

10 exhibition highlights
in plain English



Burma to Myanmar

About this guide

This book is written using short, easy to read sentences. It can be used by anyone.

A large print guide containing the entire exhibition text is also available.

This book takes you on a tour of the exhibition. It looks at 10 different objects.

A map of the exhibition shows you where to find the objects.

There is an introduction to each part of the exhibition. There are four sections.

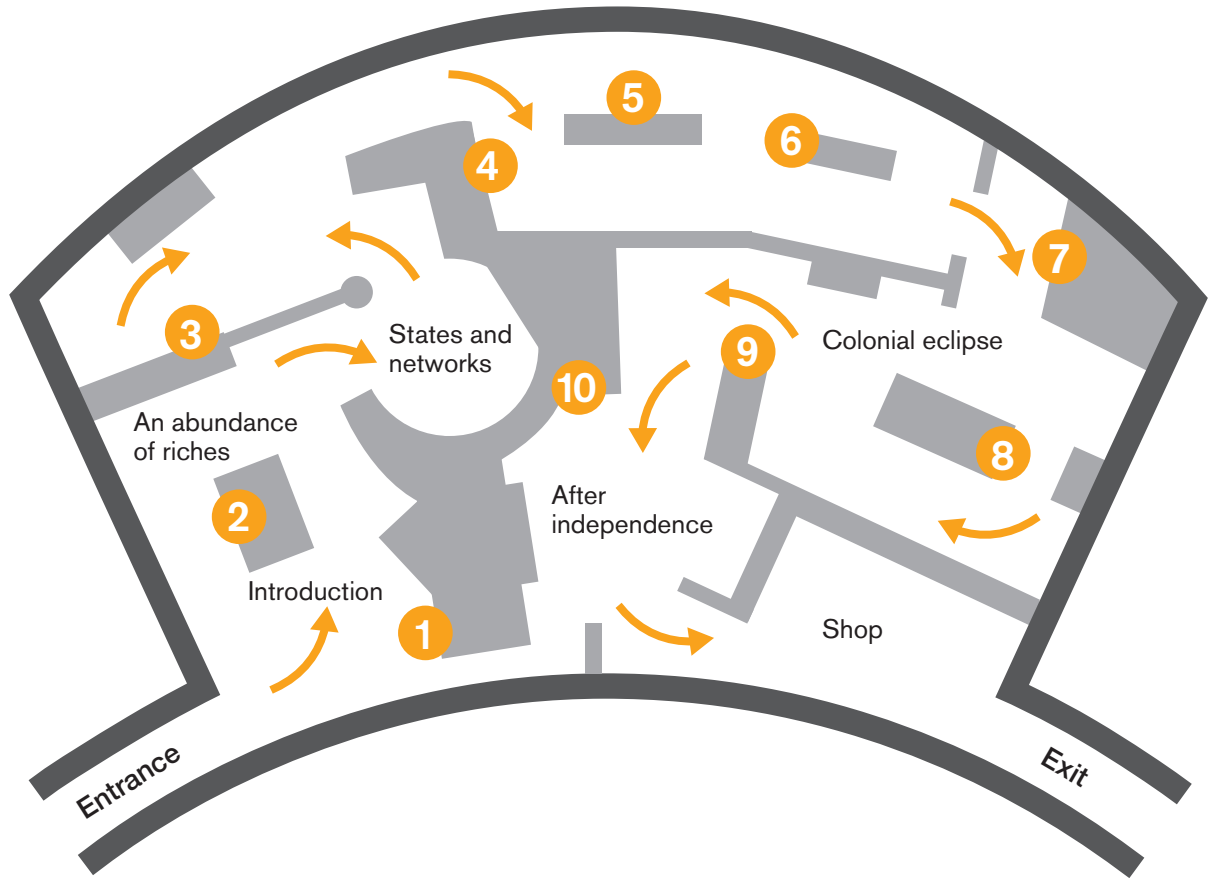
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Objects

Each object has a number. These numbers are on the exhibition map on the next page. The map shows you where each object is in the exhibition.

- ① A gold letter
- ② A wooden chair
- ③ A picture from a book of people playing and watching polo
- ④ A silver coin
- ⑤ A colourful striped skirt
- ⑥ A photo of a male leader
- ⑦ A large, seated, religious figure
- ⑧ An ivory chair
- ⑨ A silk map
- ⑩ A painting of a woman

Exhibition map



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Introduction to Burma to Myanmar

Myanmar is a country.

Some people call it Burma.

Like many countries, over time, its name has changed.

Once it was made up of lots of different kingdoms, states and family networks.

People from these different areas each had their own art forms. These changed as they met people from other cultures.



Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek – Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Hannover, Germany, Ms IV 751a

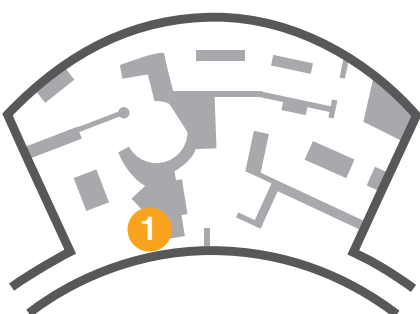
1 A gold letter

Myanmar is rich in natural resources. Some of them can be mined.

This letter is made of gold and rubies mined in the north.

A Burmese king sent it to a British king as a sign of friendship.

If you look closely, you can see the fine lettering.



Introduction to An abundance of riches

There are lots of natural resources in Myanmar, like gemstones and silver.

There are also items like cotton and rice, which are used by lots of people.

Myanmar has a long history of trading with the world around it.

Myanmar is bordered by many different countries and oceans.

China is north. India is west. Thailand is east.



© National Trust Images

2 A wooden chair

Parts of Myanmar are covered by teak tree forests.

Teak is a strong and water resistant wood.

This chair is made from teak.

It was part of a boat.

The wood is carved. Look for the peacocks in its decoration.



Introduction to States and networks

In the past, Myanmar was made up of different kingdoms, empires, states and family networks.

These groups interacted with each other in different ways.

They went to war. They shared religious ideas.
They traded.



Wellcome Collection, London

3 A picture from a book of people playing and watching polo

The kingdoms of central Myanmar sometimes invaded the nearby kingdom of Manipur.

Soldiers from Manipur were famous for riding horses.

The Manipuri soldiers played polo to keep fit.

Manipuri soldiers were captured by the central Myanmar army. They brought the game with them to the Burmese royal court.





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4 A silver coin

One of the ancient kingdoms now part of modern-day Myanmar was called Arakan.

Arakan became rich and powerful through trade.

This coin from Arakan has three different languages.

They show the wide reach of the kingdom.





Calderdale Museums Service

5 A colourful striped skirt

In Myanmar, people travelled to markets to buy things.

This skirt is made of materials from near and far.

The purple velvet is from Europe.

The red and yellow silk came from China.

The black cotton cloth is locally made and dyed.





Photograph by James Henry Green, James Henry Green Collection, Brighton & Hove Museums

6 A photo of a male leader

The powerful Kachin peoples live in the north.

This is a photograph of one of their leaders.

His clothes tell us about him.

His Chinese robe and Burmese skirt-cloth show us he had strong connections with courts far away.



Introduction to Colonial eclipse

Britain took over Myanmar.

They got rid of the Burmese king.

The British changed lots of things about Myanmar.

After the Second World War, Myanmar gained its independence from the British.

The country was in a bad condition when the British left.



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7 A large, seated, religious figure

British soldiers often took Burmese objects for their own without asking.

This statue was taken by a British soldier.

It is an image of the Buddha.

The Buddha is important religiously to many local people.





Courtesy National Museums Liverpool, World Museum

8 An ivory chair

British people began to stay in Myanmar after they took it over.

Burmese artists changed the style of the objects they made to suit British tastes.

This chair has a European shape, but is decorated in a Burmese style.





© IWM

9 A silk map

In the Second World War, soldiers were given maps to help them escape their enemies.

This map of north and central Myanmar is made of silk, not paper.

It would not have made any rustling noises when opened (like paper would).



Introduction to After independence

Myanmar became independent from Britain in 1948.

A new government was formed.

In 1962, the army seized power.

Life in Myanmar has been very hard for many people since then.

But people still protest for change.



Reproduced by permission of the artist Nan Da
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10 A painting of a woman

This is a painting of a woman from Myanmar.

She is called Aung San Suu Kyi.

She formed a political party fighting for democracy.

Today she is a prisoner of the army.

Images like this are a sign of rebellion and hope.



