



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Memory of the World

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	2
Methodology	3
Results	4
About the Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation (MBAPF)	5
Case Study 1: Department of Archaeology and National Museum (DANM), Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture	6
Case Study 2: Ludu Library, Mandalay	10
Case Study 3: Universities' Central Library (UCL)	14
Case Study 4: National Archives of Myanmar	20
Case Study 5: Film Archives, Motion Picture Development Branch, Ministry of Information	24
Case Study 6: National Library of Myanmar	28

BACKGROUND

The study was developed as part of the project 'Safeguarding the Documentary Heritage of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Southeast Asia through the UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme' funded by the Government of Malaysia through the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme (MUCP). It contains selected case studies of documentary heritage in Myanmar compiled by the Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation with the support of UNESCO and the Malaysia Funds-in-Trust (MFIT).



METHODOLOGY

In May 2017, UNESCO held a workshop in Yangon for the development of Memory of the World nominations. A number of governmental and non-governmental organizations from across Myanmar took part in the workshop, including:

- Department of Archaeology and National Museum
- Bagan and Nay Pyi Taw branches
- Myanmar National Commission for UNESCO
- Ministry of Education
- Film Archive, Ministry of Information, Yangon
- MRTV, Ministry of Information
- NGO Save Myanmar Film project
- National Archives, Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw Offices
- National Library of Myanmar, Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw Offices
- Universities' Central Library
- University of Yangon
- Myanmar Historical Commission
- NGO Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation
- Ludu Library, Mandalay

Following the workshop, the organizations were invited by the Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation to contribute to the preliminary survey of documentary heritage in Myanmar. Six organizations expressed interest in contributing to the study. A further future activity could involve a larger survey covering each Myanmar province.

RESULTS

Myanmar is in the process of establishing a National Memory of the World Committee. One of the purposes of National MoW Committees is to complete inventories of significant documentary heritage in the country and to develop a national register. In this regard, this study can be a basis for the development of the first Myanmar National MoW Register.

In addition, the study highlights a number of public and private collections that are of regional and even international significance. The case studies can be of use for custodians of this documentary heritage to develop nominations for the Regional and International MoW Registers.

The study demonstrates that despite their significance, a number of collections in Myanmar are facing challenges for their ongoing preservation. The implementation of the MoW programme and the UNESCO Recommendation on Documentary Heritage (2015) at the national level can help mobilize national, regional and international support to preserve these collections.

The case study also demonstrates that the collections are not easily accessible, with few collections digitized and access policies not defined. The UNESCO Recommendation on Documentary Heritage emphasises the need for institutions and governments to provide access to collections. Representatives of the Government of Myanmar contributed to the development of an ASEAN Member States Action Plan for the implementation of this UNESCO Recommendation. This can be an important tool to address access issues in Myanmar

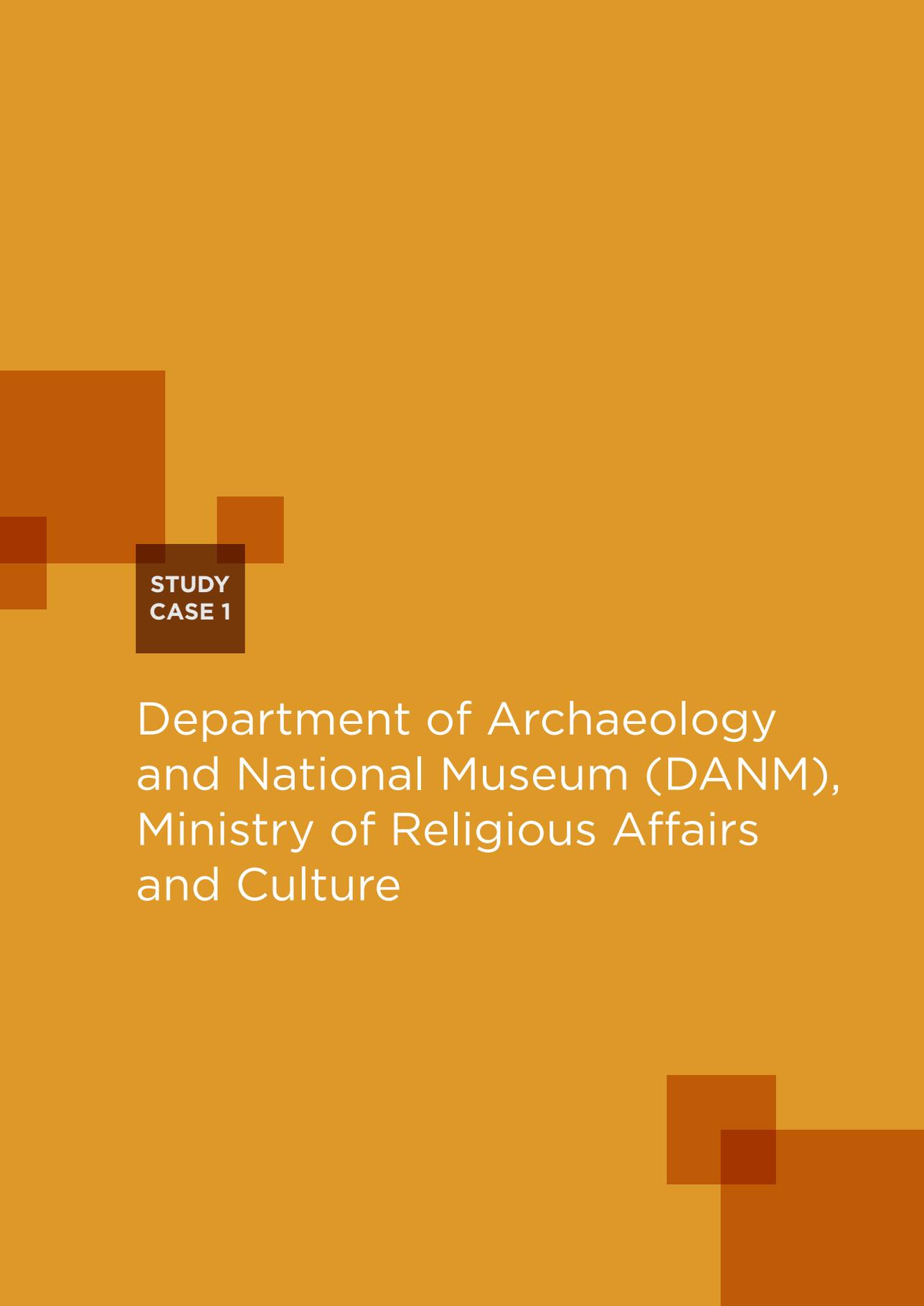
Ultimately, this survey of documentary heritage in Myanmar aims to support the institutions in Myanmar in identifying their key collections and current conditions as a base for their preservation and improved access. The study should be circulated to the relevant national authorities and organisations working with documentary heritage.

ABOUT THE MYANMAR BOOK AID AND PRESERVATION FOUNDATION (MBAPF)

MBAPF was conceived by U Thaw Kaung and John Badgley in the 1990s as an institutional response to a perceived national crisis in manuscript and book preservation. Badgley was curator of Cornell University's eminent Southeast Asia collection and U Thaw Kaung was Central Universities Librarian responsible for all university libraries.

Following the 2008 Cyclone Nargis that damaged many library collections in Myanmar, U Thaw Kaung's son, Dr. Thant Thaw Kaung, took over as Executive Director of MBAPF. Dr. Thant had built Myanmar Book Centre into the country's leading book importer, led the re-organization which aimed to create a group of dedicated librarians, ICT experts and book lovers to promote education of the poor and give global knowledge to underserved population throughout Myanmar.

The mission of the MBAPF was to provide resources and capacities to librarians by bringing global library trends to Myanmar, while the vision was to have a strong knowledge based society in Myanmar through libraries.



**STUDY
CASE 1**

Department of Archaeology
and National Museum (DANM),
Ministry of Religious Affairs
and Culture

Description of the institution

In 1902 the Burma Epigraphy Office was founded under the British colonial rule. The main functions of this office were to collect, preserve and record all the stone inscriptions, preserve ancient monuments and also collected antiquities throughout the country.

After Myanmar gained independence in 1948, the Burma Epigraphy Office was recognized as the Department of Archaeology. In 1957 the Department of Cultural Institute was established under the Ministry of Culture and took charge of the National Library, the National Museum and Cultural Museum and Libraries in States and Divisions.

The Departments of Archaeology and Cultural Institutes were merged in February 2009 and officially named the Department of Archaeology and National Museum.

Collection

The Department of Archaeology and National Museum has a range of different types of collections, including:

- Drawings, maps, photographs, and documentary records of ancient monuments such as pagodas, temples, ancient mounds, ancient monasteries, ancient cities, excavation sites, ancient landscape
- Copies of stone inscriptions, collected from around the country
- Palm leave manuscripts from across Myanmar
- Glass plate negatives of mural paintings
- Antiquities made from gold, silver, bronze, sand, stone, wood

Icons

In the collection there are over 4000 glass plate negatives collected from ca. 1900-1920 depicting the monuments, reliefs, wood carvings, stucco carving, excavation sites, Buddhist paintings and statues from across the country, including many from Bagan.

This is pre-war collection and extremely rare. The DANM is the only department in the whole country that has a complete collection of glass plates. The glass plates are an important source of information as many of the records of the temples in Bagan are not available anywhere.

Accessibility

The collection is located in Yangon. 30% of the glass plates have been digitized but currently the collection is not accessible to the public

Preservation

DANM has already collected and preserved some of the glass plate negative photographs. Some of them have been digitized.

The DANM does not have the advanced techniques to preserve the glass plate negatives and is interested to invite the experts to cooperate and share the techniques with the staff.

Threats

Some of the glass plates have been destroyed by natural disasters, pests (termites) and the humidity.

Website

http://www.archaeologymm.com/php/home_about.php



(1) Glass plate negative of rock painting from the interior of the Gubyaukgyi temple in Bagan



(2) Glass plate negative of rock painting from the interior of the Gubyaukgyi temple in Bagan



**STUDY
CASE 2**

Ludu Library, Mandalay

Description of the institution

The Ludu library was established in 2004 by Ludu U Hla (1910-1982), Ludu Daw Ah Mar (1915-2008) and the Ludu family. The library is situated in a three-storied building, in the Let-sekan quarter of the Chan-aye-thar-zan township of Mandalay.

After their marriage, Ludu U Hla and Ludu Daw Ah Mar settled in Mandalay and published the daily Ludu newspapers. Together, they developed a collection of books, magazines, and newspapers on sports, psychology, Asia and the Orient. Both of them had collections of books signed and given to them by authors.

It was the vision of Ludu U Hla to establish a library based on their collections that were valuable to the Myanmar's history. Based on the collections, Ludu U Hla researched and wrote books including the one entitled 'Newspaper as History'. Ludu Daw Ah Mar helped manage the collection and arranged to build the library to store their collection.

Their three children, Prof Dr Than Yin Mar , retired Professor and Head of Department of Medicine at the University of Medicine Mandalay, Daw Tin Win who runs the family business of Ludu Publishing House and U Nyein Chan, writer, now help to look after the Ludu library.

The Ludu library is now a well-established reference library for the scholars of Myanmar's history and literature. Academics and students studying history, geography, international relations, library and information studies, archaeology and philosophy use the library. In addition, writers, journalists, and researchers are among the daily visitors.



Ludu Library

Collection

The collection is ever increasing due to local purchases and gifts. Currently there are 50,000 books on a range of subjects from religion, biographies, histories, references, magazines, journals, and newspapers.

The library has also preserved special collections of late authors such as Dr Than Tun (1923 – 2005), a famous Professor of History, whose collection consists of over 7,000 volumes in English and Myanmar language. Other important collections include those of the late author Shwe-Oo-Daung (1889 – 1973), and the journalist Ludu U Sein Win (1940 – 2012).

Apart from these, other treasures include 210 bundles of palm leaves manuscripts and 130 folded Parabaiks, as well as many letters from many friends sent to Ludu family from 1950 to 2010 that are in the process of being digitised.

Icons

The library contains a number of complete collections of Myanmar newspapers, journals and magazines, some of which are the only ones available in the whole country. While other libraries have some of the collection, many complete collections are available only at the Ludu Library.

Magazines:

Dagon	1922-1928
Kyee-pwa-yay	1933-1940
Toe-tet-yay	1935
Shu-ma-wa	1947-1992
Ngwe-ta-yee	1960-1999
Thwe-thauk	1947-1990
Moe-way	1968-1990
Mya-wa-dee	1953-1993

Journals:

Nay-pyi-daw	1921-1922
Dee-dok	1930-1931
Bandula	1926-1935
O-way	1968-1972
Ludu	1945-1959

Newspapers:

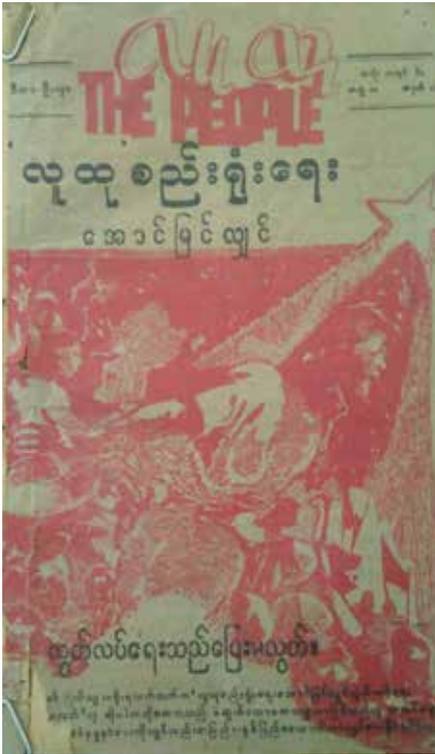
Ludu	1946-1967
Thuriya	1931-1933
Myanma Ah-lin	1927-1932, 1945-1946
Kye-mon	1962, 1966-1977
Han-tha-waddy	1945-1947

Preservation

A key part of the preservation strategy is in digitization so the originals can be stored. The library aims to digitize the whole collection starting with the rarest publications/manuscripts.

Threats

Extreme heat during the summer time in Mandalay has threatened the collection.



*Ludu Journals
dated 15 July 1945*



*Ludu Newspaper
dated 19 April 1946*



*Thuria Newspaper Mandalay
dated 18 November 1929*

Accessibility

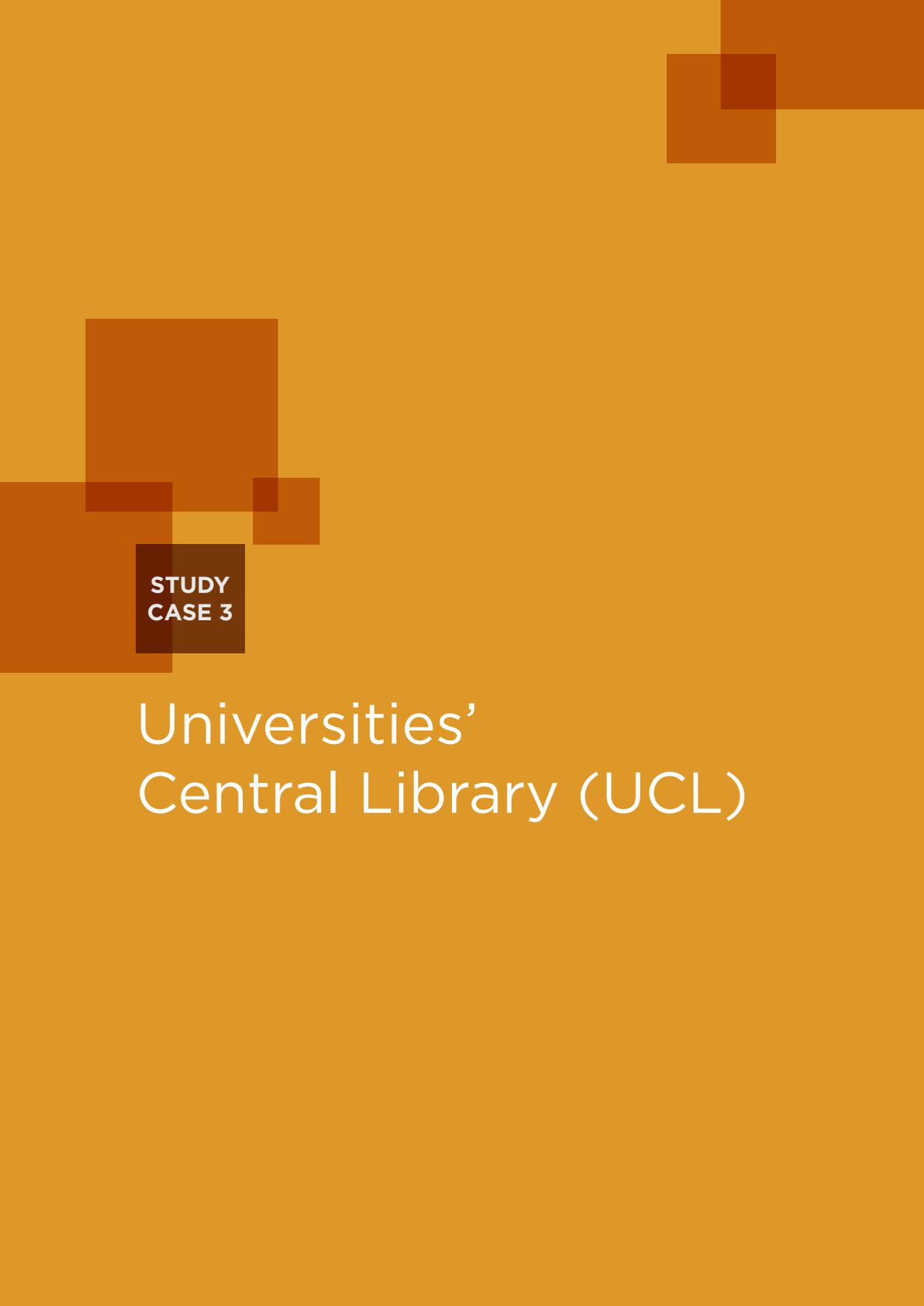
The library is located at Let-se-kan quarter, in Chan-aye-thar-zan township of Mandalay. It is open to the public every Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5 pm and is cared for by one librarian and five clerks.

Catalogues are arranged in Dewey Decimal Classification according to their topic. The library has also catalogues of authors and titles of books.

The library has started digitizing rare books and palm-leaf manuscripts.

Website

<http://bit.ly/2nPCA5v>



**STUDY
CASE 3**

Universities' Central Library (UCL)

Description of the institution

UCL plays a leading role in the collection and preservation of old Myanmar traditional manuscripts.

The Rangoon University Library was founded in 1929. During the Second World War, early collections of the Rangoon University Library, including the rare manuscripts were all destroyed. The Rangoon University Library Building was severely damaged and renovated. It was opened again in 1952.

In 1964, the name of the Rangoon University Library was changed to Universities' Central Library. Universities' Central Library building was completed in 1980. A separate Yangon University Library was re-established in 1987, in the original building. Universities' Central Library is located in the University of Yangon campus, Kamayut Township, Yangon.

Collection

Palm-leaf and *Parabaik* manuscripts can still be found in many old monasteries in Myanmar but the largest collections can be found in the Universities' Central Library. The total amount is 19,000, consisting of 15,000 Myanmar manuscripts on palm-leaf and about 4,000 *Parabaiks*.

The collection covers a diverse range of subjects, from the teaching of Buddha, *Tipitaka*, historic documents, traditional medicine, astrology, astronomy, customary law and Myanmar literature, etc.

Parabaik were used to create detailed and rich illustrated pictures such as that of Buddhist ordination halls, maids of honor of Royal Palace, the designs of various royal hairstyles done by the queen, princess in the palace at the time of *Bagan*, pictures of royal barges used by the Prince, the King and more.

These *Parabaik* have been collected since 1964. In 1977, Dr. Ragavan, who was the expert in the preservation of ancient literature from UNESCO, and Chief Librarian of UCL, Dr Thaw Kaung hunted for antique *Parabaik* in *Mandalay, Sagaing, Monywa, Pakakku, Pago, Nyaung Oo, Magwae, Taung Twin Gee, Pyay*, old city of *Beikthano, Mawzar* city.

Some *Parabaik* came in to the UCL collection through donation by the Monastery of *Thayet Chin* village, *Sinphyu* township and *Pyaw Bwal* township. Others were bought from the towns of *Shwe Bo* and *Kyimyintain*.

Icons

The *Parabaiks* are the largest collection of colour manuscripts in Myanmar. The collection is unique because, these are the original, primary, and complete sources. Among the 4,000 *Parabaiks* collected at Universities' Central Library, the 8 colour *Parabaiks* are the most significant and rare.

These include:

The Life of Buddha: The illustrations depict the Buddha bathing in the *mingalar* lake, resting on a stone mat, and images informing the birth of son *Yahula* to prince *Thaddada* from Royal palace.

Ordination Hall: In this *Parabaik*, drawn in 1884, the ordination hall design is depicted. The areas surrounding the ordination hall including a bank, villages, mountains, and caves were also drawn. The advantages and disadvantages of the location of the ordination hall are illustrated in the drawing.

100 Maids of Honor of the Royal Palace: This *Parabaik* includes illustrations of male and female *nats*, mountains, animals, types of paddy, kinds of fishes, grades of gold, flowers, fruits, birds, are depicted.

Waithanthayar Jataka: In this *Parabaik* the story of *Waithanthayar*, the life of Buddha before he become enlightened, is illustrated,

Tournament on Horseback: In this *Parabaik*, 37 styles of horse riding and spear throwing by member of royal cavalry were drawn.

Taming the Violent Elephant: This *Parabaik* depicts people trying to lure a wild elephant into a *keddah* (trap).

Donation of King Mindone (Myanmar era 1206 – 1222): This *Parabaik* depicts various donations (alms giving).

31 Planes of Existence: In this *Parabaik* the 31 Planes of Existence from Buddhist belief are depicted.

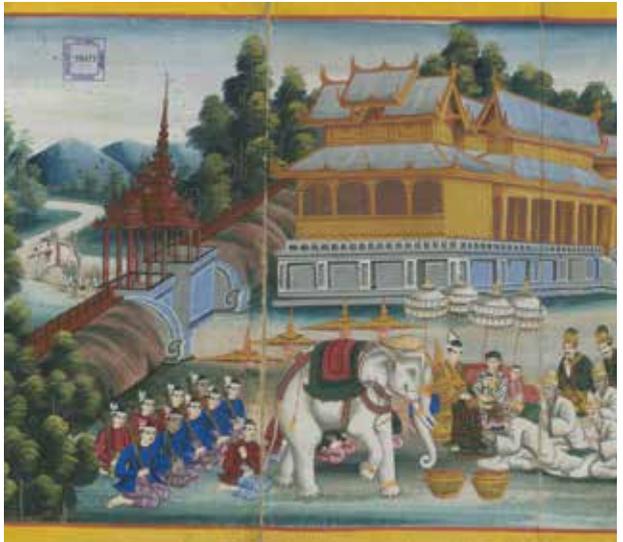
The earliest piece is dated back to early 19th century and is still in good condition. International and national scholars have completed research on the collections. These eight colour *Parabaiks* have potential to be registered as Memory of the World because of their historical, social, artistic and religious significance.



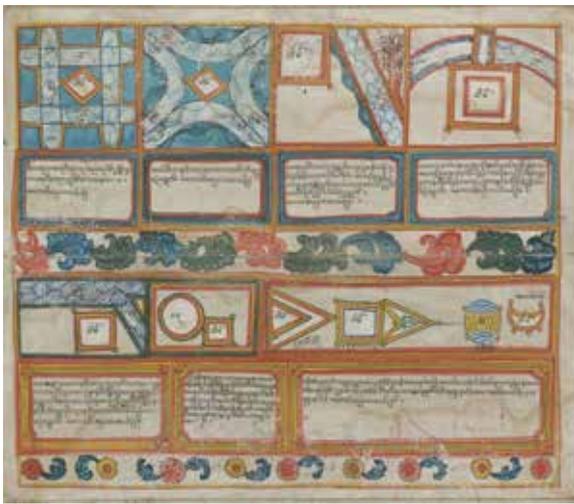
100 Maids of Honor of the Royal Palace



Donation of King Mindone



Waithanthayar Jataka



Ordination Hall



Tournament on Horseback



Life of Buddha

Taming the Violent Elephant



Accessibility

The collection can be accessed by the public free of charge through digitized copies. There is a reading room in the library. There are no special access policies, however, only the digitized copy can be accessed to protect the originals.

Preservation

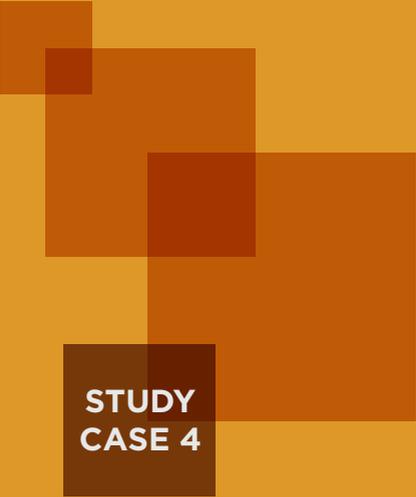
The eight collections have already been digitized. The colours used in illustrations are red, orange, black, green, blue, yellow, white, pink and some other bright colours that are very attractive. Moreover, the paints are natural dye without any chemicals. As a result the *Parabaik* are still in very good condition and shape.

Threats

There are many threats to the collection and preservation problems. The climate of Myanmar is a challenge with the rainy season bringing humidity, the collections absorbing moisture and leading to mould etc. During the summer the highest temperature can reach above 100F, and this can result in the collection becoming brittle and easily broken. At that time the UCL cannot run the air conditioner 24 hours due to the unstable electricity supply and costs.

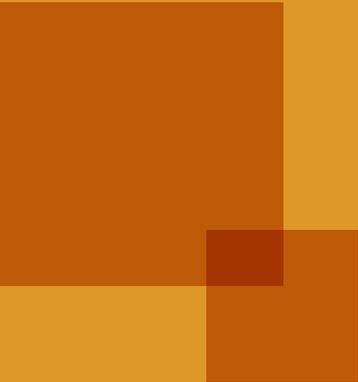
Website

<http://www.uclmyanmar.org/>



**STUDY
CASE 4**

National Archives of Myanmar



Description of the institution

The National Archives of Myanmar was established in 1972 under the Ministry of Planning and Finance as a library of the Secretaries' Office.

In 1982, UNESCO supported the development of the National Archives through a project entitled 'Strengthening of National Archives'. UNESCO provided technology and equipment. In 1990, National Records and Archives were enacted. In 1991, the National Archives became a member of Southeast Asia Regional Branch of International Councils on Archives and in 1993, it also became a member of International Councils on Archives. In 2015, the Headquarters of the Archives was inaugurated in Naypyitaw.

Collection

The strength of National Archives of Myanmar lies in its holdings of official records, private collections and historical documents, which are the property of other specialized agencies. The collection of official publications consists of laws and regulations, annual department and annual statistical reports, official gazettes,

census reports, administrative manuals and monographs by Government officials, covering a great variety of topics. Moreover, the National Archives collection also contains historical manuscripts in the form of palm-leaf scripts and *Parabaiks* (parchments). There are 5205 sheets of palm leaves and 34 *Parabaiks* in the National Archives.

Icons

One icon of the National Archives collection is the Great Myanmar Maha Bandula palm-leaf which is significant for many reasons:

- It contains 5 palm-leaves and both sides were written in Myanmar language,
- It is 2 lined manuscripts, 3 feet and 1 inches length and 1.1 inches width. It has informational value as well as evidential value,
- It was the order of the National Hero, Commander-in-Chief Maha Bandula, and
- It relates to the Anglo-Burmese War, 1824, and is an authentic archive with official character and unique.

The National Archives received that palm-leaf from the former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, when he visited Myanmar in 1987. He presented that palm-leaf to President U San Yu. Before transferring the palm-leaf it was displayed at Victoria Museum in Calcutta in India.

The history of the palm-leaf is described as follows. Vaysali in Assam was sovereign power ruled by Sandara Gondashein, with the consent of the Myanmar King. However, after

plotting to rebel against the King, the Commander-in-Chief of the King's army, Maha Bandula, was ordered to subdue him and restore peace and order in the region.

Maha Bandula sent the letter warning the consequences of a rebellion would be severe and would disturb the age-longed friendship that existed between Myanmar and Manipur



Great Myanmar Mahabandoola Palm Leaf

Accessibility

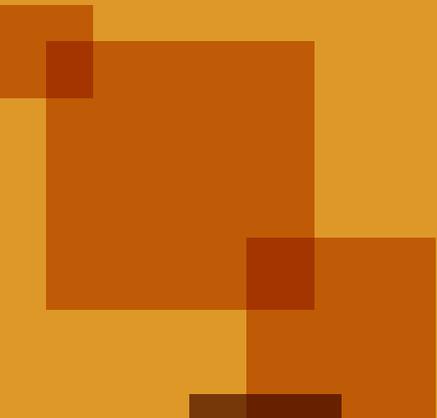
The National Archives has a mini showroom where the replica of Maha Bandula palm-leaf is displayed and open to public access.

Preservation

This palm-leaf has been digitized. The National Archives preserved that palm-leaf in a wooden box, covered by a glass with controlled temperature and humidity. The collection is kept in a separate room for security.



Great Myanmar Mahabandoola Palm Leaf



**STUDY
CASE 5**

Film Archives,
Motion Picture
Development Branch,
Ministry of Information



Description of the institution

The Documentary Film Division of Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department was first established as a publicity field during the military government after the Second World War.

It was named Government Films and Plays Department under the Ministry of Information in 1947 and then Central Films Division. Later, it became the Film Corporation and Film Archive Department. Then on 9 July 1997, its name was changed to Film Archives, Motion Picture Development Branch. It was mainly formed for broadcasting the news of the government for propaganda purposes and for spreading policies and information. For entertainment programmes, films of 35 mm and 16 mm were screened in various parts of Myanmar as travelling cinema. In the 1950s, the archives started to store the Myanmar Academy Award Winning and Nominated films.

The archives has been used not only for film storage but also for other film related activities such as filming, film processing, film editing, film duplicating, sound recording and some post-production processes.

Collection

In their collection, there are both newsreels and Myanmar feature films. Besides this, they also keep gramophone discs such as General Aung San's speech from 1940s.

The archives holds 2,906 newsreels from 1962 to 2015, covering many important historical contents such as the Myanmar Independence Day, Flag Rising Ceremonies, Inn Sein Battle which reflects Myanmar civil war, Satthta Thingar Yanar Tin, which is the most important religious ceremony of Buddhism, the Execution of Galon U Saw, who was the murderer of General Aung San and martyrs, and the Funeral of Kayen leader, Saw Ba Oo Gyi.

The archives also keeps feature films. There are twelve black and white films and 130 colour films that are kept in the archives. These extant films are important because many of old Myanmar films are not surviving anymore.

Icons

Mya Ga Naing is a silent film produced by A1 Film Production in 1934 in Myanmar. It is the oldest Myanmar film still in existence with film element that enabled a complete restoration in 2016.

Considering the glorious past of Myanmar cinema, and the critical situation of conservation today, Mya Ga Naing is indeed a national treasure. It was restored in 2016, hence becoming an encouraging sign for the ongoing and future preservation efforts of Myanmar dispersed heritage. It is an emblematic film for Myanmar history of cinema.

Accessibility

The film is allowed for screening to the public. The digital restored elements are available as well as prints for its circulation to the audience.

Preservation

The preservation of this Myanmar treasure was done in 2016. One digital print is preserved at the State Archives and the other print is preserved at MEMORY! Cinema Association based in Paris, France. Restoration elements are preserved at Cineteca di Bologna, Italy.

Threats

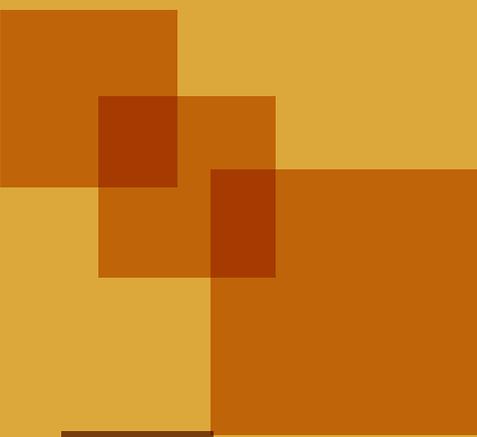
Mya Ga Naing is not under threat as it was fully restored in a laboratory in Bologna, Italy, that provided preservation elements. However, the film vault in Myanmar where Mya Ga Naing is being stored does not meet the international standards for archives. Therefore, a plan for further upgrading the film archives is being developed by Saving Myanmar Film.

Website

<http://2016e.memoryfilmfestival.org/mya-ganaing-1934/>

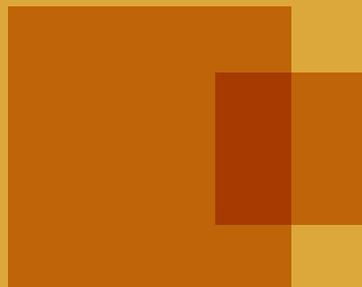


Mya Ga Naing © Film Archive,
Ministry of Information,
Myanmar



**STUDY
CASE 6**

National Library of Myanmar



Description of the institution

The National Library originated from the Bernard Free Library that was opened in 1883 during British Colonial era.

The Bernard Library was renamed the State Library under the Ministry of Culture in 1952, and changed its name to National Library in 1967.

The Library was first located in the Jubilee Hall Building, and then moved from place to place and in October 2008, the Library was moved to the current location, no. 85, Thirimingalar Yeiktha Street, Kabaraye Pagoda Road, Yankin Township in Yangon.

Collection

There are about 800,000 items in the collection of the National Library in Yangon, including books, periodicals, manuscripts and e-books.

Icons

One of the most significant collections of the National Library of Myanmar is the collection of *Parabaiks* depicting the 73 royal barges and 37 techniques to use them. The *Parabaik* is the paper folded manuscript made from tree bark and used as a record book in ancient Myanmar. Based on the style of writing on *Parabaik* and historical evidence, these *Parabaiks* were written during the *Bodaw Phayar* (King Badon) period.

These include the history of the boats named as Hlay-taw and Phaung-taw, shapes, types and decorations at the top and end part of the boats, illustrations and the usages of these boats in the period of Bodaw-Pa-Don Min (1745-1819) and Late Dynasty of Myanmar Kings.

Accessibility

A facsimile book form is displayed for public usage and can be accessed in the reference room. Domestic and foreign researchers can use it according to the library's rules and regulations.

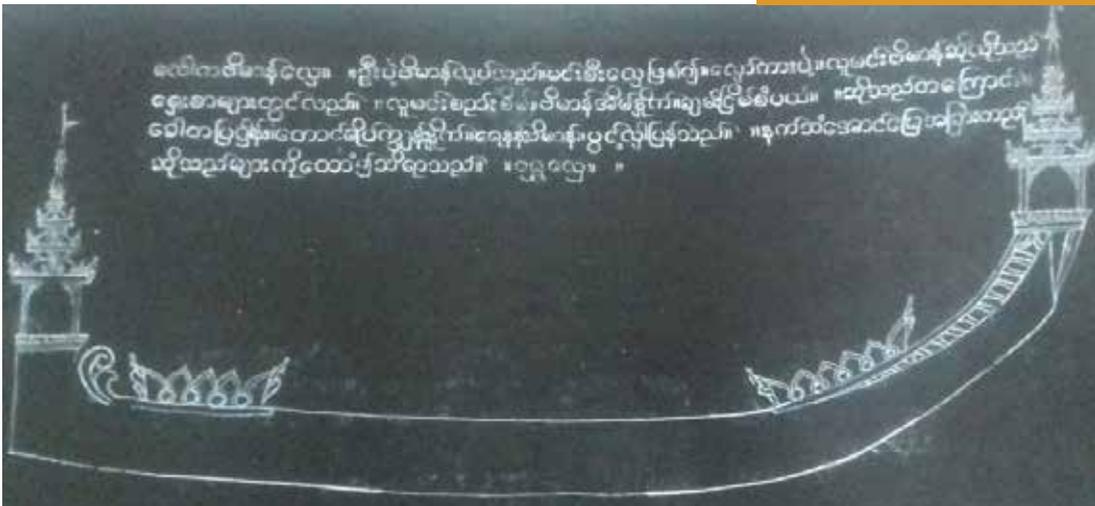
Preservation

The collection is well preserved to prevent dust and fungus impacting the collection. The collection has already been digitized.

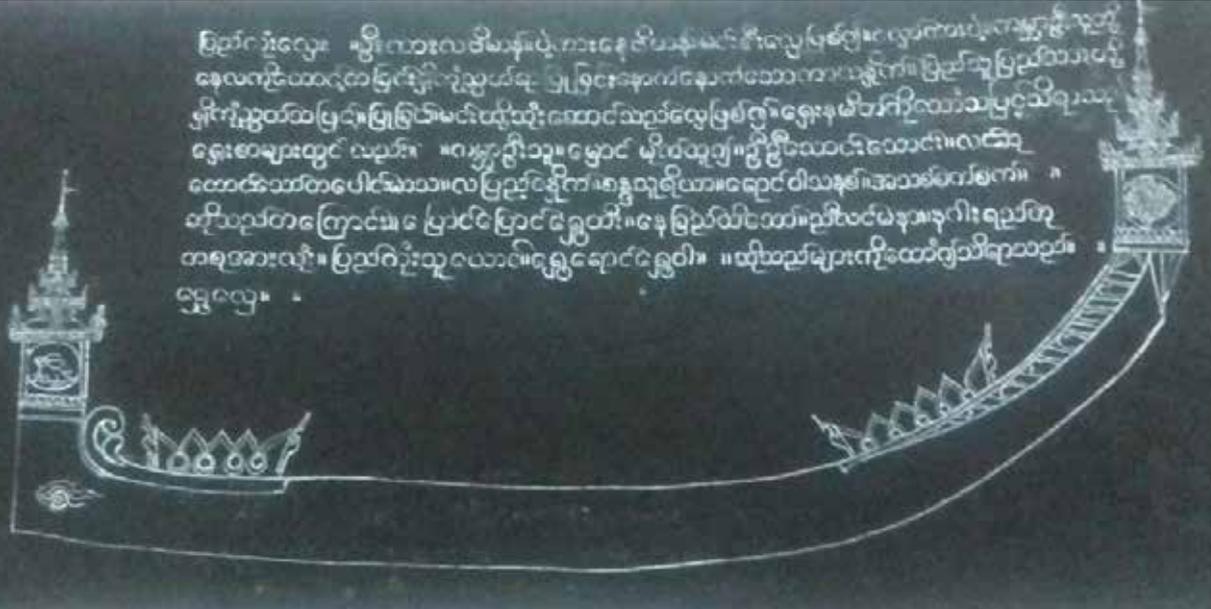
Threats

Humidity, fluctuations in temperature due to the conditions in Myanmar.

The *Parabaik* depicting the royal barge (1)



ပြည်ကိုလွှဲလွှဲ။ ဦးကားလဲမိမိနားပဲ့ကားနေမိမိနားမင်းစီးလျှေမြစ်ကြီးဝလှကားပဲ့ကားနားနားနား
 နေလကွဲထောင့်ကွဲမြင်နိုးညွှန်ချေပြုခြင်းနားကဲနားကဲသောကားပဲ့နားကဲ။ ပြည်သူပြည်သားပဲ့
 ဖြိုကဲညွှတ်ထပြင်။ ပြုမြင်မင်းထိုထိုးထောင်သည့်လှေမြစ်ကြီးရှေးနားမိမိကဲလှေသံပြင်သီချင်း
 ရှေးစာချားထွင်သည်။ ။ ဂန္ဓာဗျူသို့။ မြောင် မိုးစိယုတ်။ ဦးဦးသောင်းသောင်း။ လင်္ကာ
 ထောင်သော်တပေါင်မိသား။ လပြည့်နေ့ကြီး။ နန္ဒရုဇိယာ။ ရောင်ဝါသနမ်း။ အသားမကဲမကဲ။ ။
 ဆိုသည်ကကြောင်း။ ပြောင်ပြောင်လှေထိုး။ နေပြည်ထိုးထေး။ ညိုလင်မိနား။ ခုဂါးရည်တူ
 ကရုဏာလှီး။ ပြည်ကိုလွှဲလွှဲ။ ရွှေရောင်ရွှေဝါ။ ။ ထိုထည်များကိုထောင့်သီချင်းသည်။ ။
 လှေလှေ။ ။



The Parabaik depicting the royal barge (2)

