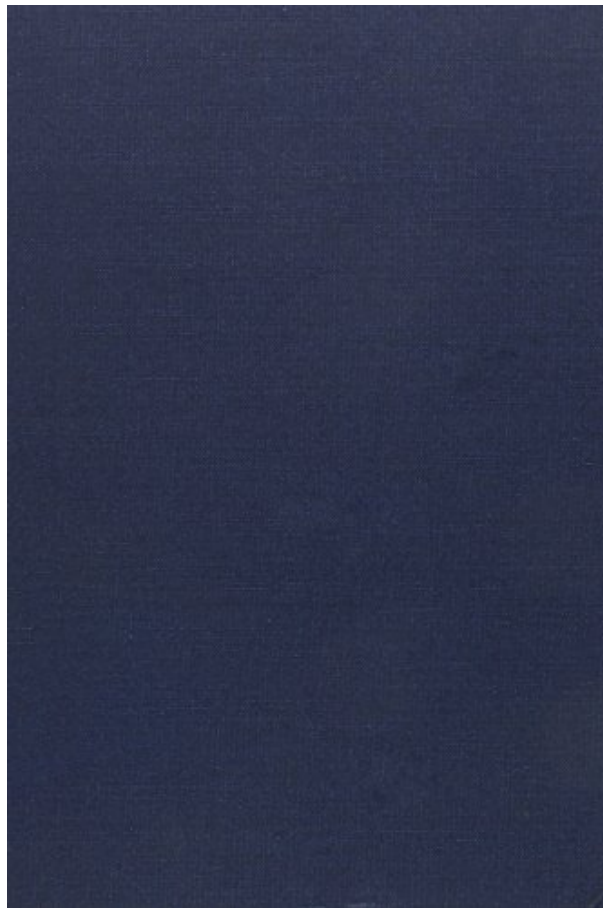
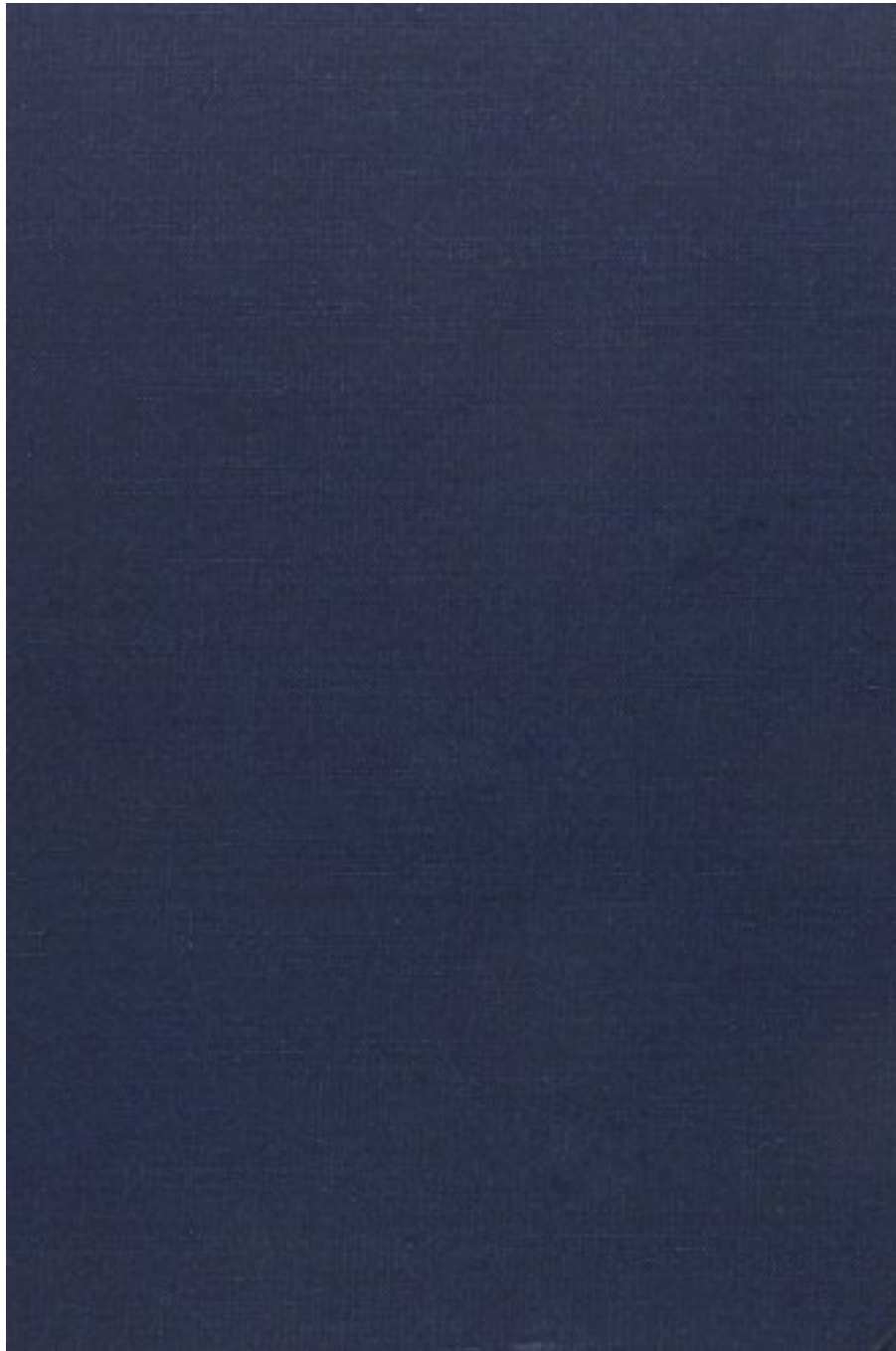


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About the Author

Guillaume Rozenberg has been a researcher with the French National Center of Scientific Research since 2004, and is a member of the Center of Social Anthropology (LISST) in Toulouse, France. His research focuses on figures of Buddhist sainthood and related cults in contemporary Burma.

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This monograph explores the identity of a seemingly paradoxical figure: the Burmese Buddhist saint, who departs for the forest to combine harsh asceticism with radical world renunciation, yet also seeks active involvement in the affairs of society. Examining the trajectory and work of eight living monks committed to the quest for salvation, Rozenberg contradicts representations of Theravada Buddhist saints as single-minded pursuers of nirvana. On the contrary, he shows how work for the temporal welfare and spiritual advancement of all is integral to a Burmese saint's identity. The saint predicts winning lottery numbers, redistributes goods donated to him, and develops building complexes essential to the spread of Buddhism. Throughout the book, otherwise obscure notions of spiritual power are reconsidered and explicated in a Burmese context.

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Full of interesting information you won't find elsewhere

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This is NOT « a day in the life of a monk in Burma » it is written by an ethnologist about monks and their place in Burmese culture and the interdependence between monks and laymen which is at the heart of Burmese society. The book is at times academic, a bit complicated, repetitive, but full of rich information that I got nowhere else. For example, the three areas where there is a strong interdependence: prediction, redistribution of wealth, and building religious structures. I learned about the weikzas, with their supernatural powers that are just as intriguing as the nats. There is a good chapter on the relationship between the government and powers that be and the monastic community, from the time of Bagan to the present day.

The book is illustrated with the stories and examples of eight of the most revered monks in Burma, one of which, Thamanya Hsayadaw, is the spiritual counselor for Aung San Suu Kyi, and his city of 15,000 was put forward by her as the Ideal City.

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