

BEYOND THE CHINDWIN

THE BURMA CAMPAIGN WITH DR ROBERT LYMAN

25 November - 8 December 2023

SAMPAN TRAVEL

Sampan creates journeys in Myanmar and India. Our journeys are for those seeking something different. They are journeys on the edge of adventure with authentic, unexpected experiences.

Our purpose is to create bridges between our guests and local people. To help travellers make a connection through unexpected encounters, to open their eyes to the possible and dive deep into remote destinations. All our journeys attempt to have a positive impact on local communities.

Our journeys are handcrafted. We offer full customization through an intimate service and personal recommendations. Sampan's team is based on-the-ground. This means that we are able to greet most of our guests in person upon arrival. It also ensures that we are in rhythm with the beat of the region, abreast of developments and intimately familiar with our partners. We try everything before we recommend it to our guests.



MEET BERTIE

Bertie moved from Berlin to Yangon in 2015. Since then he has worked to develop Sampan Travel as the best and most authentic conduit for travellers wishing to explore and learn about Myanmar.

Bertie remained in Myanmar throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the military coup which followed at the beginning of 2021. Bertie believes that responsible travellers have a vital role to play in Myanmar's future.

Bertie expanded Sampan to eastern India in 2022 and when not travelling either there or in Myanmar, is most likely to be found on his mountain bike or watching Liverpool FC.

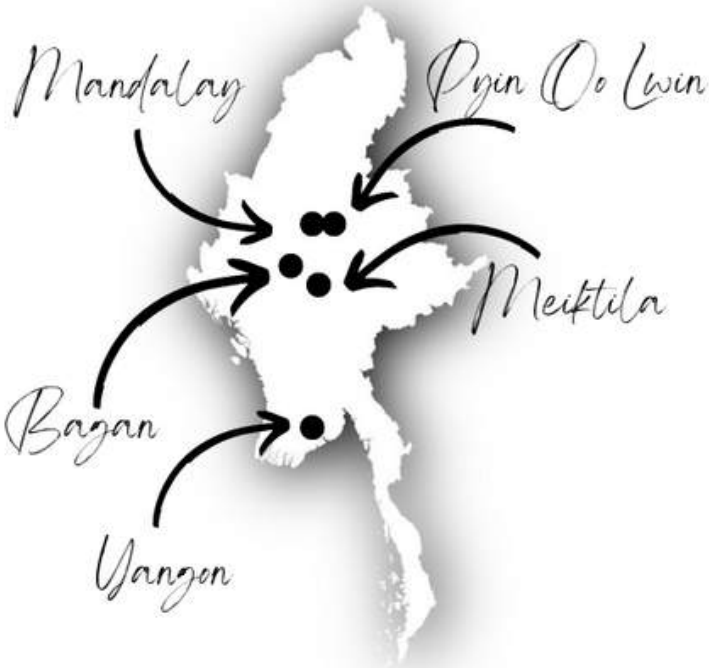


YOUR JOURNEY IN A NUTSHELL

	<i>Arrival</i>	
Saturday 25	●	Yangon <i>Governor's Residence</i>
Sunday 26	●	Yangon <i>Governor's Residence</i>
Monday 27	●	Yangon <i>Governor's Residence</i>
Tuesday 28	●	Yangon - Mandalay - Pyin Oo Lwin <i>Akimomo</i>
Wednesday 29	●	Pyin Oo Lwin <i>Akimomo</i>
Thursday 30	●	Pyin Oo Lwin - Meiktila - Bagan <i>Thiripyitsaya</i>
Friday 1	●	Bagan <i>Akimomo</i>

Saturday 2	●	Bagan <i>Sanctuary Ananda</i>
Sunday 3	●	Bagan - Sagaing <i>Sanctuary Ananda</i>
Monday 4	●	Sagaing - Mandalay <i>Sanctuary Ananda</i>
Tuesday 5	●	Mandalay <i>Mandalay Hill Resort</i>
Wednesday 6	●	Mandalay <i>Mandalay Hill Resort</i>
Thursday 7	●	Mandalay - Yangon <i>Awei Metta</i>
Friday 8	●	Yangon
		<i>Departure</i>

ROUTE



FLIGHTS

Date	Reference	Sector	ETD	ETA	Remarks
Tuesday 28		Yangon - Mandalay			
Thursday 7		Mandalay - Yangon			



YOUR
JOURNEY
— IN FULL —

SATURDAY 25 YANGON

Yangon Airport Transfer

Private car and driver

Welcome Supper

at the Governor's Residence

Upon arrival at Yangon International Airport, you will be greeted by Ko Sai Kenneth, your local Myanmar guide for the next two weeks. You will be transferred into Yangon's Embassy Quarter and check-in to the Governor's Residence Hotel - the former residence of the governor of British Burma.

You will be left at leisure to refresh and recuperate after your flight. This evening, join your hosts Sampan Travel, historian Dr Robert Lyman, filmmaker Alex Bescoby, Ko Sai and your fellow travellers for a drinks reception and Welcome Dinner.

For the next two weeks Rob and Ko Sai will be your guides. Rob will furnish you with his expertise on the Burma Campaign and Bill Slim's reconquest of the country during the Second World War, while Ko Sai provides deep local knowledge of both the history and perspective of Myanmar during and since the Second World War, as well as the situation in the country today.

Alex will remain with the group for the first three days in Yangon. Alex is a filmmaker and former resident of Yangon. On Monday Alex will present his documentary *Forgotten Allies*, and speak about the Myanmar men that fought alongside the British during WW2 - and their struggles since the end of the war.

OVERNIGHT

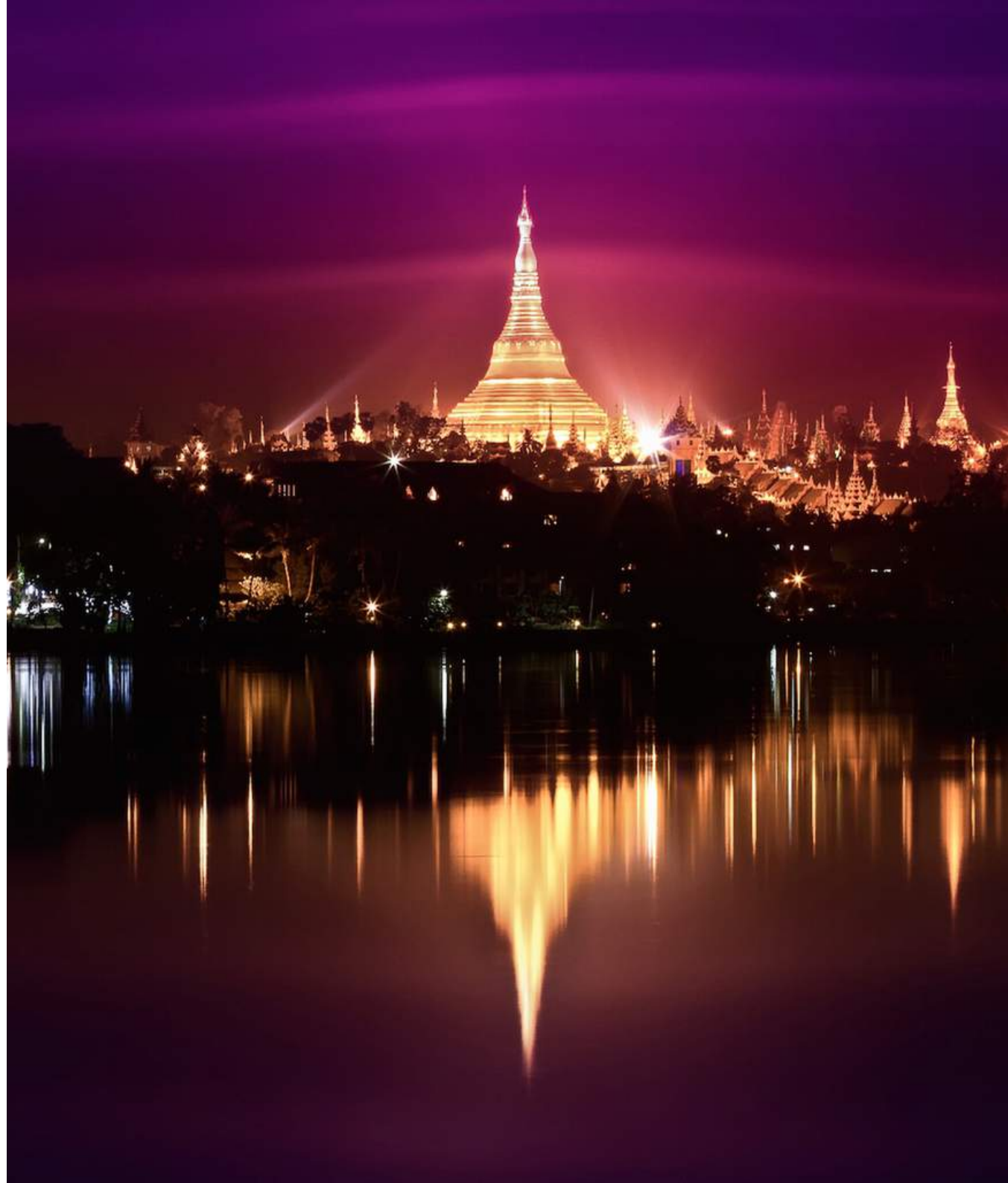
Governor's Residence, *Deluxe Room*

INTRODUCTION TO **YANGON**

Described by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda as "a city of blood, dreams and gold", Yangon, Myanmar's commercial capital, is a fusion of oriental wonder and dilapidated colonial majesty.

Bedecked with carolling street-vendors and honking, rustbucket buses, the atmosphere of Yangon (formerly Rangoon) is kinetic and intoxicating. This enchanting city is the ideal location to commence your exploration of Myanmar: it is the tip of the gilded Burmese hand extended to the world, the entrance of the rabbit hole leading into the heart of the Golden Land.

Yangon has turbulent history. It was where the pro-democracy demonstrations of 1988 begun, and where Aung San Suu Kyi was put under house arrest shortly after. The largest demonstrations after the military coup of 2021 also took place in Yangon.



SUNDAY 26

YANGON

Yangon Full Day Exploration

Vehicles, drivers & English-speaking guide

Lunch

Today after breakfast Ko Sai will lead us on a short walking tour of downtown Yangon, the heart of British Rangoon. We will begin at Mahabandula Square (formerly Fytche Square) and see the High Court and City Hall. Ko Sai will lead us down the old financial quarter of Rangoon and to what was the New Law Courts, HQ and prison of the Kempeitai, the Japanese Secret Police, during WW2.

Walk down Pansodan Street (Yangon's grandest street) and see the Strand Hotel - once described as the finest hostelry east of Suez.

After lunch we will visit the house where General Aung San - Burmese revolutionary and independence hero - lived after WW2 as he negotiated terms of succession with British Prime Minister Atlee. This house is also where his daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi, lived as a young girl.

This evening you shall be left at leisure.

OVERNIGHT

Governor's Residence, *Deluxe Room*

AUNG SAN

INDEPENDENCE HERO

As a fervently politicized student activist, Aung San assisted the Japanese with their invasion of British Burma in 1941.

Later disillusioned with the country's new oppressors, at the head of the newly formed Burma Independence Army Aung San changed sides and begun aiding the British in their recapture of the country.

After the war, Aung San lived in a leafy suburb of Rangoon while negotiating terms of secession with British Prime Minister Atlee.

In July 1947, just months before the country gained its independence, at the age of 32 Aung San was assassinated alongside half his cabinet, leaving behind his wife, two young sons, and daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi.



MONDAY 27

YANGON

Yangon Half Day Exploration

Vehicles, driver & English-speaking guide

Lunch

Drinks Reception, Film Screening & Q&A

*with Alex Bescoby, director of *Forgotten Allies**

OVERNIGHT

Governor's Residence, *Deluxe Room*

This morning at dawn, there will be the option to visit Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon's "twinkling wonder", described by Somerset Maugham as like a "sudden hope in the dark night of the soul." This is the holiest site in southern Myanmar. Today is the Full Moon Day of Tazaungmonev, so you will see Myanmar pilgrims in their finery this morning at Shwedagon.

After breakfast, Rob will lead the group to the Rangoon War Cemetery, one of three Commonwealth War Graves in Myanmar, and where undercover Major Hugh Seagrim, executed by the Japanese, is buried. Visit the Holy Trinity Church where there is a memorial to the ethnic soldiers that fought with the British in WW2.

After lunch we will be taken on a tour of the Secretariat. This building bookends British Burma. Construction began in 1889, just a few years after the British had annexed Mandalay in the third Anglo-Burmese War. After WW2 and just a few months before the British left, independence hero and father of Aung San Suu Kyi, General Aung San, was assassinated here, along with six members of his cabinet.

This evening at the Governor's Residence, Alex will present a screening of his documentary *Forgotten Allies*, about the work of one small British charity attempting to give recognition to Myanmar veterans of the Second World War who were left bereft by the British once Burma gained independence in 1948.

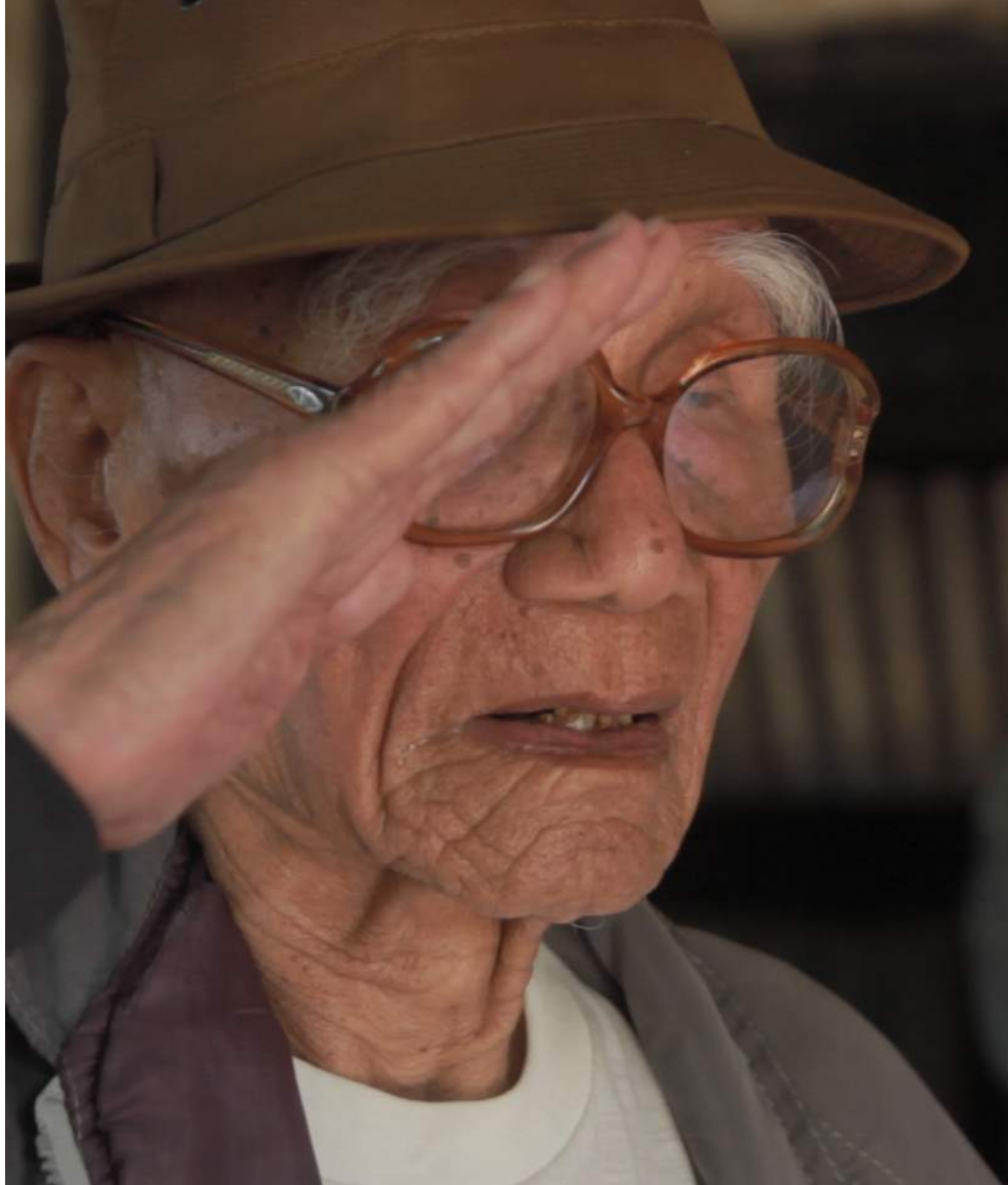
FORGOTTEN **ALLIES**

“What would have happened if the Japanese had caught you?”

“They’d have peeled off my skin and poured salt underneath.”

The stunned silence is only broken by Liao Chang’s laughter. Even at 93, this former scout in the British Army has that roguish spark of the fearless teenager whose stories he’s retelling. Sally McLean, founder of Help for Forgotten Allies and poser of the question takes a moment to process. It’s stories just like this that she has heard many times on her regular tours across Myanmar. In his documentary *Forgotten Allies*, Alex Bescoby follows Sally around Burma as she works tirelessly to track down men like Liao Chang. Men who fought alongside the British throughout the Second World War. With every year that passes her mission becomes harder and harder, her meetings fewer and fewer.

But she remains determined that these men shall not be forgotten. More here: <https://www.sampantravel.com/magazine/remembering-allies/>



TUESDAY 28

YANGON - MANDALAY - PYIN OO LWIN

Yangon Airport Transfer

Private car, driver; & English-speaking guide

Yangon to Mandalay

FLIGHT: TBC

Mandalay to Pyin Oo Lwin

Private car, driver & English-speaking guide

Dinner

This morning we will transfer to Yangon Airport to catch our domestic flight to Mandalay.

Greeted in Mandalay, we will travel up into the hills to Pyin Oo Lwin. Formerly known as Maymyo, this was a favourite hill station of the British, allowing them to avoid the “prickly heat” that plagued them in Mandalay.

Lunch will be enjoyed on the way to Pyin Oo Lwin. We will enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

OVERNIGHT

Akimomi, Superior Room

INTRODUCTION TO **MAYMYO**

Pyin Oo Lwin, formerly Maymyo, is Myanmar's tidiest town. Narating its construction in his book *The Trouser People*, Andrew Marshall writes how the British hacked golf courses out of the wilderness "while all around the jungle frothed and seethed".

In 1943 Maymyo was HQ for the Japanese, and it became a cushy outpost. The 'Seimeiso' was open every evening serving pure sake at a time when pure sake was unobtainable in Tokyo. Every officer would have his own geisha and lavish banquets would be put on whenever there was a conference or report of significance.

Known as the City of Flowers, Myanmar's riot of botanical colour has here been snipped, sorted, and arranged in neat rows in the grand Botanical Gardens, and in ringlets upon the brows of horses leading carriages.

Read about Paul Theroux in Pyin Oo Lwin here:
<https://sampantravel.com/magazine/over-gokteik-viaduct/>



WEDNESDAY 29

PYIN OO LWIN

Pyin Oo Lwin Full Day Exploration

Vehicles, drivers & English-speaking guide

Lunch

Supper

OVERNIGHT

Akimomi, *Superior Room*

Today Ko Sai will lead an exploration of Pyin Oo Lwin while Rob outlines how the town was used as the forward HQ of General Mutaguchi of the Japanese Imperial Army, as they advanced towards Kohima and Imphal on their “march on Delhi.”

Lunch will be enjoyed together in Pyin Oo Lwin.

We will visit the European Cemetery, the All Saints Church and the Botanical Gardens, modeled on Kew and built by Turkish prisoners of War. See the Purcell Clocktower (that mimics Big Ben) and visit the Candacraig Hotel.

The Candacraig is the most famous piece of colonial architecture in Pyin Oo Lwin. Candacraig served as a hospital during World War Two and before that was a Raj chummary for British bachelors employed by the Burmah Trading Company. Now renovated, Paul Theroux stayed here in the ‘70s and again 30 years later, and the building features in his books *The Great Railway Bazaar* and *Ghost Train to the Eastern Star*.

Dinner will be enjoyed together. Make it an early night. It is a long day tomorrow ...

THURSDAY 30
PYIN OO LWIN -
MEIKTILA - BAGAN

Pyin Oo Lwin to Meiktila

Vehicles, driver & English-speaking guide

Lunch

Meiktila Exploration

Meiktila to Bagan

OVERNIGHT

Thiripyitsaya, *Deluxe Garden View*

Today we will make an early start from Pyin Oo Lwin. Drive down into Myanmar's dry zone and reach Meiktila for lunch. Here Rob will take us through the most decisive battle of General Slim's reconquest of Burma.

We will travel on to Bagan and check into our hotel in the evening. This evening you will be left at leisure.

THE BATTLE OF MEIKTILA

The Battle of Meiktila in early 1945, was one of the decisive battles of the reconquest of Burma. It represented the remarkable climax of General Slim's "Operation Extended Capital". Rob Lyman writes:

"Slim's approach to warfare in Burma was refreshingly novel for the British Army of the time. In planning his offensive in Burma he aimed to apply strength - in the form of combat power - against weakness, rather than against strength. In everything he sought to exploit subtlety and guile. At the operational level of war Operation Extended Capital was one of the classic accounts in the history of war of the power of manoeuvre to entirely destabilise the whole basis on an enemy's plan. This isn't just me saying so. General Kimura, commander of the Burma Area Army, described it as the "masterstroke of the war"."

More here:

<https://robertlyman.substack.com/p/meiktila-march-1945>



FRIDAY 1
BAGAN

Lunch

al fresco amongst the temples

Nyaung U River Crossings Exploration

Vehicles, drivers & English-speaking guide

Supper

This morning you will be left at leisure to lie-in and enjoy breakfast, looking over the mighty Ayeyarwaddy River.

Enjoy lunch al fresco at a secret site of Sampan's. This afternoon Rob will take us through the importance of the Nyuang U river crossings in the reconquest of Burma.

This evening you will be left at leisure.

OVERNIGHT

Thiripyitsaya, *Deluxe Garden View*

INTRODUCTION TO **BAGAN**

Bagan is one of the most spectacular wonders of the ancient world. The 25 kilometre-squared area covers what was once the resplendent heart of the Bagan Empire where between the 9th and 13th Centuries, in a wave of religious fervour, the rulers and the rich of Bagan built over 10,000 pagodas and temples.

The Empire of Bagan was founded by the Bamar people entering the Irrawaddy Delta east from modern day China in the 9th Century. By the 11th Century, Bagan, Myanmar's first imperial power to unite the people of the delta, was the cultural, spiritual and economic hub of Southeast Asia, rivalled only by the Khmer Empire in modern day Cambodia.

Due to an onslaught of Mongol attacks upon Bagan, Myanmar's first empire eventually collapsed in 1287. The country fell into turmoil as factions rushed to take advantage of the sudden power vacuum.



SATURDAY 2

BAGAN

Lunch on Board

Bagan Half Day Exploration

Vehicles, driver & English-speaking guide

Champagne Reception

Supper

Candle-lit on the sandbanks

OVERNIGHT

Sanctuary Ananda

This morning you will be left at leisure before checking into the Sanctuary Ananda.

Enjoy lunch on board the Ananda

This afternoon we will visit Kayminga pagoda complex to see the different architecture of the stupas first-hand. This is the perfect starting point to understand how Bagan was built over several centuries and how the architectural style has evolved.

Next, visit Bagan to see the Ananda Temple. Completed in 1091 AD, it is commonly referred to as one of the four great temples in Bagan. The Ananda is regarded by folklore as one of the most beautiful temples in Myanmar. Enjoy the sunset over the Bagan plains and admire the light change on the pagodas as they exude antiquity and mystery.

Back on board the Sanctuary Ananda, welcome briefing and champagne reception will be hosted in the Kansai Panorama Lounge before a candlelit sandbank dinner is served with the backdrop of the twinkling lights of Bagan.

SUNDAY 3

BAGAN - SAGAING

Hot Air Balloon

Sunrise over the temples

Bagan Half Day Exploration

Vehicles, driver & English-speaking guide

Lunch

on board

Demonstrations, tours & talks

on board

Dinner

on board

OVERNIGHT

Sanctuary Ananda

This morning take a sunrise balloon tour to capture a birds-eye view of the Bagan plain. After breakfast on board we will visit the great golden Shwezigon Pagoda. The Shwezigon is said to contain important relics of the Gautama Buddha, two bones and a copy of a tooth.

Return to the ship for lunch and start sailing upstream towards Sagaing. Relax as we pass villages set against a backdrop of soft browns, rich tamarind trees, with white and golden pagodas gracing the distant hills.

Each day on board the Ananda, optimizing the time, Rob will give short presentations on aspects of the Burma Campaign not directly covered in this journey (the Chindits, Kohima & Imphal, the Admin Box of the Arakan ...) and also look at how events of WW2 have led in part to where the country is today.

After lunch, there will also be an optional talk put on by Sanctuary Ananda, covering the country's incredibly rich history, more recent and controversial events, and prospects for the future.

A delicious dinner in the Talifoo Restaurant will follow.

DEMOCRACY IN MYANMAR

In November 2020 Myanmar held a general election and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won a landslide victory. The Myanmar military claimed fraud and seized power on 1 February 2021. Suu Kyi and other members of the elected government were arrested. Peaceful demonstrations took place across the country. In response, security forces fired live rounds. Fighting erupted – young demonstrators armed with home-made shields and slingshots. Since then, the landscape has changed. Many of the most ardent demonstrators have retreated to Myanmar's border areas. There they receive training from ethnic armed organizations. These resistance fighters have set-up 'people's defence forces' (PDFs) to combat the military.

Despite this, many parts of the country are safe to travel to. Much of the country looks curiously like it did in 2019. Please contact us for more information. For up-to-date news on the political situation in Myanmar, we recommend frontiermyanmar.net



MONDAY 4

SAGAING - MANDALAY

Cooking Demonstration

with the Ananda's Executive Chef

Lunch on board

Sagaing Hill Exploration

vehicles, drivers & English-speaking guide

Amarapura & U Bein Bridge Exploration

vehicles, drivers & English-speaking guide

Dinner

on board, followed by musical performance

The morning will be spent sailing. A cooking class with our Executive Chef will be available.

In the afternoon visit the pagoda sprinkled Sagaing Hill, an important religious and monastic centre, home to some 554 monasteries and 6,000 monks and nuns. Next, take in the views from the top of the hill on the terraces of the Soon U Ponya Shin Pagoda which are truly breathtaking. Below and all around, pagodas of different shapes and sizes dot the landscape.

Amarapura, was once known as 'The City of Immortals'. Today, the leisurely 'clack-clack' from the looms of the cotton and silk weavers has replaced the noisy bustle of this former capital. Visit the U Bein Bridge, a spectacular place to enjoy the sunset. This long teak bridge snakes across the Taungthaman Lake and each evening you can watch monks crossing the bridge to collect food donations.

The view of the bridge as the sun goes down is perhaps one of the most beautiful sights in Mandalay, making it an excellent photography opportunity. After sunset, return to the Sanctuary Ananda to enjoy our final dinner on board.

OVERNIGHT

Sanctuary Ananda

TUESDAY 5

MANDALAY

Mandalay Half Day Exploration

Private vehicles, driver & English-speaking guide

This morning we will disembark from the Sanctuary Ananda after breakfast and transfer to our hotel.

This afternoon, Rob will guide us through the Battle of Mandalay in 1945, at both the Royal Palace (christened 'Fort William' by the British) and at the iconic Mandalay Hill.

This evening you will be left at leisure.

OVERNIGHT

Mandalay Hill Resort, *Deluxe Room*

INTRODUCTION TO MANDALAY

In the 1920s, Somerset Maugham wrote that wise men kept away from Mandalay, Burma's imperial capital, aware that the city would never be able to live up to the "independent magic" aroused by its name's lilting syllables.

The city took a hammering in WW2. Combatant George Rodger was to write in 1945:

"Mandalay, that proud city, now lay a heap of smouldering ruins. A fire-blackened Pagoda still raised its spire as though in defiance from the smoking cinders ... Every temple had gone, the bazars and the shops had gone. Mandalay itself had gone."

Mandalay is reborn today. With culturally-sensitive, liberal locals it is seen by some as the 'Melbourne of Myanmar'. As Rough Guides puts it, Mandalay has *"a cultural and historical lustre compared to which Yangon is a mere colonial upstart, and Nay Pyi Daw a deranged military fantasy."*



WEDNESDAY 6

MANDALAY

Mandalay & Mingun Full Day Exploration

*Private vehicles, drivers, boats & English-speaking
guide*

Lunch

Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Mandalay Hill Resort, *Deluxe Room*

Today there is the option to rise before dawn and view the face-washing ceremony at the Maha Muni Pagoda. This is the most holy site of Myanmar. The Buddha imaged was stolen from the Arakan, and is believed to have been originally sculpted in the lifetime of Lord Buddha, and therefore is an exact likeness.

Today after breakfast, Ko Sai will take you back in time before the Second World War, when Mandalay was the capital of the Imperial Burma. You will visit monasteries, shrines and cross the Ayeyarwaddy to see Mingun - the mighty and vainglorious unfinished pagoda.

This evening we will have dinner together at a restaurant in Mandalay.

THURSDAY 7

MANDALAY - YANGON

Lunch

Mandalay Airport Transfer

Private vehicles, drivers and English-speaking guide

Mandalay - Yangon

Flight

Yangon Airport Transfer

Private vehicles, drivers and English-speaking guide

Visit to Htaukkyan War Cemetery

Private vehicles, drivers and English-speaking guide

Farewell Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Awei Metta, Deluxe Room

Today we will transfer to Mandalay Airport to catch our flight back to Yangon.

In Yangon we shall visit Htaukkan War Cemetery.

We will then transfer to our hotel and this evening enjoy a Farewell Dinner together.

HTAUKKYAN WAR CEMETERY

Htaukkyan War Cemetery is the largest of the three Commonwealth war cemeteries in Myanmar. It holds graves previously situated in Rakhine, Kachin and Mandalay, many for 'Chindits', the soldiers of a long-range penetration group of special operatives who were instrumental in the Allies recapture of Burma.

The circular colonnade at the centre of Htaukkyan War Cemetery is inscribed with the names of those whose remains were never found.

Amongst this number is the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, the grandson of the Viceroy who annexed Myanmar in 1856. Ironically, it was in Ava (modern-day Inwa) that this young Dufferin died.



FRIDAY 8 YANGON

Yangon Airport Transfer

Private vehicles & drivers

Today you will be left at leisure until ready for your transfer to Yangon International Airport to catch your departure flight out of Myanmar.

END OF THIS JOURNEY

BEGINNING OF ANOTHER ...



DR ROBERT LYMAN

WW2 Historian

Dates of Service: 25 November - 7 December 2023

Dr Robert Lyman FRHistS is a writer and historian. He is a Research Fellow at the Changing Character of War Centre, Pembroke College, University of Oxford.

After finishing a twenty-year career in the British Army in 2001 he has published widely on the Second World War in Europe, North Africa and Asia.

He is Field Marshal Bill Slim's military biographer. His presentation of the case for Slim won a National Army Museum debate in 2011 for Britain's Greatest General and his case for Kohima/Imphal won a National Army Museum debate in 2013 for Britain's Greatest Battle.

Rob is an elected Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and has been a trustee of the Kohima Educational Trust since 2004, and Chairman between 2008-2016. Rob has been working with Sampan since 2020.



ALEX BESCOBY

Film Maker

Dates of Service: 25-27 November 2023

“The art of good travel is all about being endlessly curious, and I believe being prepared with the right questions is one of the best things you can bring to the people you meet.”

Alex is an award-winning filmmaker and presenter, with broadcasts on BBC, Discovery and Canal+ International. He recently returned from ‘The Last Overland’ expedition where he and his team drove 22,000 KM from Singapore to London, recreating the famous ‘Oxford and Cambridge Far Eastern Expedition’ of 1955.

Alex has spent the last decade living on and off in Myanmar. His ardent belief that visitors to this country should have an appreciation of the history before they arrive led him to make the film *We Were Kings* (2017) about the fall of the last royal family. This was followed by *Forgotten Allies* (2019), telling the story of Myanmar veterans from the Second World War.

Read more here: <https://www.sampantravel.com/magazine/hidden-history/>



KO SAI KENNETH

Senior Myanmar Guide

Dates of Service: 25 November - 8 December 2024

Ko Sai is from northern Shan State. He has been a guide since the year 2000 and speaks fluent Japanese and Mandarin as well as English. If he wasn't a guide, he says to us, he would have become a diplomat or restaurateur. Ko Sai's favourite places in Myanmar are Mrauk U and Hsipaw. He has now lived in Yangon for some time. We ask him what he likes most about the city:

"... the atmosphere, colonial buildings, the food, walking on the streets, sitting on the corner with a very low table and plastic stalls having a cup of tea or a Burmese snack. Spending only two dollars and still filling your stomach! Wandering around the old book stores ... These kind of things are like the essence of Yangon."

We have worked with Ko Sai for years. Read more about him here:
<https://www.sampantravel.com/magazine/sai-kenneth-shan-hills/>

GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE

Yangon

Guests at the Governor's Residence in Yangon can enjoy reclining in an ornate colonial-style mansion dating back to the 1920s. This hotel remains reminiscent of bygone years when it was home to the British chief administrator of Lower Burma.

The hotel's Kipling Bar downstairs provides an intimate setting for a pre-supper tippie, as does the breezy Mindon Lounge, if one wished for a more foliage-filled refresher. We would recommend trying the 'Governor's Collins' which uses a gin infused with kaffir lime.

FLASH POINT: *Hotel staff in Myanmar are almost always charming. At the Governor's Residence, they are not only charming, but incredibly efficient, on-the-ball, and also have – on occasion – a wicked sense of humour. You can relax in the knowledge that they have your back at the Governor's Residence.*



AKIMOMI

Pyin Oo Lwin

In a town sometimes referred to as "Little England", with weather to match, a miniature Big Ben at its centre and botanical gardens modelled on Kew, Akimomi Hotel, designed in the style of a Samurai village, is refreshingly contrary. The owners of Akimomi, Dr Khin Maung Htwe and his wife Daw Moe Moe Aye, had studied for years in Japan and there met and befriended the architect who eventually built their hotel for them.

The hotel was built "bit by bit" and "inch by inch". Neatly, and with diligent attention to detail, "a dream of a lifetime" was put into reality. The rooms are minimalist (as you would expect), the grounds airy and spacious. It is truly, an oasis, and a relief, in Maymyo.

FLASH POINT: *The spa, when open, is a delectable slice of Japan in Myanmar.*



THIRIPYITSAYA

Bagan

This resort is set amongst 24 acres on the banks of the Ayeyarwady River. The menu is a succinct fusion of Western and Asian dishes. As the sun goes down the lights on the ground blaze on, and it will be hard to find a table without a stunning view.

There is a large pool (the best in Bagan?) which from certain angles appears to spill out into the Ayeyarwady.

The best rooms have their own wi-fi (a luxury not to be sniffed at in Myanmar) and the cottages on the banks of the river come with bathtubs and expansive terraces.

FLASH POINT: *From the okra in their vegetable tempura to the mint in their mojito, much of the produce used here is sourced from the onsite vegetable and herb gardens.*



SANCTUARY ANANDA

Bagan - Mandalay

There are 21 suites on board the Sanctuary Ananda. Each is elegantly designed to celebrate Myanmar's rich heritage with lush silks, polished teak furniture and traditional lacquerware. The swish bathrooms are stocked with L'Occitane toiletries, and in each room is placed an iPad upon which guests can surf the net.

À la table, guests on river cruise holidays will browse Sanctuary's sumptuous menu featuring dishes peppered with the staples of Myanmar cuisine such as lemongrass, kaffir lime and sweet chilli. Local ingredient are used in all the dishes, the chefs replenishing their stocks at the village markets passed on the way. In addition to local recipes, the Sanctuary Ananda offers guests a selection of European dishes including freshly made pasta and sirloin steak.

Read more here: <https://www.sampantravel.com/magazine/the-ananda-in-august/>

FLASH POINT: *Attention to detail is everything on the Ananda, setting apart from rival boats in the region.*



MANDALAY HILL RESORT

Mandalay

The Mandalay Hill Resort is to be found amidst the quasi-jungle at the foot of Mandalay Hill, fit with an outdoor pool and spa. One of Mandalay's most famous hotels at the foot of its most famous feature.

Superior bedrooms are classy and cosy; deluxe ones spacious with breathtaking views over the hills. Other rooms boast views out to Mandalay Hill, the Royal Palace, and the Ayeyarwaddy River. The villas offer an oriental luxury unrivalled by the other Mandalay hotels. This hotel also offers babysitting services, and limousine and bicycle rental.

FLASH POINT: *The Kipling Bar at the Mandalay Hill Resort is top-notch. The bar is bedecked with elephantine velvet armchairs, mosaics and crowned peacocks, the perfect setting in which to settle down and enjoy a fancy cocktail.*



AWEI METTA

Yangon

Awei Metta, where elegant intimacy, relaxation, and unique flavours come together to craft the ideal urban retreat. Located within the Pun Hlaing Estate, Yangon, this two-acre resort provides a taste of tranquillity for those looking for a quick escape from the city. Enjoy some of the best pan-Asian food in Yangon; partake in smooth cocktails and cigars in their cigar lounge; indulge yourself at the Oasis spa.

At Awei Metta it is possible to escape the hustle and bustle of downtown Yangon. Rent a bike at the hotel reception and step outside to explore the Pun Hlaing Estate neighbourhood, immersing yourself in the lush green landscape and 18-hole golf course. There is also a swimming pool and tennis courts.

FLASH POINT: *Breakfast looking out over the rolling green of the golf course.*



QUOTATION

per person in a shared twin / double room - **US\$ 6,899**
per person in their own twin / double room - **US\$ 8,899**

INCLUDED IN QUOTE

- Full transfer service in private vehicles
- Domestic flights: Yangon to Mandalay, Mandalay to Yangon
- Accommodation with daily breakfast as per itinerary
- Three nights aboard the Sanctuary Ananda cruise ship
- Sunrise hot air balloon ride in Bagan
- Lunch every day except on the 25 November and the 5 & 8 of December
- Supper on the 25, 28 and 29 of November, and on the 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of December, including Welcome Diner, Farewell Dinner and champagne reception
- Dr Robert Lyman's expertise as he accompanies the group from the 25 November to the 7 December
- Ko Sai Kenneth's expertise as he guides the group from the 25 November to the 8 December
- Film screening hosted by Alex Bescoby on the 27 November
- All zone and entrance fees and permits
- Carbon Offsetting Charge for domestic flights, to be donated to Help for Forgotten Allies (this can be removed upon request)

EXCLUDED FROM QUOTE

- Any services not explicitly mentioned in itinerary
- International flights
- Lunch on the 25 November and the 5 & 8 December.
- Supper on the 26, 27 & 30 November, and the 1 & 5 of December.
- Early check-in or late check-out at hotels (can be requested)
- Tips to guide, driver and others
- Photography / videography fees
- Travel insurance
- Visa fees
- All personal expenses



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