalay, 24 Dec 1886, Mss Eur F278/59, British Library.
[119] Keng Hung in Shan, Che-li in Chinese, Kyaingyongyi in Burmese and Chiang Rung in Thai. 'Keing Hong' was the Superintendent James Scott's own transliteration, (a habit of his which would cause problems later when it came to reconciling his maps with reality on the ground during disputes over border demarcation).
[120] Note by Scott on the Trans-Salween Shan States and their frontier towards China and Siam, Camp Nongmon, 28 March 1889, Papers Concerning Trans-Salween Affairs and the Claims of Siam to Certain Territories East of the Salween, Part VI, Rangoon, 1889, LL.9/47, Scott papers, Cambridge University Library.
[121] James Ansil Ramsay, 'Modernisation and Centralisation in Northern Thailand', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 7:1 (1976), 23.

was required to maintain guard stations on the Siamese bank of the Salween River. British authorities should catch murderers and dacoits who escaped into Burma and vice versa. A British Consul or Vice-Consul was appointed at Chiang Mai, and British subjects were prohibited from cutting timber without a written agreement with the forest owner.[122]

The main teak forests in northern Siam were the private property of the chiefs of the four largest princely states in Upper Siam. The forests of Chiang Mai and Lakon were mostly split up into small holdings which were worked mainly by British Burmans under three-year agreements granted by the princes. In the forests in Prae and Nan the forest work was done by the chiefs' relatives, with verbal agreements.[123] Prior to the British annexation of Upper Burma in 1885, forest leases had been drawn up between the Burmese Konbaung monarchy at Ava and foreign timber companies.[124] These contracts between the Burmese monarchy and foreign companies were at odds with the style of governing that the new colonial government of Upper Burma wanted to introduce. They had been loosely worded, complained the British government of Upper Burma in 1886, and nobody could say where the boundaries of the jurisdictions of the named districts lay.[125]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, timber merchants, unsatisfied with the alleged corruption of the local princes, began to increase pressure on the government of Burma to intervene in the system of granting forest leases. In two memorials to the Chief Commissioner of British Burma in 1885 and 1886, just before and just after the annexation of Upper Burma, a group of seventy timber dealers called for the Burmese Forest Department to abolish the

[122] PRO 30/33/2/7, The National Archives: Public Record Office, Kew.
[123] Macaulay, *History of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation*, 51.
[124] Memorandum by Mr C Bernard, 29 January 1886, CLC/B/207/MS40325/001, Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation Archives, London Metropolitan Archives.
[125] Memorandum by Mr C Bernard, 29 January 1886, CLC/B/207/MS40325/001, Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation Archives, London Metropolitan Archives.

system of leases.[126] In the 1880s, the British in Burma passed laws which initiated forest demarcation. State intervention limited logging, creating 'reserved species'. Local people had to apply to use timber for house-building, religious or public purposes.[127]

At the same time teak firms also put pressure on the Siamese monarchy to take land ownership away from local chiefs, accusing local rulers of frequently leasing forests to multiple companies. British officials in Burma and Bangkok also pressed the Siamese monarchy to reform the system of granting logging concessions.[128] The growing importance of the timber trade was part of the reason the Siamese government desired to control the princely states to the north. The Siamese state began laying claim to the forests, claiming them as national territory and taking concession-granting powers away from local chiefs. The first step was sending a Siamese Commissioner to Chiang Mai. The old chief of Chiang Mai died in 1897. The new Siamese Commissioner of Chiang Mai continued to consolidate his power. The Siamese state took control of the forests, giving financial compensation to the hereditary owners.[129]

The concept of sovereignty as rule over people rather than over territory had characterised much of pre-modern Southeast Asian politics. Since land was plentiful and workers scarce, the control of people was more important to a ruler than the control of land. Hence the size of their taxable population had determined the relative power of polities. In the case of Malaya, Anthony Milner has shown how the relationship between the Raja and his subjects, signified through bestowing rank, holding elaborate ceremonies and giving gifts, was more

[126] Memorial from the Merchants, Foresters and Traders in Teak in British Burma to the Chief Commissioner, Government of Burma, October 1885, CLC/B/207/MS40325/001 (1886), Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation Archives, London Metropolitan Archives.
[127] Peter Vandergeest, 'Mapping Nature: Territorialisation of Forest Rights in Thailand', *Society and Natural Resources* 9:2 (1996), 162.
[128] Ramsay, 'Modernisation and Centralisation in Northern Thailand', 16-32.
[129] Macaulay, *History of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation*, 65.

important to pre-colonial Malay political life than the losing or gaining of territory.[130] In *The Sulu Zone*, James Francis Warren shows the centrality of slave-raiding to the economy of the Sulu Sultanate. He argues that previous histories of Malay piracy had relied on colonial accounts of the depravity of the raiders without trying to understand the place of slaving in the indigenous society and economy. Slave-raiding was directly linked to power and wealth, as the more captives a *datu* could put to use in procurement and trade the wealthier he became.[131] The political scientist James C. Scott echoes this argument, arguing that the control of a settled base of taxable, conscript-able manpower was the main determinant of political power and the first prerogative of premodern Southeast Asian states.[132] Only by 'scouring its periphery' for people to take captive and resettle in one's own land, he claimed, was a growing state able to build the population base necessary to defend its core. Inter-state wars resembled large-scale slave raids, with the main aim being to seize as much of the other's population as possible to resettle in one's own valleys. Towards the late nineteenth century however, these political relations of the uplands, with local princes governing often-mobile groups of people and giving allegiance sometimes to multiple lowland powers at once, were increasingly incompatible with lowland states' desires to claim territory and control natural resource extraction.

Thongchai Winichakul argues that the change in Southeast Asian states' aims from the control of populations to the control of territories deeply influenced Siamese conceptions of borders. As an example of these changing conceptions of borders, a Siamese prince who was sent to Chiang Mai in 1884 found that the local chiefs, rather than patrolling the border as the British did, instead stayed in their towns waiting for opportunities to attack and plunder

[130] Milner, *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, 8.
[131] James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press (2007), 148.
[132] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 64.

Burmese towns along the border. The Siamese prince, explicitly looking to the British example, ordered the local chiefs to set up border guardhouses and to inspect the borders regularly. This change from a focus on rule over peoples to rule over territory, Thongchai argues, was part of the making of Siam's 'geo-body'.[133] However, he has looked at the making of Siam's borders from a mainly lowland Siamese perspective, overlooking how these conceptions of the national 'geo-body' could be contested by people living at the margins of states.

The drive to territorialise forests meant excluding, or circumscribing the activities of, the forests' inhabitants. In 1896 Prince Damrong set up the Royal Forestry Department, asserting Siamese state ownership of all forests.[134] The Siamese recruited Herbert Slade, a British national and forester with expertise from British India, to organise the department.[135] At Slade's recommendation the Siamese monarchy instituted reforms very similar to those of the British in Upper Burma. The control of all forest lands was transferred from local lords to the Forestry Department. This new 'forest' included most of the land area in Thailand – estimated by historians to be about 75 per cent at this time.[136] A variety of acts created a legal framework for the Royal Forestry Department's claims to forests, the most important of which were the Forest Preservation Act of 1897 and the Forest Conservation Law of 1913. Under the latter law, the Royal Forestry Department could declare any forest product to be 'reserved'. People living in the forests who wanted to exploit 'reserved' forest products had to obtain permits, pay fees, and follow specific regulations on how the product was to be cut, tapped, or however extracted. Local people could legally use forest resources for domestic needs only.[137]

[133] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 72.
[134] Ramsay, 'Modernisation and Centralisation in Northern Thailand', 25.
[135] Macaulay, *History of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation*, 60.
[136] Vandergeest and Peluso, 'Territorialisation and State Power in Thailand', 408.
[137] Vandergeest and Peluso, 'Territorialisation and State Power in Thailand', 408.

As immobile resources such as teak made land scarce and contested, the idea of contiguous nation-states ruling over bounded territory began to appeal. States' desire to demarcate territorial boundaries thus grew in parallel to their desire to delineate claims to the natural resources of the region. Control of space conferred control over the increasingly valuable natural resources such as teak. Territorialisation, and hence ownership of the rich natural resources, became the aim of both lowland powers.

'THERE ARE KENG TUNG VILLAGES AND CHIANG MAI VILLAGES SIDE BY SIDE': THE BURMA-SIAM BOUNDARY NEGOTIATIONS, 1887-1892

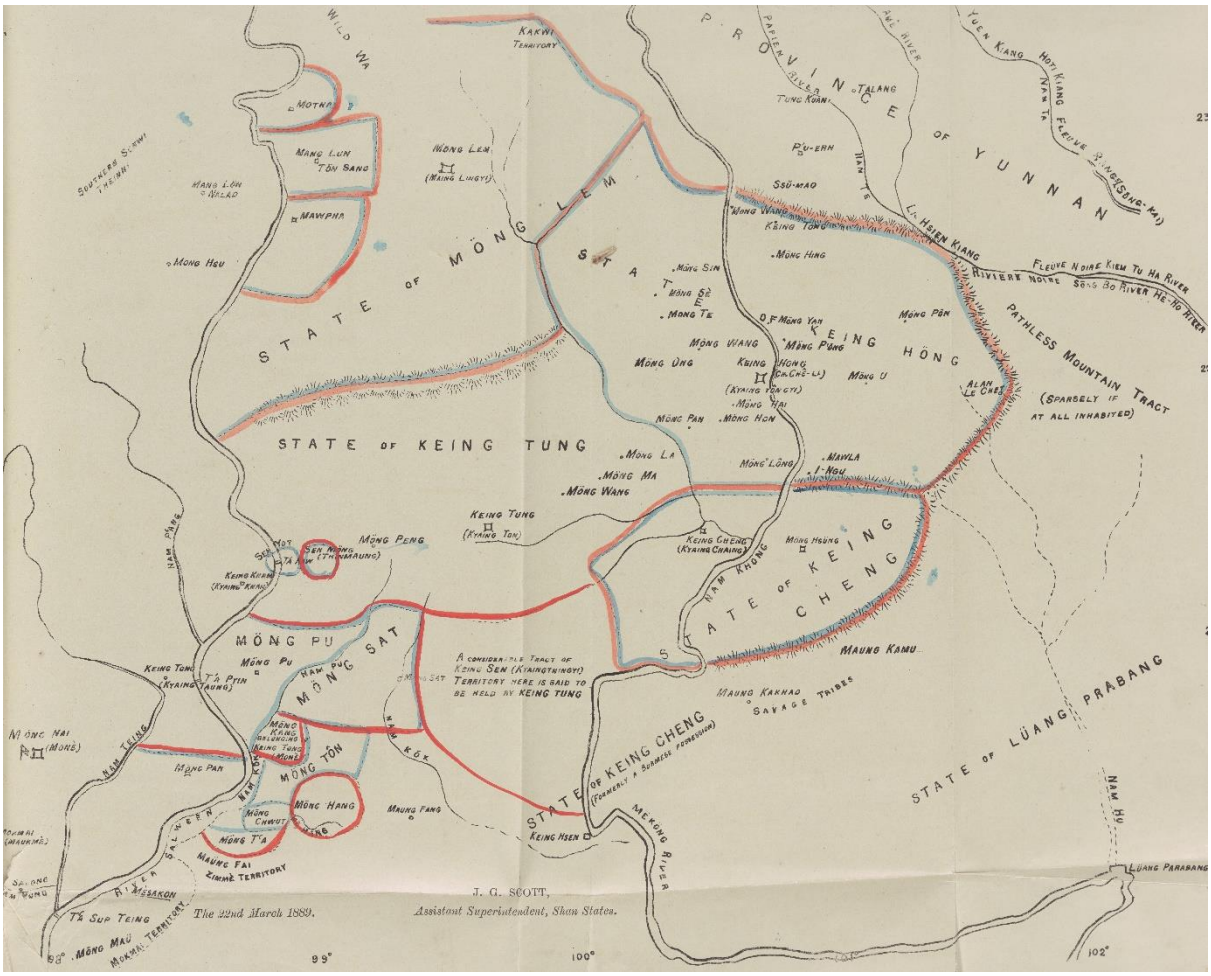
The need to demarcate international borders followed on from states' desire to enclose natural resources within exclusive sovereign territory. The 1887-1892 Burma-Siam boundary negotiations demonstrate the conflict between the concept of sovereignty as being determined by people's allegiance to the ruler, and that of sovereignty as being determined by the ethnicity of settled homogeneous populations. The episode shows the complications which ensued when states attempted to apply the concept of exclusive territorial sovereignty to the complex regional politics of the highlands. Many village groups in the mountains shifted political allegiance between different rulers, sometimes paying allegiance to multiple different rulers at a time. These tactics failed in the face of external state territorialisation, and lowland states divided and nationalised the forests without regard to the local cultivators.

The map at Figure 4 below illustrates the British Boundary Commissioners' attempt to interpret local politics in terms of Westphalian-style territorial states. The complicated allegiances of different states have to be explained in detailed descriptions, as for instance: 'A considerable tract of Keing Sen (Kyaingthingyi) territory here is said to be held by Keing Tung'. Yet even these vague estimates of sovereignty are encircled by bold red lines. In places the red lines follow mountain ranges, but often they seem to be drawn in arbitrarily straight lines in order to give a state definitive boundaries, as Scott, the Boundary

Commissioner, grappled with translating between the theory of hard borders and the practice of shifting allegiances.

Figure 4

J.G. Scott's map of the Burma-Siam border, 1889



Source: Cambridge University Library, MS Scott LL9.47.

The Siam-Burma border negotiations of 1887-1892 became a negotiation between different definitions of territorial sovereignty. Prior to this point, tributary states often paid allegiance to multiple powers at the same time. Rulers governed groups of sometimes-mobile people who might live interspersed with villages under a different sovereign. The British officials, however, rejected the legitimacy of this concept of dual allegiance. For the British, the

ethnicity of the inhabitants should determine to whom the territory belonged. For the Siamese, inhabitants' ethnicity was secondary, and their allegiance was the primary factor in deciding the sovereignty of the territory. By the end of the negotiations, the British and Siamese came to agree on a concept of sovereignty as exclusive rule over a bounded, ethnically-homogeneous territory. Extradition of citizens became the agreed solution to the problem of different nationalities living interspersed with each other.

Some borderland dwellers challenged the new concept of state sovereignty over fixed homogeneous populations. In the Burma-Siam borderlands, many inhabitants of the hills were swidden farmers. Where land was too poor for intensive farming, local people extracted maximum value from the land with nomadic swidden farming, leaving them unable to easily mobilise large followings to defend territory as Wa leaders later did in the Yunnan borderlands. The Lahu's precarious situation was compounded by the fact that in these hills, where teak rather than precious metals was the resource in demand, they were unable to extract value from the resources surrounding their villages. The expense and logistics of logging, which required purchasing elephants to move logs out of vast areas of mountainous country, meant that companies or states with the capital necessary to monetise teak could override the demands of local people.

The most contested section of the border between the Burmese Shan States and Siam went through five densely-forested and semi-independent Shan statelets southwest of the British-allied Keng Tung state, bordering the Salween. In 1888 four Siamese Commissioners met Mr Hildebrand, Superintendent of the Shan States, and Mr Archer, the British Vice-Consul at Chiang Mai, at Mong Pan, to demarcate the boundary through these states. According to one British account of the story, Siam in 1887 ordered the five most-contested states to pay allegiance to Siam, threatening to invade if they refused. The British Government of Burma

refused to accept the legitimacy of those declarations of allegiance, maintaining that the states were tributaries of Burma and could not transfer their allegiance elsewhere. To which the Siamese Chief Commissioner responded that the five States were dependencies of Siam, that the inhabitants may belong to different nationalities but the territory was Siamese.[138]

Both sides claimed the land, but the Siamese emphasised historic ownership and the allegiance of the inhabitants. The Siamese based their claim in part on historic royal prerogative. The Siamese Commissioners asserted that Siamese history recorded that the soil had always been Siamese, but the British refused to accept the validity of a history which was not written down. The British believed that the race/ethnicity of the population should be the determining factor. They based their claim on the fact that the population then resident in the state were Shans from (British-allied) Mong Pan, with 'not one Lao or Siamese resident'.[139] The Siamese Commissioners, however, maintained that the inhabitants may belong to different nationalities but the territory was Siamese.[140]

In response to the deadlock, the Foreign Office in London unilaterally declared the states to be British territory and the British Superintendent deposed one of the, now 'rebel', Siam-allied rulers.[141] This framing of the local leaders as rebels marked the British rejection of the idea of independent chiefs being free to give allegiance to other neighbouring and lowland states. In the conception of boundaries as lines dividing homogeneous populations in

[138] W.J. Archer, Acting Vice-Consul at Chiengmai to the Chief Commissioner, Burma, 13 September 1887, Papers concerning Trans-Salween States, relations between Siam and Burma, and claims of Siam to certain territory on east of Salween, Pts I-VI Rangoon: Government of Burma, 1889, IOR/L/PS/20/MEMO28, British Library.
[139] Report on the Administration of the Shan States, for the year 1889-90, Mss. Eur. E254/19, British Library.
[140] W.J. Archer, Vice-Consul Chiengmai, to the Chief Commissioner, Burma, 13 September 1887, in Papers concerning Trans-Salween States, relations between Siam and Burma, and claims of Siam to certain territory on east of Salween, Pts I-VI, Rangoon: Govt of Burma, 1889, IOR/L/PS/20/MEMO28, British Library.
[141] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary, to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.

contiguous territorial nation-states, leaders' shifting allegiance was unimportant compared to their ethnicity.

In 1890 the Chief Commissioner of British Burma sent Scott, then the Officiating Superintendent of the Shan States, to join the Anglo-Siamese Commission. James George Scott, or 'Scott of the Shan Hills' as his wife later styled him, was something of a serial Boundary Commissioner, serving on the 1889-90 Anglo-Siamese Boundary Commission led by Ney Elias, and later on the Mekong (Anglo-French buffer state) commission of 1894-5.[142] He also led the British Commissioners in demarcating the Wa states boundary in the Burma-China Boundary Commission of 1897-1900. Formerly a journalist and Rangoon school headmaster who had shocked the English with his 1882 pseudonymous book *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, Scott got his career break with the annexation of Upper Burma.[143] In December 1886 he was appointed Assistant Commissioner to the newly-annexed Shan States and quickly established himself as an authority on Shan affairs and language.[144]

In 1891 the Commission began to demarcate the boundary between the independent Shan state of Maingthat and the Siamese-allied state of Muang Fang. Six years before the Boundary Commission visited the hills south of Muang Fang, Hpaya Kiri, a Lahu leader, had moved with his followers into one of the ranges of fertile and previously uninhabited hills. These hills proved so fertile that his following grew until in six years he had five *hsen,* or headmen, under him to manage his villages. Hpaya Kiri had recognised Maingthat supremacy and paid tribute to that state, until the Siamese destroyed neighbouring villages at which point he began to pay allegiance to Siam. His line of hills formed the crux of a boundary dispute between

[142] G.E. Mitton (Lady Scott), *Scott of the Shan Hills: Orders and Impressions*, London: John Murray (1936).
[143] Shway Yoe, *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, London: Macmillan (1896), first edition 1882.
[144] Patricia M. Herbert, 'Scott, Sir James George (1851–1935), administrator in Burma and author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004), accessed 6 June 2019, [URL: https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:4148/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35989].

Maingthat and Siam. The British and the Siamese commissioners in 1891 each tried to get Hpaya Kiri to give evidence to the Boundary Commission. Scott wrote to him asking him to meet the commission at some convenient place on the Namkok, and the Siamese representatives instructed the Governor of Muang Fang to endeavour to ensure his appearance, but he refused to meet them. One British Commissioner noted in a memorandum that 'the allegiance of a few Muhseu more or less is of no great value to anybody … they are as uncertain as woodcock or sand-grouse and of about equal sentimental interest'.[145]

Swidden farmers like Hpaya Kiri often used terrain to escape from outside influence. Lahu villages for instance were often built under the brow of hills. Travellers talked of stumbling upon them, in stark contrast to the unmistakable Wa village fortresses built on the tops of hills. A British traveller to the borderlands in 1886 described the Lahu villages he saw: 'The path leading to their village was a scarcely perceptible track through thick forest. It is said that when one of the paths by use begins to be well defined, the Moosurs [Lahu] abandon it and take another line, and that until in its turn it begins to become a beaten path and is also abandoned.'[146] In 1888 the Boundary Commissioners reported that the Lahu 'hide away their villages at considerable distances from roads in hollows and dips of the hills, so that we seldom saw any of them and never entered any.'[147] This type of approach made them easy to ignore in subsequent negotiations over ownership of the forests.

Siam thought that Hpaya Kiri's allegiance was important evidence, explaining that he had switched allegiance to Siam of his own free will. Scott dismissed this fact as irrelevant, not

[145] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.
[146] From E.M. Satow, Her Majesty's Minister Resident and Consul-General, Bangkok, to the Government of India, Foreign Department, No. 34, 7 June 1886, enclosing copy of Mr Gould's detailed report upon his journey to Chiengsen and along the frontier between the Shan States and Chiengmai, report dated Bangkok, 7 June 1886, Papers concerning Trans-Salween States, relations between Siam and Burma, and claims of Siam to certain territory on east of Salween. Pts I-VI Rangoon: Government of Burma, 1889, IOR/L/PS/20/MEMO28 : 1889, British Library.
[147] Report on the Administration of the Shan States, for the year 1889-90, Mss EUR E254/19, British Library.

accepting allegiance as evidence of sovereignty.[148] After Hpaya Kiri refused to meet with the Boundary Commissioners, they agreed to ignore him in their calculations and divide the hills in two.[149] Hpaya Kiri's political strategies to retain control over the territory – politically hedging his bets by switching allegiance, pledging allegiance to multiple lowland powers at once, or simply running away when government officials came by – can be seen as typically 'escapist' territorial strategies, but they ultimately failed to prevent lowland states extending control over the Burma-Siam highlands. The Lahu's political tactics also proved not to work in protecting them from lowland companies' attempts to enter and extract resources from the highlands. Boundary disputes, which in the Wa country to the north ended unresolved in 1899 when the Wa prevented the Boundary Commissioners from entering their states, were agreed in the southern Shan states at the expense of the Lahu, as timber companies entered the newly demarcated and legally nationalised forests by agreement of Siam and Burma. When the British and Siamese came to an agreement on a new type of (territorial) sovereignty in the uplands, the Lahu's territorial strategies were irrelevant to the new system.

After settling the boundary through Hpaya Kiri's hills bordering Maingthat and Muang Fang, the commissioners marched east towards Tachileik. Here, the Keng Tung representative backed up their claims to sovereignty over the area by producing a statement of 'dates, names of villages, names of the persons who founded them, proofs of occupation and exercise of jurisdiction, executive and fiscal'. Against this the Siamese representatives stated that the whole area from Muang Fang north to the Mon Kang range had historically been a forest reserve of the Chief of Chiang Mai, and from it he had obtained elephant tusks, rhinoceros horns, wild honey and other forest produce, which he had sent as part of his tribute to

[148] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.
[149] Memorandum by Scott, Officiating Superintendent Shan States, on a Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.

Bangkok. The Siamese explained that there were 'men still living' who had obtained forest products for the chief.[150] The British countered that the inhabitants were 'exclusively British Shans', and that while for the last six months they had apparently not recognised Keng Tung authority, that was merely 'a proof of the turbulent character of the population'.[151]

One of the British Boundary Commissioners suggested ceding the Siamese claims to the plains, and running the border through the Mon Kang hills, which were inhabited by Lahu. Another, Scott, demurred. Complaining that this Mon Kang hill frontier would cede between two and three hundred square miles of territory to Siam, he claimed that it was unacceptable to run the frontier through the Lahu's hills. He argued that dividing the Lahu between Siam and Burma in the Kiri hills was awkward, but if the Mon Kang Lahu were similarly to be handed over in part to Siam, 'there will be a sufficient number of these none-too-manageable mountaineers to cause a constant irritation and source of danger along the frontier'.[152] Where it suited him, Scott was quick to stress that the occupying Lahu should *not* be divided by a border, and that therefore the British should claim the whole tract.

From there, the Boundary Commission in 1890 moved east to demarcate the border through the Chiang Saen plain. These negotiations ended in a mutual agreement to extradite citizens of Burma living in territory agreed to be Siamese.[153] This marked the Siamese acquiescence to the rejection of the dual allegiance concept in favour of a 'Westphalian' conception of territorial sovereignty over ethnically homogeneous populations.

[150] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.
[151] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.
[152] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary, to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.
[153] Report on the administration of the Shan States, 1893-94, LL.9/20, Scott papers, Cambridge University Library.

Two successive British Vice-Consuls of Chiang Mai, E.B. Gould and W.J. Archer, had visited Chiang Saen plain in 1886 and 1887. They had found 'Keng Tung villages and Chiang Mai villages side by side, the people of each nationality ruled by their own headmen and apparently acknowledging no central authority'.[154] They concluded that this situation 'may at any moment lead to disturbances'.[155] The British were convinced that enforcing exclusive territorial sovereignty over homogeneous populations would solve this problem. In 1891 Scott reported: 'The other districts, Mainghan, Maingchwut, and Maingta, which were ravaged last year, have been partially repopulated, but still remain in a very miserable condition. It is not probable that they will make any great progress towards restored prosperity until the erection of boundary pillars convinces the former inhabitants that all danger of interference on the part of Siam has passed away.'[156] For the British, the moment the border had been demarcated any Siamese activity on the Burmese side became dangerous interference. They had faith that more borders would solve problems, and they deeply mistrusted heterogeneity.

The British conceived of nationality not so much as acknowledging a particular authority, but rather in terms of fixed racial or ethnic terms. The Siamese, however, did not accept that nationality was racially defined. They agreed that Shans had for some time previously inhabited the Chiang Saen plain, but argued that these Shans did not accept Keng Tung authority and were merely fugitives.[157] The Siamese prioritised the allegiance of inhabitants over their ethnicity when determining who owned the territory. The British thought that the

[154] Papers concerning Trans-Salween States, relations between Siam and Burma, and claims of Siam to certain territory on east of Salween. Pts I-VI Rangoon: Government of Burma, 1889, IOR/L/PS/20/MEMO28, British Library.
[155] Papers concerning Trans-Salween States, relations between Siam and Burma, and claims of Siam to certain territory on east of Salween. Pts I-VI Rangoon: Government of Burma, 1889, IOR/L/PS/20/MEMO28, British Library.
[156] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary, to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung (1891), Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.
[157] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.

ethnicity of inhabitants was more important in deciding who should get the territory. Scott's opinion on the allegiance of the Lahu people is indicative of the British position on sovereignty. He thought that since they were a nomadic people, their allegiance could not influence the line of the boundary. Since they would no doubt in a few years 'track off to some other range', their allegiance is 'a factor which cannot influence the line of the frontier'.[158] Only settled villagers fitted the new definitions of citizenship.

The Siamese representative did not see the need to deny that there were Shan settlements in the area because these Shans did not recognise Keng Tung authority. The existence of villagers of a different race or ethnicity was irrelevant to the Siamese conception of territorial sovereignty, but central for the British. The Siamese conception of sovereignty was able to encompass difference, i.e. the heterogeneity of the people inhabiting a territory, something the British could not comprehend. To solve the dispute over these Shan settlers in the Chiang Saen plain, one British Boundary Commissioner suggested that the British declare them to be British subjects 'responsible only to the Vice-Consul at Chiang Mai'. The Chief Commissioner of British Burma swiftly dismissed this suggestion. He judged that these people, if they wished to remain subject to Keng Tung, could move, and if they decided to stay where they were, they had to be subject to Siam.[159] This marked the central government's rejection of the principle of different nationalities living side by side in the same area. British policy was split between central government rejecting local practices, while officials on the ground wondered whether they could incorporate or adapt local practices such as multiple allegiance and rule over people to their purposes.

[158] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung (1891), Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.
[159] Symes, Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, to the Secretary to the GOI Foreign Department, Rangoon, 11 June 1891, in Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.

In 1892 the British finally agreed to leave the Chiang Saen plain to Siam. At the same time they also stipulated the extradition of Keng Tung subjects from the Chiang Saen plain to Keng Tung state. This was a means for them to solve what they saw as the problem of citizens of each country living side by side.[160] This decision marked the culmination of a fundamental shift, as the Siamese and British both agreed in this case no longer to work by the principle of sovereignty being rule over people. When both sides agreed that the principle of sovereignty was rule over territories consisting of homogeneous populations, the logical conclusion was extradition.

British officials on the Burma-Siam Boundary Commission had attempted to claim the land based on pre-existing rule, where this could be 'proved' by written evidence. The central government however rejected many of these ideas, instead deciding borders based on geopolitical pressures. To the government in Calcutta the borderline represented imperial security against foreign threat. Precise local realities were less important. Scott argued that an ideal boundary would run along the Kyu Tap Yaung ridge, giving the British all of the Chiang Saen plain, as it would 'round off our frontier better', as well as being the best frontier for defence.[161] In the end the Government of India prioritised their calculations of Britain's interests in the region, ignoring Scott's misgivings about the impracticality of defending the Mekong as a boundary line. Desire for a buffer state between Britain and France informed the Government of India decision in 1891 to cede all their claims to trans-Mekong territory to Siam.[162]

[160] Report on the administration of the Shan States, 1893-94, 3358, Myanmar National Archives.
[161] Memorandum by Scott, Visit to the Kyaington-Chiengmai Boundary, to Meung Hsing and to Chieng Hung, 1891, Mss Eur F278/73, British Library.
[162] Burma-Siam Frontier. The Kyaington-Chiengmai Mission. Mr Archer's Reports. Concessions to Siam, L/PS/18/B52, British Library.

'Difference' continued to worry British administrators, and increasingly the Siamese administrators too. After the border had been demarcated, but before the extradition of Keng Tung villagers from Chiang Saen was complete, officials on both sides worried of possible 'breaches of the peace' resulting from this (newly) anomalous situation. Government officials, British and Siamese alike, voiced fears that multiple nationalities living side by side would lead to unspecified 'disturbances'. An official reported that:

> 'There were constant alarms on the part of the Lao [northern Siam] and Siamese officials on the Keng Tung-Kengsen [Chiang Saen] boundary demarcated last year. Frequent reports have been received from the British Vice-Consul at Chiengmai of threatened or anticipated breaches of the peace by Keng Tung subjects, but on the whole the year has passed without any serious breach of the peace. An attempt was made by the Siamese to supplement some of the boundary marks laid down by the Commission last year by some of their own, but upon a remonstrance being addressed to the British Vice-Consul the attempt was abandoned.'[163]

Once the last of the Keng Tung villagers had moved out of the Chiang Saen plain, British officials reflected that 'this very considerable element of danger of a breach of the peace on this frontier has been eliminated'.[164] It is unclear what these threatened 'breaches of the peace' entailed. Officials might have feared that locals would make use of their newly 'extra-territorial' citizenship to break Siamese laws, or that they would challenge the new boundary or the forced extradition.

When the British and Siamese agreed that sovereignty would be defined as exclusive rule over contiguous ethnically-homogeneous territories, the Lahu lost out. Claiming territory by temporary occupation, as the Lahu did, did not fit the new model of citizenship based on settled residence. The Lahu's politics of tactically shifting allegiance between lowland rulers proved not to work in protecting them from external states' and companies' attempts to divide and exploit the highlands' resources. The nature of teak as an unlootable resource hindered

[163] Report on the administration of the Shan States, 1893-94, 3358, Myanmar National Archives.
[164] Report on the administration of the Shan States, 1893-94, 3358, Myanmar National Archives.

local Lahu inhabitants' ability to turn the situation to their advantage. Boundary disputes, which in the Wa country to the north ended unresolved when the Wa prevented both lowland states from extending control over their territory, were resolved in the southern Shan states at the expense of the local Lahu inhabitants. Timber companies took control of the newly demarcated and nationalised forests by agreement of Siam and Burma.

LOOTABLE MINERALS IN THE SINO-BURMESE BORDERLANDS

The Lahu people's politics of switching allegiance had failed to deter aggrandizing external states, but the Wa tried different tactics. Their use of weapons transformed the 'friction of terrain' from something which had not helped the Lahu to something which could be used offensively. Through forming supralocal political structures which were capable to arming large numbers of fighters, groups of Wa successfully countered British and Chinese attempts at border-making in the Wa hills. The particular natural resource landscape of the Wa hills enabled these tactics. In the nineteenth century, the Was had been known as the chief musket-makers of the region, supplying the majority of matchlocks and dahs to the Keng Tung and Chiang Mai markets.[165] These skills, built on the resource wealth of the lead and silver-rich hills, enabled the Wa to mount successful defences of their territory in the late nineteenth century.

Lootable resources can be defined as high-value goods with low barriers to entry. Primary diamonds, for example, are generally considered to be less lootable than secondary diamonds, given the capital-intensive nature of underground mining. Secondary, or alluvial, diamonds are lootable, as they are found in river beds and can be extracted easily with little or no tools. In the Wa hills, lead, which was found in the slag left over after silver had been extracted

[165] House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 'Papers relating to the Route of Captain W.C. Macleod from Moulmein to the Frontiers of China, and to the Route of Doctor Richardson on his Fourth Mission to the Shan Provinces of Burmah', 1869, 38, 62.

from ore, could be exploited in small-scale artisanal ways that did not require large amounts of outside capital. The mines at Lufang/Maolang give an example of the nature of extraction. The headman of Lufang village near the mines levied tax on behalf of the ruling Wa chief of Yungpang. In 1929 he showed the Wa operations to G.E. Barton, who was visiting the Wa country on a geological survey. The slag heaps surrounding the old silver mines were dotted with small furnaces, each about the size of a chair, which Wa village groups used to re-smelt the lead-rich slag. Apparently all Was from nearby areas, when they wanted to wage war or make raids, came to these slag heaps to get lead for bullets. Sending a party to the mines to make bullets was, according to the headman, effectively a declaration of war. There was a ban on fighting at the mines, with the result that multiple belligerents would smelt lead side by side.[166]

In the nineteenth century egalitarian village groups formed defensive pacts, and chiefs wrote to and negotiated with visiting officials. Hkak Hkawn, a Wa headman, in 1929 explained to Barton, a British traveller, that there were two kinds of Wa political formation. There was a nucleus of people called Kawa, who hunted heads, (known to the British as the 'wild' Wa). Surrounding them were their close relatives, called Lawa, (whom the British called the 'tame' Wa). Both groups spoke the same language. Lawa people did not hunt heads, but lived by extracting tribute from the surrounding Shan lowland people, either by threatening to take the Shan people's heads, or promising to protect the Shan from the Lawa's wilder Kawa cousins. Through this easy life the Lawa got 'soft', hence the Kawa call them the 'soft' Wa. The 'wild' Kawa often fought the Lawa, as they needed heads to bring good fortune for their harvest. Often the Kawa beat the Lawa and retreated with the spoils. Sometimes, however, the 'wild' Kawa would supplant the Lawa, and take over the Lawa's easy, tribute-taking

[166] Barton, *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary*, 73.

lifestyle. In contrast to the Lawa, Hkak Hkawn explained, the social organisation of the Kawa, who lived confined to the area around Lake Walawn, involved little more than a clan structure. Different independent villages undertook to act together only in case of a common enemy, and then only a few villages at a time would unite. The Lawa, he said, found it necessary to form confederacies to protect themselves from the wilder Kawa. These confederacies would merge into effective overlordships, only to break up again by inheritance or rebellion.[167] In the late nineteenth century these Wa territorial strategies, built on lootable mineral resources, would play a part in the failure of Britain and China to demarcate a border through the Wa hills.

The biggest silver and lead mines in the Wa hills were at Banhong, also known as Maolong.[168] In the mid-eighteenth century Chinese immigrants to the Wa hills had developed the mines, which at the time were the largest mines in the south of China. These mines, controlled by the Wa, but mined in the eighteenth century by Chinese, were important as sources of Wa wealth. The history of these enormous silver mines, mined for silver in the eighteenth century and for lead in the nineteenth, demonstrates how the Wa controlled natural resources to preserve their autonomy down to the twentieth century. By the end of the eighteenth century the Banhong silver mines had closed, but in the nineteenth century they had a second life, as Wa miners would re-smelt the left-over slag to extract lead for bullets. The mines were very much in the hands of the Wa, who wanted them worked, but not by the Chinese government. Whoever wished to enter the mines had to seek the Wa ruler's consent.[169] Draper, the

[167] Barton, *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary*, 63.
[168] Silver rarely occurs in nature as a pure metal. Most historic silver mining was based on smelting silver-containing galena, or lead sulphide. Smelting this ore produced a lead-silver alloy. This alloy was re-smelted, during which process the lead would be oxidised, leaving the silver in its metallic state. The lead oxide can be easily smelted again to form lead metal. See Pengfei Xie and Thilo Rehren, 'Scientific Analysis of Lead-Silver Smelting Slag from Two Sites in China', in Pengfei Xie and Thilo Rehren (eds), *Metallurgy and Civilisation: Eurasia and Beyond*, London: Archetype (2009), 177.
[169] Barton, *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary*, 27.

American mining expert who accompanied Barton on his 1929 trip, estimated that the lead in the slag heaps was worth six million US dollars.[170]

Mong Lem on the borders of the Wa hills was also rich in silver and lead. In 1837 Captain Macleod reported that, 'the Bau-dwin or silver mines in the Muang Lem [Mong Lem] territory are very productive: they are worked by Chinese who are generally employed by the villagers'.[171] Over sixty years later, lead (probably smelted from the slag) was reportedly being exported from Mong Lem to China.[172]

The so-called 'Gold Tract' in the southeast of the Wa country was another source of Wa mineral wealth. In 1891 the Shans living at Nahpan showed Daly, the Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, nuggets of gold they had brought back from the so-called Gold Tract, dug up from sand in the river bed. Daly also reported gold washing in Nampang River, west of Panhsang, 'one of many places this is reported'.[173] In the 1890s some Lahu from Mong Hka, who lived within two days of the so-called Gold Tract in Wapetken, reported that they visited the Gold Tract to barter opium and salt, and while there 'could pick up nuggets and handfuls of dust almost any day'. Scott speculated that the Gold Tract, lying at the junction of the Namhka River and its confluents, must be the Shwethaminchaung – 'golden river' – of Burmese legend.[174] In 1897, Wa from the Gold Tract brought Scott bars of silver as tribute when he visited Wapetken. He immediately declared them British subjects, but on visiting the river in question in 1897 found nothing.[175]

[170] Barton, *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary*, 72.
[171] House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 'Papers relating to the Route of Captain W.C. Macleod from Moulmein to the Frontiers of China, and to the Route of Doctor Richardson on his Fourth Mission to the Shan Provinces of Burmah', 1869, 79.
[172] Diary of the Assistant Political Officer Keng Tung, 11 February 1902, Political Department Confidential, 3601, Myanmar National Archives.
[173] Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 7.
[174] Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 15.
[175] Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 38.

In the 1890s silver was reportedly plentiful in Mong Hka town.[176] Wa individuals employed Chinese slaves to mine silver from the mountains north of Mong Hka town. A former mine slave who had worked for Wa miners at Mong Hka at the turn of the century described how the Wa had captured and enslaved him. Prior to his capture, he said, he had been a silver miner at the Munai mines west of Mong Hka. A band of sixty Wa captured him near Munai and sold him into captivity at Mong Hka. He worked for a dozen years in the mines two day's north of Mong Hka town before being freed when he lost his sight. It was unusual, he said, for a master to have more than one or two slaves, and individual Wa miners each had their own hole in the mountainside. Most of the produce was sold as ore to Chinese outside the Wa country, where Chinese miners extracted the silver from the ore.[177] Groups of Lahu made money by capturing Chinese and selling them to the Wa. These were the only Chinese to be found among the really wild Wa, east of the Mongmao-Nahpan line. By 1896 the Chinese had occupied the Wa country with posts and had begun working silver mines at Laohsinchang, one of the mines near Mong Hka.[178]

Resources in the Wa hills were woven into a regional network of trade, which imperial interests threatened to disrupt. Unlike in the hills south of Keng Tung, where local inhabitants including Lahu were unable to benefit from the valuable resources which surrounded them, the Wa had developed techniques to profit from the mines. By taxing Chinese mining entrepreneurs, employing captured Chinese mine slaves, or extracting lead themselves, the Wa exploited the mineral resources in the hills. In the late nineteenth century, Wa village groups developed institutional structures to protect their interests from external states' attempts to exploit the mine-rich hills.

[176] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 15.
[177] Barton, *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary*, 41.
[178] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 32.

COMPETING TERRITORIALITY IN THE WA HILLS

The second half of the 1890s saw an increasing desire on the part of the British and Chinese to divide these mineral-rich Wa hills between them. Joint British and Chinese attempts to survey the borderlands faced equally strong Wa attempts to assert their own territorial control. The British and Chinese were not just in disagreement with each other over who this territory belonged to. The joint Boundary Commission faced opposition from multiple groups of local Wa. The Wa's opposition to the British and Chinese Commissioners took various forms, from negotiations and diplomatic efforts to military offensives. Competing territorialisation in the highlands was thus not just between the British and the Chinese, but also with the Wa, who ultimately defended their sovereignty against the lowland states' attempts to penetrate and exploit the Wa country.

Some groups of Wa developed political formations which engaged with external states. In order to counter British Burma and Yunnan's attempts to penetrate the Wa country, (putatively) fiercely independent Lawa states agreed on supralocal mutual defence pacts, neutrality agreements, and methods of external diplomacy. Supralocal agreements such as confederacies enabled independent village groups to raise and arm large numbers of men, make joint use of the richest states among them, and negotiate their position through engaging in diplomacy with external states. Lawa institutions enabled multiple independent, often warring, states, to unite temporarily for mutual defence. The binary description of politics in the highlands, between states and state-escaping societies, is therefore inadequate.

The British had divided the Burmese Shan states administratively into two, with the Superintendent of the Northern Shan States based at Lashio with a contingent of military police, some 150-200 miles from the Wa hills. The British tended to demonstrate their claims to the Wa hills by occasional, often bloody, expeditions from Lashio. One expedition sent

out to the border area in 1895-6 encountered unexpected opposition from the Wa, and in response burnt the majority of Wa villages they passed.[179] On the other side of the contested borderland lay the Qing Prefecture of Chen-pien, established in 1891, with a Han Prefect and a Panthay (Yunnanese Muslim) Colonel Commandant. General Couchman, the British Intelligence Officer on the 1897 Boundary Commission, described the Qing method of subduing a district. 'They move a strong column out and build a defensive post. From here parties go out and harry the neighbourhood until all the natives have fled or submitted.' They would then advance and build smaller posts, and repeat the process.[180] The Qing method of building and manning smaller posts, using the greater manpower available to them in the form of local Yunnanese, contrasted with the more intermittent British involvement in the borderlands. The disputed Wa country lay directly in between the Qing district of Chen-pien and the British military post at Lashio.

In Manglun, a large Wa state to the south of the 'wild Wa' hills, the British hoped in the late nineteenth century to establish a Shan-style client chief who would help them to control the Wa. In 1893 Scott installed Tonhsang, a pliant ally, as ruler of Manglun, and other British allies as chiefs of Ngekting and Lonlong states. Daly, the Intelligence Officer on the expedition, suggested that Tonhsang should be required to pay tribute in cash for West Manglun, and that for his territories east of the Salween – East Manglun – 'an annual nazr of gold and silver flowers or the like should be accepted'. The Government of India approved this proposal.[181]

[179] Report of the Intelligence Officer on Tour with the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, 1895-96, IOR/L/MIL/17/19/35/1, British Library.
[180] Report of the Intelligence Officer Accompanying the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on his Tour in 1896-97, by Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Rangoon: 1897, IOR/L/PS/2095, British Library.
[181] Symes, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Burma, to Secretary to the Government of India, Rangoon, Aug 3, 1893, in 'Report on an expedition to Manglun and the Wild Wa country, by Scott, SNSS, 1892-93', MSS Eur F278/78, British Library.

The Manglun chief, despite British hopes, was far from being able to control the Wa, some of whom formed an anti-British confederacy, swearing to resist the foreign incursion. In 1893 the Panthays of Panglong – a settlement in the middle of the Wa state of Panghkawn founded in 1875 by Panthay Muslim refugees from Yunnan – petitioned the British for assistance as they feared a Wa attack.[182] A number of Wa headmen had just summoned the Panthay chief to a meeting where they accused the Panthays of inviting the foreigners into their land. The Wa leaders told the Panthay chief to either join them in swearing to resist the foreigner, or leave the country with all his people. The Panthay chief protested that he was loyal to Panghkawn (the Wa chief to whom he paid tribute).[183] This episode suggests that the Was' anti-British confederacy was focused on protecting the entire territory from external penetration, which meant either recruiting or expelling the untrustworthy Panthays, rather than simply being an alliance of like-minded rulers.

In 1896, a confederacy of five Wa headmen on the northern borders of Manglun combined to resist a British incursion. In 1896, Capt. L.E. Elliott, Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, having mistakenly believed that the Wa village groups on the northern border of the British-allied East Manglun were just recalcitrant tributaries of Manglun state, entered the hills to repress their rebellion. The five headmen combined to raise 1,300 men to resist the expedition. The chiefs of Ngeklet, Lunlong, Motle, Ngekting and Songlong had made a pact for mutual self-defence, under penalty of Rs. 300 for any leader who broke the agreement by failing to help. 130 Military Police accompanied Elliott's expedition, but the combined Wa forces made him withdraw for a fortnight after he had driven them onto their prepared positions in their own territory. The Wa made use of the terrain, and their knowledge of it, by building stockades and planting *panjis* (bamboo foot-spikes), in order to ambush the

[182] Andrew D.W. Forbes, 'History of Panglong, 1875-1900: A "Panthay" (Chinese Muslim) Settlement in the Burmese Wa States', *Muslim World,* 75:1 (1988), 39.
[183] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 20.

British troops. In six days' fighting Elliott stormed half a dozen stockades, expended 17,000 rounds of ammunition, and lost three men killed and 17 wounded. For open fighting the Wa preferred not the top, but the foot of a hill, holding it with small stockades and firing upwards into the attack as it descended; they used ambushes at wooded fords, counterattacked, and on one occasion 25 volleys at 250 yards failed to dislodge them.[184] This episode demonstrates how groups looking to engage external powers could make use of the 'friction of terrain' for that purpose. Terrain was contingent and human-made, and not necessarily only used for escape. Arguably in this period the 'friction of terrain' was successfully used offensively, but failed when used defensively (as Lahu groups had tried).

The Wa miners' use of resources, when compared to the Lahu's, shows that the 'friction of terrain' is not a constant, unchanging over time. It was not rigid or linear but contingent and human-made, changing depending on technology. Just as in the nineteenth century the use of elephants had opened up steeper hillsides to logging, so the Wa could use muskets to maximise the offensive capabilities of mountainous terrain. The 'friction of terrain' was not just used defensively, to escape and run, but also offensively, to engage and fight, e.g. through ambushes. This is extending Gaston Gordillo's analysis of terrain as a weapon of insurgency.[185] Gordillo argued that bodies in motion affect, as well as being affected by, the terrain they are part of. Terrain, he argued, has the power to both constrain and enhance human action, and the three-dimensional nature of terrain becomes most clear in the importance of controlling the higher ground in mountain warfare. This thesis argues that lootable resources enabled terrain to be used successfully as a weapon in some cases, where groups of local actors were armed and combined in supra-local structures in order to organise

[184] Macquoid, Report of the Intelligence Officer on Tour with the SNSS, 1895-6, IOR/L/MIL/17/19/35/1, British Library.
[185] Gaston Gordillo, 'Terrain as Insurgent Weapon: An Affective Geometry of Warfare in the Mountains of Afghanistan', *Political Geography* 64 (2018), 54.

large numbers of fighters. Locals' understanding of terrain was useful to them in the face of companies and states intent on establishing territorial jurisdiction over the hills. Thus natural resources spurred territorial annexation, but could sometimes be used to halt it. By building roadblocks and ambushing the British with muskets aimed from undergrowth, combined with using resources and the institutions built on them, confederacies of Wa village groups engaged with rather than seeking to escape the outsiders.

At the same time other Wa and Lahu leaders also banded together, but in an attempt to use joint diplomacy to engage with the Superintendent. In 1896 Wa and Lahu headmen wrote a petition in Shan to the Superintendent which stated:

> I, with five influential Wa headmen and five influential Muhso headmen, have agreed to petition the Sawbwa (Ton Hsang, the Sawbwa of Mong Lun [Manglun]) that we are the essential headmen and ask the Sawbwa to back us up. Hpa Long, the Ta Lao Yeh of Mong Hka, the head Muhso headman, has obtained Chinese troops and is starting a post and city at Mong Hka with 500 or 600 men and waiting for the Kalas[186] to come. Hpa Lang will not keep anybody who is willing to receive the Kalas in the country. All the Muhsos had bolted into the jungle. Please help us at once and arrange that the Superintendent should come up at once and settle matters. Lao Lon (Muhso) of Ho Cha or Nan Cha brings letters from Ho Cha, Tong Chien, and Shang Kai Hsom.[187]

This episode demonstrates how groups of actors developed strategies which sought to engage with imperial states. Rather than deploying tactics of state avoidance in order to counter British Burma and China's attempts to penetrate the Wa country, the normally fiercely independent Wa agreed on supralocal mutual defence pacts and undertook joint efforts at direct diplomacy. Supralocal agreements such as these enabled groups of Wa to raise and arm large numbers of men, to make joint use of the richest states among them, and to negotiate their position through engaging in diplomacy with external states. These institutions enabled multiple independent, often warring, chiefs to unite temporarily in attempts to counter, by

[186] Meaning Indians, or foreigners in general. Refers here to British.
[187] Report of the Intelligence Officer on Tour with the Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, 1895-6, Macquoid, IOR/L/MIL/17/19/35/1, British Library.

engaging with, external states' interventions. The binary description commonly used to describe politics in the highlands, between states and state-escaping acephalous societies, is inadequate to describe these formations.

A few years later, in 1897, confederacies of Wa leaders reformed, this time to counter a joint British and Chinese Boundary Commission. An 1892-1894 Boundary Convention in London had agreed on paper most of the boundary between Burma and China. It provided for a Boundary Commission to be set up to demarcate the section of the boundary which ran through the as-yet un-surveyed Wa hills. This Boundary Commission worked from 1897 until 1899, when the negotiations ended in a stalemate. The 1897 Boundary Commission reveals the differences between British and Chinese concepts and methods of border-making in the highlands. It also highlights that the competing territorialisation of the hills was not just a binary competition between the British and the Chinese. The Wa asserted their own claims to the hills, and were ultimately successful at repulsing external attempts to claim sovereignty over the borderlands.

In December 1896 Scott left Lashio with 150 sepoys to join the Commission.[188] They set up camp on the outskirts of Mong Hsaw village. The Chinese arrived soon after and put up at the local *pongyi kyaung* (monastery school). Staying at the *pongyi kyaung* inside the village, instead of camping outside the village, would have left an impression of them being in charge rather than just passing through. Overnight more Chinese soldiers arrived, increasing the Chinese force to 120 men. A little later General Wang himself, the Colonel Commandant of Chen-pien Prefecture, turned up. While at Mong Hsaw the Mong Lem leaders (local leaders unambiguously under the Chinese) said that they had administered Mong Hsaw for 180 years. The British countered that Mong Hsaw used to pay tribute to both Mong Lem and the Was

[188] Report of the Intelligence Officer Accompanying the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on his Tour in 1896-97, Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Rangoon, 1897, IOR/L/PS/2095, British Library.

and the Lahus at the same time, and in former years Mong Lem used to pay tribute to Burma as well as to China.[189] The multiple allegiances and overlapping historical claims set up the fundamental dilemma of the territorial dispute in this region.

Facing an impasse on what locals' claims could establish, the British turned to cartography based on previous agreements. They called a meeting at their camp outside the village and had a map drawn up, one inch to a mile, to show their ideas on the boundary, especially as it ran along the 'Kong Ming Shan' range. The Chinese contended that Scott had been mistaken and that there were in fact two ranges known locally as 'Kong Ming Shan'. They produced a map they said was a facsimile of the map signed in London in 1894 by Lord Rosebery and the Chinese Minister, Hsueh. Each side refused to accept the maps produced by the other.

As in the Burma-Siam negotiations of the previous decade, both sides considered not only the other's claims but also their evidence for these claims to be illegitimate. In part, this grew from very different ideas – or, at least, opposing positions in this instance – of what constituted a 'natural' boundary. Scott reported that the Qing 'declared that statements of latitude and longitude were beyond their comprehension and insinuated that they were only inserted with sinister intentions', and at another stage 'they affected not to know what was meant by a watershed'.[190] The Qing treated locally-acknowledged boundaries as more important than any external ideas of what a boundary should be, elevating the local people's practices as 'natural'. They refused to compromise the integrity of three Sawbwa-ships which were to be left to China under the 1894 Agreement, but which lay on the British side of what the British called the 'natural' watershed frontier. For the British, however, geographical features were more important in defining a boundary than the allegiance of the inhabitants.

[189] Report of the Intelligence Officer Accompanying the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on his Tour in 1896-97, Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Rangoon, 1897, IOR/L/PS/2095, British Library.
[190] Burma-China Frontier: Namting-Nalawt Section, IOR/L/PS/18/B184, British Library.

The two sides could not agree. The Chinese suggested they could speak about it better at Mong Lem, where they said all the records were kept. General Wang insisted on Scott's going with him to Mong Lem, where the Chen-pien Prefect would meet him. Wang also insisted on Scott taking the whole British Military Police escort with him, as then 'all the world would see what good friends the two countries were'. So, they marched together on Mong Lem.[191] Unbeknownst to the British party at the time, however, the Yunnan Gazetteer recorded this march as Scott's flight to Mong Lem after his defeat at Mong Hsaw.[192] Rivalry and mimicry were entwined in such a way that a march to a local centre of administration could be displayed as either a show of strength or of weakness. The Qing demonstration of power in 1897, persuading the British to march with them and then representing the march as a defeat, and likewise marching into villages just as the British set up camp outside them, contrasted with the British style of demonstrating control. British 'expeditions' to the disputed border area featured a few moments of symbolism, such as when the British found themselves on 'their' side of the watershed and so hoisted a Union Jack they had made out of whatever was to hand – a tablecloth and red and blue pencils – but mostly consisted of bloody reprisals against recalcitrant local chiefs.[193] This episode highlights the differences between the British and the Qing's ideas and methods of achieving territorial control. Violence – burning nearly every village they passed through – characterised the British expedition in 1897. Displays of power over the British – hurrying to join the British in whatever village they camped in, or insisting that the British accompany them to the next village – characterised the Qing interaction with the British. These two different methods were aimed at achieving the same goal – territorialisation of the valuable mines district.

[191] Report of the Intelligence Officer Accompanying the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on his Tour in 1896-97, Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Rangoon, 1897, IOR/L/PS/2095, British Library.
[192] Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 37.
[193] Report of the Intelligence Officer Accompanying the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on his Tour in 1896-97, Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Rangoon, 1897, IOR/L/PS/2095, British Library.

Also attempting to use maps to demonstrate control of territory, the Shan Sawbwa at Mong Lem tried to make use of British interest in the area. Before the British left, the Sawbwa appealed to them for help against the Chinese. The Sawbwa's brother showed the British party a combined Chinese and Shan map of Mong Lem State. According to this map, Scott reported, Mong Lem 'appears to have extended itself of late years in an extraordinary manner'. The map was given to Scott in much secrecy, 'the wretched man trembling with fright'. He requested that the Chinese should not be informed of his bringing the map, and that it should be returned as soon as possible, as he had been forbidden to show it to him. The Sawbwa's brother complained also of Chinese exactions, saying that the Chinese had recently demanded thirty-five viss of silver from Mong Lem.[194] Trying to maximise his agency in what had been a two-way debate between the external powers, the Sawbwa's attempts to mimic the use of maps to demonstrate his control of territory seems not to have succeeded.

The Wa headman of Ngeklet also attempted to negotiate using diplomacy, but took a different approach. In 1897 the headman wrote to Scott directly, telling him to stay away from his state, and threatening that his people were very wild. The chief wrote: 'We beg that you will not come into our states. Please return by the route you came. Ours is a wild country and the people devour rats and squirrels raw. … We greatly fear the old people might resist you and thus offend you.' By performing his 'wildness' in the correspondence, the headman's strategy went beyond simply avoiding external states. Scott found correspondence belonging to Ngeklet which showed that they were in league with some of the chiefs he had deposed, as well as with the Chinese. At the same time as he sought to ally himself with other anti-British leaders and with the Chinese, the headman was also deploying towards the British a sort of 'strategic essentialism', in Spivak's famous term, seeking to essentialise the Was'

[194] Report of the Intelligence Officer Accompanying the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on his Tour in 1896-97, Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Rangoon, 1897, IOR/L/PS/2095, British Library.

identity as a 'wild tribe' to further their political interests.[195] Anthropologist Magnus Fiskesjo has argued that the Wa used headhunting partly as a sacrifice aimed at capturing the force of the enemy Other, and partly as a strategy to repel outsiders.[196] This episode shows a similar impulse, but shows how it can be expressed through engaging with rather than escaping from external states.

Even though Scott avoided going through Ngeklet, the people of Ngeklet lay in ambush all along his march for successive days. The Wa's main offensive technique consisted of guerrilla attacks making use of the jungle terrain. Rather than waiting in their fortified villages, the Wa preferred to ambush the British columns as they made their way along the jungle paths. The British found it impossible to protect their columns in the dense jungle. 'They frequently picked off our men at short range without our being able to catch sight of one of them, as they are clever at taking cover. … One of their most dangerous weapons is firing the dry jungle; the fire creates its own wind and invariably travels uphill, even against the wind, so that the whole hillside becomes a blazing furnace.'[197] Scott's column would find sudden trenches or fallen trees across the road, or Wa snipers firing at them and setting fire to 'whole hillsides of dry jungle' so that some of his men were cut off and some of his ammunition boxes exploded.[198] The Ngeklet chief wrote to Scott explaining that he distrusted Scott's friendly overtures because last year Captain Elliott had made the same offers and then burnt his village. Scott replied that on this occasion they were merely taking the shortest route, but then, giving no reason, sent a party back later and burned the village. 'The burning of the village excited the ire of the Was, who showed their annoyance by a furious but distant

[195] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, New York: Routledge (1987), 281.
[196] Fiskesjo, 'The Fate of Sacrifice and the Making of Wa History', 324.
[197] Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 40.
[198] Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Report of the Intelligence Officer, accompanying SNSS on his tour 1896-7, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 39.

fusillade and loud yells'. Concluding carelessly: 'What the Was lost no one knows.'[199] The lawless, senseless actions of the British in burning the village contrasts with the rationality of the locals in building alliances for defence when diplomacy and negotiations failed.

In 1900 headmen in the northern Wa hills neighbouring the Chinese Shan state of Mengting united in a confederacy and successfully repulsed the joint British-Chinese Boundary Commission' attempts to demarcate the territory. This confederacy, which had formed when the leaders heard that the British and Chinese planned to divide their country from their Shan tributaries, commanded enough men to be able to overpower the British and Chinese Boundary Commission forces. After the Wa killed Sutherland and Kiddle, two British surveyors working on the Boundary Commission, in Mengting bazaar, the Wa confederacy raised and armed 2,000 men and laid siege to Mengting. The British and Chinese Boundary Commission escorts were forced to abandon the town. 'For weeks the Chinese Boundary Commission escorts, hundreds strong, were besieged and unable to stir while Wa roamed around in parties of 400 burning the wretched Chinese-Shan villages under their eyes, and at one time they had to have 2,000 men under arms.'[200]

Hkak Hkawn, the Lawa headman who Barton met in 1929, told the story of the fighting in 1900. In the north of the Wa country, he said, one confederacy was badly broken up at the time of the big fight of the British and the Chinese. The fight occurred when Wa villagers killed two British Boundary Commissioners and besieged Mengting town. The British and Chinese in revenge burnt five stockades and twelve villages in two days. According to Hkak Hkawn, the northern federation fought because some Chinese told them that the British and Chinese planned to split the country and stop them levying tribute from the Chinese Shan

[199] Report of the Intelligence Officer Accompanying the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on his Tour in 1896-97, Captain G.H.H. Couchman, Rangoon, 1897, IOR/L/PS/2095, British Library.
[200] 1900 Boundary Commission report, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 53.

country. The valley belonged to us, Hkak Hkawn said, and they (the Mengting Shan) settled there with our permission. 'The tribute paid to us by Mongkawtum [Mengting and Mongtum] Shan is not a head-ransom paid to wild people, but a rental, for the country up to the Namhsung belongs to us.' He distinguished the Lawa from the 'really wild tribes', who do not wait for tribute to be paid 'as arranged beforehand' but raid for whatever they want, whenever they want it, and take heads into the bargain, 'without being bound by any agreements'.[201] Hkak Hkawn was himself a Lawa chief from Yungpang state. He told Barton how he used to be a Kawa villager, but was made homeless after the fighting in 1900 between his confederacy and the British and Chinese Boundary Commissioners. After his village was burned in 1900 he travelled the countryside, and eventually married into a Lawa chieftain's family, thereafter becoming a Lawa chief, and Buddhist.

Pangkawn villagers in 1929 still remembered how Pangkawn and its confederates had fought against the Chinese in 1900. The villagers told Barton that in 1900 some Chinese warned the Hulu Wangs (Pangkawn and its confederates) not to deal with the foreigners.[202] The British had suspected at the time that the murder of the surveyors had been instigated by the Chinese. The confederates fought, except Yungpang, who did not join the fighting because he hoped that the foreigners would re-open the mines. The same chiefs made a pledge in 1902, and again in 1903, to resist the foreigner. In 1902, the chiefs of Saohin and Saohpa summoned the Wa chiefs to a meeting at which they pledged themselves to resist violation of their territory.[203] In 1903 Pangkawn, Panglao and Panghung met, pledged themselves to resist violation of their territory, to boycott Panglong, and to forbid foreigners to cross the Namting River.[204] Often seen by outsiders and scholars alike as lawless, warmongering village groups,

[201] Barton, *Barton's 1929 Wa Diary*, 65.
[202] 'Wang' means 'prince' in Chinese.
[203] Northern Shan States Annual Report 1903-1904, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 68.
[204] Northern Shan States Annual Report 1903-1904, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 70.

Wa governance was rules-based, comprising systems such as defence and neutrality pacts, and rental agreements.

The 1897-99 boundary negotiations in the end produced two boundary lines, which became known as the Scott line and the Liu-Chen line. Deciding to abandon the Boundary Commission, Scott in 1899 proceeded to demarcate the boundary single-handed. He sent the map to General Liu, the principal Chinese Commissioner, writing that the concessions the British had offered were withdrawn and that the British Government would regard this new line as the definitive boundary. General Liu replied on 1 May 1900, declining to accept Scott's line, and transmitting a detailed statement of the alternative frontier claimed by him on the authority of the 'Hsueh map', writing that the Nam Kha 'is the natural boundary, which has been always well known to the local people; neither in ancient nor in modern times has it been modified, and it cannot now be wrongfully changed or moved somewhere else'.[205]

The lack of agreement between the two sides contrasts with the Anglo-Siamese Boundary Commission of 1892-93, which had been conducted with mutual cordiality and concluded peacefully. Winichakul argued that the cordiality of the Anglo-Siamese demarcation was due to the fact that Siamese state-building in its northern tributaries was designed to facilitate British commercial interests.[206] A comparison with the acrimonious competition for territory in the Wa hills also points to the possible importance of the nature of teak compared to minerals in determining negotiators' obstinacy. Where only already-explored and hence quantifiable teak forests were at stake, rather than unknown quantities of precious metals, the British and Siamese freely swapped territory back and forth. The value of minerals, on the other hand, was only speculative. It was impossible at that time to accurately quantify the

[205] Burma-China Frontier: Namting-Nalawt Section, IOR/L/PS/18/B184, British Library.
[206] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 109.

value of underground resources, so there was no incentive for either side to compromise with territorial swaps.

THE LINE OF SAFETY

Almost as soon as Scott demarcated what he claimed to be the boundary, officials in Rangoon and Delhi decided that attempting to administer the Wa states was not worth the cost. The murder of the two surveyors, Sutherland and Kiddle, and the subsequent fighting, sparked a debate between the Government of Burma and the Government of India over whether the British should give up trying to control the Wa states. The governments of Burma and India eventually both agreed that attempting to administer the Wa states was unfeasible. In 1903 Scott admitted that the boundary line through the Wa hills which he had drawn in 1899 was not ideal because the 'wild Wa' straddled it. If the Wa raided Chinese territory, the Chinese would be within their rights to call on the British to control the border to protect them against Wa raids, something the British would be unable to do. The Government of Burma decided in the 1900s that they should let the matter rest.[207]

The British also began to question the value of the Wa hills' mineral wealth. In 1899 the Yunnan Viceroy told the British Boundary Commission that Britain was welcome to the 'Gold Tract', if it turned out to be on the British side of the Scott Line. As head hunters, the Wa of the so-called Gold Tract were more trouble than they were worth. The Viceroy primarily wanted Sumu (Panghkawn), where the large Banhong/Maolong silver mine lay. Scott mistakenly thought Panghkawn was worthless, and during the boundary negotiations in 1899 the Chinese had kept quiet about the mines. Scott began to agree with the Chinese about the Gold Tract. When the Wa from Wapetken visited him begging not to be given to

[207] Bayne, Chief Secretary, 22 July 1903, Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 70.

China, because the Chinese used them for forced labour, he called them 'wretched tribes', whom he regretted making British subjects.[208]

The Government of Burma thought they should continue to assert ownership of the entire Wa country just in case there turned out to be valuable mines there. China's success in building military posts in the 'tame' Wa and Shan areas, together with the 'wild' Was' opposition, led the British to claim the territory, but no longer make the pretence of administering it. The Government of Burma in 1905 argued that the British should 'leave things as they are', only protesting to Peking about the Chinese building military posts in territory which the British still claimed. Enforcing the Scott Line by armed posts was not worth the cost, as the Wa territory was remote and would not repay the cost of administration.[209] The Government of India disagreed. 'The tract may be inaccessible, operations may be costly, commensurate advantages may not be forthcoming, but Her Majesty's Government having formally declared the Scott Line to be the provisional frontier … [should not] ignore a deliberate transgression.' The Government of India envisaged attempting to police the frontier with China with military posts, but not attempting to govern the Wa areas within Burma.[210]

The Burma government estimated that it would cost Rs. 350,000 just to have posts at the frontier, and more to administer within the frontier. They believed that the Chinese would hold the British responsible for Wa raids on China, while the Wa were equally likely to attack the British. 'The country has no value, and would not repay even the slenderest administration, and we can let the matter rest as it will not deteriorate with delay.'[211] The Government of India escalated the dispute to the India Office in London, saying that Burma's

[208] 1900 Boundary Commission diary, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 60.
[209] Gates, Chief Secretary to Government of India, 14 July 1905, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 75.
[210] Government of India to Chief Secretary Government of Burma, 13 September 1905, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 75.
[211] Gates, Chief Secretary to Government of India, 9 March 1906, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 76.

laissez-faire policy would prejudice the British claim to the Wa country. 'If we cannot administer them, we should return them in exchange for advantageous settlement of the Irrawaddy-Salween boundary and possibly Tibetan Adhesion Agreement.'[212]

Mirroring the assumptions of policy-makers on the Burma-Siam border that a clear line would reduce 'breaches of the peace', the India Office in London prioritised getting a 'workable' frontier between Burma and China.[213] This precipitated yet another argument, this time between the current and former Superintendents to the Shan States, Scott and Stirling, over where the British should draw the frontier through the Wa hills. Stirling, the Superintendent, proposed a new line, the Stirling Line, dividing the Wa. He argued that Scott's promise of British citizenship to the Wa from the 'Gold Tract' had lost force since the British had allowed the Chinese to build posts there.[214] Scott disagreed, saying that the Chinese 'behaved disgracefully' during the 1900 Boundary Commission, and 'the least we can do' is to continue to claim the Scott Line. It is the best geographical and racial line, he argued. Any other line would give China many or all of the wild Wa and would thus lead to perpetual unrest.[215] Gates, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, had never heard of the silver mine.[216] The Government of India decided, as 'apparently we cannot hold it and the Chinese can', they could probably maintain order there better than is held at present. … we could give China part or whole of Wa country in return for concessions on Myitkyina frontier or the Tengyueh railway.[217] The Government of Burma again worried that ceding the Wa country as a whole would bring disorder directly onto Burma's frontier. The Scott Line was a good racial frontier, any other line being 'a leap in the dark with unknown tribal

[212] Government of India to India Office, 14 June 1906, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 76.
[213] Government of India to Chief Secretary Government of Burma, 8 August 1906, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 79.
[214] Stirling SNSS, 16 August 1906, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 76.
[215] Scott, Superintendent and Political Officer Southern Shan States, 15 August 1906, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 80.
[216] Gates, Chief Secretary, 15 August 1906, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 80.
[217] Government of India to Gates, Chief Secretary, 24 September 1906, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 80.

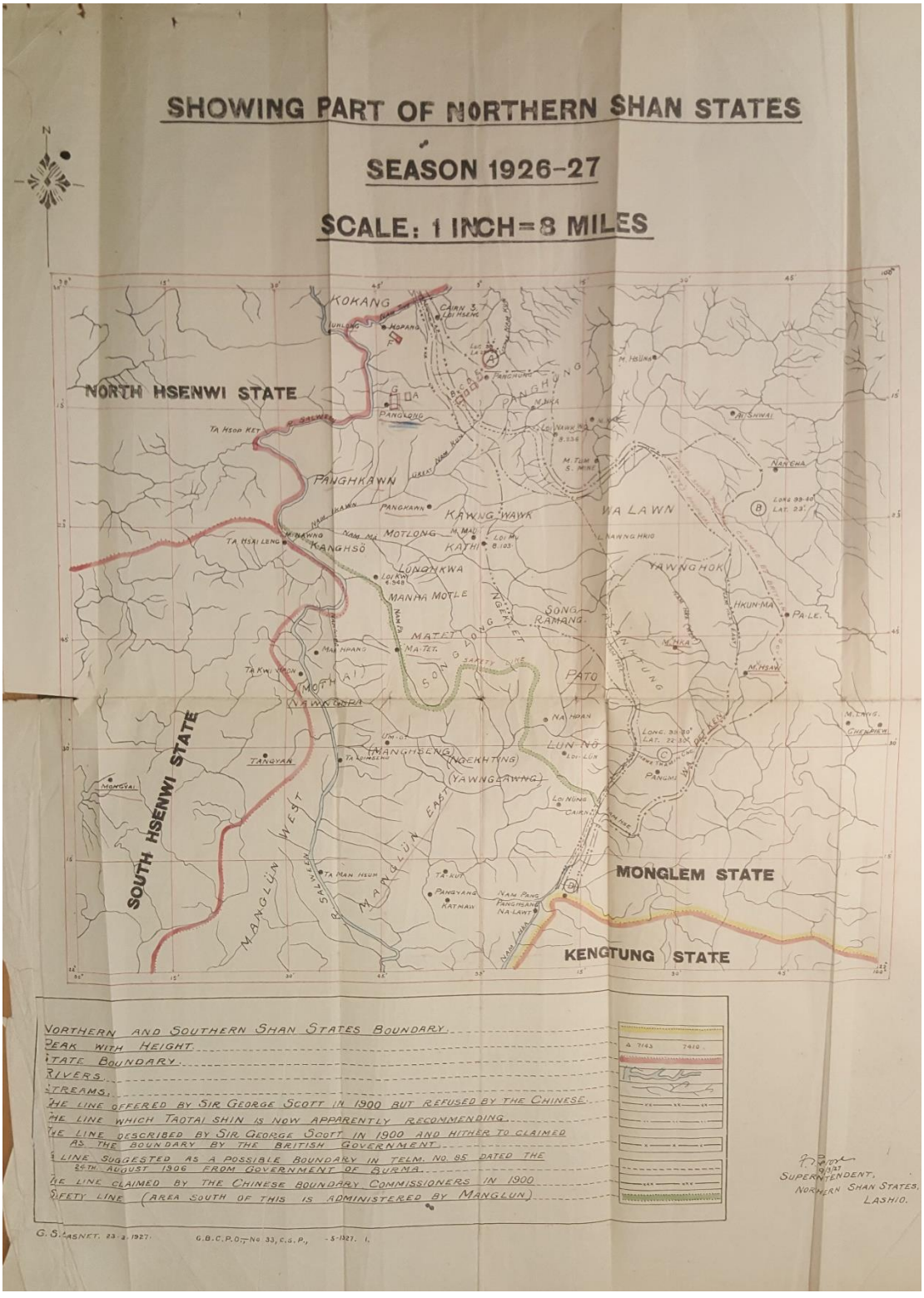
repercussions'. Plus, 'it includes territory which may after all turn out to be valuable some day'.[218]

In 1908 policy-makers in Rangoon compromised, and decided, by drawing a so-called Line of Safety, not to attempt to govern the Wa area officially (see Figure 5 below). This line was on the Burmese side of the Scott Line which Britain still claimed, but British officials were not allowed to go beyond it into the Wa hills. The Wa had successfully, if only temporarily, made themselves ungovernable, preserving for now their territorial sovereignty.

[218] Gates, Chief Secretary to Government of India, 19 October 1906, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 81.

Figure 5

The Line of Safety



Source: © British Library Board, IOR/M/3/633.

This ‘Line of Safety’ mirrored arrangements the British came up with for governing frontiers elsewhere across the empire. For the so-called ‘independent’ tribes living in the foothills of what became in 1893 the border between British India and Afghanistan, the British created a bifurcated frontier between governed and ungoverned British territory. Through the Frontier Crimes Regulation – promulgated in 1872, 1887 and 1901 - the administration created an alternative judiciary, whereby frontier inhabitants were to be separated from the colonial judiciary and governed by their own ‘traditions’, as determined by the state, and the collective punishment of ‘tribes’ was a central feature.[219] In northern Kenya, in a succession of acts in 1902, 1926 and 1934, colonial administrators created a similar parallel legal realm in Somaliland. With the ‘Somali line’ in Kenya’s Northern Frontier District, the state aimed to restrict the movement of whole communities.[220] Differentiated or fragmented sovereignty was a classic way of dealing with, but often ended up constituting or reinforcing, difference, across the multi-ethnic states which the new boundaries were creating.

CONCLUSION

The period saw different kinds of borderland polities confronting external states’ attempts to territorialise the borderlands. The late 1880s and 1890s saw Britain’s so-called Pacification of Upper Burma – a decade-long military intervention to suppress rebellions by the former tributaries of the Konbaung monarchy in the Shan States. At the same time as Britain was extending control over the states formerly tributary to Upper Burma, the Siamese and the Qing were simultaneously expanding state control over their tributaries in the densely-forested uplands of the northern Siamese and southwestern Qing borderlands. The teak forests of the Burma-Siam borderlands were highly valuable to British and Siamese timber

[219] Benjamin D. Hopkins, ‘The Frontier Crimes Regulation and Frontier Governmentality’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 74:2 (2015), 376.
[220] Emma Lochery, ‘Rendering Difference Visible: The Kenyan State and its Somali Citizens’, *African Affairs,* 111: 445 (2012), 620.

companies in the nineteenth century. Teak companies lobbied for lowland states to extend territorial control over the highlands. The desire to demarcate and claim forests also led the British and the Siamese to attempt to delineate a border between the two countries.

In the face of this lowland territorialisation, Lahu swidden farmers in the borderlands chose political strategies which resembled Scott's 'escapist' model. The evidence that groups of hill dwellers used 'escapist' political and agricultural methods is not evidence for or against his assertion that valley dwellers at some point in the past 'ran to the hills'. The model does not apply uniformly, but it can be useful. The 'escapism' of the Lahu living in the Siam-Burma borderlands ranged from swidden agricultural techniques to living in unfortified hidden villages. This flexible politics of multiple shifting allegiances suited the nomadic lifestyle, and made sense given the difficulty of benefiting from unlootable teak. Yet their strategy of switching political allegiance proved to be incompatible with the new definitions of sovereignty and citizenship. The lowland powers which in the late nineteenth century were penetrating the hills to claim resources could dismiss their existence. Lahu strategies to control territory failed, as the Boundary Commission concluded with a mutual shift to a definition of sovereignty as rule over an ethnically-homogeneous contiguous territory. Yet the nomadic Lahu, by definition, continued to disrupt the governments' claims to govern homogeneous populations living within, and not across, defined boundaries.

The Wa's own territoriality during this period differed in many respects from the Lahu's. By their strategies of combining to conduct joint diplomacy, or making military pacts to raise large numbers of fighters, the Wa were able to repulse both the British and the Chinese. These supralocal mechanisms were built on lootable mineral wealth. Lootable minerals converted into weapons directly enabled Wa fighters to make use of the mountainous terrain for offense. The political coordination required to carry out these typical state functions makes us

question the assumptions made about Wa statelessness. The British and Qing practices of territoriality and definitions of territorial sovereignty were different again. The Qing method of building military posts and installing Han magistrates differed from the British method of undertaking annual bloody expeditions to assert control. When it came to border-making, neither side could agree with the other's ideas of what made a 'natural' boundary. In 1899, after two years of negotiations, the Commissioners were unable to agree on a border, differing especially over the location of the 'Kongmingshan' mountain range described in the 1894 Convention.

Subsequent debates among the British centred on how to claim sovereignty, without controlling, this still-autonomous territory. Eventually Burma's 'laissez-faire' policy of claiming the Wa hills as British territory, without attempting to govern them, was made official policy as British officials were banned from entering from 1908. The existence of this Line of Safety, beyond which officials were banned from entering, highlights how irrelevant the international boundaries were on the ground during this period. Lines on a map, cutting though hills which were still almost entirely under local control, in the early years of the twentieth century the nominal borders in this region had little meaningful reality for people living in the borderland. The possibility of minerals meant that neither the British nor Chinese side wanted to give up claims to the area, yet it was ironically local agency in the coming decades which gave the borderlines some concrete relevance on the ground.

2. PEOPLE, SPACE AND TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIONS BETWEEN SIAM AND YUNNAN

INTRODUCTION

In 1905 William Marcus Young, an American Baptist missionary, reported a 'remarkable ingathering' among the Lahu in Keng Tung. 'The people have come in from all parts of the state', he said, 'from east of the Cambodia river and from far over in China'. He had baptised 988 people in the few months since it started, and he sent home an 'urgent request' for 'more evangelists'.[221]

William Marcus Young had been in Keng Tung since 1900. His work among the Shan people in Keng Tung valley had proceeded slowly for several years. Then, in early 1903, he began to notice increased interest from Lahu people who listened to his preaching at the bazaar. 'There is some excitement over some dreams among them', he reported. Ten years prior, Lahu people living in different villages scattered across the country had dreamt that God was coming soon. Many who heard the Gospel saw it as the fulfilment of this dream.[222] The news spread rapidly into the Lahu hills in southwest China. He reported how groups would visit him, after fifteen to twenty days' journey, with tracts or Gospels that had been guarded 'with scrupulous care'.[223]

The first convert was baptised in October 1904.[224] At the same time two Lahu prophets and sixty of their followers came to Young saying that they had been searching for the true God for years. They said they had been travelling for the past fourteen years telling people that the true God was coming soon. They had heard of the Baptists' work two years ago, they

[221] Annual Report of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention, 1907, American Baptist Historical Society archives (ABHS), Atlanta, Georgia.
[222] Young to Barbour, 11 April 1903, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[223] Young, April 4, 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[224] Vincent Young, 7 December 1970, Young family files, ABHS.

said, and since then had been weighing whether the Baptists' teaching was the fulfilment of their traditions or not. Young was convinced that if these prophets converted, the people would follow. These teachers had 'a wonderful influence over the people'.[225] There were many of these itinerating evangelists in the Lahu country, who spent years travelling the country warning people to give up sin because God was coming soon. These were 'deeply pious men', Young said, who could not read, but carried 'papers covered with hieroglyphs that they do not understand the meaning of themselves'. It was probable that some of their 'head teachers' in China could interpret these peculiar papers, he thought.

In 1904 several of these itinerant prophets converted, and promised to go back to the villages and bring people to the Baptists' mass meetings.[226] Groups of the first converts in November 1904 went out 'to all parts of the state and even into China'. The movement spread rapidly, with 1,046 people being baptised in 1904-1905, and 4,419 people in 1905-1906.[227] By 1936 the total Baptist church membership was 33,650. Well over half of these were in China.[228]

Over the early decades of the twentieth century Britain and China began increasingly to try to control the movement of people and things across the borderlands. At the turn of the century, however, the disputed borders remained effectively invisible for local people. Local preachers continued to cross the borderlands along networks originating in previous centuries' millenarian movements. States' borders became increasingly visible over the period. In the 1900s, Britain and China both tried to control the movement of foreign missionaries across the borderlands. In the 1910s and 1920s Britain and China tried to limit

[225] Young to Barbour, 5 November 1904, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[226] Young to Barbour, 22 November 1904, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[227] Annual Report of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention, 1907, ABHS.
[228] Rev. Saw Aung Din and Rev. E.E. Sowards, 'Work among the Lahus, Was, Akhas', *Burma Baptist Chronicle*, Rangoon: Burma Baptist Convention Publishing (1963), 412.

the cross-border movement of local preachers too. Missionaries and converts in the early years of the twentieth century challenged external states' claims to control their territory.

Missionaries' territorial imagination was totally different to governments' ideas of territory explored in the previous chapter. The Baptists' ideas of their mission were based on a religious geography, where the surrounding hills were divided into 'vast fields' of people still to be converted. Yet at the same time their desire to divide territory in order to enumerate converts was another manifestation of the same 'territorial' urge seen in Chapter 1: a desire to enclose things – in this case people rather than natural resources – within a demarcated territory. Missionaries' ideas of borders were often based on ethnic or linguistic divisions, unlike state borders which were more often drawn with the aim of demarcating natural resources. The contrast between missionaries' prioritising of sacred boundaries over states' secular boundaries is revealed in an ongoing dispute between Baptist and Presbyterian missionaries which carried on through the early decades of the twentieth century. This dispute showed both sects competing for control of territory in the region stretching from the Wa hills on the border with China to the hills south of Keng Tung bordering northern Siam and Chiang Mai. The Presbyterians' eventual decision to relinquish the Keng Tung and Yunnan 'fields' to the Baptists in the 1910s had long-term consequences for borders in the region. Baptists differed from Presbyterians in their relation to the developing nation-states. Baptists worked with lowland states where necessary, as a means to an end, but envisaged a united community of Baptists stretching across the Burma-China borderlands. Presbyterians at first envisaged a cross-border community of Lao-speaking Christians from Yunnan to Chiang Mai, but eventually decided to work with the Siamese state within national borders. The period saw the growing relevance of national borders, as missionaries turned from trying to draw pan-regional organisations on linguistic or ethnic lines, to cooperating with nation-states within national or transnational organisations.

The first section of this chapter describes how this mass conversion movement spread among the Lahu and Wa living across the highlands in the early years of the twentieth century. Converts and missionaries made use of pre-existing regional connections, particularly the links made by former Mahayana Buddhist millenarian movements. The mass movement began at a moment of transition in the borderlands. Qing repression of Lahu Buddhist states was one trigger of the movement, Wa leaders' attempts to make use of British interest in the borderlands was another. The external states that were attempting to penetrate the borderlands were not able to prevent border-crossing local preachers from spreading the new religion. The disputed borders in this period were invisible to locals, some of whom made use of this mobility to connect dispersed communities with a new religion.

The second section considers the missionaries' territorial imagination. The Baptists and Presbyterians' desire to stake out and control the land, or the 'field' in missionary terms, reflected a view of territorial divisions unconnected to national imaginaries. Key to understanding their drive for territory was the perceived competition with other missionary denominations. One missionary, Young, talked about rumours of the Roman Catholics moving into Keng Tung in 1912 as a 'crisis'. From 1904 to 1919, the Baptists and Presbyterians in Keng Tung fought bitterly over how to divide the Keng Tung field between them. Debate raged over whether the Baptists' Burma Mission and the Presbyterians' Laos Mission should divide the land by altitude or by linguistic divisions. During the feud, both Baptists and Presbyterians talked of the other side's 'invasions' of 'disputed territory'.

The third section shows how the growing importance of national borders subsumed the missionaries' alternative imagining of geographical divisions. In the 1900s, Young's border-crossing ambitions alarmed the British and the Qing. Both states turned down his frequent requests to visit the disputed territory which ran through the Wa hills. Both the British and

the Qing were trying to hide their lack of control of the territory in question. By the 1910s, the missionaries' continual attempts to cross the disputed border forced the British and the Qing to set up a more formal border regime of checks and escorts in order to control missionaries crossing the border. Restrictions on foreigners' travel escalated till eventually in 1918 the Chinese expelled all native as well as foreign Christian workers in the borderlands.[229] The British responded by recalling any workers who were left on the China side. As the states' presence grew in the borderlands, missionaries began to organise themselves along national lines. The American Legation in Peking tried to convince the Chinese to let the missionaries return, by arguing that missionary schools would help to make good citizens of the borderland people. The Baptists began in the 1910s to teach the Chinese government curriculum in Yunnan, and in 1918 decided to make Burmese the language of instruction in Keng Tung, despite continuing to administer both areas from Burma. Through the 1910s and 1920s, lowland states on either side of the border began to extend their control through the borderlands, by controlling the movements of missionaries and converts, and by spurring missionaries' pan-regional organisations to transform into national or transnational organisations.

'THE SIGN IS THAT WHITE PEOPLE ON WHITE HORSES WILL BRING US THE SCRIPTURE OF GOD'

The Lahu Baptist mass conversion movement which began in 1904 built on a long history of millenarian movements across the peoples of the highlands. The leaders of these movements typically blended spiritual and secular power. Foreign missionaries' efforts to convert locals and build transnational religious organisations sometimes explicitly and sometimes inadvertently built on the traditions and networks of Lahu prophetic leaders.

[229] The missionaries used the term 'native' workers to include the many Karen preachers they worked with, while 'local' (invariably followed by 'helper') referred to the (always anonymous) Lahu and Wa preachers.

From the seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries, a network of Mahayana Buddhist temples spread across the Lahu hills on Yunnan's southwest borders. The story of how the Lahu first converted to millenarian Mahayana Buddhism is shrouded in myth, but historians agree that several elements seem clear. A Han Chinese monk, Yang Deyuan, came from Dali to the Lahu hills in the mid-seventeenth century. The Lahu called him a god. In 1790 he constructed a temple at Nancha in Yunnan, sent Lahu monks out to proselytise, and began to build a network of daughter temples across the Lahu hills.[230] The Lahu called this organisation *na fu na ki* (Five Buddhas and Five Scriptures).[231] The anthropologist Ma Jianxiong shows how an elite family – the descendants of Monk Tong Jin, Monk Yang's successor – developed religious power as hereditary Buddha kings at the central temple at Nancha, while at the same time representing the Lahu in front of Qing officials. The Lahu Buddhist monks' system of temples thus doubled as administrative districts.[232]

These Lahu monk-leaders rallied followers to rebel against their local Shan rulers several times in the eighteenth century. Lahu people used the institutions of Mahayana Buddhism to unify and mobilise their communities. Mahayana Buddhist temple leadership enabled greater politico-military centralisation than was otherwise possible in the Lahu's autonomous and widely dispersed village communities.[233] In 1799 there was a particularly massive rebellion in Mengmeng (modern Shuangjiang county), led by a Lahu, Li Wenming, against the Shan ruler of Mengmeng. The rebellion was defeated in 1800, and the leader was put to death. As part of the Qing policy at that time of *yi yi zhi yi* ('ruling the barbarian through the barbarian'), the monk co-leader – Monk Tong Jin, a Han Chinese immigrant originally known as Zhang Fuguo – voluntarily derobed and was given control of three *meng* (*muang*, referring to Shan-

[230] Ma Jianxiong, 'The Five Buddha Districts on the Yunnan-Burma Frontier: A Political System Attached to the State', *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, 8, (2013), 64.
[231] Ma, 'The Five Buddha Districts on the Yunnan-Burma Frontier', 66.
[232] Ma, 'The Five Buddha Districts on the Yunnan-Burma Frontier', 53-54.
[233] Walker, *Merit and the Millennium*, 514.

inhabited plains) and five *quan* ('circles', referring to smaller statelets in the mountains), and a title under the Qing's *tusi* system.[234]

In 1883, Zhang Fuguo's son and grandson again attacked Mengmeng. They were defeated and lost the *tusi*-ship. The Qing in the 1890s began a campaign to suppress the Lahu Buddha kings, part of their attempt to expand their control over their peripheries, driven by the increased British imperial interest in the southern edges of the same highlands. In the ten years of 'pacification' they destroyed almost all the Mahayana temples in the Lahu country, and killed all the monks.[235] James Scott, the Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, reported in April 1892 that the Chinese had been 'penetrating the dozen "Buddha Houses"', i.e. the Lahu temples, using 'every refinement of cruelty'.[236] Lahu refugees escaping Qing repression in Yunnan approached the British in Burma for support. Refugees from north of Keng Tung came to Scott, the Superintendent, with a message from the Wa chief with whom they had taken refuge asking Scott to accept them all as British subjects.[237] Refugees wanted the protection that came with British citizenship. This episode suggests that locals were not trying to use the border as a line across which they would be safe, but rather were making use of the disputed sovereignty of the border zone in attempts to attract British support against the Chinese.

Scott visited the last of the Lahu Buddhist chiefs, Li Tongming, in Mong Hka in 1893. Li Tongming's, father-in-law, A Sha Fo Zu, had created a Lahu state in Mong Hka (Ximeng) in Yunnan in the mid-nineteenth century.[238] The Qing established a *zhenbianting* (Frontier Pacification Bureau) in 1887, placing the region under direct administration.[239] They created

[234] Walker, *Merit and the Millennium*, 80.
[235] Ma, 'The Five Buddha Districts on the Yunnan-Burma Frontier, 73.
[236] Scott, Superintendent Northern Shan States (SNSS), 13 April 1892, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 10.
[237] Scott, SNSS, 13 April 1892, in Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 10.
[238] Fiskesjo, 'The Fate of Sacrifice and the Making of Wa History', 114.
[239] Walker, *Merit and the Millennium*, 80.

a district called Chen-pien (today Lancang), under a Chinese magistrate, out of several Lahu, Wa and Shan states near Mong Hka.[240] Chinese accounts record that the Lahu chief at Mong Hka in 1891 submitted to the imperial Chinese authorities. Until a few years before, Chinese rule had been only nominal and these small states had been practically independent. The extension of Qing administration into these areas, while rapid, had not completely displaced pre-existing structures of authority. The Mong Hka chief, Li Tongming, by meeting the British in 1893, was trying to leverage British support, as part of an attempt to preserve his autonomy in a time of accelerating Qing encroachment.[241]

The Qing's brutal repression of these Lahu Buddhist states in Yunnan in the closing decade of the nineteenth century was the context for the arrival of missionary Christianity and its salvation message in 1900. A Sha Fo Zu, one of the Lahu's deified Buddhist chiefs, prophesied in the 1880s that, 'There is a sign and when it appears we will know that God is coming. The sign is that white people on white horses will bring us the Scripture of God.'[242] Baptist missionaries realised the importance of A Sha Fo Zu's prophecy, and the Qing's repression, in spurring Lahu messianism in the mass conversion movement in Keng Tung in 1904.[243] Young described how, since the late nineteenth century, the Chinese 'by constantly pruning their leaders, broke down the spirit of the Lahu', forcing many to emigrate. They were, 'until we brought Christianity to them, spiritually the most depressed elements of the population'.[244]

[240] Major H.R. Davies, *Yunnan: The Link Between India and the Yangtze*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1909), 92; Fiskesjo, 'The Fate of Sacrifice and the Making of Wa History', 31.
[241] Scott, SNSS to the Chief Commissioner of Burma, Camp Mong Hka, 19 Feb 1893, Chinese encroachment in the neighbourhood of Mong Hka, 8931, Myanmar National Archives.
[242] Saw Aung Din and E.E. Sowards, 'Work among Lahus, Was, Akhas', *Burma Baptist Chronicle*, 409.
[243] Gordon Young, *The Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand: A Socio-Ethnological Report*, Bangkok: Siam Society (1962), first edition prepared under the auspices of the Government of Thailand and the cooperation of the US Operations Mission to Thailand, May 1961, 11.
[244] Rev. W.M. Young's deposition, Maymyo, 28 Feb 1932, in Barton, *Wa Diary*, (1932), 98.

The ‘Buddha Districts’ provided not just the cosmological foundations for millennialism (including a belief that enlightenment can be attained in a lifetime, by lay followers) but also a trans-regional network of Lahu religious leaders. Newly-arrived American missionaries built on the remnants of the trans-local networks of politico-religious power. Itinerant Lahu prophets, who had travelled the country prophesying the return of the true God, began preaching the Baptist message.

As the movement spread in the 1900s, Young began to hear rumours that Wa people north of Keng Tung were converting, too. He believed that many Wa people accepted Lahu traditions, including the prophecies about God’s return. He heard that a Lahu teacher had visited the Wa three years ago, and that thousands of Wa were ‘longing for the foreigner to bring them the True Law’. He wrote home that the Wa were desperate to have the Baptists show them the way. Ninety-seven villages had asked him to come and baptise them.[245]

After the Lahu movement took off, Young’s enthusiasm for the possibilities of also converting the Wa was strongly felt. The movement among the Was had been ‘one of the most important things’ in their year’s work, but ‘so far we have not garnered much’.[246] Young in 1905 claimed that as a foreigner he could easily take over the Wa’s religious leadership. Their religious leaders, he wrote, were known as *Pu San*, and were held in great esteem and respect ‘by even the wild Was’. He asserted that foreigners would be ‘regarded as a Pu San, only a Pu San over all other Pu Sans’.[247] In 1905, Young believed a major Wa religious leader had invited the Baptists to come from Keng Tung town to preach to him. To Young’s knowledge, the Wa had no chief over the entire country but only local chiefs or *Ho Hoi*. However, Young observed, ‘the Wa religious leader is in the position where he could, if he

[245] Young to Barbour, 4 April 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[246] Annual Report of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention, 1907, ABHS.
[247] Young to Barbour, 30 October, 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.

would, exercise authority over all. His teaching has unified them in a large measure, although he has refused any political position.'[248] The idea that the Wa had a religious leader who could persuade the whole population to convert seems like more wishful thinking on Young's part. There is no evidence that the Wa had a similar central religious figure such as the Lahu's in the form of the Buddha kings at Nancha, although that is perhaps where Young got the idea.

In 1905 he reported that the Wa had sent representatives to the Baptists three times, beginning in 1904.[249] British contemporaries, and Wa historians today, both contradict Young's story. The British at the time believed that the Wa came to Young in 1905 by accident. They thought it likely that the 'religious leader' who Young said had repeatedly invited him to the Wa country, was Sao Kut, a Wa chief. The British thought that Sao Kut had meant to send his deputation to the British-allied Manglun Sawbwa to ask for British assistance. It was easy to understand, they said, how 'the zeal of the missionaries' interpreted Sao Kut's desire for British protection against the Chinese into a yearning towards the Christian religion. 'Very likely the messengers innocently encouraged the delusion', and, 'finding that the warmth of their reception by the "Englishmen" increased when they responded to questions regarding the troubled state of Sao Kut's soul, enlarged on the subject and fired Mr Young's enthusiasm'.[250]

An official Wa history today states that a Wa prophet first sent a representative to Keng Tung in 1907, which marked the beginning of the Wa conversion movement. According to the Wa history, written by a Wa Literature, History and Culture Committee in 2010, in around 1900 Young wrote a letter to the Wa people asking them to welcome Protestants to the northeast

[248] Young, 28 May, 1906, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[249] Young, draft report, January 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[250] G.W. Dawson, 15 December 1905 in 'Projected Tour by Certain American Baptist Missionaries at Keng Tung among the Was and Lahus in Chinese Territory', 1905, Myanmar National Archives.

of the Wa area. The Wa thought that the letter was fake and that he wanted to fight them. When the missionaries arrived in the Wa area, the Wa fought them, and the missionaries left. Then in 1901, Young moved from Hsipaw to Keng Tung. He preached about Christianity to Wa, Shan, Lahu, Palaung and Akha people who came to the market from the mountains. The news of his work spread outside Keng Tung to the Wa area. In 1907 a Wa prophet named Tax Pu Cao Meung chose twelve people from among the Wa, Lahu and Shan people and sent them to Young to invite Young to propagate the Christian religion in the Wa area. Among the twelve was Tax Vat Rong, from Tax Ai Rong village. He believed and accepted the missionary's preaching. Therefore, on 17 April 1908 Tax Vat Rong became the first Wa to be baptised. After the twelve representatives successfully learnt about evangelism, the Bible, hymns, and Christian literature, they returned to their areas and spread Christianity.[251]

Reports of such large baptisms in Shan State caused mixed reactions in the Baptist mission. Dr A.H. Henderson, a veteran missionary to the Shan, and Rev. C.H. Heptonstall, a missionary among the Karen, were sent to Keng Tung to investigate in 1905. Some missionaries thought that converts could be taught more about the Christian life after converting. Most missionaries, however, waited until candidates for baptism had proved their understanding of Christianity and showed that they had changed their lives.[252] In the meantime, the mass movement made a great story for congregations in America. Numerous articles appeared in church magazines. One, titled 'How the Intrepid Missionary Triumphed Over All Obstacles', contained pictures of 'ponies sent down from China by the heathen Wa as gifts to Mr Young when they invited him to come and open work among them'.[253]

[251] Wa Literature, History and Culture Committee, *Wa Thamaing*, (2010), 169.
[252] Rev. Saw Aung Din and Rev. E.E. Sowards, 'Work among the Lahus, Was, Akhas', *Burma Baptist Chronicle*, 411.
[253] Rev. A.C. Hanna, 'A Wonderful Story of Missionary Evangelism: How the Intrepid Missionary Triumphed over all Obstacles', *Missions*, 13:9 (1922).

The Baptist conversion movement coincided with a period of political upheaval in the borderlands, as Chinese and British states extended their reach across the area. Qing repression, and the possibilities of utilising the expanding British state for refuge, helped the mass movement on its way. Yet the territorial ambitions of lowland states were far from the minds of itinerating preachers, who criss-crossed the region along pre-existing networks as they spread the new religion. The added presence of foreign, not just Han, missionaries differentiated this movement from previous millenarian incarnations. The foreignness of American missionaries brought an extra complication to the relations between religion and states in the borderlands. Their disregard for state boundaries was expressed in the growing conflict between different Protestant sects which soon began to dominate their activities in the borderlands.

'ALL VILLAGES OF HILL PEOPLES EAST OF THIS LINE ARE HEREBY CORDIALLY RECOGNISED AS BELONGING TO THE BAPTIST WORK': TERRITORY IN THE MISSIONARY GEOGRAPHIC IMAGINATION

Through the 1900s and 1910s, the Baptists and Presbyterians in Keng Tung fought over control of the 'fertile' Lahu hills. In the first decades of the twentieth century, missionaries' concepts of territory and their plans for how to divide the territory between them reflected other concerns than national boundaries. This section shows how Baptist and Presbyterian missionaries imagined dividing territory along cultural lines such as linguistic groups, or geographical lines such as altitude – where the Baptists would work with the diverse hill peoples and Presbyterians with the Shan plainspeople. This was territoriality of a different kind, where enclosing people rather than resources was the focus. The two groups of missionaries fought bitterly over how to divide their missions, but for the first decades of the twentieth century, national boundaries did not feature in the debates.

The personality of William Marcus Young featured prominently in these debates. Initially, in 1904, both denominations had occupied Keng Tung town jointly. Friction between the different families led the Baptist and Presbyterian Foreign Mission Boards back in America to try to divide the Keng Tung field equally between the two missions. Young was furious, claiming that he had been responsible for all the conversions and that the Presbyterians had not made any.[254] The British Superintendent suspected that Young wanted to 'peg out' claims against other missionaries and ultimately to 'control all'.[255] Young's desire to 'peg out' and 'control' territory partly reflected his imagining of his religious mission, which he conceived of in terms of converting maximum numbers of Christians, and partly reflected his own personality. Young's character has to feature in understanding how the Baptist mass movement impacted border-making in the Lahu and Wa hills.

Born in 1861 in Illinois, Young grew up in an indifferently religious family, and converted at seventeen. As soon as he finished his studies in 1892 he sailed to Burma to become a missionary. The American Baptist Convention had been active in Burma since 1813, when Ann and Adoniram Judson first arrived from Massachusetts. The Burma Baptist Mission at first sent him to Mongnai, which was at that time the Baptists' frontier station among the Shans. From Mongnai they sent him to the new Shan frontier station at Hsipaw. Soon after, in 1900, they sent him to open work for the Baptists at Keng Tung.[256] One fellow missionary wrote that Young reminded him of the Apostle Paul, 'that other pioneer and frontiersman'. Young was, he said, 'one of the last of the great pioneer missionaries'.[257] Another missionary wrote similarly: 'Mr Young was literally a pioneer. He pushed back the frontiers of Baptist

[254] Young to George B. Huntingdon, 5 November 1908, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[255] B.S. Carey, Superintendent and Political Officer Southern Shan States, to Gates, Chief Secretary to Government of Burma, 25 November 1905, Projected Tour by Certain American Baptist Missionaries at Keng Tung among the Was and Lahus in Chinese Territory, 1905, Myanmar National Archives.
[256] Rev. J.C. Robbins, 'Passing of a Pioneer', 4 September 1936, ABHS.
[257] Rev. J.C. Robbins, 'Passing of a Pioneer', 4 September 1936, ABHS.

Mission work to cover an area of 100,000 square miles, … carried on almost single-handedly' – hyperbole which of course obscured his dependence on Karen, Lahu and Wa missionaries.[258]

The idea of claiming territory was central to Young's imagining of his mission. He saw a key part of the pioneer's job as competing with missionaries from other denominations to stake out territory for the Baptists. The Presbyterians likewise thought in territorial terms, at one point accusing the Baptists of 'invading disputed territory', by starting a station before the field was divided.[259] As soon as the movement among the Wa started in 1905, Young's first thought was of claiming the field before the Presbyterians could get in. In describing the urgent need for Baptists to begin work to the Wa hills, he wrote, 'the sooner we enter the territory the less the danger of complications with Presbyterians over the matter'.[260] Even distributing Bibles was tactical for Young. In 1905 he described how the Baptists sent out thousands of tracts and hundreds of Gospels. Wherever the tracts reached, he thought, it gave the Baptists 'a sort of squatter sovereignty right to the territory'. People would pass on the copies to villages several days away. In this way the Baptists' literature (by Young's account) reached far into Yunnan.[261]

Where the British had thought of territorialisation in terms of demarcating a Westphalian-style line between Chinese and British competing claims to natural resources, the missionaries, thinking primarily in Biblical terms, imagined the country surrounding the central station as multiple 'vast fields' needing to be worked. After the mass movement began in 1904, missionaries spent months at a time on tour, baptising thousands of people in groups

[258] Rev. R.B. Buker, *Burma News*, May 1936, 76 ff., cited in Rev. Saw Aung Din and Rev. E.E. Sowards, 'Work among the Lahus, Was, Akhas', *Burma Baptist Chronicle*, 412.
[259] W. Clifton Dodd and C.R. Callender to the Members of the American Baptist Mission, Keng Tung Station, 16 March 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[260] Young to Barbour, 4 April 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[261] Young to Barbour, 4 April 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.

of up to thirty at a time. During the 'touring season', beginning in October, the missionaries – American, Karen, Lahu and Wa – would travel continuously until July. In 1906, Young reported he travelled east as far as the Mekong River, and baptised about 1,260 there. Farther to the south, over 900 were baptised from that section. Furthermore, he wrote, 'there is a vast field to the south-west that must be worked this coming season'. And after that 'there is a vast field yet to work in the north-west especially'.[262]

When the Presbyterians first arrived in Keng Tung, they were initially on friendly terms with the Baptists. Three families of evangelists from the Laos Mission (the name for the Presbyterian mission in Thailand) moved to Keng Tung in 1904 from their base in Chiang Mai. The Baptist missionaries were 'cordial and helpful', and they distributed books together 'in Laos and Shan languages'.[263] When the two denominations' mission boards in America first talked of dividing the field geographically, Young asked the Baptist Board not to draw any line between the two denominations. Any division across the region would prevent the Baptists from working with all the Lahu, who lived spread all over the highlands.[264] He described the 'mixed character of the population' and declared it would be impossible to make a satisfactory division. Since the work with the Lahu and Wa had recently been so successful, Young claimed that if there was to be a division of the field, the division with the Presbyterians should be between hill people and valley people. He protested about Thailand having already been designated as an exclusively Presbyterian field, despite many Lahu living in the hills on the border. 'It is decidedly unjust', he complained, 'for them to hold so much territory and not to work the field.'[265]

[262] Annual Report of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention, 1907, ABHS.
[263] Mrs W.C. Dodd, *The Laos News*, Vol. 1:3, (1904).
[264] Young to Barbour, 16 March 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[265] Young, January 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.

The Presbyterians saw a linguistic division of the borderlands. They considered themselves the designated evangelists for Lao-speaking people. Using 'Lao' as an umbrella term to include the Thai language too, they claimed on linguistic grounds everyone speaking Lao, Thai, or related languages. They claimed that since Shan was a Lao language, and Keng Tung was a Shan state, they should have the right to occupy Keng Tung.[266] They cited evidence, such as that by Nan Inta, a Tai Loi convert, who gave a statement that he had listened to the Baptist helpers preaching in Keng Tung market but could not understand them clearly. On the other hand, he wrote, 'Everyone understands the Presbyterians in all that is said'. And furthermore, 'When I became a Christian I joined the Presbyterians because they know clearly (the vernacular) in contrast to the Baptists.'[267] This desire for a linguistic division was typical of the methods of dividing missionary fields at the time. Missionaries often sought to find and demarcate territories containing linguistically homogeneous groups.[268]

The intense dispute between the missionaries over the relative rights of occupancy of the Keng Tung field led the Baptist and Presbyterian Boards in January 1906 to appoint a joint commission of representatives from the Burma Mission and the Laos Mission with instructions to visit Keng Tung. The joint commission undertook 'long and laborious work', but was unable to arrive at any conclusions, except that it was undesirable that the two Boards should co-exist in the field. The joint commission referred everything back to America. The Presbyterian Board decided in December 1906 that there should be another joint commission of missionaries. This commission met in January 1907. They too undertook long and

[266] C.R. Callender, W.A. Briggs, and Howard Campbell to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 3 October 1912, cited in Board report 3 June 1913, American Presbyterian Mission, North Laos Mission archives (NLM), Payap University, Chiang Mai.
[267] Statement by Nan Inta, 25 August 1907, Statement from the Laos Mission, Chiang Rai, 3 October 1912, NLM.
[268] Joseph Errington, 'Colonial Linguistics', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30 (2001), 24.

laborious work, and also regretted that they were unable to arrive at any conclusions, other than to refer the question back to the Boards in America.[269]

At the time this commission was working, William Young drew up a map of the region which he argued disproved the Presbyterians' claims regarding the languages spoken in the region (Figure 6). In a letter accompanying the map he explains that he sat down with the British Political Officer of Keng Tung to confirm the distribution of Shan dialects. This map, he argued, proved his claim that the lowlands around Keng Tung all spoke 'Western Shan' rather than Lao, and the uplands a mixture of Wa, Kachin, Lahu and Kaw.[270] The map only includes two non-riverine boundaries, namely one dotted line around Keng Tung town, and another to the north dividing Keng Hung from the rest of the map. Political boundaries otherwise do not feature. Outstations are all marked, with information on whether they have an ordained preacher working there or not. His vision of the geography of the region was of a vast, undemarcated area, with linguistic divisions the main hurdle to be overcome in his mission.

[269] John F. Patterson, Chairman, to the members of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 11 December 1907, cited in Board report 3 June 1913, NLM.
[270] Young, 12 June 1907, Notes taken during the interview with Mr Gordon the Political Officer of Keng Tung during which the map showing the distribution of the various Shan dialects in that state was compiled, Young correspondence, ABHS.

Figure 6

William M. Young's 1907 map of the region



Source: American Baptist Historical Society.

The Presbyterian Board in 1907 decided to drop the issue, and to leave Keng Tung. They reasoned that it was better not to spend at least $10,000 on property and annually at least $5,000 for maintenance in order to demand that 'a sister evangelical Board' withdraw from Keng Tung. But, they said, they did not waive their right to be considered 'the agency for the evangelisation of the Laos-speaking peoples'.[271] In any case, of the initial three families of missionaries, only one family was left by 1908. In 1908 the last of the Presbyterian missionaries left Keng Tung, leaving it to the Baptists, and moved back to Chiang Rai. The 'northern territory' remained for them an out-station, which they worked from Chiang Rai.[272]

[271] John F. Patterson, Chairman, to the members of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 11 December 1907, cited in Board report 3 June 1913, NLM.
[272] *The Laos News*, Vol 5:2, April 1908.

The dispute over the division of territory was fuelled in part by Young's monomaniacal focus on demarcating territory for the Baptists. His approach to church-building reflected a similar drive to organise, enumerate, and settle church populations. Between 1910 and 1914 Young tried to organise the Lahu's leaderless shifting villages, the easier to appoint Boards of deacons to lead villages, enumerate members, and draw boundaries. Lahu families' tendency to move around made it much harder to enumerate the Baptist converts. In many cases people who were unwilling to convert to Christianity and who lived in majority-Christian villages would move to heathen villages. Likewise, families who wanted to become Christian moved to Christian villages.[273] He therefore tried to persuade the people to gather in more permanent villages, and to take up lowland rice cultivation and grow cash crops such as rubber and camphor.[274]

In 1910 a poor crop left tens of thousands in the hills almost destitute. This caused an increase in the breaking up of villages, with far more change than normal. Young hoped that this 'tendency to change and confusion' would 'lead to ultimate gain', as some people were trying to move down to the lowlands to grow rice.[275] But still, 'the matter of organisation into Churches has been difficult on account of people changing so much'. The missionaries had granted the right to observe the ordinances to Christian villages whenever an ordained man visited them. In 1911 they appointed a Board of deacons to each village, consisting of from four to seven villagers depending on the size of the village, in charge of looking after the services in villages where they have a teacher.[276]

'In some of the better villages, where the population is more permanent, we will complete the Church organisation'. In the majority of villages, which were constantly on the move,

[273] Annual report 1911, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[274] Annual report 1911, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[275] Annual report 1911, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[276] Annual report 1911, Young correspondence, ABHS.

rarely settling for more than a few years, organisation would be impossible. 'With separate local Churches now it would be a most trying task to correct Church records, to letter out and receive members on their letters. We are urging … very strongly … for them to gather in larger villages, to secure lowland rice fields as far as possible so they will be more permanent.'[277] Enclosing people, as had once been the focus of Southeast Asian kings, was Young's priority.

His desire to fix the boundaries of Baptist territory can be seen as a sort of defensive (against the Presbyterians) territoriality. In 1914 much his tour was taken up with defining the boundaries of Baptist associations.[278] Afterwards he wrote triumphantly to the Board in America that 'we have fixed the boundaries definitely and hold five Associations'. He had organised the field into seventy 'organised Churches' in Keng Tung State and six in China. He therefore protested over the Board 'giving away 75% of the Keng Tung field'. Of the territory the Board in America had given away, he said, three of the Associations 'organised and with boundaries fixed', lay within this joint occupancy strip.[279]

The Baptist Board in America accused Young of being controlling. In 1907, while he was absent on leave, two of his fellow missionaries in Keng Tung voted, in his words, to 'depose' him.[280] The Board in a letter to Young in 1908 asked him whether his 'personal characteristics' were the sole reason for the division of the field. In a series of pointed questions, the Board asked: 'Is there sufficient reason for division aside from expediency on account of personal characteristics of missionary staff? Is Mr Young's opposition to division due in any degree to feeling that work will be removed from his controlling influence? Is Mr

[277] Annual report 1911, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[278] Baptist churches typically organise themselves into associations, which are fraternal rather than hierarchical, for the purpose of sharing ministers, facilities and training.
[279] Young to Huntingdon, 7 April 1914, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[280] Young, 14 January 1907, Young correspondence, ABHS.

Young's personality such that harmonious working with other missionary staff is a possibility?' They accused him of using his control of the station's finances to gain influence over locals. This would account for the 'estrangement of native workers from other missionaries', and the workers' 'complete harmony' with Young in all matters of policy.[281] Young's attempts to gain workers' allegiance by controlling the station finances shows that local workers in fact had agency, which he was trying to constrain. The nature of the sources necessarily amplify Young's voice, but also occasionally reveal how much he ultimately depended on their allegiance.

In 1911 the Presbyterians reopened the question of Keng Tung occupancy. Based on a missionary's trip to Yunnan in 1910, the Presbyterians claimed to have discovered that Lao-speaking people lived spread across southwest China. In 1910 the Presbyterian Clifton Dodd made a long tour north of Keng Tung into China. He concluded that the Laos-speaking people actually ranged up across southwest China, not just to northern Siam and Keng Tung State, and that there were twelve to thirteen million of them.[282] Young replied citing the British 1901 Census which enumerated 57,058 'Western Shan' and 1,047 'Laos' in Shan State. In any case, 'our stations already skirt the border of China from the Me-Kong to the borders of Thibet. We already have 4,000 baptised in the northern section in China'.[283] The Laos Mission said that Young went 'out of his way' to slander Dr Dodd and to 'sneer at the whole Laos Mission'.[284] The Presbyterians only wanted an access route through Keng Tung, they said, to allow them to reach southwest China. The French had blocked their attempts to travel through the region northeast of their mission in Chiang Mai. The French government's

[281] Board to Young, November 1908, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[282] 'Keng Tung and Laos Expansion Northward', Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 3 June, 1913, NLM.
[283] W.M. Young to Rev. Arthur Brown, Presbyterian Board New York, 21 March 1912, cited in Board Report, 3 June 1913, NLM.
[284] C.R. Callender, W.A. Briggs, and Howard Campbell to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 3 October 1912, cited in Board report 3 June 1913, NLM.

'persistent hostility to Protestant missionary work' had thus far thwarted every effort that they had made 'even to itinerate within French territory'.[285] Keng Tung, they said, was the only gateway for them to reach the Lao-speakers in China.[286] The French border, unlike those between Burma, Siam and China, seems to have been a non-negotiable hard border to both sets of missionaries. This is perhaps related to the fact the British refused to let French officials even enter British territory.[287] The missionaries' focus thus fell on how best to divide Keng Tung, the route from Yunnan to Siam, between themselves.

The Presbyterians wrote that they recognised the 'non-Buddhist hill tribes' as within the 'sphere of Baptist plans'. As experience had shown that it is impossible to come to any agreement 'regarding the linguistic affiliations of the majority of the people in Keng Tung', they suggested trying to 'adjust the matter of geographical lines', with a division whereby the Baptists took all the peoples of every kind west of Keng Tung City and plain, as well as the non-Buddhist hill tribes of Keng Tung State in any direction, and the Presbyterians took all the peoples east of Keng Tung, except the hill tribes. Keng Tung city and plain would have to be common ground, but 'the great outlying regions would be measurably distinct'.[288] Young doubled down, countering that 'the latest map from Yunnan show Muhsos far to the north', arguing that in fact he ought to be given 'everything south of the West China Mission'.[289]

[285] Arthur Brown, Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, to Rev. Dr Barbour, 5 October 1911, NLM.
[286] Arthur Brown, Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, to Rev. Dr Barbour, 5 October 1911, NLM.
[287] In 1901 French officials had requested to travel on the British rather than the French bank of the Mekong, due to the French side of the river being impassable in the rains. British officials in the Shan States had refused their request, and decided in the future to give permission only in urgent cases. See Chief Secretary Government of Burma to Secretary of Government of India Foreign Department, 9 June 1903, Entry of French Officials into the British Shan State of Keng Tung from French Territory on the East Bank of the Mekong, 1903, 6327 Myanmar National Archives.
[288] Arthur Brown, Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, to Rev. Dr Barbour, 5 October 1911, NLM.
[289] Young, March 1912, Young correspondence, ABHS.

Adding to Young's woes, there was an additional 'crisis' in 1912, when the Catholics opened a mission at Keng Tung City. They would try to work the west half of the state, he supposed, so it was vital that the Baptists got there first.[290] Later that same month he reported an impending disaster with regards to the Tai Loi. He was sending locals out urgently to run the Baptist station there. They need to 'extend fast with the Tai Loi', he said, before the Presbyterians got in.[291]

Local 'helpers' were crucial to enabling Young to demarcate territory exclusively for the Baptists. His controlling personality, which alienated other foreigners, disguised the fact that he was dependent on local missionaries. In May 1912, the Baptist Mission Board at Boston took it up with Young. More serious than joint occupancy, they wrote, was his relationship with other missionaries. He had had four missionaries, including two his own choice, and none had worked out. Unfortunately, they said, Harper had asked to be transferred, and they could not find anyone who wanted to replace him.[292] The tropical climate makes Europeans irritable, Young breezed.[293] A few months later, a letter signed by Rev. Po Tun, Rev. Maung Bu and Rev. U Yaung arrived on the desks of the Board in Boston, which stated:

> 'While WM Young was [on leave], we the helpers did not understand the work. Everything was mixed up. … Bazar preaching was poor. The touring and preaching on the hill too was at the point of death. As soon as Rev. Young arrived in the field, … the preaching in bazar and on the hill was going on very well. … Dr Harper did not pay attention to the church.'[294]

The Harper-Young spat reveals how far the missionaries all depended on local workers. Harper alleged that Young had 'an excessive jealousy against anything that seems to promise any influence [of other missionaries] with the native workers'.[295] This episode shows that, no

[290] Young to Kelly, Chairman of Baptist Mission Reference Committee Rangoon, April 1912, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[291] Young to Huntingdon, April 1912, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[292] Huntingdon to Young, May 1912, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[293] Young to Huntingdon, June 1912, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[294] Rev. Po Tun, Rev. Maung Bu and Rev. U Yaung, 28 December 1912, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[295] Young to Board of Managers, 31 March 1913, Young correspondence, ABHS.

matter how much he tried to control them, Young was, like all the foreign missionaries, reliant on local 'helpers' to carry out missionary work, as well as in this case to back up his testimony to the Board in America. Without ordained preachers the outstations could not function. Local preachers, in particular highly-regarded Karen missionaries such as Rev. Ba Te Te and Rev. Po Tun, had power, even in this case the power to make or break foreigners' careers. Their loyalty was valuable. The foreign missionaries as a result seem to have competed for the allegiance of the most senior ordained preachers.

The Presbyterian Board in New York decided in 1913 that they would give up the fight over Keng Tung city, again, and sell their station there to the Baptists, so long as this did not mean them giving up the right to evangelise 'all the Laos-speaking peoples including in the Shan States as we may deem proper'.[296] The Baptists in Keng Tung were therefore furious when the Baptist Board in America wrote that they were drawing lines north and south of Keng Tung City, giving away strips of land to the Presbyterians. The Board agreed with the Presbyterians' governing body to grant the Baptists a section from a line drawn northward through Keng Tung and Mong Lem, and westward to the Salween River, and north to the very northern section of the Wa country. However, Young complained, this would be as inaccessible to mission work as anything in the French territory (from which missionaries were banned from working), as it was unadministered British territory and the British refused to allow any touring in this unadministered section, so the Baptists had no reservation at all according to that geographic division.[297] Imperial borders thus at times did matter to missionaries. The French border in particular was a hard barrier for both of the Protestant sects, while the British ban on foreigners travelling through unadministered territory seems also to have endured. Yet Young continued to talk about 'Presbyterian' territory, or

[296] 'Keng Tung and Laos Expansion Northward', Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 3 June 1913, NLM.
[297] Young to Huntingdon, 7 April 1914, Young correspondence, ABHS.

'Buddhist' territory as easily as he talked about British territory or French territory. He complained how it was ridiculous that the Board should give away Baptist outstations just because they were 'in Buddhist territory', and that 'some people are ours who now fall into Presbyterian territory'.[298]

The two Boards in America ignored him and held a joint conference in New York in November 1914 to decide the Keng Tung boundary issue. They decided that a line running 'five miles west of the eastern caravan route', which ran 'north from Chiang Rai west of the Mekong River, through … the towns and villages traversed by this general caravan thoroughfare to Chiang Hung, shall be recognised as the eastern boundary of the Baptist occupation and work'. The Presbyterians were to have Chiang Hung in Yunnan together with 'the land in a ten mile radius west of it'. North of Chiang Hung territory, the Mekong River was to be recognised as the boundary line up to the 24th parallel.

The conference in New York ended up complicating rather than simplifying the matter. As was typical with attempts to map the highlands, there was no agreed orthography for any of the places in question. Young's response was, besides predictable fury, to question where many of those places were, and to draw attention to the fact that there were multiple routes between them.[299] A letter from Karen pastors landed on the desks of the Baptist Board in America in January 1915, begging them please not to divide the territory like this. Of the letter Young wrote, 'I knew they had written but I did not see the letter at all. This morning I asked them to read it to me and it is the first time I have heard it'.[300] The two Boards went ahead and divided the territory anyway. In 1916 the Presbyterians set up a mission in Kenghung in Yunnan, two days' north of the border of China.[301]

[298] Young to Huntingdon, April 1914, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[299] Young to Baldwin, 23 January 1915, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[300] Young to Baldwin, 6 February 1915, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[301] Mabel Moore Galt, 'Chinese Interlude', *The Siam Outlook*, (April 1935).

In 1918 the Board briefly tried to sack Young, designating him to the Shan work in Hsipaw. While Young was on leave in Ohio, the Secretary of the Board wrote regretfully, 'I know that such designation was a great disappointment to you, planning as you were to continue the work where you have been so wonderfully blessed across the border from Keng Tung into China.' Citing a lack of funds, and a large number of vacant stations in Burma, they regretted they could not allow him to extend Baptist work across the border. The Board sent three new missionaries to Keng Tung, hoping that these three 'would be able in a conservative way to follow up the work that you have pioneered across the border'.[302] Young ignored them, replying 'of course I'm not going to Hsipaw'. Writing from Ohio, he remarked that he had 'not heard directly from the Missionaries' in Keng Tung, but that local workers were keeping him up to date with developments while he was in America.[303]

Baptist missionaries were divided over whether the mission in Keng Tung should face towards Burma or towards China. This division came to the fore in disputes over language training in missionary schools. While Young was on leave his replacements had made Burmese the first language for the missionary schools in Keng Tung, something Young considered 'a most fatal mistake'. Many of the pupils came from China. It was of 'vital importance' that the work in Keng Tung and in China be carried on in the 'closest possible harmony.' The two fields would 'act and react upon each other' in a 'far stronger way' than any other two fields in all Burma. Of course, the boundaries would still be distinct and clear, 'following the Boundary line between the two countries'.[304] The Foreign Mission Board in America seems to have been much more concerned than Young about respecting international boundaries, prioritising the need to stay on good terms with neighbouring governments. Young cared less about relationships with officials than about converting and

[302] Robbins, Foreign Secretary, Boston, to Young, 12 June 1918, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[303] Young to Robbins, 18 June 1918, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[304] Young to Robbins, 18 June 1918, Young correspondence, ABHS.

enumerating the largest number of people. Promising to work with states as they extended control into the borderlands was merely a means to an end. For him the most important boundaries were those surrounding populations of Baptist converts.

In 1919, while Young was on leave, the new missionaries in Keng Tung met the Presbyterians from Chiang Hung station and agreed (another) boundary line. They agreed that due to the nature of the terrain the line 'five miles west of the caravan trail' from the Siam border to Chiang Hung in Yunnan was unsuitable. Therefore they agreed that 'through the hills of Keng Tung State', the caravan trail itself would be the boundary, while in the plains the boundary would follow the western boundaries of the plains themselves. All west of the line would be Baptist territory and all east Presbyterian, 'except that all villages of hill peoples east of this line in which there are now Baptist congregations are hereby cordially recognised as belonging to the Baptist work'. In Yunnan they agreed to let the demarcation conform to 'the civil boundaries of the political unit known as the Sip Song Panna'. Since this would give extra to the Presbyterians, they agreed that in exchange the Presbyterians would cede to the Baptists all of the hills across the entire Keng Tung State.[305]

For nearly the first two decades of the twentieth century, missionaries' territorial imagining continued to ignore, where possible, national boundaries. Baptists pushed for a hill/valley division of the region, while Presbyterians preferred a linguistic division. The missionaries imagined the land divided primarily between Buddhist, Baptist and Presbyterian territory, and only secondarily between national territories. Through the period Young's response to other mission's trying to 'invade' his territory was essentially 'territorialising'. Young's desire to divide territory in order to enumerate converts was part of the same 'territoriality' seen in the previous chapter. Trying to persuade the villagers to settle would help him to

[305] 21 March 1919, Young correspondence, ABHS.

enumerate converts and fix boundaries between Associations, and would also make it easier to complain about 'giving away' Baptist territory to the Presbyterians. His prioritising of religious borders above national borders meant that, despite promising the Baptist Board that the boundaries between the China and Burma 'fields' would be distinct and clear, the two fields actually did 'react upon each other' strongly. This continuing connectivity is reflected in Young's anger when new missionaries decided in 1918 to teach all classes through Burmese at the school in Keng Tung. Young revealed that many of the students in Keng Tung came from China, an indication of how closely integrated the Baptists' work was across the region.

'PATRIOTIC OFFICIALS SHOULD WELCOME THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARIES': BUILDING A TRANSNATIONAL ORGANISATION

Missionaries and converts in the early years of the twentieth century, through making use of converts' cross-border networks and trans-local imagined geographies to build transnational organisations, subverted the British and Chinese states' claims to territorial hegemony. As foreign missionaries attempted to spread their message across the whole of the region, their and their converts' movement across disputed territory worked at first to undermine but over time to concretise the states' presence in the borderlands. Their presence and regular evangelical touring in the borderlands at first proved a headache for the British and the Qing. Missionaries in the 1900s threatened to unmask each state's pretence of governing the border areas. The Chinese and the British governments at first made efforts to hide this lack of control by banning missionaries. Through their flouting of state injunctions not to cross borders, by sending locals, and by aiming to set up cross-border organisations, missionaries weakened, by ignoring, states' claims to authority. The missionaries' attempts to cross the disputed border forced each state over the period to try to extend their control over the borderland. By pushing the limits of each state's administrative control over its borderlands,

missionaries forced each to strengthen its control, by expelling non-citizens, and by strengthening or institutionalising state borders.

There was a nineteenth-century precedent to states banning travellers crossing the border as a means for them to protect their claims to govern the frontier. During the late Qing, international treaties required the Tsungli Yamen to protect travellers within the province of Yunnan. The boundaries of the province, the Tsungli Yamen admitted, were not under state control. All routes between Yunnan and Burma were dangerous to foreign travellers. Due to the 'mixed population of aborigines', the routes between Yunnan and Burma were 'dangerous and difficult and not guarded by officers or soldiers'. In 1886 the Tsungli Yamen declared to the British that 'all persons alike are stopped from going to Burma or Tonking by way of the Yunnan frontier'.[306]

When the Baptist mass movement started among Lahu and Wa in 1904, the missionaries were based in Keng Tung on the British Burma side of the disputed border. When the American missionaries decided to cross into China to preach to the Lahu and Wa villagers there, they ran into problems. Much of the Wa hills were 'unadministered territory', lying within the territory which the British claimed, but beyond the 'Line of Safety', which the Government of Burma had decreed that British officials were not allowed to cross. Both the Chinese and the British aimed to prevent missionaries travelling in these disputed and effectively-autonomous border regions. An inability to safeguard foreign travellers in unadministered territory threatened to raise the question of the other state's claim to sovereignty over the border areas. Governments weighed the risk of being blamed for their citizens murdering foreigners in what they claimed as their own territory and often opted for caution.

[306] Tsungli Yamen to Sir John Walsham, 17 December 1886, Chinese Border Affairs, 8718, Myanmar National Archives.

In 1905, when the Americans applied to tour through the Wa hills, the Taotai (Qing Chief Magistrate or Circuit Intendant) asked the British Consul General not to allow the missionaries into China as he (the Taotai) would have to supply a large escort in administered districts, while no protection at all could be offered in Wa country.[307] This request spurred some debate among British officials over whether to let Young cross into China. Young did not want to go with an escort, but the Chinese authorities did not want him to go without one. Without an escort, the British Superintendent at Keng Tung imagined, 'he is likely to enact the part of the harvest and the celestial sickle', and cause complications which 'would be very inconvenient'. The British thought that Young's 'religious leader', who Young thought had invited the Baptists to preach to him, might actually be Sao Kut, a political leader seeking British assistance. They suspected that if this was the case, and Sao Kut was in fact pro-British, he would not meet Young if Young was with a Chinese escort. And if there was no escort and Sao Kut came to see Young, 'the Wa leader's disappointment at being offered a Bible instead of what he expects might take an acute form'.[308]

In 1906 the Government of Burma refused Young's renewed request for permission to cross the border into China. Young then applied for two Karen preachers to go across the border disguised as Lahu and preach to the Wa leader.[309] British officials debated whether the American's revised plan should be allowed to go ahead. One official took the view that 'it is a question of colour', and the murder of the Karen missionaries, 'if such should unfortunately happen', would 'not shake the prestige of the British Government'. Another thought that the risk lay in the missionaries and their Karen helpers causing disturbance or excitement in the Wa country. The Lieutenant-Governor intervened in March 1906 to close down the debate,

[307] Young to Barbour, 30 October 1905, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[308] G.W. Dawson, 15 December 1905 in 'Projected Tour by Certain American Baptist Missionaries at Keng Tung among the Was and Lahus in Chinese Territory', Government of Burma, Political Department, (1905), Myanmar National Archives.
[309] Young to Barbour, 1 February 1906, Young correspondence, ABHS.

ruling out any 'Muhso[Lahu]-speaking Karen preachers in Muhso dress' going to any part of the Wa country.[310]

While the border began to be hardened by the states on either side, in these early years for local people it remained effectively invisible. Missionaries in Burma therefore made use of local converts to pass across the border and work on the Chinese side. In 1906 while waiting for the Government of Burma to make a decision regarding Young's request to locate an outpost on the Wa border, he planned to send some trained Wa and Lahu helpers across the border anyway, hoping that 'there can be no Government restrictions at all to that kind of work'.[311]

In 1907, when the British and Chinese authorities finally granted the foreign missionaries' wish to visit the Yunnan side of the border, Chinese officials in Yunnan did not allow the foreigners to stray from the roads, and the missionaries relied on local Wa and Lahu converts to work alongside the roads.[312] Young said he 'had to rely entirely on local Lahu and Wa Christians' to 'work beside the roads'. Upwards of thirty local workers visited villages the Americans were not permitted to visit.[313] The Chinese officials who accompanied them were 'amazed' to see Lahu coming to them in the hundreds. The Baptists together baptised 1,567 people in a month. They left 'a number of their best local men' to work along the border, with Shan and Karen helpers in charge of new outstations. One Wa Christian who stayed behind, Ai Nan, a former opium addict and robber, Young hoped would become the next Wa leader, after the last leader had just died. The Wa, he wrote, 'seem ready to accept him as their leader'.[314]

[310] 'Projected Tour by certain American Baptist Missionaries at Keng Tung among the Was and Lahus in Chinese Territory', File No. IC-3, 1906, Myanmar National Archives.
[311] Young to Barbour, 21 May 1907, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[312] Young to Barbour, April 1907, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[313] Annual Report of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention, 1907, ABHS.
[314] Young to Barbour, April 1907, Young correspondence, ABHS.

The continuing mobility of indigenous people and their networks across the highlands were crucial to the project of building a mass movement across the new borders in this first decade of the new century. Missionaries who challenged states' claims to sovereignty over effectively autonomous and ungoverned territory were quickly banned from crossing the new border, but local networks which criss-crossed the borderlands continued unimpeded, at least for the time being. The implications for state-making were twofold: missionaries had revealed the fact that the highlands were in fact ungoverned and autonomous, and border-crossing converts had revealed the flimsiness of lowland states' 'geo-bodies'.

During the 1900s, the government at Peking got increasingly involved in the cross-border administration. In 1907, prior to visiting the China side of the border, the Baptists only had to get letters from the Viceroy of Yunnan in Yunnanfu (Kunming) in order to tour in the China side of the border. They got these through the local government in Burma. In 1908 the Baptists again secured letters from the Viceroy of Yunnan for Karen missionaries, Rev. Bate and Rev. Po Tun, native ordained men, and local helpers to make a tour. Around that time the Chinese government changed their passport regulations for foreigners, and asked American citizens to get passports from the American Consul in China, with visas from the government in Peking. Young's passport travails revealed the increasing reach of the central state in the borderlands.

Through the 1910s, missionaries had to deal increasingly with central states in their attempts to work in the borderlands. Young's approach to communicating with officials at first produced adverse results. In 1911, a British official at Maymyo said that Young would have British permission to travel, but that the British were unable to ask Peking for permission on Young's behalf.[315] Young replied criticising the tone of the official's letter.[316] Phinney's

[315] Phinney to Young, April 1911, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[316] Young to Phinney, May 1911, Young correspondence, ABHS.

reply was acerbic. 'I note you say my letters are ludicrous', he wrote. 'I take it for granted that they should have given you half an hour to "laugh and grow fat", and I trust you improved the opportunity'. The British were unable, he said, to go on the Baptists' behalf 'to any Chinese ruler and make any strong appeal for permission to convert his subjects'.[317] The Baptist Board in 1916 decided that the best way to get land concessions for new mission compounds in Yunnan was by the American Secretary of State and the American Legation in China making an application to Peking.[318]

The 1910s saw a disconnect in Yunnan between local village officials and subprefectural officials. The Baptists' promises to help the central government educate citizens in the borderlands held less sway locally. In 1916 the Baptists experienced 'some opposition' from 'a few petty officials' who did not know 'the laws in China regarding religious liberty'. This slight opposition would pass at once, Young was confidant, if higher officials granted concessions for purchasing land for permanent Mission Compounds, especially if they granted a letter 'setting forth clearly the laws of China granting religious liberty'.[319] In making representations to the Chinese government in Peking hoping to get land concessions from the government, Young promised that the missionaries' school and medical work in Yunnan would 'win round converts to the Government'. With a good school, and with 'proper medical work in the Central Station', he was confidant that 'the Mission would be one of the strongest possible factors to gain and hold the friendship of all these hill tribes to the Government'.[320]

The progress the Baptists had made in opening schools and medical clinics in Yunnan was suddenly reversed in 1916, when local officials drove the Wa Baptist workers out of China.

[317] Phinney to Young, April 1911, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[318] Young to Robbins, 28 August 1916, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[319] Young to Robbins, 28 August 1916, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[320] Young to Robbins, 28 August 1916, Young correspondence, ABHS.

Young had made arrangements earlier that year with the Chinese official in the area giving the Baptists permission to locate near Mong Mong. A few months later the workers returned to Keng Tung saying that local officials had tied and beaten them, and ordered them to leave China immediately.[321] Young sent representations to the American Consul at Canton and also to the American Ambassador at Peking.[322] The American Legation at Peking wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wu Tingfang, protesting at the Chinese officials' persecution of the local workers.

The Americans' tactic was to highlight to the Chinese government how useful the Baptist missionaries were to the Chinese project of making good citizens out of the borderland people. The American Minister wrote that, since 'the people of this section of China are given over to a debasing worship of evil spirits and to drunkenness', and the work of the American Missionaries 'tends to free them from harmful superstitions' and leads to their becoming sober in their habits, 'all patriotic officials should welcome the work of the American Missionaries'. By establishing missionary schools, wrote the Minister, 'the natives … will be raised in intelligence and so become better fitted to be citizens of the Chinese Republic'.[323]

All this work in 1916 and 1917 trying to win over the government to support missionaries' work in the borderlands was reversed in 1918, when local Chinese officials' opposition to the missionaries escalated, as they once again drove local (not just native and foreign) workers out of Yunnan. The British government responded by increasing their own travel restrictions on British subjects in the borderland. The British recalled all missionaries and helpers who

[321] Young to Robbins, 18 September 1916, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[322] Young to Robbins, 6 January 1917, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[323] American Legation at Peking to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency, Wu T'ing-Fang, 6 January 1917, in Young to Robbins, 4 May 1917, Young correspondence, ABHS.

were British subjects, refusing to give them passports until the missionaries had secured land from the Chinese government.[324]

Young managed to circumvent the closed British border in 1919 by travelling a circuitous route to Yunnan via French Indo-China. It is unclear how he avoided the French injunction against Protestant missionaries travelling through French territory. Despite the closed British border, Young still planned to build mission compounds in Mong Mong and Mong Lem.[325] The Board in America had finally granted Young's long-held wish to unite the two fields, and voted that Young's Yunnan work was to be part of the Burma Mission, to be included in the Burma Mission's budget and administrative oversight.[326]

The Baptists' relations with nation-states were changing over the period, from trying to evade states, to having to try to cooperate with them. In 1920, in his desire to squeeze funds for his Chinese expansion plans out of the Board in America, Young tried to prove that he was working closely with state officials, although reports from his son in later years suggested that he had been less than cooperative.[327] When he met opposition from the Shan officials in Mong Lem he moved his plans for an outstation to nearby Bana village. When a Chinese subprefecture level official visited him at Bana accompanied by Shan officials, the Chinese official was, Young emphasised, 'as friendly as we could ask'. The Chinese official, according to Young, promised to circulate and post statements concerning China's laws on religious liberty throughout the region.[328] Back in Mong Lem later, the Shan officials allegedly threatened to kill the missionaries. According to Young's account, the Shan officials sent false statements about what had happened to the top Yunnan official and from

[324] Young to Robbins, 31 August 1918, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[325] Young to Robbins, 23 January 1920, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[326] Robbins to Young, 2 March 1920, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[327] Harold Young in 1934 talked of trying to get his father away from 'front line' work, as that 'seemed to cause the most persecutions and run ins with officials'. See Harold Young to Robbins, 8 February 1934, Young correspondence, ABHS.
[328] Young to Huntingdon, 26 April 1920, Young correspondence, ABHS.

there to the American Consul at Canton. The Chinese magistrate at Lancang apparently sent a strongly worded letter to the Shan officials at Mong Lem, reprimanding them for their conduct. Without evidence for any of these exchanges beyond Young's letters to the Board in America, it is unclear what really happened. In his need to show the China project as deserving of funds, Young would have been motivated to show his relationship with the Chinese officials in as positive a light as possible, and to contradict whatever (seemingly negative) description of their interactions was contained in the Shan officials' letter to the American Consul. In all his letters to the Board he was emphatic that he would be able to build his planned station at Bana.[329]

Through this period the state was an inconvenience for the missionaries. Initially Young wanted to work on the basis of uniting the Chinese and Burmese 'fields'. Eventually he began to accept the Consul and Board's suggestion that he use the increasing state presence to his advantage, i.e. by promising to make the Lahu and Wa Christians into good Chinese citizens and to teach the Chinese curriculum in exchange for land concessions. This tactic only worked to the extent that states were at this stage really able to control their borderlands. Where this control was shaky, as in the alleged clashes between Chinese and local officials in Yunnan, the missionaries' plans could come unstuck. The missionaries during this period were similarly an inconvenience to states. The British and the Chinese were both trying to hide their lack of control over the borderlands. Violence against travelling foreigners would have highlighted the autonomy of the border regions which both states claimed to govern. Missionaries initially thought in terms of alternative geographies based on linguistic divisions, or pre-existing regional religious linkages, or altitude. Through trying to make use of continuing regional linguistic or religious cross-border connections, religious movements

[329] Young to Robbins, 14 September 1920, Young correspondence, ABHS.

challenged states' claims to authority, and brought different (non-Westphalian) conceptions of how border-making should be done. It was only after local preachers were expelled in 1916 and 1918 that Young gave in to the need to work with states. This is revealing both of his dependence on locals to carry out missionary work across borders, and of the enduring importance for him of a religious rather than a practical or political geographical imagination.

CONCLUSION

The Baptist missionaries' arrival in 1900 coincided with the Qing's final repression of over a century of Lahu Buddhists' rebellions against their Shan overlords. The missionaries' work made use of the remnants of these pre-existing religious networks, as well as Lahu millenarian prophecies of a returning God. Regional political-religious networks such as these contradicted lowland imperial states' claims to territorial hegemony. Missionaries and converts worked across state borders and instituted their own organisational boundaries, based often on racial or linguistic boundaries, or even customary trading routes, rather than national boundaries. These networks, and the dangers lowland states thought they posed to states' claims over disputed territory, resulted in officials attempting to strengthen the state's presence at the borders. Lowland states felt forced to react to incursions by, for instance, blocking entry to foreigners, as in 1886 and 1906, or even by expelling native and foreign workers, as happened in 1916 and 1918. The developing national border regime was not so much the product of a new imagined geography inspired by a hegemonic discourse of mapping, as of the contested continuation of pre-existing patterns of power across the highlands. Just as the movement of opium around the borderlands had contributed to the making of borders, so the movement of people, which external states contested and tried to control, played a role in transforming borders from imaginary lines on a map into lines which had some effect in people's lives.

People living at the margins of the newly developing territorial states did not experience Thongchai Winichakul's new imagined geographic nationhood.[330] The peripheries of the nations whose imagined geo-bodies Thongchai explains have in fact been marked by resistance to these narratives. The work that Winichakul has begun, by directing historians to explore indigenous conceptions of space, and how they were displaced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, can be furthered by exploring how these local geographies in some places held out against the homogenising tendencies of lowland nation-states. The increasing rigidity of borders, as well as the countervailing incidences where border- and state-making failed, are in part due to the lack of a homogeneous imagined geography on the part of border-crossing people. The cross-border networks and organisations of borderland people, as well as evidencing instances of failed border- and state-making, also pushed lowland states towards making increasingly rigid borders. Pre-existing networks of politico-religious leadership in the highlands continued to exert influence across the region even as states were agreeing national borders. The displacing of old cosmologies by a new imagined 'geo-body' of the nation was uneven and contested. Over time, however, as a result of the borders being continually challenged by the missionaries' attempts to continue regional cross-border connections, a border regime began to be concretised.

In 1914 Young complained that most of the land he was 'given' in the division of Keng Tung was in unadministered British territory and therefore inaccessible for mission work. It was several years more before Young accepted the need to work with the expanding state administrations in the borderlands. The next generation of missionaries, however, built even closer relations with the states on either side of the border.

[330] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*.

The 1930s saw both the Baptist and Presbyterian missions try to cooperate more closely with the governments of the respective states in which they worked. Educating good citizens was an explicit aim for the Presbyterian missionaries in northern Siam at the time. In 1931 Presbyterians wanted to train Chinese immigrants to be good Siamese citizens. They wrote that 'training in citizenship is the most difficult of our tasks'. The Chinese come to Siam in large numbers, escaping the turmoil in China. How, missionaries wondered, 'can we best train the strangers to love their adopted country?' Placing emphasis on the Siamese language, honouring Siamese holidays and traditions, respecting the laws of the country, all formed part of the Presbyterians' attempts towards 'moulding the mind of the younger generation to a sympathetic attitude toward the Siamese Government'.[331]

In 1934 Harold Young, William Marcus Young's son, believed that the Panglong expedition had made the beginning of direct British administration of the Wa states a near-term certainty. He therefore seized the opportunity of moving the Baptists' Wa work into soon-to-be British territory. Sure that the British would soon administer it, he applied to the Baptist Board in America for permission to move a station into the Wa territory. Harold stretched the truth somewhat in answer to the question 'is it administered territory?', stating that 'it is old administered territory, next to Pang Long and Pang Hong, which are as good as administered'. The clinching argument, as in the old days, was that 'this station will be worked strongly by Roman Catholics unless we establish work'. His brother Vincent had been trying for three years to secure land in nearby Mong Mong in Chinese territory, he wrote, but Chinese officials continued to refuse him permission.[332]

A map of the border region which Harold Young produced in 1934 (Figure 7 below) shows how the afterlife of the missionaries' religious conception of territorial divisions imprinted

[331] Alice H. Schaefer, 'Serving Two Kingdoms', *The Siam Outlook*, 7:3, (July 1931).
[332] Harold Young to Robbins, 29 December 1934, Young correspondence, ABHS.

itself upon the new Westphalian-style idea of state borders. The map below illustrates how starkly both secular and sectarian borders featured in the missionaries' work. The China-Burma border was as important to their work as the border with the China Inland Mission, which cut Yunnan in half from east to west. In addition, each of the Wa states on British-claimed territory is demarcated with precise borderlines. This is in contrast to the largely borderless map William Young produced in 1907. Harold, explaining the map to the Board in America, described how the original western boundary of the Baptists' Mong Mong-Bana field was the Salween River, which included the Wa States. This territory, he said, had been generally known as Unadministered British territory and 'we have had to use the utmost caution in carrying on our work in this section on account of the suspicion of the Chinese.'[333] He proposed that in the future the Baptists divide the administration of the Mong Mong-Bana field along the British-claimed international boundary, separating the Wa field from the Yunnan work.

[333] Harold Young to Robbins, 29 December 1934, Young correspondence, ABHS.

Figure 7

Harold Young's 1934 map of the region



Source: Young correspondence, ABHS archives.

At the same time as pushing to open a new outstation in British territory, where they hoped 'not to be hampered by officials as we were in China but instead have Government on our side', the missionaries in China still worked at achieving the closest harmonious relations with the government in China. The Baptists ran two separate schools on their mission compound in China, 'the one Chinese and the other a Bible school'. They taught 'other subjects beside the Bible at the Mission school', Harold Young said, 'but the other is following the government curriculum'. The children there 'have made good progress and most of them are speaking considerable Chinese'. The local officials were generally not in favour of Christian work, 'but as long as we have a Chinese school they are satisfied and much more friendly'. In fact many of the local officials asked to be allowed to send their own children to the mission school.[334]

These 1930s episodes illustrate the change over the period in the importance of different types of borders. For Young, the 'pioneer' who single-handedly (sic) pushed back the boundaries of Baptist territory in Burma, nation-state borders had at first been an irrelevance, and only later did they become an annoyance, to be avoided if possible. He conceived of borders primarily as ways to demarcate and enumerate settled populations of Christians, preferably Baptists. For the missionaries working in the 1920s and 1930s, state borders were more noticeable, as states were more present in the borderlands. States were less worried about blocking missionaries' access to swathes of territory when they discovered that they could make use of them instead. School curriculums, and school languages of instruction, were ways that the state, through missionaries, could influence the lives of populations in the borderlands. As state influence extended into schools on either side of the borders in the region, states could begin to spread ideas of borders as Westphalian-style lines dividing

[334] Harold Young to Robbins, 8 February 1934, Young correspondence, ABHS.

contiguous nation-states. Where once the Baptist millenarian movement had spread across the region regardless of international boundaries, the missionaries over time became implicated in the diffusion of this new concept of borders.

3. OPIUM, INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN KENG TUNG STATE

INTRODUCTION

The borderlands of Shan State, Yunnan and northern Siam, known today as the 'Golden Triangle', are one of the world's biggest sources of opium.[335] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, opium was central to the economy of the northern Shan States and Yunnan, where cultivation of the poppy was ubiquitous. The Northern Shan States in the 1920s produced two or three times Burma's total annual consumption of opium.[336] Opium was a link which connected farmers in these remote highlands to distant metropoles.[337] Opium produced in the northern Shan States was exported to the other Shan states and Upper Burma, and also to Siam and Chinese territory. In the southern Shan States, during the period examined here, prior to WWII, poppy cultivation was more limited, 'being confined to small patches in gardens or to out of the way places in hill ranges', where the yield was not sufficient for local consumption.[338] The southern Shan States were important as a trade route along which opium passed from southwest China and the northern Shan States southwards to Siam and the Straits Settlements.

Following opium flows enables us to understand how different types of borders evolved over the period, creating divisions within Burma as well as between Burma, Siam and China. The system of monopolistic opium tax farms in Southeast Asia which colonial governments established during the nineteenth century made huge profits available to smugglers who could evade Southeast Asian tax farms' border controls. The variations between national drug

[335] Between 1994-2000 Myanmar came second only to Afghanistan in total production, producing 29% of the world's opium behind Afghanistan's 62%. See Hermann Kreutzman, 'Afghanistan and the Opium World Market: Poppy Production and Trade', *Iranian Studies*, 40:5 (2007), 608.
[336] Booth-Graveley, Chief Secretary Government of Burma to Government of India, February 1933, IOR/M/3/633, British Library.
[337] Jean Michaud, 'Zomia and Beyond', *Journal of Global History*, 5:2 (2010), 196.
[338] Royal Commission on Opium, Final Report, Sessional Papers of the House of Commons, 1894, 91.

regimes across the region caused great incentives for smugglers, and meant that borders became more important over the period. Upland farmers' and traders' attempts to exploit the border meant engaging with lowland states. Smuggling can be seen on the one hand as escaping the reach of the state, but at the same time smuggling meant engaging with the various states, their borders, and their regulatory and tax regimes. Nugent notes that 'the act of creating a paper border set in motion a local dynamic in which populations became actively engaged in the inscription of the contours on the ground … the contraband trade has helped to render the border more legitimate not less so'.[339]

As the concept of the Frontier Areas developed in Burma, internal as well as international borders became sites of opportunity for smugglers. Part of the 'sanads', documents which the Shan Sawbwas signed when they submitted to British rule in the 1890s, included a ban on the 'export' of opium from their states into Burma. When the Federated Shan States were created as part of the Frontier Areas in 1923, remote Keng Tung State and the unadministered Wa States became increasingly separated from the other constituent states of the federation. The Shan States Opium Order in 1923 banned opium from being exported from Keng Tung and the Wa country, two of the largest opium producing regions, across the Salween boundary to the rest of the Shan States and Ministerial Burma. With the increasing legal differentiation within the Frontier Areas, as well as between the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma, borders *within* Burma took on increased significance.

This chapter shifts between different protagonists, showing how borders meant different thing to different actors. Major players in the opium trade such as the Keng Tung Sawbwa, Sao Kawng Kiao Intaleng, whose whole family was involved in smuggling opium between China, Burma and Siam, could profit more from the border by taxing the legal trade.

[339] Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Lie of the Borderlands since 1914*, Athens: Ohio University Press (2002), 5-7.

Throughout the period he continually tried to formalise his relations with neighbouring countries, signing trade deals with foreign syndicates in Keng Tung and visiting Bangkok to negotiate agreements with government officials in Siam. His attempts to forge his own foreign policy brought him into frequent conflict with the British, as his border-crossing business deals challenged their control over what they saw as the borders of British India. For small-scale smugglers on the other hand, borders were most profitable as a way to escape taxation or national suppression campaigns. In Yunnan, opium eradication campaigns, such as those during the late Qing and early Republican periods, made national borders increasingly relevant to people living nearby, as farmers exploited their location on the boundary to escape or protest the campaigns.

The first section of this chapter examines cross-border circulations of opium in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to show how small-scale opium cultivators and traders influenced the making of borders over the period. External states' lack of control over the frontier districts meant that opium farmers living in the borderland could influence policy by threatening to evade states. Opium suppression was difficult in the borderlands, as upland cultivators crossed the borders to evade and protest states' policies. By making use of borders, they paradoxically made the disputed borders more rather than less relevant. As traders also exploited the border to profit from the differences between national tax regimes, the border as a line became increasingly meaningful over the period.

The second half of this chapter shifts to examine larger actors in the opium trade. Disputes between Sao Kawng Kiao Intaleng, the Sawbwa of Keng Tung between 1896 and 1935, and the Government of Burma over the Sawbwa's trade in opium show how internal as well as international borders were made. The Sawbwa, Intaleng, benefited from his state's semi-independent status by smuggling opium from Keng Tung to the rest of Burma. Yet when he

tried to make use of his status in order to sign trade deals with foreign companies, he posed a threat to British control over their external borders. His cross-border activities began to take on new significance as 'foreign affairs'. Controversies over the Sawbwa's cross-border trade in opium were revealing of the wider issue of the relationship between the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma. During a period of legislative reforms, the rulers of the Frontier Areas tried to maintain their independence from the Burman politicians in Ministerial Burma. The Keng Tung Sawbwa's attempts to take advantage of his semi-independent legal and administrative position within Burma both hardened his state's border with the rest of Burma, and threatened the British ability to decide foreign policy on Burma's external borders.

TAX FARMS, DRUG REGIMES AND CROSS-BORDER FLOWS

More minor players in the opium trade, from small-scale traders to borderland cultivators, also shaped border-making in the region. This section shows the role of opium traders and cultivators in making borders in the region. Often overlooked in the focus on remote 'Zomian' agriculture, specialist traders such as the Panthay community at Panglong and the Shans at Nahpan in the Wa hills connected cultivators with Southeast Asian and Chinese metropolitan centres. By adapting in response to changing state policies towards the drug, Zomian traders engaged with lowland states. Farmers who resisted eradication campaigns also engaged with states, whether by directly challenging visiting state officials or contesting the intrusion of physical symbols of the state such as boundary pillars. The destruction of opium crops by the Chinese in the late Qing and the Republican periods made the exact location of the boundary line increasingly important. Farmers living on the border occasionally responded by moving boundary pillars, or renting land across the border. At times the threat of farmers contesting eradication efforts shaped national drug regimes. Small-scale border traders and cultivators were thus central to the start of the transforming of borders from simply lines on a map to lines which had some relevance to real lives.

In the nineteenth century, opium was a central part of the economy of the Burma-China borderlands, and opium farmers were often reliant on the poppy as a cash crop. The British Royal Commission on Opium of 1895, set up by Gladstone to appease prohibitionist sentiment in Britain, collected testimonies from more than 700 witnesses ranging from medical missionaries and clergymen, to Indian Civil Service officials and local inhabitants. Saw Maung, a former Sawbwa of the southern Shan state of Nyaungywe, testified regarding the history of opium in the Shan States. He told the Commission that poppy cultivation and opium smoking were introduced from China about a hundred years ago, and first spread among the tribes inhabiting the borders of China. The Wa, he said, cultivate opium for trading purposes.[340] From there it was traded all over the Shan States, into Siam and also east of the Mekong.[341] The Commissioners described how in the northern Shan states to the east of the Salween river, namely in Keng Tung, Kokang and the Wa states, the poppy was in many places the principal agricultural industry.[342] Where the poppy was the main cash crop, hill farmers were wholly dependent on the trade. James Scott, then the British Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, concluded his report to the Royal Commission in 1895 by imploring that, 'to deprive the Shan and the hillman of opium would be to put him to death. To forbid him to grow the poppy would be to court defiance and revolt'.[343]

Local pressure persuaded the British government at the turn of the century not to intervene in the opium economy of the Wa country. In doing so the British effectively acknowledged the state's lack of control over their frontier territories as well as the porosity of the border.

[340] Even in 1932, nearly 40 years later, opium was still the main export from the Wa states, and barter the sole medium of exchange. See Harvey, *Wa Precis*, (1932).
[341] Royal Commission on Opium, Vol. II: Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Sessional Papers of the House of Commons, 1894, 222.
[342] Royal Commission on Opium, Final Report, Sessional Papers of the House of Commons, 1894, 91.
[343] Letter by J. George Scott, Superintendent of the Northern Shan States (SNSS), on deputation as Charge d'Affaires and Acting Consul-General, Siam, to the Secretary of the Opium Commission, Rangoon, dated Bangkok, 8 Dec 1893, Royal Commission on Opium, Final Report, Sessional Papers of the House of Commons, 1894.

In giving their conclusions regarding opium prohibition in Upper Burma, the Commissioners in 1895 wrote, 'it is not thought desirable to impose on those races in our districts a law in respect to opium, so entirely different from the custom and practice which prevail among their brethren of the same races in the adjacent semi-independent territories. The violence of the contrast might raise discontent, might drive some away and prevent others coming in, and might injure our influence over the semi-independent country.'[344] The Commission's conclusions, which informed British opium policy in the borderlands into the early years of the twentieth century, shows how the relation of peasant farmer to lowland government was not simply one of external influence and local response. Borderland peoples' actions – ranging from simply migrating, to defiance and the threat of open revolt – reveal the 'weapons of the weak' identified by the political scientist James Scott.[345] Farmers leveraged their borderland location to increase their agency vis-à-vis external states. The Commission's recommendations not to intervene in the border districts' opium economy show how local people, by crossing the border, could change central government policy.

Smugglers' responses to the wide variations in national drug regimes across the region also worked to make the national borders more important. Tax farms funded colonial governments in Southeast Asia, while in China periods of state attempts at eradication alternated with periods of warlords encouraging of cultivation. The actors engaged in smuggling opium from the Shan States to Lower Burma and elsewhere in Southeast Asia included Chinese (domiciled either in Burma or in China), Burmans, Shans, Indians, and also Europeans and Anglo-Indians. The smugglers were well-organised, usually in syndicates, which provided the necessary capital. In Burma, opium was transported on the railways and by steamer. Opium smuggled across the mountainous borderland from Yunnan to Burma was usually

[344] Royal Commission on Opium, Final Report, Sessional Papers of the House of Commons, 1894, 92.
[345] James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven: Yale University Press (1985).

transported in large caravans under protection of strong bands of armed men. These smugglers were almost always Chinese.[346] Every year a number of police were killed or wounded in fights with smugglers. The railway line from Lashio to Mandalay, which opened in 1902, was frequently used for opium smuggling, the smugglers acting in collusion with railway employees.[347]

The Panthays at Panglong were key figures in the trade in opium from the Wa country and the Northern Shan States. The Panthays, also known as Hui Muslims, of Yunnan had been involved in the overland caravan trade with Tibet, Assam, and Southeast Asia since as early as the thirteenth century.[348] As well as playing a central role in connecting upland cultivators to distant metropolitan markets, the Panthays also grew large amounts of opium themselves. In 1928 an official estimated that they grew 10,000 to 12,000 acres of opium at Panglong, and bought as much again or more from the Was. They exported the opium by mules, each mule with a couple of riflemen, to French Indo-China and to Rangoon.[349] The territory of the northern Shan States and Yunnan was ideal for frontier smuggling operations. The mountains were criss-crossed by jungle paths, which traders with mule or bullock caravans used to carry merchandise of all kinds to and from Yunnan. There were no regular roads which could be patrolled and controlled. The police forces consisted of untrained villagers.[350] The Superintendent of the Northern Shan States in 1929 estimated that 93% of the total smuggling into the Shan States escaped seizure, and that total smuggling from and through the Shan

[346] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931, 45.
[347] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931, 45; Robert L. Clifford, 'The Rise and Fall of British Investment in Burma', *Asian Affairs* 6:2, (1975), 199.
[348] Andrew D.W. Forbes, 'The Role of Hui Muslims in the Traditional Caravan Trade Between Yunnan and Thailand', in Denys Lombard and Jean Aubin (eds), *Asian Merchants and Businessmen in the Indian Ocean and the China Sea,* Oxford: OUP (2000), 290.
[349] A.H. Oberlander's conversation with Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, attachment in S. Wyatt-Smith to Sir Miles Lampson, 9 April 1928, IOR/L/PS/11/279, British Library.
[350] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931, 44.

States was about 13,100 viss annually (about 20,000 kg), of which 7,000 viss was Yunnan opium, 4,000 viss Wa, 1,300 viss East Manglun and 800 viss Kokang opium.[351] In 1932 the Commissioner of the Federated Shan States concluded that, because they exported 24,000 viss out of the 36,000 viss that they produced, the Wa States were 'the most important aspect in the frontier opium problem'.[352]

At the turn of the century, drug regimes in most Southeast Asian countries differed markedly from the drug regimes in Qing and Republican China. These differences often determined the directions of cross-border flows. Monopolistic revenue farms dominated Southeast Asian opium markets in the nineteenth century. Revenue farming had come about as a result of the rapid territorial expansion of the British, Siamese, French and Dutch colonial states in Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century. Territorial expansion, with its attendant demands on state resources, coupled with a weak colonial state infrastructure and the huge potential increases in tax receipts from booming trade, motivated the mutually beneficial outsourcing of tax collection to private contractors known as tax farmers.[353] These revenue farms would have a monopoly over the retail sale (and sometimes production/refining) of specific commodities – usually either sugar, tobacco, gambling or opium – in a specific bounded territory. Under the revenue farming system, governments would put revenue farm licenses out to tender, usually every three years. Businessmen, or most often syndicates, would then bid for these tenders. The contracts involved paying the government, usually monthly, a set amount of the proceeds of taxing the trade. Tax farming was a capital-intensive industry; enforcing a monopoly (which usually corresponded to colonial territorial boundaries) and

[351] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931, 45.
[352] F.S. Clague, Commissioner of the Federated Shan States, Taunggyi, to Booth-Gravely, Chief Secretary, Government of Burma, 1 Aug 1932, Box 3, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.
[353] John Butcher, 'Revenue Farming and the Changing State in Southeast Asia', in John Butcher and Howard Dick (eds), *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elites and the Emergence of the Modern State in Southeast Asia*, London: Macmillan (1993), 34.

gathering taxes were heavy infrastructural and bureaucratic burdens. One of the tax farmers' biggest prerogatives was to prevent smugglers undercutting their prices. Thus, another paradox of the revenue farming system was that (usually Chinese) businesses were the first to systematically police state borders in the region.[354]

The system of tax farms established across Southeast Asian states in the nineteenth century made huge profits available to the smugglers who managed to undercut the monopolies. The profits to be had in Southeast Asia in the early twentieth century drew Shan opium southwards. When demand in Siam was much greater than in China, Keng Tung opium flowed to Siam. For instance, the price in Chiang Mai in 1912 was Rs. 40-45 per viss, but at the same time just north of the border in Keng Tung a viss was worth Rs. 30-40.[355] In 1913 both of the Superintendents of the Northern and the Southern Shan States agreed that there was little if any smuggling from the Shan States into Yunnan, and little prospect of any while the profits to be made in Siam and French Indo-China were so great. They wrote that, 'the destruction of opium cultivation in Yunnan will require to be very complete before traders are tempted to abandon the assured profits obtainable from the export into Siam and Tonkin for the doubtful profits to be realised from smuggling into Yunnan.'[356] However, within a few years of this assertion that it would take a lot to reverse the flows of opium south into northern Siam, China's eradication efforts caused the beginning of exactly that reversal.

The short-lived Republican regime in Yunnan attempted to continue the eradication campaigns begun under the Qing in 1906. Officials' efforts to eradicate the cultivation of opium in Yunnan were severe. Often-violent efforts at eradication, together with the volatility

[354] Carl A. Trocki, 'Chinese Revenue Farms and Borders in Southeast Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, 43:1 (2009), 355.
[355] Report on the Administration of the Shan and Karenni States, 1912, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.
[356] Note regarding opium cultivation on the Burma-China frontiers, confidential, W.C., 19 July 1918, Proposed prohibition of opium growing in Siam and possibility of unrest in the Shan States, 7472, Myanmar National Archives.

of the price of opium, resulted in unrest among impoverished farmers on the Yunnan side of the border. In some places, farmers responded violently to parties of Chinese officials trying to carry out central government orders to suppress opium cultivation in the hills. In 1915, on the borders of North Hsenwi and Manglun states, 'a few collisions with the villagers were reported which did not all end in the defeat of the cultivators'.[357] In Mong Lem and in the Chenpien region, where Chinese officials had more success in destroying the crop, local British officials reported that the policy was highly resented.[358] However, with the warlords' proclamation of the independence of Yunnan in December 1915, the campaign against opium (temporarily) came to an end.

Alarmed by Yuan Shi-kai declaring himself Emperor of China in December 1915, Cai E, the warlord governor of Yunnan, together with the constitutionalist Liang Qichao, launched the so-called National Protection Movement to resist Yuan's imperial ambitions.[359] In December 1915 Cai E and Liang Qichao declared the independence of Yunnan, with other southwest provinces soon joining them.[360] Warlords such as Cai E, in order to raise revenue to fund their wars against Yuan Shi-Kai's central state, began coercing peasants into growing the poppy again. Warlords 'dragooned communities of peasants, or indigenous tribal peoples, into the cultivation of opium, so that the soldiers or officials could appropriate it and move it into the market and buy more guns'.[361] Due to the shortages caused by previous years' suppression efforts, warlords supplemented the opium they bought from Yunnan with opium procured in northern Burma. The military authorities in charge of the troops dispatched from Yunnan to Sichuan were said to have taken large quantities of the drug with them for sale at

[357] Report on the Administration of the Northern Shan States, 1916, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.
[358] Report on the Administration of the Southern Shan States, 1916, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.
[359] Hans van de Ven, 'Public Finance and the Rise of Warlordism', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30:4 (1996), 848.
[360] Edward A. McCord, *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism,* Berkeley: University of California Press (1993), 205.
[361] Trocki, 'Chinese Revenue Farms and Borders in Southeast Asia', 133.

Rs. 272 per viss but, as there was such a scarcity of opium in Yunnan, agents were sent to Lashio and Kokang to procure as much as possible there.[362]

The politics of warlord rule in Yunnan had an immediate effect on the cross-border opium economy. The Qing and Republican eradication campaigns had had the effect of depressing the supply of opium, and thereby increasing prices. This effect was compounded in 1915-16, as the proclamation of the National Protection War in 1915 caused a sudden spike in demand. Dramatic shifts in the price of opium in Burma as a result of political shifts in Yunnan indicate the level of integration of the cross-border market. In the space of just a few years the price of opium increased dramatically on both sides of the border. As an indication of the market's volatility, the price in Keng Tung rose by a factor of five, from 40 rupees per viss in 1912 to 200 rupees per viss in 1918, before falling back to Rs. 100-140 in 1919.[363] Farmers across the highlands immediately felt the effects of the 1916-18 price spike. Cultivators responded by increasing production on both sides of the border. In addition, cross-border trade increased as merchants arbitraged away the price differences. The high price of opium, and hence high value of the opium caravans crossing the border, in 1918 also temporarily caused an increase in dacoity on the frontier.[364] British officials in Burma noticed increases in crime against mule caravans, tracing them to the sudden increase in the value of cross-border trade in 1918. Traders as a result had to travel in larger and better-armed caravans. A year later, these changes were quickly reversed, as trans-frontier trade decreased in 1919. This reduction in trade was partly caused by plague and influenza at Keng Tung, partly by the fall in the price

[362] Report on the Administration of the Northern Shan States, 1916, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.
[363] Reports on the Administration of the Northern Shan States, 1912-1920, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.
[364] Report on the Administration of the Northern Shan States, 1918, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.

of opium, and partly by Chinese restrictions on the movement of bullion introduced in 1919.[365]

The fall in the price of opium was nearly as steep as the rise had been a few years previously. In June 1916 after Yuan Shikai's death, the National Protection War ended and the provinces rescinded their declarations of independence.[366] Demand for opium fell as the Yunnan authorities in 1917 reversed the army's policies of buying up opium and encouraging poppy growing, instead trying, with more or less success, to renew efforts at eradication. These efforts were directed at Wa regions near Mong Hka, which lay within the region claimed by the British. The expeditions were thus partly also attempts to solidify Chinese claims to govern the region, as well as being an opportunity for Chinese officials and troops to pocket the profits from confiscated opium.[367] In 1917 Wa villagers defeated a military column which Yunnan authorities sent to Mong Hka in the Wa country. One company suffered heavy casualties, and the column had had to call for reinforcements.[368] In 1917 Lahu farmers' resentments against opium suppression in Yunnan came to the surface and they rebelled against the Yunnan authorities at Chenpien. The rebellion began when a Lahu family claimed the Ta-ya-hko Chiefship. They soon found support among cultivators who had been impoverished by the opium suppression campaigns. The rebels were temporarily successful in overrunning Chenpien Prefecture. Kaw Shu Shin, the Chinese officer at Keng Hung, quickly marched to Mong Hai 'with all the troops he could collect' and succeeded in suppressing the rebellion.[369]

[365] Report on the Administration of the Shan and Karenni States 1919, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.
[366] Edward A. McCord, *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism*, Berkeley: University of California Press (1993), 245.
[367] Diary of the Assistant Superintendent, Keng Tung, 27 January 1917, Summary of events in the Southern Shan States, 6 March 1917, 7407, Myanmar National Archives.
[368] Diary of the Assistant Superintendent, Keng Tung, 10 March 1917, 7407, Myanmar National Archives.
[369] Report on the Administration of the Northern Shan States, 1919, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.

Local resentment against suppression often spilled over into violence against state officials, but sometimes farmers took out their anger on the next best thing, which was the state as manifested in the physical symbols of the boundary. In one case in Kokang in 1917, the British officer in charge of the outpost at Tawnio visited the border with two Chinese officials. Together they walked over a particularly disputed section of the border. A few days later a marked tree which was prominent in the official descriptions of the boundary was felled. The British did not know who had been behind the tree felling but, clearly suspecting the Chinese officials, made a 'vigorous complaint' over the 'outrage'.[370] Local people also moved boundary pillars as a way to express grievances. In 1917 there was a backlash in Henma and Wanzoshu – towns on the border near Myitkyina in Kachin state – against Chinese anti-opium measures. In those disturbances, local opium farmers responded to the Chinese suppression efforts by removing boundary pillars and refusing to pay taxes. These disputes escalated into violence lasting three months, during which time the farmers killed a Chinese officer.[371] Thus tangible symbols of the border became another 'weapon of the weak' as farmers living on or near the border moved boundary pillars in response to China's opium suppression campaigns. It is unclear whether removing the boundary pillars was simply about protesting or evading the state's policies, or whether it was about rejecting the very idea of the border and of Chinese sovereignty more generally. Boundary pillars were perhaps a target as an imposition of outside states, especially if they arbitrarily divided fields of crops deemed illegal on one side and tolerated on the other.

[370] Report on the Administration of the Northern Shan States, 1917, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.
[371] Extract from the Diary of the District Superintendent of Police, Mandalay, 17 March 1917, Enforcement of Anti-Opium Regulations in China 1917, 7407, Myanmar National Archives; District Superintendent of Police, Bhamo to Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Burma, 4 May 1917, Enforcement of Anti-Opium Regulations in China 1917, 7407, Myanmar National Archives.

While resistance to suppression campaigns in Yunnan was ultimately futile, farmers across the border in the British Shan states were able to exploit the newly-relevant national border. The severity of the renewed suppression campaigns in Yunnan meant that the exact location of the border took on increased salience. British subjects in the Shan States responded to the opium shortage in Yunnan both by increasing their own cultivation of opium in fields on the British side of the border, and by letting their fields to Chinese subjects to grow opium.[372] Thus, while suppression campaigns in China immiserated already poor farmers in Yunnan, farmers living just across the border in Burma turned the differences in national drug policies to their financial advantage. In this way the border became increasingly meaningful, as profit-seeking local farmers began to make use of it. By seeking to benefit from the increasing importance of the national border, upland farmers engaged with the neighbouring states and their policies.

The eradication campaigns of the late Qing and Republican periods, through their success in suppressing cultivation (to the detriment of Yunnanese farmers' livelihoods), had the effect of increasing the relevance of the international border to locals' lives. A disputed line that previously had been important only to mining companies and military expeditions took on relevance for people living on the border. Traders and cultivators changed their behaviour in response to changes in the drug policies of the states on either side of the border. The period of suppression in Yunnan from 1906 to 1916 under the late Qing and the Republicans was followed by several years of warlord government, during which the late Qing and Republican anti-opium policies were swiftly reversed. The new warlord governors of Yunnan engaged in the opium trade in order to finance their military campaigns across southwest China. The

[372] Report on the Administration of the Shan and Karenni States, 1917, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.

fluctuations in prices across the region during the warlord era shows how quickly cross-border traders and cultivators responded to these policy changes.

Trans-regional networks of commodities thus criss-crossed the highlands, forming the link that bound farmers and traders to the lowland governments on either side of the borderlands. National drug regimes varied from those of Qing and Republican China where suppression campaigns were patchily successful but occasionally reversed by warlords encouraging cultivation to meet their revenue needs, to those in Southeast Asia where colonial and Siamese states' revenue needs resulted in monopolistic tax farms. Cultivators and traders responded to these varying drug policies and regional politics by taking advantage of the newly-important national borders. Smugglers profited from the price differences, while farmers exploited the border to avoid suppression campaigns in Yunnan, either by crossing the border or moving the physical symbols of the borderline. Borderland cultivators and cross-border traders took advantage of differences in policy on either side of the practically-invisible border, which paradoxically contributed to the hardening of the international border.

FOREIGN TRADE AND THE BORDERS OF KENG TUNG STATE

Just as small-scale cultivators and traders' exploiting of the border had helped to reify it, so larger-scale players' participation in the opium trade had the effect of solidifying borders in the region. Centring a different protagonist in this section highlights how borders meant different things to different people. This section examines disputes over the Keng Tung Sawbwa's cross-border opium trade between the 1900s and 1930s. His trade both with Siam and with the rest of Burma challenged the colonial state's model of indirect rule. Local rulers, through whom the British tried to govern indirectly, subverted the process of colonial state-making by conducting their own foreign affairs, including trading illicit opium across borders within Burma and signing international trade deals with foreign companies. By attempting to

legalise and tax the international opium trade, the Sawbwa contested the colonial state's claims to absolute foreign policy-making and coercive powers. Examining cross-border trade disputes from the 1900s to the 1930s highlights the ambiguities inherent in colonial state-making at its borders. The Keng Tung Sawbwa had enough independence from Burma for there to be separate laws on opium, which made it illegal to trade opium between Keng Tung and the rest of Burma, yet not enough independence to be able to sign his own trade deals with Siam. Where the previous section focused on small-scale traders and cultivators, this section will turn to larger players such as the Shan rulers in order to compare how different people stood to benefit from different kinds of borders.

Disputes over the Keng Tung Sawbwa's desire to conduct his own foreign policy revealed the effects on border-making of the separation between the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma. By increasing the complexity of taxation regimes within colonial Burma, the British introduced ever more legal distinctions between Burma's core and periphery. This chapter considers how Burma, which seemed uniformly pink on the map, was actually not so, and did not become more so over the period. Instead distinctions within Burma hardened, making internal borders more meaningful. Legal distinctions between internal opium tax regimes increased the importance of internal borders, as well as increasing the benefits which flowed to small-scale smugglers who transgressed those borders. Rulers and tax farmers on the other hand, wanted the benefits which came from taxing border trade or monopolising retail sales of opium within a territory.

The Keng Tung Sawbwa, Sao Kawng Kiao Intaleng, had different interests in borders compared to small-scale smugglers. He saw that he could make more money if he transitioned from being just another smuggler, albeit a major player, evading states at borders, to a trading magnate signing deals with foreign states and private corporations. This desire to legalise and

control the cross-border trade formed part of his wider plan to 'develop' his state, part of which involved offering monopolistic business privileges to foreign syndicates. However, Intaleng's state- and border-making threatened Britain's control over what were still the borders of the empire, with consequences for the relations between the Shan States and Ministerial Burma.

The Keng Tung Sawbwa and his family were major players in the opium trade. Keng Tung was a transit centre of opium coming from the major cultivating regions in the Northern Shan States, the Wa states and Yunnan south to Siam and French Indo-China. While he continued to profit personally from his own illicit trade with Siam, the Sawbwa also sought to direct some of the profits from the rest of the cross-border opium trade to his state's revenues. Despite his entreaties, the British repeatedly turned down his applications to be allowed to levy export taxes, sell opium openly to Siam and Burma, or sign trading agreements with foreign companies.[373]

The conflict between the Keng Tung Sawbwa and the Government of Burma over the Sawbwa's foreign policy represents a wider struggle over local rulers' rights in Burma's so-called 'backward tracts'. Before its submission to British Burma in 1890, Keng Tung was a jurisdiction independent of Lower Burma, which was then ruled as part of British India. In 1886, while Keng Tung was still an autonomous state, the Keng Tung Sawbwa inquired whether he could contract to export opium to Lower Burma. At this point, the British also treated Keng Tung as an independent princely state. In a letter to the Commissioner at Moulmein in 1886, the then Sawbwa wrote: 'as an amicable relationship exists between your Government and my Principality to promote commerce, I am desirous of opening up a trade in opium with your Division.' The Foreign Department at Rangoon replied informing the

[373] Chief Secretary, Government of Burma, to Thornton, Superintendent of the Shan States, Maymyo, 30 October 1920, 4325, Myanmar National Archives.

Sawbwa that the importing of opium into Burma was prohibited.[374] After the British deposed King Thebaw and annexed Upper Burma in 1885, the independence of the unruly Shan States bordering Upper Burma, often the refuge of rebels and criminals, became an issue. In 1890, as part of the decade-long violent 'Pacification' of the Shan states, the Government of India made Keng Tung a subordinate state. The British installed a British Resident, who was supposed to 'advise' the ruler on foreign affairs. In 1896, the year that Intaleng succeeded to the throne, Keng Tung further lost its status as a Native State and became part of British India, with the same status as the other Shan States.[375]

In 1903 Intaleng attempted to sign a trade deal directly with a revenue farmer at Bangkok to supply him with Keng Tung opium. The Sawbwa hoped to become a 'bonded warehouseman' for opium exports to Siam.[376] The British Consul at Chiang Mai estimated that the Sawbwa stood to make Rs. 54,000 per annum from the deal. As part of the deal Intaleng ordered that no one was to sell opium in Keng Tung state except to him, on pain of imprisonment. According to the agreement the Sawbwa also agreed not to supply any other person in Siam with opium from Keng Tung. This raised a problem. The Superintendent worried that since the Sawbwa's frontier guards were insufficient to prevent the sale of opium from his state to people in northern Siam, the Sawbwa might be sued in Siamese courts for infringement of his contract. It was different if a Chinese businessman was sued for failing to police the borders of his monopoly, but if the Sawbwa, a ruler of a state in the British Empire, were sued in a Siamese court, it could cause serious complications for the British. The

[374] Sawbwa of Kyaington and Kyaingchaing to the Commissioner of Moulmein, 1886, Kyaington Sawbwa's proposal to send opium to Rangoon for sale, 8645, Myanmar National Archives.
[375] G.E. Harvey, Memorandum on Native State Status, 1930, Box 7, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.
[376] Beckett, Consul Chiang Mai, to Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, 14 August 1903, Visit of the Keng Tung Sawbwa to Colombo, Singapore and Bangkok, his request to be allowed to assume control of Kengsen (Chiengsen), agreement between the Keng Tung Sawbwa and the opium farmer of Bangkok for the supply of Keng Tung opium, 6324, Myanmar National Archives.

Superintendent decided that this risk was slim, however, and hoped that him exporting more to Siam would mean that he would smuggle less into Burma.[377]

The British Government of Burma reported the matter to the Government of India, who raised concerns about the Government of Burma's lack of control over the Shan states' relations with their neighbours. The Government of Burma told the Government of India that there was nothing in the Sawbwa's sanad to prevent the Government regulating this trade. The 'sanad' was the letter of appointment given to the Sawbwa, Sao Kawn Hkam Hpu, in 1890 confirming him in his rule after he tendered his submission to the British. This letter was then updated in 1896 when Intaleng succeeded him as Sawbwa. The British decided not to impose an export duty on the trade, as it would interfere with exports, but simply to warn Intaleng that they alone had the power to impose duties.[378]

This opium agreement with Siam was in the context of a series of diplomatic visits by Intaleng designed to develop his state's foreign relations. In 1903, he travelled to Colombo and Singapore. Then, declaring that his object was to see the country and to facilitate the cultivation of good relations, he returned via Bangkok, and two of the northern Siamese states, Lakon and Chiang Mai. In Bangkok he visited the Siamese king, where he also personally negotiated the opium trade agreement.[379] Around this time the Sawbwa had also considered creating a rubber monopoly, and perhaps other monopolies.[380] These efforts to

[377] Barnes, 23 October 1903, Visit of the Keng Tung Sawbwa to Colombo, Singapore and Bangkok, his request to be allowed to assume control of Kengsen (Chiengsen), agreement between the Keng Tung Sawbwa and the opium farmer of Bangkok for the supply of Keng Tung opium, 6324, Myanmar National Archives.
[378] Trade in Opium between Keng Tung and Siam, 1920, Political Department, 4325, Myanmar National Archives.
[379] Beckett, Consul Chiang Mai to Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, 15 May 1903, Visit of the Keng Tung Sawbwa to Colombo, Singapore and Bangkok, his request to be allowed to assume control of Kengsen (Chiengsen), agreement between the Keng Tung Sawbwa and the opium farmer of Bangkok for the supply of Keng Tung opium, 6324, Myanmar National Archives.
[380] Beckett, Consul Chiang Mai to Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, 15 May 1903, Visit of the Keng Tung Sawbwa to Colombo, Singapore and Bangkok, his request to be allowed to assume control of Kengsen (Chiengsen), agreement between the Keng Tung Sawbwa and the opium farmer of Bangkok for the supply of Keng Tung opium, 6324, Myanmar National Archives.

plan his state's economy mirrored Southeast Asian colonial governments' experiments of the past half century.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, states in Southeast Asia relied on revenues from opium sales. The state-run monopolies which began to replace the private tax farms continued to reward smugglers who could evade border controls. The tax farming system lasted until the turn of the century when, between the mid-1880s and the 1910s, several of the big revenue farms across Southeast Asia collapsed. Having hugely outbid rivals in order to secure the tenders, many contractors were unable to meet their obligations and requested government assistance to take over the running of their farms. Governments in Southeast Asia consistently prioritized supporting their own revenue needs over submitting to international pressures for drug suppression. This meant that when the monopolistic tax farming system collapsed, governments set up opium monopolies of their own to continue the practice of monopolistic rent-seeking. By the 1910s government-run monopolies had replaced most private tax farms. Colonial bureaucracies were larger and better able to intervene in the economy by the early twentieth century, so they were now able to manage the policing and bureaucratic costs involved. That they chose to run monopolies rather than banning the trade (the United States in the Philippines excepted) shows states' continuing reliance on opium revenues. Indeed, in 1918 the Indian opium trade with China supposedly stopped, but in fact the Government of India continued to sell ever more 'non-certified' opium to the Straits Settlements and Hong Kong – where the opium revenue farms were responsible for about half of government revenues – as well as to Macau, French Indo-China, the Dutch East Indies and Japan.[381]

[381] Gregory Blue, 'Opium for China: The British Connection', in Timothy Brook, Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas (eds), *Opium Regimes: China, Britain and Japan, 1839-1952*, Berkeley: University of California Press (2000), 43.

In 1920 the Sawbwa applied to the British for permission to tender for a contract to supply the Siamese Government with opium. The Superintendent said this should be on condition of either the contract being a state transaction and the state getting the profits, or the state levying an export duty on the trade. Thornton proposed giving the Sawbwa permission to tender for the Siamese contract, and stipulating that the proceeds of the trade should go to state funds, 'rather than into the Sawbwa's pockets as happened under the 1903 arrangement'.[382] Others disagreed, arguing that the Sawbwas had no rights under their sanads to levy export taxes. Allowing the Sawbwa to tax opium exports would contradict their claim that levying taxes was the sole right of the Government of India.[383]

The Sawbwa did not win the 1920 contract, which Siam awarded to Ah Mong, a Cantonese resident of Keng Tung. The Sawbwa instead requested permission to levy an export tax for the benefit of his state. Thornton, the Political Officer at Keng Tung, recommended that permission to levy the tax be given. The Chief Secretary poured water on Thornton's recommendation, pointing out that it would set a precedent for the right of Sawbwas to tax goods exported out of British India.[384] The Sawbwa's response to the British denying him the right to legalise the cross-border opium trade seems to have been to continue to send opium illicitly to the other British-ruled Shan states. In 1922 opium was found in the hands of the Sawbwa's servant, apparently enough to fill the consumption requirements of all the southern Shan states for three years. A total of 1,500 viss was seized in various consignments on their way westwards from Keng Tung, which would have been worth about Rs. 4,000,000 when it

[382] Trade in Opium between Keng Tung and Siam, 1920, Political Department, 4325, Myanmar National Archives.
[383] Trade in Opium between Keng Tung and Siam, 1920, Political Department, 4325, Myanmar National Archives.
[384] Thornton, Superintendent and Political Officer Southern Shan States, to Chief Secretary Government of India, 18 September 1920, Trade in Opium between Keng Tung and Siam, 1920, Political Department, 4325, Myanmar National Archives.

reached Rangoon.[385] It is unclear who exactly seized the opium, i.e. if there were police along the border between Keng Tung and the western Shan States. In fact, rather than being in charge of confiscating illicit opium, the Superintendent mentions that one of the people caught carrying opium was the Chief of the Keng Tung Police, U Hsang Hkam, who 'seemed to have had a good deal to do with the consignments'. He together with the licensee at Mong Pawn were found in possession of 460 viss. On receipt of a telegraph from the Sawbwa, the Chief of Police stated that part of the opium was his and part was the Sawbwa's. The Mong Hsu Myosa seized some of the opium which was on its way through his state, but released it as soon as he heard that it belonged to the Keng Tung Sawbwa.[386] In what seems to have been a family affair, there were also rumours of regular smuggling operations by the Sawbwa's sister.[387]

The Chief Secretary recommended that the Sawbwa be reprimanded in a 'friendly but firm' manner, by reminding him of the privileges he possessed and 'the impropriety of any abuse of those privileges'.[388] These episodes epitomised the clash between the Sawbwa's desire to run his state's cross-border trade affairs and the Government of India's insistence that taxation and foreign affairs were the preserve of the central colonial state. The episodes further highlighted Britain's inability to control the remote Shan states, just a time when the anti-opium movement was gathering steam again after the war. Britain's response would be to relinquish even more power to the Shan rulers, separating them even further from lowland Burma.

[385] Grahame, Superintendent and Political Officer Southern Shan States, Summary of events in the Southern Shan States for the month of August 1922, 2 September 1922, Opium smuggling from Keng Tung, 1922, 4518, Myanmar National Archives.
[386] Grahame, Summary of events in the Southern Shan States for the month of August 1922, 2 September 1922, Opium smuggling from Keng Tung, 1922, 4518, Myanmar National Archives.
[387] Opium smuggling from Keng Tung, 1922, 4518, Myanmar National Archives.
[388] Chief Secretary to Thornton, Commissioner Frontier Division, 26 October 1922, Opium smuggling from Keng Tung, 1922, 4518, Myanmar National Archives.

The Government of India was increasingly criticised in the 1920s for failing to halt the opium trade. The League of Nations, founded in 1920, resumed pre-war international efforts to suppress opium. This period saw a shift in the global anti-opium movement from voluntary national agreements to mandatory international controls. One milestone on the road towards the internationalisation of cross-border anti-opium controls was the system of import certificates which the League of Nations had mandated in 1922. Dealers wishing to trade internationally were required to obtain certificates from their own governments before being allowed to sell drugs across borders.[389] Two League of Nations conferences in 1924-1925 marked the culmination of the internationalisation of the opium prohibition movement. The Government of India, in the face of increasing criticisms in the 1920s, continued to assert that it was not obliged to stop smuggling while the Chinese were not enforcing suppression.[390]

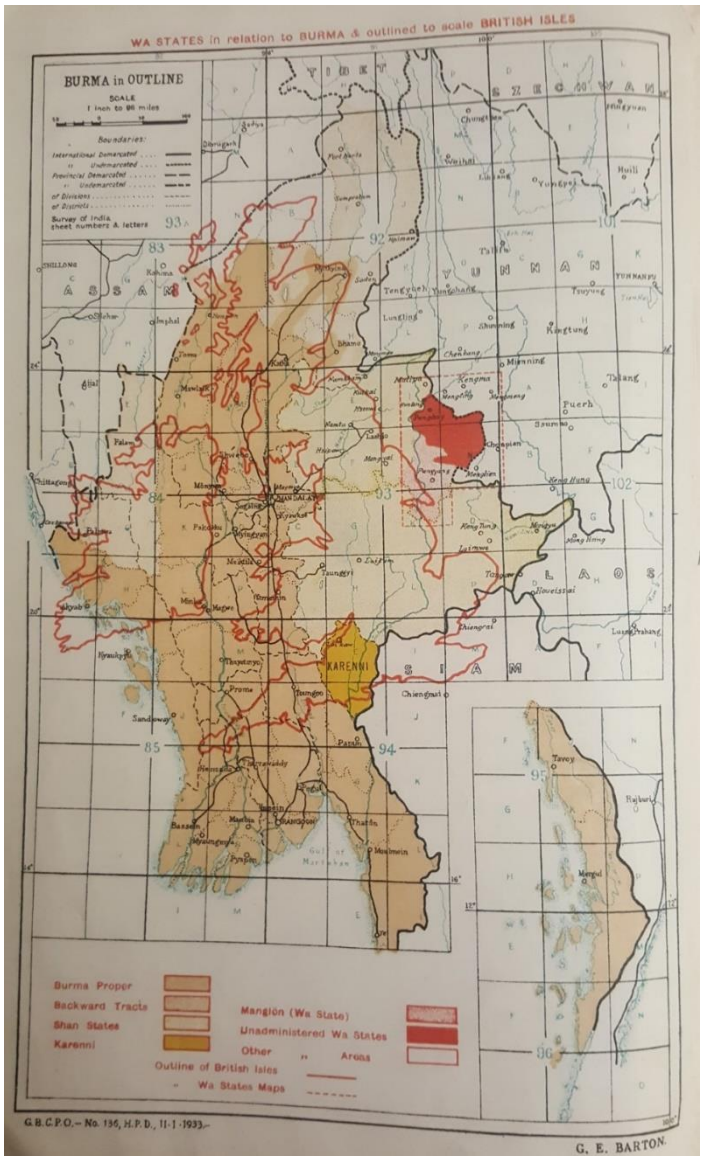
In response to pressure from the international prohibition movement, the British attempted to control the trade in the parts of the Shan States nearest to lowland Burma, while professing that they were unable to control more remote parts of the states. Internal borders became more important, as they now sought to emphasise the distinction which they had introduced at the turn of the century between 'administered' and 'unadministered' border districts. They also experimented in the 1920s with off-loading responsibility for opium control onto the newly self-governing Shan chiefs. In 1921 the Government of Burma gave notice to all cultivators in the Shan States that in two years' time the government would make opium exports from the Shan States illegal and would require farmers to hold licenses for cultivation. At the same time, government officials admitted that they were unable to enforce the ban in the states east of the Salween River, namely Keng Tung State, Kokang, and the Wa states.[391]

[389] 'The Opium Commission of the League of Nations, from a Correspondent at Geneva', *British Medical Journal*, 6 May 1922.
[390] Blue, 'Opium for China', 42.
[391] Report on the Administration of the Shan States, 1921, (IND) IB Burma Ba 4, Oriental Institute Library, Oxford.

The government continued to treat the border districts separately, not just from the lowlands of ‘Burma proper’, but also from the administered Shan states. The multiple distinctions of administration between the ‘backward tracts’, the unadministered Wa States, the Shan States and ‘Burma proper’ are clearly depicted on a 1933 map of the country (see Figure 8 below).

Figure 8

Map of the Wa States in Relation to Burma, 1933



Source: © British Library Board, Mss Eur E252/26, Harvey, *Wa Precis* (1933).

The Superintendents of the Northern and Southern Shan States had in 1914 and again in 1919 recommended treating the independent-minded eastern Shan states differently.[392] In 1923, a few months after the creation of the Federated Shan States, the Government of Burma introduced the Shan States Opium Order. This order gave responsibility for the control of opium sales to the Shan chiefs, extending the concept of retail monopolies to the Shan States. The monopolists were to obtain their supplies of opium from the Chief of the State, which they could then sell in opium shops.[393] The 1923 Shan States Opium Order did not apply to the Trans-Salween (eastern) Shan States.[394] These independent-minded eastern states included Keng Tung, which was now banned from 'exporting' opium to the western Shan states. This was despite these states being not only in the same country but also in the same administrative district, or so-called 'backward tract', as the Federated Shan States. In the case of Keng Tung and Mong Pan, from whence the majority of opium smuggled into Siam originated, the Order did not prohibit cultivation at all. The patchwork of regulations which characterised the British rule over the Frontier Areas highlighted their inability to control the border districts. The new opium legislation for the Shan States in 1923 just added another layer to the gradations of the Shan States' (lack of) independence. These variations in types of sovereignty and administration, when combined with the Keng Tung Sawbwa's desire to trade across both internal and international borders, would lead to a clash over the question of the Sawbwa's right to an independent border policy.

The Shan Sawbwas were continually trying to assert their independence from the legislative reforms ongoing in Ministerial Burma. In 1929 the Sawbwas of Keng Tung, Mongnai,

[392] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931, 40.
[393] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931, 42.
[394] Robert Bruce Maule, 'British Policy and Administration in the Federated Shan States, 1922-1942', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1993, 395.

Yawnghwe, North Hsenwi and Mongmit lodged a protest against the Shan States being included in the investigations of the Simon Commission. The Simon Commission, or Indian Statutory Commission, was sent to India in 1928 tasked with studying the question of constitutional reform in British India.[395] The Sawbwas, on hearing at the last minute that the Shan States were to be included in the remit of the Commission's investigations, wrote immediately of their 'fixed resolve never to be under Indians or Burmans, never to be made [part of] any Reformed Government, but always to be directly under the English head of the Province without any Asiatic intermediaries.'[396] The Mongmit Sawbwa suggested to the Commissioners that the Shan States should form a separate entity styled as 'Free States' similar to the Native States in India.[397]

Interestingly the Sawbwas' demands were mirrored in the desire expressed by some subordinate headmen in Keng Tung state in 1923 not to be under the jurisdiction of the Keng Tung Sawbwa but instead to be put directly under British administration.[398] This period saw an empire-wide extension of the model of indirect rule through self-governing rulers, directly under the British. The Shan headmen – seeing the Sawbwas' semi-independent rule – aimed to reap the perceived benefits of this form of administration. First developed in India's princely states in the eighteenth century, indirect rule was a model for later colonial administrators who wanted to rule without the costs of administration.[399] Forms of indirect rule were extended in much of the Muslim British Empire in the 1920s and 1930s. In northern Nigeria the British ruled through the Sultan of Sokoto, in northern Sudan from the 1920s the

[395] C.F. Andrews, *India and the Simon Report*, London: George Allen and Unwin, (1930).
[396] The Shan Sawbwas Memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission, 10 February 1929, Box 7, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.
[397] Memo of Points suggested by the Mongmit Sawbwagyi to be discussed at the Shan Chiefs committee meeting, to put up the case relating to Shan States reforms to Simon Committee, Box 7, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.
[398] Movement against the Sawbwa of Keng Tung, 1923, 4536, Myanmar National Archives.
[399] Michael H. Fisher, 'Indirect Rule in the British Empire: The Foundations of the Residency System in India, 1764–1858', *Modern Asian Studies*, 18:3 (1987), 393.

British made a concerted effort to rule through tribal and rural chiefs, likewise in the Gulf and south Arabian shore influence was exercised through sultans and emirs. In Malaya the British maintained the fiction of governing through sultans.[400] These headmen's demands make scholars' point that indirect rule served mostly to entrench the interests of conservative, often rural, elites.

The Shan leaders, in a memorial of 1929 addressed to the Simon Committee, included a protest against 'the recent tendency to belittle [our] Customary Law as antiquated and obsolete, and to deny us all legislative power'. The Sawbwas rejected the Superintendents' statement that the Customary Law was 'the mere whim or will of the Chief'. They refuted English officials' complaints that the Customary Law had never been codified, retorting, 'has the Common Law of England ever been codified? Customs change and cannot be fixed in code.'[401] The Sawbwas acknowledged that the Customary Law only held insofar as it did not contradict 'the spirit of British Indian Law'.[402] However, they emphasised how in the first British negotiations with the Sawbwas in 1887, just after the annexation of Upper Burma, the British 'were inclined to treat [the Sawbwas] as sovereigns', and the Chief Commissioner 'accepted the Sawbwa's intentions that he should be a king in subordination to the Queen Empress, and that a treaty should be made between him and the British Government'. Prior to that, they asserted, 'Though the king of Burma became our overlord, we were never ruled by the Burmese people'.[403]

[400] Francis Robinson, 'The British Empire and the Muslim World', *Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1999), 407.
[401] The Shan Sawbwas' Memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission, 1929, Presented by the Chiefs of Hsipaw, Yawnghwe, Tawngpeng, Mongmit, Pwehla, at the hearing granted by Sir John Simon and his colleagues at Government House, Mandalay, 10 February 1929, Box 7, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.
[402] The Shan Sawbwas' Memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission, 10 February 1929, Box 7, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.
[403] The Shan Sawbwas' Memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission, 10 February 1929, Box 7, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.

The semi-independent status of the Shan States frustrated both the large- and small-scale players in the opium trade, who were each trying to profit from the border in different ways. The question of the extent of the juridical independence of the Shan States was tested in 1929, in an opium smuggling case which came before a court in Rangoon. The magistrate in Rangoon acquitted the accused, Kyaung Kaing, a Chinese citizen resident in the northern Shan State of Hsipaw, on the grounds that the Burmese Opium Act of 1878 did not extend to Hsipaw, where he had been accused of possession. The magistrate ruled that the accused therefore could not be convicted in a British Indian court of an act which was not an offense in the Shan States. The Public Prosecutor countered by arguing that 'the Shan States were not Germany or France'. To this, the counsel for the accused replied that 'they were so far as this Act was concerned'.[404] Despite the judge effectively agreeing that the Shan States were as independent from the UK as Germany and France were, the Sawbwas continued to be unable to levy export duties or sign contracts with Siamese importers.[405] The Sawbwas were in a bind. They were separate enough from Ministerial Burma to be accused of smuggling across the internal border (since it was illegal to sell opium from the Shan States into Burma), yet not independent enough to be allowed to sign deals to sell their opium across the border into Siam. For large players such as the Sawbwas, the borders represented a frustratingly unrealised opportunity to profit by taxing a legal trade. Yet for smaller players such as small-scale smugglers, of course, the borders were most profitable when they were unpoliced, when mountainous trails and scant border guards enabled them to exploit the border for their own gain.

[404] '"Shan States Not Germany". Question of Jurisdiction in Opium Case. An Interesting Point of Law', *The Burma Exchange Gazette*, 8 June 1929, Box 7, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.
[405] G.E. Harvey, SNSS, to the Excise Commissioner Rangoon, 17 June 1929, Box 7, G.E. Harvey papers, Weston Library, Oxford.

Smuggling continued unabated. Everyone concerned, from the national and colonial governments down to the rulers of princely states such as Keng Tung, was fully aware of the ongoing smuggling operations. In fact, states on occasion worked together to hide from the League of Nations the full extent of cultivation and smuggling. National and colonial governments' main concern was to be seen by the international community – in the shape of transnational organisations such as the League – to be trying to stamp out smuggling and drug cultivation. In 1929, shortly before the League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East was due to visit the border region, the Siamese tried to help the British to hide the extent of cross-border smuggling. In a memo in 1929, the Siamese Minister of Finance alerted the British to the fact that the Keng Tung Sawbwa's opium shops lay 'ostentatiously on the roadside'. He warned that the Siamese felt they would have to tell the League of Nations, who were due to visit the area in December, and so told the British to 'take any action you deem necessary' to hide the shops.[406] The Assistant Superintendent at Keng Tung advised the Sawbwa to move his opium shop to Monglin, 'a considerably greater distance from the frontier', which the Sawbwa did.[407] The shop's location was legal, as it was legal to sell opium for personal consumption within the Shan States, but its proximity to the border made it clear to everyone concerned that the shop engaged in cross-border sales. Smuggling was thus widely known to exist, but 'ostentatious' exploitation of the border was a step too far.

All parties knew that it would be next to impossible to stop either smuggling or cultivation. Opium was produced in enormous quantities in Yunnan and smuggled into Burma, a trade

[406] Memo from the Siamese Minister of Finance, enclosure to British Legation at Bangkok to Chief Secretary Government of Burma, 3 Oct 1929, in Report regarding the existence of an opium factory in the Shan state of Keng Tung, 1929, 4857 Myanmar National Archives.
[407] Translation of an Order issued by the Sawbwa of Keng Tung State to Baya Kawn, the State Frontier Official in charge of Monglin Sub-State, in Report regarding the existence of an opium factory in the Shan state of Keng Tung, 1929, 4857 Myanmar National Archives.

which would simply increase to the detriment of Burmese growers if cultivation in the Shan States was suppressed.[408] The League of Nations enquiry in 1931 estimated that the illicit traffic was about the same as the total sales of Government opium in Burma.[409] The Commissioner of the Federated Shan States repeated in 1931 that suppression was unfeasible because a considerable part of the population depended on opium for their living, and also that smuggling was bound to take place.[410] French businessmen in Indo-China, knowing that opium shipments were in any case travelling illicitly along the same route, even considered lobbying their government to legalise the transit trade from Yunnan via Tonkin to south China. The French Chambers of Commerce considered transporting opium on the new French railway which linked Yunnan to the coast at Tonkin.[411]

Unable to persuade the British to allow him to legalise the trade in opium, the Sawbwa in 1930 tried a different tack. The British response highlights the fact that it was not the opium trade per se which they desired to control, but rather the Sawbwa's ability to carry out his state's foreign policy independent of British India. In 1930 a businessman in Perak in Malaya alerted the authorities to the fact that the Sawbwa had not only entered into negotiations with representatives of a foreign syndicate but had already signed an agreement with them. Following the standard model for governments in Southeast Asia seeking to raise revenues in the absence of a sufficiently large bureaucracy, the Sawbwa, in exchange for 50% of the profits, gave the syndicate various trading concessions, including in particular the right to own the monopoly of mining, gambling farms and opium for 15 years. Major Hornidge, a

[408] W.A.R. Wood, Consul, Chiang Mai, to R.H. Greg, H.M. Minister Bangkok, 21 Jan 1926, Myanmar National Archives.
[409] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931, 29.
[410] Clague, Commissioner of the Federated Shan States, to Chief Secretary, Government of Burma, 6 August 1931, in Report regarding the existence of an opium factory in the Shan state of Keng Tung, 4857, Myanmar National Archives.
[411] Minutes of meetings of the French Chambers of Commerce at Yunnanfu and Haiphong advocating the legalisation of the transit trade through Tonkin of Yunnan opium consigned to other parts of China, n.d. [1920s] 4827, Myanmar National Archives.

mining engineer residing at Perak, was the first to alert the British to the news. He wrote to the British Resident at Perak in August 1930 informing him that a Chinese businessman from Ipoh had approached him offering him a concession in Keng Tung worth 'more than $1,000,000'. He had seen the contract, in which the Sawbwa granted a gambling concession to the 'Keng Tung State-Malayan Development Syndicate' for ten years in return for 10% of gross profits, and the right to purchase opium at a fixed price for ten years, as well as the right to sell cooked opium within the state for ten years. The agreement also offered the syndicate the rights (not exclusive) to construct and manage distilleries, sawmills, rice-mills, soap factories, match factories, aerated water factories, paper mills and other factories and mills, race courses, amusement parks, banks, sugar factories, pawn shops, and electric plants (so long as light was provided free to the Sawbwa). Waterfalls were also to be granted to the syndicate should it require them for electricity. The Sawbwa and various named others including his son and the Queen Mother would receive a 50% share consideration in any company which was formed to operate under these concessions.[412]

The Sawbwa explained to the Assistant Superintendent that he had always believed his state to be capable of great expansion 'in the way of trade etc.', and had long wanted to obtain expert opinion as to various possibilities and their value.[413] The agreement was indeed peppered with provisos that it was all subject to the Commissioner's approval, but this still failed to mollify the Superintendent. Where the British had patronised Intaleng, e.g. in 1908 granting him his nine gun salute to reward him for his attention to public works, he saw himself as an independent ruler, with responsibility for the economic development of his state. All these agreements served to increase the separate status of Keng Tung vis-à-vis the rest of the Shan States and Burma. The concessions he granted were on such a scale that they

[412] Major Hornidge to the British Resident, Perak, 7 August 1930, 4907, Myanmar National Archives.
[413] Pitchford, Assistant Superintendent Keng Tung Subdivision, to the Commissioner of the Federated Shan States, Taunggyi, 20 October 1930, 4907, Myanmar National Archives.

caused a rumour to spread, which the *Bangkok Daily Mail* reported in July 1930, that Siam proposed to swap Pattani for Keng Tung. The Superintendent worried that the Sawbwa's promises to the syndicate were so large as to give the impression that Keng Tung State would soon cease to be a part of the British Empire.[414]

The Keng Tung Sawbwa's trade deals raised the question of his freedom to set his own foreign policy. Under the various sanads which the Shan Sawbwas had accepted, dating mostly from the 1890s, they were to host a British Resident in their state's capital, who would supposedly advise them on foreign policy. Paragraph II of Intaleng's sanad stated that the Sawbwa 'shall abstain from communicating with states outside British India'.[415] In 1903 the Superintendent had given him the benefit of the doubt on this point, arguing that Intaleng had signed the agreement in the Consulate-General in Bangkok, and he was probably not aware that the Foreign Office was a distinct department from the India Office, so he probably honestly believed that he had not infringed the second condition of his sanad, regarding dealings or communications with states outside British India.[416] But in 1930, after Intaleng's multiple attempts to export opium, and protests against British constraints on his trade deals, the British were less quick to assume that he did not know that he was not allowed to strike deals with foreign governments. Noting the 'furtive manner' with which he signed the agreements, the Commissioner recommended in 1930 that he be reprimanded.[417] As borders gradually became more important over the period, cross-border activities began to take on new significance as 'foreign affairs'. The increasing internationalisation of the Sawbwa's

[414] Pitchford, Assistant Superintendent Keng Tung Subdivision, to the Commissioner of the Federated Shan States, Taunggyi, 20 October 1930, 4907, Myanmar National Archives.
[415] Sanad granted to the Sawbwa of Keng Tung, 24 April 1897, Shan States Manual 1901, Rangoon: Government Printing, Burma (1901).
[416] Scott, Superintendent and Political Officer, Southern Shan States, to Chief Secretary, 21 September 1903, Visit of the Keng Tung Sawbwa to Colombo, Singapore and Bangkok, Political Department Notes, File No. 4S-3, Part III, 1903, Myanmar National Archives.
[417] Commissioner of the Federated Shan States to Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, 7 November 1930, Negotiations entered into by the Sawbwa of Keng Tung State with the Malayan Development Syndicate and certain agreements signed by him with the syndicate, 1930, 4907, Myanmar National Archives.

cross-border relations, offering tax monopolies to foreign companies, and personally signing trade deals with Siamese officials, threatened Britain's ability to control its external borders. Ultimately the British could only reprimand him, try to police the border, and endeavour to persuade him to hide the more visible signs of cross-border trade, such as opium shops on the border.

Intaleng's fall from grace was exacerbated when in 1931 the British discovered evidence of the huge extent of his smuggling *within* Burma. Despite British remonstrations after the 1922 incident, the Sawbwa continued to trade personally in opium. In 1931, 907 lbs. of opium were seized on the west bank of the Salween, and three men – a servant of the Sawbwa, the son of a Circle (administrative sub-division) official, and the boatman – were arrested. The Sawbwa admitted to owning half of the opium, but said that he had ordered the official not to smuggle it west of the Salween but to sell it to licensees on the east bank. The three men were found guilty under the Shan States Opium Order, which banned Keng Tung from exporting opium to the Shan states west of the Salween.[418] However the British could not find any concrete proof of Intaleng personally being involved in the case, despite the fact that his servant was one of the smugglers, so he was not sanctioned. Furthermore, the Superintendent noted, the Sawbwa should not be censured 'mainly on the grounds that censures are perfectly useless in his case'.[419]

International pressures forced the British to take the Sawbwa's international smuggling more seriously. In 1935 the full scale of his personal trade in opium across international borders to Siam was uncovered. This episode caused great embarrassment to the British, who supposedly controlled the international border, and to the Siamese, whose senior officials' involvement in smuggling operations was publicly revealed. In what the British Legation in

[418] Seizure of 907 lbs. opium on the West bank of the Salween, 1931, 4938, Myanmar National Archives.
[419] F.B. Leach Chief Secretary to the Governor of Burma, 21 July 1931, 4907, Myanmar National Archives.

Bangkok called ‘one of the biggest transactions in smuggled opium known to history’, the Keng Tung royal family, without the knowledge or consent of the Governments of India or of Burma, sold over nine metric tons of opium to the Director-General of the Siam Excise Department.[420] Myo Seng, a rival smuggler, alerted the British Legation and the Siamese government, and the Bangkok Investigation Department seized the consignment. Siam’s response was to attempt to diversify their domestic supply by encouraging the hill tribes of northern Siam to produce opium. The Keng Tung Sawbwa’s opium had been Siam’s preferred supply because official supplies from Persia were expensive and because the Siamese Excise Department had wanted to profit from trade that anyway would have been smuggled from the Shan states. The British response was to investigate and take disciplinary action against the Sawbwa’s sons, the main aim being to protect the British image in Geneva.[421]

Controversies over opium smuggling through Keng Tung in the early twentieth century formed a part of the wider question of the independence of the Frontier Areas from Ministerial Burma. The Sawbwa’s disputes with the British over border policy-making revealed the contradictions of indirect rule, which were exposed as Britain consolidated its own foreign relations with Siam, while leaving ill-defined the rights of its own ‘backward tracts’ to decide their own border affairs. These episodes are revealing of the increasing differentiation between Ministerial Burma and the semi-independent Shan States, as the Sawbwa tested the limits of his self-government by attempting to engage in bilateral relations with neighbouring states. Disputes over opium trade revealed the hardening of the borders between the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma, but also the Frontier Areas’ lack of true independence. The Sawbwas’ own Customary Law applied within their states, yet in their

[420] Maule, ‘British Policy and Administration in the Federated Shan States’, 401.
[421] Maule, ‘British Policy and Administration in the Federated Shan States’, 420.

external affairs, which included border trade, they were constrained in their relations both with the rest of Burma or with other countries. The Keng Tung Sawbwa and his family's opium trafficking, and his attempts to sign his own trade deals, highlighted these contradictions in his legal relationship with the colonial state. Just as small-scale smuggling threatened states at borders, so the Sawbwa's foreign trade deals, whether across internal or external borders, highlighted the British lack of control over their borders. The international community's growing interest in opium heightened these tensions, as the British tried to reconcile backward tracts' desire for autonomy with the central state's declared aim of controlling their borders and halting the trade. The nature of opium as a highly mobile commodity and the difficulty of access to the highlands meant that for decades the British were unable, even if they had wanted, to actually to enforce the many treaties prohibiting the cross-border trade. On paper, however, they continued to declare their control over their territory by refusing the Sawbwas' applications to trade with Siam.

CONCLUSION

Studying flows of opium around the highlands during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries enables us to see how smugglers' and cultivators' responses to the different national drug regimes across the region made both internal and international borders increasingly salient. Networks of traders in the highlands transported opium across international borders in order to take advantage of changing state policies. Cultivators, too, sometimes migrated to take advantage of different regimes, or rented fields on the side of the border where profits were greater. Decisions to increase or decrease poppy cultivation and trafficking reflected not simply escapist agricultural techniques but rather showed how deeply farmers' livelihoods were connected to the political economies of lowland states. Traders connected these markets, enabling cross-border flows of opium to respond to external politics and policies.

Cultivators continued to make use of the porosity of the border to avoid lowland states' opium regimes. British fears that prohibiting opium would cause protests and mass emigration of their subjects to neighbouring countries recurred over the period. Just as in 1895, when Gladstone's Royal Commission had concluded that the British should not intervene in border districts for fear that the local population would respond by emigrating across the border, similarly in 1931 British officials reporting to the League of Nations argued that they were unable to suppress poppy cultivation because it would lead to the population emigrating into Yunnan. The League of Nations commission noted that the principal means of livelihood of the population in the Shan states bordering on Yunnan was poppy cultivation. Prohibition in these regions, 'if it could be enforced', would lead to 'a wholesale emigration of these populations into Yunnan'. In addition, 'the people living in these States are all backward and poor, and an interference with poppy cultivation would cause much suffering'.[422] The close cross-border links of the districts bordering the British 'semi-independent territories' meant that borderland residents could shape policy by threatening to evade states. Looking at the movement of opium during this period highlights the role local actors played in simultaneously challenging and paradoxically making more meaningful the borders that the lowland imperial powers were marking on the map.

Larger-scale players in the opium trade also challenged borders in the region. In the case of the Keng Tung Sawbwa he saw borders not as an opportunity to evade states but instead as a chance to deal directly with foreign governments, and to profit from taxing legal trade. Conflicts between Ministerial Burma and Keng Tung over the growing 'internationalisation' of the Sawbwa's relations with Siam and Malaya reveal the hardening of Keng Tung's internal as well as international borders. Attempting to take advantage of the semi-

[422] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931, 42.

independent status of the Frontier Areas, the Keng Tung Sawbwa challenged Britain's control over his state's border and foreign trading affairs. The British in Rangoon became increasingly concerned about the cross-border trade. Just as the free movement of missionaries and preachers across the disputed Wa borderlands had worried the British and Chinese, the movement of opium revealed the Burma government's lack of control over their external borders. While they were unable to stop smuggling in practice, they were able to, and did, turn down the Sawbwa's repeated attempts to shape his own international trade policy. The Sawbwa's jurisdictional independence was to be curtailed if possible, even while legally Keng Tung was deemed as independent from Burma 'as the UK was to Germany or France'. At the same time in the Wa country, Wa villagers' opposition had forced the British to treat the country separately to the rest of the frontier districts, yet there were some local actors who called for more active British control over the borderland.

4. 'THE CRAZINESS OF THE PATCHWORK QUILT': FRONTIER GOVERNANCE AND AGENCY IN THE WA HILLS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the implications for border-making of the differing views of the border held by colonial government and borderland inhabitants. This chapter argues that the British interest in borders as lines demarcating natural resources had the effect of amplifying local influence, as local opposition could derail attempts to control or exploit territory. The border was important to the colonial government primarily as a line defining a bounded territory containing resources. The value of resources, coupled with their ability to demarcate and exploit the territory, dictated British interest in the area. Panthay elites seeking the extension of British control over the borderlands were thus able to persuade the government to send a surveying expedition in 1933 by arguing that they would help them to defeat the Wa opposition and exploit the mines. The importance of local agency to the British ability to control the borderlands was also a factor in the colonial government's emphasis on the need to gain the consent of borderland inhabitants during the transfer of sovereignty. This chapter will argue that their seeing the borderlands mainly as a bounded territory to be exploited meant that the British were relaxed about dividing the country into different regions with different types of administration. Local opposition or support could determine the success of colonial attempts at territorial control in the borderlands. Systems of graduated sovereignty were the result, whereby government consisted of layers of differing types of administration, citizenship and sovereignty.[423] The long legacy of the ad hoc approach to frontier governance under colonial rule, which had resulted in multiple levels and types of administration, complicated Burma's independence negotiations.

[423] Ong, 'Graduated Sovereignty in Southeast Asia', 57.

This chapter first considers the role of local agency in encouraging, and thwarting, British attempts to administer the borderland in the early twentieth century. Wa opposition had quashed Britain's ability to agree a border with China through the disputed Wa hills during the early years of the twentieth century. Without the capacity to take control of the region from Wa inhabitants, the British decided to leave well alone. This was in common with a wider imperial policy of treating frontier, invariably 'tribal' areas, as separate legally to majority-dominated areas. The government continued with its laissez-faire policy until after the Wa-Panthay war of 1926 to 1928, when the Panthays' diplomatic representations drew colonial attention back to their undemarcated northern border. Both the Panthays and the mining industry undertook several years of hard lobbying to try to persuade the British to allow a surveying party to enter and ultimately to extend direct administration over the area. The exact location of the border mattered to the Panthays, who sought to make use of, or even kindle, external interest in the borderlands for their own protection.

The second section traces how the success of the Panthays' and business lobbying efforts resulted in a disastrous British expedition to the Wa country in 1933, in which Wa and Chinese forces combined to fight off a British surveying party. The incident ended, if not in outright British defeat, as the Chinese sources declared, then at least in ignominy. The Chinese and British decided after this incident to try again to demarcate the border, with a neutral adjudicator this time. Local agency was important during this period, as the external desire to territorialise in order to exploit resources continued to be matched by the threat of violence from the Wa defending their territory and autonomy.

The third section examines the extent of this agency during a League of Nations-mediated Boundary Commission in 1935-1937. Partly because of witnesses' obstruction, trying to make use of their liminal status to maintain their autonomy, the Boundary Commission ended

in stalemate when neither side could agree on a border line. The Chinese eventually accepted the British demands in 1941, when the Republic of China (ROC)'s wartime need for supplies gave the British power to demand concessions on the border.

The fourth section shows how disputes with Frontier Areas elites and British negotiators during the talks over the future relationship of Ministerial Burma with the Frontier Areas after independence shaped many Burman nationalists' ideas of borderlands. One of the biggest issues to be resolved during independence negotiations, which contributed to the mistrust between the Burman nationalists and the people of the Frontier Areas, was the desire of the peoples of the Frontier Areas for the continuation of the Frontier Areas' special status relative to the rest of Burma. British and borderland elites' attempts to retain control of the Frontier Areas conditioned many Burman nationalists to see the borderlands as a risk, where foreign influence could endanger the unity of the nation.

A 'BLOODLESS ANNEXATION': BORDER-MAKING AND THE 1926-28 WA-PANTHAY WAR

The possibility of exploiting natural resources in large part determined the colonial government's view of the borderland. The colonial government had long seen the Wa borderlands as a resource frontier in which they competed with China for control of the mine-rich Wa hills. Into the mid-twentieth century, the desire for resources amplified the agency of locals, who were able to hamper, and also occasionally to encourage, external penetration. Some groups, notably the Panthays, capitalised on the British desire to demarcate and control territory in the Wa hills. Through the late 1920s Panthay Muslims from Panglong lobbied the British government to extend its control over the unadministered Wa country, hoping for protection against the Wa and the Chinese.

In the early twentieth century, government desire to administer the Burma-China borderlands waxed and waned according to the results of surveying expeditions. There was a brief moment of interest in the unadministered border area from British government and industry in 1920, when the Burma Mines Company sent a geologist, Oberlander, to visit China and the Wa States. He reported slag heaps indicating the presence of large lead mines. The company warned the British that an American company, the Ming Hsing Mining Company, was also interested and that the British should try to get there first.[424] Another British company, the New Consolidated Gold Fields Co., heard about the 'new' discoveries and also asked for permission to explore the area.[425] Oberlander's visit together with the mining companies' interest sparked a discussion among British colonial officers, none of whom knew very much about the Wa states. The generation of officials who had been to the Wa states in the 1890s and 1900s, and the clerks who knew the files, had by this time passed away.[426] The Superintendent of the Northern Shan States informed the Government of Burma that a new expedition would need to bring a large force, with the aim of establishing a fixed post, otherwise 'we would just be inviting the Chinese in'. He also reminded them that even just the expedition to defeat the Was would be expensive.[427] The Government of Burma refused the New Consolidated Gold Fields Company's request. The idea for an expedition to the disputed area was forgotten for several years until the Panthays, after defeating their Wa overlords in 1928, lobbied the British to annex the territory, reawakening British interest in demarcating the border.

[424] Hall, Burma Mines Co., Namtu, to Chief Secretary to Government of Burma, 16 April 1920, Mining Operations in Wa State, 7569, Myanmar National Archives.
[425] Harris, New Consolidated Gold Fields Co., to Under Secretary of State, India Office, 20 May 1920, Mining Operations in Wa State, 7569, Myanmar National Archives.
[426] Harvey, *Wa Precis*, 90.
[427] SNSS to Government of Burma, 28 July 1920, Mining Operations in Wa State, 7570, Myanmar National Archives.

The Wa-Panthay war began in October 1926, when Panthays killed the Wa headman who controlled a nearby ferry crossing. The Wa headman's suzerain, the Wa ruler of Panghkawn, demanded that the Panthays pay Rs. 1,200 compensation. The Panthays called in a Shan Chinese brigand and overran most of Panghkawn. The people fled into neighbouring Wa states and the British Shan state of North Hsenwi.[428] The Panthays tried to maximise their advantage from this victory by seeking protection from Chinese incursions as well as from Wa reprisals. In February 1927, the Panthay headman wrote to the Superintendent of the Northern Shan States, citing all the times the Panthays had helped the British, and asking for military and financial aid against the Wa.[429] At the same time he also told Oberlander, a manager at the Burma Corporation's Namtu mines, that the Panthays had already been victorious 'across the whole country'. Stating that, thanks to the Panthay defeat of the Wa, it would now be easy for the Burma Corporation to work the mines, the Panthay headman asked Oberlander for a loan of Rs. 50,000.[430] The Panthays understood the financial calculations behind the British interest in border-making in the Wa hills. They represented themselves to both government and industry as reliable allies in the borderlands who would help to clear a path for British business to access the mines. Their interest, however, was in benefitting from the extension of British territorial control, funded by the government, which they knew would follow any attempt to exploit the mines.

The Panthays continued through 1928 to try to rouse their allies to support them against the perceived Chinese threat to their independence. This included repeatedly prodding the British Superintendent of the Northern Shan States to remonstrate with the Yunnan government on their behalf, as well as trying to rouse Wa leaders to unite against the increasing Kuomintang

[428] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 94.
[429] Panglong Sawbwa to Superintendent of the Northern Shan States (SNSS), enclosed in Grose, SNSS, to the Commissioner of the Federated Shan States (FSS), 5 March 1927, Note by the Commissioner FSS, on the Wa States and the Burma-China boundary from the Namting to the Nalawt, 7700, Myanmar National Archives.
[430] Harcourt Butler to Government of India, June 1927, in Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 94.

(KMT) incursions into the Wa country. In February 1928 the Panglong headman wrote to the British stating his alarm at a KMT official announcing a visit to Panglong. The Superintendent was unmoved, stating that 'Yunnan affairs are ridiculous', and that it was possible that Panghung, the Panthays' Wa enemy, had hired an actor to play the KMT aggressor.[431] The Panglong headman said that the KMT visitor had told him that the whole country belonged to China. He asked the Superintendent to remonstrate with the Chinese Taotai (Chief Magistrate) at Tengyueh.[432] In April 1928, the Panthays again asked the British to stop Tengyueh 'making pretensions' in Panghung state, emphasising that it was British territory.[433] The border mattered to the Panthays as a line demarcating two sovereign countries, the location of which determined their citizenship. They thus tried to make use of British government and industry interest in the mines for their own security needs.

The Panthays' demands had their desired effect, namely to remind the British of the mines, and specifically of how having the Panthays as allies in the Wa country would help them to access the mines. In January 1928, G.E. Harvey, the Superintendent of the Northern Shan States (SNSS), talked to Oberlander, the manager of the Burma Corporation mines at Namtu, about how the Panthays were useful allies to have in the region. He suggested a 'bloodless annexation' of the area, which would give the British 'an industrious, friendly, law-abiding Panthay population', and allow the Burma Corporation to build a railway to Kunlong on the edge of the Wa country.[434] The Burma Corporation had not forgotten the mines, and jumped

[431] SNSS to Commissioner of the Federated Shan States, February 1928, North East Frontier, Wa States Boundary Question and British Policy, IOR/L/PS/11/279, British Library.
[432] Headman Panglong to SNSS, February 1928, North East Frontier Wa States Boundary Question and British Policy, IOR/L/PS/11/279, British Library.
[433] Consul Tengyueh to British Legation Beijing, April 1928, North East Frontier, Wa States Boundary Question and British Policy, IOR/L/PS/11/279, British Library.
[434] Harvey SNSS to Oberlander, January 1928, North East Frontier, Wa States Boundary Question and British Policy, IOR/L/PS/11/279, British Library.

at the chance to benefit from the renewed British interest in the Wa country. In February 1928, the Burma Corporation renewed their 1920 application for a Prospecting Licence.[435]

Different parts of the British colonial apparatus differed regarding the advisability of sending an expedition to the Wa mines, given the political situation in China at the time. While the Burma Corporation, the Panthays and the Superintendent all tried to persuade Innes, the Governor of Burma, to allow a geological survey party to enter the Wa States, the Government of India and the British Legation at Beijing both tried to persuade him not to. Officials in Burma on the one side suggested that it would be a shame if their claims to the undemarcated territory, i.e. the mines, were dropped. On the other side, the British Legation in China warned that the ensuing local and probably national outcry in China would be potentially damaging to British interests in China. In July 1928 the Beijing Delegation warned the Foreign Office of the 'extreme inadvisability' of a reconnaissance mission at the present time, as crossing the disputed border would have repercussions throughout China.[436] The Governor of Burma summed up the problem for the Government of India. On the one hand, the British laissez-faire policy in the Wa states had not worked, as the Chinese had occupied parts of the disputed Wa country. On the other hand, leaving the Wa states as they were made a good buffer state, and claiming them would cause outcry in China.[437] In September the Government of India decided to delay the expedition.[438]

In 1929 and 1930, several small survey trips by British, American and Chinese mineralogists heightened outside interest in the disputed borderlands. In March 1929 a Chinese Magistrate, Ma Lien-wei (alias Ma Tzu-yang), visited the Lufang mines and returned with a mule-load

[435] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 100.
[436] Beijing to Foreign Office, July 1928, North East Frontier Wa States Boundary Question and British Policy, IOR/L/PS/11/279, British Library.
[437] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 105.
[438] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 107.

of ore.[439] In response the Panthays increased their efforts to gain local support, trying to get a nearby Shan Sawbwa to protect them from the Chinese. The Chinese raised the issue of demarcation in 1929, but the British Legation quashed the idea. In May 1929 Dr Wang, the Chinese Foreign Minister, told the British Legation at Beijing that the time was ripe for a Boundary Commission. The British Minister at Beijing, however, decided that the Nanking Government had 'little real knowledge of the matter' and that they were 'not ready for negotiations'.[440]

Pressure from the Panthays and from British business, combined with the prospect of the Chinese opening the mines, eventually paid off. By early 1933, the Government of Burma was increasingly bullish about entering and administering the Wa states, particularly with a view to claiming the Lufang mines. It probably also helped that they had just realised quite how much opium the Wa area produced. When the League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East visited the Northern Shan States in 1929, they discovered that the Wa region produced two or three times Burma's consumption of opium annually.[441] Alongside officials' expressed desire to control opium was probably also their desire to tax the profits. But the expansionist impulses of some colonials increasingly clashed with changing international norms. The Chief Secretary lamented the 'changes in fashion' which meant it was 'no longer possible to think of dismembering Empires', and 'improper to think of entering a small area', despite it being 'painted red on the map'.[442] Where previously in the 1890s and 1900s it was Wa defence of their territory which kept the

[439] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 108.
[440] Harvey, *Wa Precis,* 111.
[441] League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, Report to the Council, Volume II: Detailed Memoranda on each Territory visited by the Commission, 1931.
[442] Chief Secretary Government of Burma to Government of India, February 1933, Wa States: Reports on administration in various states, IOR/M/3/633, British Library.

British out of the Wa hills, by the 1930s the British were having to acknowledge the growing international repercussions of crossing disputed borderlines.

THE 'BANHONG INCIDENT' OR THE 'PANGLONG EXPEDITION'

In December 1933, a party of British soldiers and mining experts from the Burma Corporation travelled to the north of the Wa country to survey the mines at Lufang which, they asserted, belonged to their allies, the Panthays of Panglong. A mixture of Wa and Chinese forces clashed with the British over a period of several months. In March 1934 Wang Jingwei, the Wai Chiao Pu (Minister for Foreign Affairs), wrote to the British delegation at Nanking, querying 'the recent British invasion of China'.[443] The Burma Corporation quickly discovered there were no valuable minerals and in April they asked the British government to withdraw their surveyors as quickly as possible.[444]

With the 1933 Panglong Expedition, as British sources called it, or the Banhong Incident, as it became known in China, the Panthays and the expansionist colonials won the argument, but it proved a Pyrrhic victory. The Chinese described the Banhong Incident as a British invasion of the Chinese territory of Banhong (Panghung), which was repulsed by Wa patriots fighting for China. The British described the episode as a surveying expedition to Panglong during the course of which several thousand Chinese troops attacked them. Panglong, they claimed, was inside British territory and the home of British subjects, the Panthays. The historian Eric Vanden Bussche depicts the event as a Chinese victory, via a Wa victory. He writes that following the arrival of British geologists and soldiers in Banhong in December 1933, the Banhong incident unfolded over a period of months between December 1933 and May 1934. The British expedition to the mines led to military clashes with the Wa, ending

[443] Wang Jingwei to Her Majesty's delegation at Nanking, 2 March 1934, Policy adopted pending settlement of undelimited frontier, IOR/M/3/301, British Library.
[444] Secretary of State for India to Government of India, 7 April 1934, Policy adopted pending settlement of undelimited frontier, IOR/M/3/301, British Library.

with a British retreat and the glorification of the Wa in the Chinese media for having fought on behalf of the Chinese.[445] The anthropologist Magnus Fiskesjo describes the incident as a British victory. He writes that in 1934 the British set out to Panglong and a local war ensued between British, Chinese and Wa. The British forces felt 'compelled to protect' territory on their side of the Chinese-claimed areas, with some Chinese losses.

The truth seems more complicated than either a Wa or a British victory. The 'Wa' side included Chinese regular troops, as well as a Chinese force acting under a man known variously as a dacoit and as the leader of the Southwest Yunnan Volunteer Organisation. Some sources describe the Wa calling in the Chinese to help them expel the British invaders. Other sources highlight letters from the Southwest Yunnan Volunteer Organisation calling on Was to assist the Yunnanese in expelling the invader. The Panghung Sawbwa called in Li Siche, alias Li Chan Hsien, a dacoit leader of the Southwest Yunnan Volunteer Organisation, as well as Chinese regular troops, to help Panglao resist the British troops.[446] Li attempted to raise support from other Wa states. The Tahsaileng Sawbwa showed the British official some letters containing official seals which the Southwest Yunnan Volunteer Organisation had sent him. These exhorted all the Wa states to collect volunteers and join the Yunnanese in expelling the British from the Chinese Wa states.[447]

The Banhong Incident had a less decisive end than either side would admit in subsequent tellings of the story. In June, when it was all over according to Vanden Bussche and the Chinese sources, the Secretary of State for India reported to the Cabinet that the situation was still 'causing some anxiety' but that he hoped there would be no serious consequences. The

[445] Bussche, 'Contested Realms: Colonial Rivalry, Border Demarcation and State-Building in Southwest China, 1885-1960', 133.
[446] Government of Burma to Government of India, 1 June 1934, IOR/M/3/301, British Library.
[447] Government of Burma to Government of India, 4 June 1934, IOR/M/3/301, British Library.

British were reinforcing from Lashio, hoping to avoid outright defeat.[448] The British Civil Officer at Lufang reported in June that there were bands of Chinese moving on both sides of the Scott Line, and that there were 2,000 Chinese troops at Manchiu who reportedly intended to attack the British survey party.[449] A force of 500, partly Chinese and partly Wa, had set up a headquarters at Manchiu, flying a red and white flag.[450] It is unclear what this flag was. It seems unlikely that it was a version of the national flag of the ROC, which was red and blue.

The incident had a messier end than a simple defeat of either side, with a period of chaos and looting before troops dispersed. According to a Wa representative quoted in a Yunnan newspaper, when the British arrived at the Lufang mines, Li Chan Hsien opposed them but they did not withdraw. Li withdrew to Chinese territory in obedience to orders. When the British came again, one of the Wa leaders fought the British and won, killing an important official, probably a Deputy Commissioner.[451] On the contrary, another local told the British, in 1934 Li's army dispersed at the end of the rains, 'mainly because it was seen that their efforts were in vain'. Li was apparently furious that the Chinese had disowned him, and that the Lancang magistrate had called him a dacoit. After the end of the rains in 1934, his army just melted away.[452] From August to October 1934, the British Civil Officer was still travelling the Wa country shelling villages to make them submit. In October, the Civil Officer asked the Superintendent at Lashio for permission to shell another village, but was finally told to stop because border negotiations were in planning.[453]

[448] SSI to Cabinet, Jun 1934, Policy adopted pending settlement of undelimited frontier, IOR/M/3/301, British Library.
[449] Government of Burma to Government of India, 5 June 1934, Policy adopted pending settlement of undelimited frontier, IOR/M/3/301, British Library.
[450] Government of Burma to Government of India, 1 June 1934, Policy adopted pending settlement of undelimited frontier, IOR/M/3/301, British Library.
[451] Precis of item in *New Yunnan Press*, 26 February 1935, in 'Burma-Yunnan Southern Undelimited Frontier', 9759, Myanmar National Archives.
[452] Statement of Chinese preparations for Boundary Commission, n.d. [1935], 9784, Myanmar National Archives.
[453] Report on local situation in the Wa States 1934, 5166, Myanmar National Archives; Proposed operation against Htakhting in Wa States 1934, 5178, Myanmar National Archives.

Following the incident, the British and Chinese agreed to hold another Boundary Commission, this time mediated by an impartial adjudicator. The British, fearing a loss of prestige and not wishing to break their promise to their allies, had felt it impossible to withdraw to their former position behind the Line of Safety. They appointed a Civil Officer to Lufang, the first British administrative officer assigned to the Wa states.[454] This episode shows how important local actors were in drawing British and Chinese interest into the borderlands. In the future both sides cited local allegiance as proving their claims to the territory. Where the British had ignored the allegiance of the inhabitants as a factor when demarcating the Siam-Burma border in the 1880s, in the Wa hills local actors had forced the issue to the forefront of the debate. As the Panthays had hoped, British attempts to enter the area, even just with a survey party initially, had drawn them into extending administration up to the border with China.

Both the British and the Chinese were interested in a hard border again. The Panthays wanted a hard border for their own needs. Sovereignty and citizenship for them meant protection from foreign state agents. The colonial government in Burma were at first only interested in exploring the area's mines. Whoever allowed the expedition to go ahead had clearly thought that crossing disputed territory was a minor issue. The end result of the fiasco was to cause both the British and the Chinese to want to attempt once again to demarcate a precise borderline.

'IT MAY SAVOUR A LITTLE OF BLACKMAIL': COMING TO A BORDER AGREEMENT

The League of Nations Boundary Commission, due to start in 1935, was to determine the location of the border based on the views of local witnesses. The planned emphasis on local

[454] Robert Bruce Maule, 'British Policy and Administration in the Federated Shan States, 1922-1942', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, (1993), 309.

people's accounts of their allegiance led both the British and the Chinese to embark on propaganda campaigns in the run-up to the Boundary Commission. Both sides tried to drum up support among borderlands inhabitants or co-opt local rulers. Some Chinese officials thought American missionaries were complicit in British propaganda, conflating American missionary schooling with British government propaganda. The geographer Li Shengzhuang, in an article on Yunnan published in 1934, wrote that the English, where they could not encroach on China's frontier using political power, try to 'conquer by civilising' local inhabitants. Thus, he argued, the missionary had implanted his religion in the Wa country, and his propaganda was already getting results. If we leave the Wa completely to themselves, he warned, in a few years they will be 'completely converted to the god with blue eyes', to 'Jesus with the curly hair'. Then, even if they do not belong to the English, they will belong to them anyway. He recommended counter-measures such as giving the Wa small presents to win their hearts, awarding their leaders Chinese titles, and reassuring them of China's virtues and the historical links which bind the Chinese and the Wa together.[455] One Yunnanese local official similarly believed that the missionaries over the border were British. He wanted the Chinese to emulate what he thought were the British methods of co-optation. He claimed that the missionaries selected the brightest children in each village along the border and took them to study in Burma for three years. After developing a strong loyalty to Britain, they would be returned to the villages to instil this loyalty among their fellow villagers.[456]

The Chinese attempts to win the allegiance of locals, according to the evidence one witness gave to British enquiries, combined nationalist and anti-foreign rhetoric, tailored to their

[455] Li Shengzhuang, 'L'Étude sur les Races du Premier District des marches Colonial Yunnanaises', in J. Siguret, *Territoires et Populations des Confins du Yunnan*, Peiping: Henri Veitch (1937).
[456] Bussche, 'Contested Realms: Colonial Rivalry, Border Demarcation and State-Building in Southwest China, 1885-1960', 183.

audience. In 1935, a local informant told the British that earlier that year the Chinese had started an intensive propaganda campaign along the border. To the Shans they preached Asia for the Asiatics and referred to the iniquities of treaty ports, while to the tribes they preached 'the old fairy tales' that wherever the foreigner sets foot, the fields cease to be fertile and the springs to yield water. This so-called 'movement for the education of the tribes' consisted of varied repetitions of the statement that the Wa were of Chinese origin, blood brothers of the Chinese and part of the Great Chinese Family, and that they must not mislead the Boundary Commission by asserting otherwise. This was coupled with the threat that they must not expect any mercy from the Chinese patriots who were even then on their doorstep. These 'patriots' were Li's army, which was still present in the Wa country after the Banhong incident.[457]

The British still hoped that they had the allegiance of some Wa. In March 1935 the British official based at Lufang spent a month touring the 'friendly' Wa States, including Panglong, Motlong, Mankwei, Pangkawn and Yungpang.[458] Some 'friendly' states sent him petitions, including four which described the misdeeds of Panglong.[459] Wa leaders claimed that the Chinese had forced them to resist the British. They handed over flags and medallions which the Chinese had given to them in 1934, and swore that this time they wanted revenge.[460]

On 8 June 1935, Colonel Frederic Iselin, a Swiss officer, was appointed the neutral chair of the League of Nations Boundary Commission which set out to demarcate the border through the Wa hills. He had experience of boundary demarcation, having served on the Iraq-Syria

[457] Statement of Chinese preparations for Boundary Commission, n.d. [1935], 9784, Myanmar National Archives.
[458] Harding, Consul-General Yunnanfu, to Government of Burma, 29 March 1935, in Burma Yunnan Southern Undelimited Frontier, 9759, Myanmar National Archives.
[459] J. Shaw, Civil Officer Lufang, to SNSS, 9 April 1935, Petition in Shan Received during SOCOL's tour to friendly Wa States, 5296, Myanmar National Archives.
[460] Report January 1937, by Civil Officer Lufang, Monthly summaries of the situation in the Wa States and across the border, 1937, 5580, Myanmar National Archives.

frontier investigation. Fieldwork began on 1 December 1935. Each side was accompanied by around 500 men including experts and soldiers. In over four months the Boundary Commissioners surveyed half the undemarcated territory and held over sixty-seven conferences cross-examining witnesses.[461] The language barrier severely hampered the Iselin Commission's work. Sometimes witnesses' testimonies had to be translated twice, via Shan to English. One British commissioners despaired that their methods were totally unsuitable for ascertaining the true views of the witnesses. After asking complex and conditional questions, through relays of interpreters, at times the witness's reply would be totally unconnected with the question.[462]

In all these interviews the Boundary Commission chair tried to interpret witness statements in terms of an ideal border dividing homogeneous groups of citizens. Wa leaders tried just as hard to turn the negotiations to their own advantage. In February 1936, fourteen Wa headmen presented two petitions to the Chairman, one in Chinese and one in Shan. A Chinese newspaper reported that the Chinese version of the petition said that the Wa land was Chinese, that the Salween should be the boundary, and that the petition alluded to the recent ballot in the Saarland in January 1935 over reunification with Germany, (in which residents had voted overwhelmingly to reject their status as a League of Nations mandate and to reunite with Germany).[463] It is unclear from where the Wa leaders would have heard about the Saar Plebiscite. It is possible that the petition was a fabrication of the Chinese. The British representative to the Boundary Commission insisted that the Shan version had said that the Was had bowed neither to Burma nor to China, that they deprecated interference by either Britain or China, and that they concluded: 'we do not agree to give our country to

[461] Martin R. Norins, 'Tribal Boundaries of the Burma-Yunnan Frontier', *Pacific Affairs* 12:1 (1939), 1939.
[462] W. Stark Toller, *Eastern World*, May and June 1949, in Appendix to Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Burma*, London: The Cresset Press (1962), 551.
[463] Extract from the *Minkuo Jih Pao* of 18 March 1936, cited in Clague to Government of Burma, 7 June 1936, MSS Eur E252/60, British Library.

anybody'.[464] In part thanks to the contradictory evidence by witnesses, the Commission's results, which they reported in April 1937, were inconclusive. The map showed half a dozen lines representing different views as to the location of the frontier.[465]

Since both regimes saw the border in terms of resources, they had no incentive to compromise over the borderline. Each government was willing to continue claiming the borderlands until they had the means to control and exploit them. Both sides eventually signed documents stating that their claims were unchanged, and the matter rested there. Soon after, Japan went to war with China and the report was shelved.[466]

The likelihood of China ever agreeing to British demands remained slim until war changed the balance of power between the two countries. China was forced to request British assistance in countering Japanese aggression. During the Japanese naval blockade, the Republican government of Chiang Kai Shek sought road and rail links to transport munitions overland from Southeast Asia to their capital at Chongqing. In 1937 the two governments began to discuss building a road connecting Burma with the KMT government at Chongqing, which when completed in 1938 would run over 700 miles from Bhamo on the Irrawaddy through Yunnan to Chongqing on the Yangzi. During negotiations over the road in 1937, the Burma Office and the Foreign Office at first split over whether they should make use of China's needs in order to leverage border concessions. The Burma Office thought that the question of the transit of munitions could be used to settle the frontier problem in Britain's favour, even though 'it may savour a little of blackmail', but conceded that the Foreign Office would probably 'deprecate the linking of the two questions'. Monteath, the Under Secretary of State at the Burma Office, thought the tactic was nevertheless worth trying 'even if it had

[464] Clague to Government of Burma, 7 June 1936, MSS Eur E252/60, British Library.
[465] Stark Toller, *Eastern World*, May and June 1949, in Appendix to Woodman, *Making of Burma*, 551.
[466] Stark Toller, *Eastern World*, May and June 1949, in Appendix to Woodman, *Making of Burma*, 551.

to be put to the Chinese unofficially'.[467] At the Foreign Office Anthony Eden said that connecting aid and border concessions would be wrong, and also that it would be easy for the Chinese to later go back on the agreement by saying that it had been forced on them. The Burma Office complained that the Foreign Office could not distinguish between 'offers to help with hope of return' and open threats. The Secretary of the Political Department said this was a typical Foreign Office position towards any bargaining counter presented to them. The Burma Road negotiations went ahead without any reference to the disputed boundary.[468]

By late 1940 China faced a renewed crisis in obtaining war materials and asked for a railway linking Yunnan and Burma. China had left numerous unfulfilled promises regarding the Road, so this time the British raised the border issue in exchange for a railway from Kunlong. The Chinese asked to be given a minority stake in any future mining operations at Lufang, but otherwise gave all of the Wa hills to the British, as well as giving the British a reciprocal right to participate in any Chinese mining at Mong Hka. The ROC and the British government signed an Exchange of Notes in June 1941, in which the ROC agreed a borderline based on the British demands during the Iselin Commission.[469]

This agreement was immediately made redundant by the Japanese takeover of Burma in 1941-42. The Japanese first attacked Tenasserim from Thailand in December 1941, soon capturing Tavoy, Moulmein and Sittang in January and February 1942. In February the British evacuated Rangoon. The Japanese advanced rapidly through Central Burma, occupying Lashio and Maymyo in April. The colonial government, army and an estimated 400,000 civilians retreated into British India. The Directorate of Army Education in 1945

[467] Monteath to Clague, 19 October 1937, IOR/M/3/362, British Library.
[468] Maule, 'British Policy and Administration in the Federated Shan States, 1922-1942', 519.
[469] Exchange of Notes between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of Burma, and the National Government of the Republic of China concerning the Burma-Yunnan Boundary, Chungking, 18 June 1941.

estimated that at least 75% of those 400,000 people trekked out, with the loss of an estimated 10,000 people on the journey.[470]

In Shan State, the Japanese officially annexed Keng Tung and Mong Pan to Thailand in July 1943, at the same time as handing over to Thailand the four Malay states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu.[471] The border area between Yunnan, Keng Tung and Manglun became a 'happy hunting ground' for Chinese bandits. The area east and west of the Nam Hka river and in north west Keng Tung endured a period of 'scorched-earth', where in some places bandits wiped out 'almost the entire population'.[472] Captain Harold Young, the missionary William M. Young's son, was at the time the Assistant Resident at Manglun in the south of the Wa country. Captain Young and a 'totally unorganised' force of around 500 Lahu levies, whom they called 'Armed Civil Police', had by October 1945 cleared the Chinese bandits out of Manglun, and later did the same for the Northern and Southern Wa States.[473] This force represents just a fraction of the total number of hill peoples who signed up as guerrilla forces during the war to fight the Japanese. By one estimate there were 16,000 guerrillas operating in Burma under the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in 1942.[474] These wartime experiences shaped the independence negotiations which were already beginning in Simla.

The boundary negotiations in 1935-37 marked the beginning of the end of local actors having a say on border decisions. The British in Burma had been forced to take into account local peoples' allegiance during border negotiations. As a result, during the transfer of sovereignty, the outgoing colonial government insisted on the principle of gaining consent from frontier

[470] Directorate of Army Education, *Burma During the War,* Directorate of Army Education (1945), 6-7.
[471] Direk Jayanama, *Thailand and World War II*, trans. Jane Keyes, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books (2008), 113.
[472] Report on Chinese Guerrilla Activities in relation to Keng Tung and Manglun States, NSS, Burma, from 1942 to date, 25 July 1945, 10161, Myanmar National Archives.
[473] Report on the Wa States Operations December 1944-45 to March 1946, IOR MSS Eur C710, British Library.
[474] Andrew Selth, 'Race and Resistance in Burma, 1942-1945', *Modern Asian Studies* 20:3 (1986), 497.

peoples. During the coming negotiations over Burma's independence, Burman nationalists worried about both the frontier leaders' agency and, connected to that, the potential ongoing British control over the frontier areas.

INDEPENDENCE AND THE FRONTIER AREAS

As the war drew to a close, the Allies had temporarily cooperated with the Burman nationalists' anti-Japanese resistance fighters in order to retake Burma from the Japanese. Immediately after the war, Burma's wartime leaders demanded independence as soon as possible. Negotiations had begun during the war between Burman nationalists and the British government in exile in India regarding one of the most pressing issues, namely the future relations between the Frontier Areas and independent Burma. These areas, also known as the Excluded Areas or Scheduled Areas, included the Federated Shan States, Kachin State, Karen State and the Chin Hills. The Frontier elites' calls for autonomy during the negotiations, combined with the proprietorial attitude of many British towards these areas, shaped the way the Burman nationalists saw the borders. Selth argues that the war saw the hardening of political differences between the majority Burmans and the peoples of the Frontier Areas, differences that were encouraged by their imperial sponsors.[475] Reginald Dorman-Smith, Governor of Burma in 1941-42 and 1945-46, argued that after the war the British should resume direct rule in order to rebuild Burma, with the concession that direct rule be time-limited to appease the Burman nationalists. After independence, he thought that the British should retain charge of the Frontier Areas, with a policy of 'gradual coalescence', the ultimate aim being federation. He imagined that retaining the Frontier Areas as a 'British girdle around Burma' would be a way to pressure the Burmese to remain closely linked to Britain after

[475] Selth, 'Race and Resistance in Burma, 1942-1945', 483.

independence.[476] In December 1944 Sir Paw Tun, Prime Minister of the government in exile, warned Dorman-Smith of the possible political unrest that such a policy might cause.[477]

The Burman negotiators saw the possible loss of the Frontier Areas as an existential threat to the country. Retaining the unity of the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma became vital to ensuring Burma's independence from long-running British influence. This way of thinking about the borderland would have implications subsequently for border-making during the early years of independence. This was the beginning of a shift from the borderlands being important primarily as a resource frontier, as they were for the British, to the borderlands being a place which could, through outside influence or splitting, endanger the unity of the nation. The Burman nationalists' experience of fighting to secure the unity of the Frontier Areas with the rest of Burma in the face of unified Frontier Areas elite and British opposition led the Burman nationalists to associate a threat to the borderlands with the compromising of the nation's independence.

The planned 'British girdle' around Burma was manifest in the British government's White Paper of 1945. The White Paper discussed the future status of Burma, and stated that no decision would be made on behalf of the people of the Frontier Areas without their consent. They were to be placed under a special regime under the Governor of Burma 'until such time as their inhabitants signify their desire for some suitable form of amalgamation of their territories with Burma proper.'[478] Hubert Rance, the Governor of Burma from 1946, recognised that the White Paper was unpopular among 'all shades of Burmese opinion', particularly because the areas which were reserved for Britain, namely defence and external

[476] Dorman-Smith to Amery, 17 Oct 1944, Question of Burmese self-government after the war, IOR/L/PO/9/8, British Library.
[477] Dorman-Smith to Amery, 6 Dec 1944, Question of Burmese self-government after the war, IOR/L/PO/9/8, British Library.
[478] Burma Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government, Cmd. 6635, May 1945, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1945.

affairs, the frontier areas, and monetary policy, were 'a blow to Burmese pride'.[479] Rance had arrived in Rangoon in April 1945, as director of civil affairs in Burma, tasked with rehabilitating the country after the war. He supported Mountbatten's policy of working with the rising tide of Burmese nationalism, a policy which was not popular with his staff, who were mainly Burma officials from the pre-war days. His predecessor, Reginald Dorman-Smith, had been hostile to Aung San and the nationalist party, known in English as the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL). Likewise the AFPFL had not been prepared to cooperate with Dorman-Smith's plans for an extended British-run transition period.[480]

U Saw condemned the White Paper proposal to keep the Shan States British, calling it 'dismembering the country', and likening Burma to the countries of the UK.[481] U Saw feared a continuation of the past policy of 'divide and rule' where British officials, he alleged, had encouraged the Frontier Area peoples' desire to separate from Burma. Aung San, addressing the opening session of the Supreme Council of the AFPFL on 1 November 1946, similarly criticised the British 'divide et impera' policy regarding the frontier areas. At the same time he stressed that the plains people had no territorial ambitions in the hills.[482] At the AFPFL Conference in Rangoon in January 1946, delegates demanded immediate and complete independence, with no question of entering a satellite relationship with the UK such as that of Dominion Status (whose members included Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and after independence India, Pakistan, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka). The AFPFL protested the White Paper's reference to the continuing separation of the Excluded Areas from independent

[479] Rance to Pethick Lawrence, 17 Sep 1946, Secret and personal regarding Burma affairs 1946, IOR/L/PO/9/15, British Library.
[480] S.R. Ashton, 'Rance, Sir Hubert Elvin (1898–1974), army officer and colonial governor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2008), accessed 18 February 2019, [URL: http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-94669]
[481] U Saw to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, 19 February 1946, IOR/M/5/101, British Library.
[482] Director of Public Relations, Government of Burma to Information Department, Burma Office, 3 November 1946, IOR/M/4/2601, in Hugh Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944-1948*, Vol. I, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, (1983), 81.

Burma, but acknowledged that the question of their incorporation into Burma must be according to the wishes of the Excluded Area inhabitants.[483]

The British negotiators eventually gave in to the nationalist leaders' demands over the Frontier Areas. In response to the building pressure from Burman nationalists, Rance tried to persuade his colleagues and superiors that the British needed a new approach. They should start with the premise that 'there is only one Burma', he argued. The British aim should be a united Burma in the shortest possible time. Supporting Ministerial Burma's rapid movement towards full independence meant that the British would have to change their policy towards the Frontier Areas. Rance argued that there could be no special regime whereby the Frontier Areas remained under British protection, since, he said, 'no Burmese Government could contemplate a British-controlled ring fence round all her land frontiers'. This implied reducing the British support for Kachin and Shan autonomy. One possible long term answer he identified was a joint protectorate looked after both by the Burmese and the British.[484] A similar joint arrangement had been in place in Sudan, which was ruled by an Anglo-Egyptian Condominium between 1898 and 1934.[485]

Rance worried that if the British discharged what they felt were their obligations towards the Frontier Areas, even if just by the offer of financial aid, Burman nationalists might interpret this 'for political purposes' as 'building up the Frontier Areas against Burma'. He stressed the importance of getting the Burman nationalists to understand that unless the British fulfilled their 'particular obligation' towards the Frontier Areas, the British would be 'condemned before world opinion' as having 'broken our pledges and let the Frontier peoples

[483] 'Secret and personal re Burma affairs 1946', IOR/L/PO/9/15, British Library.
[484] Rance to Pethick Lawrence, 2 January 1947, IOR/M/4/2804, in Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944-1948,* 157.
[485] M.W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1934,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1986).

down'. He suggested therefore offering the Burman nationalists a one-off grant of five million pounds to cover the British obligations towards the Frontier Areas and to show their good intentions.[486]

In January 1947 Aung San led a delegation to London to negotiate with the Prime Minister Clement Attlee. The question of the relationship between Burma and the Frontier Areas was foremost among the issues which needed to be decided. The Burmese delegates argued that the British had caused the division in the first place, citing for instance how the Burmese were formerly admitted to the Frontier Service until recruitment stopped in 1927; how in imposing a Chin Romanised script the British aim was to divide the Chins further from the Burmese; how the British gave different opportunities to Buddhist and Christian missionaries in the Frontier Areas; and how, the Burmese claimed, military officers' incitement during the war had added to the desire for a Kachin State.[487] The British policy of exclusionary hiring to the Frontier Service was mirrored in their policy, official from 1925, of hiring only Chins, Kachins and Karens into the army.[488] This policy possibly reflected the British preference for working with missionary-educated Christians, who were overwhelmingly of non-Burman ethnicities.[489]

The process of consulting with the people of the Frontier Areas, to gain their consent and to decide the nature of their future constitutional relations to Burma, was fraught with problems. Aung San's visit to London produced an agreement with Atlee in January 1947 that

[486] Rance to Pethick Lawrence, 23 January 1947, IOR/M/4/2811, in Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944-1948,* 230.
[487] Further Statement by the Burma Delegation, presented to the fifth meeting, 22 January 1947, IOR/L/PO/9/17, British Library.
[488] Selth, 'Race and Resistance in Burma', 488.
[489] Matthew J. Walton, 'Ethnicity, Conflict, and History in Burma: The Myths of Panglong', *Asian Survey*, 48:6 (2008), 894.

guaranteed Burma's independence within a year.[490] One of the terms of the agreement was that the frontier peoples needed to give their consent to being included in the future union of Burma. The Panglong Conference of February 1947, where leaders of some of the ethnic groups agreed to unite with Burma, technically achieved this consent. The numerous issues with the Panglong Conference, however, included the small number of ethnic groups which were represented, and the fact that the delegates invited to represent each group only spoke for particular sets of people, despite there being a range of complex views on the matter within each ethnic group.[491]

The London agreement also stipulated that a Committee of Enquiry be set up to ascertain how best to associate the Frontier Areas with the constitution of the future independent Burma.[492] The Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry, as it was known, sat at Maymyo from April to May 1947. The committee, headed by a British Member of Parliament, interviewed representatives of many smaller ethnic groups which had not been invited to the Panglong Conference. These included the Wa, Naga, Arakanese, Kokang Chinese, and Karenni, as well as witnesses from the Shan, Kachin, Karen and Chin people. The Wa, Naga and others who had been excluded from Panglong but invited to the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry were treated with disdain, as belonging to primitive civilisations. Other small groups, including the Lahu, Palaung and Pa'O, were excluded from both the Panglong Conference and the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry.[493] The Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry reflected the Panglong approach to gaining the consent of the frontier peoples, whereby the Burmans and the British satisfied themselves that consent had been achieved, without

[490] S.R. Ashton, 'Aung San (1915-1947), politician in Burma', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2015), accessed 18 February 2019, [URL: http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-94670]
[491] Walton, 'Ethnicity, Conflict, and History in Burma', 899.
[492] Report of the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry, Rangoon: Government of Burma Printing, (1947).
[493] Walton, 'Ethnicity, Conflict, and History in Burma', 902.

ensuring that the affected parties were actually satisfied with how they had been represented, if indeed they had been represented at all.

The Committee interviewed two representatives from the northern Wa states and two from the southern Wa states. In giving evidence to the committee, Naw Hkam U, the Chief Minister to the Sawbwa of Manglun State in the southern Wa States, stated his states' desire to remain in the Federated Shan States. The Manglun Sawbwa had had a semi-detached relationship with the administration of the Federated Shan States. The state's liminal status was reflected in the fact that the British had expressly seen the Manglun Sawbwa's main job as keeping the peace with China. The Federation had had almost no administrative presence in the state. When the Federated Shan States were established in 1923, the Manglun Sawbwa was not required to attend Council, because his state was 'not yet developed'. The Federation had demanded a nominal tribute of Rs. 250 because the state was 'wild', 'inaccessible' and had no revenue system. The Wa States were also included in the Federation, and were also not expected to pay.[494] The Federation had made no effort over the years to intervene in the states. A report in 1931 noted that the Federation had spent no money on roads or other services in the states.[495] The other Wa representatives also declared to the Committee their preference to remain independent. One of the representatives of the southern Wa States, Sao Naw Hseng, asked not to be included in the Shan States, stating that 'Was are Was and Shans are Shans'. The representatives from the northern Wa States, Hkun Sai and Sao Maha, stated their desire to remain as they were, independent of other people. Just as the Shans had refused to be ruled by Burmese, so the Wa leaders interviewed by the committee of enquiry rejected being directly ruled by the Shan.

[494] Maule, 'British Policy and Administration in the Federated Shan States, 1922-1942', 143.
[495] 'Preliminary Report on the Working of Federation in the Shan States, 1922-1931', 1931, IOR/M/3/252, British Library.

Ignoring these demands, the Committee recommended that the Wa States should be supervised by the government of the Federated Shan States, 'until their people are fit to take over the administration of their own area either as a state in the Burma federation or as a unit of Burma proper'.[496] In May, Rance, the Governor of Burma, proposed that in fact the Central Government had better administer the Wa States, as the Shan Council was not fit to be responsible for this 'troublous' area which is 'such a danger point on the Frontier'.[497] As regards finding Wa representatives to join the Constituent Assembly then tasked with drafting Burma's Constitution, the Committee of Enquiry reported that they 'found it impracticable' to procure witnesses from the Naga Hills and the Wa States. Further they recommended that Naga and Wa representatives need not be sought for the Constituent Assembly 'on account of the primitive nature of their civilisation and the impossibility of their finding persons who will be able to assist in the drawing up of Burma's future constitution'.[498] These recommendations are typical of how the British thought about the borderlands as dangerous, backward, and hence as requiring special administration.

The Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry's final report acknowledged the 'craziness of the patchwork quilt' which the then administration of the Frontier Areas resembled, but, as requested by many witnesses, did little to reduce it. The Committee of Enquiry's report suggested in effect enshrining these differences in the Constitution. Recommendations included incorporating, as the Chins had requested, the Chin Hills and Salween District into Burma proper, but otherwise the committee's report entrenched the administrative and legislative differences between the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma.[499] A majority of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee of Enquiry requested that the right to

[496] Report of the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry.
[497] Governor of Burma to SSB, 14 May 1947, General papers regarding the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry 1947, IOR/M/4/2854, British Library.
[498] Report of the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry.
[499] Report of the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry.

secession be included in the constitution. Burma's Constitution as eventually drafted recognised states' right to secede, but laid down four conditions: ten years must first elapse; two thirds of the State Council must approve a resolution to secede; the Union President must order a plebiscite; and only Shan and Kachin State had the right to secede.[500]

Once the Panglong Agreement had theoretically satisfied the requirement that the inhabitants of the Frontier Areas stated their willingness to join the union of Burma, the Burman nationalists began preparing for elections to the Constituent Assembly. Aung San's assassination on 19 July 1947 threw the fledgling independent government into crisis. Rance quickly appointed U Nu Prime Minister. U Nu and Prime Minister Clement Attlee signed the treaty recognising Burma's independence on 17 October 1947, and U Nu chose 4 January 1948 as the date for Burma's independence.[501]

CONCLUSION

This chapter showed how the colonial desire for territorial control amplified local influence over the process of state-making in the borderlands. The support or at least acquiescence of borderland inhabitants was important to enable natural resource extraction. Local actors who foiled colonial attempts at territorial control added to the complexity of the system of graduated sovereignty, where government consisted of layers of differing types of administration, citizenship and sovereignty. The Wa hills thus continued to be autonomous behind the Line of Safety, despite being claimed by multiple powers. Panthay leaders correctly surmised that by expressing their support for British mining enterprises they could persuade the British to extend their administration into the disputed borderlands. Through

[500] Josef Silverstein, 'Politics in the Shan State: The Question of Secession from the Union of Burma', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 18:1 (1958), 49.
[501] Walton, 'Ethnicity, Conflict, and History in Burma', 897.

their ability to invite or repel the colonial government's control over the territory, local agency was thus increased as a result of the colonial demand for resources.

The negotiations around the status of the Frontier Areas at independence reveal how the balance of power was shifting against frontier peoples. The Burmese state was beginning to challenge the agency of frontier peoples where the British, conscious of the debts they owed them after the war, had been, at least initially, and however imperfectly, advocating for them. The Frontier Areas were seen from afar, from Rangoon as they had once been from Calcutta and London, as a border zone which threatened the defence or integrity of the centre. This marked a change from how colonial administrators based in regional centres had seen the borderlands, as territories containing resources and people which needed to be bounded the better to be controlled.

This chapter showed how the debate during Burma's independence negotiations over the Frontier Areas' future relations with Ministerial Burma was central to many Burman nationalists' conceptions of Burma as a symbolic whole, as well as to the government's paranoia regarding threats to that perceived whole. The British had governed Burma with different types of administration in different regions. Relations between the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma during colonial rule evolved in negotiations between Frontier Areas leaders and the colonial government over the relative independence of the Frontier Areas, as seen for instance in the debates over the Keng Tung Sawbwa's foreign policy. These internal divides were clearly depicted on maps of the country.

During negotiations over the location of the borderline, both the British and the Chinese cited the allegiance of local inhabitants as evidence for the correct location of the border. This same impulse was reflected in the negotiations around the Panglong conference and the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry. The independence negotiations influenced the post-

colonial Rangoon government's views of the border. Burman politicians were less interested in the exact location of the borderline and more concerned with the unity of the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma. This shift had the effect of diminishing local people's ability to influence border policy.

Burman nationalist politicians had fought for the territorial unity of the country based on the colonial borders with neighbouring countries, and did not want to compromise that unity. The (perceived as well as actual) British desire to retain influence over independent Burma by retaining the Frontier Areas made Burman politicians increasingly paranoid and defensive towards the borderlands. The border began to be seen primarily as a zone representing a threat to the national centre, rather than, as they had to British colonial administrators in Burma, as a bounded territory containing people and resources to be demarcated and exploited. Ironically, this meant that to Burman nationalists the question of the allegiance of local borderland peoples was even less important than it had been under the British. As the exact location of the border moved lower down the government's list of priorities, cultivating international friendships and avoiding invasions which might threaten the nation's centre became more important, and the agency of local people slipped from view.

5. 'TO ENSURE BETTER NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS': BORDER-MAKING AFTER INDEPENDENCE

INTRODUCTION

For the government, the loss of the borderlands, as had been contemplated during independence negotiations, would constitute an existential threat to the nation. The Cold War context is central to understanding the government's approach to the border. The Rangoon government, when concerned with maintaining friendly relations with China, sought to minimise PLA troops' incursions into the Wa hills in the 1950s and emphasise that the border was a grey area of disputed sovereignty. The Rangoon government argued that China 'might have' occupied 'a strip of land' in Wa state, but the fact that the border was undemarcated meant that this occupation was unimportant.[502] The government was afraid of the former Frontier Areas insofar as their occupation posed a threat to the centre, but had no capacity or desire to combat incursions by assumed friendly powers in the remote Wa hills. The exact location of the borderline was unimportant when the PLA crossed it. Troops' presence on the remote border was not a priority unless it might endanger the centre. When concerned with the KMT occupation of Burmese territory, on the other hand, the government played up the significance of the border as a line around a sovereign nation. Conversely the vociferously anti-China *Nation* newspaper described the PLA border incident using the language Burman nationalists had used during independence negotiations – of the nation being 'dismembered' – to describe the Chinese threat to territorial unity.

After independence, the main threat to the border came from China not Britain. The outbreak of Communist insurgencies across Burma in the years after the Second World War, together with the Kuomintang (KMT) occupation of parts of Shan State in the 1950s, increased the

[502] 'Press Conference Opens With Wa Frontier Affair', *New Times of Burma*, 8 August 1956.

Rangoon government's fears of China. Afraid of the possibility of China invading Burma to aid the Communist insurgents or fight the KMT, the Rangoon government chose conciliation, negotiation and friendship with China.

Whereas for the Burman government the Wa border began to be seen as a fuzzy line, whose exact location was no longer paramount as it had been for the colonial government, for some Burmans the border-as-a-line now signified the geo-body and unity of the nation. Nationalist anti-China newspapers saw the borders in terms of lines on a map which represented the hard-won prestige and territorial integrity of the independent nation. The Rangoon government in the late 1950s was more worried about national preservation than national prestige, however. Communist insurgencies and US aid to the KMT were a danger to the nation, but PLA troops crossing the distant Wa border were merely allies entering a zone of fuzzy sovereignty. As a result the government was happy to sign a border treaty with China in 1960, despite the loss of territory this entailed. In exchange for three villages in Kachin State, the border treaty safeguarded Burma's independence from the potential Chinese threat.

This contrast between the nationalist press and nationalist government's views of the border has implications for scholars' work on nationalism. Benedict Anderson's theory, which was developed to explain the dynastic states of nineteenth-century Europe, described nation-building as involving both a genuine, popular nationalism and a 'systematic, even Machiavellian, instilling of nationalist ideology through the mass media, the education system, administrative regulations and so forth'.[503] In a 1993 revision of his famous work, he clarified that this theory was unsuitable to explain nationalism in the new states of postcolonial Asia and Africa.[504] Instead, following the work of Thongchai Winichakul, he

[503] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 113-114.
[504] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 113-114.

saw the origins of nationalism in the colonial institutions of censuses, maps and museums.[505] These arguments hold true for the colonial period, where censuses and maps played a role in constructing the categories of identity on which many of the anti-colonial nationalist movements were based. For the development of nationalism after independence, however, his earlier point holds true. In Burma after independence there was a mismatch between popular nationalism and the more top-down nationalist ideologies propagated by the government. This chapter will argue that popular nationalism focused on Othering foreign enemies, while the government sought to instil a nationalist ideology by highlighting the threat to the nation from Others within.

This study will further Michael Charney's argument regarding Cold War politics in Burma. In a study of a propaganda play written by U Nu in the 1950s, Charney shows how Burman nationalist leaders such as U Nu sought to bifurcate Burma's complicated domestic and international politics, seeking through the medium of a radio play to parse Burma's internal and external threats for a domestic audience.[506] He analyses how the Burmese government described the KMT occupation of parts of the Shan State as a threat to Burma as a united whole.[507] This chapter shows how the Rangoon government could at times seek to minimise the image of Burma as an indivisible sovereign unit, as for instance when the border was broached by an otherwise friendly neighbour. The government's foreign policy prioritised preserving the nation from outside threats, opting for a diplomacy of neutralism and forming alliances with potential enemies. For nationalists at home, especially those who saw China as the biggest danger, the government tried to play down the importance of the border as a symbol of the nation.

[505] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped.*
[506] Michael W. Charney, 'U Nu, China and the "Burmese" Cold War': Propaganda in Burma in the 1950s', in Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu and Michael Szonyi (eds), *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle of Hearts and Minds*, Leiden: Brill (2010), 41.
[507] Charney, 'U Nu, China and the "Burmese" Cold War', 49.

Thongchai Winichakul argues that 'the discourse of national security is undoubtedly a very effective paranoia put into Thai people's heads by the Thai state'.[508] The Burmese case was different to the Thai 'protecting the geo-body' paranoia in that it led the government to appease their large neighbour, even to the point of ceding territory in order to come to an agreement. The Burmese government was paranoid, and not without reason given both the internal and external threats, but their paranoia led them conversely to persuade nationalists expressly *not* to Other their neighbours. The post-colonial Burmese government's survivalist instincts to seek safety in friendship rather than confrontation are evident in, for instance, its self-positioning in the United Nations (UN) as one among many 'little nations'. A *New Times of Burma* editorial, 'UNO and the Little Nations', wrote that Burma 'along with ten other little nations' had taken upon itself the task of establishing world peace.'[509]

The first section of the chapter explains the Rangoon government's response to the perceived risk to the borderlands in the context of Burma-China relations after the war. Even before independence in 1948, the government was consumed by rebellions that broke out across the country. After the war the Wa country had continued as an undemarcated disputed zone. Its liminal status was further complicated by the presence of Kuomintang troops who had retreated there following the Chinese Civil War, hoping to use Burma as a base from which to recapture China. This context drove a shift in the approach to border-making of the new government compared to the colonial government, as border issues took on a new significance for independent Burma trying to find its way between the competing blocs of the post-war world order. Where the colonial government had focused on demarcating natural resources in the borderlands, the independent government saw the border primarily as a zone of danger. This led to a view of the border as a fuzzy line as opposed to a precise line.

[508] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 167.
[509] 'UNO and the Little Nations', *New Times of Burma*, 26 October 1949.

The second section discusses a border crisis which erupted in the mid-1950s, after Chinese Communist troops entered the Wa country in pursuit of the KMT and remained for several years. The PLA troops' presence was only made public in Rangoon when the anti-China Rangoon newspaper the *Nation* broke the story in 1956, after three years of occupation. Independent Burma's foreign policy at the time was to try not to alienate either of the two blocs. This foreign policy stance led the Burmese government in 1956 to downplay as much as possible the news of the PLA troop movements. The Rangoon-based *Nation* on the other hand tried to draw attention to the incident as a national crisis. Articles in the *Nation* hammered home the message that China was the enemy 'Other', calling for confrontation rather than conciliation to counter the China invasion threat. Over the summer of 1956 more and more pro-government newspapers began to write about the border incursions as a national crisis. Opinions on the China threat were linked to differing views of the border as either a symbolic line or a fuzzy zone of unclear sovereignty.

The third section shows how the Rangoon government's approach to the border was rooted in awareness of Burma's position in the international context. Taking over in 1958, General Ne Win continued U Nu's policy of deference towards China. In 1960, he signed a border agreement in Beijing, accepting the loss of three Kachin villages in return for the line through the Wa hills which the British had demanded in 1941. The border treaty was ratified in 1961 and huge parties were staged in Beijing to celebrate Burma-China friendship. What has been called the acme of Burma-China friendship in fact reflected an attempt to patch over underlying discord.[510]

The democratisation of the public sphere meant that the border became something which diverse groups could discuss and opine on. This chapter therefore centres on sources which

[510] David I. Steinberg, and Hongwei Fan, *Modern Myanmar-China Relations: Dilemmas of Mutual Dependence*, Copenhagen: NIAS Press (2012), 64.

differ from the colonial sources of previous chapters. In this period debates relating to borders in the Wa country went on at an even greater remove from local inhabitants. Yet among lowland Burmans there was a greater democratisation of the debate, which centred around how independent Burma should respond to the polarising of international relations after the war.

'WITH A VIEW TO MAINTAINING FUTURE CORDIAL RELATIONS': BURMA-CHINA FOREIGN RELATIONS AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The new government of independent Burma took an entirely different approach to border issues than Britain. Examining the language used by the press and the government helps to trace how their concepts of borders developed in the first years of Burma's existence as an independent nation. The international Cold War context of Burma's independence is key to understanding the new approach. After independence, when Kuomintang troops aided by the USA entered Shan State in the 1950s, the Rangoon government saw it as a threat to Burma as a whole. When the People's Liberation Army (PLA), however, crossed the disputed Wa border in the 1950s, the Rangoon government tried to play down the importance of the border as a symbolic line. The anti-China Rangoon paper, the *Nation*, on the other hand, took the opposite approach.

Immediately after independence, the Rangoon government was entirely overwhelmed by rebellions which broke out across the country. By 1949, the year after independence, the Rangoon government had lost control of 75% of the towns of Burma to various insurgent groups.[511] The government was in survival mode, and had no bandwidth to consider details such as the demarcation of the disputed border. When the Republican Chinese government

[511] Mary Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State-Building in Burma*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (2004), 114.

suggested carrying out a joint boundary demarcation in 1948, the Rangoon government was barely in control of Rangoon itself.

The first shots of the civil war had been fired before independence. From 1945 there had been growing divisions between the parties that made up the AFPFL, particularly between the Burma Socialist Party and the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). In February 1946 Thakin Soe had split from the AFPFL and led his own Red Flag Communist Party into rebellion against both the British imperialists and the 'rightists' in the AFPFL.[512] In March 1948 the Burmese government in Rangoon purged the rest of the CPB, the majority of whom left Rangoon and went underground to fight the AFPFL and the Burma army. The Communist uprising spread quickly across the country.[513]

In January 1949, the Karen members of the Burma army, which included much of the leadership, turned against the AFPFL. By early 1949 more than half of government troops had mutinied.[514] In February 1949 Insein, a suburb of Rangoon, fell to Karen insurgents.[515] Between February and May 1949, all the major towns between Rangoon and Maymyo – including Prome, Meiktila and Mandalay – and much of the Irrawaddy Delta, fell to one group of insurgents or another.[516] In 1949, 75% of the towns in Burma were controlled by insurgents. The government did not retake Insein from the Karens until May 1949 and only after both sides had suffered heavy losses. Toungoo was under rebel control until March 1950.[517] 'In other words', writes Callahan, 'just as the state became independent from colonial rule, it utterly collapsed'.[518] The Rangoon government managed to survive as Burma Army remnants waged 'piecemeal, uncoordinated campaigns' against the different rebel

[512] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 103.
[513] Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Burma*, 14.
[514] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 114.
[515] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 133-134.
[516] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 135.
[517] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 135.
[518] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 114.

groups (communists, army mutineers and Karen rebels) into the 1950s. The insurgency in the central region had begun to peter out by mid-1950.[519]

In the midst of Burma's chaotic first year of independence, between April and October 1948 the Republic of China (ROC) carried out a unilateral border survey and demarcation. The ROC government invited the Burmese government to take part, but the Rangoon government was too occupied with its own problems and turned down the invitation. A fourteen-member commission of the Ministry of the Interior headed by Dr Fu Chueh-chin, Director of the ROC Foreign Ministry's Territory Department, returned in October 1948 from a seven-month survey of the China-Burma border, and began preparing for the task of delimiting the border between the two countries. On their first trip they surveyed the disputed stretch of territory in the Wa region between the Namting and Namhka rivers, as well as the 620 kilometres from north of the Chienkao mountain to the India-China border at Sikang Province, and erected 135 boundary markers. Refuting reports that the Chinese Government might claim territory from Burma, Dr Shih Chao-ying, Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that the main objective of the mission was to clearly define the boundary of the two nations to 'ensure better neighbourly relations'.[520] At the time the Rangoon government was too embroiled in fighting its own Communist insurrection to be able to start a fight, even diplomatic, with an otherwise friendly neighbour. The ROC, which was likewise engaged in fighting Communists, had a similarly diminished capacity to carry out negotiations and the matter seems to have gone no further.[521]

Before negotiating exact borders, the government's priority in these turbulent years was to find international friends. Immediately after independence, in the midst of the accelerating

[519] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 146.
[520] 'Demarcation of Sino-Burmese Border, Chinese Commission Preparing Second Survey', *New Times of Burma*, 2 October 1948.
[521] 'The Border Again', *New Times of Burma*, 3 October 1948.

polarisation of international politics in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Rangoon government at first tried to avoid joining either bloc, instead appealing for aid from all sides.[522] What was couched as neutralism was more a desperate search for aid and allies in the initial years of independence. Surrounded by countries with opposing affiliations, it appeared to the Rangoon government too much of a gamble for a new small nation to risk alienating large neighbours. Romantically, as U Nu put it in September 1950: 'We are hemmed in like a tender gourd among the cactus. We cannot move an inch.'[523] Or hard-headedly, as outside observers put it: 'the nations of neither power bloc … thought it worthwhile … to make a sustained effort to catch Burma for their side'.[524]

After the first chaotic year of independence, the Rangoon government looked to the Western democracies for support. In 1949, U E Maung, Burma's Foreign Minister, announced a trip to Washington, London and Thailand. Following on the back of Deputy Premier and Defence Minister General Ne Win's earlier visit to the US and the UK, many onlookers praised Burma's seemingly final choice of political alignment.[525]

At the same time the government continued to hedge its options closer to home. When Chiang Kai-Shek and the Philippines President Elpidio Quirino discussed a possible anti-Communist Pacific Alliance, the Burmese government at first refused to be drawn on whether they would join or not.[526] U E Maung cautioned: 'we must make sure that no country will [make use] of the alliance to its own advantage.' Observers interpreted this to mean that Burma would not join any alliance that would back Chiang Kai-Shek in his imminent defeat to the Chinese

[522] 'A Policy Of Neutrality', *New Times of Burma*, 13 July 1949.
[523] *Burma Weekly Bulletin*, 9 September 1950; U Nu speech to Parliament, 5 September 1950 in U Nu, *From Peace to Stability*, Ministry of Information: Government of the Union of Burma (1951), 102; *The Nation*, 24 December 1954.
[524] W.C. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy*, (1963), 261.
[525] *New Times of Burma*, 9 August 1949.
[526] 'Burma and Pacific Alliance', *New Times of Burma*, 16 July 1949.

Communists.[527] U E Maung made these comments even while he was in Washington trying to drum up western support for newly independent Burma.

The Rangoon government hoped that the West would give some protection against any encroachments on Burma's territory from China. In March 1950 U Nu said the 'greater advantage' for Burma lay in 'closer relations with the Western democracies'. While expressing a lack of interest in joining any anti-Communist Pacific Pact or blocs, Burma would welcome 'help from any friendly nation to ward off encroachments on its frontiers'.[528]

The Rangoon government's fear of large-scale foreign invasion led the government into also attempting to appease China. Throughout the early years of independence, the Rangoon government went out of its way not to antagonise China. As U Nu recalled in 1952, 'We were among the first non-communist countries to accord official recognition to the People's Republic of China, which is not liked by the Anglo-Americans; we also put out our best effort to get Red China seated in the United Nations; we opposed the American resolution in the United Nations branding Red China as aggressor in Korea; we also refused the invitation of the United States government to attend the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference held at San Francisco'.[529]

Historian Chi-shad Liang argues that Burma wanted to appease China to avert possible PRC support for the Communist Party of Burma, which had been in insurrection against the government in Rangoon since soon after Burmese independence in 1948.[530] Liang argues that the PRC used the Communist Party of Burma as a lever to keep the Rangoon government

[527] 'U E Maung Confers With Acheson', *New Times of Burma*, 17 August 1949.
[528] 'Burma Will Welcome Aid From "Friendly Nations", But Not Interested In Pacific Pact Or Blocs', *New Times of Burma*, 7 March 1950.
[529] U Nu, Speech delivered on the opening day of the Union Welfare Conference, 4 August 1952, in U Nu, *Burma Looks Ahead*, Rangoon: Government Printing and Stationery, (1951), 99.
[530] Chi-shad Liang, 'Burma's Relations with the People's Republic of China: From Delicate Friendship to Genuine Cooperation', in Peter Carey (ed), *Burma: The Challenge of Change in a Divided Society*, London: Macmillan (1997), 71.

friendly. The PRC would increase support for the CPB when relations became strained and reduce it when relations improved.[531]

The *Nation*, more bullish on the possibility of Western support against China, pronounced Burma's voting tactics at the UN in 1951 'an admission of fear'.[532] The government suggested that Burma's geographic position was partly to blame. As U Nu said, if you were to just 'glance at the map of Asia', you would see that Burma was 'within an arm's reach from the Soviet Russia and Red China as well as from Britain and the United States sphere of influence'. Consequently, 'whether we turn our guns in the direction of Red China and Soviet Russia or in the direction of the Anglo-Americans, we shall face the same fate as Korea'.[533] U Nu sought to draw attention to the threat to Burma from both blocs, a concern which would later prove to be prescient when the US began in the 1950s to send aid to KMT troops occupying Shan State.

The government chose to seek accord with China rather than attempt confrontation. In a Martyr's Day speech on 19 July 1950, U Nu declared, 'in relations between two countries, there are occasions when one side should forego its legitimate claims with a view to maintaining future cordial relations'.[534] In March 1951, U Nu denied to parliament the rumours that PLA troops had infiltrated the Burmese Communist insurgents. 'Whatever Chinese personnel the underground Communists have are not Red Chinese soldiers but some Chinese chow chow sellers from our country whom our Communists have dressed in uniform to deceive Communist rank and file whose morale is declining'.[535] At the same time a Chinese government map came to light in Burma, which raised Burmese fears of Chinese irredentist

[531] Liang, 'Burma's Relations with the People's Republic of China', 71.
[532] *The Nation*, 2 February 1951.
[533] U Nu, Speech delivered on the opening day of the Union Welfare Conference, 4 August 1952, U Nu, *Burma Looks Ahead*, 102.
[534] Thakin Nu, '"Our policy and programme", Speech delivered on Martyrs' Day 19th July 1950', in U Nu, *From Peace to Stability*, 90.
[535] U Nu, Speech to Parliament, 8 March 1951, in U Nu, *From Peace to Stability*, 195.

ambitions in northern Burma. U Nu spoke to Parliament of the need to calm Burmese people's fears regarding the map, which he admitted showed the Sino-Burmese frontier 'encroaching a great deal into our territory'. The Chinese government in Beijing, he said, had given assurances to the Burmese Ambassador regarding this 'much talked of' map. The assurances, which he quoted to Parliament, stated that the Chinese Government had had no time to draw a new map and had only reproduced an old map. The map shows the Sino-Burmese border as an undemarcated boundary, wrote the Chinese government, and 'we see no difficulty in sitting down together and demarcating the boundary. China has no territorial ambition.'[536]

In June 1954 Zhou Enlai, on his way back from Geneva, spent two days in Rangoon, where he met U Nu for the first time. He came to Rangoon via New Delhi, where Nehru had joined him in endorsing the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. These Five Principles were mutual respect, non-aggression, non-interference, equality and mutual benefit, and co-existence. On 29 June U Nu endorsed these principles too. The Five Principles policy suited Rangoon, as it allayed some of the government's fears about the CPB threat. The alliance suited China because it successfully prevented Burma from joining SEATO, the anti-Communist bloc in Southeast Asia, and kept Burma friendly in the face of US encirclement.[537]

The two leaders met again at the Bandung Conference in April 1955 where these friendly sentiments were renewed. Joining Zhou Enlai and U Nu were such world leaders as Nasser, Nehru and Sukarno, as they and other leaders of newly-decolonised Asian and African nations pledged to uphold the principles (now ten) of peaceful coexistence. Underlying Cold War ideological divisions were never far from the surface at Bandung, however, and the

[536] U Nu, Speech to Parliament, 8 March 1951, in U Nu, *From Peace to Stability*, 195.
[537] Liang, 'Burma's Relations with the People's Republic of China', 77.

Conference was nearly derailed by disagreements over the wording of the ten principles.[538] The unity achieved by this largely symbolic moment in international diplomacy would be severely tested in the years to come.

Disputes between Burma and China over the location of the undemarcated border had fallen off the agenda, as the focus of inter-state relations lay on maintaining neutrality. But almost immediately after Bandung a problem arose for the Rangoon government in its efforts to maintain this friendly position towards Burma's largest neighbour. In the summer of 1956 the long-standing PRC occupation of the Wa States came to public attention, throwing Burma-China relations into crisis.

'SLEEPERS, AWAKE!': A BORDER CRISIS

The government and the anti-China *Nation*'s responses to the PLA troops' cross-border incursions reveal their very different ideas of borders. In a pragmatic effort to appease China, the government tried to minimise the significance of the existence of PLA troops in the disputed border area. Unlike their reaction to the KMT occupation, which was to depict Burma as an indivisible sovereign entity, the government tried to emphasise the disputed sovereignty of the borderlands. The *Nation*'s editors on the other hand saw the border as a line representing the pride and integrity of the nation. After breaking the news of PLA troop incursions, they spent the summer pressuring the government to defend the borders against foreign incursions. Over the summer of 1956 gradually some pro-government newspapers followed suit. Many newspapers began to see the border as a matter of 'national interest', and began to call on the government to increase pressure on China.[539]

[538] Naoko Shimazu, 'Diplomacy As Theatre: Staging the Bandung Conference of 1955', *Modern Asian Studies* 48:1 (2014), 227.
[539] *New Times of Burma*, 6 September 1956.

The Rangoon government had foreseen the possibility of PLA troops' presence in the border areas. Besides the risk of the PRC supporting the Communist insurgents in Burma, the Rangoon government was also aware of the ongoing risk of China invading Burma to expel the Kuomintang remnants who had retreated into Shan State after the Communist victory in China. General Li Mi, the last Nationalist governor of Yunnan, and the remaining two Divisions of the KMT 8th Army – the remnants of the 26th Division under General Liu Kuo-chuan and of the 93rd under Major General Ma Chaw-yi – had retreated into Keng Tung State in 1949. Two hundred KMT troops had entered Keng Tung State early in January 1950. In March about 1,500 soldiers of the 8th Army (26th and 93rd Divisions) joined them, together with about 500 wives and children. They entrenched themselves south of Keng Tung in the triangle bordered by the Mekong and French Indo-China, the Keng Tung-Tachileik Road, and the Thai border.[540]An estimated 1,700 such refugees in early 1950 rose, by local recruitment and flying in reinforcements, to 12,000 in 1953.[541]

The outbreak of the Korean war in the summer of 1950 benefitted the Chinese Nationalists in Keng Tung. The US increased its support for Taiwan, as it could not afford to let the Chinese Communists gain control of the South China Sea.[542] At the same time the US and Taiwan organised air-drops to supply General Li Mi at his headquarters in Mong Hsat near the Thai-Burma border.[543] The build-up of military force in Keng Tung was part of the Taiwanese and US governments' plan to encircle China.[544]

[540] Ministry of Information, Foreword, *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma*, Rangoon: Government Publishing (1953), 3.
[541] Bertil Lintner, 'The Shans and the Shan State of Burma', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 5:4 (1984), 409; Ministry of Information, Foreword, *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma*, 3.
[542] Dr Maung Maung, *Grim War against the KMT*, Rangoon: Nu Yin Press (1953), 16.
[543] Ralph Pettman, *China in Burma's Foreign Policy*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, (1973), 11.
[544] Lintner, 'The Shans and the Shan State of Burma', 409.

Maung Maung, a Rangoon-based journalist who visited the Burma Army on the Shan State front in 1953, alleged that General Li Mi had never had any intention of building up a guerrilla force in order to use Keng Tung as a base to invade China. General Li Mi, who had had 'a deplorable record during the war', had planned to settle down as a smuggler in Keng Tung. Taiwan had found his force to be 'good propaganda and advertisement material', and Li Mi and his smugglers were, 'by clever and effective propaganda, made out into a brave general and brave warriors, heroes of a forth-coming liberation'.[545]

The KMT units in 1951 started carrying out offensives against China. The Rangoon government and army leaders quickly surmised that these campaigns might lead Communist China to invade Burma. The KMT presence shaped the Burmese government's policy towards China in the 1950s, heightening the government's fear of China and the perceived threat of Chinese intervention in Shan State. Callahan argues that the KMT crisis prompted Burmese military leaders to build an army capable of protecting the country from more threatening, global kinds of warfare. Army leaders set out to establish a bureaucratised, European-style standing army. Improvements in civilian bureaucratic capacities did not keep pace with the transformation of the army. Over the next decade this uneven development across sites of power within the national state led to military aggrandisement of resources, responsibilities and powers in traditionally non-military realms.[546]

The Burma Army launched major operations against the KMT in November and December 1951. They inflicted heavy casualties, but the rebels dispersed into the hilly jungles which the Burma Army were unable to access. Alleged KMT atrocities against local villages gained

[545] Maung Maung, *Grim War Against the KMT*, 12.
[546] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 18.

momentum from October 1952. The Burma Army launched more operations against them from all fronts in 1953.[547]

On 25 March 1953 the Burmese made a formal complaint about the KMT occupation to the UN.[548] The UN, with only the Republic of China abstaining, adopted a resolution demanding that the KMT should disarm and immediately leave Burma's territory.[549] Under UN pressure in 1953-54 the KMT force was repatriated to Taiwan. By then it numbered 13,000 including followers. They had by then been there for years and were self-supporting, smuggling opium in Thailand by the lorry-load, mostly from the Wa country.[550] From November 1953 to May 1954 an estimated 6,000 men, women and children were airlifted out. At the end of the official evacuation, General Li Mi announced that there were no troops left, which effectively meant that he disclaimed responsibility for those that were.[551]

The government's fears that the KMT presence would lead to China invading Burma proved to be well founded. On 31 July 1956, *The Nation* broke the story that several hundred Chinese troops, fully armed, had invaded and occupied Burmese territory along the 500-mile stretch of frontier from Putao to the Kunlong ferry. In 1953 PLA troops had chased KMT rebels into Wa State and stayed there. This military incursion coincided with a 'wholesale influx of Chinese in civilian garb' into north Burma towns and villages.[552] *The Nation* connected the 'Reds' found inside Burmese territory with the recent sharp increase in Chinese immigration across Burma's northern border, as they reported the two events being part of a 'slow but implacable' invasion of Burma.[553]

[547] Ministry of Information, Translation of a Government Statement on KMT Aggression into Burma, 2 March 1953, in *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma*.
[548] Ministry of Information, Foreword, in *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma*.
[549] Maung Maung, *Grim War Against the KMT*, 112.
[550] Harvey, 'The Wa People of the Burma China Frontier', 133.
[551] Pettman, *China in Burma's Foreign Policy*, 12.
[552] 'Red Chinese Soldiers Cross Burmese Border', *The Nation*, 31 July 1956.
[553] *The Nation*, 1 August 1956.

Both the government and the anti-China *Nation* feared Burma's northern neighbour, but their reactions to the cross-border incursions were very different. Both saw the incursions as an existential threat to the nation, but the government's response to the threat was to downplay the significance of the incursions, in a pragmatic attempt to placate China. At first the government attempted to hide the fact of the Chinese troops' presence. When the *Nation* broke the news of the PLA troops' presence in Burma in 1956, the government tried strenuously to minimise its significance. The government's press release denied that an 'invasion' or 'occupation' had occurred in Kachin State, instead stating that 'some' Chinese troops had entered Burmese territory and 'established outposts on Union soil in the Wa State in close proximity to the Burma-China border'.[554] The press release stated: 'While the Government of the Union of Burma cannot but be seriously concerned over this development, it is emphasised that the situation is not such as to warrant the treatment accorded to it by *The Nation*.'[555] The *People's Daily* also denied reports of a Chinese invasion, stating that Chinese troops had always been stationed in that area 'because the frontier between Burma and China was not defined in this mountainous region'.[556] The sovereignty of this 'mountainous region' was once again officially blurry. The Rangoon government was unconcerned about the exact location of the borderline so long as the PLA troops remained remote from the nation's core. The government's aim when dealing with the Chinese threat was to prioritise its policy of conciliation towards China over what it saw as minor, remote incursions into disputed territory.

The *Nation*, on the other hand, saw the border incursions in terms of national prestige, and demanded that the government react more aggressively. Writers calling for more confrontation with China began to use the same language that the Burman nationalists had

[554] *The Nation*, 1 August 1956; *The Burman*, 1 August 1956.
[555] *The Nation*, 1 August 1956; *The Burman*, 1 August 1956.
[556] *New Times of Burma*, 5 August 1956.

used during independence negotiations to refer to the desired unity of Ministerial Burma and the Frontier Areas. Many people saw the nation's territorial integrity to once again be under threat from an outside power. The nationalistic paper anthropomorphised the nation, using the language of 'dismemberment', describing territory as 'chunks of flesh' being sliced from the national body.

The border incursions of the summer of 1956 took place in the context of a spike in immigration from China into Burma. The anti-China press amplified the impact of Chinese immigration on Burma. Beginning in June 1956, articles in the *Nation* raised fears of Burma being 'swamped' by the persistent influx from 'the two teeming nations between which we live sandwiched'.[557] There were reports that 'illegal immigrants' had increased the Chinese population of the Kachin border areas by 'about ten times' in the last eight years, amid fears that they were 'rapidly taking all the trade into their own hands'.[558]

In February 1956, in response to concerns about worsening cross-border relations, Burma and China attempted to revive the old colonial system of border meetings. A meeting at Lweje, a border town, convened on 7 February 1956, rather than solving border tensions, revealed them. An article in the *Nation* lamented how the meeting was 'so different in character from the old border meetings'.[559] In those days, the procedure was systematised. The British officials knew who their counter-parts were over the border. Originally developed for the Kachin border in the 1900s, the Frontier Meetings system brought border officials from each side together to rule on cross-border cases which could not be settled by the justice systems on either side. The 1902 Manai Agreement established the system of annual meetings and by 1909 they were hearing over a hundred cases annually. The border people on either

[557] 'Steady Stream Of Illegal Immigration Into Burma', *The Nation*, 25 June 1956.
[558] 'Chinese Coming in Steady Stream Over Yunnan Border', *The Nation*, July 11 1956.
[559] Daphne Whittam, 'Lweje In Retrospect; Behind The "Bamboo Curtain", Scowls And Automatics', *The Nation*, 13 February 1956.

side brought their complaints against each other to the meeting. Officials arbitrated cases and levied fines on the spot. The laws in use on both sides of the border were the same. These included the Track Law, which stated that if your cow was stolen and you followed its tracks to a village, the village must either restore the cattle or pay their value. The Manai agreement merely codified established practice.[560] But by 1956, the author of the *Nation* article noted, 'little is known about the administration on the other side', and 'no precedent exists for contacts across the border, still less for the settling of problems'.[561] The Lweje meeting in 1956, ostensibly a preliminary gesture towards the re-establishment of Burma-China border relations, was in the end primarily an attempt by the Burmese to consolidate the support of the Kachin leaders against PRC propaganda.[562] The Chinese had allegedly been issuing identity cards to some Kachin residents in the area, as well as leaflets urging them to cross over to China.[563] This context of failing or non-existent cross-border relations, amid a sharp increase in Chinese immigration, formed the backdrop of the border incident of the summer of 1956.

The idea of the nation being under attack and the desire to confront China were at first fringe opinions. Pro-government newspapers such as the *New Times of Burma,* the *Burma Weekly Bulletin,* the *Burman* and *Ludu* stressed the need to negotiate with and not antagonise China.[564] These newspapers emphasised that the British had stirred up the conflict between Burma and China, and that by promoting non-confrontation over the border with China, independent Burma was renewing a pre-colonial friendly relationship. The Burmese-

[560] 'Report on the Burma-Yunnan Frontier Meetings, 1929-30', Wyatt-Smith, Consul Tengyueh, in Box 3, G.E. Harvey archives, Weston Library, Oxford.
[561] Whittam, 'Lweje In Retrospect; Behind The "Bamboo Curtain", Scowls And Automatics', *The Nation*, 13 February 1956.
[562] Maung Aung Myoe, *In the Name of Pauk-Phaw: Myanmar's China Policy Since 1948*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (2011), 43.
[563] Harold C. Hinton, *China's Relations with Burma and Vietnam*, New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Peace Relations, (1958), 43.
[564] The *New Times of Burma* and the *Burma Weekly Bulletin* were at the time both managed by the Ministry of Information.

language *Ludu* newspaper covered the initial news of the border incursions with an article entitled 'The Goodwill Between China and Burma'. The article noted that 'some people wanted to destroy the goodwill between Burma and China', and that it was vital to stop them. 'These people are transmitting the news of the Chinese occupation of Burma to Pakistan radio, to American television, all over the world'. The author counselled that Burma and China should undertake negotiations similar to those between China and Indonesia earlier in the year. Colonial officials had tried to divide Burma and China, and to make them hate each other. 'Burmese people must be careful'.[565]

An editorial in the *New Times of Burma* defended the government's stance, writing that the Union Government was refusing to allow itself to be 'stampeded into accusations against the PRC'. In addition, the legality of the border should not be questioned, as that would be merely 'flogging a dead horse', and would benefit no one.[566] The whole issue, argued one commentator, was like the Burmese story of the dragonfly and the spear: from the crow's perspective, it looked like the dragonfly was about to get speared, but the dragonfly knew that it was in no danger.[567] Burma, the dragonfly, knew it was small enough to be in no danger from China, the spear. A few days after the news of the border incursions broke, editors of *The Burman* likewise supported the government's neutral stance, warning readers not to be 'bullied into getting too hysterical over the affair', or to let the 'anti-neutral' nations force them into accepting 'that China can never be expected to keep good faith with her friends'.[568]

Through the summer of 1956 the *Nation* ramped up its warnings of the border threat. The authors used the same vocabulary of national dismemberment which the Burman nationalists had used during the pre-independence debate about the Frontier Areas' relationship with

[565] 'The Goodwill Between China and Burma', *Ludu*, 2 August 1956.
[566] *New Times of Burma*, 5 August 1956.
[567] 'A Burmese Diary', *New Times of Burma*, 6 August 1956.
[568] *The Burman*, 4 August 1956.

Burma. Besides three villages in Kachin State – Hpimaw, Kangfang and Gawlum – the other 'chunk of flesh' which the Chinese were excising was the Wa State, which, the authors reminded readers, included the Lufang mines.[569] The *Nation* led with stories of the Chinese invasion of the three Kachin villages and Wa state, warning readers that China's expansionist scheme, 'clearly betrayed in thousands of Chinese maps', was to 'dismember us'. For the *Nation,* the border was crucial as a line bounding the body of the nation.

The Rangoon government, however, prioritised maintaining Burma's relations with China over any occupation of territory within the fuzzy borderline, which was remote enough from the centre of the nation to not pose a danger. Where previously borders had been important to colonial governments as a means of enclosing claims to natural resources, the Rangoon government now saw the exact location of the border as a distraction from wider foreign policy priorities. The Burmese government used the lack of an agreed border to dismiss claims that an invasion of Burma's territory had taken place. Ministers continued to downplay, while not denying, the presence of Chinese troops in Burma. Prime Minister U Ba Swe told the press that the Chinese had told him that there was 'no border at all'. The Chinese troops now in the Wa state, he said, 'could very well be in their own territory'.[570] He said that there was 'no danger whatever in the Red Chinese occupation of a strip of land in the Wa State', and that negotiations to find a peaceful solution were going smoothly.[571] The Chinese called into question the 1941 agreement and demanded that a new frontier be negotiated before they would pull out their troops.[572] Newspapers which supported the government's position agreed that ultimately, 'one can be sure that the good sense of the Chinese leaders will prevail and the matter [will be] settled without further ado.'[573] U Ba Swe said that the

[569] *The Nation,* 2 August 1956.
[570] 'The Border Affair', *New Times of Burma*, 8 August 1956.
[571] 'Press Conference Opens With Wa Frontier Affair', *New Times of Burma*, 8 August 1956.
[572] 'The Border Affair', *New Times of Burma*, 8 August 1956.
[573] 'The Border Affair', *New Times of Burma*, 8 August 1956.

two countries had had 'a little problem' on 20 November 1955, but 'apart from that there have been no problems', so 'do not worry'.[574] *Ludu* reported that Minister U Nu requested that the media avoid writing about the border issue.[575]

The United States and Taiwan offered to help Burma deal with China's border incursions by military means, but many Burmese were wary. Soon after the news of the Chinese troop movements broke in 1956, Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, said that if reports of a Chinese Communist invasion of Burma proved to be true, he presumed SEATO would go to Burma's aid if requested. On the same day Taiwan's official Nationalist newspaper, the *Central Daily News*, said that this was Burma's last chance to declare her opposition to Communism and 'return to the community of the free world' instead of 'taking "suicidal measures" by negotiating with Beijing'. The Burma Democratic Party was the only one of Burma's political parties that agreed with this assessment. They argued that it was only thanks to the existence of SEATO that Burma had not fallen completely into the hands of the PRC. They called for an end to peaceful negotiations, and for the government to declare Burma a victim of aggression. *The Burman*, which carried the stories, strongly opposed SEATO involvement in the dispute. The editors saw SEATO's interest in the affair as hypocritical, and putting its own anti-Communist interests above the interests of Burma, as the editor made clear in an in-line comment: 'What about KMT aggression? -Ed.'.[576]

Burma's official policy position was to attempt to follow the path of a 'Third Force' in international politics. This stood for avoiding commitment to either bloc, rejecting all military pacts e.g. SEATO, maintaining as far as possible friendly relations with all nations, being critical of Communism and all forms of imperialism, and being strongly committed to the

[574] 'Do Not Worry About the Case of the Wa Area', *Ludu*, 8 August 1956.
[575] 'China-Burma Border Problem', *Ludu*, 8 August 1956.
[576] 'Carry The War To People's Chinese Troops Within Burmese Territory, SEATO Deters Chinese Conquest Of Burma', *The Burman*, 28 August 1956.

UN as well as to Democratic Socialism.[577] In 1949 the Foreign Minister told the *New Times of Burma* representative that Burma had had one example of South East Asia Co-Prosperity (under the bitter Japanese occupation, although this was unspoken), and had no intention of again becoming involved in any such sphere.[578] Burma's neutralism again came to the fore at Bandung in 1955, as U Nu, together with leaders of the other four neutralist host countries – Indonesia, India, Pakistan and Ceylon, collectively known as the Colombo Powers – strove to bring a total of twenty-nine independent nations to affirm Afro-Asian peaceful solidarity.[579]

The moral idealism of the tone of many government pronouncements relating to the border issue, where they tried to rebuke the more strident nationalism of those who were urging the government to take a stronger line against China, hid the pragmatism of Burma's neutral policy, as a small nation looking out for its interests in between the two opposing blocs. Burma's dependence on rice exports for foreign exchange was a large factor behind the government's pragmatism regarding friendship with China. 80% of exports were rice, and Trager estimated that in 1956 35% of those exports by volume went to the Sino-Soviet bloc. As a result, 'motives of customers' were certainly involved in the slant of Burma's foreign policy.[580]

The *Nation* was increasingly derisive of Burmese official policy towards China, asserting in August 1956 that the Five Principles were 'only sweet words meant for Ambassadors and Cabinet Ministers'. Headlines instead linked the lawlessness of the border region to Burma's friendliness with China: 'Peaceful Co-Existence Means Border Bristling With Smugglers,

[577] Frank N. Trager, 'Burma's Foreign Policy: Neutralism, Third Force and Rice', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 16:1 (1956), 97.
[578] 'Burma And Pacific Alliance', *New Times of Burma*, 16 July 1949.
[579] Christopher J. Lee, 'Introduction. Between a Moment and an Era: The Origins and Afterlives of Bandung', in Christopher J. Lee (ed), *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives*, Athens: Ohio University Press (2010), 15.
[580] Trager, 'Burma's Foreign Policy', 101.

Soldiers and Spies'.[581] The *Nation* printed letters from readers wanting 'to perish now rather than suffer a slow and peaceful death after some years of peaceful co-existence', and stating that 'the sacred policy of co-existence is an incentive to the Red Chinese to invade our country by any means'.[582] For this stance the National Unity Front, a leftist pro-China party formed in 1955, dubbed the anti-China press 'US stooges'.[583]

Over time the border incident drew attention to the question of Burma-China relations, and to the government's strategy. The *Nation* initially despaired over people's lack of interest in and knowledge about the Wa state. 'Sleepers, awake!', implored the *Nation*'s editorials.[584] Over the summer more newspapers took on a nationalistic tone, and began to demand that the government confront China. The border crisis amplified in people's minds the idea of an existential threat to the nation from China's expansion. Over the summer of 1956 the border began to assume a symbolic importance as a 'national' issue, as even pro-government newspapers began to press the government to question China's dedication to the Five Principles and to take a firmer stance on the border issue. By September 1956, the *New Times of Burma*, while reporting approvingly on how the negotiations were proceeding on the basis of the five principles of co-existence, started to press the government, reminding them that 'the border question has become a topic of national interest, surpassing in importance even the campaign against the insurgents, and the nation's economic position'.[585] By October 1956 the *New Times of Burma* had diverged further from the government line, reminding China what was at stake, as 'the whole world is watching the outcome of the Sino-Burmese border affair'.[586]

[581] *The Nation,* 18 August 1956.
[582] *The Nation,* 23 August 1956; *The Nation,* 25 August 1956.
[583] Frank Trager, 'Burma's Foreign Policy, 1948-1956: Neutralism, Third Force, and Rice', *Journal of Asian Studies,* 16:1, (1956), 91; *The Nation,* 30 August 1956.
[584] *The Nation,* 2 August 1956.
[585] *New Times of Burma*, 6 September 1956.
[586] *New Times of Burma*, 5 October 1956.

When U Nu visited Beijing in September 1956 in an attempt to resolve the border issue, Zhou Enlai greeted him as an 'old friend of China', and reminisced how they had first met in Rangoon in June 1954 when the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence were established to found relations between Burma and China.[587] The Chinese government offered U Nu a proposal by which, starting from the end of November 1956, the Chinese troops would withdraw from the area to the west of the 1941 line, and Burmese troops would withdraw from the three Kachin villages of Hpimaw, Kangfang and Gawlum. It became known as the 'Package Deal' because it covered the whole boundary and was supposed to be treated as a whole.[588] This demand cued Kachin fury and months of protests.[589]

Prime Minister U Ba Swe and Zhou Enlai held a Border Conference in Mangshih in Yunnan in December 1956, dubbed a 'fraternisation conference' by Zhou. There was a carnival to mark the signing in November of the agreement that China would withdraw behind the 1941 line.[590] The Sino-Burmese Frontier People's Friendship Conference sponsored a mass meeting of 30,000 people from the frontier area.[591] Historians have seen this border conference at Mangshih in Yunnan as emblematic of the period from 1955 to 1958, when both governments held numerous cultural exchanges, agricultural exchanges, and military exchanges.[592]

The border issue highlighted how unequal Burma's desired friendship with China was. On 9 July 1957 Zhou delivered a speech to the People's Congress reporting on the question of the boundary line between China and Burma. Regarding the Wa area, Zhou said that the 1941 line had stemmed from Britain taking advantage of China during the war, when Britain had

[587] 'U Nu Welcomed As "An Old Friend Of China"', *New Times of Burma*, 27 October 1956.
[588] Daphne Whittam, 'The Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty', *Pacific Affairs*, 34:2 (1961), 178.
[589] *The Nation,* 23 November 1956.
[590] 'Carnival in Mangshih', *The Guardian*, 18 December 1956.
[591] 'The Mangshih Story', *The Guardian*, 19 December 1956.
[592] Pettman, *China in Burma's Foreign Policy*, 21.

used China's weakness during the Pacific War to demarcate the Wa border to her advantage. During the 1956 discussion, Zhou said, Burmese leaders had indicated that they could understand China's dissatisfaction with the 1941 line, but they asked the Chinese to withdraw Chinese troops from west of the line. We had entered the area west of the 1941 line when chasing KMT troops in 1952, Zhou said, so we agreed to withdraw.[593]

From China's perspective, magnanimously agreeing to withdraw peacefully from Wa State in exchange for a quid pro quo in Kachin State represented a good will gesture to a fellow post-colonial Asian neighbour. From the perspective of China's smaller neighbour, Burma, China's occupation of Wa State, followed by demands that Burma hand over the three Kachin villages, represented a foreign policy crisis, testing Burma's declared policy of 'peaceful co-existence' with China.

'BURMA AND CHINA HAVE BOTH BEEN TO BLAME': THE 1960 BOUNDARY AGREEMENT

In April 1958 the AFPFL split. U Nu and U Ba Swe emerged as leaders of two rival factions, triggering a crisis in Burma's government. In October 1958 U Nu stepped down. He, and a majority in Parliament, voted to elect General Ne Win, the chief of staff, as leader of a military 'caretaker government'. This caretaker government was to restore law and order, and hold free and fair elections.[594] Ne Win continued U Nu's policy of friendship and deference towards China. In June 1959 Ne Win reopened negotiations with Beijing, offering China slightly more territory in Wa State than the 1941 line.[595] It is unclear why China was more open to an agreement with Ne Win than with U Nu, but China invited Ne Win to come to Beijing in January, where on 28 January 1960 they signed a Boundary Agreement and a ten-

[593] *The Nation*, 19 July 1957.
[594] Maung Maung, 'The Burma-China Boundary Settlement', *Asian Survey*, 1:1 (1961), 41.
[595] Whittam, 'The Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty', 179.

year Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Non-Aggression. The Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression which Ne Win had signed in January 1960 prohibited acts of aggression and also prohibited either party joining military alliances directed against the other. Burma was happy to have a friend, and China was happy to prevent the US using Burma as a base.[596]

The *Nation* wrote that only a political neutral like Ne Win was able to marry the major camps at home and edge on the final result.[597] China accepted the British-defined 1941 boundary, except for taking in addition the three Kachin villages and an area in the Wa States, which they agreed to exchange for the Namwan Tract.[598] As part of the treaty China agreed to send engineers to Burma, and educationalists to teach Burmese workers. Part of the loan was for scholarships for Burmese students to study in China.[599] The two countries also agreed that China would build a paper mill in Sittaung, a sugar factory in Belin and a clothes factory in Meiktila.[600]

Why did China settle the border dispute on such modest terms? Ralph Pettman argued that China, having just put down an uprising in Tibet, while in the midst of fights over its border with India and with Indonesia regarding the status of Indonesian Chinese, wanted to brighten its leaders' self-image of magnanimity, with Burma as the incidental beneficiary. In the following two years, China made similar agreements with Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan.[601] U Than Maung, writing in 1961, similarly thought that China had signed for reasons of national prestige. He thought China's prestige had fallen in Southeast Asia because of the revelations of China's border problems with India and Burma, and because of the Tibet revolution. He argued that China's desire to regain some of the prestige it had garnered as a

[596] Liang, 'Burma's Relations with the People's Republic of China', 77.
[597] 'U Nu's Summary', *The Nation*, 29 April 1960; Pettman, *China in Burma's Foreign Policy*, 24.
[598] Whittam, 'The Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty', 180.
[599] Kyin Nyunt, *Chit Kyin Ye Chit Kyin Ye So Ga*, [Loving Friendship], Rangoon: Maung Kyaw Nyunt, (1968), 322.
[600] Kyin Nyunt, *Chit Kyin Ye Chit Kyin Ye So Ga*, [Loving Friendship], 325.
[601] Pettman, *China in Burma's Foreign Policy*, 24.

result of Zhou Enlai's diplomacy at the Bandung Conference tempted it to sign this border treaty with a friendly postcolonial neighbour.[602] It could be argued instead that Zhou Enlai was eager to sign this treaty with Ne Win in particular because he had not been at Bandung. His willingness to sign was perhaps an indication that Zhou was worried that residual good feelings from Bandung were being wiped away. For Burma, the signing of the border agreement, with all the pomp of the celebrations, was a piece of political theatre, designed to reassure the anti-China nationalists in Rangoon that all was well.

The agreement signed in January 1960 created a joint China-Burma border committee to survey and demarcate the border through the Wa country and to erect boundary pillars. Headed by General Aung Gyi for Burma and Yun Chongmin for China, the border committee worked through the monsoon in 1960, finally agreeing the borderline in September 1960.[603] In October 1960 U Nu and Zhou Enlai signed a treaty implementing the agreement.[604] A mammoth rally in Beijing's Workers' Stadium celebrated the occasion. The Burma Army soccer team and a Beijing team held a friendly match, which Burma lost.[605] On signing the treaty, Zhou Enlai had emphasised that the treaty had laid to rest a problem which had been 'a product of imperialist policies of aggression', that it had demarcated 'a boundary of peace and friendship' and that it was a 'brilliant model' for peaceful co-existence among Asian peoples. U Nu strove to emphasise that the agreement was friendly, entered into freely, and signed on terms of 'absolute equality'. It would be 'ridiculous' to suggest that either country had imposed the treaty on the other, he said.[606] China saw the agreement as raising the prestige of a post-colonial Asian nation. Burma, 'for the loss of a small portion of territory',

[602] Mandalay Thuriya U Than Maung, *Ta Youq Ni A Twe A Kyoun Mya*, [The Red Chinese Experience], Mandalay: Thuriya Press, (1961), 52.
[603] Kyin Nyunt, *Chit Kyin Ye Chit Kyin Ye So Ga*, [Loving Friendship], 312.
[604] Kyin Nyunt, *Chit Kyin Ye Chit Kyin Ye So Ga*, [Loving Friendship], 312.
[605] Pettman, *China in Burma's Foreign Policy*, 25.
[606] Maung Maung, 'The Burma-China Boundary Settlement', 38.

obtained ‘what they had all along wanted, namely, the British-defined boundary and, even more important, a boundary recognised by the Chinese’.[607]

Ludu newspaper celebrated the signing of the border treaty in October 1960 with a full front page spread, consisting of an illustrated copy of a poem by the thirteenth century monk and poet Manlay Sayadaw (1203-1282). The poem, titled ‘Politics’, celebrated the long history of relations between Burma and China. It described how the two countries’ royal families intermarried and exchanged gifts, and how they sometimes went to war. When love and faith connected Burma and China, there was no war. But, the poem warned, immoral people could still betray and destroy the country.[608] In the same issue of *Ludu*, Daw Amar castigated the US government for failing to help Burma when the KMT invaded, even though they had helped Korea. In the history of border issues, ‘Burma and China had both been to blame’. Both sides had stolen land at various times between 1914 and 1941, and she approved of U Nu’s call for a peaceful solution.[609] Also in *Ludu*, U Hla’s article cheered the conclusion of the dispute, writing of how the Chinese leader had warmly welcomed the Burmese leader to a celebration of the ‘border triumph’ at Beijing. The Burmese delegation to Beijing had included 300 Burmese representatives from culture, sport, media, commerce and the military. Since the Mindon period, he wrote, the Burmese people’s treatment of their Chinese visitors had been hospitable, and vice versa.[610] Another article, which summarised the history of the disputed border, described the 1956 negotiations without mentioning the 1950s Chinese troop incursions which had spurred the negotiations.[611] *Ludu* lauded the occasion as a success for the policy of conciliation.

[607] Whittam, ‘The Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty’, 181.
[608] *Ludu*, 1 October 1960.
[609] *Ludu*, 1 October 1960.
[610] *Ludu*, 1 October 1960.
[611] ‘China-Burma Relations’, *Ludu*, 2 August 1956.

On 4 January 1961, on the thirteenth anniversary of Burma's independence, Zhou Enlai and U Nu exchanged the instruments of ratification of the Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty and the Treaty of Mutual Non-Aggression.[612] At the same time, news came out that China was planning to give Burma a loan of Ks. 400 billion. U Than Maung described, 'from rickshaw drivers to ministers, everyone proclaims how the goodwill between Burma and China is firm. Even though they do not know what that means, they say it anyway'.[613] Burma and China finally had agreed and demarcated a borderline through the Wa hills. Whether the border agreement meant anything on the ground is less clear. The location of the borderline was theoretically decided, but the Burmese state was far from having even a presence, let along any kind of monopoly on the use of violence, legitimate or not, in most of the Burma-China-Thailand border area. Through the second half of the twentieth century the area continued to be plagued by violence, the base of various armed forces including, between 1968 and 1989, the Communist Party of Burma (CPB).[614] In effect the colonial model of graduated sovereignty and effective border autonomy endured.

CONCLUSION

The Wa hills were emblematic of the legacies of the complex gradations of governance in colonial Burma, a product partly of Britain's ad hoc approach to annexation and border-making. Whereas multi-coloured colonial-era maps had revealed the differentiated sovereignty within colonial Burma, the Burman nationalists had fought hard to achieve the unity of Ministerial Burma and the Frontier Areas after independence. Where the government perceived this unity to be under threat, as happened when the KMT occupied parts of Shan State, they depicted the country as a sovereign whole. Where an allied power crossed the

[612] Whittam, 'The Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty', 174.
[613] Mandalay Thuriya U Than Maung, *Ta youq ni a twe a kyoun mya*, [The Red Chinese Experience], 5-6.
[614] Tom Kramer, *The United Wa State Party: Narco-Army or Ethnic Nationalist Party?*, Washington DC: East-West Center, (2007), 13-14.

border, however, the government tried to play down the importance of the border as a fixed line bounding sovereign territory. After independence, the Rangoon government had absolutely no bandwidth to deal with the border as a resource frontier to be governed or exploited. The border was no longer important as a line bounding natural resources, but was instead seen variously as a line bounding the sovereign nation, and as a zone or grey area of sovereignty. The government's response to perceived external risk was to try to strike deals, even if that meant conceding territory.

The nationalist, anti-China press on the other hand saw the border in terms of a line on a map which represented national prestige. Writers sought to anthropomorphise the nation, in order to emphasise the importance of the borders as a line circumscribing independent Burma's territorial integrity. The press equated attempts to annex or control Burma's territory with attempts to excise flesh from the body of the nation. The *Nation* in particular argued that the AFPFL government's response to threats on the border should be robust, including confrontation with China, rather than negotiation and concession as ultimately happened. However, in the years following independence the Rangoon government was in survival mode. They saw maintaining territorial integrity in terms of preserving the nation, and as a small country they chose non-confrontation. While the occupying force was remote from the centre, in a 'strip of land' where the border was 'anyway undefined', it posed little risk and its significance could be downplayed. The government thus tried, with relative success, to persuade the public *not* to 'Other' China. The government instead negotiated with China over troop withdrawal and in 1960 agreed a border treaty. Celebrations of the signing of the treaty in 1961 seem to have been genuinely popular, with 'even rickshaw drivers' cheering the Burma-China friendship. In the same year there was a public backlash against the 'US

colonialists' giving aid to the KMT in Shan State. Thousands marched in protests in Mandalay and Rangoon.[615]

In the story which broke the news of the PLA troop incursions in 1956, the *Nation* compared the size of the occupied area in Wa state to 'a triangle drawn between Rangoon-Pegu-Tharrawaddy'. This was partly to explain the size of the area in question to Rangoon readers, and partly to emphasise that all parts of Burma's sovereign territory should be treated as one.[616] In the minds of many Burmese, the border problem had become far more divorced from borderland inhabitants than it had been in the days when borderland people, in attempts to stall government penetration, had attacked external states' 'expeditions'. Borderland people's affiliations mattered during the Boundary Commission in 1935, and during the transfer of sovereignty, when both sides set out to woo frontier dwellers, but in Beijing in 1959, the negotiators simply haggled over the colonial-era borderlines. Minimising foreign threats, or making magnanimous gestures to small neighbours in the Bandung era, were what mattered most. The greater military stakes for Burma in the mid-twentieth century, and the political theatrics of Zhou Enlai's diplomacy, now dictated both sides' approach to dividing territory. The irony here is cutting. Just when the borderland peoples were theoretically rendered full and equal citizens of the states which were disputing the border, that was when they became least important in the determination of the border.

[615] 'Marchers And Crisis At The American Embassy In Yangon', *Ludu*, 22 February 1961; 'White Chinese And US Interference March', *Ludu*, 23 February 1961.
[616] *The Nation*, 1 August 1956.

CONCLUSION

This thesis tracks the shifting ideas, definitions, and negotiations of the borders between Burma, Thailand (Siam) and China to examine the changing relations between borderland dwellers, empires and nation-states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The analysis has suggested some ways to rethink the conventional historiography of border- and state-making on the edges of states. This thesis contributes to borderlands historiography by highlighting the false dichotomy between non-state borderland dwellers and central states. In addition this thesis suggests that the Zomian narrative of lowland state expansion contrasted with upland stateless escapism is not sufficient to explain shifting power relations in the borderlands. This thesis also shows ways in which a new borderlands history can contribute to wider debates on the nature of nation-state-making, sovereignty and citizenship. At the margins, central states' certainties regarding 'geo-bodies' and 'imagined communities' were challenged by alternative spatial imaginings and political configurations in the borderlands.

The thesis highlights the problems with treating states as normative and all other political formations as 'non-state'. This binary has influenced much of the debate on Zomia. Indeed scholars define Zomia itself in large part by its 'statelessness'. But, as Charles Tilly argues, it is only in the last two centuries that what he calls 'consolidated states', defined as 'coercion-wielding organisations governing directly and rather uniformly in a series of heterogeneous and clearly bounded territories', have become the norm. 'Nor should we imagine', he writes, 'consolidated states to have such great advantages over all other political organisations that they have rendered the others obsolete; after a mere two hundred years of hegemony, Western consolidated states are already showing signs of incapacity to provide either order or public goods in the face of challenges from networks of capital, labour, drugs, arms and terror that

cross their painfully-erected borders with ease.'[617] Borderlands history, focusing on the flows of people, things, and power in the borderlands, can question the teleologies which are often implied in histories of the making of states and nations.

This analysis of border- and state-making at the margins also reveals the nineteenth and twentieth century roots of ethnic politics in Myanmar today. Burman politicians after independence blamed the British for creating ethnic divisions, while ironically themselves setting out to marginalise those who did not fit into the notional category of the Burmese nation. This strategy of marginalisation was written into law with the 1982 Citizenship Law, which created three categories of full and partial citizenship to distinguish ethnic Burmans from other ethnic groups, as well as fully removing citizenship from several minority groups such as the Rohingya.[618] Down to the present day, the distinctions between Burman Self and ethnic minority Other have continued to be expressed, as seen for instance in the recent Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) government's policies of political opening among ethnic Burmans amid increasing violence in non-Burman areas.[619]

Past scholarship has shown how colonial administrations and armies resorted to ethnic compartmentalisation in order to ease governing the multi-ethnic regions they encountered.[620] This was a view espoused by Burman nationalists during the last years of colonial rule in Burma. Aung San, among others, frequently raised the issue of British policies of 'divide and rule' in causing many of Burma's political tensions. Nationalist politicians in Malaya, too,

[617] Charles Tilly, 'How Empires End', in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds), *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building, The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press (1997), 3.
[618] Anders Bjornberg, 'Rohingya Territoriality in Myanmar and Bangladesh: Humanitarian Crisis and National Disordering', in Su-Ann Oh (ed), *Myanmar's Mountain and Maritime Borderscapes: Local Practices, Boundary-Making and Figured Worlds*, Singapore: ISEAS Publishing (2016), 152.
[619] Matthew J. Walton, 'The "Wages of Burman-ness": Ethnicity and Burman Privilege in Contemporary Myanmar', *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 43:1 (2013), 2.
[620] A.J. Stockwell, 'Conceptions of Community in Colonial Southeast Asia', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 8 (1998), 340.

argued that the British, faced with the prospect of a united Malay nation, resorted to the politics of divide and rule.[621] In the same vein, scholars have pointed to the British role in the construction of communalism in colonial India as a direct cause of the ethnic and religious tensions complicating that country's politics today.[622] Some scholars have pushed back against the more simplistic versions of the narrative linking colonial policies and ethnic tensions. Karen Barkey has criticised what she calls the 'standard anti-imperialist line'. She questions the argument that empires, through the manipulation of ethnic groups, caused the ethnic hatreds which became full-fledged conflicts after imperial collapse. Barkey looks at the ethnic politics of early modern empires and concludes that imperial ethnic diversity alone cannot explain modern ethnic conflict. Instead, she argues that we need to examine the policies of the new postcolonial states in the context of imperial legacies.[623] These legacies include inherited institutions of varying strengths and efficiency, national elites who reached power through various means and by appealing to varied audiences, and uneven levels of economic development. The new nations in the imperial periphery were often left with minorities within their territory, and replicated the imperial relationship of domination.[624] For the Burmese case, Mary Callahan shows how the Burmese army carried over the British army's ethnic recruitment policies – in particular the system of 'class'-specific battalions – with effects which included enabling the splitting off of ethnic battalions within the military.[625] This thesis has examined some of these imperial legacies which influenced postcolonial states. In the Burma borderlands, the legacies of the varying kinds of colonial

[621] Stockwell, 'Conceptions of Community in Colonial Southeast Asia', 339.
[622] Sandria B. Freitag, 'Contesting in Public: Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Communalism', in David E. Ludden (ed), *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, (1996), 212; Gita Subrahmanyam, 'Ruling Continuities: Colonial Rule, Social Forces and Path Dependence in British India and Africa', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 44:1 (2006), 111.
[623] Karen Barkey, 'Thinking about Consequences of Empires', in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds), *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building, The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press (1997), 103.
[624] Barkey, 'Thinking about Consequences of Empires', 107.
[625] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, 96.

administration resulted in fragmented sovereignty and citizenship even within the Shan States. Colonial policies might not have directly caused post-colonial ethnic tensions, but the governments of post-colonial nation-states built on divisive colonial institutions such as frontier government and armed forces.

Scholars agree that colonial policies contributed to the failures of postcolonial states' attempts at nation-building. Part of this stems from the fact that political boundaries were an imposition of colonial states. Eric Hobsbawm explains the parlous situation of the newly independent post-colonial nations as stemming from the nature of colonial rule. 'Most of the imperialist dependencies consisted not of established states conquered by the Europeans, but of territories to which only the new imperial administration had given structure and definition. Their borders, their existence as administrative units, their political identity, indeed often the language of their politics and administration, were given to them through their colonial status.' He identifies the Indian princely states as exceptions to this rule, but argues that on the whole the postcolonial states started with nothing except their borders.[626] The Shan States can also be included as exceptions. Colonial rule gave them their political boundaries, but their political identity and existence as administrative units pre-dated the colonial period.

The distinction between 'Frontier Areas' and 'Ministerial Burma' or 'Burma proper' was one institutional imposition of colonial rule which would have far-reaching implications. It was only in the 1990s that the colonial-imposed distinction between the Frontier or Excluded Areas and central Myanmar was broken down. This boundary had, since colonial times, determined language politics, differentiated citizenship, and the shape of power struggles in

[626] Eric Hobsbawm, 'The End of Empires', in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds), *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building, The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press (1997), 15.

Myanmar.[627] After the 1988 pro-democracy uprising, the central state, fearing a new alliance between the opposition National League for Democracy and ethnic rebels, saw ethnic minority populations as an increased threat. The state's response was to overhaul ideas of belonging in Burma, in particular through language education policy, with the dual aim of assimilation and disempowerment.[628]

The current plight of the Rohingya people is one of the ultimate examples of the contradictions of nation and state as defined in Myanmar today. An estimated two million Muslim Rohingya live along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, but their claims to territory and belonging are denied in both Myanmar and Bangladesh.[629] Anders Bjornberg argues that the Rohingya 'stick out like a sore thumb' as a non-national group which has resisted assimilation. Their very presence is perceived as a threat to the coherence of the Burmese nation-state.[630] As a result of this perceived threat to the nation, the Rohingya's opponents, including the Myanmar state but also other marginalized 'borderlands' people (the Arakanese), have tried to render them invisible and delegitimise their presence or to push them over a line that was imagined into existence only in the last century. Bangladesh has similarly sought to expel the Rohingya, at times forcing asylum seekers to return to Myanmar.[631] Where once rulers aimed to capture slaves in order to increase the size and strength of the central state, now they aim to ensure the homogeneity of populations across the entire territory of the nation. Identity politics, the logic of imagined communities and rulers' insecurity, are all expressed at borders, where the illogic of arbitrary borders challenges the self-Other identification of the nation.

[627] Mary Callahan, 'Making Myanmars: Language, Territory and Belonging in Post-Socialist Burma', in Joel S. Migdal (ed), *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2004), 99.
[628] Callahan, 'Making Myanmars: Language, Territory and Belonging in Post-Socialist Burma', 103-104.
[629] Bjornberg, 'Rohingya Territoriality in Myanmar and Bangladesh', 146.
[630] Bjornberg, 'Rohingya Territoriality in Myanmar and Bangladesh', 152.
[631] Bjornberg, 'Rohingya Territoriality in Myanmar and Bangladesh', 156-158.

Besides literally expelling those who destabilise its main narrative of national identity, the state in modern Myanmar has sought to further imprint the 'geo-body' of the nation through Burmanisation. Xenophobic Burmanisation was a key part of the 'Burmese Way to Socialism', instituted under General Ne Win after 1962.[632] The central place of Buddhism in the ongoing practice of Burmanisation is visible in the period studied in this thesis. From Burman nationalists' recurring complaints alleging that the British banned Buddhist preachers from the Frontier Areas,[633] to U Nu's 1961 act instituting Buddhism as the national religion,[634] Buddhism has long been part of Burman's conception of nation-state-making. Maxime Boutry explores this dynamic in present-day Myanmar, showing how Buddhism and Burman identity are entwined, and how the perceived threat to Buddhism is equated with a perceived threat to Burman territorial hegemony.[635]

This thesis has examined these questions of nation- and state-making by showing how these processes were destabilised in the borderlands. The first chapter challenged the state/non-state binary which characterises current scholarship on Zomia. Recent studies of the southwestern borderlands of the Qing empire have emphasised the state's extension of its control over frontier territories. This chapter showed instead how power in the borderlands was mediated through a variety of actors. Despite having in many ways a similarly 'Zomian' politics to the Lahu, with a distinctively egalitarian politics, Wa centres of population were larger, wealthier, and more equipped to resist encroachment from empires and nation-states than the Lahu were. Thanks in part to the 'lootable' nature of the natural resources found in

[632] Robert A. Holmes, 'Burmese Domestic Policy: The Politics of Burmanisation', *Asian Survey* 7:3 (1967), 189.
[633] Government of Burma to Simla, 1 December 1944, IOR/L/PO/9/8, British Library; 'Further Statement by the Burma Delegation', presented to the fifth meeting, 22 January 1947, IOR/L/PO/9/17, British Library.
[634] F.K. Lehman, 'Ethnic Categories in Burma and the Theory of Social Systems', in Peter Kunstadter (ed), *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities and Nations*, Vol. I, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1967), 96.
[635] Maxime Boutry, 'Burman Territories and Borders in the Making of a Myanmar Nation State', in Su-Ann Oh (ed), *Myanmar's Mountain and Maritime Borderscapes: Local Practices, Boundary-Making and Figured Worlds*, Singapore: ISEAS Publishing (2016), 102.

the Wa hills, some Wa polities retained their autonomy and the possibility of playing different powers off against each other. On occasion the supposedly state-escaping Wa combined for political purposes. Groups of Wa village leaders formed allegiances both for common diplomacy, by projecting 'wildness' in communications with external powers and by attempting to play different sides off against each other through expressions of support or opposition, and through common military action, on occasion raising thousands of armed soldiers to repel British and Chinese military and surveyors. Examining the various kinds of political formation that contested the borderlands in the nineteenth century can show how border-making was not simply the extension of lowland state power into stateless uplands, but rather a multidirectional process where different centres of power both near and far contested territorial and governance claims.

Secondly, by paying attention to the movement of people and goods across the borderlands, in two chapters which make new use of foreign missionary sources and colonial trade statistics, this thesis showed how the experience of mobility contributed to the making of borders in the region. The second chapter described how movements of missionaries and preachers across disputed borders at the turn of the century gave hitherto invisible borders a real effect. States worried about Christian converts and missionaries moving across the disputed border, making use of pre-existing trans-local networks and demonstrating their alternative imagined geographies. These fears pushed states to tighten up their control over their borders. When missionaries first began to try to cross the disputed borderlands in the 1900s, governments in Rangoon and Beijing tried at first to restrict their movement. Local converts meanwhile continued to be able to travel unimpeded. For the missionaries' purpose of growing the Church across the highlands, new political divisions were mainly seen as inconvenient obstacles to be evaded if possible. Missionaries' territorial imagination was primarily seen in a sacred idiom; the land was made up of vast fields of people who needed

to hear their message. Baptists ignored states and crossed borders where they could, thereby contradicting states' claims to govern bounded homogeneous territories. States' desires to control the movement of people had the effect of making non-citizens of itinerating Lahu and Wa preachers. The British and the Chinese tried increasingly to differentiate between citizens and foreigners, at times even expelling non-citizens or recalling their own citizens in a sign of growing external state penetration. International borders were at first irrelevant to Baptists' and Presbyterians' territorial imaginings, but over time this changed. When the British and the Chinese began to extend their physical presence in the borderlands, Baptist missionaries made use of this for their own ends, for instance by offering to help with educating citizens, but with the aim still of setting up transnational cross-border organisations. In Siam, Presbyterians worked with the Siamese state, with the explicit aim of making good Siamese citizens of borderland dwellers.

The third chapter explored how contested circulations of goods gave real effect to hitherto invisible borders. This furthers Eric Tagliacozzo's work on cross-border circulations of illicit commodities in the Netherlands Indies. He has focused on how cross-border movements of goods challenged state-building in insular Southeast Asia. Tagliacozzo is interested in the interaction between politics, commodity flows and frontiers, and how each shaped the other over the nineteenth century.[636] His analysis centres on examining the extension of one state's power into the borderlands. A more transnational study can focus on the role played by other actors, such as cultivators, traders and local rulers who profited from the cross-border trade. This thesis examined first how international borders made smuggling profitable, as smugglers took advantage of the opportunities created by differential state tax regimes. The chapter showed how borders in the region were reified in part by the contested mobility of illicit

[636] Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*.

commodities. The Keng Tung Sawbwa used disputes with British and Siamese state actors over border policy to argue that his state should be able to make its own foreign policy. A focus on the transnational opium trade and debates over its legalisation can explain how contestations between multiple groups of actors contributed to the hardening of some borders in the region.

These new international boundaries continued to be sites of contestation and transgression after independence. This analysis extends the historiography around nation-state-making, exploring how legacies of colonial rule in the borderlands contributed to the lack of fit between independent states and nations. The final two chapters showed how, for postcolonial states like Burma, decades of haphazard colonial borderlands policy shaped central governments' foreign as well as border policies. This discussion focused on how the nature of borderland dwellers' differentiated government under colonial rule shaped bordering policies in the new postcolonial state. Differentiated citizenship categories were part of the nature of imperial rule. The ramifications of these contingent political arrangements would complicate independence negotiations and contribute to the uneasy fit between independent states and nations. As a result of experiences under colonial rule and during the independence negotiations, Burma's first government saw the borderlands as a site of potential existential threat. The presence of rival foreign forces in Shan State made the polarising international order of the mid-twentieth century a domestic as well as an international problem for Burma. The U Nu regime responded to PLA and KMT border incursions in the 1950s by focusing on appeasing China, a policy which Ne Win completed in 1960 with a border agreement and a friendship treaty.

A multitude of recent border crises have grabbed headlines around the world. Border-crossing asylum seekers have upended domestic politics in Bangladesh, the EU and the US. In Ireland

politicians and citizens across the board fear the consequences of a return to a hard Irish border. In the UK in recent years panic over the removal of internal EU barriers to the movement of people brought border enforcement into the home, as politicians asked landlords and bosses to act as border police. Maritime borders have come into renewed focus in East Asia as competing claims to resources, expressed through invocations of age-old sea borders, risk a regional conflagration. All of these events serve to remind us that borders are not going away. If we want to understand states and nations in this modern era, we need more than ever to understand why borders are created, and how, and what they mean to different people near and far.

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