



Teacher's Guide

Myanmar (Burma) **Beyond Our Borders Series**

Grade Levels:

6-10

Subject Areas:

Social Studies

World History

World Geography & Cultures

Foreign Languages

Synopsis:

Provides an illuminating introduction to Burmese culture and politics with outstanding photography of the geography of this resource-rich country. The first section on Myanmar's history reviews the legacy of the British colonial system, the advent of General Ne Win, human rights abuses and the Burmese people's loyalty to their elected leader, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi. Explaining that the Burmese people remain serene and steadfast in spite of widespread abuse, introduces Burmese Buddhism by visiting temples and pagodas in the Plains of Pagan, the reclining Buddha at the Shwedagon Pagoda and the Kuthodaw Pagoda in Mandalay. Cultural excursions include the floating gardens of Inle Lake, a trip to film Paduang women with their traditional elongated neck rings, visits to abandoned stone temples and pagodas and excursions through the Irrawaddy River System.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Understand that Myanmar is a country rich in natural resources.
- Recall the history of oppression in Myanmar.
- Appreciate the importance of Burmese Buddhism to the national character.
- Describe unique cultural groups in Myanmar.

Vocabulary:

separatist, advocates, refinement, paranoia, monopolized, patronizing, administrate, humiliating, power vacuum, resistance fighter, ironically, suppression, genesis, nationalized, eradicate, pidginized, protesters, indiscriminately, appease, articulate, non-violence, landslide victory, house arrest, sacred relics, reclining Buddha, Nirvana, homage, Shin Pyu, novice, alms,

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meditation, resigned, prolific, acacia tree, Thanaka, nats, intervening, pagodas, reminiscent

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

What country used to be called Burma? Do you know why its name was changed?

Where is this country located? How would you describe its geography?

Why do many Americans and Canadians feel a connection with Myanmar or, as it used to be called, Burma?

What kind of people are the Burmese? Are they a very aggressive people? How do you know?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

Which region of Myanmar did you find the most interesting? Which region would you most like to visit?

Why have human rights been suppressed for so long in Myanmar? Do you think the country will ever become a democracy? Why or why not?

Why do you think that Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize? Why is she still under house arrest?

Why are there so many temples and pagodas in Myanmar? What other evidence tells you that Buddhism is a very important to the Burmese people?

Further Activities:

Further investigate the life of Aung San Suu Kyi to determine how she became such an important figure in Burmese politics.

Find maps that provide greater detail of the geography of Myanmar. Compare these to maps that summarize agricultural activities in Myanmar.

Further investigate the culture of the Paduang people or other Burmese hill tribes.

Investigate the history of rice production in Myanmar and determine if rice production is still important to Myanmar's economy.

Research and report on the recent cyclone devastation in the Irrawaddy Delta region of Myanmar.

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