

## Colonial Spatial Demarcations in British Indian Rangoon

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### ABSTRACT

Burma now Myanmar was part of British India for over 100 years. Burma's colonial experiences position it closer to South Asian experiences than colonial experiences of other parts of Southeast Asia such as Malaya, Vietnam or Indonesia. The British annexed Burma gradually starting in 1826 with the Eastern and Southern parts of the present geographic entity of Burma. Rangoon (now Yangon) was occupied by the British in 1852, and the town was quickly planted with churches, mosques and pretentious grand Indo-Saracenic commercial and administrative buildings designed by British architects and engineers based in British India.

Rangoon became thus another showpiece of the pompous colonial architecture of British India. In India, the British usually divided the colonized cities into White Town and Black Town, spatially differentiating the European population, administration and businesses in the White Town from the native Asian population in the Black Town.

This paper discusses the extent into which colonial Rangoon as a British Indian construct was segregated along the lines of White Town/ Black Town. The paper furthermore explores the legacies of these colonial racial demarcations and power hierarchies in contemporary Rangoon.

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### Introduction

Burma now Myanmar was part of India for over 100 years. That translates into Burma's colonial experiences having been more in analogy with the South Asian experiences rather than the colonial experiences of areas like Malaya, Vietnam or Indonesia. The British annexed Burma gradually starting in 1826 with the Eastern and Southern parts of present Burma. Rangoon was occupied 1852, and was quickly filled with churches, mosques and pretentious hybrid Indo-Victorian commercial and administrative building along the lines of Calcutta.

Burma as a part of British India was demographically and linguistically included in the British Indo-sphere. Hundreds of thousands of South Asian particularly Bengali were encouraged to move eastwards within the British Empire. George Orwell's ill-fated hero John Flory speaks "Hindustani" to his servants in "Burmese Days" published in 1934. In Assam, the Assamese language was trumped by Bengali between 1836 and 1872. The British approached Kandy in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in Tamil and employed Tamil as the administrative language in Ceylon. The simple reason for favouring certain South Asian languages was the British happened to master those languages already due to their long presence in South Asia.

In South Asia, the Europeans designed White and Black Towns particularly in the French colonies like Pondicherry but also in British Madras and Calcutta.

This paper looks into the townscape the British designed in Rangoon and debated whether same White/Black dichotomy applies to Rangoon or whether the boundaries created in Rangoon were connected to power relations rather than colour.

Argues that the racial divisions between White Town and Black Towns were neither complete nor static in Calcutta [1]. Calcutta was the first port where the British settled down in the 1600s, and in the firsts two centuries Indian-European marriage alliances were quite common, and became banned only in 1793, together with sanctions against "Indianized clothes and fabrics." Hence the boundaries were blurred for a few centuries [1]. Residing in the White Town became more a class and caste issue than a race issue [1].

Chattopadhyaya excuses the British race-based boundaries with the "British obsession with classification, division, and separation, exaggerated in the colonial context by the need to distinguish between black and white [1].

The Madras Black Town was divided along the lines of religion, language, caste, and class. Residences were segregated along ethnic lines, but also along caste and professional lines by the functional specialization of trades and other activities [2].

In Rangoon, the commercial and administrative downtown was divided by religious boundaries by promoting the construction of religious buildings supported by respective lay communities. The British settlement was located in the shady "garden city" Golden Valley in Rangoon.

The extravaganza of the British colonial power left behind many architectural monuments as a legacy of their supremacy. The colonial power created British landmarks that mixed “nativized” adaptations of “Oriental” design with British Victorian architecture. According to Ors-Ausin, these hybrid monuments of the colonial Empire create today a “tortured and distorted ideas” of Asian heritage, at the same symbolic of the subjugation and erasure of the indigenous history. Now, the formerly subjugated populace is expected to preserve these markers of colonial status, as they somehow have become the guardians of the Empire’s legacy.

In other cases, as in Burma, what was imagined was secular decadence, such that contemporary natives were no longer capable their putative ancestors' achievements. Seen in this light, the reconstructed monuments, juxtaposed with the surrounding rural poverty, said to the natives: ‘Our very presence shows that you have always been, or have long become, incapable of either greatness or self-rule [3].

As time passed, however, there was less and less openly brutal talk about right of conquest, and more and more effort to create alternative legitimacies. More and more Europeans were being born in Southeast Asia, and being tempted to make it their home. Monumental archaeology allowed the state to appear as the guardian of generalized, but also local, tradition. Constructed monuments often had smartly laid out lawns around them, and explanatory tablets, complete with datings, planted here and there [3].

### Rangoon as an Imperial City

Rangoon is one of the world’s great heritage cities, containing an unparalleled collection of heritage assets these include traditions, communities and memories as well as physical things like parks, buildings and whole neighbourhoods. The city has a rich history as the stage upon which national independence was won and the foundations of modern Myanmar were laid. Great writers, artists and leaders from across Myanmar and the world have lived and worked here. This broad variety of peoples and traditions gives the city its strong cultural identity.

Rangoon’s colonial era buildings are survivors. They have lived through wars and natural disasters, as well as numerous changes of ownership and systems of government [4].

The modern history of Rangoon can be traced through its colonial era buildings and the imprint of the past is indelibly marked by the life cycle of each remaining structure. The many colonial era buildings that survive have, inevitably, weathered over the years. Some state their origins proudly with brass wall plaques or marble foundation stones. Others retain only fleeting hints of their former occupants a set of initials inscribed on a wall or the shadow of a name beneath peeling layers of paint. In some cases, the structures have been altered and adjusted with the needs of their occupants, alternative entrances opened up and airconditioning vents knocked through [4].

The physical setting within which Rangoon’s colonial era buildings are set first began to take shape in simple sketches drawn by a British superintendent William Montgomerie. He had arrived in Rangoon with British troops in 1852 and brought with him some experience as a member of the Singapore town committee when Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles mapped out the new city of Singapore. Impressed by the commercially advantageous riverside setting, Montgomerie proposed a wide Strand along the river that would be kept clear of buildings and plotted a grid of streets leading off it at right angles. Such a design would, according to him, help keep the city cool as the streets would channel the river breeze and rows of buildings would provide shade for the opposite side of each street, except in midday.

The task of planning Rangoon was given Alexander Fraser of Bengal Engineers. He expanded Montgomerie’s chessboard pattern and placed the existing gilded Sule Pagoda east of centre on the grid. The northern boundary was the ancient Shwedagon pagoda [4].

The early decades of the 20th century saw a construction boom as the colonial administration upgraded and expanded its earlier offices, merchant houses established their headquarters, international banks opened new branches, and smaller shops grew into large department stores and bazaars.

The British also followed their idea of a “garden city” and therefore open green spaces were created and maintained such as Royal Lake (now Kandawgyi), zoological gardens, and a cantonment park around the Shwedagon pagoda.

The biggest threat to these buildings is neglect. After the capital was shifted to Central Burma and new town called Naypyidaw was established in 2005, a huge array of state-owned buildings that were once occupied by ministries and government departments were left behind. Many of these buildings are now empty or only partially occupied and falling gradually prey to damp, rust, weeds and termites [4].

The brief democratic period with Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD government started a boom of heritage-oriented restorations of some of the buildings. This operation was cut short by the brutal military coup d’etat 1 February 2021 to eliminate NLD’s overwhelming landslide victory in the elections in November 2020.

Myanmar stands at a crossroads. After decades of military rule, the country is taking steps towards political reform, negotiations with armed ethnic groups can lead to sustainable peace, and the early stages of economic restructuring are under way. Myanmar’s population has endured years of poor economic growth and is now hopeful of a better future.

Rangoon is Myanmar’s most important urban economic centre and the city’s future is closely linked to that of the country. The newly elected government, which has an unprecedented mandate for change, has stated that getting Yangon right is one of its key aims. Indeed, the current transition provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to set a new agenda for Yangon and lay down a guiding vision. There is also substantial international goodwill and interest in Myanmar, shown by the numerous trade, diplomatic and humanitarian missions over recent years.

Myanmar’s transition coincides with a global political and economic rebalance. Asian countries are expected to lead global growth over coming decades. The country’s existing natural assets, arable land and large working age population mean there is huge potential for economic growth. Positioned at the heart of Asia between the world’s two largest and fastest growing major economies, India and China, Myanmar is emerging at the right moment to be part of a regional boom and an increasingly globalised economy. With the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projecting Myanmar’s national GDP will grow by 8.6% in 2016 and 7.7% in 2017, many potential investors are eagerly watching the country’s emerging markets.

The conservation of Yangon’s built, cultural and natural heritage is essential to making it a success. A city’s residents, leaders, businesspeople and innovators are the source of its ability to grow, evolve and meet future challenges. Making Yangon a liveable city will enhance its regional competitiveness and ability to attract future talent and investment. Yangon already has assets that can’t

be bought or planned into existence; it is a green and fundamentally well-planned city with rich cultural heritage and one of the best surviving historic cityscapes in Asia. These features provide it with the economic edge needed to succeed in the future and must be protected. By combining the infrastructure necessary for a 21st century city with Yangon's unique heritage, a set of advantages not available in other cities can be offered to investors, businesses and residents.

The Yangon Heritage Strategy identifies 12 key principles for a liveable Yangon. These represent the following core areas to develop and work towards: a Compact city; well-Connected transport networks; Resilient in the face of disaster risks; inclusive of Diverse communities; residents Engaged in civic issues; a strong Economy; access to good Education and Health infrastructure; high-quality and accessible Public Assets like parks, libraries and theatres; strong Rule of Law; well-conserved Unique natural, cultural and built heritage; finally, all of this must be Affordable for city residents.

As the Asian region leads global economic growth, there is a re-emergence of interest in local heritage assets and a realisation of their economic and social value. In recent years, many cities in the region have seen the importance of heritage conservation. Major centres such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Manila and Jakarta lost huge swathes of their historic cities to development over the last 50 years. Today, these places regret losing so much of their heritage as they pushed ahead with new construction.

From Kolkata to Jakarta, conservation movements and government support mechanisms are growing. Led by China and India, the region has seen an increase in the number of World Heritage nominations over recent years. The effort to better plan and manage Yangon's development is perfectly timed to take advantage of these trends and to learn from the mistakes of neighbours. The city's heritage buildings, streetscapes and neighbourhoods, together with their existing communities, represent a social and economic asset worth billion. Heritage is all the ideas, places, objects, buildings, traditions and values we have inherited from past generations. Heritage conservation is the process of protecting and enhancing the important parts of that inheritance. For Yangon, good heritage conservation means looking at the city as a whole, from small-scale residential and commercial buildings to landmark monuments, parks and view lines. It also means guiding new development within heritage neighbourhoods to protect their character. Protecting a few landmark buildings is not enough. Without both targeted individual and broad area controls, Yangon's uniqueness will quickly be lost through unregulated development.

Urban planning is the process of designing how best to effectively use, protect and manage a city's assets and how best to address its challenges. This process involves preparing for the future through a set of proven principles and processes that have worked in other urban contexts.

Urban planning can apply at a very local scale or at a comprehensive scale across a whole city. This type of plan is called a master plan and involves looking at all of a city's systems and how they relate to each other, and strategically preparing actions and guidelines for their management. A master plan may contain many specific plans for issues such as sanitation or transportation. Until the early 1960s, Yangon was well managed under the guidance of good urban planning principles. Since 1990, several poor decisions

including the Strand toll road, badly placed towers like Centrepoint and the HAGL Myanmar Centre, new road overpasses and the downtown pedestrian footbridges have further damaged the urban environment.

Yangon still has many surviving assets the result of good past planning decisions. The city was laid out on proven urban planning principles originating in ancient Rome and the Middle East. These assets include abundant parks and gardens for passive and active recreation, a well-planned road network, a central circular rail line and generous waterfront spaces.

The city also has great potential for future urban planning initiatives. At the confluence of six major waterways, Yangon has a total river frontage of 71 miles, of which 15 miles is within the historic city. The city also has 39 miles of lake frontage. There is a good existing stock of primary and secondary schools. The university campus is highly intact and represents an extremely valuable asset. Designed around the Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon is respectfully situated around a historic religious landscape and splendid views of the pagoda can still be seen from many parts of the city. Numerous smaller ancient temples and monasteries were conserved in the original city plan and are an integral part of Yangon's social fabric.

Many cities are now experiencing huge social, economic and health problems due to unplanned development that has led to physical and economic isolation of outer urban areas. In such cities, slums trench the social gap between rich and poor, traffic becomes gridlocked for hours and access to new job and education opportunities is minimal. Poor infrastructure means high levels of noise and air pollution, rivers clogged with rubbish, piles of garbage in the streets, and lack of hygiene from congested sewers or water drains. All this leads, in turn, to a downward cycle of investment as investors choose to take their business elsewhere. Without good planning, Yangon could end up like this within a few years.

Yangon will continue to be Myanmar's commercial capital its most important and populous city. As such, it should become a dynamic modern city. It can be a centre for the arts and culture, for creative and knowledge based economies, as well as for manufacturing and service industries. With improved industrial areas, new air and sea ports, transport links across the country and around the world, Yangon can lead growth in the manufacturing sector. It can also be a top international tourist destination and a global example of cultural diversity and inclusion. It can become regionally competitive. This combined growth will create tens of thousands of jobs in the near term, enabling Yangon's social and economic prosperity.

Over the coming ten to fifteen years, Yangon must focus on providing its residents with jobs and decent and affordable housing and public transport. To do this, the city will need to attract investment, upgrade its energy supply, communications, transport systems, legal frameworks, and ensure the best possible healthcare and education facilities. By the early 2030s, Myanmar will be a medium income country and Yangon will be actively competing with cities across Asia to attract investment and retain talent. It is then, when Yangon is trying to move beyond light manufacturing and low-paid jobs to creative, knowledge based economies, that having a beautiful, dynamic and well planned historic city will make all the difference.

If Yangon does not protect its current assets, the city's leaders and residents will regret it. Many other Asian cities have gone through a similar period of unplanned growth to become bigger, more modern and prosperous cities. Such progression leads to a bigger economy but with many negative consequences, from extreme traffic congestion and noise and air pollution to the loss of established communities and social cohesion. Bangkok, Manila, Jakarta are prime examples and even Singapore, so well planned, regrets the destruction of its built heritage. Yangon must learn from the mistakes of its neighbours and prioritise the conservation of its unique heritage.

Undertaking the major infrastructure upgrades needed to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades is achievable. Ensuring that the city doesn't destroy the assets it already has will make it liveable, regionally competitive and economically successful. The answer lies in careful heritage conservation and good urban planning.

### **The Colonial Hegemonic Centres in Rangoon**

The Secretariat was built between 1889 and 1905 to house the seat of the British colonial government and designed by Public Works Department architect Henry Hoyne Fox. It became the largest colonial building in Burma.

After independence from colonial rule, the Secretariat became the main Minister's office known as Ministries. The building has a strong historical significance as the Burmese independence leader Aung San was assassinated in the premises together with six colleagues and two other members of his team on 19 July 1947.

At the other fringes of the British colonial hegemonic centre was the Rangoon General Hospital also designed by the PWD architect Henry Hoyne-Fox and constructed between 1904 and 1911. It was built to replace an old teakwood hospital.

The railway line divides the tightly built colonial era downtown to the more open garden city for the colonial officials. The headquarters of the Burma Railways was a huge red brick building constructed in 1877. Its importance in the colonial economy cannot be underestimated as railways transported teak, rice, oil, and minerals to the Rangoon harbour. The building was under a massive development project much promoted by the YHT but its fate remains unclear now that the military is back in power.

The fourth massive symbol of British supremacy was the High Court still intact built between 1905 and 1911 by Consulting Architect to the Government of India, John Ransome. It was designed to be imposing and intimidating. Poised on the roof are two lion statues, symbols of the British Empire.

These four buildings established the British political and administrative power and superiority in bureaucracy, health care, logistics and law. As fifth construct of superior colonial power of modernity and education was St. Paul's High School for boys to be trained in English for colonial service. The school was founded by Bishop Paul Bigandet, who served in Rangoon from 1856 to his death 1894. It was originally a modest wooden structure, but was built in the present shape in red brick in 1885. The school was one of the ten operated by the De la Salle brothers and located across the country from Moulmein to Myitkyina. The street leading to the school was called Bigadet Road, but was changed to Anawratha Road. The school catered most of two European and Anglo-Indian boys who were sons of British civil servants or wealthy merchants [4].

The political hegemonic supremacy was surrounded by religious buildings. The downtown chess board was divided by the Sule Pagoda, of which in the east were the Christian, Catholic and Hindu and Sikh religious constructs and the on the west were mostly mosques and a synagogue. This colonial chess board was closed with the holiest of Burmese temples, the Shwedagon.

Burma/Myanmar is a multicultural and multiethnic country with a great diversity in religious practices. Despite the political constraint of authoritarian rule, religious practice has remained relatively free everywhere in the country except for the ethnic areas of on-going fighting between the armed groups and the Myanmar army.

Some 89% of the Myanmar people are Buddhists and the country is indeed dotted with Buddhist temples. The Myanmar Buddhist practices, however, differ significantly from the Buddhist practices of the neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

This diversity in religiosity is reflected in the urban landscape where mosques and churches dominate the urban centres in former colonial administrative centres like Rangoon, Moulmein, and Sittwe. Buddhist temples are predominantly located outside the centre of the city.

The role of the Christian missions and missionaries in the development of colonization was crucial (Ashcroft 2000). Particularly American Southern Baptists targeted this part of the world; the most well-known American Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson arriving as early as in 1813. There is Judson Churches in Moulmein/Mawlamyine and Rangoon/Yangon. The consolidation of British power (1826/1852/1887) further alleviated the proselytising. The "explosive expansion of Christianity in Africa and Asia" is regarded as the "most remarkable cultural transformation in the history of the mankind".

### **Colonial Space and Hierarchy Revisited**

Myanmar is a multiethnic and multicultural country. According to the semi official statistics some 68% of the population are ethnic Burman, 9% Shan, 7% Karen, 4% Rakhine, 3% Chinese, 2% Indian, 2% Mon, 5% other.

Religion wise 89% of the population of Myanmar are Buddhists, of the rest 4% are Muslims, 4% are Christians of whom 3% are Baptists and 1% Roman Catholics. The rest 2% are listed as 'other' including Hindus and Sikhs.

Religion and ethnicity concur, consequently practically all ethnic Burmese are Buddhist. The rest of the 89% of Buddhists include other ethnic groups such as Shan (9%), majority of the Karen (4%), Mon (2%) and Rakhine/Arakanese. Among the Rakhine, there is a Muslim minority known as Rakhine Muslims. Muslim influences have been strongest in Rakhine due to the geographic and historical vicinity to various Muslim sultanates ruling South Asia.

The areas that the British called 'Ministerial Burma' or 'Burma Proper' are hence predominantly Buddhist. The migrant population arriving as a result of the British economic enterprises such as mining, oil industry and expansion of rice economy in the Delta area originated predominantly from South Asia. In the height of the colonial period approximately 50% of the population of Yangon/Rangoon were of South Asian origins, most of the estimates assume that religion-wise the Indian population was evenly divided into Hindus and Muslims.

Since 1900, there were annually approximately 250,000 Indian immigrants moving to British Burma. By the year 1921, there were one million Indians living in Burma, of who circa 50% were Muslims. Total population of Burma was 11 million. In the peak year 1927, about 480,000 Indians migrated to British Burma. Indian population was concentrated in the capital city Rangoon, which accommodated 4,425 Muslims in the year 1869, by 1872 the number had more than doubled to 11,671.

In the year 1872 only 16% of the population of Rangoon was Indian; since 1901 it was around 50%. In 1911, a peak was reached when 56% of the population of Rangoon was of Indian origins. Same percentage was reached in 1941.

The Indian community, including the Indian Muslim community, became the scapegoat when the economic backlash of the Wall Street crash 1929 spread into the colonial world. There were violent anti-Indian riots in Burma against the Indians in 1930 and 1938, organised by the students of Rangoon University and the new nationalist leaders.

Rene Egretteau attempts to reinterpret the statistics to explain his theory about widespread Burmese “Islamophobia” and suggests that the dominating majority of the South Asian were actually Muslims. This can, however, been disputed, as no Censuses of India/Burma confirm this narrative.

The areas outside the British Indian ‘Burma Proper’ were the hills in the North in the shape of a horseshoe, which the British classified as ‘Scheduled Areas’ or ‘Frontier Areas’. The highlander population of various Tibeto-Burman tribes such as Kachins and Chins had traditionally been Animists, but became the main recipients of the massive American Baptist proselytising under the British colonial protection.

Italian Roman Catholic missionaries had been proselytising in mainland Southeast Asia since the 17th century after some areas of Vietnam had been baptised into the Catholic faith. The Catholic proselytising came to an abrupt halt in Ayutthaya after the Greek-born Roman Catholic Constantin Phaulkon was executed as a traitor by King Narai’s critics.

The Italian missionaries had found a fertile ground in the Salween river valley, where several Karennic-speaking tribes lived. Hence many of the peoples living in modern Kayah/Karenni State are Roman Catholics, such as the Kayin/Karens, Kayah/Karennis and Padaungs. The Kayah State was nominally an ‘independent’ state under British protection, divided however into three different administrative zones Bawlake, Kantarawaddy, and Kyeboyyi.

The Kayin/Karen people became mediators between different peoples and religions in colonial and post-colonial Burma. The Kayin people consists of several linguistic and cultural subgroups such as Sgaw and Pow and is geographically split into Salween Kayin, who tend to be Animists and Buddhists and Delta Kayin many of whom converted into Christianity during the colonial era.

The British colonial engineering in terms of categorising, classifying and labelling people in narrowly defined groups remained probably the most harmful colonial legacy the newly independent Myanmar had to deal with.

The British had openly favoured the Christianised ethnic minorities in terms of providing them with education and labour thus creating

great expectations among these groups for future autonomy or self-rule. The colonial period overturned the traditional hierarchy; the Burmese royal family was exiled to India and royal records were destroyed. The former tributary leaders of the Burmese monarchy were elevated to the new elite of British Burma. The Kachin and Shan chiefs were feted at the Delhi durbar in 1903 and 1911.

The colonial administration did not only favour Christianity but also other non-Buddhist religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Judaism by allocating land for instance in central Yangon to these religious communities. “Free sites for religious groups were allotted to Hindus, Armenians, Muslims, Baptists, Chinese and Jews” [5].

The British also encouraged massive Indian migration and favoured particularly the Muslim population among the South Asian. As a legacy of this favouritism are the gigantic mosques constructed in downtown Yangon/Rangoon, Mawlamyine/Moulmein and Sittwe.

This article revisits the urban spaces of Myanmar and map the geography and religious hierarchy in the main colonial and post colonial towns in order to understand how the socio economic elite competition and intra-ethnic dynamics are embedded in the colonial legacy [6-12].

### Mapping Religious Buildings in Colonial Rangoon

One of the most prominent mosques in the absolute downtown Yangon is the Bengali Sunni Mosque called Bengale Sunni Jameh Mosque on Sule Pagoda Road just opposite the gilded Buddhist padoda. Some lanes further into the Indian neighbourhood on the 25th Street there is yet another colourful gigantic mosque called Ehlay Hadee Sunni Jaamay Mosque.

There are several churches in the downtown; one of the oldest ones is the Immanuel Baptist Church, one of the oldest churches in Yangon, built 1830 facing the City Hall. This church is nowadays mainly favoured by Kayin Baptists but delivers sermons in seven local languages; English, Burmese, Kayin, Telugu, Chinese, Shan, Lisu and Mizo.

Additionally, to the Kayin Baptist church, there are several smaller Indian churches in the downtown, there is a poorly maintained Telugu Methodist Church on Anawratha Road at the corner of the morning market Seikkan Thar Road. Another prominent church in the downtown is the red Anglican church next to Bogyoke Aung San Market. The most important Catholic church is St. Mary’s Cathedral located on the Bo Aung Kyaw Road in the corner of Bogyoke Aung San Road. The Cathedral accommodates the seat of the diocese and the Catholic bishops for entire Myanmar.

There is also a synagogue called Moseah Yeshua Synagogue on the 26th Street and an Armenian church on Merchant Street cornering Bo Galay Zay Road. The Jewish community of Rangoon was concentrated in the areas between Sule Pagoda Road and the 26th Road, that also is populated predominantly by South Asian Muslims. The Jewish community of Myanmar originated from Bengal and other parts of South Asia. The Armenians also often arrived via South Asia and formed a network of diasporic Armenian merchants trading among themselves.

Further on the Indian side of the downtown, there are several churches favoured by the Indians such as the Catholic St. Joseph’s church on Bo Sun Pat Road. There are also a few Hindu temples such as Sri Kali on Anawratha Road and Sri Siva on Mahabandoola

Road. There is a smaller Hindu temple on Bogyoke Aung San Road opposite the market next door to a mosque. There is also a specifically Bengali Hindu temple on the Bo Aung Kyaw Road opposite St. Mary's Cathedral. Further down on Mahabandoola Road, there is a small church proudly announcing that it is a Karen Baptist Church. There is also a modest Gurdwara on a corner of Anawratha Road not far from Sri Devi Hindu temple.

These are all churches and mosques inside the downtown Rangoon within the British-planned city with numbered streets running straight from south to north. There are also important YMCA/YWCA premises in the downtown on the Mahabandoola Street and on the Bo Galay Zay Street. Nowadays these function both as hostels and centres for language courses and other educational purposes.

Outside the absolute downtown are yet a number of religious institutions; an Anglican church just opposite Thammada Hotel, a Tamil Catholic Church St Anthony on the Myanma Gon Yi Street opposite a Tamil Mosque and a Lutheran Tamil Church on Theinbyu Road. There is also a famous old Judson Church inside the Rangoon university campus.

### Summary

The colonial space in Rangoon was divided according to the race and religious affiliations rather than "White" and "Black". The Eastern side of the town east of Sule Pagoda was predominantly reserved to the reserved to various Christian, Hindu and Sikh communities. This area was located between Sule Pagoda and the Secretariat including buildings like St Mary's Cathedral. St Paul's High School, Armenian Church, YMCA, Immanuel Baptist Church, Bengali Hindu temple and Salvation Army. The Western parts of the city were rated to the various Muslim groups and hence land was auctioned to build mosques. Interestingly the Jews ended up in this group as well, as their ancestors were Bagdadi Jews and often arrived in Burma via Bengal.

Compared with British India fewer British officials settled permanently in Burma. The colonial administration was mainly run by Indians or Anglo-Indians referring to British who were born in India.

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