

**Friedrich Nietzsche in British India**  
A Contribution towards the Study of Occidentalism  
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## **1 Introduction**

a) Since Edward Said's work of 1978, the term "Orientalism" has become a symbol for the reflection of how "the West" saw and perceived "the East". Said's and his associates' intention can be read as a stimulation of reflection towards a process of mental decolonisation on the side of the former colonial powers that aims at the prevention of neo-colonial attitudes and behaviour. On the other hand, new frontiers of real or alleged cultural conflicts have come into being.

Colonialism and orientalism could and still can be likened to a one-way traffic. Western fantasies and actions were directed towards the attractive and, at the same time, dangerous Orient under the pretext of liberating the material as well as spiritual treasures of the East for anybody by bringing Western democratic Enlightenment to the despotic East. Decolonisation opened the way for oncoming traffic and, almost inevitably, the term "Occidentalism" entered the scientific and semi-scientific debate.<sup>1</sup>

Like its predecessor, "occidentalism" is an oscillating phrase with many facets on the brink of scientific and political language.<sup>2</sup> This is unavoidable. The age of colonialism and the process of decolonisation to which the terms "Orientalism" and "Occidentalism" are related have not yet come to a complete end. Myanmar/Burma's case is an exemplary illustration for this assumption.

At a reception of the current Minister for Education of Myanmar to honour the participants of the Myanmar 2 Millennia Conference in Yangon in December 1999, the foreign guests received a picture drawn by a Burmese student illustrating one of the 'Asian Values', namely: "Paying respect to the teachers". The picture was nice and innocent, a quality that none of the cartoons in the New Light of Myanmar during the days of the conference could claim. Here, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her friends of the NLD were depicted as neo-colonial agents who wanted to implement 'Western Values' into Myanmar schools, that is, for example to incite students against their parents and teachers.

This is occidentalism pure and crude. It matches the examples of orientalism that Said and others have presented and underlines the thesis that occidentalism may be called a "programme for revenge" for the Western cultural and economic hegemony of the past.<sup>3</sup>

b) This paper attempts to contribute to the discussion by presenting a case study of Burmese 'occidentalism' that happened some 70 years ago at a crucial event of modern Burmese history in 1930, a year that embodied some political shocks and upheavals around the globe. The repercussions of Wall Street's Black Friday were felt all over the world, even in an alleged backwater of the British Empire like Burma. Saya San and his men revolted in December in a part of Burma that was notorious for lawlessness. This revolt received the attention of the authorities and the media of those days. It fitted very well into the orientalism-scheme and could easily be labelled as a medieval outburst of superstition and despotism against the Enlightened - but of course human and, therefore, not flawless - British government.

Seven months before the Saya-San-rebellion started, another attempt at a revolution took place in Rangoon. It did not receive any media attention at those times although this revolution tried to make use of the contemporary media available: public pamphlets and political pop songs.

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<sup>1</sup> This essay was written for the Burma Studies Conference in De Kalb, October 2000.

The *Dobama Asiayone*, the We-Burma-Association, started its activities at the end of May, 1930, briefly after a labour conflict between Burmese and Indian workers that developed into a violent Indo-Burmese riot.<sup>4</sup> The association published a pamphlet demanding - among other things - the promotion of Burmese business and a new Burmese consciousness. In July it launched a song that proved to be a public success and that was later transformed into the national anthem of independent Burma. At the performances of the song the national aims of the association were explained and the members of the audience were asked to take the title of *Thakin* as a prefix to the personal name - instead of the traditional prefixes of Maung, Ko and U or the like. In August a second series of reform articles was published that stressed the necessity of a complete reformation of Burmese education and cultural values.<sup>5</sup>

*Thakin* had been the casual address by a native to a Western - in most cases: British - authority of those days and parallels the Indian *Sahib*. The word is usually translated as 'master' and has a wide range of connotations including the addresses of a king and even the Buddha. The reclamation of the title by Burmese citizens was of high symbolic significance. It challenged British-Western hegemony and thus the foundation of the colonial project of a 'guided way to democracy'. On the other hand the taking of the *Thakin*-title was an act of creative restoration of old Burma's glory that had been incorporated in the great dynasties that could be traced back to the 'solar race' of the Buddha. The creative newness of this restoration was underlined in many ways.

The reclamation of the title was a kind of 'democratisation'. In Burma, from then on there was not only one *thakin*, the king, there were many, anybody - even women<sup>6</sup> - were called upon to take the cognomen and the claim connected with it. "We Burmans are a race of masters" the song proclaimed. And the reform articles made clear that much striving was necessary to realise the new proclamation of the Burmese masters.

The great appeal and the great weakness of symbolic action are due to its vagueness. The song was a success, the pamphlets were not. Only after five years and the exit of the association's founder, Thakin Ba Thoung, from his brainchild was the association transformed into an institution.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the reclaiming of the *Thakin*-title by Thakin Ba Thoung and his friends is open to questions.

c) One crucial question touches the sensitive issue of the relationship of the old and the new, the British and the Burmese 'masters' of the country. Was it any kind of partnership with the British that was imagined on the side of the *Thakins* and, if yes, on what foundation? Was there the assumption of explicit or implicit Burmese hegemony? Both questions are closely connected with the relationship between the Burmans and other ethnic groups within Burma particularly those who were affiliated with the British in a special way like the Indian and - at least partly - the Karen population.

These questions are of a very intricate nature. They are related to the "We-others-dilemma" that lies at the bottom of all reflection of all the problems connected with "orientalism" and "occidentalism". To define 'Burmese We-ness' (*Do-Bama*), it was necessary to use an expression that signified the 'Others'. By reclaiming the *Thakin*-title from the British (and other Westerners) and thus refuting the foreign assertion of hegemony, the 'democratic' element within the British meaning of the word had to be taken over. The attempt to overcome the colonial situation made a dilemma unavoidable: The language of liberation had to use terms that included the language of the - current or potential - oppressor.

This is theory. Practise shows that people try to avoid or circumvent dilemmas. One of many strategies is to associate for a certain time with a "suitable other" to fight the current enemy hoping that this "Other" is no threat for the independence striven for. This strategy is the basis for many alliances during the struggle for independence in Burma and elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

And here Friedrich Nietzsche enters the stage. He was one of the "suitable others" that were used for a time by the *Thakins* as a foreign ally.

## 2 Friedrich Nietzsche in Burma, Part I

a) Nietzsche's name has been mentioned quite often in the enumeration of Western persons and ideas that influenced the *Dobama* movement in general and Thakin Ba Thoung in particular. His name serves as an illustration of the ideological diversity of the *Dobama Asiayone*. Cady's remark is typical: „Thakin ideology, always strongly nationalist, was otherwise a hodgepodge, extremely fluid. They studied whatever came to hand, Dr. Sun's *San Min Chu I*, the Sinn Fein movement literature from Ireland, Nietzsche, and Karl Marx.“<sup>9</sup> A closer look reveals that different authors state the same sequence: Sinn Fein – Nietzsche – Marx(ism-Leninism).<sup>10</sup>

We find the same series already in a contemporary comment on the rise of the *Dobama* movement. The columnist Mya Doung Nyo<sup>11</sup> of the nationalist newspaper *New Burma* in August 1938 wrote under the headline “Growth of Burmese Political Ideas”:

Slowly, Burma turned towards Ireland, could we not import Sinn Fein? Sinn Fein Movement gave birth to Dobama (Thakin) Movement. The experiment was tried; but though there was no lack of Griffiths and de Valera to reach the efficiency of non-violent ? self-reliance, the iron hand of British Imperialism tried to nip it in the bud. Nietzsche and his superman philosophy cropped up with Thakinism. The old reactionaries said this country was not ripe for Revolution [...] The world outside Burma had in the meantime went beyond the Irish stage. The 1917 coup and Lenin appear on the political horizon. Marxism-Leninism is the new political philosophy for the younger generation, though the elders despise it as something crazy and utopian. [...] „Comrades“ and „Hammer and Sickle“ come out in the streets, in face of Fascist militaristic organisations of some of our old political leaders.<sup>12</sup>

Mya Doung Nyo's analysis is not guided by the criteria of ideological correctness and stringency but of “newness” in a double sense. Internationally, the *Dobama Asiayone* was inspired by the latest developments within the contemporary world. On the national level, there was a fight between the young and the old political generation. Both aspects are interconnected. *Dobama's* radical political attitude opposed the position of the old political leaders who had linked up with the British rulers and it resorted to international contemporary models “other than British”.

The “Other-ness” in regard to Britain was quite evident in the case of Ireland and Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein was a religious, cultural and political protest against Britain and the Irish fight for freedom after the abortive declaration of independence in 1916. Moreover, this fight provided stories of heroes and martyrs of the independence struggle, such as Griffiths and de Valera, mentioned above. There were others like Roger Casement and Michael Collins, who died violent deaths at the hands of a British executioner and a member of a rival group within the Irish Republican Army respectively.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the name *Dobama Asiayone* (“We-Burma-Association”) can be seen as a Burmese equivalent of *Sinn Fein* (“We alone”).

On the other hand, Marxist-Leninist Soviet Russia was seen as a contemporary success story for a non-British way towards supporting weak and poor nations and towards establishing a just society.<sup>14</sup>

But what about Nietzsche? He was no revolutionary in the political meaning of the word. He had been a philologist, a writer and a philosopher who died in 1900 some 20 years before the Burmese independence struggle gained momentum with the student strike of 1920.

b) First of all, Friedrich Nietzsche, as a German,<sup>15</sup> could be regarded as another non-British “suitable other” for the Burmese fight for freedom. World War I had been a kind of watershed in the Burmese assessment of Germany vis-à-vis Great Britain. Burmese soldiers had helped Britain to defeat Germany. Public opinion expressed by U Lun – in later times: Thakin

Kodaw Hmaing - expected a positive post-war attitude towards a self-ruled Burma from the British side. After the dyarchy-scheme that came into effect in British India in 1919 was not implemented in Burma, public opinion turned against Britain and regarded Germany as a ‘co-victim’ of British political arrogance.<sup>16</sup>

A second argument for Nietzsche’s impact on the *Dobama Asiayone* was his proximity to Burmese traditional ‘mastery’. U Ohn suggested in 1963 the thesis that the taking of the title of *Thakin* was more than just a status-seeking protest and vain gesture against British domination. He emphasised that “‘Thakin’ was an equivalent of ‘Superman’ of Nietzschean thought”.<sup>17</sup>

U Ohn was closely associated with Burma’s struggle for independence and independent post-war Burma and familiar with the leading politicians. Born in 1913 in Toungoo, he participated in the Burmese student movement of the 1930s. In 1935, he was elected treasurer of the Rangoon University Student Union (RUSU) under Nu’s presidency of the Union. Other members of the RUSU team were M.A. Rashid (Vice-President) and Aung San who became editor of the Student magazine *Oway* that became famous because of a short article published in 1936 that supplied one reason why the student strike of 1936 happened. U Nu later remembered Ohn as the person who introduced to him Aung San, Kyaw Nyein and Thein Pe who were at the core of the younger student generation.<sup>18</sup> Having won a scholarship for further studies in Great Britain, he studied sociology in Leeds<sup>19</sup> and remained in England during the war. Having acted as a defendant of the AFPFL after the war and having met with Aung San in January 1947 during the latter’s negotiations with the British government, he was promoted Burma’s second ambassador to Britain in 1949 and her first ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1951. He returned to Burma in 1956 to replace U Thant, who had become Burma’s envoy at the United Nations, as Prime Minister U Nu’s personal advisor. He was an eccentric man of an intellectual feature and bent and a bookworm.<sup>20</sup>

The paper in which U Ohn presented his thesis was read in January 1963, ten months after the coup of March 2, at a meeting of the Burma Research Society. The theme of the paper delivered in a rather cryptic and aphoristic style is the gap between Burmese folk belief on one hand and world-wide science and modernism on the other. The Burmese words for “face” and “butterfly” are analysed as examples of Burmese traditional belief, the *Dobama* Song of 1930 and the Song of the *Nagani* Book Club of 1937 are examined as exemplars of the “new national and political attitudes” that the Thakins introduced to Burma in taking up different breezes of the “West Wind” and applying them to Burma’s politics.<sup>21</sup>

U Ohn in retrospect interconnects some Burmese phrases and quotations with expressions from Nietzsche:

- Nietzsche’s ‘superman’ resembles the Burmese belief in the special powers of kings and hermits.<sup>22</sup>

- The idea of a superior ‘master race’ was expressed in the opening words of the *Dobama* Song as well as in a popular song about the magic Bo Bo Aung at the dawn of the Second World War.<sup>23</sup>

- The core of the song is seen by Ohn in the sentences that stress the “selfless zeal and dedication to the cause of the country and people, especially for the generations to succeed after them”. He compares this unselfishness with Nietzsche’s idea that a “transvaluation of values” is necessary to provide a new breed of men “beyond good and evil” being extremely gifted both in intellect and will.<sup>24</sup>

- Finally, Ohn pairs the slogan “live dangerously!” coined by Nietzsche with a Burmese proverb that emphasises the necessity to face future hazards.<sup>25</sup>

For Ohn, Nietzsche’s concept of ‘superman’ suited the *Thakins* for at least two reasons. It was in line with Burmese tradition and it represented contemporary international modernity. The values of old were ‘re-valued’, renewed. Burman We-ness was preserved,<sup>26</sup> but traditional, superstitious folk belief was overcome.

c) Ohn's arguments are supported by a look at Thakin Ba Thoung, the central figure of the early days of the *Dobama Asiayone*. Ba Thoung, born in 1906, worked together with J.S. Furnivall and others to translate international literature into Burmese. In 1930, he won a prize for one of his translations.<sup>27</sup> According to an interview in 1960 reported by Prof. Sarkisyanz, he read Nietzsche and was encouraged by this reading to fight for a Burmese "master mentality" instead of a "slave mentality".<sup>28</sup> He adopted and radicalised a theme that had been a constituent element of Burmese nationalist rhetoric since the student strike of 1920.<sup>29</sup>

Before and after the *Dobama* Song was introduced, Ba Thoung and his friends published two pamphlets that outlined the program of the *Dobama Asiayone* in very plain terms. They demanded cultural and economic reform in Burma based on a new Burmese "We-consciousness" and self-assurance.

'Master' Ba Thoung like his predecessors and successors tried to define a new Burmese individual, social and political identity against British-Western domination and orientalism. One of the means of the attempt was the import of anti-imperialist political strategies both from non-British and British origin. Another was the adoption of non-political ideas that suited the "politics of definition".<sup>30</sup> This kind of politics implicated the whole of 'Burma-ness' including personal and collective self-assertion and self-definition. It contained two elements of the ambivalence that is characteristic for occidentalism (and orientalism, too). First, the promotion of "positive occidentalism" - Nietzsche's and other Western thinkers' estimation by the Burmese nationalists; second, "negative occidentalism" - the view of the slave-producing British system and its cultural-ideological superstructure.

d) To strike an interim balance: A look at Nietzsche's footprints in Burma exposes a complex situation beyond the simple antagonism of "We" and "Others". The reception of Nietzsche had an effect on the shaping of modern Burma's conception of herself. Before a more detailed assessment of how Nietzsche's positive adaptation by Thakin Ba Thoung and other *Thakins* contributed to Burma's self-conceptualisation vis-à-vis the imperialist West a condensed look on the reception of Nietzsche's ideas in other parts of the world may be useful.

### 3 Nietzsche world-wide

a) One Indian investigator into Friedrich Nietzsche's legacy stated:

„[N]o single individual in recent times, with the possible exception of Karl Marx, had such a powerful impact - direct and indirect - on the minds of men and practise of States as Nietzsche. But, also, there is perhaps no other individual who is so controversial and so much open to a variety of conflicting interpretations as Nietzsche is.“<sup>31</sup>

This assertion has gained even more weight after the political regimes inspired by Marx' and Engels' thoughts disappeared from the political landscape of Europe.

Nietzsche, among others, has been labelled, a prophet of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and of post-modernism. On the other hand, he has been blamed as a thinker who was a pioneer of German fascist racism. His impact on later generation and the vast amount of literature dealing with his life and work are contrasted with his personal biography that lacks superficial strength and glory.

Friedrich Nietzsche was born in 1854 in a small town in Saxony. His father and his grandfathers were Lutheran ministers. Following this tradition, he started to study theology together with classical philology, but abandoned the former after one year to concentrate on the latter. At the age of twenty-four, he was appointed professor at the University of Basel, Switzerland, bypassing the usual academic procedure.<sup>32</sup> His first great publication, dedicated

to Richard Wagner, transgressed the borders of the scholastic domain and stirred up considerable controversy within the German speaking philological world.

Suffering from ill health since his early youth, Nietzsche had to suspend his teachings at the University twice and finally left the institute for good after only 10 years. After 1879, he lived on his pension as an unassuming lodger at resorts in Switzerland, Italy and France. The writings that made him famous were published after his retirement. His most popular work is *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. The first three sections were published in 1883 and 1884, the fourth section, although written in 1885, only in 1892. Here, he displayed his typical aphoristic and paradoxical style, combined a diagnosis of the contemporary world and psychological insight and, as a kind of therapy, presented the idea of a “Superior Man” (or: Superman, Overman) as a role model for the world after the death of the Christian God and all other gods as well:

“Dead are all the Gods: now do we desire the Superman to live.” – Let this be our final will at the great noontide.<sup>33</sup>

These and other of Nietzsche’s assertions attracted worldwide attention only after the prophet had met his fate. Nietzsche’s health deteriorated over the years. In January 1889, he suffered a final breakdown. From here on, he lived in mental darkness. His mother and his sister nursed him until his death in August 1900. His sister cared for his unpublished and unfinished writings as well. Interested in the reputation of her brother and her own gain and fame she manipulated and partially faked the legacy of her brother. Thus she and her assistants paved the way for the worship of Nietzsche as a heroic martyr and prophet<sup>34</sup> and attracted some of the leading Nazi’s interest in his ideas.

These ideas stretched out around the world at tremendous speed. First translations of Nietzsche’s works into the main western languages were published in the 1890s and in 1911 (New York) and 1913 (London) his collected works in 18 volumes were edited in English. In Japan, the first articles on Nietzsche were written shortly after his insanity commenced, “Zarathustra” developed here as elsewhere into a best-seller and Nietzsche’s complete works were published between 1916 and 1929.<sup>35</sup>

The interest in Nietzsche reached a first peak before World War I, but other waves followed between the wars and after World War II continuing until today. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nietzsche’s death in 2000 witnesses many conferences dedicated to his legacy.

b) The appeal of Nietzsche transcended boundaries. He was read and discussed in the west and in the east by people with different cultural and religious backgrounds. Scientists of many subjects dealt with his ideas and he became a hero of popular interest as well, even a cult figure. What were the reasons for this extremely diverse impact?

There are, of course, many answers to this question. Two of them may do in this context. Firstly, Nietzsche was an “affirmative thinker”.<sup>36</sup> He did not present his ideas through sequences of rational logic argumentation but in a poetic and metaphorical style that was open to a wide variety of interpretations and misinterpretations. He came straight to the point and coined a lot of phrases that had an immediate appeal to the reader and could be easily applied to different situations of life. The phrases cited by U Ohn – ‘superman’, ‘transvaluation of values’ and ‘live dangerously’ – are a few examples of many.

The phrase of ‘God’s death’ points to Nietzsche’s fundamental critique of the contemporary Christian inspired world at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time and closely interconnected with this criticism, he strongly questioned the contemporary concepts of one’s own self. He did this as an outsider and from a far-off perspective.<sup>37</sup> This made Nietzsche an early ‘global thinker’. In retrospective, his thoughts could be interpreted as a foreboding of the many collective and individual crises of the century to come and at the same time as a means to survive these dangerous times.

#### 4 Nietzsche in British India

a) It has been stated that “Nietzsche’s impact on India appears to have been less widespread than in China and Japan.”<sup>38</sup> This may be true if one looks only at the Nietzsche-reception on the academic philosophical level. The case of Burma shows already that he was known in British-India not long after the end of World War I and that the impact of his work may have extended to the political field. This assumption can be corroborated.

The writings of Nietzsche received a very early echo in Bengal, the Indian province bordering Burma. Sri Aurobindo Gosh, politician, religious man and philosopher, published an essay entitled “The Superman” and received inspiration for his theory of evolution from Nietzsche.<sup>39</sup> But Aurobindo had already turned his back on politics when he wrote about this inspiration. It was different with two other men who influenced Indian political culture, Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945).

b) Iqbal was a man of many professions. He was active as philosopher, poet, lawyer, politician, Islamic scholar and social reformer and is regarded as one of the spiritual and political fathers of Pakistan. He formulated a political philosophy of “cultural nationalism” based on the principles laid down in the Qur’an and opposed to western “territorial nationalism” that tried to revive the spirit of original Islam and rejected the claim of superiority of western democracies. In 1930, acting as president of the Indian All Muslim League, he elaborated the idea of a separate Muslim state as the best solution for a healthy development of both the major communities in the Indian subcontinent.

Iqbal had been in England and Germany between 1905 and 1908. In 1907 he earned his Ph.D. from Munich University. In 1915, he published a long poem “The Secrets of Self”<sup>40</sup>. His interpretation of self as a superhuman entity resembled Nietzsche’s concept of ‘Superman’ although in Iqbal’s concept it is the divine spark that enables man to reach human perfection. This difference resulted in Iqbal’s critique of Nietzsche. In 1917 he wrote:

The Democracy of Europe .... originated mainly in the economic regeneration of European societies. Nietzsche, however, abhors this „rule of the herd“ and, hopeless of the plebeian, he bases a higher culture on the cultivation and growth of an Aristocracy of Superman. But is the plebeian so absolutely hopeless? The Democracy of Islam did not grow out of the extension of economic opportunity, it is a spiritual principle [...] Out of the plebeian material Islam had formed men of the noblest type of life and power. Is not, then, the Democracy of early Islam an experimental refutation of the ideas of Nietzsche?<sup>41</sup>

Together with Nietzsche, Iqbal criticises the “economic materialism” of western democracies, but against Nietzsche upholds the possibility of an “Islamic democracy” consisting of many noble ‘supermen’ guided by the Qur’an’s spirit. In short, he characterised Nietzsche – similar to the characterisation of Karl Marx thus “[P]agan his brain, faithful his heart and good”.

Iqbal used Nietzsche to fight the Indian Muslims’ inferiority complex. A western genius had lost faith in the western values that seemed to dominate the Indians and had proved that they were wrong. He had become a martyr who could be regarded as a half-enlightened follower of Muhammed.<sup>42</sup> What greatness and what geniuses could be expected in India if the heirs of the Prophet dared to live up to their destiny! Thus, Nietzsche’s example could be used to show the wrong ways of the west and the right way ahead of the true believers in an Islamic Indian nation, the boundaries of which were not drawn by human pencils but by Allah’s spirit.

c) Muhammad Iqbal was knighted in 1923. At this time Subhas Chandra Bose had already broken with the British system of rewards. After having studied in London and having passed

the examination for the Indian Civil Service that opened the door for a top post in the administration of India he quit the Service and dedicated his life to 'Mother India'. Like Iqbal, he had many talents, but he used them for one purpose only: to liberate India from her internal weakness and her foreign oppressor. He worked under the supervision of the Bengal leader C.R. Das.

In October 1924, Bose was arrested for a second time. In January of the following year he was transferred to Mandalay jail in Burma. Eight months later, in September 1925, he received the first instalment of Nietzsche's Collected Works – an 18 volume edition - through the Calcutta Book Company of Girin Mitter.<sup>43</sup>

Bose was released in 1927 and resumed his duties as a fighter for Indian freedom. Between 1929 and 1931, he delivered several speeches at meetings of youth organisations affiliated to the Indian National Congress. On August 17, 1929, he addressed a District Students' Conference on the issue of "The True Nature of Freedom" that included this paragraph:

Life is worth living only if we know or try to know how is it possible for us to create a new nation. This is the real problem before the students' conference.

It may be asked what is the true ideal [...] of men? What should be the code of conduct in student life that may lead to the attainment of that ideal? To this, Nietzsche's theory of Superman, which he prescribed for the German nation to make it great and an ideal one, might be a pertinent suggestion. Nietzsche prescribed a code of conduct as also some changes in the prevailing mode of thought. He believed that Christian morality led men astray from the true ideals and if a new class of men were to be created, Christian morality had to be scorned and cast aside. His theory holds ground till today. Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Thomas Moore and our own ancient Rishis<sup>44</sup> tried to find out a way whereby men could be elevated to a higher level of humanity which would be the ideal for all.

Now, what is our ideal? No foreigner or outsider can suggest it. The answer must come from within, it must come from our own people.<sup>45</sup>

Bose had studied secondary literature dealing with Nietzsche as well.<sup>46</sup> He comprehended the "theory of Superman" as a kind of climax of human thought that included western **and** eastern traditions and that fitted into Bose's own project of how to liberate India.

This project was announced three years later at a conference of Indians living abroad held in London. Bose had come to Europe in 1933 to improve his health that was badly affected by his stays in prison. He used the opportunity to contact European politicians, friends of India and Indians living in Europe and to develop his ideas about the future of India.<sup>47</sup> In the speech that was delivered at the conference<sup>48</sup> after a lengthy analysis of the political situation in India vis-à-vis the British he outlined his vision of the way towards a "Free India".<sup>49</sup>

He envisaged a new party as the force to achieve this goal that necessarily had to part ways with the current Indian leadership (including Gandhi). Like every great movement, and Bose expected India to be the place of the "next remarkable contribution to the culture and the civilisation of the world",<sup>50</sup> this party would have to start from small beginnings. Bose foresaw three steps to be taken:

Our first task will be to gather together a group of men and women who are willing to undergo the maximum sacrifice and suffering .... When these 'morally prepared' men and women are available, they must be given the requisite intellectual training so that they may be able to realise the magnitude of their task. .... When this intellectual training is completed we will have a clear notion of the plan of action that will be necessary for the conquest of power and also of the programme that should be put into operation when the new state is brought into existence after the seizure of power.<sup>51</sup>

Bose never had the opportunity to put these ideas into action. He was elected President of the Indian National Congress twice in 1938 and 1939 but escaped the shadow of Gandhi only after his escape from house-arrest in Calcutta to Germany in 1941 and his return to Asia in 1943. The Indian National Army that was re-established under his leadership can be regarded

as a substitute of the envisioned political *Samyavada Sangha* (Community of Unity). This army was based on strict non-communal principles. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs served together and there was even a unit of women, the “Ransi of Jhani regiment” named after a heroine of the Indian mutiny of 1857. – The attempt to conquer British-India together with the Japanese army failed. Bose died in an aeroplane crash in 1945 on the way to Japan. He left behind many followers who regarded him as a martyr for India’s freedom, someone with superhuman powers that enabled him to influence Indian politics even after his physical disappearance<sup>52</sup> and who firmly believed that under Bose’s leadership India’s history would have taken a better course.

d) Nietzsche’s idea of a “Superman” appealed to political thinkers in different parts of British India. The Muslim Iqbal used him for his approach towards an Indian-Islamic renaissance. The Hindu Subhas Chandra Bose, who was influenced by the reformers Sri Aurobindo Gosh, Vivekananda introduced him as a model for the building-up of a strong secular Indian welfare state. The Buddhist Ba Thoung was inspired to take the title *Thakin* and spread the message that the Burmans were able to master their destiny independently.

All this is prove of one quality inherent in Nietzsche’s writings, the quality of transcending cultural and religious boundaries. Nietzsche and his literary children Zarathustra and Superman became ‘global heroes’ – or ‘global scoundrels’ for those who resented the ideas and the acts of the Burmese followers of Nietzsche.

On the other side there was one common factor for the recipients of Nietzsche’s message in British India. The colonial situation had altered the conditions for expressing the subjects’ own identity. It had to be newly defined in an at least double sense: vis-à-vis the own past and the system of values represented by the respective colonial power. The “Superman” was able to serve both needs. He could be seen as a literary reincarnation of the heroes of Burma’s own past and as a fundamental critique of the system of the present rulers. And he was a figure that symbolised complete independence.

In detail, there were other factors that influenced the kind of reception. Iqbal stressed Nietzsche’s ‘martyrdom’ to underline his closeness to Islamic martyrs, Bose underlined the universality of the Superman-ideal and alleged a political connotation in Nietzsche’s work. In any case, the reception served the purpose of laying the foundation for a better future of the own community. Nietzsche’s ideas could be used to hew such a foundation stone. These ideas had the quality of a ‘relative truth’ and of an ‘object of transition’. “Moral conduct”, as Bose put it, individual strength and purity were prerequisites for intellectual training and the final seizure of power and the taking over of responsibility.

## **5 Friedrich Nietzsche in Burma II**

a) Thakin Ba Thoung was without any doubt an eccentric and the *Thakin* movement he helped to bring into existence carried a new style into Burmese politics that disturbed many.<sup>53</sup> The preceding paragraphs demonstrate that the reception of Nietzsche in Burma is part of a pattern that can be found elsewhere in Asia and around the world. Nietzsche himself was an eccentric who only became famous after he went insane. His personal fate together with his striking and affirmative style made him a figure of global interest and controversy.

The Nietzsche-reception in Burma parallels that in other parts of British India and is mainly determined by the colonial situation. Even if one doesn’t follow U Ohn’s thesis of a direct connection between the ‘Superman’ and the *Thakin*-title, the *Dobama*-Song shows that the ‘Superman’ had the qualities of representing the Burmese fame of old and rejecting the British claim to master the affairs of the country.

In Burma, too, Nietzsche’s impact was transitory. Its special function was a contribution to the first step of a Cultural Revolution, the establishment of self-confidence and – to put it in

Nietzsche's words – the “will to power”. Other steps had to be taken and were taken parallel to Bose's scheme. A symbol for the necessary ‘intellectual training’ is the establishment of the *Nagani* Book Club in 1937; the final seizure of power was achieved, due to the circumstances of war, through the Burmese Independence Army with the “Thirty Comrades”, 25 of whom had taken the *Thakin* title, as its core.<sup>54</sup> It fits into this framework that the first book that helped to create the myth of these “comrades”, started with a lengthy quotation from Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. The book was written by Mya Doung Nyo, the former columnist of *The New Burma*, and the paragraph out of the first section of the book cited is entitled: “War and warriors”.<sup>55</sup> This quotation can be connected with the first lines of the *Dobama* song that recalled the victories over Siam and India and the song of the paramilitary troupe of the *Dobama Asiayone*, the *Bama Letyone Tat* that reminded the members that they were the descendants of heroes.<sup>56</sup> In a way, Nietzsche was one of the godfathers of the Burmese army, of Burma's independence and the problems connected with it.

b) Besides the parallels between the Nietzsche reception in Burma and other parts of British India, there are peculiarities, too. It can be asked if Nietzsche's relation to Buddhism may have had any impact on his reception in Burma. One of the phrases he coined cited by U Ohn is the “eternal recurrence” that for a Buddhist ear may provoke a connotation to the Wheel of Kamma. But the structural similarities between Nietzsche's thinking and Buddhism that have been subject to investigation concentrate on Mahayana Buddhism.<sup>57</sup> Here, further research is necessary.

The same applies to another question. At present, there are only indirect sources available that tell us about the early influence of Nietzsche in Burma. Thakin Ba Thoung's pamphlets of 1930 do not contain any direct quotations of Nietzsche's work, but a lot of indirect references and a similar style. Ba Thoung applies the principle of “transvaluation of values” according to his needs.<sup>58</sup> Before more sources about Ba Thoung's thought are accessible, the difference between him and the *Dobama Asiayone* respectively and Iqbal and Bose who directly mentioned Nietzsche can be tentatively explained this way: The latter addressed a well outlined-group of people – demanding readers and students - who were interested in current trends of the international world. Ba Thoung tried to reach out to the average Burmese population of Rangoon, urging them to think and to buy Burmese.<sup>59</sup> The people addressed could not be expected to appreciate intellectual knowledge.

Finally, the attitude towards Nietzsche's country of birth, Germany, may have influenced the reception of his work in India under British rule. Iqbal and Bose had lived in Europe for some time and had thus come into personal contact with European contemporary thought including the “Nietzsche fever” at the beginning of the century. The Burmese *Thakins* had no such experience. Their assessment of Germany – as their view of Nietzsche – was solely a result of imagination.

It has already been mentioned that in the eyes of many Burmans Germany was regarded as a ‘co-victim’ of the British. This attitude may have contributed to granting special credit to Nietzsche and his work. In later years it was the Nazi Swastika (and the Japanese sun-symbols) that aroused Burmese fantasies of a common German-Burman (-Japanese) descent from the Buddha's sun race. Finally, during the war, Germany was Burma's ally before and after Burma's “independence” of August 1943.<sup>60</sup> Mya Doung Nyo's Nietzsche-quotation fits well into this frame.

## 6 Conclusion

The alleged Burmese-German alliance was a product of fantasy. It did not correspond with the reality of German politics.<sup>61</sup> But as fantasy it was a special kind of reality. It was one “image of the West” on the Burmese side and thus an object for the study of occidentalism. What

happened to Nietzsche in Burma and elsewhere in British India supplies other examples. His ideas about a “Superman” and other parts of his writings were taken out of their context and used as a ‘suitable other’ to re-define the own ‘oriental identity’ vis-à-vis the Occident. This may be compared to what happened to pieces of oriental tradition at the hands of Western interpreters.

This parallel leads to the assumption that occidentalism and orientalism are like twins orientalism only being the slightly older of the two. After “the West” had met “the East”, the West’s representatives could not but outline their own identity by using images of the other side – and vice versa. But both are not identical twins. They developed from different eggs and grew up in diverse environments.

The case of Nietzsche’s reception in Burma shows, among other things, that Burmese occidentalism did not merely follow the simple “We-Others” dichotomy. There were many “Others”, more or less suitable ones, that were used to shape the Burmese identity, beside the British masters a bunch of Irish revolutionaries, a German philosopher, British socialists, the builders of the Soviet state and others. To complicate the situation, some of the groups living in Burma like the Indians, Chinese and Karen and others because of their affiliation with the British had an ‘occidental tinge’.

This made it very difficult to formulate and set into practice a balanced national identity. Clearly, Burma has not yet finished this task. The metaphor of orientalism and occidentalism being twins may remind us that the unfinished assignment can only be fulfilled if representatives of both sides (and on both sides there are many!) come to terms.

The example of Nietzsche may be helpful for this achievement. He reminds us Westerners that Burmese occidentalism of today has Western roots. And he may remind the Burmese side that the ideal of complete independence symbolised by Nietzsche’s “Superman” could only be a transitory one if it should not develop into insane isolation.

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<sup>1</sup>ndnotes:

According to Stein Tønnesson, the Egyptian philosopher Hassan Hanafi used the term in 1982 as a “positive Arabic response to Edward Said’s critique” in a long work entitled “Introduction to the science of Occidentalism” (Stein Tønnesson, “Orientalism, Occidentalism and Knowing about Others”. (1994) Internet source: <http://nias.ku.dk.Nytt/Thematic/Orientalism/orientalism.html>, p. 6). Later, Samuel Huntington used the term to underline his “Clash-of-Civilisation-Thesis” by labelling the Malaysian Prime Minister Muhammad Mahathir as an advocate of “Asian Occidentalism” (Internet source: [http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/agathon/2791\\_4.htm](http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/agathon/2791_4.htm), p. 3).

<sup>2</sup> For an overview on the different meanings of „Occidentalism“ see the introduction to James G. Carrier (ed.), *Occidentalism. Images of the West*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, pp. 1-32.

<sup>3</sup> Tønnesson, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> For the early history of the *Dobama*-movement see Khin Yi, *The Dobama Movement in Burma (1930-1938)*. pp. 3-12.

<sup>5</sup> The articles and the text of the *Dobama* song are reprinted in Burmese in the appendix of Khin Yi’s work (pp. 1-35). U Maung Maung made an English translation of parts of the two pamphlets in the appendix of his M.A.-thesis „From Sangha to Laity“. The appendix does not appear in the published version of the thesis. The English version of the *Dobama* song given by Khin Yi (*Dobama* p. 9) is quite different from the Burmese original.

<sup>6</sup> There were some female *Thakinmas* as well ((Dr.) Maung Maung, *Burma and General Ne Win*. Rangoon: Religious Affairs Department, 1969, p. 48).

<sup>7</sup> The first congress of the association in Rangoon under Thakin Ba Thoung’s leadership was a complete failure because of the very low attendance. Therefore, the organisation later called the meeting organised in Yenangyaung from March 30 to April 1, 1935 the first conference of the *Dobama Asiayone*.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Ba Maw formulated his dilemma at the start of the war in retrospect (Ba Maw, *Breakthrough in Burma. Memoirs of a Revolution, 1939-1946*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968, p 23s) and formulated a Burmese solution: “... our first task was to get rid of the ogre [Burmese demon; e.g.: the British] riding on our necks before we turned to fight any other ogre, however ogre-ish he might be; indeed, even if necessary to use the other ogre to drive away the one on our necks at the moment.” (op. cit., p. 24)

<sup>9</sup> John F. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing, 1965, p. 377.

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<sup>10</sup> Tun Pe, *Sun over Burma*, Rangoon: Rasika Ranjani Press, 1949, p. 32; Ohn, „Face, Butterfly and Two Songs: A Prologue to a Study of the Elements of Myth and Magic in Burmese Politics“, in: *The Journal of the Burma Research Society*. vol. 46, No. 1, June 1963, pp. 11-25; pp. 18-22.

<sup>11</sup> *Mya* = diamond; *doung* (*daung*) = Peacock, symbol of the Burmese kingdom, referring to its extraction from the „sun-race“ to which the clan of the Buddha belonged; later, the dancing peacock was the emblem on the flag of the Burma Independence Army and Burma’s state flag between 1943-1945 (Htin Aung, *The Stricken Peacock, Anglo-Burmese Relations 1752-1948*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965, p. vii); *nyo* = true. – Mya Doung Nyo was the pen name of U Aung Thein (1915-1953). He participated in the student strike of 1936 and worked – together with Aung San – for the nationalist newspaper *New Burma*. As a journalist and writer he specialised in historical and political themes. In 1943, he wrote a book on the ‘30 Comrades’ that was published in English in 1954 and 1992.

<sup>12</sup> Mya Doung Nyo in: *New Burma* 28.8.1938, p.3.

<sup>13</sup> The *Nagani* Bookclub that had been founded in late 1937 by Maung (later: *Nagani* and Thakin) Nu published seven books on the Irish freedom struggle, two of them written by Mya Doung Nyo.

<sup>14</sup> The said club published 5 books on the Russian revolution and some more about Marxism and Socialism in general. The last book published in 1941 was entitled “Revolution” and was written by Mya Doung Nyo. - The ‘Manifesto’ of the *Dobama Asiayone* that was drafted by Thakin Aung San at the end of 1939 defended at length the international achievements of Soviet Russia and praised the country as „the constant and consistent supporter of human freedom“ (The text of the Manifesto was reprinted by the Guardian Magazine, vol. 6, No.1 in January 1959, pp. 21-26).

<sup>15</sup> In fact, Nietzsche was dismissed as a Prussian citizen in 1869 after he was called to become a professor for classical philology in Basel, Switzerland. Nietzsche after that was stateless.

<sup>16</sup> The Treaty of Versailles of 1919 was regarded as a ‚mistake‘ by Burmese commentators after 1920 as well as after 1945 (see, for example, C.A. Soorma, *Some Recent Trends in World Affairs*. With a Foreword by Dr. Ba U, President of the Union of Burma. Preface by U Khin Zaw, Director, Burma Broadcasting Service. Rangoon (no publisher mentioned), 1954, p. 20).

<sup>17</sup> Ohn, „Face, Butterfly and Two Songs“, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Nu, *Saturday’s Son*. Translated by Law Yone, edited by Kyaw Win. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1975, p. 160.

<sup>19</sup> He wrote his M.Ed. thesis on the subject of „Survey of the development of education in Burma“ in 1940.

<sup>20</sup> Interviews with U Thet Tun, a retired Burmese diplomat and Dr. Dietrich Mahlo, who as a member of the German embassy in Rangoon lived for some years in a house adjacent to Ohn’s compound. U Ohn was called “long haired” Ohn to discriminate him from another Ohn; he was a vegetarian and - being a bachelor until 1962 - cooked for himself even during his terms as ambassador. It is reported that, when he was transferred from London to Moscow, he did his removal himself accompanying his personal belongings (mostly books) personally on the train.

<sup>21</sup> Ohn, „Face, Butterfly and Two Songs“, pp. 25; 19.

<sup>22</sup> Op. cit. p. 19. - Nietzsche’s „Zarathustra“, the work in which the idea of a ‚superman‘ (in German „Übermensch“) was developed, commences thus: „

<sup>23</sup> For the impact of the legend of Bo Bo Aung on the success of the Freedom Bloc of 1939 and 1940 see Ba Maw, *Breakthrough in Burma. Memoirs of a Revolution, 1939-1946*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1968, pp. 67-69.

<sup>24</sup> Ohn, „Face, Butterfly and Two Songs“, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. - Tun Pe, op. cit., p. 49, remembers Aug San telling him that he wanted to „live dangerously“.

<sup>26</sup> Ohn stresses that „the spirit of confidence and dedication of the Thakins were purely Burman“ (o. cit., p.20).

<sup>27</sup> For more information on Ba Thoung see Khin Yi, *The Dobama Movement in Burma*, pp. 3-25; Kei Nemoto, „The Doubama-Asiayoun and the Shweibon Bye (sic!)-election (1933)“, in: The Burma Research Group. *Burma and Japan. Basic Studies on Their Cultural and Social Structure*. Tokyo: Toyo Publishing and Printing Co. Ltd., 1987, pp. 247-256.

<sup>28</sup> E. Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965, p. 167. – Butwell who interviewed Ba Thoung one year later reported that Ba Thoung was inspired by G.B. Shaw’s „Man and Superman“ published in 1903 (Richard Butwell, *U Nu of Burma*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1963, p. 14).

<sup>29</sup> For example, Ko Ba U condemned „slavish education“ in his speech to the students on December 20, 1920 (Hans-Bernd Zöllner, *Birma zwischen „Unabhängigkeit Zuerst - Unabhängigkeit Zuletzt“. Die birmanischen Unabhängigkeitsbewegungen und ihre Sicht der zeitgenössischen Welt am Beispiel der deutsch-birmanischen Beziehungen, 1920-1948*. Hamburg: LIT-Verlag, 2000, p. 505). – It is remarkable that the same phrase was used by the British Labour MP Colonel Wedgwood who gave a speech to the striking students on December 12 (Aye Kyaw, *The Voice of Young Burma*. Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, 1993, p. 27).

<sup>30</sup> Carrier, op. cit., p. 8.

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<sup>31</sup> Subhas C. Kashyap, *The Unknown Nietzsche. His Socio-political Thought and Legacy*. Delhi: National, 1970, p. 127.

<sup>32</sup> Nietzsche received the offer to become a professor before he had finished his doctorate. The doctorate was awarded without any examination and disputation.

<sup>33</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, section 1, part 22 „The Bestowing Virtue“, 3., Translation: Thomas Common.

<sup>34</sup> See Jürgen Krause, „Märtyrer“ und „Prophet“: *Studien zum Nietzsche-Kult in der bildenden Kunst um die Jahrhundertwende*. Berlin and New York: ....., 1984.

<sup>35</sup> See Graham Parkes, „The Early Reception of Nietzsche’s Philosophy in Japan“. In: Graham Parkes (ed.), *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 177-199.

<sup>36</sup> See Yirmiyahu Yovel (ed.), *Nietzsche as Affirmative Thinker: Papers Presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Jerusalem Philosophical Encounter, April 1983*. Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1986.

<sup>37</sup> Eberhard Scheffele, „Questioning One’s „Own“ from the Perspective of the Foreign“. In: Parkes (ed.), *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, pp. 31-47.

<sup>38</sup> Graham Parkes, „The Orientation of the Nietzschean Text“. In: Parkes (ed.), *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, pp. 3-19; p. 16 (endnote 1). – It seems that this statement reflects the state of research more than the reality. Nietzsche’s reception in Japan (and China) has been subject to thorough investigation (see the China and Japan related articles in the book edited by Parkes and Hans-Joachim Becker, *Die frühe Nietzsche-Rezeption in Japan (1893-1903). Ein Beitrag zur Individualismusproblematik im Modernisierungsprozeß*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983). Similar efforts have not yet been undertaken to do research into the impact of Nietzschean thought in India.

<sup>39</sup> For details see Hari Kaul, *Sri Aurobindo. A Descriptive Bibliography*. New Delhi, Munashiram Monahalal, 1972; Alphonsus Maria Gerardus van Dijk, *Europese invloeden on het denken van Sri Aurobindo*. Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de grad van doctor in de godgeleertheit aan de Rijksuniversiteit de Utrecht, 1977, pp. 199-216.

<sup>40</sup> The poem was written in Persian. An English translation by R.A. Nicholson was published in 1920.

<sup>41</sup> Parveen Feroze Hassan, *The Political Philosophy of Iqbal*. Lahore: Publishers United Ltd, (1971), p. 279.

<sup>42</sup> In a poem written in 1932, Iqbal described Nietzsche so: „He is a German sage, / posed amidst both worlds / .... / for he is Halladsch [an Islamic mystic of the 10<sup>th</sup> century who was executed by the authorities] without rope and gallows, / has spoken the old words anew! / His word is spotless, deep his thought, / his wordsword splintering the Westerners. / The neighbours didn’t know what he enjoyed / and the ecstatic was regarded as a maniac. / .... Escaped the parsons, died at the physician’s hand. / .... / Severed himself from God and from his self together. / .... / What he was looking for was rule of God / that lies beyond intelligence. / .... / He realised „There is no God“ but not „besides Him“. / .... / His eye searched only for the humans – ‘Where is man?’ he shouted unremitting.“ (Muhammad Iqbal, *Botschaft des Ostens*. Ausgewählte Werke. Ed. by Annemarie Schimmel. Tübingen and Basel: Horst Erdmann Verlag, 1977, p. 81; translation from the German: H.B. Zöllner.)

<sup>43</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose, *Netaji Collected Works, Volume 3*. Ed. By Sisir K. Bose. Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1981, pp. 202; 204; 211f; 227; 247; 258f ; 287f.

<sup>44</sup> Wise men.

<sup>45</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose *Netaji - Collected Works, Volume 6*. Ed. by Sisir K. Bose, Sugata Bose. Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1987, pp. 21s.

<sup>46</sup> Bose, *Netaji Collected Works, Volume 5*. Ed. by Sisir K. Bose. Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1985, pp. 65, 184.

<sup>47</sup> The result of this effort was the book „The Struggle for India“ that was published in 1934.

<sup>48</sup> Because of his anti-government activities in India, Bose was not allowed to go to England. The speech was read on his behalf.

<sup>49</sup> The speech is reprinted in: Subhas Chandra Bose, *Collected Works, Volume 8. Letters, Articles, Speeches and Statements 1933-1937*. Ed. By Sisir Kumar Bose and Sugata Bose. Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1994, pp. 241-263.

<sup>50</sup> Op. cit. p. 256. – In his book *The Indian Struggle* Bose expressed the idea that India would be the place where the synthesis of communism and fascism could take place (Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle 1920-1942*. Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1981 (Netaji Collected Works, Volume 2), p. 351.

<sup>51</sup> Bose, *Collected Works 8*, pp. 261s.

<sup>52</sup> At the celebrations of Bose’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in January 1999, the author happened to meet an Indian physician in Calcutta who had served in the INA and who was convinced that Bose was still living as a hermit in the Himalayas.

<sup>53</sup> U tun Pe was one of the very few who dared to publicly echo the mainstream pre-war assessment of the *Thakins* as a group of irresponsible subjects (U Tun Pe, *Sun over Burma*, pp. 32.37). – Thakin Kodaw Hmaing tried his best to counter this opinion by writing his *Thakin Tika* (Tin Htway, *The Emergence and Development of Political Writing in Burmese Literature, 1914-1942, with Special Reference to U Lun*. M. Phil. Thesis, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1969, pp. 328-332.

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<sup>54</sup> It is very probable that Subhas Chandra Bose was Aung's political Guru (for details see Zöllner, *Unabhängigkeit Zuerst – Unabhängigkeit Zuletzt*, pp. 385-394). In any case, the parallels between Bose's and Aung San's activities during the war are striking (op. cit. 440-444).

<sup>55</sup> Mya Doung Nyo (pen name for U Aung Thein), *The Thirty Comrades*, Rangun: Ministry of Information (Educational & Agitational Publications No. 4 For Strengthening of Patriotisms [*sic!*]), 1992, pp. 9s. – The original Burmese version of the book was published in 1943. – For an extract of the quotation see note 59.

<sup>56</sup> Tin Htway, *Emergence and Development of Political Writing*, p. 322.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example Glen T. Martin, „Deconstruction and Breakthrough in Nietzsche and Nagarjuna“. In: Parkes, *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, pp. 91-111.

<sup>58</sup> Ba Thaug wrote as a praise of the „reprobates“ who fought the Indians in the riots of May 1930: „We have to thank the reprobates and malefactors. If defending oneself is considered evil, than we may have to define Panditaw (being wise) as bashing others. - If virtue is constituted of cowardice, selfishness, lack of understanding to band together to defend against the coming danger, than let us be evil. Allow us to be evil. - An old saying that “desire of enmity increases enmity, but desiring not enmity crumbles enmity” is not for this age. Now-a-days the rule [must be:] Avoiding adversity increases adversity. Seeking adversity shall cause its collapse.” (Translation U Maung Maung; source: Zöllner, *Unabhängigkeit Zuerst – Unabhängigkeit Zuletzt*, p.510) - Nietzsche played many times with themes of morality. In point 5 (entitled „Joys and Passions“) of the first section of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* we can read (Translation: Thomas Common): „And nothing evil groweth in thee any longer, unless it be the evil that groweth out of the conflict of thy virtues. My brother, if thou be fortunate, then wilt thou have one virtue and no more: thus goest thou easier over the bridge. Illustrious is it to have many virtues, but a hard lot; and many a one hath gone into the wilderness and killed himself, because he was weary of being the battle and battlefield of virtues. My brother, are war and battle evil? Necessary, however, is the evil; necessary are the envy and the distrust and the back-biting among the virtues.“ Point 10 (“War and Warriors”) contains this passage: “ I see many soldiers; could I but see many warriors! "Uniform" one calleth what they wear; may it not be uniform what they therewith hide! Ye shall be those whose eyes ever seek for an enemy- for your enemy. And with some of you there is hatred at first sight. Your enemy shall ye seek; your war shall ye wage, and for the sake of your thoughts! And if your thoughts succumb, your uprightness shall still shout triumph thereby! Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars- and the short peace more than the long. You I advise not to work, but to fight. You I advise not to peace, but to victory. Let your work be a fight, let your peace be a victory!” (Internet source: <http://eng.hss.cmu.edu/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt>)

<sup>59</sup> According to the evaluation of the „Burma Book Catalogue“ by U Tin Htway, the two editions of Ba Thoug's *Dobama Sadan* had a circulation of 5.000 each and were distributed free of charge. This circulation of books dealing with politics was met only by books on the highly controversial issue of separation or non-separation of India.

<sup>60</sup> The Burmese attitude towards Germany was complex. For details see Zöllner, *Unabhängigkeit Zuerst – Unabhängigkeit Zuletzt*, part 3 (summary: pp. 318-321).

<sup>61</sup> For details see op. cit. pp. 318-327.