

## **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPONYMY OF BURMA**

**This paper concentrates on those aspects of modern Burma of interest to the toponymist: modern history, people, language, and geographical names. It is not otherwise a specialist text. The paper is drawn together from an assortment of material, from a wide variety of sources.**

The procedures adopted in this paper as regards the preferred spelling of geographical and other names are as follows. Names of administrative divisions and populated places (except for the principal city, Rangoon) are spelt as found in the latest available official Burmese sources, as are the names of rivers which flow within Burma only. Names of ethnic groups, languages, and rivers of an international extent are given in their traditional English spellings.

The reason for this two-fold approach is to enable those names which properly belong within the remit of the Burmese authorities to be spelt as they are in official Burmese English-language sources, while retaining in an English spelling those names of a wider and more general application.

Inevitably, this procedure means that, on occasion, a single name may be spelt in two different ways in this document, according to its particular application. For instance, the administrative division spellings *Kayin*, *Rakhine* and *Kayah* equate to the ethnic groups *Karen*, *Arakan*, and *Karenni* respectively. The administrative division name *Ayeyarwady* equates to the river name *Irrawaddy*.

The words “Burmese” and “Burman” are used according to their customary application in British English. “Burmese” is applied as a national adjective and as a political term to include all the nation's inhabitants. It is also used as the name for the language of the majority ethnic group. “Burman” is used as the name of that majority ethnic group.

The question of the country name, “Burma” or “Myanmar”, is the subject of a dedicated section (Section D) within this paper.

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**P C G N**  
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## **SECTION A**      **Outline of Post-Independence History**

- 1 Burma achieved independence in January 1948 as the “Union of Burma”, a fragile fusion of disparate ethnic areas. Its borders were the result of a three-stage nineteenth century colonial annexation by Britain, uneasily combining the Burman heartland, watered by the Chindwin, Irrawaddy and Sittoung rivers and known to the British as “Burma Proper”, with the outlying regions known as the “Frontier Areas”<sup>1</sup>. Independence was granted when Britain felt a sufficient degree of national unity had been achieved, but the reality was domination by the Burman heartland, with the acquiescence of the Frontier Areas to the notion of Burma’s independence achieved only amidst much misunderstanding.
- 2 The years after 1948 saw a limited measure of ethnic autonomy put in place, but even this modest decentralisation ended in 1962 when, on the pretext that the nation was about to break up into ethnic mini-states, the military<sup>2</sup> overthrew the government and assumed power. This military junta ruled by decree, and in 1974 it institutionalised a unitary state within a new constitution which no longer guaranteed the ethnic autonomy granted at independence. The protection of minority languages, customs and cultures became dependent upon their not being used, in the eyes of the authorities, to subvert the national order. Thus the intended administrative balance between 7 Burman divisions and 7 non-Burman ethnic states<sup>3</sup> was thrown into disequilibrium. At this same juncture in 1974, the “Union of Burma” was re-titled as the “Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma”.
- 3 By 1988, resistance to military rule had become appreciable, and in July of that year the government stepped down amidst riots and turmoil. There followed a chaotic two-month period sometimes known as the “democracy summer”, which lasted until military leaders again seized power in September 1988 and assumed the title “State Law and Order Restoration Council” (SLORC). This council abrogated the constitution and brutally suppressed the summer demonstrations, with several thousand deaths reported. Subsequently, the SLORC did call for democratic elections to be held and in June 1989 dropped the words “Socialist Republic” from the state title in an effort to demonstrate their proclaimed preference for a multi-party state. At the same time, however, they changed the word “Burma” to “Myanmar”, the new state title becoming the “Union of Myanmar”<sup>4</sup>.
- 4 In the 1990 election the National League for Democracy (NLD), whose most prominent figurehead was and remains Aung San Suu Kyi, won 80% of the seats and claimed power. But the SLORC refused to allow the NLD to assume control, insisting instead that a new constitution be adopted first. In July 1990 the SLORC issued Declaration 1/90, empowering themselves to govern indefinitely by martial law decrees until such time as this proposed new constitution might be adopted to their satisfaction, whereupon at their discretion they might return power to civilian rule. The military now possessed absolute control of all the components of state power, and the term “military” had come to equal the “state”. The “people” were not empowered either ethnically or through any political structure, and ethnic or political diversity was deemed divisive. The military authorities claimed – and continue to claim – that they alone, supposedly free from ethnic diversity and concerned only with the broad national interest, could hold together the fragile union<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The “Frontier Areas” equate to the “Scheduled Areas” plus the Karenni area.

<sup>2</sup> The word *Tatmadaw*, the name in the Burmese language for Burma's military forces, is sometimes seen used untranslated in English language texts.

<sup>3</sup> See paragraph 6 and Annex B.

<sup>4</sup> For the significance of this change, see paragraph 9 and also in particular Section D.

<sup>5</sup> The military authorities are themselves mostly Burman, and are apt to believe that their ethnic group enjoys a superiority of culture and intelligence which makes them anointed to govern.

5 A decade on from the events of 1988, the authorities felt they had finally achieved full “law and order restoration” and determined to re-package themselves less intimidatingly as “developers” of the country. Thus in November 1997 the SLORC changed its name to the State People's Development Council (SPDC). Yet even in that same month, the United Nations General Assembly passed one of a series of resolutions noting the absence of democratic governance in Burma and deploring the continued violation of human rights. Only the title of the rulers had changed; not the reality of the rule, as witnessed once more in the latest round of brutal repression in autumn 2007. In total, about 45 of the 59 years of independence have been lived out under military rule, “a bizarre path of socialist autarchy, militarism and Buddhism”<sup>6</sup>, a concoction to which the word “superstition” might usefully be added. Even geography has been used to support the theories of autarchy and national unity propounded by the authorities, with the claim that Burma's principal geographical features occur entirely within the country's boundaries, and that Burma is therefore a naturally discrete unit enjoying a form of geographical self-sufficiency<sup>7</sup>.

## **SECTION B                      Ethnic Groups**

6 Burma is a country of 54,821,500 inhabitants<sup>8</sup>, living in an area of 261,228 square miles (676,577 square kms), an area slightly larger than Ukraine. There are 8 principal ethnic groups in the country: Burman, Shan, Karen, Arakanese, Mon, Kachin, Chin, and Karenni. The Burmans form approximately two-thirds of this population, roughly 36 million, while the next most numerous ethnic group is the Shan at 9% (about 4.9 million). The principle on which the Union was based was one of ethnic balance, whereby the Burmans live in 7 first-order administrative units known as *divisions*, while each of the other 7 major ethnic groups forms a majority population in its own *state*. This 7+7 arrangement accounts for the circle of 14 stars on the Burmese flag<sup>9</sup>. The relationship between the administrative divisions and the principal ethnic groups can be (greatly) simplified as follows:

<b>States</b>	<b>Principal Ethnic Groups</b>
Chin	Chin
Kachin	Kachin
Kayah	Karenni
Kayin	mainly Karen; some Burman & Mon
Mon	Mon & Burman
Rakhine	Arakanese
Shan	mainly Shan; some Wa & Karen & Palaung
<b>Divisions</b>	
Ayeyarwady	mainly Burman; some Karen
Bago	mainly Burman; some Karen
Magway	Burman
Mandalay	Burman
Sagaing	mainly Burman; some Naga
Tanintharyi	Burman & Mon & Karen
Yangon	mainly Burman; some Karen

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<sup>6</sup> Carl Mortished, “Boycotting Burma makes things worse”, *The Times*, October 3 2007.

<sup>7</sup> This is a highly dubious argument. Many features are in fact shared with neighbouring countries, and although Burmese sources show the major feature of the Irrawaddy river as domestic only, Chinese and other sources consider it to be international.

<sup>8</sup> Population figures in this document are 2007 estimates from the website <http://www.world-gazetteer.com>.

<sup>9</sup> This flag was adopted in 1974. In a draft constitutional document of September 2007 the SPDC proposed a new flag with a single star, perhaps indicative of the reality of a Burman-dominated country.

- 7 The Shans live in the eastern highlands bordering Thailand; they are related to the Thais and indeed call themselves *T'ai* in their own language, *Shan* being a Burmese name. The Mons are related to the Khmers of Cambodia and live in the Irrawaddy delta region and along the coast to the south. The Karens and Karennis live, like the Shans, in the eastern highlands, the Chins and Kachins in the northern highlands, and the Arakanese along the western coast. The religious structure of Burma is very complex, but it can be summarised in the following way. Most Burmans (perhaps 95% of them), Shans, Mons and Arakanese are Buddhist, along with most of the Karen populace. Most Kachins, Chins and Karennis are Christian, along with much of the Karen leadership. Historically, the various non-Burman ethnic groups, particularly the so-called “hill tribes” of the highland areas, were governed by their own hereditary rulers, though these usually maintained a tributary relationship with the powerful kingdoms of Burma Proper.
- 8 The Wa, Palaung<sup>10</sup> and Naga ethnic groups noted in the table in paragraph 6 of this paper form three of the many smaller ethnic groups. The current authorities claim there are 135 such ethnic nationalities in total, but this figure is an understatement since it takes no account of those groupings which the SPDC would prefer to ignore, such as the Rohingyas, a Muslim group from Rakhine state. The Rohingyas are among those groups which have been displaced from their homelands by the authorities; some 200,000 Rohingyas now live in Bangladesh. The SPDC regard the displaced Rohingyas simply as economic migrants. Similarly, some 50,000 Chins are exiled in India, and Thailand shelters 150,000 refugees plus an estimated 700,000 illegal workers of various Burmese nationalities. Additionally, there is a large number of internally displaced and forcibly relocated people within Burma itself, many from the ethnic groups of the eastern highland states, especially those living in the vicinity of the hydroelectric projects along the Salween river. Estimates of the numbers of displaced vary from 1 million to 3 million.

## SECTION C            Languages

- 9 The three principal language families present in Burma are as follows:

**Tibeto-Burman** (eastern branch): including Burmese<sup>11</sup>, Kachin, Naga & Karen<sup>12</sup>

**Mon-Khmer**: including Mon, Palaung, Wa

**Thai**: including Shan

The situation is in fact greatly complex, as is suggested by a linguistic survey begun in 1917, which identified 242 languages and dialects before it was abandoned as being beyond the capacity and resources of the administration to accomplish. About three-quarters of the population of Burma, that is to say some 40 million people, speak one of the Tibeto-Burman languages. These are mostly Burmans who speak Burmese, almost the only language spoken in much of the central plains. Native Burmans seldom speak any indigenous language other than Burmese, but many educated non-Burmans do speak Burmese as a second language, so Burmese can serve as a medium of communication away from the central plains also. Burmese exists in both a literary/ceremonial and in a colloquial form, the language itself being known as *myanma (h)batha* in the former but generally as *bama (h)batha* in the latter. This important distinction between *myanma* and *bama* is encountered again in the debate over the country name itself (see Section D).

<sup>10</sup> *Palaung* is a Burmese name; the self-designation of this ethnic group is *Rumai*.

<sup>11</sup> Burmese is the official language of Burma.

<sup>12</sup> There is some debate as to the proper classification of Karen.

## **SECTION D**

### **Did you say “Burma”? Shouldn't that be “Myanmar” now?**

10 By 1989, after a year in power, the ruling SLORC were alarmed at the support enjoyed by the opposition NLD in the run-up to the 1990 elections, and they attempted to increase their popularity by portraying themselves as the country’s only true defenders of Burma’s independence from the “foreign” influences that they claimed governed the NLD’s policies and thinking<sup>13</sup>. As part of a wider effort to expunge perceived foreign influences, the SLORC in May 1989 established the “Commission of Inquiry into the True Naming of Myanmar”<sup>14</sup>, a committee of over 20 members with the remit to examine, and remove any colonial influences from, Burmese toponyms. Yet only 2 of the committee members were expert in any of the indigenous languages of Burma, and both of those specialised in the Burmese language only. The real purpose of the committee was in fact to re-write the Roman script versions of indigenous toponyms so that the spellings reflected (in terms of the orthography of the *English* language specifically) modern Burmese pronunciations.

11 The effect of this committee’s work on toponyms within Burma is dealt with elsewhere in this paper (Section E). But the most internationally visible result of their work concerned the country name itself. On June 18<sup>th</sup> 1989, the SLORC adopted Law 15/89, entitled the “Adaptation of Expressions Law”. The first substantive clause of this law read as follows:

The expression “Union of Burma” and the expression “Burma”, “Burman” or “Burmese” contained in existing laws enacted in the English language shall be substituted by the expression “Union of Myanmar” and “Myanmar” respectively.

The claim behind this move was that words deriving from the noun “Burma” could only properly relate to the Burman ethnic group. In order properly to encompass the entire spectrum of ethnic groups within the country, the word “Myanmar” should be used. This argument is still used today by the SPDC authorities<sup>15</sup>. However, the crucial element of this clause is to be found in the words “laws enacted in the English language”. Law 15/89 was openly directed at the *English* language specifically. It had no effect whatsoever on the Burmese language where, as has been noted at the end of paragraph 9 above, the word employed continued to be *myanma* in literary/ceremonial form and *bama* in colloquial form<sup>16</sup>. And the law effectively disadvantaged non-Burman ethnic groups, who had become accustomed to forms of “Burma” denoting the whole country, but to whom *myanma* and its derivatives were totally alien words which were redolent only of the language of the dominant ethnic group.

12 Politics have entered this debate very forcefully. To the SLORC/SPDC, use of the word *bama* may be indicative of subversion. Conversely, the National League for Democracy have largely eschewed all reference to “Myanmar” and have continued to use “Burma” and its derivatives. Indeed, it can be argued that it is difficult to make a choice of country name without, in so doing, delivering a political judgement on the current authorities. The NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi has certainly delivered her verdict:

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<sup>13</sup> For example the NLD’s leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, had a foreign (British) husband! Placing blame for any opposition on “foreign influences” remains the standard reaction of the SPDC today.

<sup>14</sup> Sometimes known as the “Group on Correct Pronunciation and Spelling of Myanmar Place Names”.

<sup>15</sup> It was used during Burma’s presentation to the 8<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Berlin, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> See paragraph 9 for an explanation of literary and colloquial Burmese. The letter “r” added in *Myanmar* was an attempt by the authorities to ensure a correct pronunciation in the English language, namely with a final long “a”. This addition is of course quite meaningless outside southern British English. (Note, however, that the medial “r” in *Burma* is similarly superfluous).

No-one should be allowed to change the name of the country without referring to the will of the people. They [the SLORC/SPDC] say that “Myanmar” refers to all the Burmese ethnic groups, whereas “Burma” only refers to the Burmese ethnic group, but that is not true. “Myanmar” is a literary word for “Burma” and it refers only to the Burmese ethnic group. Of course I prefer the word “Burma”<sup>17</sup>.

- 13 Thus the seductive argument of inclusiveness, employed by the authorities to promote the use of “Myanmar” at the expense of “Burma”, and to demonstrate their patriotic goodwill for the entire country, is in reality a false argument. “Myanmar” is not a neutral and all-inclusive term. If anything, it is less inclusive than “Burma”, since in the minds of all non-Burmans “Myanmar” is a word inextricably linked to the majority Burman ethnic group.
- 14 Official practice in the United Kingdom is to use as country names those names which are in common informal usage in British English. In this instance, that name is “Burma”, and hence “Burma” is the country name in official UK usage. But official UK policy for state titles is to reflect the will of the authorities in the country of origin, which in this instance means using “Union of Myanmar” as the state title in official UK usage.

## **SECTION E**                    **Toponyms within Burma**

- 15 As indicated in paragraph 11 above, the June 1989 “Adaptation of Expressions Law” (Law 15/89) did not restrict itself to the name of the country. Far more numerous and wide-ranging were the effects of this law on the domestic toponyms of Burma. The second substantive clause of the law read as follows:

If it is necessary to amend in the English language the name of any state, division, townships zone, township, town, ward, village tract or village, or the name of any river, stream, forest, mountain, or island, which is presently written and used in the English language, so as to conform to the Myanmar pronunciation, the government may, by notification, amend the same.

And this is precisely what the government proceeded to do. The Burman ethnic group was renamed *Bamar*<sup>18</sup>, and 8 of the 14 first-order administrative division name spellings were altered:

*Arakan to Rakhine*<sup>19</sup>  
*Irrawaddy to Ayeyarwady*  
*Karen to Kayin*  
*Karenni to Kayah*  
*Magwe to Magway*  
*Pegu to Bago*  
*Rangoon to Yangon*  
*Tenasserim to Tanintharyi*

Geographical names were also re-spelled. Annex D provides an illustrative list of the changes made by this Law and by its subsequent application since 1989.

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<sup>17</sup> On her release from house arrest in May 2002, Aung San Suu Kyi did make reference to “Myanmar”, perhaps indicating a small if temporary thaw in relations between the SPDC and the NLD. But note that she was once again placed under house arrest in the autumn of 2003, a detention which remains to this day.

<sup>18</sup> Again with a superfluous “r”; see footnote 16.

<sup>19</sup> This is another dubious attempt to represent English pronunciation; *Rakhine* is intended to rhyme with “alpine”.

- 16 As with the imposition of “Myanmar” as the country name, these new spellings were claimed to rid the country of the vestiges of colonial toponyms. In reality, they were engineered by the authorities to reflect, in terms of English orthography, the Burmese language pronunciation of individual names<sup>20</sup>. They were thus far less inclusive as toponyms to the citizens of Burma than many of the spellings they replaced. The original field collection of toponyms had usually been undertaken by survey personnel from outside Burma, who automatically recorded toponyms as they heard them; in the local ethnic form they found on location<sup>21</sup>. So there had been a judicious and balanced selection of (for example) well-established Shan names reflected in the written toponyms of Shan state, whereas after the enactment of the 1989 law all toponymic spellings throughout Burma reflected only the language of the majority Burman group. Again, this law was on the surface directed exclusively at the *English* language, having no effect whatsoever on the Burmese language, but hidden from outside view was the effect the law had on the languages of the ethnic minority groups. It removed official status from their toponyms.
- 17 Here it is pertinent to note that both before and after this 1989 law, Burmese practice had and has been to issue laws and documentation (such as mapping) in two parallel editions: Burmese language and English language. The Burmese editions were naturally in Burmese script. The English versions were in Roman script, but carried *ad hoc* spellings of toponyms which were not romanizations. For example, the town of *Sittwe*, spelt as such in Burmese script on the Burmese editions, has been shown as *Akyab* on the English edition<sup>22</sup>. It is these pre-1989 “English” spellings which the 1989 law sought to alter. Similarly, the BGN/PCGN romanization for the state formerly known as *Arakan* and changed by the 1989 law to *Rakhine* would be consistently *Yagaing*, yet this form is never encountered in Burmese Roman products. This is why the 1989 “Adaptation of Expressions Law” mentions the English language specifically.
- 18 At the 8<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 2002, the Burmese delegation<sup>23</sup> announced that their country planned to establish a permanent committee on geographical names, composed of experts in linguistics, survey, hydrography, cartography, etc. If and when established, this committee may simply further the enactment of Law 15/89, or it may recommend a change of policy (perhaps by considering romanization for the first time). Until such a date, it seems inexpedient for the outside world to ignore the spellings resulting from the current law, even if they can be shown to be scientifically unsound.

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<sup>20</sup> For example the archaeological site formerly written in Roman as *Pagan* was re-written as *Bagan* to reflect the pronunciation. The written Burmese script form, beginning with a “*P*”, did not change.

<sup>21</sup> This practice was not always wholly reflective of the principal local ethnic toponyms; it also introduced names such as *Akyab*, the Rohingya/Bengali name for *Sittwe*.

<sup>22</sup> See paragraph 16 and footnote 20.

<sup>23</sup> Consisting of the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

## Population and Related Information

Burma is known in Burmese as *Myanma Naingngandaw* မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်. The full state title is "Union of Myanmar", which in Burmese is *Pyidaungzu Myanma Naingngandaw* ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်. The country has a population of 54,821,500 living in an area of 261,228 sq mls (676,577 sq kms), slightly larger than Ukraine and slightly smaller than Texas. Burma possesses borders with the following countries:

Bangladesh	a border of 120 miles / 193 kms
India	a border of 914 miles / 1463 kms
China	a border of 1366 miles / 2185 kms
Laos	a border of 147 miles / 235 kms
Thailand	a border of 1125 miles / 1800 kms

The principal city is Yangon (conventionally Rangoon), which until recently was also the capital city. But in February 2006 the SPDC relocated most government ministries to a newly-built capital city named *Nay Pyi Taw* (meaning "Great City of the Sun", and sometimes seen as *Naypyidaw*), centred at 1945N 9606E, more centrally within Burma and some 12 miles west of the established town of Pyinmana in Mandalay Division. Although Nay Pyi Taw is now the seat of government, most foreign embassies remain in Rangoon. Also in Mandalay Division, the SPDC is now building a separate "cyber-capital" at a site near Pyin-Oo-Lwin named *Yadanabon Nay Pyi Taw*, Yadanabon (a word approximating to "treasure") being the name of a period in the nineteenth century when the capital of the Burman lands was in Mandalay.

## **Settlements in Burma with a population above 100,000**

Yangon [Rangoon]	4,668,800	1647N	9610E
Mandalay	1,266,500	2200N	9605E
Mawlamyine	463,400	1629N	9737E
Bago	253,500	1720N	9629E
Patheingyi	246,200	1647N	9444E
Monywa	189,600	2207N	9508E
Meiktila	186,100	2052N	9552E
Sittwe	184,700	2009N	9254E
Myeik	182,700	1226N	9836E
Taunggyi	164,700	2047N	9702E
Myingyan	148,700	2128N	9523E
Dawei	144,200	1405N	9812E
Pyay	140,300	1849N	9513E
Hinthada	140,200	1738N	9528E
Lashio	134,800	2256N	9745E
Pakokku	132,700	2120N	9506E
Thaton	130,800	1655N	9722E
Pyin-Oo-Lwin	123,000	2202N	9628E
Yenangyaung	115,600	2028N	9453E
Taungoo	110,900	1856N	9626E
Thayetmyo	110,800	1919N	9511E
Pyinmana	102,200	1944N	9613E
Magway	101,300	2009N	9455E

### **Note on Personal Names**

Burmans, the majority ethnic group, do not have forenames and surnames, but make widespread use of titles. These vary according to the relationship of the speaker to the person addressed. They include:

<i>Daw</i>	adult woman	<i>Maung</i>	young man or brother
<i>Ko</i>	young man or brother	<i>Saya</i>	teacher
<i>Kodaw</i>	holy person	<i>Shin</i>	monk
<i>Ma</i>	young woman or sister	<i>U</i>	adult man

## First-Order Administrative Divisions

Burma is divided into 14 first-order administrative divisions: 7 divisions and 7 states. Each of the 7 divisions is known as a *taing*, and each of the 7 states is a *pyinè*. There are 64 second-order divisions (districts; see Annex C), then 324 third-order townships, followed at the fourth-order level jointly by 2548 (urban) wards and 13,742 (rural) village tracts.

<b>Ayeyarwady</b>	<b>(Division)</b>	centred at 1700N 9500E and divided into 5 districts Population = 7,749,800 Area = 13,566 sq mls / 35,138 sq kms Admin Centre = Patheingyi 1647N 9444E
<b>Bago</b>	<b>(Division)</b>	centred at 1815N 9615E and divided into 4 districts Population = 5,900,800 Area = 14,866 sq mls / 39,404 sq kms Admin Centre = Bago 1720N 9629E
<b>Chin</b>	<b>(State)</b>	centred at 2200N 9330E and divided into 2 districts Population = 572,900 Area = 13,907 sq mls / 36,019 sq kms Admin Centre = Hakha 2239N 9337E
<b>Kachin</b>	<b>(State)</b>	centred at 2600N 9730E and divided into 3 districts Population = 1,403,700 Area = 34,379 sq mls / 89,041 sq kms Admin Centre = Myittha 2523N 9724E
<b>Kayah</b>	<b>(State)</b>	centred at 1915N 9730E and divided into 2 districts Population = 261,400 Area = 4,530 sq mls / 11,733 sq kms Admin Centre = Loikaw 1941N 9713E
<b>Kayin</b>	<b>(State)</b>	centred at 1730N 9745E and divided into 3 districts Population = 1,642,000 Area = 11,731 sq mls / 30,383 sq kms Admin Centre = Hpa-an 1653N 9738E
<b>Magway</b>	<b>(Division)</b>	centred at 2030N 9445E and divided into 5 districts Population = 5,032,600 Area = 17,305 sq mls / 44,820 sq kms Admin Centre = Magway 2009N 9455E
<b>Mandalay</b>	<b>(Division)</b>	centred at 2100N 9600E and divided into 7 districts Population = 7,113,000 Area = 14,295 sq mls / 37,024 sq kms Admin Centre = Mandalay 2200N 9605E
<b>Mon</b>	<b>(State)</b>	centred at 1700N 9715E and divided into 2 districts Population = 2,611,800 Area = 4,747 sq mls / 12,297 sq kms Admin Centre = Mawlamyine 1629N 9737E
<b>Rakhine</b>	<b>(State)</b>	centred at 1900N 9415E and divided into 5 districts Population = 3,176,700 Area = 14,200 sq mls / 36,778 sq kms Admin Centre = Sittwe 2009N 9254E
<b>Sagaing</b>	<b>(Division)</b>	centred at 2330N 9530E and divided into 8 districts Population = 5,987,400 Area = 36,535 sq mls / 94,625 sq kms Admin Centre = Sagaing 2152N 9559E
<b>Shan</b>	<b>(State)</b>	centred at 2200N 9800E and divided into 10 districts Population = 5,774,200 Area = 60,150 sq mls / 155,801 sq kms Admin Centre = Taunggyi 2047N 9702E
<b>Tanintharyi</b>	<b>(Division)</b>	centred at 1300N 9900E and divided into 3 districts Population = 1,424,800 Area = 16,735 sq mls / 43,343 sq kms Admin Centre = Dawei 1405N 9812E
<b>Yangon</b>	<b>(Division)</b>	centred at 1700N 9610E and divided into 4 districts Population = 6,170,300 Area = 3,927 sq mls / 10,171 sq kms Admin Centre = Yangon 1647N 9610 <sup>E</sup>

## Second-Order Administrative Divisions

There are 64 second-order administrative divisions (districts) within Burma. Each is listed here alphabetically within its appropriate first-order administrative unit. There are 14 of these first-order units; for further details see Annex B. If the district name corresponds to that of a first-order administrative centre, the name is in bold type. The district name is followed by the geographical co-ordinates of the populated place (of the same name) which forms the district centre. Finally, unofficial variant spellings of the name are included, to facilitate reference. The information is taken principally from two sources:

- (a) Union of Myanmar, 1:2 million, Myanmar Survey Department, 1998  
 (b) Myanmar Guide Map, 1:3,300,000, Design Printing Services, Rangoon, 2000 – this is based on source (a)

<b>Approved Name</b>	<b>District Seat Co-ordinates</b>	<b>Variant Name(s)</b>
<b>1 <u>Ayeyarwady Division</u></b>		
Hinthada	1738N 9528E	[sometimes seen as Ayeyawady Division], Irrawaddy Division
Maubin	1644N 9539E	Henzada
Myaungmya	1636N 9456E	Ma-oo-beng, Manbin
<b>Pathein</b>	1647N 9444E	Myoungmya
Pyapon	1617N 9541E	Bassein
		Pyapun
<b>2 <u>Bago Division</u></b>		
<b>Bago</b>	1720N 9629E	Pegu Division
Pyay	1849N 9513E	Pegu
Taungoo	1856N 9626E	Prome, Pye
Thayarwady	1739N 9548E	Taungngu, Toungoo
		Thayawaddy, Tharrawaddy, Tharyarwady
<b>3 <u>Chin State</u><sup>24</sup></b>		
Falam	2255N 9341E	Hpalam, Palam
Mindat	2122N 9359E	
<b>4 <u>Kachin State</u></b>		
Bhamo	2416N 9714E	Banmo, Hsinkai
<b>Myitkyina</b>	2523N 9724E	
Putao	2721N 9724E	Pudao, Kamde, Hkamti, Hkamti Patau, Fort Hertz
<b>5 <u>Kayah State</u></b>		
Bawlakhe	1911N 9721E	Karenni State
<b>Loikaw</b>	1941N 9713E	Bawlake
		Loi-kaw, Luykau
<b>6 <u>Kayin State</u></b>		
<b>Hpa-an</b>	1653N 9738E	Karen State
Kawkareik	1633N 9814E	Pa-an
Myawadi	1641N 9831E	Kawkayeik, Kawkareit
<b>7 <u>Magway Division</u></b>		
Gangaw	2210N 9408E	Magwe Division
<b>Magway</b>	2009N 9455E	Magwe
Minbu	2011N 9453E	
Pakokku	2120N 9506E	Pakkoku, Pagukku
Thayetmyo	1919N 9511E	Thayet, Thyatmyo, Thayetmo

<sup>24</sup> The administrative centre of Chin State, Hakha, is apparently not the centre of a district.

## 8 Mandalay Division

Kyaukse	2136N 9608E
<b>Mandalay</b>	2200N 9605E
Meiktila	2052N 9552E
Myingyan	2128N 9523E
Nyaung-u	2112N 9455E
Pyin-Oo-Lwin	2202N 9628E
Yamethin	2026N 9609E

Myingyin, Myingan  
Nyaungu, Nyoungoo, Nyaungoo  
Maymyo, Meimyu, Pyin U Lwin  
Yamethinn

## 9 Mon State

<b>Mawlamyine</b>	1629N 9737E
Thaton	1655N 9722E

Moulmein, Mawlamyaing  
Tha-tun, Thadon

## 10 Rakhine State

Buthidaung	2052N 9232E
Kyaunkpyu	1926N 9333E
Maungdaw	2049N 9222E
<b>Sittwe</b>	2009N 9254E
Thandwe	1828N 9422E

Arakan State  
Buthedaung  
Kyaukpyu  
[sometimes seen as Sittway], Akyab  
Sandoway, Arakan, Thandway

## 11 Sagaing Division

Hkamti	2600N 9542E
Kalemyo	2311N 9404E
Katha	2411N 9621E
Mawlaik	2338N 9425E
Monywa	2207N 9508E
<b>Sagaing</b>	2152N 9559E
Shwebo	2234N 9542E
Tamu	2413N 9419E

Singkaling Hkamti, Zingkaling Hkamti, Singkawng, Kanti  
Kale Myo

Sugaing, Sitkaing

Tammu, Tama, Tana

## 12 Shan State

Kengtung	2117N 9936E
Kunlong	2325N 9839E
Kyaukme	2232N 9702E
Lashio	2256N 9745E
Laukkaing	2350N 9835E <sup>25</sup>
Loilen	2052N 9740E
Mong-Hpayak	2053N 9956E
Mong Hsat	2032N 9915E
Mu Se	2359N 9754E
Tachileik	2026N 9952E
<b>Taunggyi</b>	2047N 9702E

Kengtong, Kyaingdon, Kentung  
Kunlong Ferry, Kunlon

Lasho

Loi-lem, Loi-leng

Maingbyat

Muang Sat, Maingsat

Mu-se

Tachilek, Tha Chi Lek, Tha Chaleak

Taunggye

## 13 Tanintharyi Division

<b>Dawei</b>	1405N 9812E
Kawthoung	0959N 9833E
Myeik	1226N 9836E

Tenasserim Division

Tavoi, Htawei

Kawthaung, Victoria Point, Pulodua, Kawsung, Kau Saung

Mergui

## 14 Yangon Division<sup>26</sup>

Yangon East	1647N 9610E
Yangon North	1647N 9610E
Yangon South	1647N 9610E
Yangon West	1647N 9610E

Rangoon Division

<sup>25</sup> This is an approximate position only.

<sup>26</sup> All four districts of this division are centred in the city of Yangon (Rangoon).

**Name and Spelling Changes in Burma****Note: This list is not necessarily comprehensive**

Main entry spellings in the following list are taken principally from two sources:

- (a) Union of Myanmar, 1:2 million, Myanmar Survey Department, 1998  
 (b) Working Paper E/CONF.94/INF.75, submitted by Myanmar to the 8<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 2002

Aunglan	PPL	1922N 9513E	variants = Allammyo, Myaydo, Myede, Aunglanmyo
Ayeyarwady	ADM1	1700N 9500E	[sometimes seen as Ayeyawady] variant = Irrawaddy
Ayeyarwady [BURMA]: Irrawaddy [CONVENTIONAL]			
	STM	1550N 9506E	
Bagan	SITE	2110N 9452E	variant = Pagan
Bago	ADM1	1815N 9615E	variant = Pegu
Bago	PPL	1720N 9629E	variant = Pegu
Bhamo	PPL	2416N 9714E	variants = Banmo, Hsinkai
Chindwinn	STM	2126N 9515E	variant = Chindwin
Dawei	PPL	1405N 9812E	variants = Tavoi, Htawei
Falam	PPL	2255N 9341E	variants = Hpalam, Palam
Hakha	PPL	2239N 9337E	variant = Haka
Hinthada	PPL	1738N 9528E	variant = Henzada
Hpa-an	PPL	1653N 9738E	variant = Pa-an
Kayah	ADM1	1915N 9730E	variant = Karenni
Kayin	ADM1	1730N 9745E	variant = Karen
Kyaikkami	PPL	1604N 9734E	[sometimes seen as Kyaik Kha Me] variant = Amherst
Loikaw	PPL	1941N 9713E	variants = Loi-kaw, Luykau
Magway	ADM1	2030N 9445E	variant = Magwe
Magway	PPL	2009N 9455E	variant = Magwe
Mawlamyine	PPL	1629N 9737E	variants = Moulmein, Mawlamyaing
Mrauk-oo	PPL	2035N 9311E	variants = Myohaung, Mrauk U
Myeik	PPL	1226N 9836E	variant = Mergui
Nyaungdon	PPL	1702N 9539E	variant = Yandoon
Patheingyi	PPL	1647N 9444E	variant = Bassein
Phyu	PPL	1829N 9626E	variants = Pyu, Hpyu
Pyay	PPL	1849N 9513E	variants = Prome, Pye
Pyin-Oo-Lwin	PPL	2202N 9628E	variants = Maymyo, Meimyu, Pyin U Lwin
Rakhine	ADM1	1900N 9415E	variant = Arakan
Sagaing	PPL	2152N 9559E	variant = Sugaing, Sitkaing
Sittoung	STM	1710N 9658E	variant = Sittang
Sittwe	PPL	2009N 9254E	[sometimes seen as Sittway] variant = Akyab
Tanintharyi	ADM1	1300N 9900E	variant = Tenasserim
Taunggyi	PPL	2047N 9702E	variant = Taunggye
Taungoo	PPL	1856N 9626E	variant = Taungngu, Toungoo
Thandwe	PPL	1828N 9422E	variants = Sandoway, Arakan, Thandway
Thanlwin [BURMA]: Salween [CONVENTIONAL]			
	STM	1630N 9737E	
Thanlyin	PPL	1645N 9614E	variant = Syriam
Wakema	PPL	1636N 9511E	variant = Wageima
Yangon	ADM1	1700N 9610E	variant = Rangoon
Yangon [BURMA]: Rangoon [CONVENTIONAL]			
	PPL	1647N 9610E	

# BURMA

