

Why we should stop Zawgyi in its tracks. It harms others and ourselves. Use Unicode!

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ဖန်တီးရာ၊ ရန်ကုန် ၃၁/၀၈/၂၀၁၆

NYT article: Thomas Fuller 19 July 19 2015

“Those Who Would Remake Myanmar Find That Words Fail Them”

- ‘lost in translation’ between English and မြန်မာစာ
- English loan words multiplying

Is မြန်မာစာ no longer replenishing itself?

So what is the status of English?
We need to clarify the situation

National Language – the language of national identity? National unity?

Official Language – the language of government and administration, courts, services, road signs

But what is the status of English in Myanmar?

Equal official language with မြန်မာစာ?

Second official language after မြန်မာစာ?

Official international language?

Official commercial language (internal and/or external)?

Default language when မြန်မာစာ fails?

Colonial legacy language?

Aspirational language of the future?

Language of cultural and commercial
recolonisation?

Predatory parasite stifling မြန်မာစာ's growth?

some English related observations trends

English medium of instruction in private schools –
parental pressure. မြန်မာစာ as a ‘foreign
language’ subject only

မြန်မာစာ is perceived as ‘unlearnable’ by outsiders
(Orientalism; colonialism)

advertising and branding in English

Higher Education in English (DASSK and Yangon
University / Oxford)

NGO talk: English-Burmese soup; code mixing

Branding



Coca-Cola elsewhere...



Coke in Myanmar:



Old car number plates



New car number plates



Number plates in some neighbouring countries



Multilingual signs



Welsh roads signs



'I am not in the office at the moment. Send any work to be translated...'



မြန်မာစာ font history

1980s Avalaser font for Macintosh (John Okell)

1990s 'legacy' fonts - WinResearcher, WinInnwa etc; Myanmar can only be reliably displayed in webpages as images

1995 Unicode codepoints for Burmese first proposed

2001 Myanmar1 Unicode font published - problems because   
◌ ◌ 'derived' from ယ ရ ဝ ဟ etc, some non-standard characters –
but was the **first stable font for the web**

2006 Zawgyi font designed, released 2007 - not following Unicode standards – massively popular

Dec 2007 Myanmar3 Unicode font released – too late!

Unicode vs. Zawgyi
(ဇော်ဂျီ the alchemist < Skt. yogī)

Why Zawgyi is popular:

- (1) Looks good
- (2) typing sequence is easy - left to right
- (3) widely used

Zawgyi harm #1: Zawgyi treads on the toes of other languages in Burma

Unicode

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F
U+100x	က	ခ	ဂ	ဃ	င	စ	ဆ	ဇ	ဈ	ည	ဉ	ဋ	ဌ	ဍ	ဎ	ဏ
U+101x	တ	ထ	ဒ	ဓ	န	ပ	ဖ	ဗ	ဘ	မ	ယ	ရ	လ	ဝ	သ	ဟ
U+102x	ဠ	အ	ဓ	ဏ	ဏှိ	ဉ	ဉီ	ဇ	ဇ	ဩ	ဩ	ါ	ာ	ာ	ာ	ါ
U+103x	။	ေ	ဲ	့	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ
U+104x	ဝ	ဝ	၂	၃	၄	၅	၆	၇	၈	၉	၊	။	၌	၎	၎	၏
U+105x	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ	ဓ
U+106x	၃	၅	၇	၉	၁	၂	၃	၄	၅	၆	၇	၈	၉	၁	၂	၃
U+107x	ယု	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ
U+108x	ဆ	ဂ	ံ	ပ	ဓ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ	ံ
U+109x	၀	၁	၂	၃	၄	၅	၆	၇	၈	၉					ါ	ါ

 Myanmar	 S'gaw Karen	 Kayah	 Myanmar
 Shan	 Western Pwo Karen	 Rumai Palaung	 No character for pseudo-Unicode
 Mon	 Eastern Pwo Karen	 No character	 No character
 Sanskrit and Pali	 Geba Karen		

Zawgyi

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F
U+100x	က	ခ	ဂ	ဃ	င	စ	ဆ	ဇ	ဈ	ည	ဋ	ဌ	ဍ	ဎ	ဏ	ဏ
U+101x	တ	ထ	ဒ	ဓ	န	ပ	ဖ	ဗ	ဘ	မ	ယ	ရ	လ	ဝ	သ	ဟ
U+102x	ဠ	အ	--	အံ	အိ	ဥ	ဦ	ဧ	--	အဲ	အော်	ါ	ာ	ာ	ာ	ာ
U+103x	။	ေ	'	ါ	။	--	°	°	°	°	၂	၂	၂	၂	--	--
U+104x	၀	၁	၂	၃	၄	၅	၆	၇	၈	၉	၊	။	၌	၍	၎င်း	၏
U+105x	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	၂	--	--	--	--	--
U+106x	က	ခ	ဂ	ဃ	င	စ	ဆ	ဇ	ဈ	ည	ဋ	ဌ	ဍ	ဎ	ဏ	ဏ
U+107x	တ	ထ	ဒ	ဓ	န	ပ	ဖ	ဗ	ဘ	မ	ယ	ရ	လ	ဝ	သ	ဟ
U+108x	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂
U+109x	၇	၇	၇	၇	၇	၇	၇	၇	--	--					--	--

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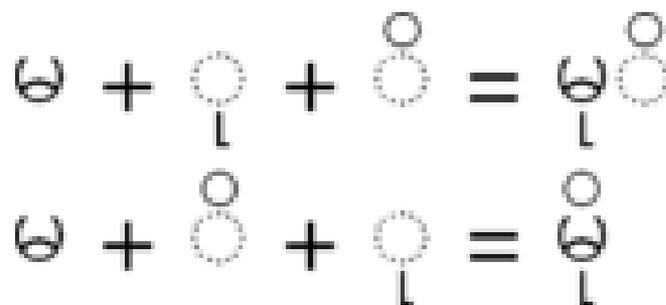
Zawgyi 'codepoints'

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F
U+100x	က	ခ	ဂ	ဃ	င	စ	ဆ	ဇ	ဈ	ည	ဋ	ဌ	ဍ	ဎ	ဏ	ဏ
U+101x	တ	ထ	ဒ	ဓ	န	ပ	ဖ	ဗ	ဘ	မ	ယ	ရ	လ	ဝ	သ	တ
U+102x	ဠ	အ	--	အိ	ဤ	ဥ	ဦ	ဧ	--	ဩ	ဪ	ါ	ာ	ာ	ာ	ာ
U+103x	။	ေ	`			--	°	°	°	°	၂	၂	၂	၂	--	--
U+104x	၀	၁	၂	၃	၄	၅	၆	၇	၈	၉	၁	။	၂	၂	၂	၂
U+105x	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	၂	--	--	--	--	--
U+106x	က	ခ	ဂ	ဃ	င	စ	ဆ	ဇ	ဈ	ည	ဋ	ဌ	ဍ	ဎ	ဏ	ဏ
U+107x	က	တ	တ	ထ	ထ	ဒ	ဓ	န	ပ	ဖ	ဗ	ဘ	မ	ယ	၂	၂
U+108x	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂	၂
U+109x	ရ	အ	ဋ	ဌ	ဍ	ဎ	ဏ	ဏ	--	--					--	--

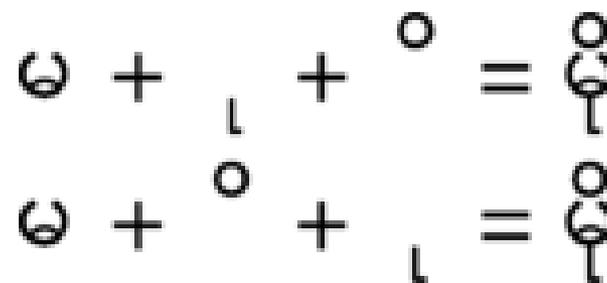
Zawgyi harm #2: Zawgyi makes it impossible to keep electronic records in Burmese

Fixed order: consonants, vowel, tone

Unicode stores text in only **one** order and arranges it correctly on the surface.



Zawgyi can store text in several ways which may all appear correct on the surface.



Good news!

The difference between Zawgyi and Unicode has nothing to do with keyboards or fonts.

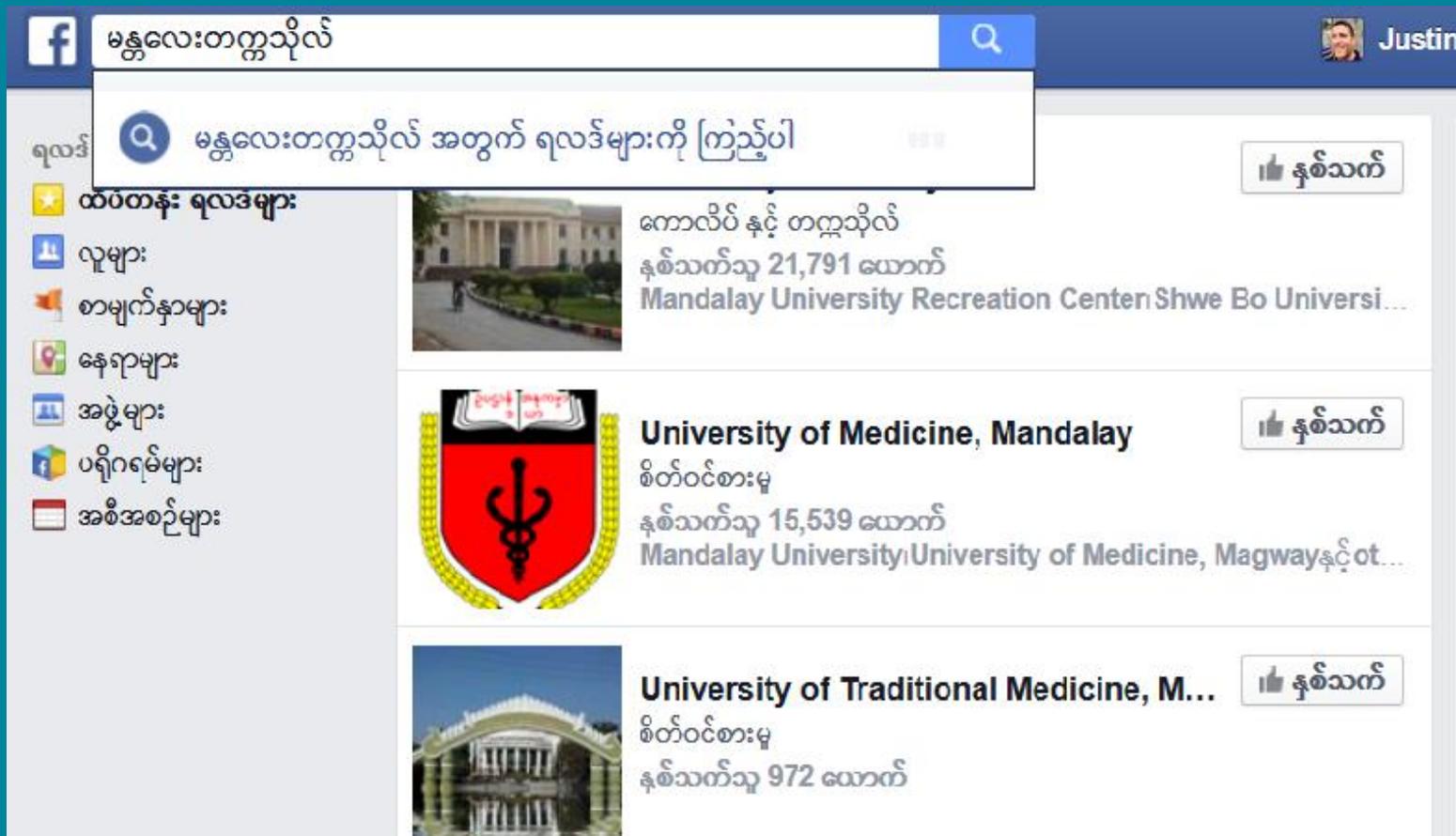
It's (relatively) easy to convert Zawgyi content to Unicode.

Users should be able to type in the same way they are used to; the computer can do the rest.

the keyboard doesn't matter!



Facebook in မြန်မာစာ



မန္တလေးတက္ကသိုလ်

ရလဒ်

- ထပ်တန်း ရလဒ်များ
- လူများ
- စာမျက်နှာများ
- နေရာများ
- အဖွဲ့များ
- ပရိုဂရမ်များ
- အစီအစဉ်များ

မန္တလေးတက္ကသိုလ် အတွက် ရလဒ်များကို ကြည့်ပါ

Justin

နှစ်သက်

 ကောလိပ် နှင့် တက္ကသိုလ်
နှစ်သက်သူ 21,791 ယောက်
Mandalay University Recreation Center Shwe Bo Universi...

 **University of Medicine, Mandalay**
စိတ်ဝင်စားမှု
နှစ်သက်သူ 15,539 ယောက်
Mandalay University, University of Medicine, Magway နှင့် ot...

နှစ်သက်

 **University of Traditional Medicine, M...**
စိတ်ဝင်စားမှု
နှစ်သက်သူ 972 ယောက်

နှစ်သက်

Google in မြန်မာစာ



ယူနီချိတ်ကြိုက်ပါတယ်။



Google တွင်ရှာပါ

ဥဲဖွ

Google.com.mm ကို အခြားဘာသာစကားနှင့် သုံးစွဲနိုင်သည် [English](#)

What support does မြန်မာစာ need?

- robust leadership on the Unicode question to promote the uptake of Unicode so မြန်မာစာ can be used for the storage and processing of electronic text, data and databases
- organisations,
- telecommunications,
- e-commerce,
- access to government services

- reduce dependence on English
- reduce loss in translation / transcription

What support does မြန်မာစာ need?

legislation and **action** to regularise and clarify the relative status of English alongside မြန်မာစာ within a national language policy

- when laws, contracts, signs, notices, advertising are made public, what should be in မြန်မာစာ ?
- what minimum criteria should foreign organisations have to meet in မြန်မာစာ ?

Why Zawgyi must be stopped!

- (1) Use of Zawgyi encroaches on the opportunities for other languages of Myanmar to develop in electronic form - Unicode does not!
- (2) Zawgyi does not conform to international computing standards - Unicode does!
- (3) Zawgyi cannot sort correctly: useless for storing data - Unicode can be used for anything!
- (4) Can store the same word in several different ways: useless for searching, processing, analysing text - Unicode can be used for anything

Why reduce dependence on English?

English ability is a false indicator of merit: English is not being ‘chosen’; it is the default. Will this serve Myanmar well in the future?

Myanmar needs talented people now to implement change of many kinds in the country, and cannot afford to write off those who happen to be able to speak but not think in English



ကျေးဇူးတင်ပါတယ်။

