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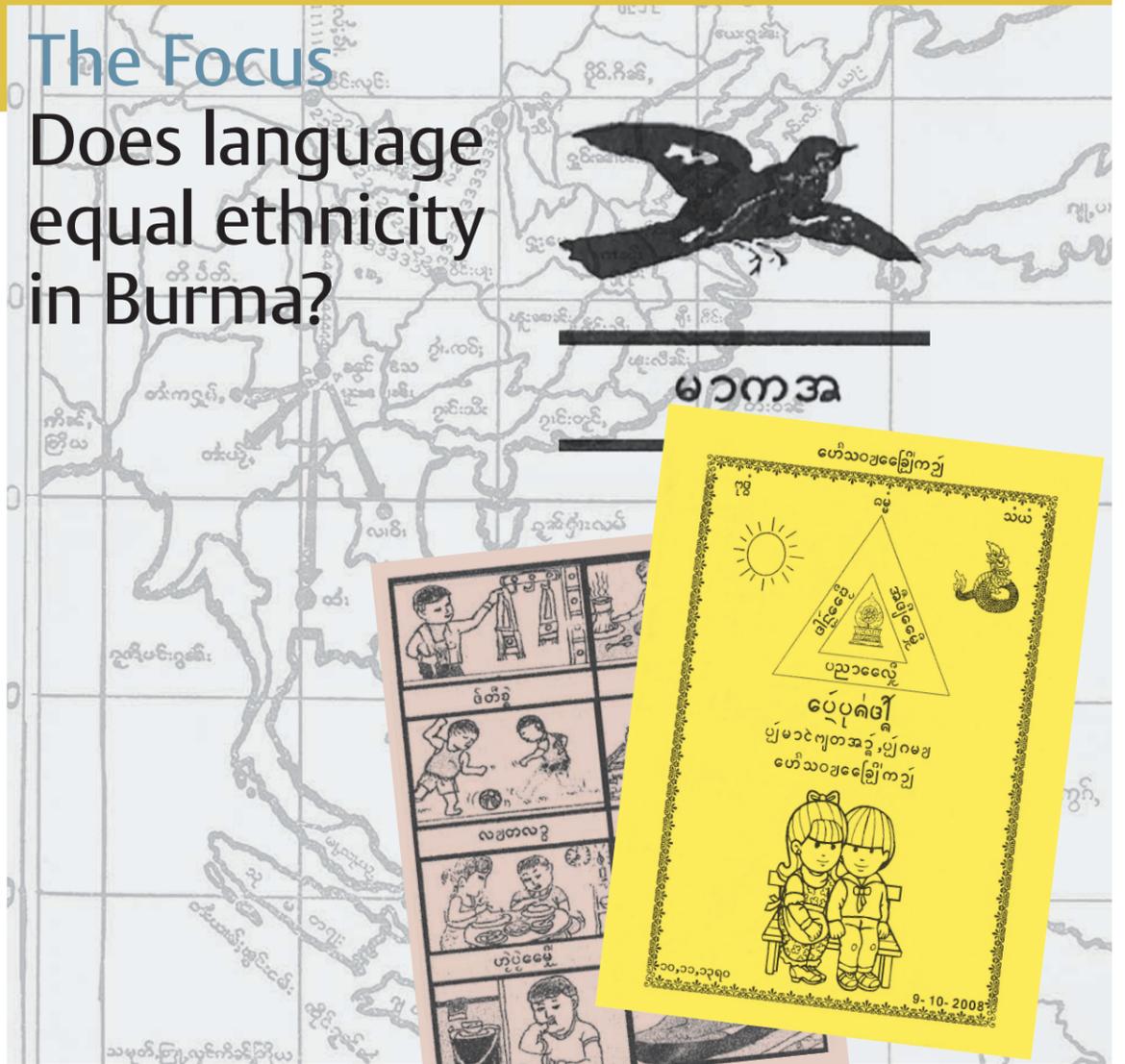
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The Focus Does language equal ethnicity in Burma?



29-31 Introduction

After decades, the possibilities for doing research in and about Burma have slowly begun to increase. Guest editor **Patrick McCormick** pairs the trajectory of the country, which cut itself off from the international academic community, with the stagnation of Burma Studies. Yet the hurdles academics and intellectuals face are still steep.

32-33

The Tai or Shan people of Burma stand in a complex linguistic and cultural relationship with the peoples around them. **Mathias Jenny** explores how they have adopted ideas and linguistic practices from their larger, more powerful neighbours, while simultaneously fulfilling that same role for nearby upland peoples.

34-35

The Kachin have long featured in anthropology, but how long has this super-ethnic category indexed a local reality? **André Müller** presents a linguistic analysis suggesting that at least some of the speakers in this category have been in close contact for a long time.

36-37

Keita Kuraba and **Masao Imamura** trace the rise of Jinghpaw as the language franca and preeminent medium of cultural and literary expression among the Kachins in Burma since the nineteenth century.

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What happens when people are made into an ethnic group, yet one without a common language or script? **Takahiro Kojima** explores how various Palaung groups have struggled to agree upon and promote a common Palaung language and script.

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Rachel Weymuth focuses specifically on the technical aspects of creating a common Palaung language out of disparate lects, a process involving considerations of power and prestige.

40-41

'Reducing' speech to script means actually reducing its variety and variation. Through the lens of creating a Palaung dictionary, **Nathan Badenoch** traces this process to remind us that the ways Palaung groups have related to each other and their larger neighbours is hardly unchanging.

42-43

People tend to equate language with ethnicity in Burma. Yet as **Patrick McCormick** explores, in whatever way speakers of Burmese dialects consider themselves – as an ethnicity separate from the majority Burmans or not – they tend to occupy the same hierarchical position as the Burman majority.