

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910168746403321
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Titolo	The Mists of Ramanna : The Legend That Was Lower Burma // Michael A. Aung-Thwin
Pubbl/distr/stampa	University of Hawai'i Press, 2005 Honolulu : , : University of Hawai'i Press, , 2005 ©2005
ISBN	0-8248-7441-2
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (444 p.) : 4 maps, 17 b&w images, 28 line drawings and charts
Disciplina	959.1
Soggetti	Legends - Burma Electronic books. Mon State (Burma) History Burma Historiography Burma History To 1824
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 403-423) and index.
Nota di contenuto	The Py millennium -- Rmannadesa : an imagined polity -- Thaton (Sudhuim) : an imagined center -- The conquest of Thaton : an imagined event -- The conquest of Thaton as allegory -- The Mon paradigm and the origins of the Burma script -- The place of written Burmese and Mon in Burma's early history -- The Mon paradigm and the evolution of the Pagan temple -- The Mon paradigm and the Kyanzittha legend -- The Mon paradigm and the myth of the "down-trodden Talaing" -- Colonial officials and colonial scholars : the institutionalization of the Mon paradigm.
Sommario/riassunto	Scholars have long accepted the belief that a Theravada Buddhist Mon kingdom, Rmaññadesa, flourished in coastal Lower Burma until it was conquered in 1057 by King Aniruddha of Pagan-which then became, in essence, the new custodian and repository of Mon culture in the Upper Burmese interior. This scenario, which Aung-Thwin calls the "Mon Paradigm," has circumscribed much of the scholarship on early Burma and significantly shaped the history of Southeast Asia for more than a

century. Now, in a masterful reassessment of Burmese history, Michael Aung-Thwin reexamines the original contemporary accounts and sources without finding any evidence of an early Theravada Mon polity or a conquest by Aniruddha. The paradigm, he finds, cannot be sustained. How, when, and why did the Mon Paradigm emerge? Aung-Thwin meticulously traces the paradigm's creation to the merging of two temporally, causally, and contextually unrelated Mon and Burmese narratives, which were later synthesized in English by colonial officials and scholars. Thus there was no single originating source, only a late and mistaken conflation of sources. The conceptual, methodological, and empirical ramifications of these findings are significant. The prevalent view that state-formation began in the maritime regions of Southeast Asia with trade and commerce rather than in the interior with agriculture must now be reassessed. In addition, a more rigorous look at the actual scope and impact of a romanticized Mon culture in the region is required. Other issues important to the field of early Burma and Southeast Asian studies, including the process of "Indianization," the characterization of "classical" states, and the advent and spread of Theravada Buddhism, are also directly affected by Aung-Thwin's work. Finally, it provides a geo-political, cultural, and economic alternative to what has become an ethnic interpretation of Burma's history. An electronic version of this book is freely available thanks to the support of libraries working with Knowledge Unlatched, a collaborative initiative designed to make high-quality books open access for the public good. The open-access version of this book is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0), which means that the work may be freely downloaded and shared for non-commercial purposes, provided credit is given to the author. Derivative works and commercial uses require permission from the publisher.
