



Cloth canopy with a protective diagram, Burma/Myanmar, late 19th century-early 20th century
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Visual Paritta: word/image relationships in Burmese popular posters

In-person and online

9 March 2026 at 5:00–6:30pm

Basement Teaching Room 1, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies,
Pusey Lane, Oxford, OX1 2LE

Tea at 4:30–5:00pm (Common Room)



SPEAKER
Alexandra Green,
S. P. Shaw Curator for
Southeast Asia,
The British Museum



DISCUSSANT
Alicia Turner,
Associate Professor of Religious
Studies and Humanities,
York University, Canada

ORGANIZER



FACULTY OF
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MIDDLE
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STUDIES

Online attendance via **Teams**.

Meeting ID: 330 227 927 630 26, Passcode: RA9vL6Uq

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Abstract

Protection in Myanmar comes in both verbal and visual forms. Drawing upon textual and visual conventions, Burmese popular religious posters indicate the inseparable relationship between word and image in the production of protection and exhibit a method of religious materialisation. In art historical discourse, the ubiquitous presence of mass-produced imagery in contemporary media is usually ignored or relegated to the periphery, but the designs of Burmese popular religious posters do not constitute a break with earlier traditions. Rather, they continue to exemplify the complex relationships between texts, words, images, ritual, and practice that have comprised Buddhism from an early time. This paper considers text-image issues and relates these to Theravada practices, reflecting upon specific Burmese visual examples. Burmese religious popular posters thus provide an excellent platform for revisiting word-image relationships and the role of material culture in religious practices.

Speaker

Alexandra Green is S. P. Shaw Curator for Southeast Asia at the British Museum and was the lead curator of the *Burma to Myanmar* exhibition (2023). Besides editing the *Burma to Myanmar* exhibition book, her publications include *Southeast Asia: A History in Objects* (2023), *Raffles in Southeast Asia* (with the Asian Civilisations Museum, 2019), and *Buddhist Visual Cultures, Rhetoric, and Narrative in Late Burmese Wall Paintings* (2018). She is currently working on a collaborative project on Stamford Raffles, as well as a travelling exhibition of the museum's Thai collection.

Discussant

Alicia Turner is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Humanities at York University in Toronto. Her research focuses on Buddhism in the colonial period in Myanmar and issues of gender and the radicalization of religious identities. She is the author of *Saving Buddhism: The Impermanence of Religion in Colonial Burma* (Hawaii 2014) and co-author of *The Irish Buddhist: The Forgotten Monk who Faced Down the British Empire* (Oxford 2020).