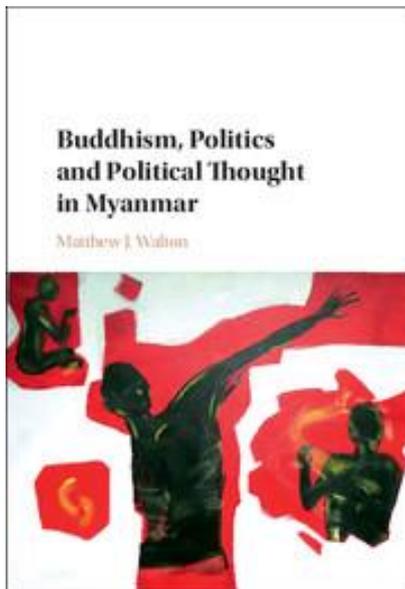


Modern Burmese Studies Programme, Asian Studies Centre,  
St Antony's College, University of Oxford



***Book launch: Buddhism, Politics and  
Political Thought in Myanmar  
(Cambridge University Press, 2016)***

**Matthew J Walton**

Aung San Suu Kyi Senior Research Fellow in Modern  
Burmese Studies, St Antony's College

**Discussant: Gustaaf Houtman (Mandalay)**

**5 p.m., Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February,  
Pavilion Room, St Antony's College**

In the first book to provide a broad overview of the ways in which Buddhist ideas have influenced political thinking and politics in Myanmar, Matthew Walton draws extensively on Burmese language sources from the last 150 years to describe the 'moral universe' of contemporary Theravada Buddhism that has anchored most political thought in Myanmar. In explaining multiple Burmese understandings of notions such as 'democracy' and 'political participation', the book provides a conceptual framework for understanding some of the key dynamics of Myanmar's ongoing political transition. Some of these ideas help to shed light on restrictive or exclusionary political impulses, such as anti-Muslim Buddhist nationalism or scepticism towards the ability of the masses to participate in politics.

**Matthew J Walton** is the Aung San Suu Kyi Senior Research Fellow in Modern Burmese Studies at St Antony's College. He has published articles on Buddhism, ethnicity, and politics in Myanmar and his analysis of Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar (co-authored with Susan Hayward), *Contesting Buddhist Narratives: Democratization, Nationalism, and Communal Violence in Myanmar*, was published in 2014 in the East-West Center Policy Studies series. His next project is a comparative study of Buddhist political thought across the Theravada world. Matt is one of the co-founders of the Myanmar Media and Society project and of the Oxford-based Burma/Myanmar blog *Tea Circle*.

**Gustaaf Houtman** is an anthropologist who has researched Myanmar's meditation traditions and the role of Buddhist concepts in political discourse. He currently teaches part-time at the University of Mandalay where he is engaged in research on the role of the beiktheik (abhiseka) ritual specialist in life-cycle rituals. Dr Houtman holds a PhD in anthropology and a first degree in Burmese language and literature and anthropology from SOAS, University of London. He is Editor of the bimonthly *Anthropology Today*, published by the Royal Anthropological Institute.

**All are welcome**

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