

(1) Title:

Myanmar's Changing Currents: Origins, Processes, Stakeholders and Impacts in Centre and Periphery Relations

(2) Convener:

Makiko Takeda (Aichi Gakuin University, Japan), Moon Nay Li (Kachin Women's Association Thailand, Thailand)

(3) Description of panel

Political stability, economic growth, development, foreign policy, democratic consolidation and prospects for peace in Myanmar are all at a critical juncture. The military's institutionalisation of its influence and control in political, economic and social aspects have been negatively affecting the safety, security and peace of people and their communities at the periphery. Although it is in the best interest for both the current ruling party (NLD) and ethnic minorities to reduce military prerogatives in the age of Myanmar's recent democratisation, the reality is far more challenging and the centre-periphery relations remain volatile. The NLD has been facing roadblocks and confrontations created by the military, which resulted in making little progress on peace, law-based society and federal state. This often fuelled minorities' suspicion on the Bamar-dominated NLD. In addition, the promotion of identity-based divisions driven by extremism has been escalating in the contexts of nationalism, religion and ethnicity. Despite the NLD's landslide victory again in the 2020 election, new divisions on the political agenda and ethnic lines are added challenges amidst the many potential prospects towards peace, national reconciliation, and democratic consolidation. Against this backdrop, non-state stakeholders such as ethnic organisations, local academics, media, and individuals have taken grassroots initiatives towards securing a genuine democratic transition by engaging in awareness-cum-capacity promotion of the marginalised population. Such processes of social innovation-based empowerment measures to benefit the local people/communities can impact the improvement of centre-periphery relations in one way or another.

This panel therefore analyses the roles of different non-state stakeholders in Myanmar's fragile transition by raising the issues of community peace, borderland stability, and post-election governance. Accordingly, it sheds light on the processes and impacts of their social innovation through bottom-up ways and means in promoting awareness and capacity of the people towards carving out a new shared future at the local and national level.

(4) Double Sessions

Presenters:

Moon Nay Li (Kachin Women's Association Thailand, Thailand) & Makiko Takeda (Aichi Gakuin University, Japan)

Michal Lubina (Jagiellonian University, Poland)

Khine Win (Sandhi Governance Institute)

Mon Mon Myat (Independent researcher, Myanmar)

Satoshi Ota (Tama University, Japan)

Chosein Yamahata (Aichi Gakuin University, Japan)

Discussant: Chosein Yamahata (Aichi Gakuin University, Japan)