



The King in Exile:

THE FALL OF THE ROYAL FAMILY OF BURMA
By Sudha Shah

Published by HarperCollins India in hardback in June 2012 and in paperback in June 2014. Published in Thailand in October 2014 (Matichon Publishing House) and reprinted three times by Matichon. To be published in Burma (Ngar Doe Sar Pay) in 2015.

Burmese and Marathi translations are currently in progress.

HarperCollins' global publishing program is now distributing to American readers select books published in India and one of the books chosen is *The King in Exile*. The book is to be made available from April 7, 2015, through Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com. The links are:

Amazon.com

http://www.amazon.com/King-Exile-Sudha-Shah/dp/9351365859/ref=sr_1_1_tw_2_pap?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1427811131&sr=1-1&keywords=king+in+exile

Barnesandnoble.com

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-king-in-exile-sudha-shah/1120326995?ean=9789351365853&itm=1&usri=the+king+in+exile>

The King in Exile is a biography of the last king of Burma, King Thibaw, and his family.

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In 1878, as the king of Burma lay dying, one of his queens schemed for his forty-first son, Thibaw, to supersede his half brothers to the throne. For seven years, King Thibaw and Queen Supayalat ruled from the resplendent, intrigue-infused Golden Palace in Mandalay, where they were treated as demi-gods. After a war against Britain in 1885, their kingdom was lost, and the family exiled to the secluded town of Ratnagiri in British-occupied India. Here they lived, closely guarded, for over thirty-one years. The king's four daughters received almost no education, and their social interaction was restricted mainly to their staff. As the princesses grew, so did their hopes and frustrations. Two of them fell in love with 'highly inappropriate' men. In 1916, the heartbroken king died. Queen Supayalat and her daughters were permitted to return to Rangoon in 1919. In Burma, the old queen regained some of her feisty spirit as visitors came by daily to pay their respects. All the princesses, however, had to make numerous adjustments in a world they had no knowledge of. The impact of the deposition and exile echoed forever in each of their lives, as it did in the lives of their children.

Shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize 2012 and for the Tata Literature Live First Book Award 2012

EXCERPTS OF REVIEWS OF THE BOOK

'[A]n absorbing read. Exhaustively researched and gracefully written The King in Exile tells a story of compelling human interest, filled with drama, pathos and tragedy ... [It] heralds the arrival of a writer of non-fiction who is both uncommonly talented and exceptionally diligent... One of the great merits of [the book] is that it is completely free of jargon and theorizing. It is in essence a family story, centred on five women whose lives were waylaid by history.'

AMITAV GHOSH • in his blog <http://amitavghosh.com/blog/?p=3306>
Award winning author of several novels including *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide*, and *Sea of Poppies* (short listed for the Man Booker Prize)

'Simultaneously scholarly and chatpata, this is a fascinating political story and a human one as well.'

VIKRAM SETH • Award-winning novelist and poet. His books include *The Golden Gate*, *A Suitable Boy* and *Two Lives*

'Sudha Shah's The King in Exile is an elegantly written book that tells with verve and clarity the strange and melancholy story of King Thibaw and his family. The transition from monarchy to British colonial rule remains the most important watershed in Burmese history and this fine work helps us to better understand two of the key characters involved: the king himself and his much maligned but also tragic wife Queen Supayalat. A fast-paced read, it brings to life an ignominious and little remembered chapter in imperial history.'

THANT MYINT-U • Historian; past Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; Author of *The Making of Modern Burma*, *The River of Lost Footsteps*, and *Where China Meets India*.

'He lived the last 31 years of his life in enforced exile, a virtual prisoner of the colonial power, in a remote town on the Arabian Sea, about as far from Burma as he could be stashed in British India. Sudha Shah records this long, melancholy epilogue in abundant, convincing detail. Lovers of Burma—and armchair students of the British Empire—will be fascinated.'

JOSEPH LELYVELD • Pulitzer Prize-winning author; former correspondent and editor of *The New York Times*

'Sudha Shah's book breaks considerable new ground by affording readers an account of Thibaw and his descendants, their experiences in the subcontinent, their many disappointments—personal, political, and financial... Meticulously researched and presented in a very fast-paced, fluid narrative, Sudha Shah's book is an important contribution to our understanding of both the latter days of the dynasty and of Burma, the latter's declining fortunes paralleling those of the former, especially in the fifty years since the establishment of military rule in the country.'

DR MICHAEL CHARNEY • Reader in South East Asian and Imperial History, School of Oriental and African Studies, London

'It seems as if a member of the family knowing the details of the family wrote the book. It doesn't seem like a foreign person that wrote [the] book. And it is a well-researched one, most of the details are all the facts, the true facts, that has occurred in our family.'

PRINCE TAW PHAYA • Grandson of King Thibaw and Queen Supayalat

'a historical triumph without a single misstep' • **ASIAN AGE**

The King in Exile is one of this year's six books shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt Award for First Book. It is a well deserved nomination. And now that Burma is the latest "market" to open to private investments, a look at how it all came to be is not just ideal read, but perhaps a mandatory one.

• **OUTLOOK BUSINESS**

'The writing exhibits the author's meticulous research... An engrossing saga' • **VERVE**

Today's circumstances and global and regional power structures are quite different, yet the pages of The King in Exile do not only tell the story of the lonely end of a clan and of an era. They are a window into a political and cultural history that even today, still informs the present.

• **THE STRAITS TIMES**

Shah acknowledges Amitav Ghosh's novel The Glass Palace—set over three generations in Burma and with links to the royal family's exiled life in India which won the Frankfurt eBook Award Grand Prize for Fiction—as having inspired her to research the history of Thibaw and his royal family. As much as The Glass Palace was a fascinating fictional read, The King in Exile is certainly its equal in the non-fiction genre.

• **THE IRRAWADDY**

'a riveting tale with much pathos, drama and pain' • **BUSINESS LINE**

'a fascinating story of three generations of a family which moved from near-divine entitlement to a very mortal denouement.'

• **THE TIMES OF INDIA**

'Shah's historical magnum opus is perhaps the first such book to detail the tragic history of the last Burmese Royal family with such vividness and magnanimity. If you are a lover of history, I suggest you give this a read.' • **HINDUSTAN TIMES**

'Meticulously researched and supplemented with photographs and illustrations, this is an engrossing story of this forgotten family.'

• **THE CARAVAN**

'a riveting tale of the last king of Burma who was exiled to India. A well-researched book, it has not fallen into the trap of adding colours of imagination to the characters.' • **THE TRIBUNE**

'This is not the first book on the royal family of a country, nor will it be the last. But what makes The King in Exile: The Fall of the Royal Family of Burma a special read is that the author has demystified the principal characters of her book and made them look so human, so normal.'

• **THE PIONEER**

'The book succeeds both as a piece of history writing and its focus on the human story at the heart of the drama. The translated work called Rachan Phu Plad Pan Din Mua Myanmar Sia Muang [in Thai] has become a big hit. The publisher, Matichon Books, had to reprint the book twice in a single month when the book was launched late last year. Now the book is being published for the fourth time.' • **BANGKOK POST**