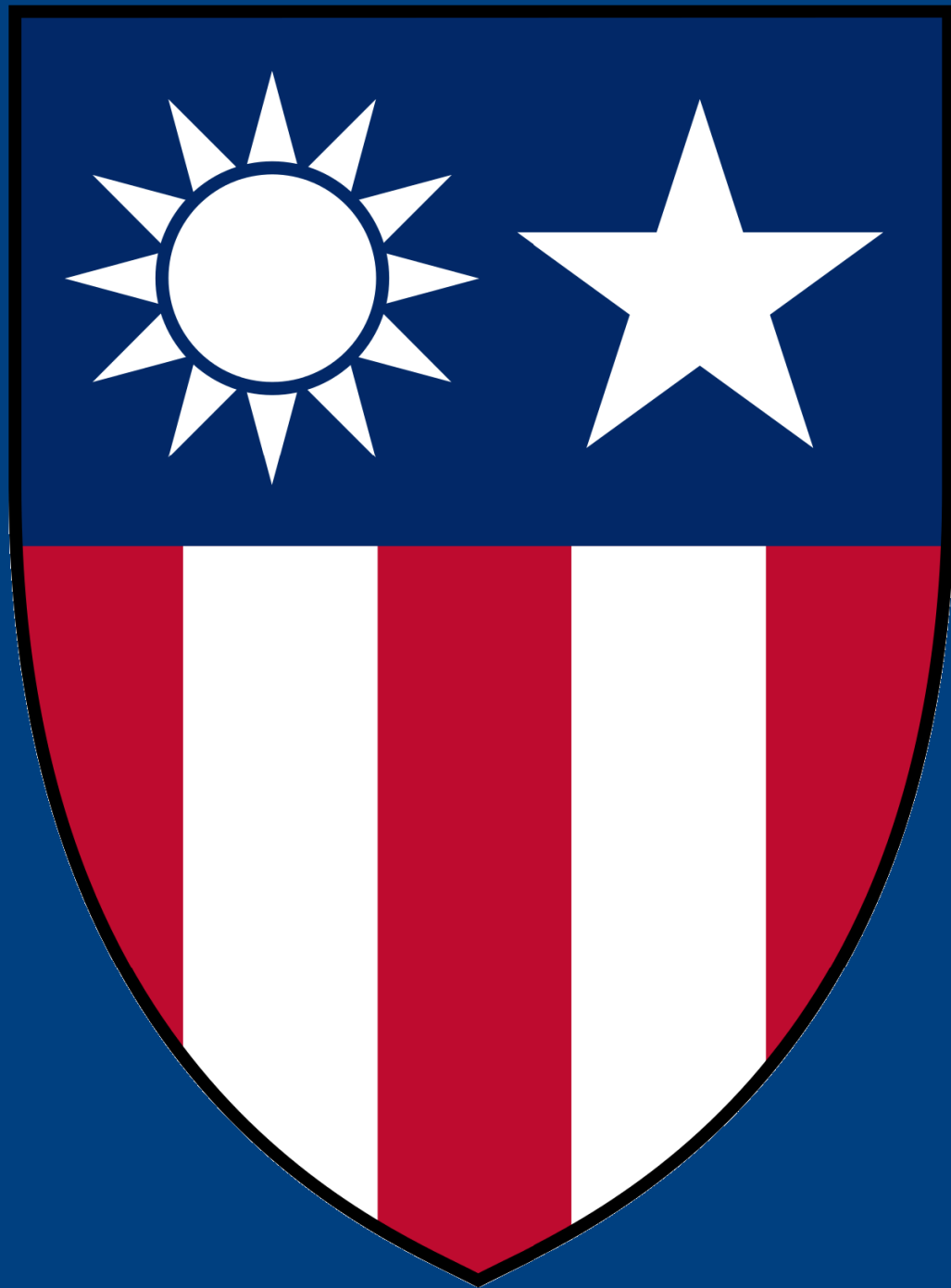


THE PACIFIC WAR

PART II





**THE FORGOTTEN
WORLD WAR:**

**THE CHINA –
INDIA – BURMA
THEATER IN
WORLD WAR II**

“I hear you call this the Forgotten Front. I hear you call yourselves the Forgotten Army. Well let me tell you this is not the Forgotten Front and you are not the Forgotten Army. In fact, no one has even heard of you.”

VADM Lord Louis Mountbatten in a speech to soldiers upon assuming command of the China-Burma-India Theater and Southeast Asia Command.

For the Western Allies:

It was an Air Force War

**Fought and won on the ground and in the
jungles**

And (ultimately) commanded by an Admiral.

For the Japanese:

**It was an arrogant mistake that ultimately
was a complete disaster.**

WHY BURMA?

After all, it was mostly a British campaign.

(Unless you include the U.S. Army Air Force and its Air Transport Service... And the OSS... And Gen. Joe Stilwell – who had been tapped to lead the American effort in Europe until war broke out in the other direction... And Claire Chanault and the “Flying Tigers”...)

It was still mostly a British Campaign – unless you were British Army who considered this a side show at best...

Or your name was Winston Churchill...

But if you were British India Army, that was another matter...

WHY BURMA?

But what about the Japanese? Why did they bother?

From 1937 onwards, winning their war against China was all that mattered. This drove all of their strategic thinking for better and (ultimately) for worse.

(But, beyond beating the Chinese they never defined what constituted a victory. What was the point of it? Beyond “winning” they could not say.)

Since the middle of 1938 (if not sooner), their war had become a stalemate. It was not a static or frozen front – there was movement back and forth – but operationally and strategically neither side could gain an advantage.

WHY BURMA?

Prior to 1941, Japan was a net importer. It could not supply its economy from its own resources – including its control over Formosa, Korea and Manchuria. Its largest trading partner was the United States representing well over half of its resources.

Before late 1940, this was not a problem.

Then the U.S. began imposing economic sanctions. At first, it was much ado about nothing – limiting or banning aviation materials which Japan had spent the last decade developing their own industrial capability.

But then came steel, and then scrap metal and the handwriting was on the wall (given that 80% of their oil also came from the U.S.)

WHY BURMA?

With the stalemate in China, Japan needed to expand its military production. But it was already mostly mobilized (and would be at full capacity by late 1940.) It needed more resources and ... it could not afford it.

Thus, the obvious answer is: take it.

But where?

Prior to late 1939, the Japanese Army in general and the Kwangtung (Manchurian) Army in particular favored going north into Soviet Siberia.

After all, the Soviets were a push over, right?

WHY BURMA?

The Navy had concerns. Siberia – especially eastern Siberia – was largely untapped resource wise. No one knew if anything was there for certain or – where they did know – it would require setting up the industry to extract it.

That and no one really knew if the Soviets were a push over.

The Navy favored a “southern” strategy. In southeast Asia there were proven resources that were already being extracted. You did not need to look for it or drill for it as that was already being done.

The problem was those resources were controlled by European powers.

And there was also the tiny factor of budgets...

WHY BURMA?

Go north – that would be a land campaign and the Army would get the bulk of the budget.

Go south – you need ships and a Navy and the Navy would get more of the budget.

And the Japanese Army and Navy hated each other.

(The U.S. Army and Navy were also rivals for lean budgets but not even close to the same degree. They only truly “hated” each other once a year – during the annual Army-Navy football game. And their “hate” was restricted to “trash-talking.” In Japan, officers got shot by one service or the other.)

WHY BURMA?

In the late summer of 1939, the Japanese Kwangtung (Manchurian) Army pushed into Mongolia. Mongolia was a Soviet client state so the Russians pushed back.

At the Battle of Kahlkin Gol in August, two Japanese divisions were shattered by a Soviet (limited) offensive. Thousands surrendered and the rest fled.

(As a result, the Japanese military decided surrender was not an option.)

Obviously, the Soviets were not a push over so now the focus was on the “Southern Resource Area” (Southeast Asia and specifically the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya.)

WHY BURMA?

The Dutch East Indies – namely Borneo and Sumatra – had the second largest proven and tapped oil reserve in the world at that time after the United States. (The full extent of the Middle East was not yet known – only that there was a lot of oil there but most of the extraction was in what is now Iraq.)

British Malaya was the world's largest producer of natural rubber.

Japan could “make do” without U.S. steel – with difficulty but it had mining in Korea and Manchuria – but not without oil or rubber.

And as those were known and under extraction, it made sense to go for what was known and easy to exploit...

WHY BURMA?

Burma also had oil fields that were producing.

It was nowhere near the coast so shipping would be more of an issue but there was more oil there than anywhere else under Japanese control in 1940 – 1941.

Burma also had Tungsten. This was a critical strategic resource and Japan was importing 100% of its Tungsten.

And, in 1940, Burma was the world's largest exporter of rice.

And Japan could feed maybe 40% of its population on its own resources...

Burma was also the only remaining supply route to China...

WHY BURMA?

Burma also shared its western border with British India, although what that meant depended upon which faction of the Japanese military one thinks about.

One faction, mainly the Navy, felt that invading India was a good idea believing that India would rise up against the British if they did.

The Army (in general) disagreed. While they could see that point, it would require Army divisions better utilized winning the important fight in China. (The Army balked at sending any units from China and did so with reluctance and in small packets lest they get drawn into a fight they didn't want.)

But holding Burma made Britain less a threat to the rest...

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

ALASKA

CANADA

BERING SEA

SEA OF OKHOTSK

KALEUTIAN ISLANDS

Pacific Ocean Areas (POA) included Central, South, Southeast and Northern Pacific Areas.

North Pacific Area
XXXXX
Central Pacific Area

UNITED STATES

Seattle

San Francisco

Los Angeles

UNITED STATES STRATEGIC DIRECTION

OUTER MONGOLIA

SINKIANG

MANCHURIA

CHINA

TIBET

INDIA

BURMA

THAILAND

INDOCHINA

PHILIPPINE IS.

MINDANAO

CELEBES

SUMATRA

JAVA

INDONESIA

GUINEA

NEW GUINEA

SOLOMON IS.

TOBAGO

NEW ZEALAND

AUSTRALIA

TASMANIA

Calcutta

Mandalay

Bangkok

Saligon

Manila

Samarang

Surabaya

Bandjarmasin

Palembang

Singapore

Perth

Adelaide

Melbourne

Sydney

Wellington

Auckland

New Zealand

ANDAMAN IS.

KRA Isthmus

Malaya

Borneo

Philippine

Mindanao

Celebes

Sumatra

Java

Indonesia

Guinea

New Guinea

Solomon

Tobago

New Zealand

Australia

Tasmania

Wakayama

Osaka

Kobe

Yokohama

Tokyo

Manchuria

China

India

Burma

Thailand

Indochina

Philippines

Mindanao

Celebes

Sumatra

Java

Indonesia

Guinea

New Guinea

Solomon

Wakayama

Osaka

Kobe

Yokohama

Tokyo

Manchuria

China

India

Burma

Thailand

Indochina

Philippines

Mindanao

Celebes

Sumatra

Java

Indonesia

Guinea

New Guinea

Solomon

Wakayama

Osaka

Kobe

Yokohama

Tokyo

Manchuria

China

India

Burma

Thailand

Indochina

Philippines

Mindanao

Celebes

Sumatra

Java

Indonesia

Guinea

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Yokohama

Tokyo

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Burma

Thailand

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China

India

Burma

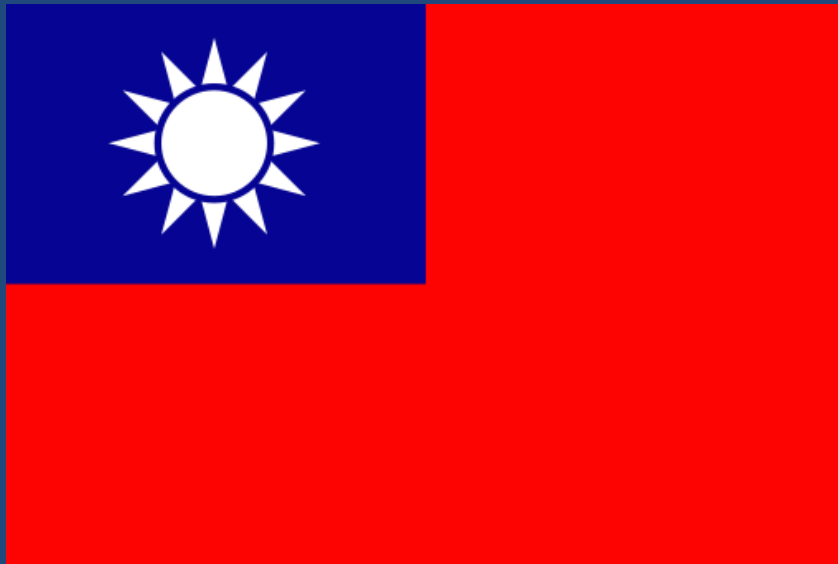
Thailand

Indochina

Philippines

Mindanao





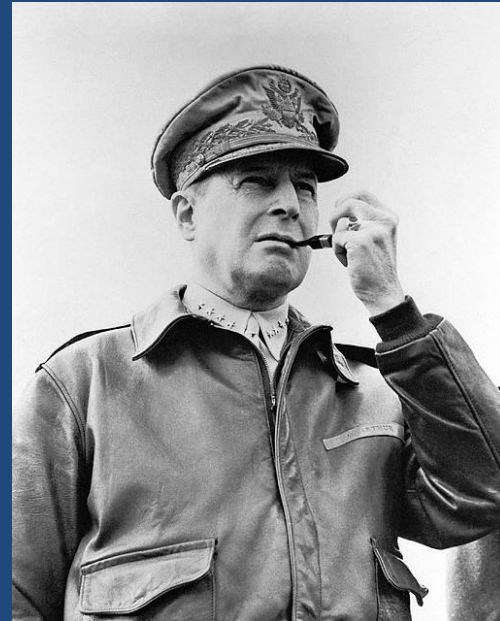
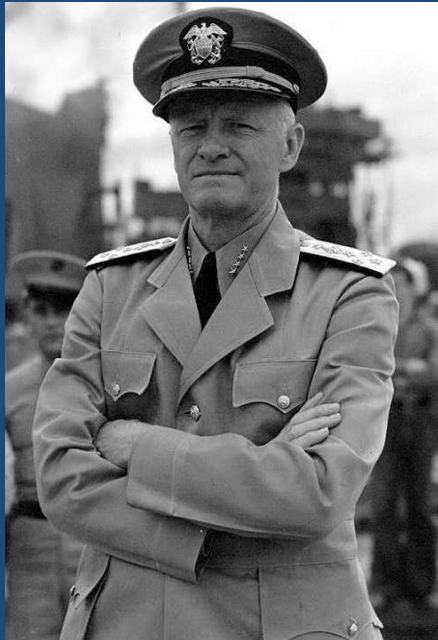
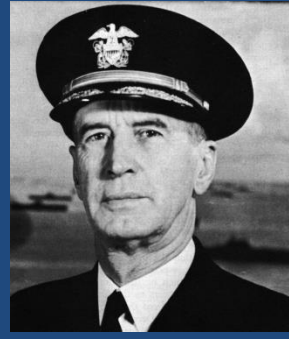
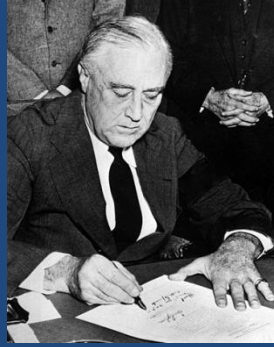
**THERE WILL BE NO ORGANIZATIONAL
CHARTS!**

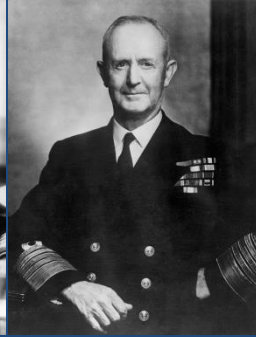
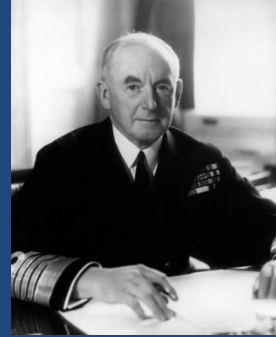
It was constantly changing.

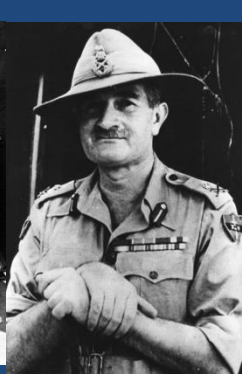
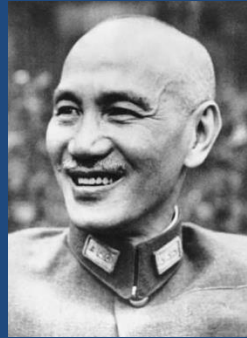
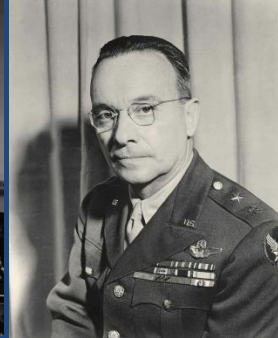
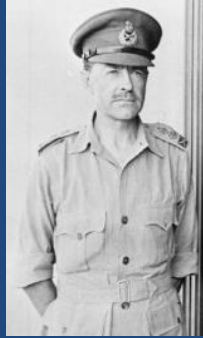
What existed makes no sense today.

**What existed made no sense to anyone
back then either.**

**(Even upon reflection when writing their
memoirs...)**

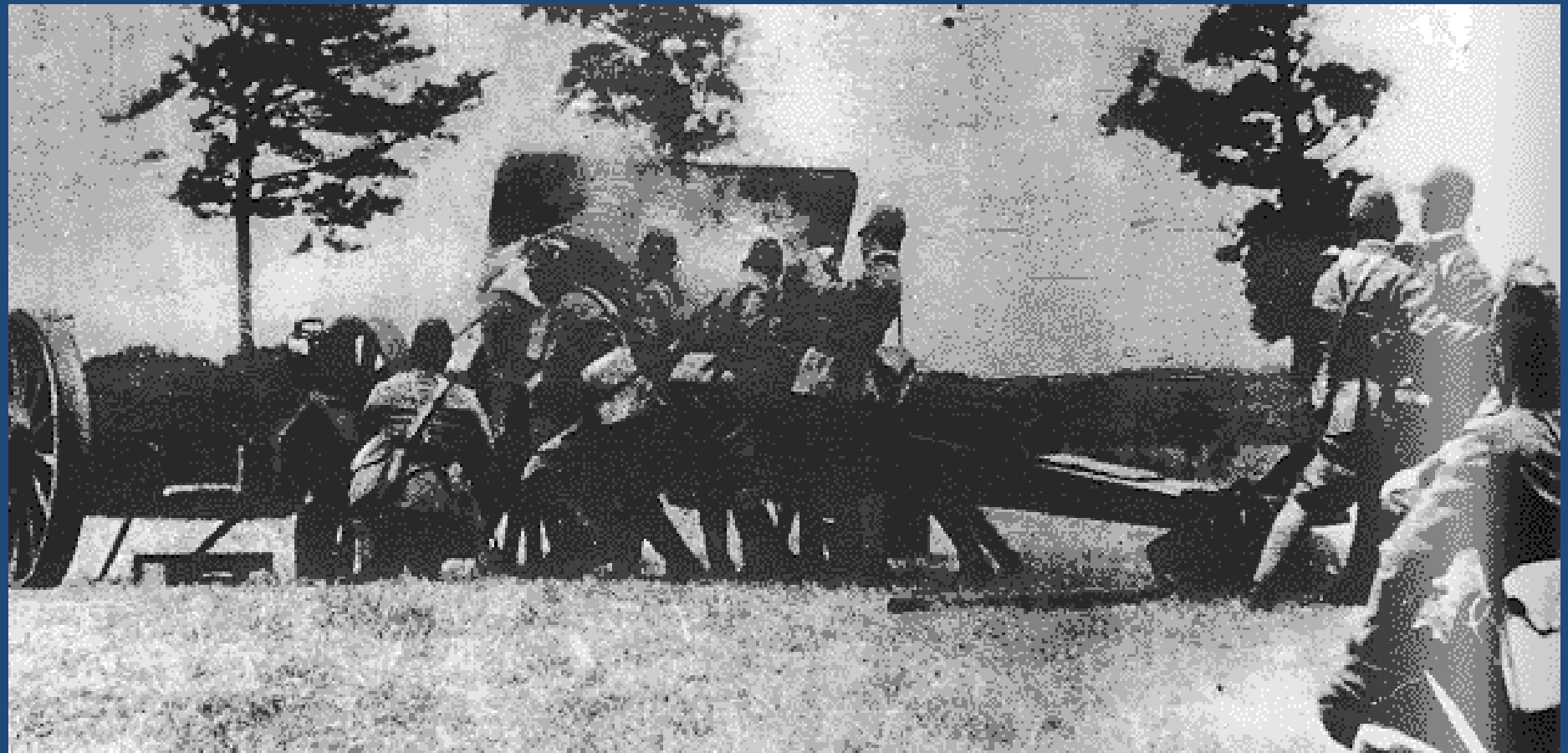








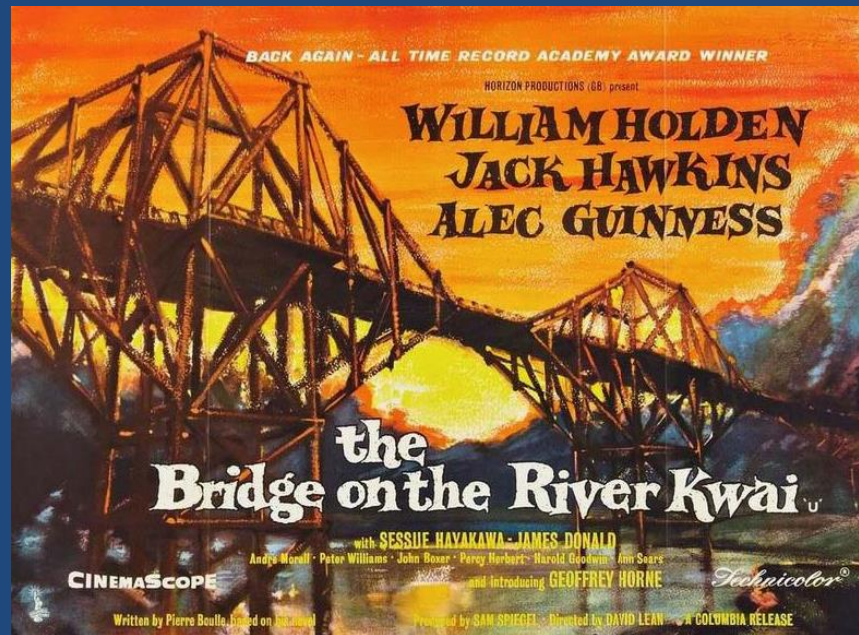
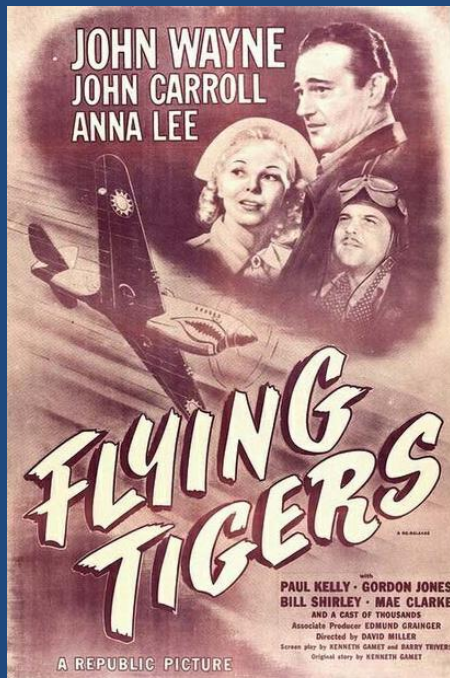


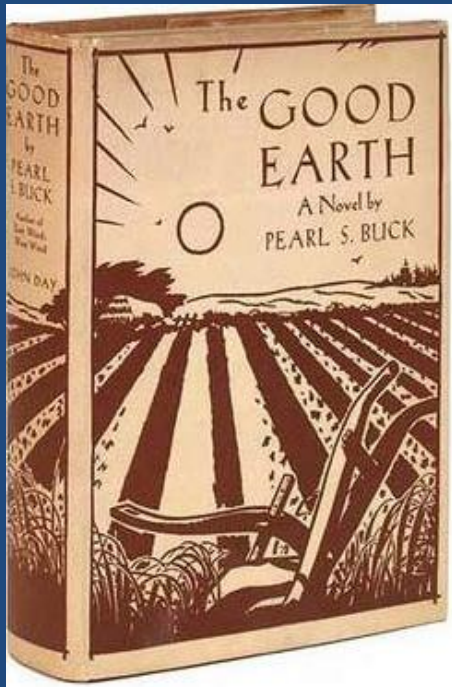


Over 14,000,000 Americans served in the armed forces during World War II.

Of those, over the entire war only around 250,000 saw service on the mainland of Asia – and not all at once. At its peak, the U.S. forces on the Asian mainland numbered less than 120,000.

Of those, the largest number of ground combat troops engaged was around 8,000.







About 440,000 Americans were killed in World War II.

Estimates vary but between 11,000,000 and 20,000,000 Chinese were killed in the war between 1937 and 1945.

Japan admits to about 1,000,000.



NANKING MASSACRE

Over a six week period from December 1937 until January 1938, Japanese forces killed Chinese civilians indiscriminately after taking the Chinese capitol Nanking.

Estimates are between 150,000 to over 400,000 died. The accepted estimate is around 300,000.

Japan admits to 35,000.

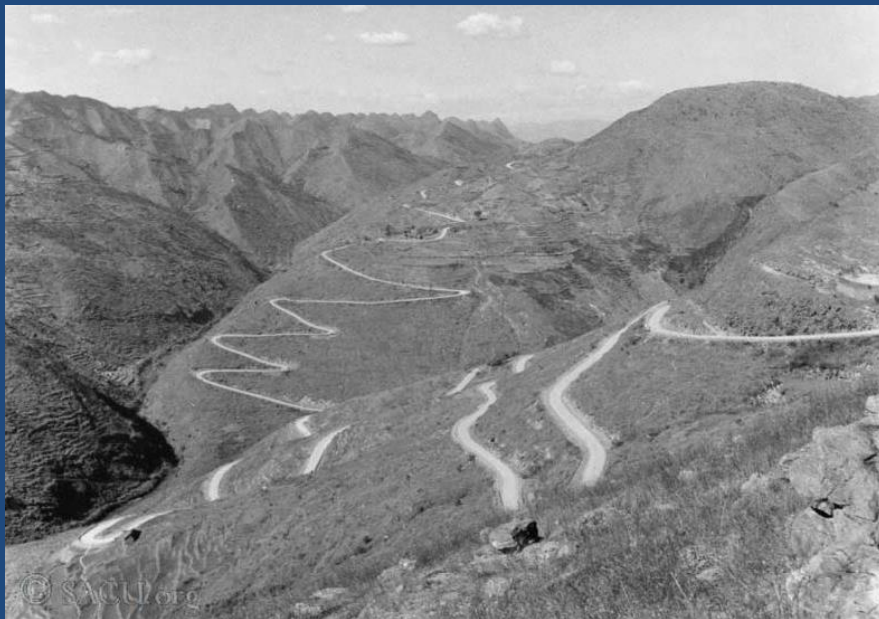


Approximately 68,000 allied POW's (mostly British and Australians) worked as slave labor on the Burma railroad in 1942 – 1943. Over 11,000 died.

Over 300,000 Malaysians, Burmese, Thai and Indochinese worked as slave labor on the same railroad at the same time. About half of them died.



Between 1938 and 1939, over 4,000,000 mostly Chinese laborers [Kuh – Li (Coolies)] built a road over some of the most difficult terrain in the world from Kunming China to Lashio Burma by hand.



It was 700 road miles.

The work force was paid in opium.

About a quarter of them died.

GOALS:

- Japan** Create Greater East Asia under Japanese rule.
- Britain** Restore lost territories. Preserve and even expand the British Empire.
- U.S.** Keep China in the war and ensure that China would be a close allied power after the war.

GOALS

China Nationalist China wanted to sit out the war now that the barbarians were fighting amongst themselves and prepare for the real war with the communists ultimately uniting China under Nationalist rule.

RESULTS:

Japan Lost.

RESULTS:

Britain Drove the Japanese out of Burma. Did not regain other former territories until Japanese surrender. Gained no additional influence in the region.

India and Burma gained their independence in 1947. Burma rejected the Commonwealth. Remaining Asian territories were independent by the 1960's.

RESULTS:

U.S. Kept Nationalist China in the war but not in the fight. Alienated Communist China. Would wind up fighting two more wars over the mess left behind.

China The Nationalists were just as effective against the Communists as they were against the Japanese – not at all. They were driven from China completely in 1949.

THE WINNERS GOALS

PRC Communist China wanted to learn how to beat a large, modern army so they could crush the Nationalists after the Japanese had lost.

India Wanted the end of British Colonial Rule.

THE WINNERS RESULTS

PRC Communist China crushed the Nationalists after the Japanese had lost. Relations with the U.S. were hostile until the 1970's. Now the dominant power in Asia.

India Independent as of 1947 although divided and embroiled in its own wars (India-Pakistan) through the 1970's.

BURMA (now Myanmar)

A balkanized region for centuries. It has over 120 distinct languages and dialects – 27 are currently recognized as official. The various ethnic groups never liked each other.

Some liked British rule as it kept the others in check. The others did not like British rule for precisely that reason.

BURMA (now Myanmar)

Overrun by the Japanese in 1942. Some of its people fought against Japan for the entire war. Some fought for the Japanese from the start. Many tried to ignore the whole mess (and would prefer to be kept out if it.)

Burma would gain its independence in 1947, being the only former British Colony to reject membership in the Commonwealth. It has been in a state of civil war ever since.

For all the combatants, the war was at the furthest end of their supply lines.

For the Allies, priority air by 1944 took five days. Most air shipments took about a month. Shipment by sea – at least 2 months and usually twice that.

The theater was dead last in supply priority and only got what it wanted late in the war when U.S. industry was fully mobilized and at maximum production.

For the Japanese, supply was always a problem.

THE CBI WAS THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD.

Nonstop Air (Not possible at all then, not possible today because the airports are too small)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| San Francisco to Lido, India | 7,300 miles |
| New York City to Lido, India | 7,692 miles |
| London to Imphal, India | 5,060 miles |

Surface transport distances. (Ship to Mumbai, rail to Calcutta and then to Dimapur or Lido, truck from Dimapur to Imphal)

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| New York to Lido (Suez) | 11,612 miles |
| New York to Lido (Cape Horn) | 15,496 miles |
| Southampton to Imphal (Suez) | 9,236 miles |
| Southampton to Imphal (Cape Horn) | 14,863 miles |

Air from Florida to Assam (At least 11 stops).

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Air – US to Assam | 13,673 miles |
|--------------------------|---------------------|

In addition to being about as far from the U.S. or U.K. as one could be, the CBI was also last on the list for supplies.

Part of this was the distance. Most was the fact that the European Theater and Pacific Theaters had higher priority.

For the U.S. only, the CBI was a high priority for:

- Transport aircraft – enough that it affected airborne operations elsewhere.**
- Road construction equipment (without impacting other operations), and**
- Railroad equipment and personnel – who were both needed because India's railroads were a mess and available as they were underemployed elsewhere.**

The record shipment for the allies was in 1944 by air from Burma to Toronto, Canada. It took only about 48 hours to ship 30 rats to the University of Toronto medical school. They were infected with Bush Typhus and sent to find a vaccine.

As of 2017, there is no vaccine.

Bush Typhus is an insect born viral infection with symptoms similar to Typhus. All accounts suggest it originated in Japan and was brought to Burma by the Japanese – not on purpose.

The Japanese did not believe their soldier got sick.



Many have heard of the “Flying Tigers” and one might assume they played a significant role in the war in Asia.

They were technically the American Volunteer Group – mercenaries with the Chinese Nationalist Air Force. There were only three operational squadrons totaling 60 aircraft although they never had that many operational and were down to less than 20 at times.



They were operational from December 20, 1941 until July 4, 1942.

They shot down 296 Japanese for the loss of 14 pilots.

They were replaced by the 23rd Fighter Group USAAF.



The real air effort was less glamorous and far more effective.

Without air transport the allies could not fight.

From 1942 – 1945 over 776,000 tons of supplies were flown to China.



The planes were unarmed, unescorted and flying in the worst weather often with no visibility from take off until landing. The pilots did not get combat pay.



The allied ground war in Burma was entirely dependent upon air supply. In 1945, a mechanized army of over 100,000 men with trucks, jeeps, tanks and artillery advanced over 1000 miles from Imphal, India to Rangoon making two major and several minor river crossings against determined opposition.

It received 98% of its fuel and supplies by air.



Much of the fighting (especially in northern Burma) was jungle warfare. There were no roads. The terrain, the climate and the jungle were as much an enemy as the Japanese – even more so.

Most casualties were from disease and infection. 124-1 in 1943.



The allies became experts in jungle warfare as well as guerrilla operations.

The Americans would soon forget and were forced to learn the lessons all over again a generation later.

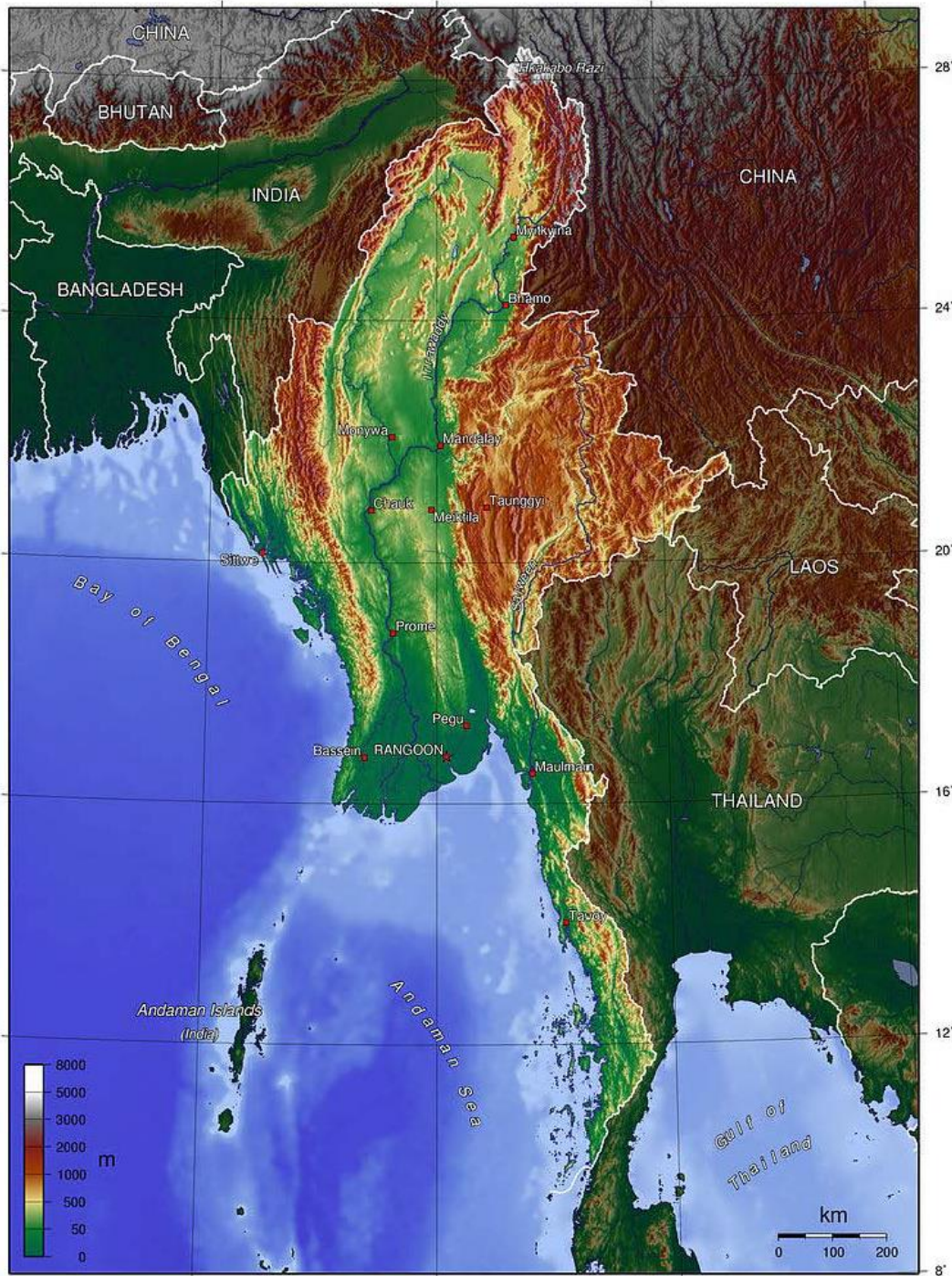


The CBI also saw the first widespread (relatively) use of the helicopter in combat.

It was used for scouting, medical evacuation and search and rescue of downed pilots.



Top: Sikorski R-4 in Burma.
Bottom: Sikorski R-6A in China.



Elevation Map of Burma

Below – map using same color scale of the continental United States for comparison.



WHY NOT BURMA?

If you had to pick the worst place to fight a land war with a modern army, Burma would rank high on the list.

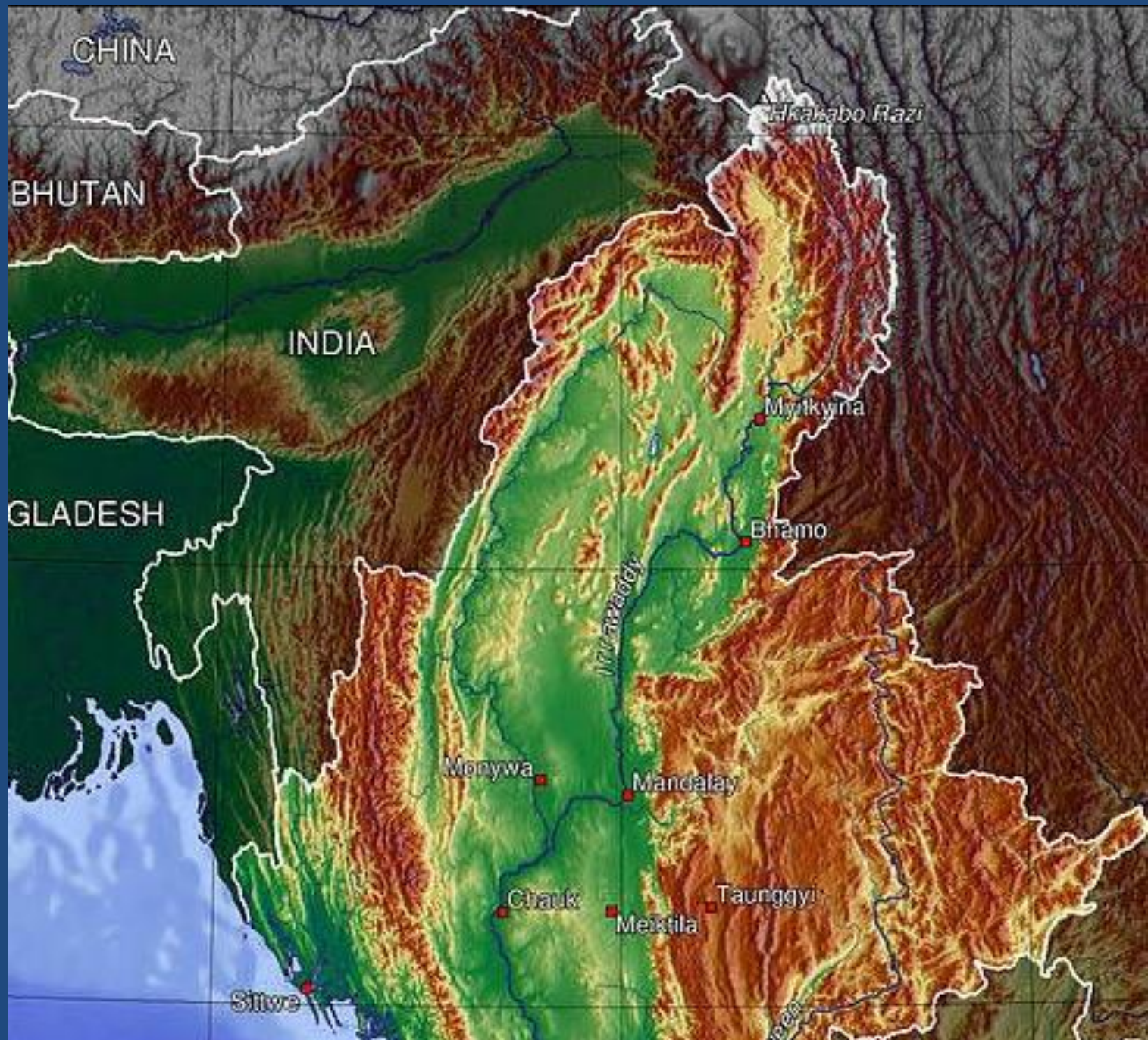
It was effectively cut off from the rest of the world except by sea and then only if one had safe access to its only port at Rangoon (which the Allies would not attain until 1945).

It had few roads – and none truly connecting it with anywhere aside from China (and that was only since 1940.)

Its terrain and lack of infrastructure was anathema to a modern, mechanized army – without unconventional thinking.

It had a brief campaign season – less than four months. The rest was the Monsoon which would turn the dirt roads to mud.

And so on and so forth...





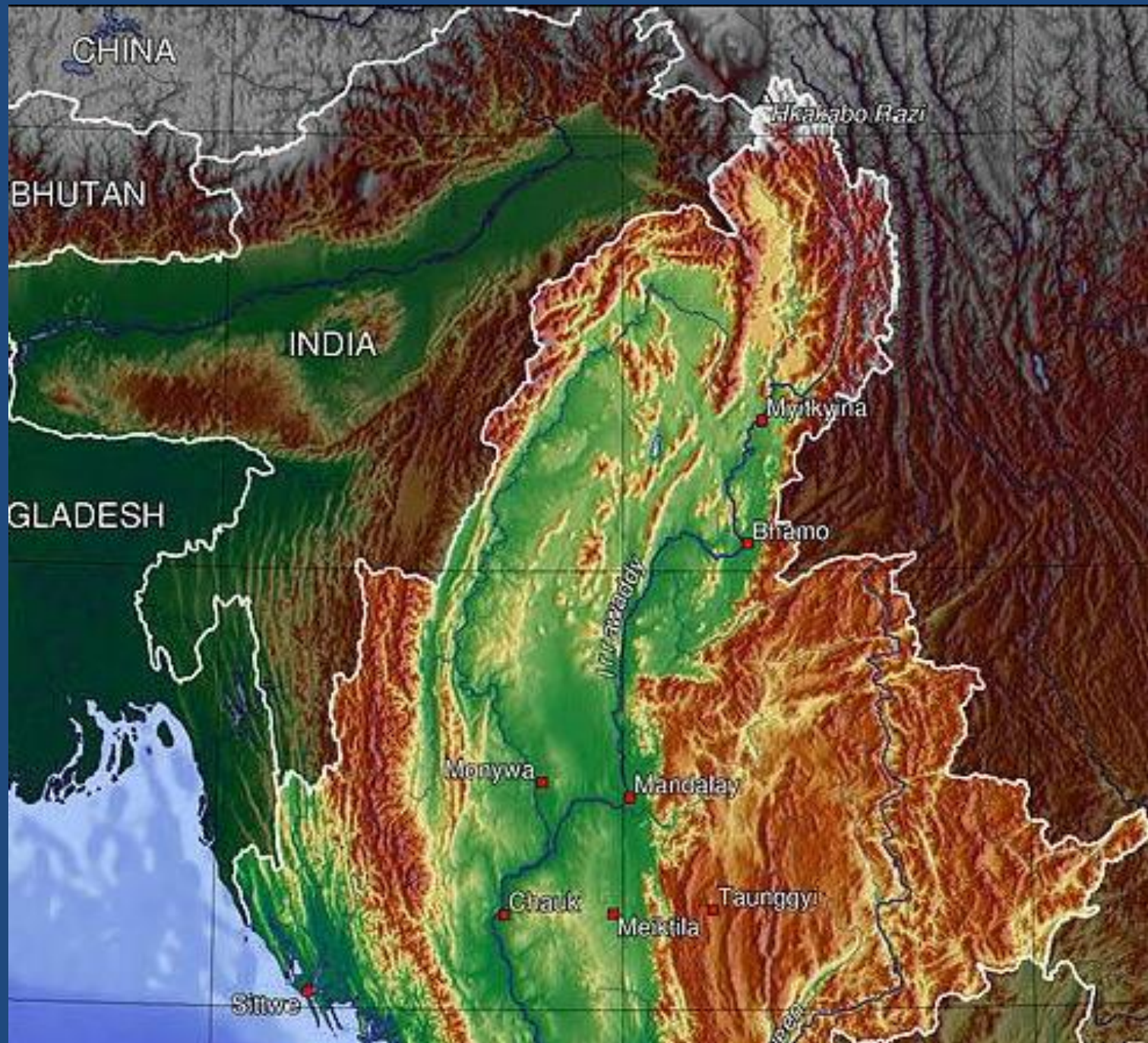
The Naga Hills form the boundary between India and Burma.

The passes over the hills are between 5,000 and 7,000 feet above sea level. The main valleys on either side are at most about 600 ft above sea level. The peaks exceed 12,000 ft.



They are hills only when compared to what lies immediately north – the Himalayas.

Pretty. Now think of moving a modern army with supplies over this ground – with no roads.





CHINDWIN RIVER

After struggling across the hills, this river is immediately at the base along most of the length.

Most of the river cannot be crossed.



Where there are places, the river is over a thousand feet wide.

And in the 1940's there were no bridges whatsoever.



CHINDWIN RIVER

In the 1940's the only way across was by ferry or barge.

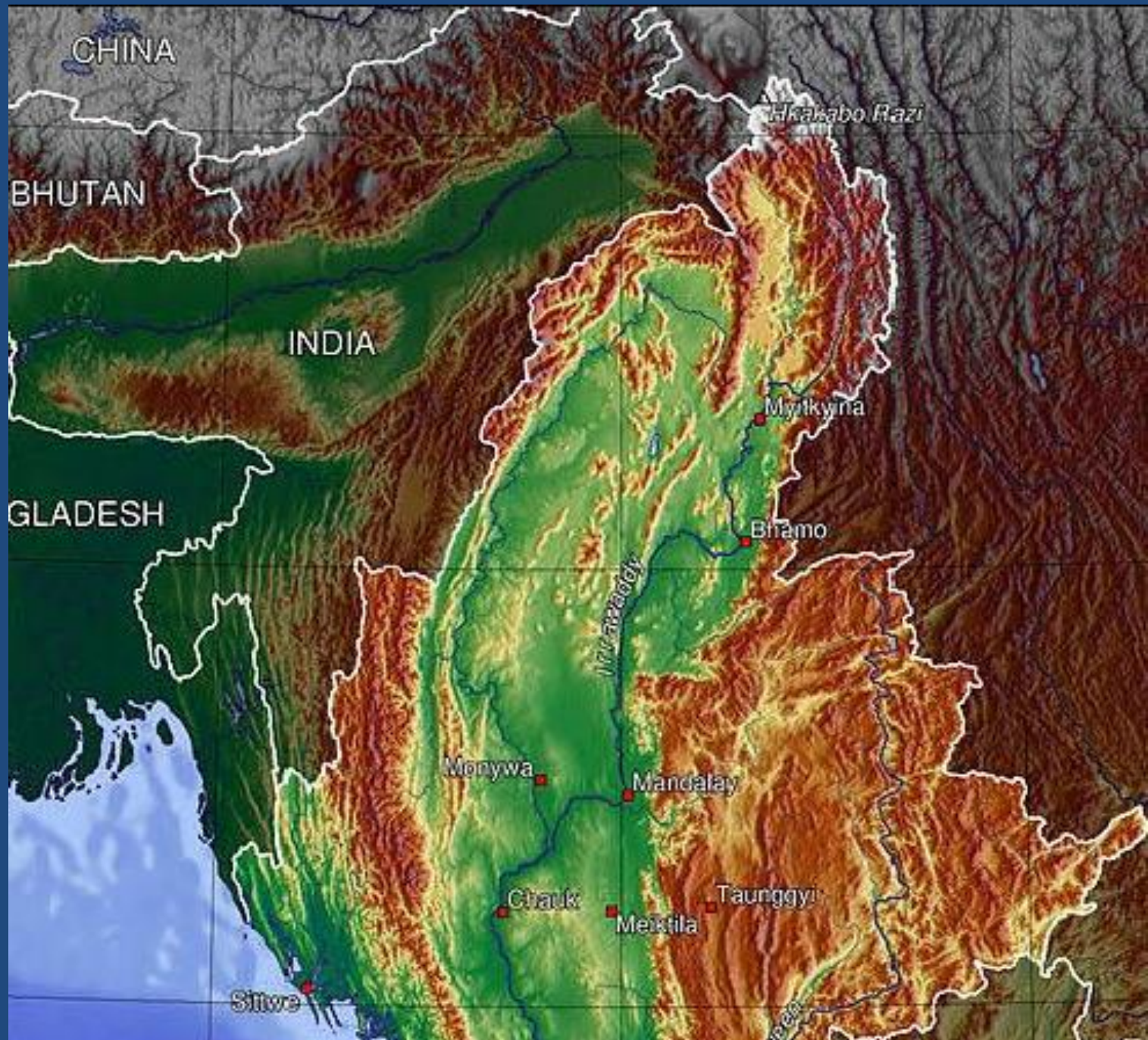
The ferries were not built to carry vehicles – although maybe they could manage a motorcycle.

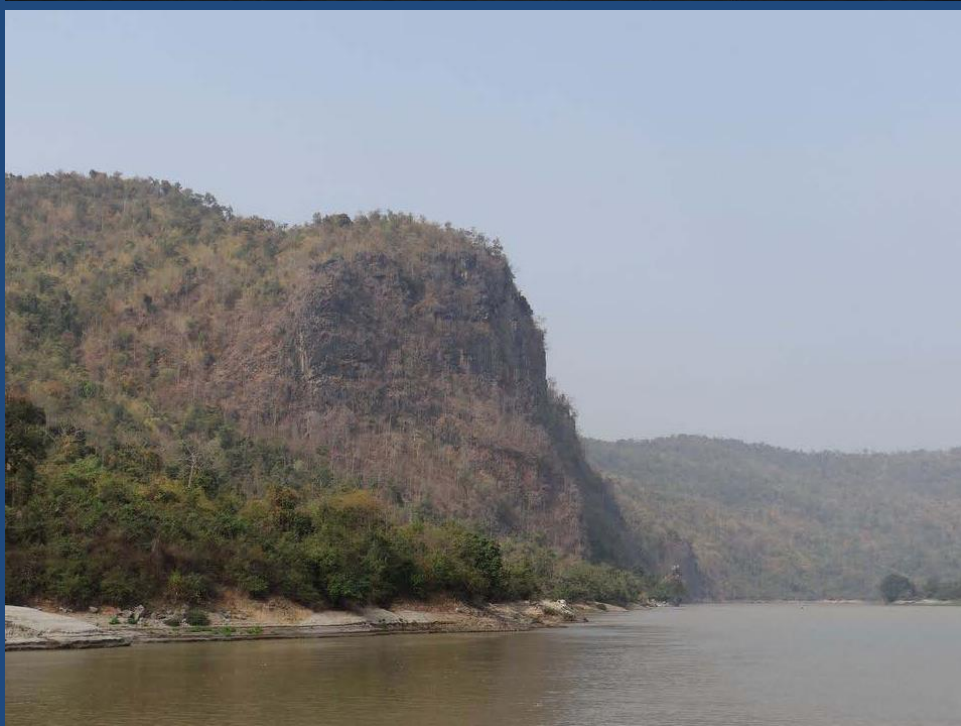
Barges would be similar to what is pictured below.



This river is wider than any in the U.S. aside from the lower Mississippi.

And this is the narrower river in Burma.





IRRAWADDY RIVER

This river cuts through the center of Burma north to south. It is the largest river in Southeast Asia and wider than the Mississippi south of the junction with the Chindwin.

It is navigable by ocean going vessels as far north as Bhamo year round and smaller vessels as far north as Myitkyina most of the year.

The bridge pictured did not exist.

Much of the river is flanked by bluffs on one side or the other.

In 1942, there was only one bridge across the river.





1 – Himalayas. Snow year round above 14,000 ft. Heavy rains May – Oct at lower elevations but rain can occur year round.

2 – Naga and Chin Hills. Heavy rains during Monsoon (May – Oct) on west slopes. Less rain to the east but still higher than in U.S. Dryer rest of year.

3. Tropical. Less rain during Monsoon season. Dry otherwise.

4. Not affected by Monsoon. Semi-arid savanah. Receives about 35" of rain per year. Very hot in dry season.

5. Rains year round. Up to 400" possible.





TIGERS

Burma had them and still does. Most Allied veterans have tiger stories – usually about seeing them briefly. Those tasked to care for mules – however – it seemed tigers like fresh mule.

The Japanese feared tigers in Burma. Apparently the tigers also liked fresh Japanese.

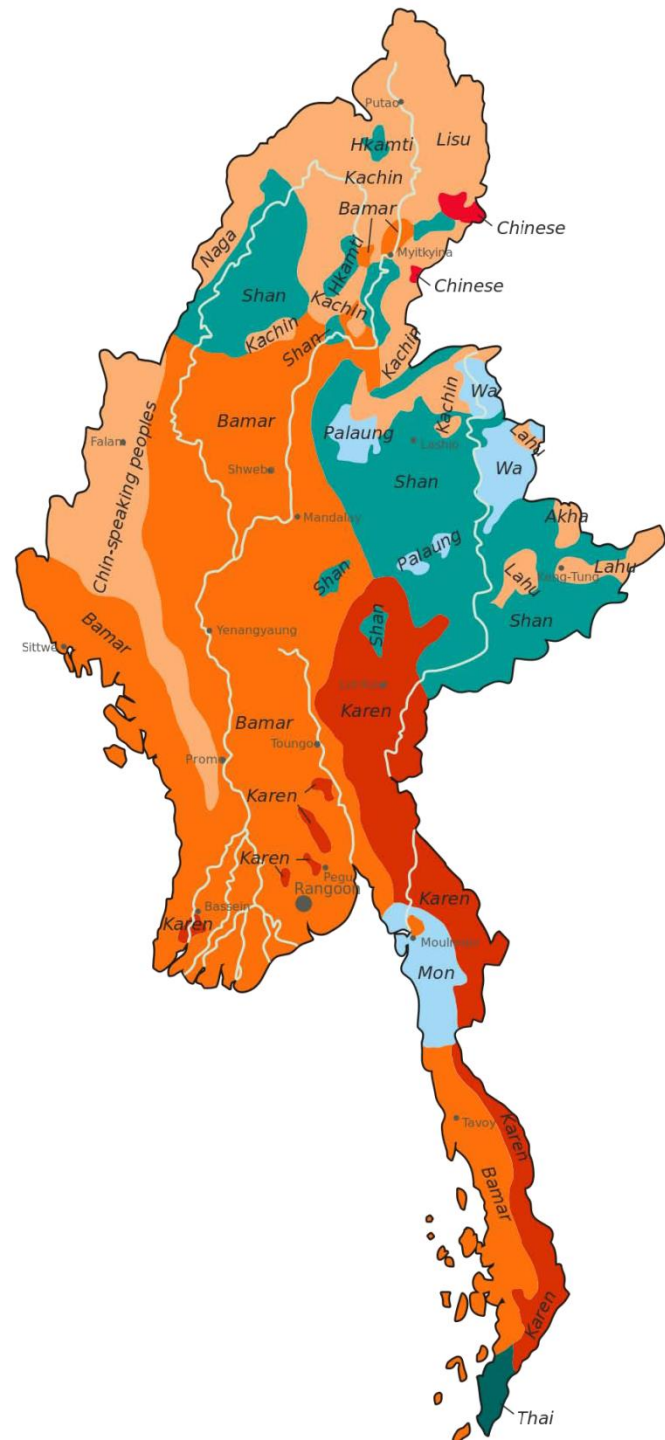
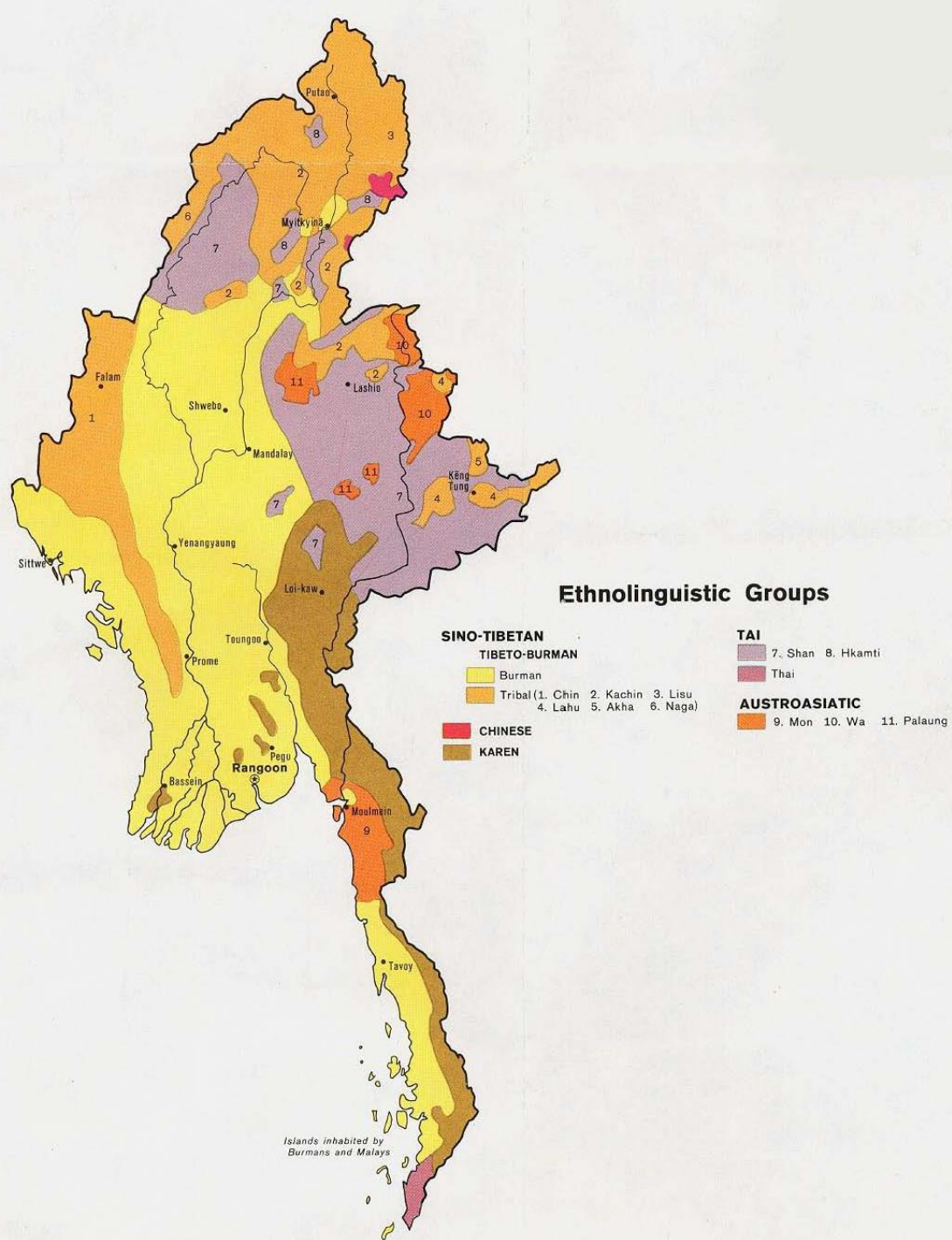


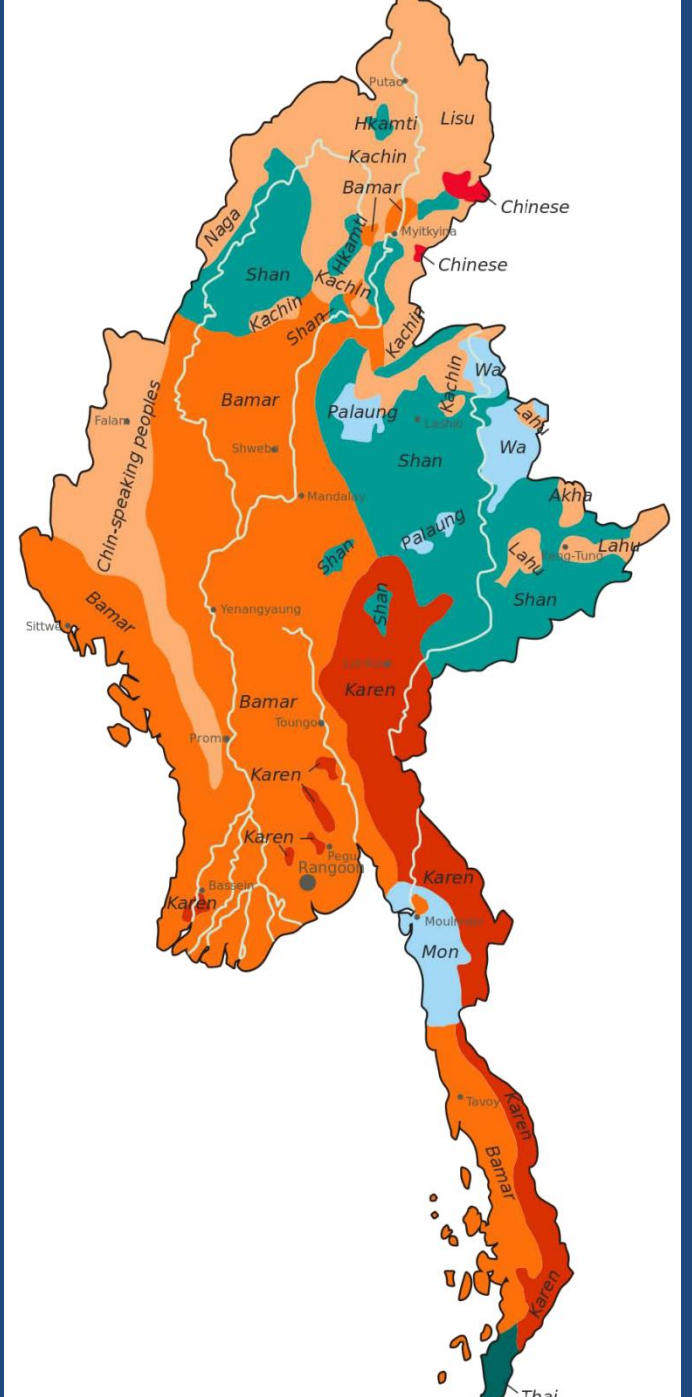
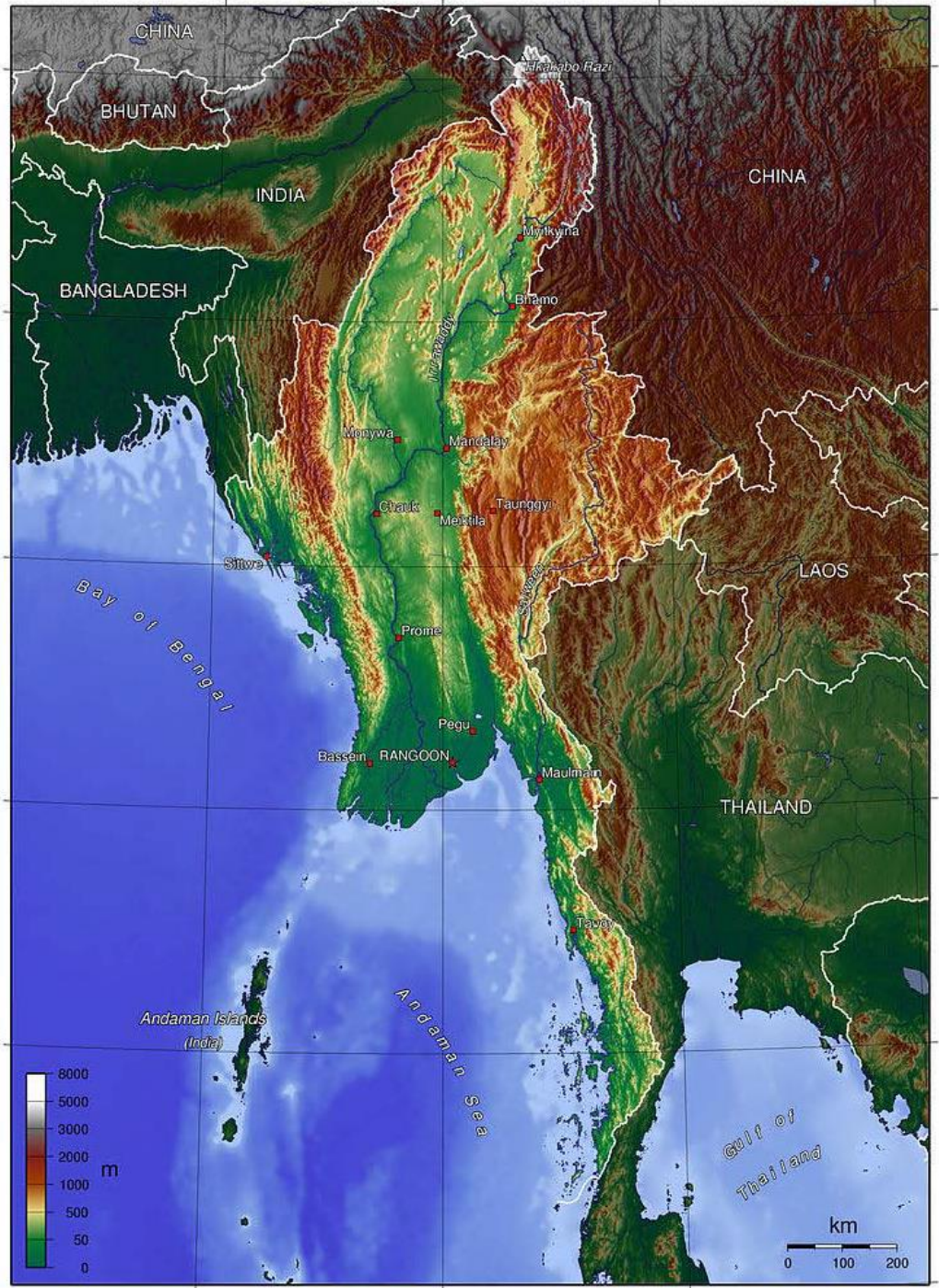
SNAKES

There are over 40 different species of poisonous snakes, many particularly so. Few cases of snake bite and a good thing too as in many cases even today there is no anti-venom available.

Arguably, Burma in 1942 was one of the worst imaginable places to try and fight a modern war.

And that is without beginning to discuss people.







The Naga people occupied the Naga Hills on both sides of the India-Burma border.

They were headhunters.

The Naga in India had mostly abandoned the practice by 1940. The Naga in Burma had not and would not until the last such tribe converted to Christianity in the 1960s.



That being said, the Naga generally supported the allies in WW2. The Japanese were not so lucky.



The Kachin people live in north Burma east of the Naga. They are ethnically related – both cultures came out of Tibet centuries earlier. They had been headhunters but had given up that practice by the 20th Century.

They were experts on the jungle and jungle fighting and hated the Japanese. Even before they openly sided with the allies, Kachins actively hunted and killed Japanese soldiers while aiding allied ones.



The Japanese were terrified of them.

Kachin tribes are democratic and most have been since the late 18th Century.



The Shan people occupy (mostly) the mountainous east of Burma. They are ethnically Thai and Buddhist.

They are also historic enemies of the Kachin and Burmese and have been at war with both on and off (mostly on) for centuries.

They sided with the Japanese at the outset and set the Japanese on the Kachin saying the Kachin were British sympathizers.

When the Kachin were not hunting Japanese, it was payback.

The Shan were not friendly with the Burmese either and have been at war with them ever since.





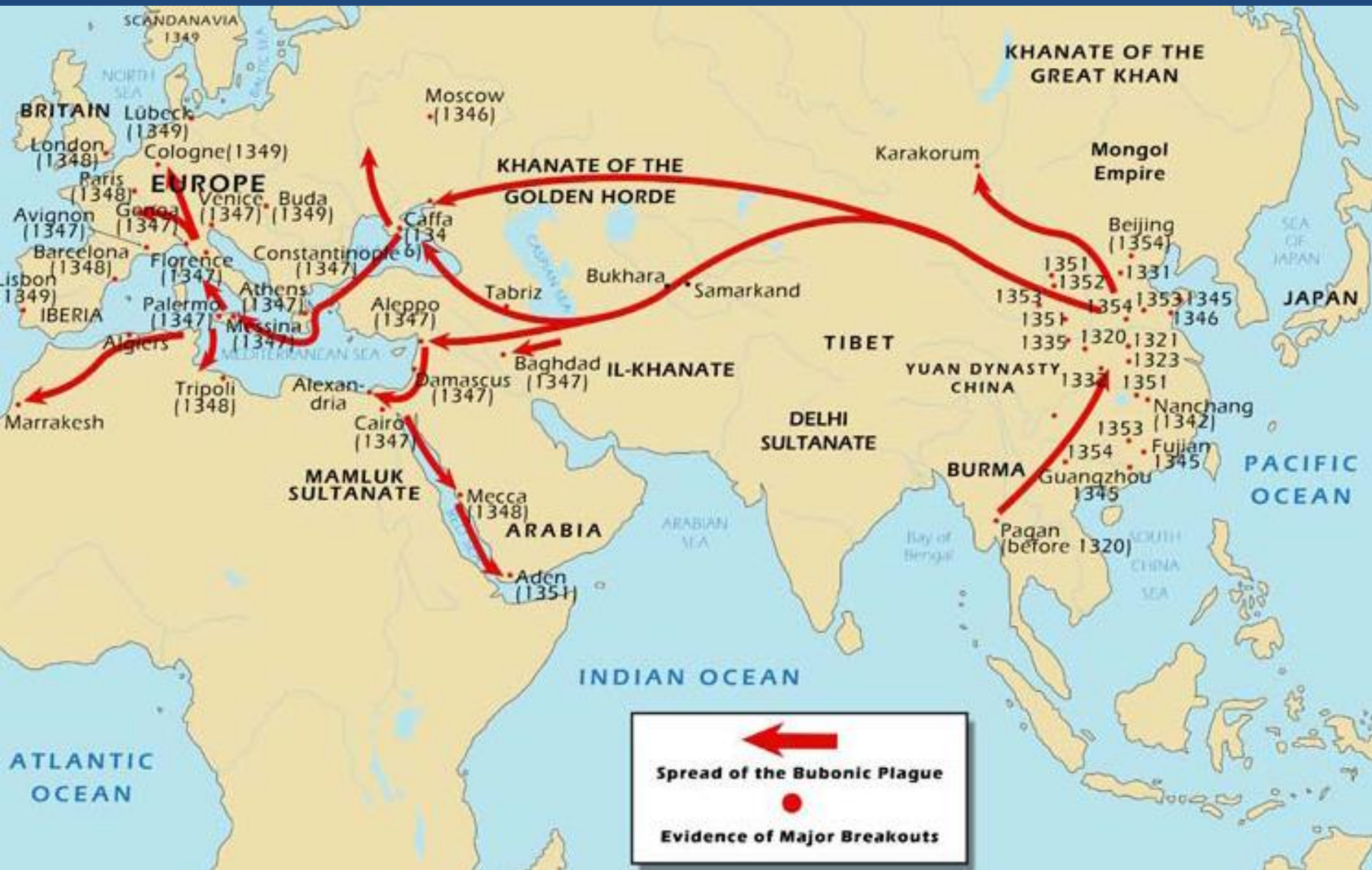
The Karen people are actually several cultures that live in the mountains along the Burma – Thai boarder. The Burmese have never been friendly. When Japan invaded, the Burmese Nationalist Army burned Karen villages (and worse).

The Karens fought for the British SOE in the south of Burma against both the Japanese and the Burmese. They have been fighting the Burmese ever since.

Karen is an anglicized version of the Burmese word “Kayin” – probably not a nice one.

(There is a sizable Karen refugee population in the U.S.. Surprisingly, one of the largest communities is in Minnesota.)







Burmese rule of the region began with Pagan, a kingdom of the Irrawaddy valley that rose around 849 C.E. and lasted until around 1297. Its capitol Pagan is known for its hundreds of temples. It fell when the Mongols of Kublai Khan destroyed it not to expand their huge empire but because they felt it best that Southeast Asia be divided and weak.





Their principal regional rival was Angkor (802 – 1431)

The Mongols would also attack Angkor but without as much success. But that, coupled with a religious upheaval, political unrest and a successful revolt and subsequent rise of Siam (and other factors) would lead to the end and a more complete one at that.





After decades where competing warlords fought over the scraps of Pagan, a new state rose centered on its capital Ava (Inwa) near modern day Mandalay. It is recognized to date from 1365 and lasted until 1555.

But unlike Pagan it was not a dominant power rather it was a vassal of the more powerful Shan states – themselves vassals of Siam.





Ayutthaya Kingdom (Siam) 1351 – 1767

This kingdom had been a province of Angkor and revolted eventually breaking away completely. As it grew in political and economic strength, Angkor diminished.

By the 1500's, it was the dominant power in Southeast Asia at least economically. The Burmese kingdoms were either tributaries or under indirect vassalage. Angkor was torn by political infighting and economic failures and would ultimately be sacked by Ayutthaya forces around 1431 – a weaker Khmer kingdom being established in Phnom Penh.

(The map shows the polities of the region around 1530.)



Ava fell to its former province of Taungoo in 1555. Taungoo Prince Tabinshwehti (r. 1530 – 1550) had taken lower Burma and moved its capital to Pegu in 1539. Controlling the Irrawaddy was not enough. Under his successor Bayinnaung (r. 1550 – 1581) the empire continued to expand eventually becoming the largest Southeast Asian empire controlling all modern day Burma, Thailand and Laos and parts of India (Assam and Manipur), Cambodia and Malaya.

The heirs could not hold it. The empire collapsed by 1599 and the regional power shifted to Siam.



Former capitols of the Taungoo Empire.

Top: Taungoo

Bottom: Pegu (now Bago).

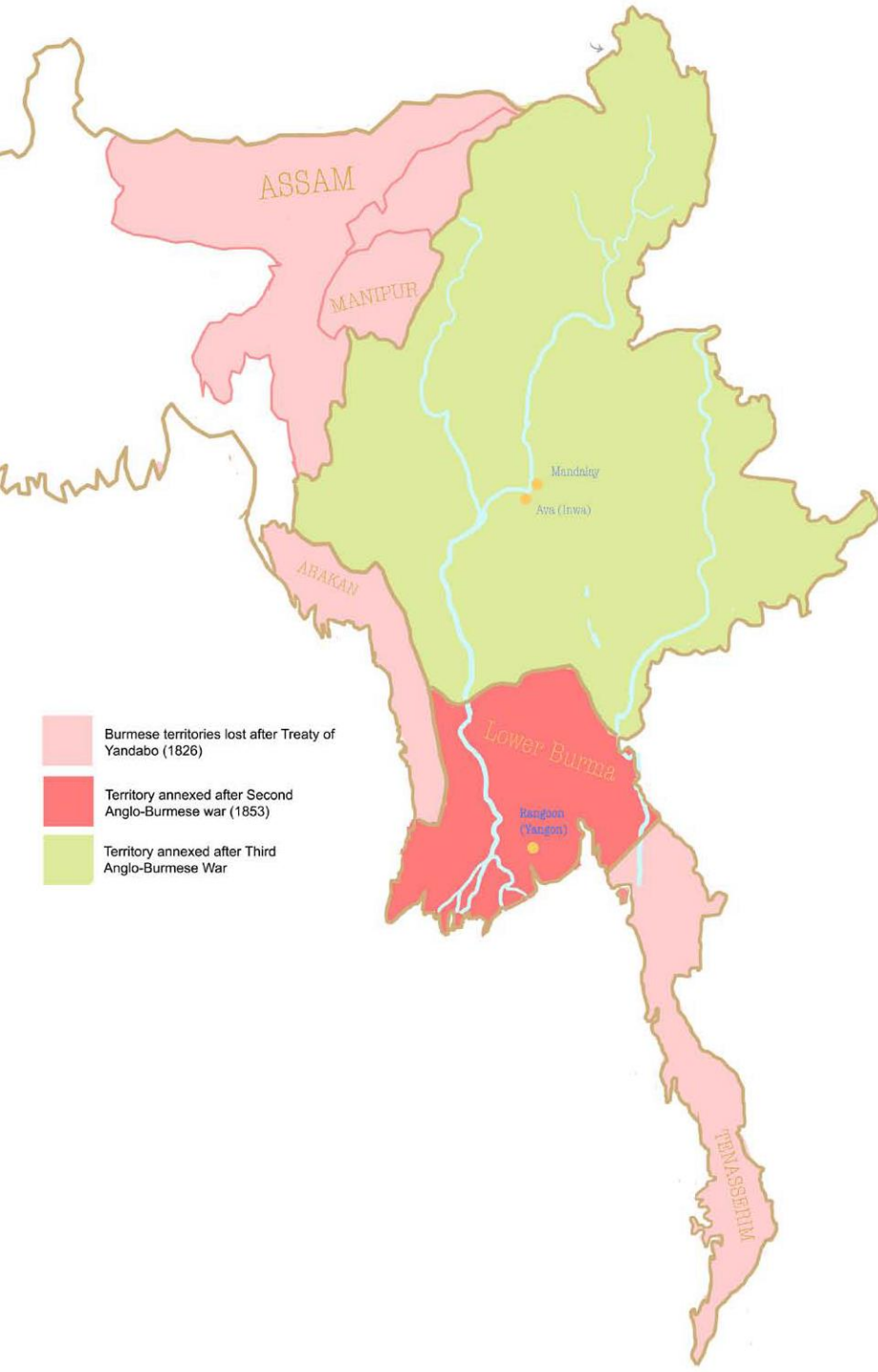


Bayinnaung was said to be a brilliant military commander, diplomat and politician. Unfortunately, it was hard to follow that and as his was a hereditary, absolute monarchy, his empire was based upon his personal abilities.

It collapsed under the reign of his son whose own son rebelled against him. (That son ruled the area around Ava).

The grandson and his descendants were able to rebuild the former Ava Kingdom and again unite the Irrawaddy Valley under their rule.

But by the 1700's, the kingdom was an economic and political mess. The Mon people revolted in the south and restored the Pegu Kingdom then conquered Ava and ended the Taungoo Kingdom.



In 1752, as the Taungoo Dynasty was falling to the Mon, the chief in Shwebo (Alaungpaya) took control of the mess north of the Irrawaddy. He and his heirs would be known as the Konbaung Dynasty. By 1759, his forces had crushed the Mon in the south driving the British and French out of Rangoon (for supplying weapons to the Mon), taken Manipur and was firmly in control of Burma.

His immediate heirs would take Laos in 1765 crush Ayutthaya in 1767 (but fail to hold the ruins) and fight off the Qing four times by 1770. Later attempts to take Siam failed and Burma turned west taking Assam by 1821.

While this last move made the Konbaung empire the second largest in Burmese history, it also provoked the British East India Trading Company...



The “Age of Exploration” was not about finding new lands to settle. It was about making a lot of money.

Spices were the key motivator.

Example:

Cloves.

In the 15th Century, cloves were grown exclusively in the Moluccas west of New Guinea. They were used in Europe for preservation and flavor (and still are today).

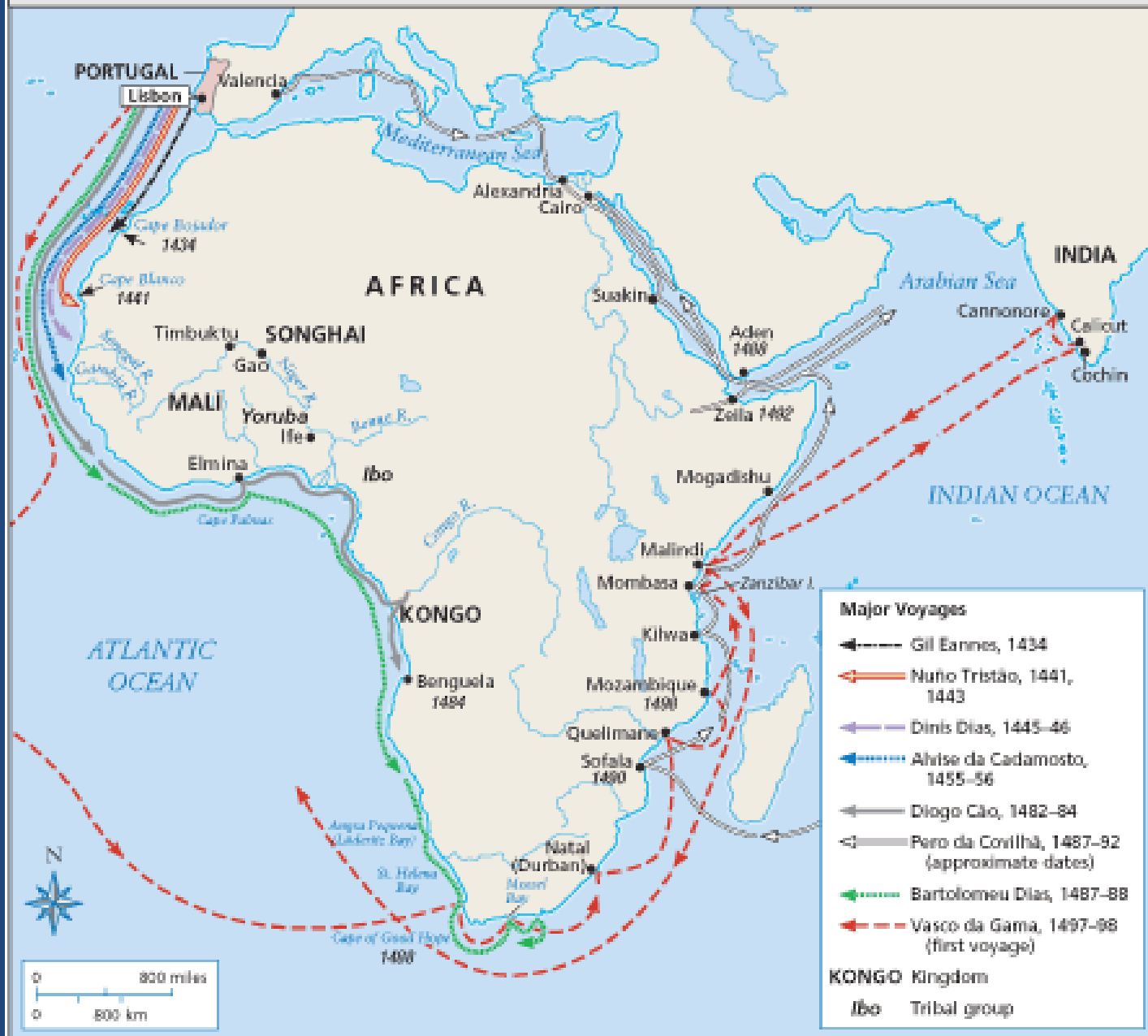
They passed through many markets to make it to Europe.

By the time they were sold in Europe they were literally worth their weight in gold.





Portuguese Explorations of Coastal Africa, 1434–1498





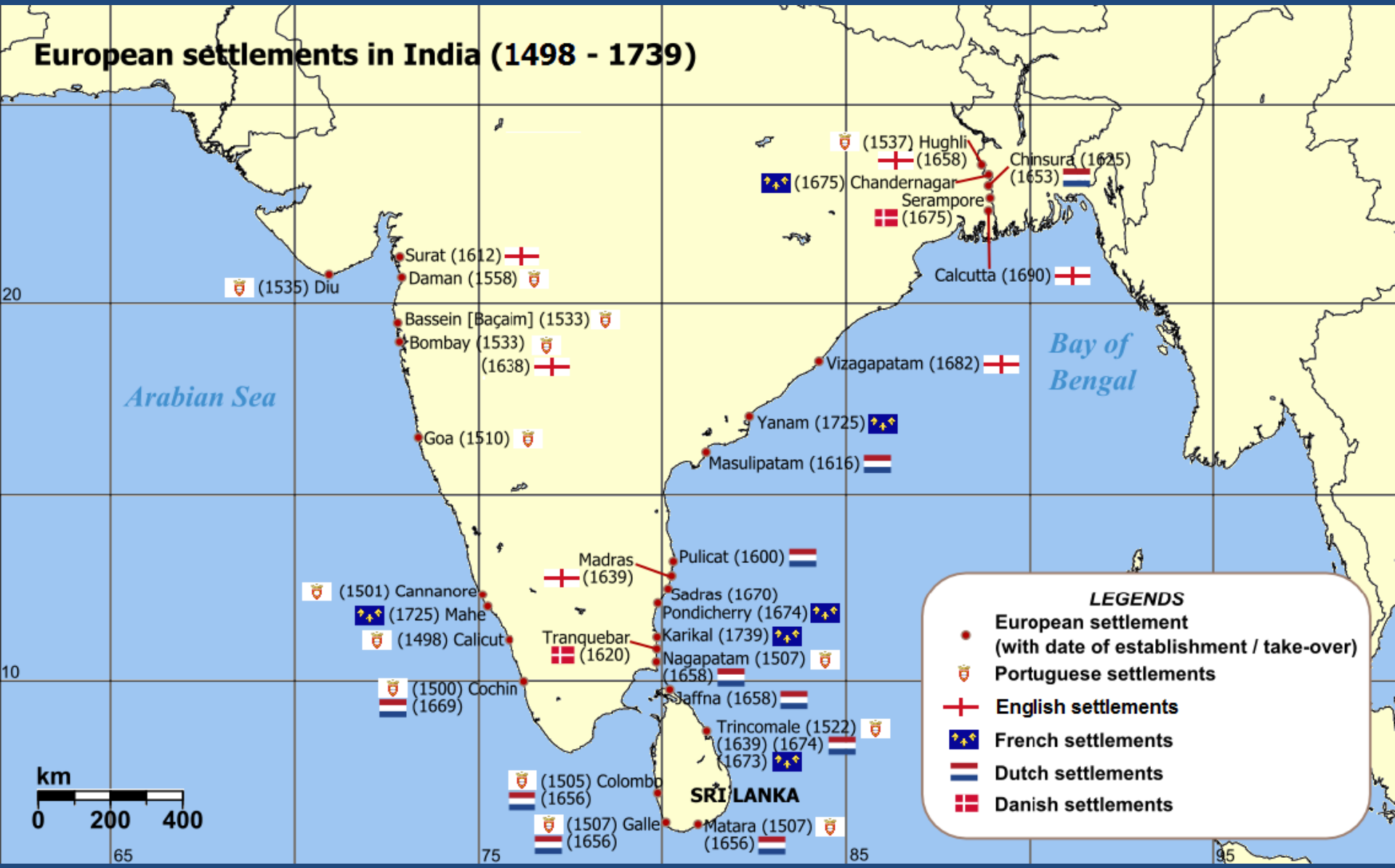
Vasco de Gama probably thought his voyage of 1497 – 1498 was only partly successful. He had proven it possible to sail from Europe to the spice markets of India.

But his holds were far less full than he planned. He had also hoped to prove that such a voyage was profitable and planned for a full cargo – he had far less than half of what he had planned.

(Turns out he could not pay for more)

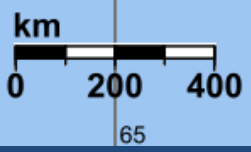
His cargo sold for about 60 times the entire cost of the voyage.

European settlements in India (1498 - 1739)



LEGENDS

- European settlement (with date of establishment / take-over)
- 🇵🇹 Portuguese settlements
- 🇬🇧 English settlements
- 🇫🇷 French settlements
- 🇳🇱 Dutch settlements
- 🇩🇰 Danish settlements



Surat (1612) 🇬🇧
 Daman (1558) 🇵🇹

Bassein [Baçaim] (1533) 🇵🇹
 Bombay (1533) 🇵🇹
 (1638) 🇬🇧

Goa (1510) 🇵🇹

(1501) Cannanore 🇵🇹
 (1725) Mahe 🇫🇷
 (1498) Calicut 🇵🇹

(1500) Cochin 🇳🇱
 (1669) 🇳🇱

(1505) Colombo 🇳🇱
 (1656) 🇳🇱

(1507) Galle 🇳🇱
 (1656) 🇳🇱

SRI LANKA

Matara (1507) 🇵🇹
 (1656) 🇳🇱

Madras (1639) 🇬🇧
 Pulicat (1600) 🇳🇱
 Sadras (1670)
 Pondicherry (1674) 🇫🇷

Karikal (1739) 🇫🇷
 Nagapatam (1507) 🇵🇹
 (1658) 🇳🇱

Jaffna (1658) 🇳🇱

Trincomale (1522) 🇵🇹
 (1639) (1674)
 (1673) 🇫🇷

(1537) Hughli 🇵🇹
 (1658) 🇬🇧
 Chandernagar (1675) 🇫🇷
 Serampore (1675) 🇩🇰
 Chinsura (1625) 🇳🇱
 (1653) 🇳🇱
 Calcutta (1690) 🇬🇧

Vizagapatam (1682) 🇬🇧

Yanam (1725) 🇫🇷

Masulipatam (1616) 🇳🇱

Bay of Bengal

Arabian Sea

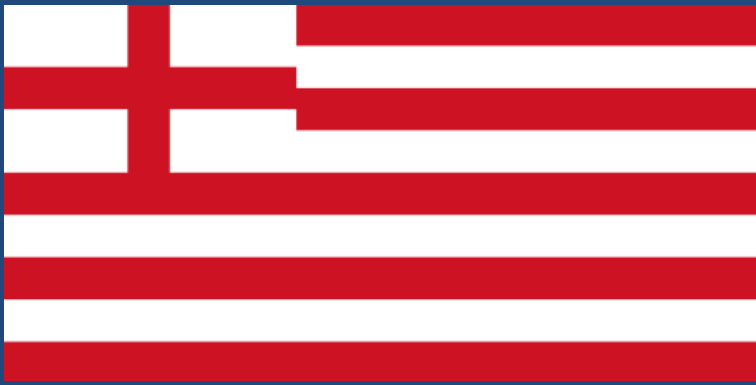


British East India Company 1600 - 1858

- The other European powers had advanced trade in the east with government backing. The English went a different route.
- Government backing meant government strings which meant a government cut, all of which cut into profits.
- Fortunes had been made in war by private enterprise in England – namely privateers (legalized piracy). Fortunes could thus only be made by private enterprise.
- The East India Company was founded by men who understood and believed in independence from government oversight.

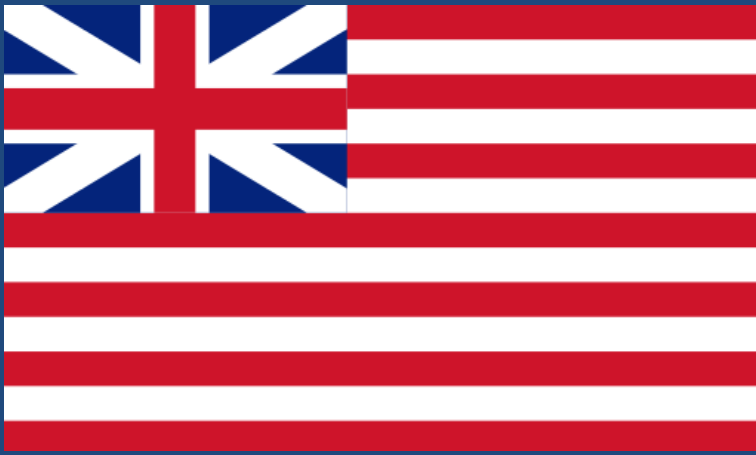
John Lancaster (1554 – 1618)

A successful trader and privateer, he would lead a successful trade voyage to Asia in 1591 and be one of the founders of the East India Company.



British East India Company 1600 - 1858

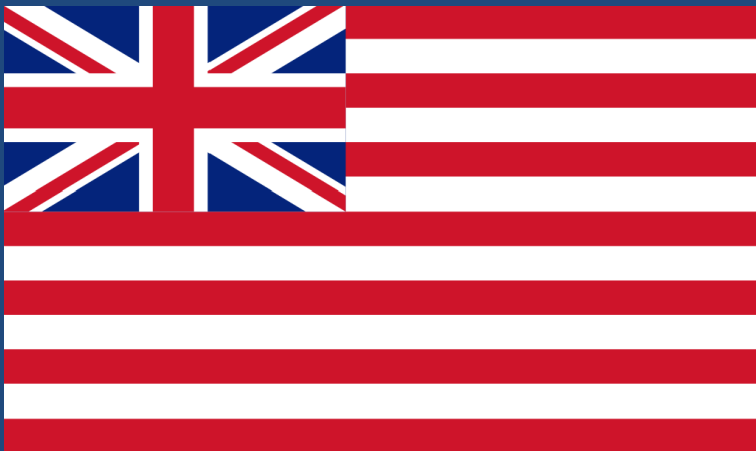
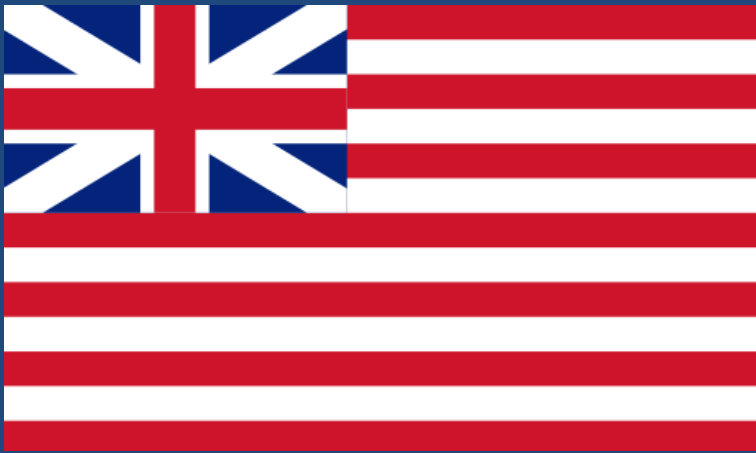
- It was a private corporation founded in 1600.
- By Royal Charter, it held an exclusive monopoly for trade and commerce in the far east to include India, Southeast Asia and China.
- The Charter did not give the Crown or Parliament any rights of control or oversight over the corporation's extra-territorial activities.
- The Company was in the business of making money. Colonization cut into profits so it did not engage in such a profitless enterprise (at least not for over 150 years.)

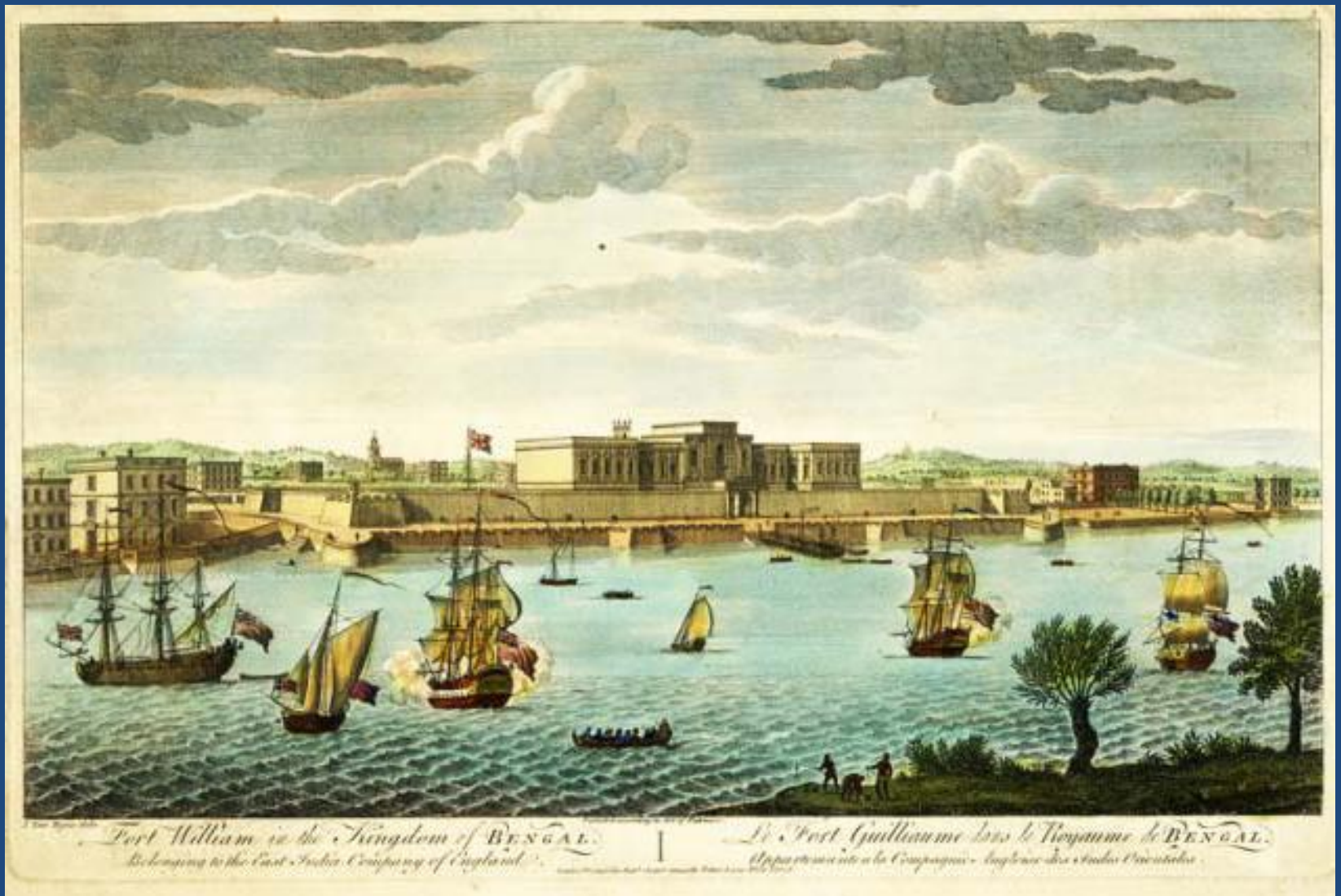




British East India Company 1600 - 1858

- As envisioned, the Company was not about colonization. Colonies were expensive propositions that more often than not lost money.
- Every Brit in Asia had to be engaged in work for the Company. They were employees, not colonists.
- Their children had to be educated in England and were not guaranteed employment or return by virtue of parentage.
- On retirement, they could retire anywhere they wanted – except anywhere within the area of the Company's monopoly.





Calcutta trading post. The Company gained a concession from the local prince – to land in a fetid swamp no one else wanted.



Madras trading post. Another concession further south on the Bay of Bengal. This time it was near a small fishing village in an area that was not fit for farming.

BOMBAY, on the Malabar Coast, belonging to the East India Company of England .



The last of the East India Company's posts – and probably the most important in time. It had been a Portuguese post for over a century – from the mid-16th Century. This one was part of the dowry for the marriage of King Charles II and Catherine of Braganza. The King had no use for it and assigned it to the Company.

BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

- What was in India worth an effort?
- Spices is not the answer. There was black pepper but India was more a market center in the global spice trade. Cultivation and production was further to the east.
- It was a convenient base of operations for trade to the east with China and Southeast Asia and was used for that purpose.
- But India offered more than convenience.
- Under the Mughals, it had become the world's largest exporter of textiles. It was this market that attracted the Company.

(England had been a significant player in the European textile industry – such as it was – in the Middle Ages. It was a leading producer of wool and flax. These were poor cousins to what India had to offer...)



When the Mughals arrived and consolidated their hold on northern India in the mid 1500's, India was already the world's largest producer and exporter of cotton.

(It would remain the largest until the end of the 20th Century when it was surpassed – slightly – by China.)

India was also becoming a serious rival with China in the production of silk.

The Mughals placed textile manufacture on an industrial scale and the arrival of the Europeans – the English in particular – supplied a vast market for their wares.





The Dutch introduced Europe to Indian textiles – but never exploited the market. They were fixated on the spice trade.

The Company decided it best not to compete for spices (competition did not equal profit). They took over the textile trade.

Ironically, it was the same trade that would be the undoing of Britain's experience in India. The Indian National Congress Party found its rallying point over British control of their cotton industry.

It is not ironic that their national flag has a stylized Indian spinning wheel at its center.





Another Dutch miss was in China. The Dutch again introduced tea to Europe but it was not spice so they did not pursue trade.

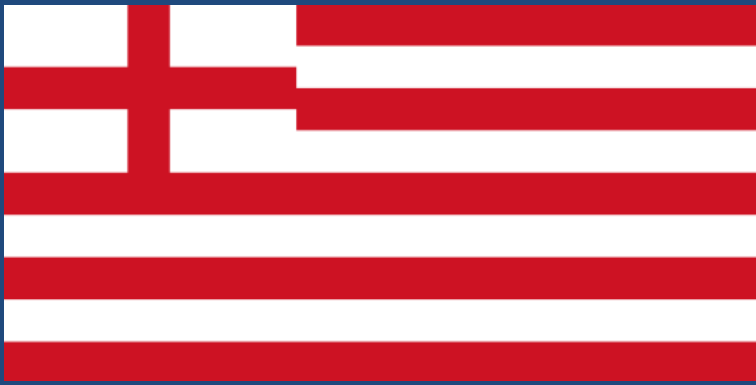
(That and the Chinese idea of trade was a problem.)

The East India Company gained control of the tea trade by the late 17th Century.

(It helped that the English were already hooked.)

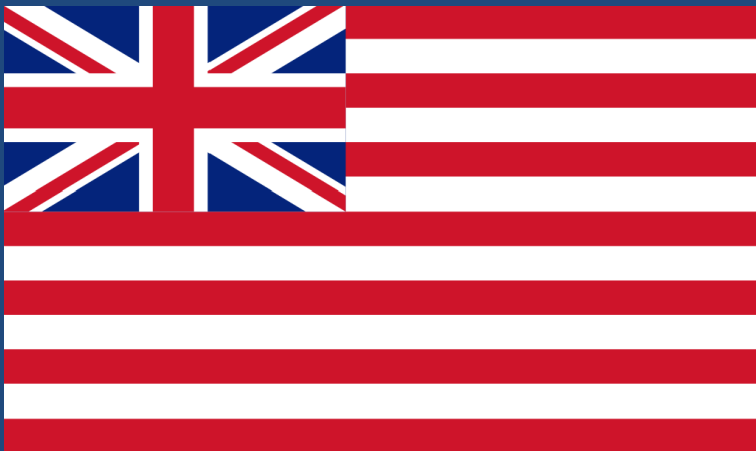
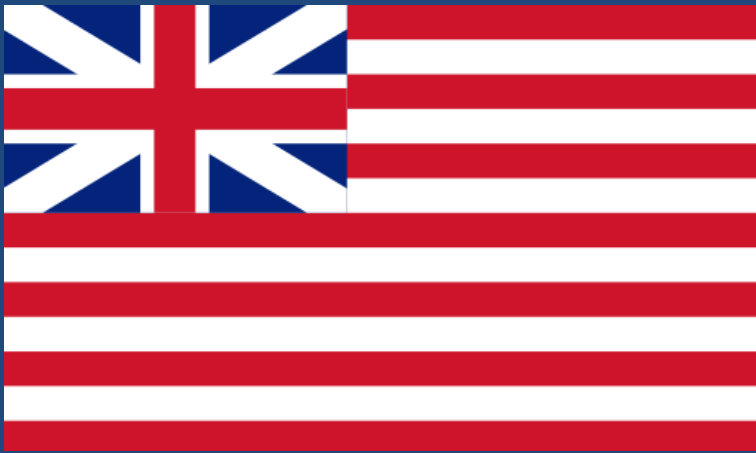
That trade (Tea) more than anything else led to a very dark chapter in British history (NOTHING TO DO WITH BOSTON!) and the end of the Company – more later.





British East India Company 1600 - 1858

- However, the Royal Charter allowed the Company to represent the Crown in the Far East.
- But Parliament would not pay them to do so.
- Nor would Parliament send a single British soldier. (In fact, it was understood that if Parliament had to deploy troops to protect the Company, the deal was off.)
- And, until the mid-18th Century, the Company could not expect help from the Royal Navy. No navy ships were stationed in India until world events changed things.



BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

- Largely without support from the British government. To protect its assets in India it had its own army for its defense. Until outside events changed things, it was little more than small garrisons.
- The officers were British but not British Army. They all were employees of the Company first and soldiers after that.
- They had royal commissions – a legal necessity since acting in a warlike manner without one violated numerous treaties and would see them hung as brigands.
- But the commissions were only good with the Company. An officer from the India Army had no connection with the British Army and vice versa meaning the officer was no longer an officer if he returned to Britain and a British officer had to resign to join the Indian Army.
- The soldiers were mostly Sepoys – Indian mercenaries.

(By 1805, the Army had 250,000 men – twice the size of the British Army then facing Napoleon.)

BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

- The Company also could not count on the Royal Navy – certainly not further to the east.
- Increasingly, India was more base than economic bastion. There was money to be made in Indian trade, but the real money was to be made in trade with China which was also part of the Company's monopoly. India was the base for these operations.
- The trade made their ships potential targets both for pirates and for privateers during the innumerable wars fought between the British and other European powers in the 17th and 18th Centuries.
- The real Navy was quite busy dealing with its own rivals in the West (mostly the Dutch and French during those centuries) and had but passing interests in the east.
- So the Company sort of had its own navy as well.

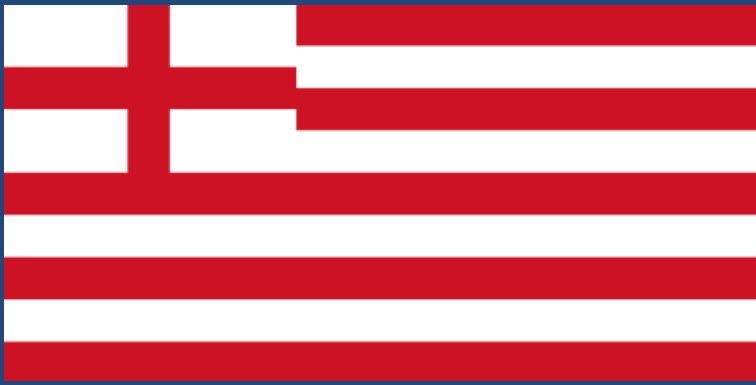




BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

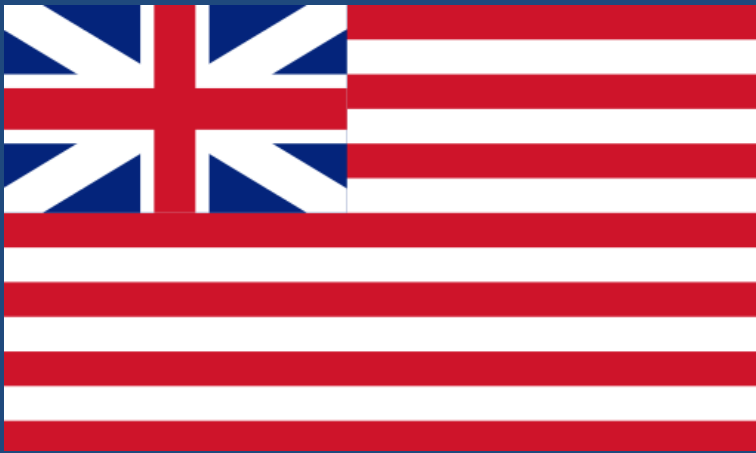
- The Company's merchant ships were heavily armed for cargo ships of the time. This was more to discourage predation by pirates and the like than for more offensive intentions.
- Many of the ships were built in India from teak – making them comparably stronger to the oak of Europe.
- The crews were mostly Indian and Asian.
- For the most part, the ships had far more guns than the crew could handle in action.
- But, East Indiamen were often privateers acting for the British in their wars preying upon enemy merchants. As privateers they had much larger crews to man the guns.

(A privateer required a Letter of Marque and Reprisal from the Crown. The Company could not issue one. A ship preying on others without such a letter was a pirate.)



British East India Company 1600 - 1858

For most of the first hundred and fifty years the company was not interested in wars or politics.



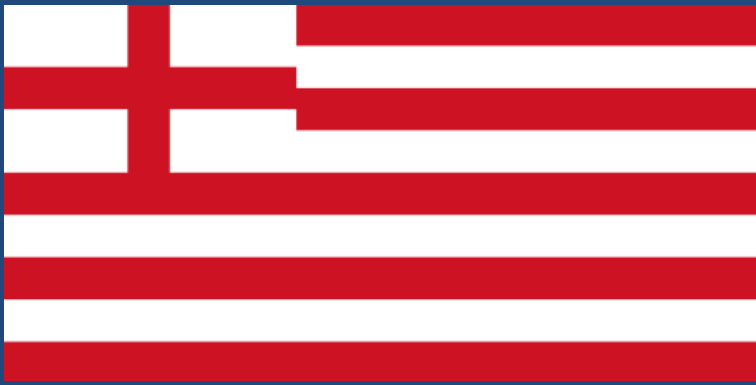
The exception, of course, was where such things cut into or expanded profits.

But war making was not a profitable enterprise. It was less expensive to pay off a potential adversary than to fight them.



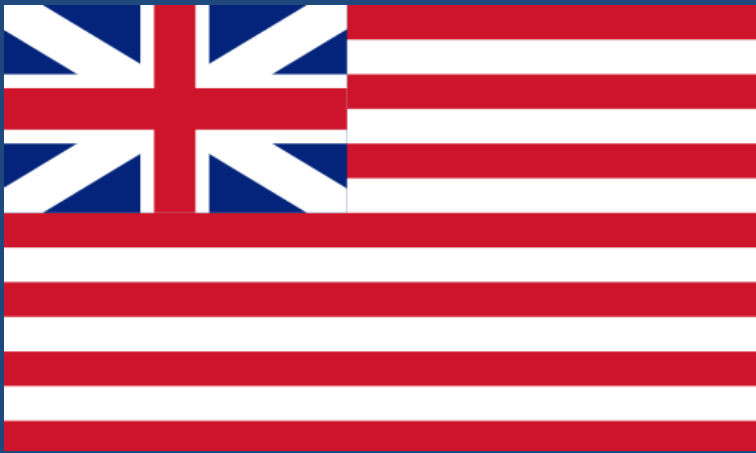
Likewise, aside from its posts, ports, operating facilities and nice housing, the company had no interest in land ownership or management.

It was cheaper to buy than to grow stuff.



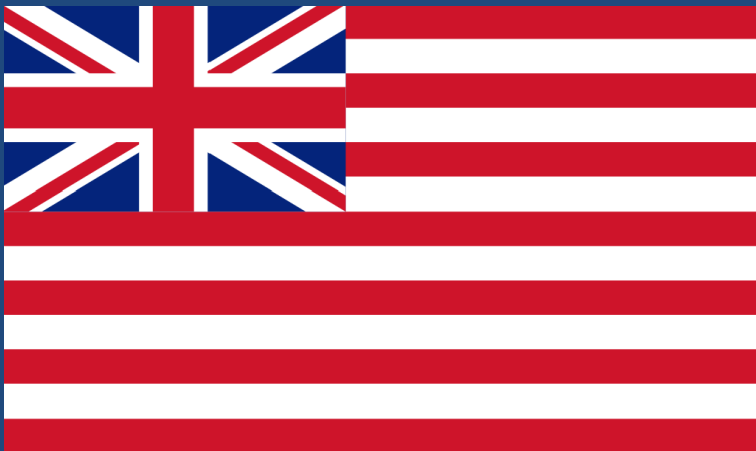
British East India Company 1600 - 1858

The Company were bankers and merchants. Politics was a dirty business that only mattered where it affected (or could affect) profit.



Perhaps they lived and worked in blissful ignorance.

It is more likely they saw the conflicts in Europe as being mostly irrelevant.



They were far more concerned about the local kingdoms around their posts seeing that those kingdom's were days and not half a year or more away.

And those kingdoms could cause far more trouble much more quickly.

World War Over A Girl 1740 - 1748



Princess Maria Teresa – daughter of the Hapsburg and Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV. The painting is from around the time of her coronation in 1740 when she was 23.

The War of Austrian Succession was arguably the First World War. It involved all the nations of Europe, much of the Americas, kingdoms in India and the Far East, etc., and was fought on a global scale.

It was fought because the Hapsburg Emperor died without any sons. He wanted his eldest (of two) daughter to succeed him and brokered an international treaty to that effect.

When he died some (Prussia) felt a woman had to be a pushover and others (the Bourbons of France and Spain) that no woman should rule where they had sons to spare.

First Carnatic War 1746 – 1748



The French and British East India Company were aware of the war in Europe but as it had nothing to do with business mainly ignored it and went on with the business of making money.

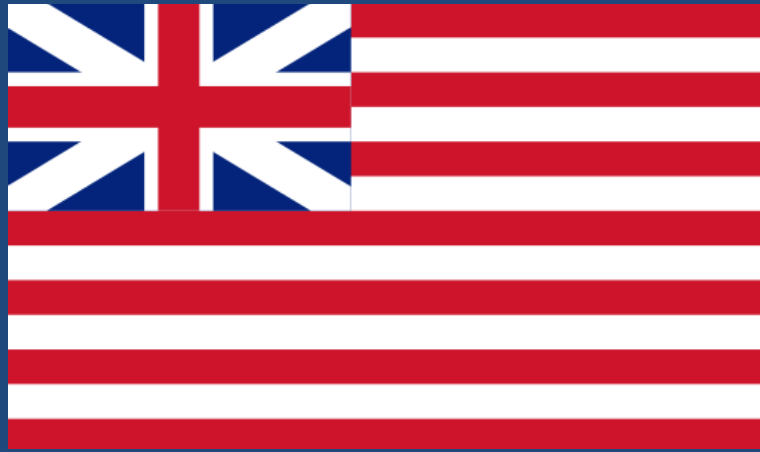
That is until France ruined it for everyone.

In 1746, a French naval squadron arrived with troops and orders to drive the British out.

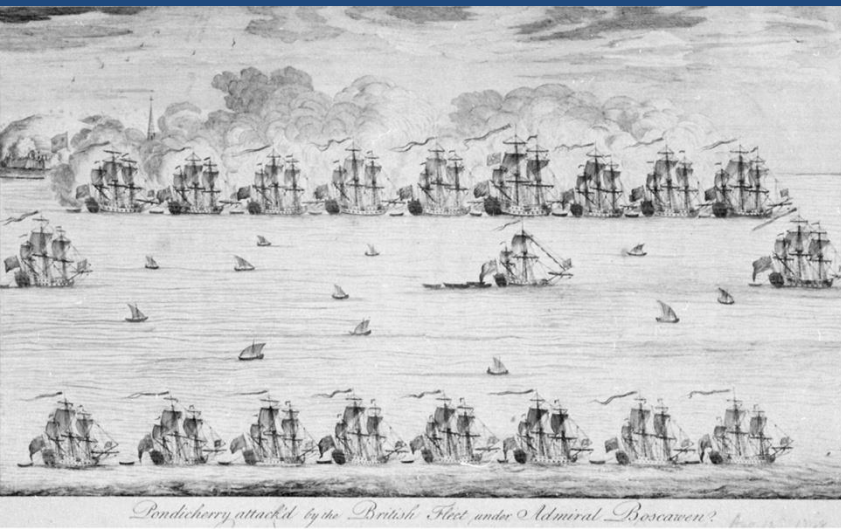
The Company was not in the business of war and was ill prepared for such a mess and their major trading port of Madras fell after a (very) brief siege later that year.



First Carnatic War 1746 – 1748



The British has sent its own squadron to deal with the French (knowing the French were on their way). The squadron arrived at India after the French Navy had left thinking the matter decided – and having been damaged in a cyclone.



The British Navy (and soldiers) sacked the French trading port of Pondicherry prompting the French Navy (based at La Reunion) to return to deal with the Royal Navy.

Before the two sides could come to serious blows, they received word that the war in Europe was over. In the peace treaty, everything everywhere was restored to status quo ante.

Second Carnatic War 1749 – 1754



Joseph-François Dupleix was not happy. He was not a soldier or a merchant but part of the French nobility and Governor-General of French India which was a total area a little larger than Champaign-Urbana scattered about the Indian subcontinent.

This bothered him.

It also bothered him that the British East India Company made far more money than the French.

But what really seemed to bother him was no one in France was bothered about it.

Second Carnatic War 1749 – 1754



He was upset when the French Navy first took Madras without consulting and then when they offered to give it back for ransom which they would not share.

He kept Madras ... for a time only to lose it in the peace treaty which he felt was misguided at best.

He intended to change that.

Like the rival East India Company, he did not have an army. But he was far more an expert at politics than the Company was at the time and the local kingdoms were easy to manipulate.

To illustrate the wars betw. the English and French
in the Carnatic 1746-60



Second Carnatic War 1749 – 1754

The Carnatic was southern India, an area of several kingdoms with varying ambitions kept in check by the Mughals under the Nawab of Hyderabad – ruler of the Nazim dominions and a Mughal vassal.

In 1748, the Nawab died without an heir and the British Company supported a claimant who they could deal with.

Naturally, Dupleix supported a rival and convinced many in the south that the British were meddling in their affairs – and thus needed to be taught a lesson.

Second Carnatic War 1749 – 1754

- The war could best be called a melee.
- Dupleix's goal was to gain direct or indirect control of southern India at the expense of the British.
- Britain could care less. The Company merely sought to maintain what it had.
- The Company deployed fewer than 1,000 men (not accounting for allies), none of whom were sent from Britain by the government.
- The French sent nearly ten times that number but were as dependent upon the whims of their allies for success as the Company was. Tactically, it began successfully for the French but then devolved into stalemate – one that was costing France a fortune and was not costing Britain a shilling and the Company more than broke even over that time.
- Dupleix was recalled to France because he refused to stop short of what he saw as total victory. He died in 1763 in poverty.

Second Carnatic War 1749 – 1754

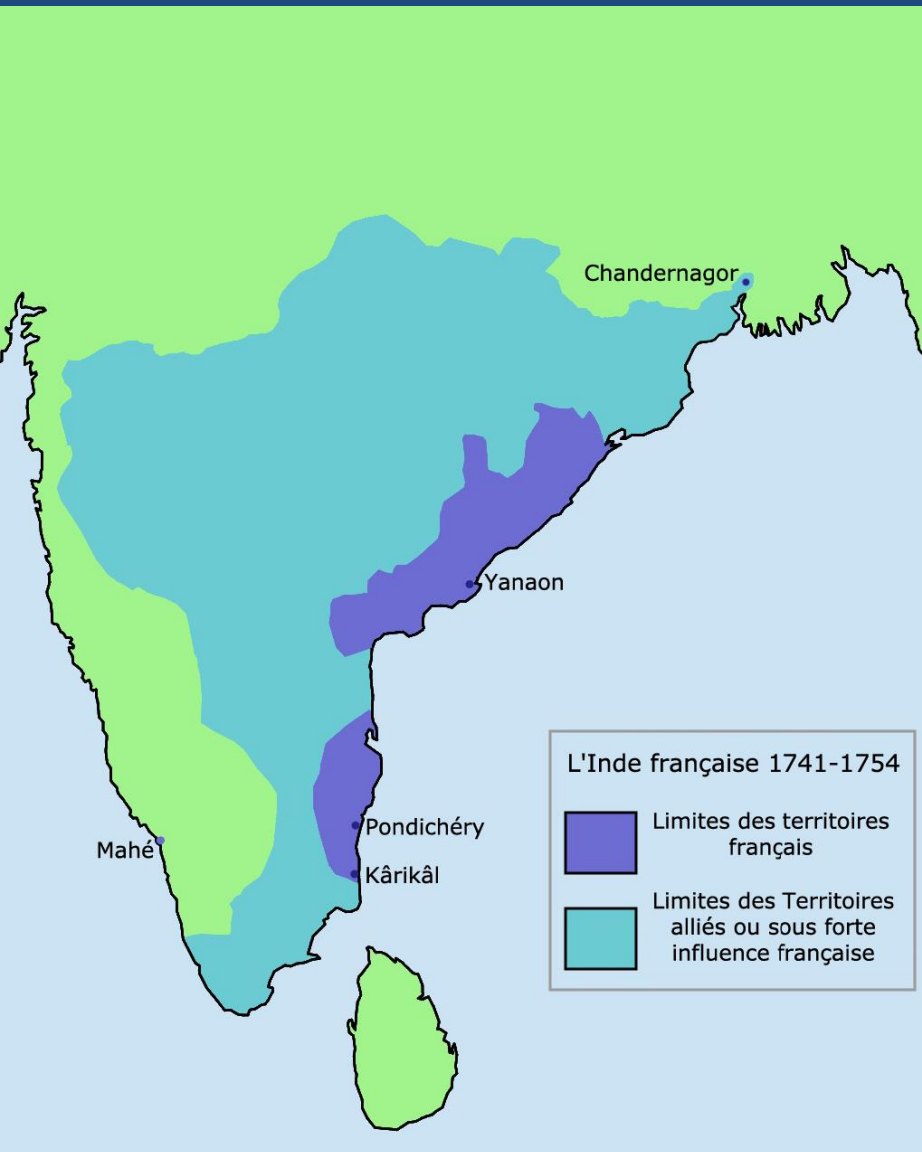
On paper, it looked like a French victory. They gained territory from the man they backed.

But the cause went to the side the British had supported.

Territory gained was never occupied or actually governed by the French.

And the reason for it all – supplanting the East India Company – never happened. The East India Company was arguably better off in the end as it had a small but capable field army whereas before it was merely a garrison force.

The peace would be short lived.



A Second World War 1754 - 1763



George Washington at age 24. On May 8th, 1754, Washington led a small force that ambushed a French scouting party in what is now Western Pennsylvania which erupted into war.

In 1754, a (then) little known British Colonial a world away from India got into a scuffle with the French in a place few had heard about and most probably didn't care about – but it sparked another global war.

It is known in the U.S. as “The French and Indian War.” To the rest of the world it is The Seven Years War.

This time, the war came to India immediately – or at least as fast as it took for word (and the British Navy) to get there.



Third Carnatic War 1756 – 1763

Robert Clive was an employee of the British East India Company – a position his father arranged because he had proven a disappointment preferring fist fights to study. His job was a bookkeeper and agent at Fort St. David just south of Madras.

In 1746, Clive was in Madras when it fell to the French and was taken prisoner. All he had to do was promise not to fight the French and he could leave. He refused.

He escaped – disguised as a native – and returned to Ft. St. David asking to enlist in the Company's small army and insisted even when told he would suffer a huge cut in pay.



Third Carnatic War 1756 – 1763

He earned a commission for his service in the First Carnatic War and remained in the small army and had some success against the French and their allies in the Second such War.

He returned to Britain in 1753 and served a brief term in Parliament. He then returned to the Company and India in 1756 to act as deputy governor of Ft. St. David – losing his fortune along the way when the ship with his wealth wrecked rounding Africa.

He arrived just in time for the new war and took a commission as Lt. Col. over the deputy governor post.



Third Carnatic War 1756 – 1763

Not long after he began his army career again at Madras, the Company learned that the Nawab of Bengal (suspected French ally) had seized Calcutta and all of its stores and thrown the English into prison. (Most died in what was later referred to as the Black Hole of Calcutta.)

Clive was tasked to take it back.

With 540 European troops, 600 Royal Navy sailors and about 800 Sepoys.

Against an estimated force of around 50,000.

He cheated, attacking before the enemy was ready and convincing them to go away (and probably that he was crazy).

Third Carnatic War 1756 – 1763

In 1757, the Nawab of Bengal had second thoughts and again set his armies against the Company. Clive was sent out with an army of about 3,000 (2,000 Sepoys) and 8 light cannon against a force of 22,000 cavalry, 40,000 infantry and about 60 cannon.



He won again at the Battle of Plassey.

This time by convincing a disgruntled Bengali commander (and his 40,000 combined troops) to turn on the Nawab at the right moment (when signaled.)

The commander, Mir Jafar, was installed as Nawab under the Company's control and Bengal became Company land.



Third Carnatic War 1756 – 1763

- Clive's victory did not gain India for Britain or the Company. It did not even end the war. It merely eliminated an annoyance in Bengal that distracted from the more important war in the south against the French.
- Bengal was now a "colony" of the British East India Company, something the Company saw as awkward. Until they learned they could impose taxes. It was like printing money.
- and they did not have to share it.
- Clive was the initial beneficiary – making a new fortune off of taxes, but the Company saw ... potential.
- The war ended in 1763 with the conclusion of the larger war. France was confined to its small colonies and prohibited from contact with any Indians beyond. The Dutch were also driven from India and India was left to the British East India Company.



The French would have another go at India a couple of decades later.

The American Revolution had grown into a Third World War by 1780 when the French and British Fleets contested each other off the Indian coast.



The battles were tactically inconclusive but strategically the British fleet prevented the French from landing any sizable number of troops to contest British interests or control.



In 1816, Burma crossed the Naga Hills into the then independent kingdom of Assam in the Brahmaputra River valley.

At that time, the British East India Trading Company controlled the Ganges River and the coast along the Bay of Bengal including the delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra. That delta region was known as Bengal.

The 1816 Burmese invasion was effectively a punitive expedition as there had been raids and smuggling from the west into northern Burma. There was a second such campaign in 1818. In 1821, Burma decided to simply take the region.

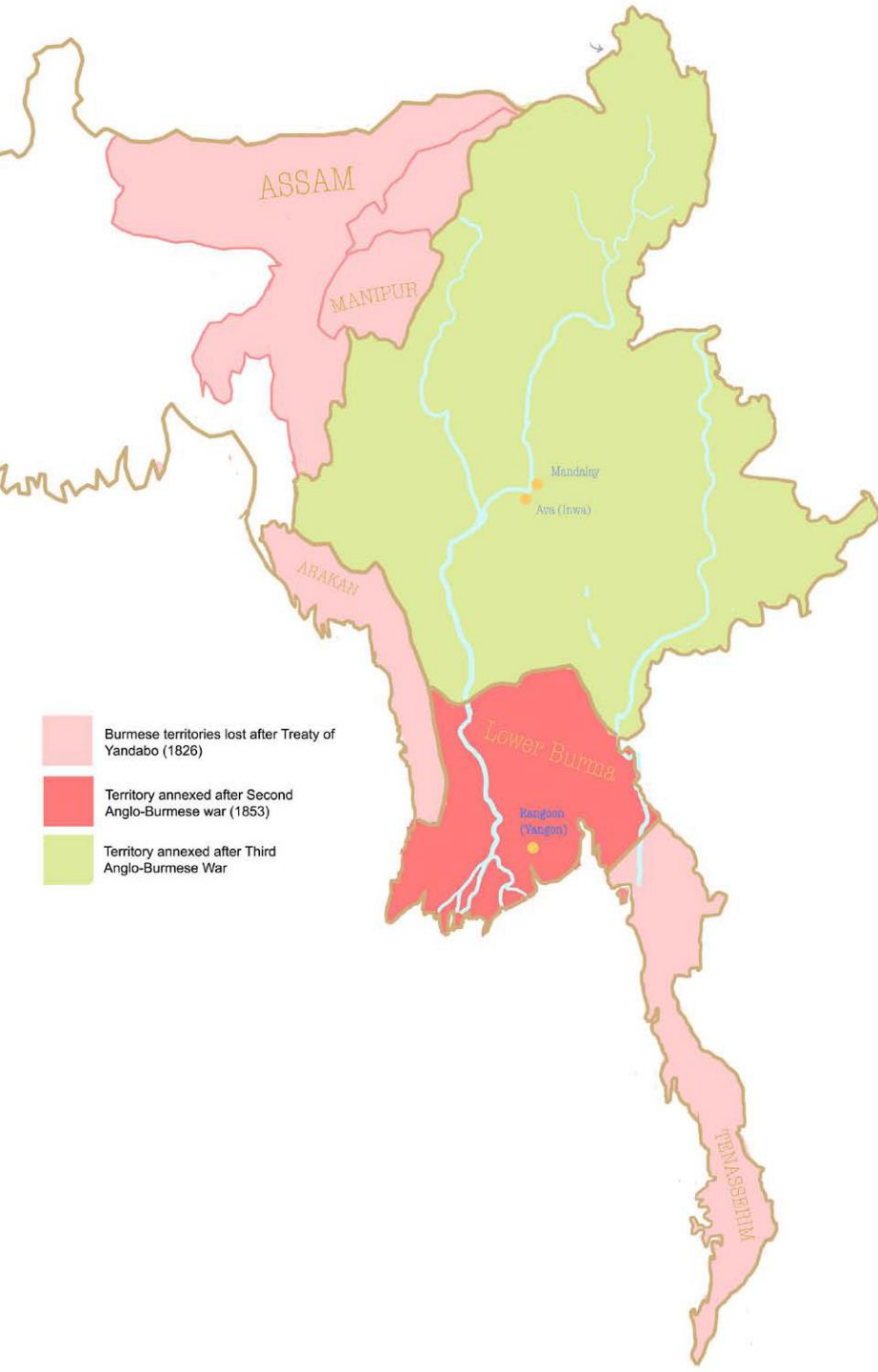
This pushed their boarder against Bengal – and into Bengal in places. The conquest also flooded Bengal with refugees from Assam and from the Arakan, all of whom now became the problem of the British East India Trading Company and the Company was about making money, not feeding refugees.

1st Anglo-Burmese War 1824 - 1826

The company saw Burma as a threat. Burma had not treated its agents well and now was at their doorstep. In 1824, the Company decided to deal with the situation.

The Company's private army was the largest private army in the world with close to 250,000 troops.

The campaign took Assam, Manapur and Arakan and pushed as far as Rangoon. It took two years and cost the company a fortune. But they gained permanent control over Assam, Manipur, Arakan and Tenasserim.

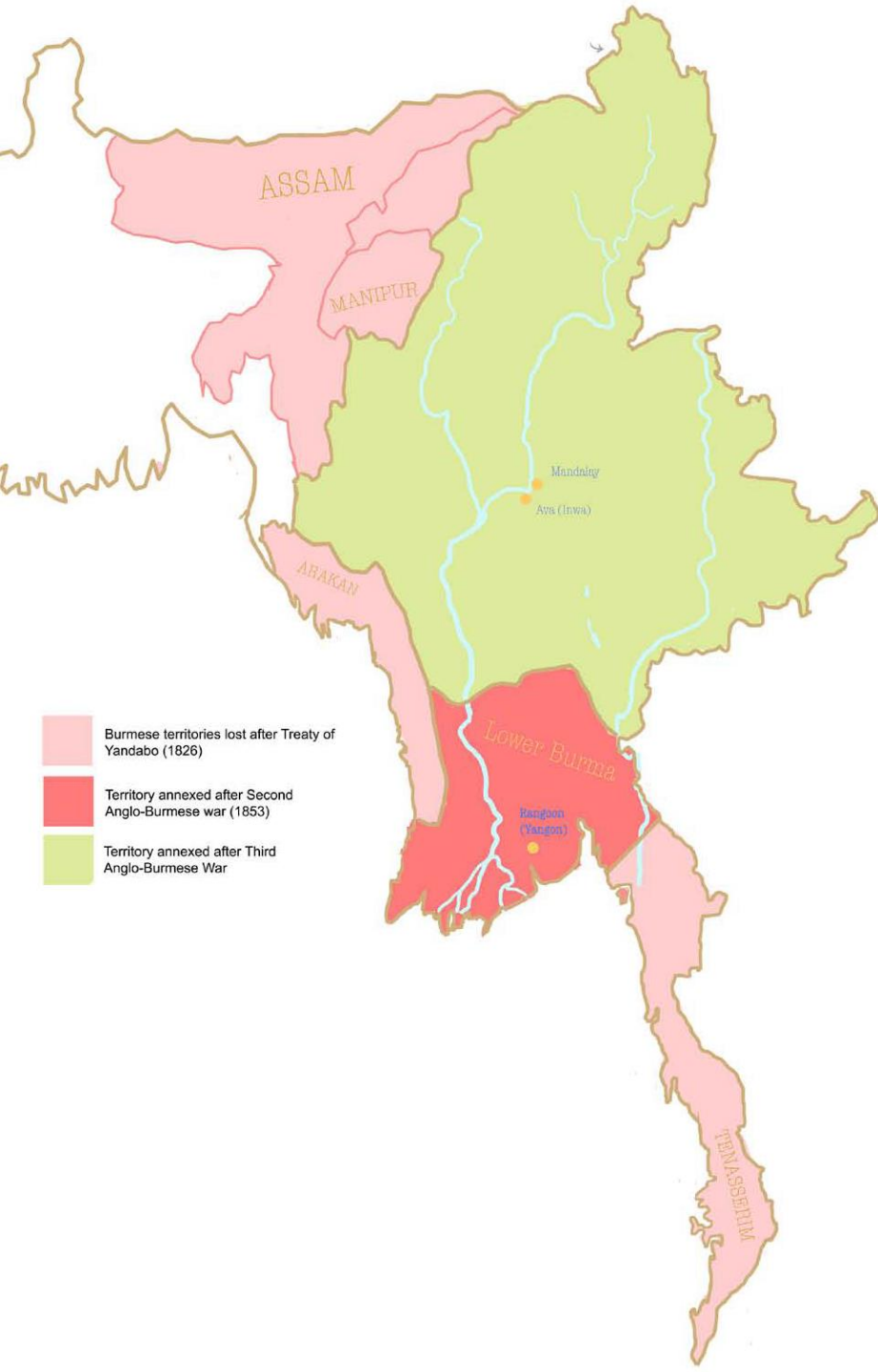


1st Anglo-Burmese War 1824 - 1826

The Company also gained an effective trade monopoly with what was left of the Burmese Kingdom and imposed £1 Million in reparations which crippled the Burmese economy.

But the war had cost the Company a fortune as well. (£5 - £13 Million). It led to an economic crisis in India beginning in 1833 and a significant drop in the Company's shares leading to a banking crisis in Britain and a significant tightening of credit that would be a contributing factor in the Panic of 1837 in the United States.

Not exactly a win-win situation.

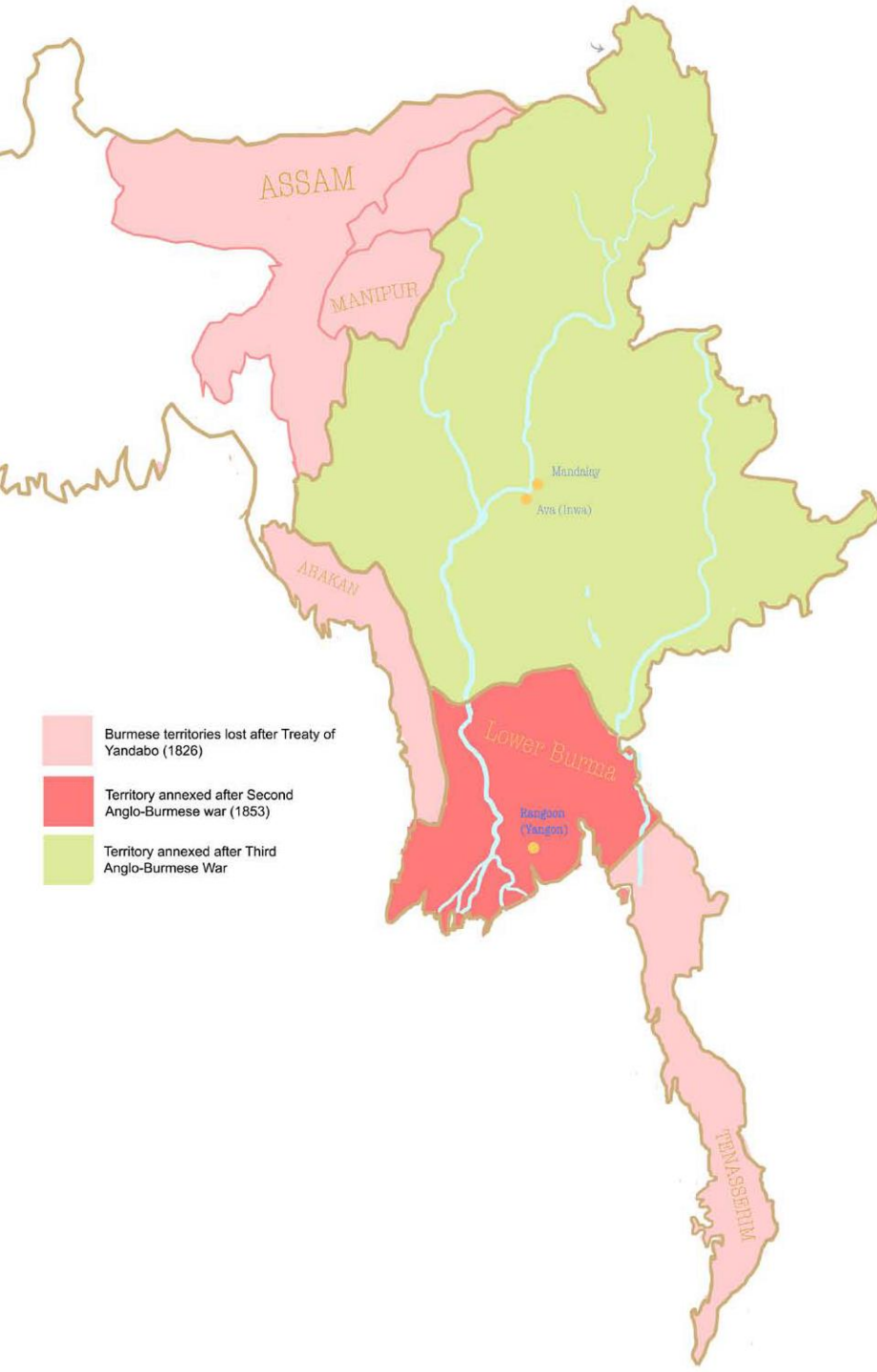


2nd Anglo-Burmese War 1852

That there was such a war is not disputed. How and why there was one is murky.

The Burmese governor of Rangoon held two British merchant ships ransom (probably for refusing to pay a bribe.) The Company sent a negotiating team to avoid conflict – with a Royal Navy squadron.

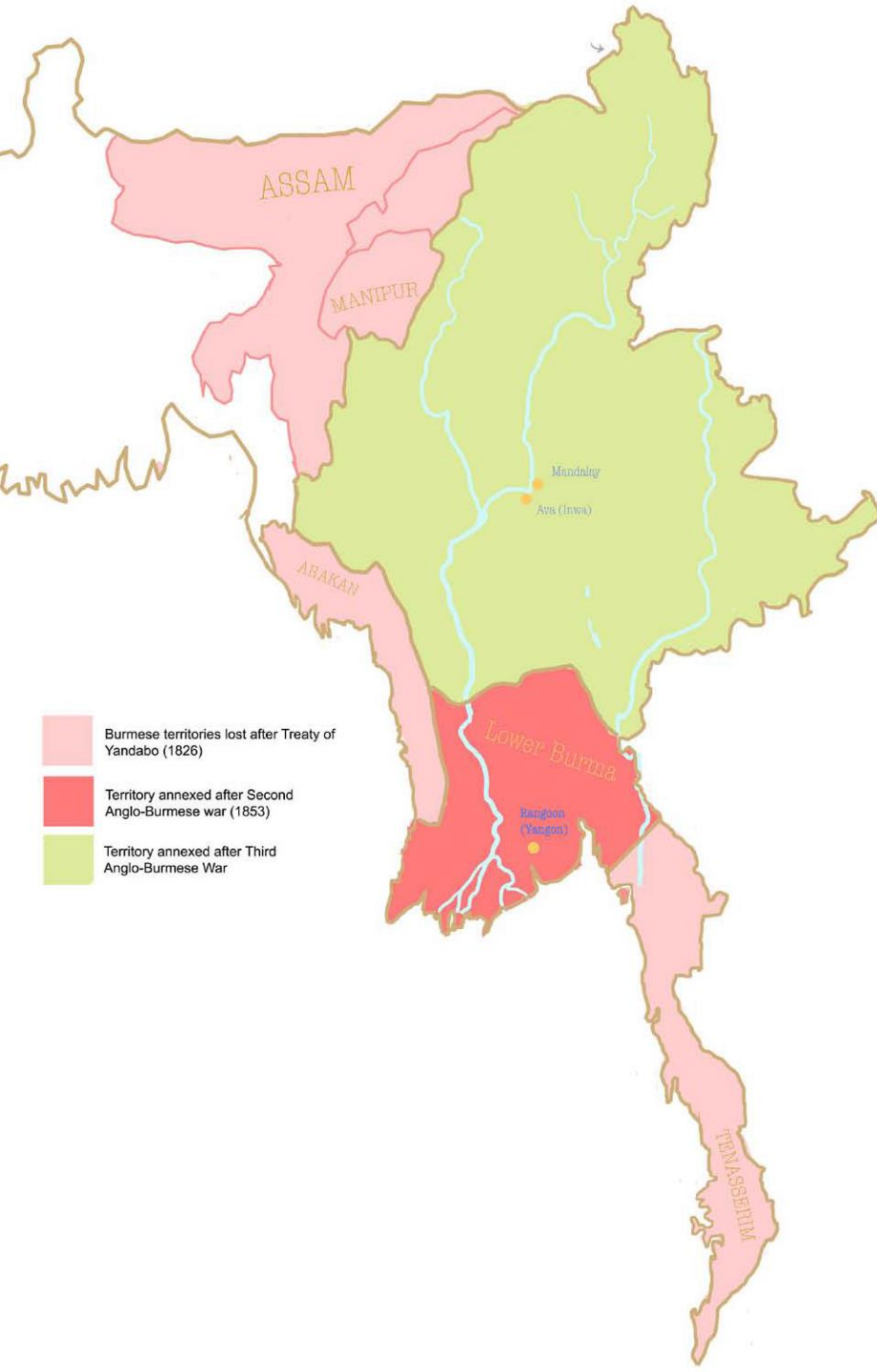
The team was successful. The ships, crews and cargo were released without paying a ransom and the governor of Rangoon was arrested by the Burmese and replaced with one more in line with Company interests.



2nd Anglo-Burmese War 1852

The commander of the Royal Navy Squadron (Commodore Lambert) without orders or other provocation attacked anyway seizing Rangoon and allowing the pillaging of its temples.

The Company found itself in a war it had not wanted but now could not afford to lose. It sent its Army who pushed as far as Prome but then declared a victory when the Navy commander RADM Charles Austen dropped dead from cholera and the Army commander refused to cooperate with the next senior naval officer Lambert.



2nd Anglo-Burmese War 1852

The King of Burma was deposed by his son as a result.

The Company lied about what happened to London. Parliament – many members heavily invested in the Company – covered up the details as to what happened.

It was the match that would light the fuse leading to the end of the Company (next week).

Among other things, the Company had to garrison the new territory with troops from India – in violation of the contracts with those troops that prohibited overseas service.

