



MIDWIVES

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Rachael Harkness of Portland Public Library provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Midwives*.

Midwives chronicles two women who run a makeshift medical clinic in a region torn apart by violent ethnic divisions. Hla, the owner, is a Buddhist in western Myanmar, where the Rohingya, a Muslim minority, are persecuted and denied basic rights. Nyo Nyo is a Muslim and an apprentice. Encouraged and challenged by Hla, Nyo Nyo is determined to become a steady health care provider for her people.

Contributors

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ADULT NON-FICTION

Combs, Daniel. *Until the World Shatters: Truth, Lies, and the Looting of Myanmar*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2020.

In Myanmar, where civil war, repressive government, and the \$40 billion a year jade industry have shaped life for decades, everyone is fighting for their own version of the truth. *Until the World Shatters*, takes us deep into a world in which journalists seek to overcome censorship and intimidation, ethnic minorities wage guerilla war against a government they claim refuses to grant basic human rights; devout Buddhists launch violent anti-Muslim campaigns; and artists try to build their own havens of free expression.

Holloway, Kris. *Monique and the mango rains : two years with a midwife in Mali*. Long Grove, Ill. : Waveland Press, 2007.

Monique and the Mango Rains is a fascinating voyage to an unforgettable place, a voyage spent close to the ground, immersed in village life, learning first-hand the rhythms of this world. From witnessing her first village birth to the night of Monique's own tragic death, Kris draws on her first-person experiences in Mali, her graduate studies in maternal and child health, medical and clinic records, letters and journals, as well as conversations with Monique, her family, friends and colleagues, to give readers a unique view and a friend in West Africa.

Myint-U, Thant. *The River of Lost Footsteps: Histories of Burma*. New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

Thant tells the story of modern Burma, in part through a telling of his own family's history, in an interwoven narrative that is by turns lyrical, dramatic, and appalling. His maternal grandfather, U Thant, rose from being the schoolmaster of a small town in the Irrawaddy Delta to become the UN secretary-general in the 1960s. And on his father's side, the author is descended from a long line of courtiers who served at Burma's Court of Ava for nearly two centuries. Through their stories and others, he portrays Burma's rise and decline in the modern world, from the time of Portuguese pirates and renegade Mughal princes through the decades of British colonialism, the devastation of World War II, and a sixty-year civil war that continues today and is the longest-running war anywhere in the world.

Myint-U, Thant. *The Hidden History of Burma: Race, Capitalism, and the Crisis of Democracy in the 21st Century*. New York, NY : W. W. Norton & Company, 2020.

Less than a decade ago, the world cheered as a dictatorship crumbled and internationally beloved Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi emerged from twenty years of house arrest. Yet just three years after her landslide victory at the polls, the country stands accused of war crimes and the expulsion of

hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims. In this riveting insider's diagnosis of a country at a breaking point, Thant Myint-U shows that Burma's perils, far from being unique, are many of the same facing all of us. Burma is a warning for the world.

Thwe, Pascal Khoo. From the Land of Green Ghosts: A Burmese Odyssey. New York : HarperCollins, 2002.

An emotionally charged and lyrically written memoir about a remarkable odyssey from a Burmese hill tribe and a land torn by civil war to Cambridge University. It was during a tour on a trip through Burma that John Casey, a Cambridge don, first met Pascal Khoo Thwe, who was moonlighting in a Chinese restaurant to support himself as a student at Mandalay University. Thwe was born a member of the Padaung tribe in Burma where political turmoil and poverty are ever-present realities.

Suu Kyi, Aung San. Letters from Burma. UK : Penguin Books, 2010.

Letters from Burma - an unforgettable collection from the Nobel Peace prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi. In these astonishing letters, Aung San Suu Kyi reaches out beyond Burma's borders to paint for her readers a vivid and poignant picture of her native land. Here she celebrates the courageous army officers, academics, actors and everyday people who have supported the National League for Democracy, often at great risk to their own lives. She reveals the impact of political decisions on the people of Burma, from the terrible cost to the children of imprisoned dissidents - allowed to see their parents for only fifteen minutes every fortnight - to the effect of inflation on the national diet and of state repression on traditions of hospitality. She also evokes the beauty of the country's seasons and scenery, customs and festivities that remain so close to her heart. Through these remarkable letters, the reader catches a glimpse of exactly what is at stake as Suu Kyi fights on for freedom in Burma, and of the love for her homeland that sustains her non-violent battle. Includes an introduction from Fergal Keane 'Aung San Suu Kyi has become a global symbol of peaceful resistance, courage and apparently endless endurance' Guardian 'A real hero in an age of phony phone-in celebrity, which hands out that title freely to the most spoiled and underqualified' Bono, Time Aung San Suu Kyi is the leader of Burma's National League for Democracy. She was placed under house arrest in Rangoon in 1989, where she remained for almost 15 of the 21 years until her release in 2010, becoming one of the world's most prominent political prisoners. She is also the author of the collection of writings Freedom from Fear.

ADULT FICTION

Craig, Charmaine. *Miss Burma*. New York, NY : Grove Press, 2017.

A beautiful and poignant story of one family during the most violent and turbulent years of world history, *Miss Burma* is a powerful novel of love and war, colonialism and ethnicity, and the ties of blood. *Miss Burma* tells the story of modern-day Burma through the eyes of Benny and Khin, husband and wife, and their daughter Louisa. Based on the story of the author's mother and grandparents, *Miss Burma* is a captivating portrait of how modern Burma came to be, and of the ordinary people swept up in the struggle for self-determination and freedom.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Glass Palace*. New York : Random House, 2001.

Tells of Rajkumar, a poor boy lifted on the tides of political and social chaos, who creates an empire in the Burmese teak forest. During the British invasion of 1885, when soldiers force the royal family out of the Glass Palace and into exile, Rajkumar befriends Dolly, the woman whose love will shape his life. He cannot forget her, and years later, as a rich man, he goes in search of her.

Orwell, George. *Burmese days*. New York : Time Incorporated, 1962.

Colonial politics in Kyauktada, India, in the 1920s, come to a head when the European Club, previously for whites only, is ordered to elect one token native member. The deeply racist members do their best to manipulate the situation, resulting in the loss not only of reputations but of lives.

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

Delisle, Guy. Burma Chronicles. Montréal : Drawn and Quarterly, 2008.

Guy Delisle uses a graphic novel format to reflect on the experiences he had while working in Burma (now known as Myanmar) where his wife's career allowed him to explore Burma's rural and impoverished regions.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Guidroz, Rukhsanna. *Samira surfs*. New York : Kokila, 2021.

Samira thinks of her life as before and after: before the burning and violence in her village in Burma, when she and her best friend would play in the fields, and after, when her family was forced to flee. There's before the uncertain journey to Bangladesh by river, and after, when the river swallowed her nana and nani whole. And now, months after rebuilding a life in Bangladesh with her mama, baba, and brother, there's before Samira saw the Bengali surfer girls of Cox's Bazar, and after, when she decides she'll become one.

Perkins, Mitali. *Bamboo People*. Watertown, MA : Charlesbridge, 2010.

Two Burmese boys, one a Karenni refugee and the other the son of an imprisoned Burmese doctor, meet in the jungle and in order to survive they must learn to trust each other.

Rush, Elizabeth A. *M is for Myanmar*. San Francisco, California : ThingsAsian Press, 2011.

Two sisters are on their way to visit Myanmar, their parents' birthplace. Hla, the older sister, describes this far away place in vignettes and poems as colorful as the paintings that showcase this magical place. She tells of the Shwedagon Pagoda that shines like a hundred crazy stars, the majestic monastery where monks meditate, the fisherman who paddles with his legs and the yummy Mohinga noodle soup. Among tales of the Golden Rock and ringing bells, Hla brings Myanmar to life in a way guaranteed to enchant young readers--and their parents. Bilingual text enhances this cultural immersion for language learners of all ages.

BOOKS FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS AND CHILDREN

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