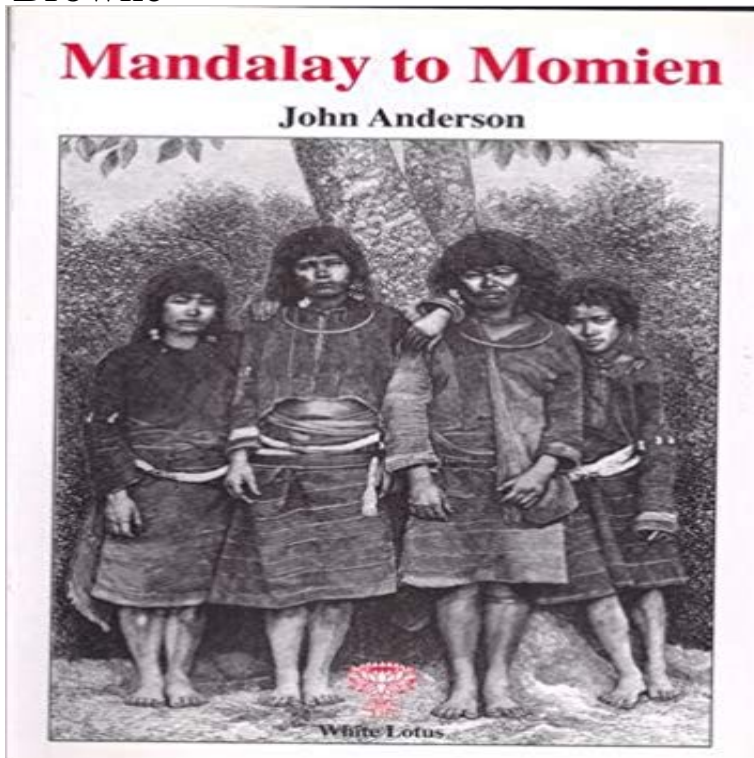


# Mandalay to Momien: Narrative of the Two Expeditions to Western China in 1868 and 1875 Under Colonel Sladen and Colonel Horace Browne



This account provides a fascinating eye witness summary of two expeditions made in pursuit of what can only be described as a misconceived dream. The idea of a back door to China, which excited British speculative greed from the late 1860s, seemed determined to ignore both economic realities and physical geography. The British merchant community at Rangoon in the recently conquered Lower Burma, urged on by Chambers of Commerce and textile mill owners back in Yorkshire and Lancashire, convinced themselves that inland China was an enormous market simply waiting to absorb a fortune in British manufactures. In the 1940s, the Bhamo-Yunnan route came into prominence again. Some 50,000 American soldiers and locals spent three years building a 1600- km-long road from Ledo in Assam through Myitkyina to Bhamo and on to Kunming. It provided a lifeline for trucking in supplies to Chinese Nationalist troops fighting the Japanese, but was abandoned after 1945. The dream persists, however. In May 2007, The Times of London carried a report headlined, India hopes old jungle trail can be a new road to riches which will allow people and goods to travel from Assam to Kunming in just two days.

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