Title

AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN SOME NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS: POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING FROM MYANMAR

By

NAW EH TAR GAY

A Thesis Submitted to The University of Birmingham For the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

> Department of Theology and Religion College of Arts and Law The University of Birmingham August 2011.

UNIVERSITY^{OF} BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

Abstract

Myanmar has undergone a political upheaval since colonial times. The country suffers in every aspects of life due to the political situation. Religious teachings, social and cultural traditions prolong these difficulties. Therefore words such as authority, power and submission have gained important in Myanmar. Those in power employ these to reinforce their rule and control people. In this context, a question that arises is what is the role of Christianity in Myanmar? Therefore the specific question for Christianity is to address how the teachings of the New Testament contribute or hinder the pursuit of freedom by the powerless and how we apply the concepts of authority, power and submission focused in some New Testament letters.

This work looks at some New Testament texts which demand the authority, power and submission in people's social, political and religious life. The postcolonial feminist uses imperial studies, decolonising, depatriarchalising, decoding, and de-moding as tools to analyse how these texts came into being with the influences of Greaco-Roman patriarchal, colonial and imperial systems. It also looks at how these texts were exegeted by mainstream scholarship, missionaries, Asian liberation theologians and Feminists and specifically by Myanmar Christians. This is in order to scrutinise if these interpretations reinforce or resist the authority and power.

The postcolonial feminist resistant reading examines the texts from a Myanmar Buddhist context. It challenges all the colonial/imperial and patriarchal mentalities not only in the texts but also in parallel Buddhist teachings and Myanmar cultural traditions and tries to find out the unheard voices and hidden resistant materials respectively. This reading focuses on balancing power and submission. This work is a weapon to challenge the power, a voice to represent and a remedy for empowering 'the others' or the marginalised.

Dedicated to

To my three Moms: My Birth Mom Daw Anna Pe, My Biblical Mom Dr. Anna May Say Pa and My British Mom Glenys Thomas

Acknowledgement

During the course of this study many people have supported and helped me. Due to the space I could express only a few, I remain indebted to those are not mentioned.

I am very grateful to my current supervisor Dr. Philip Burton who took over the task of my former supervisor and guided me with sound, academic and scholarly advice.

My former supervisor Prof. R. S. Sugirtharajah who has introduced me the postcolonial feminist studies and provided me with theoretical guidance, sound and scholarly advice and criticisms.

My sincere thanks also go to my thesis examiners Prof. David Parker (University of Birmingham) and Prof. Hugh Pyper (University of Sheffield).

Dr. Frances Kenneth, Dr. Anna May Say Pa, Dr. Thomas Kazen, Joyce Riddmer, Calorine Starr, Dr. Richard Goode. Alan Bale, Nicola Jolly and Glenys Thomas who have read my drafts and give me their valuable feminist insights, critical and stylistic comments.

Biblical Department, University of Birmingham, which gave me chances to present and discuss my work and seminars which made me feel at home. I appreciated the staff and friends who are kind and supportive.

Orchard Learning Resources Centre, University of Birmingham Main Library, Myanmar Institute of Theology library, Karen Baptist Theological Seminary, and Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology library's librarians and staffs who helped me to find the materials and books that I need.

Myanmar Baptist Leadership Development Program, Global Ministry, USA, Friends of Burma, USA, Dr. Timothy and Jill Geoffrion, Faith, Love and Hope Foundation, USA, Open Society, USA and Ms Martha Jane Hackett which helped me financially to be able to accomplish this study.

The Principals, the staff, my colleagues of Myanmar Institute of Theology, Myanmar, who gave me this chance to do my further studies and helped me whenever I needed them.

Ms. Glenys Thomas and Mr. Leslie Essex who not only provide me the accommodation at their home and but also took care of me as their own daughter. I am also grateful for the support from Katie Essex, Mark Thomas Essex and family, Ms Cim Thomas, Ruth Fell and also Verenaisi Were who are part of my British family. They are with me throughout this difficult time. Words cannot express my thanks to them.

The members and families of Karen Christian Fellowship, London and Mr. Thawng Khua Kia and Neih Lun family who supported me and encouraged me through their prayers and concern. My thank also goes to Dr. Kyaw Thin and Mrs. Sao Mangrai who gave me flexible employment and hospitality.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to my parents Daw Anna Pe and U Saw Maung Kyi and my brothers: Saw Khu, Saw Aung Pe and Saw Barblut and their families who support me emotionally and mentally and with their prayers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
1. Historical Background	1
2. The Problems	2
3. Motivation	4
3.1. The Silent Christians	4
3.2. Christians and the Concepts of the Authority and Submission in Some New Testament Letters	5
4. Aim	8
5. Main Focus, Inclusions and Limitations	8
6. Methodology	9
6.1 Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation	9
6.1. 1. An Outline of Postcolonial Biblical Criticism6.1. 2. An Outline of Feminist Hermeneutic or Women's Liberation Hermeneutic	10 13
6.1. 3. Postcolonial Criticism and Liberation and Feminist Hermeneutic6.1.4. Postcolonial Feminism and its Significances	16 17
6.2. Historical Literary Analysis	20
7. Data Collection	22
8. Thesis Structure	23
9. Significances and Contributions	25
SECTION I	
CHAPTER 1 THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION THE MYANMAR CONTEXT	IN
1.1. Brief Political History of Myanmar	26
1.1 1. Pre-colonial Era	26
1.1.2. The Colonial Era	28

1.1.3. Post-colonial Era	29
1.1.3.1.The Parliamentary Period 1.1.3.2. Military Rule	29 30
1.2. Authority and Submission in the Myanmar Context	32
1.2.1. Political Influences	32
1.2.1.1. The Kingship System1.2.1.2. British Colonial Authority1.2.1.3. Totalitarian Army Control	32 34 36
1.2.2. Religious Influences	38
1.2.2.1. The Buddhist Faith and the <i>Sangha</i> 1.2.2.2. Christianity and the Missionaries	38 40
1.2.3. Myanmar Women, Authority and Submission	42
1.2.4. Myanmar Christian Women, Power and Submission	49
	53
1.3 Conclusion SECTION II POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORIT SURMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLE	
SECTION II POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORIT SUBMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLI MYANMAR CONTEXT	D CODE IN
SECTION II POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORIT SUBMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLI MYANMAR CONTEXT Section II Introduction CHAPTER 2 DE-IMPERIALIZING AND DECOLONIZIN	D CODE IN 55
SECTION II POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORIT SUBMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLI MYANMAR CONTEXT Section II Introduction CHAPTER 2 DE-IMPERIALIZING AND DECOLONIZIN HOUSEHOLD CODES IN GRAECO-ROMAN WOR	D CODE IN 55
SECTION II POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORIT SUBMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLI MYANMAR CONTEXT Section II Introduction CHAPTER 2 DE-IMPERIALIZING AND DECOLONIZIN HOUSEHOLD CODES IN GRAECO-ROMAN WOR	D CODE IN 55 NG THE LD
SECTION II POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORIT SUBMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLI MYANMAR CONTEXT Section II Introduction CHAPTER 2 DE-IMPERIALIZING AND DECOLONIZIN HOUSEHOLD CODES IN GRAECO-ROMAN WOR	D CODE IN 55 NG THE LD 57
SECTION II POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORITS SUBMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLD MYANMAR CONTEXT Section II Introduction CHAPTER 2 DE-IMPERIALIZING AND DECOLONIZIN HOUSEHOLD CODES IN GRAECO-ROMAN WOR 2.1. Introduction 2.2. The Colonisers' Household Codes	55 NG THE LD 57 59 59 59
SECTION II POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORITS SUBMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLD MYANMAR CONTEXT Section II Introduction CHAPTER 2 DE-IMPERIALIZING AND DECOLONIZIN HOUSEHOLD CODES IN GRAECO-ROMAN WOR 2.1. Introduction 2.2. The Colonisers' Household Codes 2.2.1. Greek Colonial Household Codes 2.2.1.1. Greek Colonies and the True Face of the Codes	55 NG THE LD 57

2.2.3. The Victims of the Household Codes	71
2.2.4. Equality Vs the Household Codes	72
2. 3. The Household Codes of the Colonised or the Marginalised	75
2.3.1. The Colonised Greeks and Household Codes	76
2.3.2. Hellenistic Jews and the Codes	77
2.3.3. Early Christianity and the Household Codes	79
2.3.3.1. Early Church Fathers and their Codes2.3.3.2. The Colonial and Patriarchal New Testament Household Codes	79 81
2.3.3.2.1. The Colonial Christianised Elements 2.3.3.2.2. The Colonised or Marginal Lives from the NT Household	82
Codes 2.3. 3.2.2.1. Marginal but Privileged 2.3.3.2.2.2. The Margin of the Marginal People in the	84 85
<u>Household</u> 2.4.3.2.3. The Colonized Apologetic Concerns	86 87
2.5. Conclusion	88
CHAPTER 3 DECOLONIZING/ DE-PATRIARCHALISING DIFFERENT COLONIAL AND PATRIARCHAL INTERPRETATIO ON THE HOUSEHOLD CODES (1950S-2000S) 3.1. Introduction	90
	90
3.2. Western White Scholars' Interpretations: Hermeneutic of Consolidating of Christian Ascendancy and Security	90
3.2.1. Colonial Missionaries' Interpretations	91
3.2.2. 1970s Scholars' Interpretations: The Household Codes as Maintaining Order	96
3.2.3. 1980s -2000s: Revisiting Superiority of Christian Teachings, Christian Conformity and the Problems of the Subordinate	98
3.2.3.1. Submission of Women/Wives 3.2.3.1.1. Scholars' View	98 98
3.2.3.1.2. Biblical Commentaries' View 3.2.3.2. Submission of Children	98 99 100

3.2.3.3. Submission of Slaves	100
3.3. Western Females' Interpretations	102
3.3.1. Conventional Female Biblical Interpretations	102
3.3.2. Feminist Hermeneutic: Revisiting Positive History, Highlighting Abusive Elements and Finding Liberative Elements	103
3.3.2.1. First Wave Feminist Interpretations 3.3.2.2. Reactions of Second Wave Feminists 2.2.2.2.1. Page particular the Positive History: Household	103 104
3.3.2.2.1. Reconstructing the Positive History: Household Codes V. Baptismal Tradition 3.3.2.2.2. Finding Subjugated Christology	104 106
3.3.3. Evangelical Feminist Reading	109
3.4. Asian Interpretations	112
3.4.1. Advanced Reading in Early 60s: Counteracting Professional Codes	112
3.4.2. Twenty First Century Reading: Controversial Liberationist/ Contextual Readings	114
3.4.3. Asia and Children Abuse	118
3.5. Myanmar Interpretations	119
3.5.1. Burmese Bibles and the Codes	120
3.5.2. Missionaries' Perspectives on Family Members	120
3.5.3. Interpretations from Myanmar Oldest Christian Magazine	122
3.5.4. Interpretations from Pastor's Hand Book	125
3.5.5. Christian Theological Seminaries' Readings	126
3.5.5.1. Traditional View3.5.5.2. Feminist and Liberationist Interpretations	126 127
3.6. 'Post' Readings	129
3.6.1. Postmodern Reading	129
3.6.2. Postcolonial Readings: Decolonising and Resistant Readings	131
3.7. Conclusion	135

CHAPTER 4 POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST'S RESISTANT READING

4.1. Introduction	137
4.2. Naming the Dominant Half: the Burmese Context	138
4.2.1. The Myanmar Regime and State Laws	138
4.2.2. The Regime and Asian Neo-capitalism	141
4.2.3. Myanmar Patriarchal Traditions and Customary Laws	142
4.2.4. Myanmar Buddhist Household Rules	143
4.2.5 The Suffering Christ Model (1 Pet 2: 21)	145
4.3. Reviving the 'Other Paralysed Half'	146
4.3.1. Human Rights as Balancing the Halves	146
4.3.2. Buddhist Teachings and Traditions as Empowerment	148
4.3.2.1. Middle Way Vs Christian Dualism4.3.2.2. 'Selfless' and Egolessness4.3.2.3. Men and Women in Co-ownership	148 151 152
4.3.3. Empowerment in NT Codes	153
4.3.3.1. Women as Church4.3.3.2. Women as Co-heirs of Life (1 Pet 3: 7)4.3.3.3. The Peripheral Christ or the Incarnated Christ (Eph 5: 31)	153 154 155
4.4. Actions in the Empowered Paralysed Half	156
4.4.1. Questioning the Authority of Canonisation	156
4.4.2. The New Postcolonial Feminist Household Code	157
4.5. Conclusion	158
Section II Conclusion	159

SECTION III

POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN SOME NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS IN MYANMAR CONTEXT

Section III Introduction	161
CHAPTER 5 THE COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM AND PATRIARCHY AND GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD	
5.1. Introduction	164
5.2. The Imperial Texts	165
5.2.1. Imperial Propaganda	166
5.2.1.1. Emperors of Good Character5.2.1.2. Legitimising the Emperors as Gods	167 169
5.2.2. Submission: a Feature of Propaganda	172
5.3. The Texts and the Imperialised	172
5.4. The Historical and Political Background to the Formation of the Texts	173
5.5. Imperial and Patriarchal Elements in the Texts	174
5.5.1. Authorities, their Laws and Punishment (Rom 13: 1-4)	175
5.5.1.1. The 'Authorities' in The Greco-Roman World? 5.5.1.2. Taxation (Rom 13: 7)	175 175
5.5.2. Citizenship or Freeperson (1 Pet 2: 16)	176
5.6. The Texts and Their Hidden Elements	177
5.6.1. Confronting the Authorities	178
5.6.2. Confrontations with Encouragements	179
5.6.3. Confrontation with Christianisation	180
5.7. The Silent Elements in the Texts	180
5.7.1. The Silent Voices of the People	180
5.7.2. The Least Recognition of Women in the Texts	181
5.8. Conclusion	182

CHAPTER 6 INTERPRETATIONS ON ROM 13:1-7 AND 1 PET 2:13-17 FROM THE COLONIAL PERIOD AND ITS AFTERMATH

6.1. Introduction	184
6.2. Western White Male and Female Interpretations of the Texts	185
6.2.1. White Male's Interpretations	185
6.2.1.1. Legitimating the Government or the Colonialism	186
6.2.1.1.1. The Interpretations of the Colonisers 6. 2.1.1.2. The Interpretations after the End of Colonial Period (1950s)	186 186
6.2.1.2. Mission and Moral Oriented Interpretations from 1960s and 70s 6.2.1.3. Text and Author Oriented Interpretations from 1980s and 90s 6.2.1.4. Interpretations with Ionic Approach	188 188 189
6.2.2. White Western Feminist Interpretations	190
6.2.2.1. Women's Bible Commentary's Interpretations6.2.2.2. A Feminist Commentary's Interpretations6.2.2.3. Textual Interpretations	191 192 193
6.3. The Authority, the Texts and Asian Christians' Interpretations	193
6.3.1. Asian Male Interpretations	194
6.3.2. Asian Women's Interpretations	197
6.4. Myanmar Christians and The Texts	198
6.4.1. Missionary Translation and Interpretations	198
6.4.2. Myanmar Male Christian Interpretations	199
6.4.3. Myanmar Female Interpretations	204
6.5. Postcolonial Readings	205
6.6. Conclusion	208
CHAPTER 7 RE-READING THE TEXTS: A RESISTANT POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE FROM MYANMA CONTEXT	.R
7.1. Introduction	211
7.2. Naming the Dragon	212

7.2.1. The Regime as Dragon	212
7.2.2. Is God or Christ a Dragon? (Rom 13:1, 4, 1 Pet 2:13-14)	213
7.2.3. Is a Dragon's Anger, God's Wrath? (Rom 13:4)	215
7. 3. Crushing the Dragon's Head	216
7.3.1. Aung San Suu Kyi's Voices with Buddhist Teachings	216
7.3.1.1. Buddhist Teachings and the Dragons7.3.1.2. Right Mind and the Dragons7.3.1.3. The Dragon Ruling Vs Democracy7.3.1.4. Aung San Suu Kyi and Non-fear Way and Non-violence7.3.1.5. Aung San Suu Kyi and Patriarchy	217 219 220 222 223
7.3. 2. Crushing the Dragon (Christology)'s Head Using a Karen's Story	224
7.4. Rewriting the Texts	226
7.5. Conclusion	227
Section III Conclusion	228
SECTION IV POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READINGS ON RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN A MYANMAR CONTEX	T
Section IV Introduction	230
CHAPTER 8 DECOLONIZING/DEPATRIARCHALIZING COLONIMPERIAL AND PATRIARCHAL GRECO-ROMAN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS	
8.1. Introduction	233
8.2. The Anti-women's Leadership Texts and their Immediate Contexts in Brief	233
8.3. Decolonizing/Deimperializing/Depatriarchalising Greco-Roman Religious God's Order and Functions	234
8.3.1. Graeco-Roman Colonialist/Imperialist/Patriarchal and Hierarchal	
Religion	235
8.3.1.1. Greek Patriarchal and Colonial Views on Religions	235

8.3.1.1.1. Philosophers' Hierarchal and Patriarchal Deities	22.5
and 'Others' 8.3.1.1.2. Greek Colonialist and 'Others'	235 238
8.3.1.2. Roman Imperialism and 'Others' Religions	240
•	-
8.3.1.2.1. Imperial Propaganda 8.3.1.2.2. Imperial Suppressions and Limitations 8.3.1.2.3. The Emperors and Women's Priesthood	241244247
8.3.2. Other Colonised Religions	248
8.3.2.1. Jewish Religion and Women Leadership Roles8.3.2.2. Christian Religious Organization and Women Leadership Roles	248 252
8.3.2.2.1.Texts Against Women's Leadership Role Texts: The Mi of Greco-Roman Ideologies 8.3.2.2.2. Church Fathers' Authority	252 253
8.4. Conclusion	256
CHAPTER 9 DECOLONIZING CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS	
9.1. Introduction	258
9.2. Western Male and Female and Anti-women's Leadership Role Texts	258
9.2.1. Western Male Interpretations	258
9.2.1.1. The Normative Texts9.2.1.2. Christian Superiority, Paul's Adjustability and Women's	259
Ignorance	260
9.2.1.3. Free but Conditionally Limited 9.2.1.4. Favouring Paul and the Texts as Interpolations	262 264
9.2.1.5. Against Paul and the Traditional Views	266
9.2.2. Western Women's Interpretations	267
9.2.2.1. Conservative Women's Interpretation: Bible Teaching Vs	
Women's Liberation	267
9.2.2.2. Feminist Interpretations	269
9.2.2.2.1. Patriarchal Jewish Culture Vs Women Leadership	269
9.2.2.2.2. Women, the Victims or Problem Makers	270
9.2.2.2.3. Women's Unheard Voices	272
9.2.2.2.4. Women's Leadership Role and the Patriarchal Ecclesiology, Theology and Christology	275
9. 3. Asian Readings on Religious leadership Roles	276
9.3.1. Asian Male Interpretations	277

9.3.2. Asian Female Interpretations	278
9.4. Burmese Voices	279
9.4.1. Myanmar Colonial Missionaries and Women's Leadership	280
9.4.1.1. Male Missionary View9.4.1.2. Female Missionary View9.4.1.3. Missionary Translations	280 282 283
9.4.2. Myanmar Male Interpretations	284
9.4.3. Myanmar Women's Interpretations	286
9.5. Postcolonial Interpretations	288
9.6. Conclusion	289
CHAPTER 10 POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST RESISTANT READING RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION FROM A MYANM PERSPECTIVE	
10.1. Introduction	291
10.2. Levelling Strategy	292
10.2.1. Levelling Down the Hierarchical Pagoda Tower	293
10.2.1.1. Sangha as the Pagoda Hierarchal Contour (1 Cor 11: 2-3,7-8) 10.2.1.2. Buddha and His Male Followers? 10.2.1.3. The King or the Emperor?	293 296 296
10.2.2. The Disappearance of Bhikkuni Order in Myanmar	299
10.3. Sharing Similar Imperial and Patriarchal Cultural Norms in Christian's Texts and Buddhist Culture	300
10.3.1. Eindaray and Authority in Religion	301
10.3.2. Theika and Religious Authority	302
10.3.3. The Concept of Hpon and Women in the Texts	304
10.3.4. Atinn and Tha Din Concepts and Silencing Women	305
10.3.5. Patriarchal Male 'God' or Male 'Buddha'	305

10.3.6. Salvation through Childbirth and Motherhood	306
10.4. Zayat Readings or Horizontal Level	307
10.4.1. Non-agreement or Freedom of Choice as Zayat Reading	309
10.4.2. Balancing as Zayat Reading (1 Cor 11: 11-12)	310
10.4.3. Prioritizing 'the Others'	311
10.4.4. Inclusion of 'Others'	311
10.4.5 Forming Co-priesthood/discipleship as Zayat Reading	312
10.5. Conclusion	314
Section IV Conclusion	315
CONCLUSION	317
1. Most Cultures are Patriarchal and Colonial/Imperial in Nature	318
2logies are Needed to be De-ologised	320
2.1. De-theologising	320
2.2. De-Christologising	321
3. The 'Marginalised' Postcolonial Feminist Commentaries or Canonisations are Wanted!	325
4. Postcolonial Feminist Resistant Readings as a Challenge to Biblical Scholarship	327
BIBLIOGRAPHY	330

List of Illustrations

Illustration 1	Three periods of Early Myanmar History	28
Illustration 2	Military Rule	31
Illustration 3	Comparing the Myanmar Government's Women and Children Rights with those of the United Nations	140
Illustration 4	Duties of Husband and Wife	144
Illustration 5	Different Household Codes with Human Rights	147
Illustration 6	Hierarchal Olympian Divine Society	236
Illustration 7	Saying Against Women's Prayer	246
Illustration 8	Christianity with both Mystery and Church Structures and Practices	255
Illustration 9	The Structures and the Operations of Greco-Roman Religions	257
Illustration 10	Levelling Method	292
Illustration 11	Pagoda Hierarchy	294
Illustration 12	Zayats	308
Illustration 13	Greco-Roman, Christian and Buddhist Social Political and Religious Views on Women	318

Abbreviations

BTh Bachelor of Theology

BMin Bachelor of Ministry

BRE Bachelor of Religious Education

MDiv Master of Divinity

BD Bachelor of Divinity

MIT Myanmar Institute of Theology

KBTS Karen Baptist Theological Seminary

MICT Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology

NT New Testament

OT Old Testament

SPDC State Peace and Development Council

SLORC State Law and Order Restoration Council

CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against

Women

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

Not the Religion, Not the state, and Not the Culture, the marginalised shall decide their fate.¹

INTRODUCTION 'AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN SOME NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS: POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING FROM MYANMAR

1. Historical Background

Authority and submission are key themes in human history. This is obviously the case in traditional narratives of kings and battles, but equally true in Marxist analyses of the 'class struggle'. It persists even if in more subtle ways, in more recent forms of socio-cultural history. However, improper authority and the imposition of power over the powerless are problematic. Myanmar,² a Theravada³ Buddhist country is a society where authority and power was unjustly enforced throughout its pre-colonial, colonial and neo-imperial periods in the political, social and religious lives of the people. In the political sphere, the concepts of authority and submission form the basis of relations between rulers and the ruled. In the social sphere, this dynamic operates between the male and the female, parents and children, masters and slaves; and in the religious sphere, it is present in the status of the monks and the church leaders over their congregations. The authority of one sphere is inter-related with that of

¹ Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Woman, Church and State: a Historical Account of the Status of Woman through the Christian Ages* (New York: The Truth Seeker Company, 1893), vii. Preface, available from *www. forgottenbooks.org*, republished by Forgotten Books in 2008. Internet, accessed 22 June 2009. Matilda (1826-1898) was a suffragist and American-Indian activist, a abolitionist, a freethinker, and a prolific author, born with a hatred of oppression. This is the slogan of second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 70s. This book is about Christianity as one of the obstacles to the progress of women. I have added my own view to her comment, "Not the church, not the state; Women shall decide their fate."

² During the British colonial period, the country was known as Burma and since 1989 the military government has changed Burma into Myanmar. I will be using the name 'Myanmar' when I refer to the country and 'Burmese' or 'Myanmar' when I refer to the people in the country, including all other ethnic groups. I will use the word 'Burmar' when I refer to the people of the major tribe in Myanmar. By using these titles I am not condoning the burmanisation policy of the military regime but for practical purposes.

³ The Theravada means 'traditions of the Elders.' Followers claim that it preserves the original teachings of Buddha. Their core belief is to eliminate the suffering in *samsara* or life circles through meditations.

another: for example, religious leaders in Myanmar directly or indirectly interfere in political affairs and political leaders in religious groups. The monarchy, colonial, and military systems of regime impact on people's social and religious lives in many ways. These abusive systems have left the country in a chaotic situation and created one of the poorest countries in the world.⁴

2. The Problems

In the Myanmar situation, the victims are the majority of the population with the exception of the elite. These people are voiceless and their lives are lived at the periphery. While people in general are oppressed, it is the women and children who have suffered the most. Because of the economic situation, many women have to work outside the home, at the same time as taking responsibility for the household, and for the care of the children and elderly parents. Husbands do not see it as their responsibility to help within the home. In the work sphere, men still hold the superior positions. Many young people, both boys and girls, leave the country for work elsewhere and are seriously exploited in other countries. Many young children also leave school and work to support their extend families. Boys work in shops and factories while many young girls become maids or baby sitters and eventually prostitutes.

Culturally in Myanmar women are expected to treat men as *thar ko thakin lin ko payah* which means 'respect your husband as god and son as lord.' Women's *lonegyi* or skirt is thought of as polluted and without glory, *hpon*. Even washing and drying the clothes of both men and women together are strictly forbidden.

Religiously, in Buddhism, women can only become nuns, a situation that replaced the *bhikkuni* order; that is the order of female disciples of Buddha (or female monks) who played

⁴ The broader discussion on this topic can be seen in section I.

such an important and leading role in early years of Buddhism.⁵ In early Christianity, women were limited in a similar way. Myanmar women are not allowed to climb up to the top of the pagoda or enter the sacred part of the pagoda. Because of their lesser *karma*, women need to be men in the next life in order to try and attain *nirvana*. The position of women is very low in this culture even though the general impression created is that Myanmar women have higher social freedom and status compared to those in other Asian countries.

Politically, a number of women have participated in freedom movements. The most prominent female political figure is Aung San Su Kyi. She gains respect from the people from being the daughter of Aung San, the Independent party leader and martyr. Another woman, Phyo Phyo Nwe, has gained a prominent role in the protest movement. However, the government have arrested and imprisoned her as, unlike Aung San Su Kyi, she comes from a grassroots background and is therefore an easier target for repression. In the 2010 Election, some women stood for election.

The circumstances and consequences of the political, economic, social, cultural and religious aspects of the current state shape the lives of Myanmar women in subtle as well as overt ways.

Christianity, on the other hand, as the minority or colonial religion is also marginalised. At first, supported by both the colonisers and Western missionaries, it played an important role. Later as those imperial influences were expelled from Myanmar, Christianity became a minority faith. Christians have adapted to the culture, social and religious life of the Buddhist Burmese society. It will be argued that some biblical values and teachings correspond to those of the Buddhist Burmese culture, which reinforces authority and calls for

⁵ David Burnett, *The Spirit of Buddhism, a Christian Perspective on Buddhist Thought* (East Sussex: Monarch Publications, 1996), 57.

submission in all social, political and religious realms. Christianity, no less than Buddhism, suppresses women.

3. Motivation

There are two main reasons for writing this thesis. First, as a female biblical scholar from Myanmar, my intention is to highlight the position of Christians and in particular how Christian women could move towards overcoming political, social and religious oppression. In the political struggle in Myanmar the voices of Christians are almost silent.

Secondly, Christians have been influenced by the concepts of authority and submission present in some of the New Testament letters. These texts discuss authority and submission widely, within the political, social, gender and religious arenas. The Buddhist Burmese hierarchy and patriarchal culture share some commonalities with these texts, but the letters are rarely considered or investigated with a critical eye – the 'hermeneutics of suspicion,' to quote a famous feminist critic – but rather, neglected to see the implications for contemporary Myanmar society.

3.1. The Silent Christians

What is the role of Christians in Myanmar? When the Burmese Buddhist people played the role of 'good Samaritan,' were the Christians playing the role of the Levite or the priest? Even though Buddhist monks believed that suffering comes from one's previous bad karma, nevertheless, they fought for the suffering people, because, for them, they saw the exercise of authority or power did not follow the teachings of Buddha, and that the state misused their power and authority. Students and women fought against the State because they knew their fellows and children were suffering. They did not perceive it as only a religious, social, or

political matter. They were fighting against what they saw and experienced of how the regime had caused the people to suffer.

In order to understand why Christians in Myanmar did not involve themselves in the struggle, the following questions need to be asked: why do they believe that social and political issues are worldly, and why they separate themselves from those affairs. Why do Myanmar Christians not see poverty, gender, class, racial discriminations and political struggles as their responsibilities? Another question is whether the silence of the Christian community comes from fear due to being victimised and/or their status as a minority group. Christians have traditionally been content to be engaged in their own mission, such as evangelisation, church planting and ecumenical affairs. Some theological seminaries raise their voices against the political situation, but only in the classrooms. Furthermore, they do not represent the whole Myanmar Christian community; their ideas are thought of as coming from a secular or social perspective on the country's affairs. The current situation demands that Christians should align themselves with the protest movement of powerless people.

3.2. Christians and the Concepts of Authority and Submission in Some New Testament Letters

Other motivating factors for Christians to reinterpret the New Testament texts referring to authority and submission can be seen in three spheres: social-cultural domestic codes, political pro-authority texts and anti-women leadership in forms of worship or in religious texts. The word ὑποτασσω is translatable as 'be subordinate' or 'be subject' which can be seen applied firstly to authority in general, e.g., Rom 13: 1, 5, 1 Pet 2: 13, 1 Cor 14: 34; to husbands, Eph 5: 22, Col 3: 18, 1 Pet 3: 15; or to masters 1 Pet 2: 18. Here those carrying authority are husbands, masters, fathers, the rulers and traditional religious leaders.

The word 'authority' or 'power' is used in three distinctive areas. First, ἐξουσια is applied in the political sense, as 'capability, might or power, authority, absolute power, or ruling power' as in Rom 13: 1-2 and Titus 3:1. Second it is used as power in religious affairs or to have 'freedom of choice, right to act, decide or authority to exercise' in the church such as in prophesying and praying (1 Cor 11:10). Another word for authority or ruling power in religious realms is αὐθεντεω (1 Tim 2: 12) which mean 'authority or right of governing or dominion over' by which it is forbidden for women to teach and govern over men.

Within the Myanmar Christian context, the Bible, especially the New Testament, is used literally as the word of God and as an authoritative guide. Generally the Bible has been interpreted by three important Christian groups in Myanmar: first, the pastors or the ministers of the local churches; second, some conservative biblical teachers or scholars from the theological institutions or seminaries, and third, some liberal biblical scholars, feminist and liberationist scholars especially from the Myanmar Institute of Theology.⁷

The first group, even though they are aware that some of the texts (e. g., texts with political, gender and leadership issues) are problematic, they still will read them literally or simply overlook them. For them, political, social, economic and religious issues are separate. The Church never wants to take a risk by interpreting these kinds of texts in the Myanmar context. Moreover, pastors or ministers also reject western academic interpretations, (whether literary, historical or textual) together with liberation theological and other Asian perspectives. In certain ways the church has become irrelevant by ignoring social and political issues that affect all people in the country. In the second group, most of the biblical scholars

⁶ L. L. Belleville, "Authority," Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 57-58.

⁷ Myanmar Institute of Theology is a renowned educational institution with about a thousand students. It runs many programmes such as Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies at undergraduate level, Master of Divinity at postgraduate, and Master of Religious Education for adult lay people, among others. 80% of graduates serve the churches and non-governmental organisation groups. Most graduates become leaders in their chosen areas.

or teachers of the Bible institutions or seminaries tend to focus on the texts and the problems in the texts (e.g., whether Paul wrote thirteen letters or only seven, or whether the texts with gender issues were actually written by Paul or not). They are not concerned with making the Bible relevant to the needs of the people. The third group have done research on contextualisation, world religions, and feminist studies but they have been widely criticised by some conservative Christians as 'liberal' scholars. Their claims and teachings are rarely accepted and are considered irrelevant in the convenient belief that Church and State or social issues are separate.

The motivation for this thesis is to highlight the causes for the silence of Myanmar Christians, the factors that make them silent and without the real authority and power that made Christians interpret the Bible in the way that they used to. Through this study, it is hoped that a possible guideline for the Christians and people in Myanmar will emerge, first of all for the theological institutions in Myanmar to enable them not to read the texts as normative, nor to neglect them, but find the resistant elements within the text that foster a stand against oppression. Moreover, it is hoped that they will try to find connection with the local churches, to hear their voices, and also to be receptive to opinions and changes of view. It is hoped that this thesis will enable the churches, especially the theological institutions in Myanmar, to be more aware of and actively participate in dealing with the current postcolonial political, social and religious problems, as far as possible.

Myanmar Christians should be seeking to give a voice to the powerless. This would be facilitated by a reinterpretation of the concept of authority and submission in the New Testament letters from a postcolonial feminist perspective.

4. Aim

The aim of this thesis is to answer the following questions:

- How does the concept of authority and submission play an important role in the religious, social and political life of the people of Myanmar and the Greco-Roman world?
- What were the different interpretations of texts concerning authority and submission in the New Testament? How have mainstream western theological and Christological concerns influenced concepts of authority and submission in the NT commentaries of the colonial and postcolonial periods, and in the literature of Asia and Myanmar?
- How can the texts be reread and reinterpreted from a postcolonial feminist
 perspective? To date these have been neglected or taken literally by the churches, the
 people and Christian academic institutions.
- How can this postcolonial feminist interpretation contribute to the traditional interpretations of the texts of authority and submission and offer new meanings in the context of Myanmar?

5. Main Focus, Inclusions and Limitations

This task has been pursued by selecting some of New Testament texts which form the basis of the churches' teaching, particularly in relation to political, social, gender and religious authority. It does not attempt to trace the whole history of Myanmar, but will briefly discuss those issues that relate to the texts. It will include the discussion of interpreters from colonial backgrounds, as well as some selections from contemporary western and Asian exegesis. The selected commentaries are those used by Myanmar seminaries. In the case of Asian sources, only the interpretations or the papers or articles from widely used English language journals

such as *Dharma*, *In God's Image*, and *The Asia Journal of Theology* will be used. The thesis will provide a brief background history of the concept of the authority and submission in some New Testament letters within the specific colonial context. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the texts has been selected as it uses inclusive language. Taking a postcolonial feminist stance, the author has chosen to employ the 'last' names but not the 'surname' of the authors. Male terms, such as God, Christ and king, are used as quoted and not my preferred terms.

6. Methodology

This thesis aims to evaluate and give alternative interpretations to the Christian understanding of authority and submission as found in some New Testament letters in order to be a means of encouraging Myanmar Christians to participate in the political, social, gender problems in Myanmar. Therefore, it will mainly use the postcolonial feminist interpretations of Kwok Puilan⁹, R.S. Sugirtharajah and Musa W. Dube. For the historical literary analysis or empire studies, Sugirtharajah¹⁰, Pui-lan and other Western, Asian and Myanmar sources will be used.

6.1 Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation

Postcolonial feminism can be defined as a perspective which derives from both 'postcolonialism' and 'feminism'. ¹¹ It emphasises and challenges Western colonialism and its influences on biblical scholarship and Christian history. It also takes seriously the liberation

⁸ The author considers using the surname of the authors as discriminating against women's rights and legitimising the patriarchal and colonising systems.

⁹ Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah, *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998).

¹¹ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 13.

of women from the patriarchal system. Postcolonial feminism focuses in equal measure on imperialism (or colonialism) and patriarchy. Before discussing postcolonial feminism, one needs first to understand postcolonialism, and then feminism.

6.1.1. An Outline of Postcolonial Biblical Criticism

The postcolonialist view was at first a resistant discourse; only later did it become a methodology or criticism. Its origin came from the response to three different modes of interpretation. First, the orientalist mode reviews the oriental classic texts to see how they are directly related to the NT. Second, the anglicanist mode regards the biblical stories as true and the native stories as just myths and fables. Third, the nativist mode turns away from both orientalist and anglicanist views and focuses on their traditional vernacular stories. In response to these modes, the postcolonialist challenges the universalisation of a European interpretation and modernism which values the objectivity and neutrality. It raises the resistant voices of the marginalised including women. It places Christian texts alongside other religious texts. ¹³

Postcolonial Criticism started in the 1960s with the view to assisting independence from colonialism in many forms. The term 'post-colonial' refers to the historical period of the aftermath of colonialism. However, the term 'postcolonial', without a hyphen, used to mean:

[A] reactive resistance discourse of the colonized who critically interrogate dominant knowledge systems in order to recover the past from the Western slander and misinformation of the colonial period, and who also continue to interrogate neo-colonizing tendencies after the declaration of independence. ¹⁴

¹² Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Charlice Press, 2000), 23.

¹³ Sugirtharajah, Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations, 4-18.

¹⁴ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*, 11-13.

They question the domination or the power of western colonizers and also the neo-colonialism. It is not the development of the colonial but "[i]t is an instrument or method of analyzing situations where one social group dominated another." Sugirtharajah said that "[t]he greatest single aim of postcolonial biblical criticism is to situate colonialism at the centre of the Bible and biblical interpretation." Why?

From the postcolonial point of view, the Bible has been read and interpreted by western scholars from western cultural and colonial perspectives. It may be argued that this was to gain power over and control indigenous people, over women, blacks and the others. Indeed, even indigenous peoples have, in their commentaries, discourses and writings, often ignored their own culture and reinforced colonial powers and practices.¹⁷ Therefore Sugirtharajah said,

There were two aspects: first to analyze the diverse strategies by which the colonizers constructed images of the colonized and second, to study how the colonized themselves made use of and went beyond many of those strategies in order to articulate their identity, self-worth, and empowerment.¹⁸

Dube supports this view by stating that the Bible was used by the colonisers to control the colonised by imposing their own power, authority, standards and practices and to silence the voices of the colonised and powerless people.¹⁹

Going further than analyses of the colonial elements in texts, the postcolonial motive is to challenge and decolonise both indigenous and western colonialist writings 'to enter into a

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid 25

¹⁷ R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., "Biblical Studies after the Empire: From A Colonial to a Postcolonial Mode of Interpretation," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, *Bible and Postcolonialism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 15-16.

¹⁸ Sugirtharajah, Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation, 11.

¹⁹ See Musa W. Dube, "Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)," in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 297, where she explains this concept with the term 'imperialism.'

new era of scholarship which overturns and dismantles those colonial perspectives.'²⁰ In this way the postcolonialists challenged the authority of the Bible and of those who used the Bible as described. They also set out to help the oppressed or colonised people in resisting such authority. The benefit of a postcolonial reading is to make indigenous people, and voices of 'the other' to be heard, their perspectives to be known and their practices to be seen.

From a postcolonial point of view, the biblical texts also reflect four codes: first is the 'hegemonic code,' which Sugirtharajah calls the 'throne-succession narrative.' This code considers those with power such as kings, trade men, elites, and is replete with terms such as business, jobs, money, luxury, success and conquests. To decode this, the Postcolonialist tries to find the people who are left out by the authors and investigate how they react to those powers. This code legitimizes authority. Second is the 'professional code,' which fabricates the laws and the rules for the people, usually to promote hegemonic interests. It centralises law, traditions and customs to maintain order in society. The Postcolonialist tries to find how these centralising and legalising aspects are working in the texts and how the authors promote them. The third code is the 'negotiative code,' which attempts to fit into any context at any time so that it adapts or re-contextualises a story or an experience. The Postcolonialist searches to see whether the texts reflect and adapt the situations of the time as God-given, or mutable. The last code is the voice of protest and is oppositional, raising the needs, dreams and hopes of the marginalised.²¹

In summary, postcolonial interpreters usually read the texts with three approaches or criticisms: first, they find the colonial contexts, colonial ideas, theologies inside the texts - in other words, they study the colonial elements; second they try to find the colonial intentions

²⁰ Sugirtharajah, ed. "Biblical Studies after the Empire: From A Colonial to a Postcolonial Mode of Interpretation," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, 15-16.

²¹ Sugirtharajah, Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation, 79-86.

hidden in the interpretations of western traditional scholarship and question the different interpretations with their colonial interests and concerns; and third, they try to find the postcolonial concern and reread the texts with a postcolonial, liberation perspective.²²

6.1.2. An Outline of Feminist Hermeneutic or Women's Liberation Hermeneutic

Before going further, it is necessary to explain what feminism is. According to Alice Ogden Bellis, there were two waves of feminist biblical interpretation in western countries that occurred alongside the work undertaken in other Third World countries. The first wave started in the 19th century with the advent of the women's suffrage movement, where women were fighting for a right to speak in public. The most significant advance was the compilation of *The Women's Bible* by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1898. This version was used as the weapon for women's liberation and the pro-women movement because it revealed the patriarchal influences in the Bible. The second wave followed in the mid-20th century, when many divergent interpretations of the Bible were published. There were two major shifts in interpretation: some authors totally rejected the Bible as God's word while others were reformists for whom the Bible was perceived to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. Reformists will create their own canonisations rather than accepting the whole of the male canonised Bible. For this group the Bible is not silent on the subject of women's liberation. This opens avenues for women to interpret the Bible in their own way, in their various contexts and experiences. From a western perspective, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza²³

_

²² Sugirtharajah,ed. "Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation," in *Voices From the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, 68-70 and R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Post colonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 250-259.

²³ She is a pioneer of biblical interpretation and feminist theology, Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity of Harvard Divinity School, and was the first woman president of Society of Biblical Literature. She has written widely renowned books such as *In Memory of Her, Bread Not Stone, The Power of Naming, Wisdom Ways*, etc, "Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza," http://www.hds.harvard.edu/faculty/schusslerfiorenza.cfm (accessed on 20 October 2009).

changed the direction of feminist biblical interpretation from the questioning of the authority of the Bible into a community of interpretations with four tasks: "a hermeneutics of suspicion, a hermeneutics of historical interpretation and reconstruction, a hermeneutics of ethical and theological evaluation, and a hermeneutics of creative imagination and ritualisation." Katharine Doob Sakenfeld also suggests that there are three approaches for feminist interpretations of the Bible. The first is about looking at the texts (e.g., Gal 3:28) which contradict texts against women (e.g., 1 Tim 2:11-15, 1 Cor 11: 2-16, 14:34-35). The second approach is to look into the Bible with the perspective of finding the meaning of 'gospel' and how women play a role in this gospel. Moreover, it looks beyond the canonical Bible and includes the liberation of men and women. The third approach is about looking at both ancient and modern texts which point to women having lived in patriarchal and andocentric societies. For her, when women read or interpret the Bible, the feminists battle with these three facts. However, they do not come in sequence, but can move back and forth and alternate.²⁵

The Third World was introduced to feminism at the end of the 1970s as an analysis of women's oppression and was known for its liberal, radical or socialist strands. However, in the 1980s, distinctions were developed in its political base. In the 1990s, with the development of eco-feminism, western women were campaigning for an anthropocentric approach, while Third World women were still fighting for the adoption of a western orientation. Generally Third World feminists can be defined as a group which underlines "the intersection of sex, race, and class in its analysis and affirms the need for a new society that promotes respect and right relationships not only among women and men but with the rest of

²⁴ Alice Ogden Bellis, "Feminist Biblical Scholarship," in *Women in Scripture: a Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in Hebrew Bible, The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical and the New Testament*, ed. Carol Meyers (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2000), 24-27.

²⁵ Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Feminist Uses of Biblical Materials," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Letty M. Russell (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1985), 56-64.

creation."²⁶ For example, black feminists, who called themselves womanists, ²⁷ also contributed to such interpretations and have introduced other aspects to the debate. They also experience a further tension between the value of the female gender and that of ethnicity because they shared the experience of slavery with men. Latin American feminists, such as Elsa Tamez, offer a critique of the Bible within the contexts of poverty, malnutrition, repression and torture. Asian (Indian) feminists also see the Bible from a cultural perspective while Korean feminists, such as Chung Hyun Kyung, focus on the context of the colonial history of westernisation. These third world feminists see other oppressions around current and experiential gender issues. For them, western feminists are anti-Judaism²⁸ and oriented to textual work with different emphases - the right hand group: asked the historical questions, the left hand group used reader-response criticism to focus on the reader's understanding of the text and a middle group use literary approaches such as form criticism. However what these interpreters have in common is opposition to patriarchy or social injustice. ²⁹

Therefore from the feminist perspective (western feminist), the Bible has been questioned as the book of patriarchy. The task of the third world feminist is to deconstruct those patriarchal elements in the Bible and to liberate women from current exploitation and oppression and to empower women to take on roles other than the traditional ones. However,

²⁶ Arche Ligo, "Feminism" *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*, eds. Virginia Fabella, MM and R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 87.

²⁷ Alice Walker is the first African American woman who developed the womanist concept. She is a black woman who spoke her voice and told her story. Rufus Burrow, Jr, "Womanist Theology and Ethics," *Encounter* 59.1-2 (1998), 157-175. [E-Journal on- line],

http://ftp0.timeorg.net/pub/book/psychology/Feminism/Burrow%20%20Womanist%20theology%20and%20ethics.pdf (accessed 1 January 2010).

²⁸ For example, in terms of portraying Jesus in positive ways, they present the Jews and Judaism in negative ways. Bellis, "Feminist Biblical Scholarship," 29.

²⁹ Ibid., 27-31.

they usually neglect the colonial influences on gender issues and even reinforce western colonial strategies in their interpretations.³⁰

6.1.3. Postcolonial Criticism and Liberation and Feminist Hermeneutic³¹

Postcolonial criticism and feminist criticism with liberation hermeneutic have shared some distinctive, diverse, and parallel views. Feminist hermeneutics (FH) and liberation hermeneutics (LH) centre within Christianity, church, and monotheism presenting God as a God of the poor, a patriarchal God (FH), and Jesus as the liberator. The Bible is seen as a secure and a sound book for the faithful, and also an adjudicator of moral and theological disputes (LH). The feminists and liberationists encourage modernity, tell the poor about the powerful, and relate to the victims of past and present forms of neo-colonialism. They also base their interpretation within the frame of 'salvation history' and the 'Jesus Christ saga' and they read the texts from an Israelite perspective rather than that of the Canaanite or Egyptian victims.

Postcolonial criticism centres on secular humanism and postmodernism. It seeks to understand the many layers of polytheistic contexts and it understands the bible as both safe and unsafe and as a familiar as well as distant text. It views it as not a cure for all illness, but rather a puzzle; messy, awkward and complicated. Jesus is seen as a more complex and problematic figure. It tells the truth and challenges both, old and new, colonisers (or powers). It rectifies the discursive defamation of the 'others' or victims from, not only Israel, but also from other nations (e.g., Canaanites, Egyptians). Its concern is to free biblical interpretations from a literal reading and introduce the visualisation of reality.

³⁰ Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 24-25, 112.

³¹ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*, 67-120 and Sugirtharajah, *Troublesome Texts: The Bible in Colonial and Contemporary Culture*, 122-123.

Both approaches take the poor or the marginalized seriously. For them, the Bible and biblical interpretations are problematic, contain contradictions, and inadequacies. They struggle with its efficacy and meanings, and undermine the certitude of dominant biblical scholarship.

6. 1. 4. Postcolonial Feminism and its Significances

The combination of postcolonial and feminist theories was introduced by Laura Donaldson, Pui-lan, and Dube and 'their work has immensely enriched and sharpened feminist studies in religion.' Postcolonial feminist interpretation shares a commonality with that of the postcolonial interpretation but its primary concern is gender issues. At the same time, Arche Ligo confirms "Third World women who consider the experience of colonialisation and imperialism as crucial to their analysis define their feminist ideology as postcolonial." ³⁴

From a western biblical studies viewpoint, Schüssler Fiorenza comments that postcolonial study has developed without taking feminist questions into account.³⁵ She argues that the postcolonialists have their bias. When Stephen Moore looked at postcolonial biblical studies, he offered three criticisms: historical, contextual liberation, and empire studies and its engagement with extra-biblical studies, although he did not include the FH³⁶ Fernando Segovia also understood postcolonial biblical criticism as the discourse of resistance and emancipation with other fields such as social-economic (Marxist) and feminist criticism.

³² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 122.

³³ Kwok Pui-Lan, "Making the connections: Postcolonial Studies and Feminist Biblical Interpretation," in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah, 48-49; Sugirtharajah, ed., "Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation," in *Voices From the Margin*, 68-70. Sugirtharajah, The *Bible and the Third World: Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-colonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 250-259.

³⁴ Ligo, "Feminism," Dictionary of Third World Theologies, 87

³⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 112.

³⁶ Ibid., 119.

However, for him, these do not have the same authority as postcolonial studies as they were originated in the west. Segovia also views feminism as having not only a gender issue but a racial dimension.³⁷

For the third world, feminist studies are understood as the product of the western feminist movement and consequently cannot accurately answer the questions of Asia or third world women. Chandra Talpade Mohanty claims that the western feminist construction of third world women colonises and erases the heterogeneity of their real histories and experiences. Those constructions create the binarism between the third world women as sexually inhibited, poor, uneducated while the western women are modern, highly developed, and able to use the freedom. So in western feminist eyes, third world women need to be educated when they see themselves as 'others' and different from western women.³⁸

According to Leela Gandhi, both postcolonial and feminist approaches show a concern for the marginalized and the others. They are both suspicious methods and resist the patriarchy/colonial domination over gender, culture and race.³⁹ There are three 'collisions and collusions' between postcolonial and feminist theory. The first collision is that, for feminists, women in the third world are double victims of colonial, local and foreign patriarchy which is usually neglected by the postcolonial scholars (i.e., the gender blindness of anti-colonialism).⁴⁰ Second, postcolonialism criticises western liberal feminism claiming that it orientalises the Third World wo/man and exoticises her for imperial and western consumption. Furthermore, it also silences the voice of the wo/man by trying to speak for

³⁷ Ibid., 121.

³⁸Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminist Without Boarders, Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003), 28.

³⁹ Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 82-83.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 83.

her/him.⁴¹ Thirdly, there is the quarrel between postcolonialism and liberal feminism about the question of which came first. But it was a product of collaboration of these two which has studied the 'aggressive myth of both imperial and nationalist masculinity.'⁴²

Avoiding the flaws of both Postcolonial criticism and feminist views, postcolonial feminist criticism draws attention to both gender and colonial (or third world) experiences. The following explanations of the postcolonial feminist views are the basic methodology applied to this thesis. Dube considers Postcolonial feminist criticism as first decolonizing imperialism and patriarchy's methods, strategies, terms and ideologies in the Bible and other religious and cultural texts which double or treble oppressed women. Second, she provides a method for 'decolonising' western academics' works and third, she offers a resistant reading on the texts, not only to liberate women from both of colonial and patriarchal powers, but also to empower women to resist and decolonise both patriarchal and colonial or modern imperial systems in order to liberate both women and men.⁴³

Pui-lan's view on Postcolonial feminist criticism, as summarized by Schüssler Fiorenza, has five characteristics;

- 1. Feminist postcolonial criticism indicts western scholarship and interpretation as totalizing, pointing out its co-optation by imperial interest.
- 2. It is a counter-hegemonic discourse which pays special attention to the hidden and neglected voices in the Bible.
- 3. It pays special attention to the multi-faith contexts of Third World situations.

⁴² Ibid., 96ff.

⁴¹ Ibid., 88-89.

⁴³ Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 24-43.

- 4. It welcomes and fosters contributions from marginalized groups such as the Dalits, indigenous peoples, migrants, those living in the borderlands, Diaspora, and at many different margins and "especially women in these communities."
- 5. It interacts with and draws on other hermeneutical frameworks such as postmodernism and post-structuralism. 44

In summary, postcolonial feminism first sees or recognises the overlapping of imperialism and patriarchal methods, strategies, terms and ideologies in the Bible (and other religious and cultural texts) which serve to double or triple the oppression experienced by women. Second, it criticises western or colonial interpretations and third it rereads (or liberate rewrites) those texts not only to women from neocolonialism/imperialism/capitalism/slavery, globalisation and multi-faiths, and patriarchal cultural powers, but also to empower women to resist or speak out decolonise/depatriachalise in order to liberate both women and men. 45

6.2. Historical Literary Analysis

For this thesis, historical literary analysis is used as a tool to examine the history of the New Testament texts that relate to the concepts of authority, power and submission and also their Christian interpretations. It mainly focuses on their colonial and patriarchal mentalities in their particular historical settings. This is also known as Empire Studies.

The views of western commentators used in this thesis are largely based on the author's historical literary analysis using commentaries such as Tyndale Bible Commentary, Word Biblical Commentary, and Anchor Bible Commentary. The works of some other

⁴⁴ Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 123 and see also Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, 81-84.

⁴⁵ Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, 81-84 encourages ordinary women to reread the texts and to participate in liberation movement.

famous Biblical scholars who deal with pertinent texts will also be discussed. These will include the writing of; Richard A Horsley, Neil Elliott and Joerg Rieger who have studied Graeco-Roman imperialism which had such a strong influence on early Christianity; David Balch's work on the early Greek philosophers' imperial propaganda; Ben Witherington's early Christian and Jewish women history. Feminist and women commentaries written by different feminist commentators and great feminist biblical scholars such as Schüssler Fiorenza's will also be examined.

Asian literary and historical analysis, will be based on Sugirtharajah's *Asian Biblical Hermeneutic and Postcolonialism* which discusses mainly Orientalism, demoding and decoding the texts.⁴⁶ Here, his method of reading will be applied on rereading the interpretations from Asia and Myanmar.

This thesis will also use Pui-lan's three concepts of doing feminist theology in Asia: "cultural translation, cultural hybridization and cultural resistance." Other Asian Christians' interpretations from a liberationist point of view are included in discussions to compare and contrast them with postcolonial feminist readings. The works of Asian feminist theologians, such as Hope S. Antone and Chung Hyun Kyung, will be discussed.

Both literary and historical analysis includes readings from the 'post' perspectives such as postmodernism and postcolonialism. This thesis will explore the Myanmar Baptist missionaries, churches and theological institutions' interpretation of the texts. Most are unaware that the texts are read with a western cultural bias. The Bible translations will come from the available Burmese Bible versions, such as that of Adoniram Judson (the American Baptist missionary), which was first published on 24 October 1840, and is still used as the authorised Bible in Myanmar. Other significant versions, such as those of native Myanmar

⁴⁶ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*, 76-86.

⁴⁷ Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*, 34.

translators, aim to reach all classes (including non-Christian readers) with clearer meanings and easier vocabularies: U Sein Pe's *Myanmar Good News Version* (NT and Psalms) translated with the leading of Bible Society of Myanmar in 1985 and printed in 1986 and *NT of the Living Bible* 1985, 48 are foremost in this task.

As Myanmar Christian resources are so limited, articles from magazines, research papers and dissertations produced within theological Seminaries will be decoded from a postcolonial point of view. Myanmar feminist and biblical scholars (for example, Anna May Say Pa, Aye Nwe, Mary Dun and others) will be the main subjects for a postcolonial feminist reading from Myanmar.

Not only the Christian, but also Buddhist literature such as Peter Harvey's *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* and Rita M. Gross's *Buddhism after Patriarchy* are examined, together with Myanmar literature and writings on its historical background, such as Aung San Sun Kyi's books and Tun Aung Chain's, ⁴⁹ work related to the thesis will be included.

In summary, the author, as a postcolonial feminist, will use Empire studies, 'Destudies,' such as decolonialising, depatriarchalising, decapitalising, decoding, de-moding, and readings with resistant perspectives, will be applied in order to reach the aims of this thesis.

7. Data Collection

Data collection is mainly based on the interpretations of missionaries to Myanmar and by Myanmar scholars on the authority and submission in those texts. As there are very limited sources from Myanmar, other Asian Biblical interpretations on those texts are included as

⁴⁸ Lwin Lwin Aung, *Myanmar Bibles, "Its Beginning and Development,"* (BRE Research Paper, MIT, 1991), 11-14, 16-17. Due to doctrinal disputes on translations (for example, the word 'baptized' was translated in Judson's version as 'immersion' which was not agreed in some other denominations such as the Anglican and Methodist), some other versions were published.

⁴⁹ Tun Aung Chain is a Myanmar Historian.

source material. I will compare postcolonial feminist readings with other readings, such as; postcolonial, colonial, traditional and liberationist. Thus, most of the resources used in this study are published works. These include biblical theological, historical, social scientific literature concerned with gender issues as well as commentaries, articles, essays, book reviews and online materials that are relevant to this thesis.

8. Thesis Structure

Section I consists of a brief introduction to the history of Myanmar (its political, social and religious background). The arrival of American Baptist missionaries into Myanmar is also briefly covered. In the second part of Section I there is a discussion of how authority, power and the imposition of submission are affected by the Buddhist and the Burmese culture, as well as by the other religious groups (such as animists and Christians) within the social, political and religious realms of Myanmar. How Myanmar women and girls become the victims of these patriarchal/imperial/colonial/neo-colonial powers is also covered.

Section II will explore the way that the authority, power and the imposition of submission are practised in social circles (husband and wife, male and female, master and slave and the rich and the poor) which create class, status and gender discriminations and which can be seen as reflecting the New Testament 'household codes' (Col 3:18-22, Eph 5:22-6:9 and 1 Pet 3:1-7, 2:18-19). These social submission texts will be discussed first as they are the main stem of the other forms of oppression, such as political (Section III) and religious submission (Sections IV).⁵⁰

The household codes were essential not only in the ancient Graeco-Roman world, but also in early Christian communities and those of the Buddhist Burmese. The initial part of this

⁵⁰ Ralph P. Martin, *Colossians: The Church's Lord and Christian's Liberty* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1972), 129-130.

chapter analyses the patriarchal and hierarchal social systems which have oppressed women, slaves and the poor. This is achieved by exploring how these New Testament codes came into being and have been legitimised since the Graeco-Roman period. The following chapter scrutinises the interpretations of various biblical scholars: traditional biblical exegetes, liberation theologians, feminist biblical scholars and Myanmar Christians, who have examined the texts to establish whether they speak for the patriarchal fathers, masters and husbands or for the wives, female slaves, the poor or the female children. Postcolonial feminist interpretations of these texts are discussed in response (or resistance) to the concepts of power, authority and submission in the social sphere of Myanmar Buddhist and Christian communities.

Section III discusses first how imperialism functioned in the Graeco-Roman world and how this system influenced the development of Christianity. Thus the colonial, imperial and patriarchal backgrounds of the texts (Rom 13:1-7, 1 Pet 2:13-17) are all considered in this study. Second, it presents how different scholars' interpretations challenge or reinforce the authority of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism. Then, from a postcolonial feminist view, the texts are reinterpreted and rewritten in order to challenge the Myanmar political authority with comparative studies on the Buddhist view of political authority.

Section IV highlights how authority, power and submission are used in the religious sphere to reinforce the authority of the religious leaders and neglects the rights of all the priesthood of believers, especially the rights of women to leadership roles. For that reason this section will focus its attention on how texts such as 1 Cor 11: 2-16, 14: 34-35 and 1 Tim 2: 11- 15 have reinforced or legitimated the male leadership role and degraded women's participation at this level. It also discusses how various biblical interpretations from scholars such as the traditional western, Asian liberationist, feminist and those from Myanmar in

particular, affect the religious community. It will also discuss how postcolonial feminist interpretations can modify these concepts.

The application of these theoretical concepts to the Myanmar situation is discussed in the conclusion which summarises the findings of this thesis and demonstrates how postcolonial feminist interpretations are different from other types as well as how they can benefit Myanmar biblical scholarship and particularly the role of women in the society. Moreover how this thesis contributes to mainstream biblical scholarship is highlighted. Suggestions are given for further research in the postcolonial feminist field.

9. Significance and Contribution

This thesis is presented as a great challenge both to the writer herself and also to Myanmar Christianity. It will question the Myanmar Christian community's fundamental beliefs on the authority of the Bible and how the missionaries and religious leaders have practised the teachings of the Bible. This study will also introduce the community to both postcolonial and postcolonial feminist biblical studies and offer a new approach to the understanding of the Bible in the Myanmar context. It is hoped that it will contribute not only to biblical scholarship but will stand as a voice of the oppressed people in Myanmar.

SECTION I

CHAPTER 1 THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN THE MYANMAR CONTEXT

1. 1. Brief Political History of Myanmar

A complete and definitive history of Myanmar, even it were possible, would be out of place here. However, it may be helpful to present an historical outline to which appropriate references can be made. What is offered here is a consensus history in the sense that it does not aim to advance theories which would be radically challenged by experts in the field. However, it is also a personal history in the sense that it addresses issues of particular relevance to the main arguments of this thesis.

1.1.1. Pre-colonial Era

Myanmar is populated by many ethnic groups with the Bamars being the majority. This plurality of inhabitants makes the country an exciting mosaic but has also made its history complex and full of conflicts. Not much is known of this early history. However, by the beginning of the Common Era, the Mons were established in central Myanmar and then began moving down into their present locations in the Irrawaddy Delta and Tennesarim coastal areas. Another early group, the Pyus (100BC to840AD), had principal cities at Thayetittaya, Bekthano and Prome. The Burmese migrated into the country in the 9th century and overwhelmed the Pyus.

The Karens, Kachins, Shans, Chins and other ethnic groups migrated into the country over a number of different periods. The Karens, found in Tennesarim and along the Thai-Myanmar border, claim to be the earliest inhabitants. Martin Smith divides these ethnic peoples into two main groups; the first group, made up of Bamar, Shan, Rakhine and Mon

located in the valleys and practising wet rice cultivation, were literate and practised Theravada Buddhism; and the rest, being mountain-dwellers, practised 'slash-and-burn' agricultural methods, were non-literate with oral traditions. They worshipped ancestral spirits and the spirits of nature.¹

In this early period, city states, such as Wethali of the Arakan (now called Rakhine), Pegu and Thaton of the Mons, and Beikthano, Sriksetra and Hanlin of the Pyus, existed. In the Shan plateau, Shan chieftains were beginning to mark out their territories, whereas the many ethnic hill tribes were led by their village head men.²

The early Myanmar history can be divided into three periods: The Pagan period, ³ the Toungoo dynasty and Konbaung dynasty.⁴

1 Martin Smith, *Burma (Myanmar): The Time for Change* (Minority Rights International, 2002), 6 – 7.

² For details of this period see Maung Htin Aung, *A History of Burma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967); *Burmese History Before 1287: A Defence Of The Chronicles* (Oxford: The Asoka Society, 1970); D. G. E. Hall, *Burma* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950); G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma from the Earliest Times to 1824* (London: Longmans, Green, 1925).

³ Maung Maung, *Burma in the Family of Nations* (Amsterdam: Djambatan, 1956), 11.

⁴ Maung, Burma in the Family of Nations, 9.

Illustration 1 Three periods of Early Myanmar History

The Pagan Period

- •Anawrahta (1044-1077) was the first king capable enough to unify the country and establish the First Myanmar Kingdom at Pagan.
- An ardent Buddhist, at the advice of the monk, Shin Arahan, he invaded and destroyed the Mon kingdom of Thaton and brought back the Buddhist scriptures, the Tripitakas.
- built thousand of pagodas (still exist today)
- •Using resources and energy in building pagod led to the climate and dryness of the land and the intermittent warfare weakened the dynasty so that it fell to the Mongols in 1287.

The Toungoo Dynasty

- •the fall of Pagan led to a series of petty kingdoms such as Shan, Mon and Bamars
- •The third king of Toungoo, Bayinnaung (1552-1581) is acknowledged as one of the greatest Bamar king who not only unified the kingdom but extended it into Ayutthaya.
- Later, Portuguese encroachment along the coast, Thai nationalism and Manipuri incursion weakened the kingdom. It fell to the Mons in 1752.

The Konbaung Dynasty

- •Alaungpaya (1752-1760) from Shwebo stopped the northward advance of the Mons and establish a commanding kingdom in 1752. His final ending was Yangon, "the end of strife."
- •King Alaungpaya established the last and probably the greatest Bamar dynasty. He attacked the Thais and his son, King Hsinbyushin destroyed Ayutthaya (1763-1776) and Another son, Bodawpaya lost control of Siam but captured the Arakan kingdom which bordered India.
- •The Konbaung kings moved their capital from Shwebo to Ava to Amarapura and finally Mandalay which was founded by Mindon (1852-1878). He started education and schools and moderning the country.
- During His son, Thibaw's reign, three wars were fought with the British, the First Anglo-Burmese War in 1824-1826 when Arakan and Tenessarim was ceded to the British, the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852 1853) when lower Burma was ceded and the Third Anglo-Burmese War when the whole country(1885) became part of the British India.

1.1.2. The Colonial Era

Myanmar was ruled as part of British India until separation in 1937. The British moved the capital to Yangon⁵ to make it more accessible to trade and commerce. They administered the

⁵ First was known as Rangoon.

Illustration 1 Three periods of Early Myanmar History

The Pagan Period

- •Anawrahta (1044-1077) was the first king capable enough to unify the country and establish the First Myanmar Kingdom at Pagan.
- •An ardent Buddhist, at the advice of the monk, Shin Arahan, he invaded and destroyed the Mon kingdom of Thaton and brought back the Buddhist scriptures, the Tripitakas.
- •built thousand of pagodas (still exist today)
- •Using resources and energy in building pagod led to the climate and dryness of the land and the intermittent warfare weakened the dynasty so that it fell to the Mongols in 1287.

The Toungoo Dynasty

- •the fall of Pagan led to a series of petty kingdoms such as Shan, Mon and Bamars
- •The third king of Toungoo, Bayinnaung (1552-1581) is acknowledged as one of the greatest Bamar king who not only unified the kingdom but extended it into Ayutthaya.
- Later, Portuguese encroachment along the coast, Thai nationalism and Manipuri incursion weakened the kingdom. It fell to the Mons in 1752.

The Konbaung Dynasty

- •Alaungpaya (1752-1760) from Shwebo stopped the northward advance of the Mons and establish a commanding kingdom in 1752. His final ending was Yangon, "the end of strife."
- •King Alaungpaya established the last and probably the greatest Bamar dynasty. He attacked the Thais and his son, King Hsinbyushin destroyed Ayutthaya (1763-1776) and Another son, Bodawpaya lost control of Siam but captured the Arakan kingdom which bordered India.
- •The Konbaung kings moved their capital from Shwebo to Ava to Amarapura and finally Mandalay which was founded by Mindon (1852-1878). He started education and schools and moderning the country.
- •During His son, Thibaw's reign, three wars were fought with the British, the First Anglo-Burmese War in 1824-1826 when Arakan and Tenessarim was ceded to the British, the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852 1853) when lower Burma was ceded and the Third Anglo-Burmese War when the whole country(1885) became part of the British India.

1.1.2. The Colonial Era

Myanmar was ruled as part of British India until separation in 1937. The British moved the capital to Yangon⁵ to make it more accessible to trade and commerce. They administered the

⁵ First was known as Rangoon.

country as two separate territories: 'Ministerial Burma,' where Burmese dominated in a form of parliamentary home rule, and the 'Frontier Areas,' where the ethnic minorities mostly lived controlled by traditional headmen and chiefs. This 'divide and rule' policy of the British extended to recruitment into the army where the minorities were favoured, these races being classed 'the martial races.' Religiously, the country was also divided into Christianity and Buddhism. U Ba Swe (a government minister in the 1950s) recounts that, "[i]n order to separate them culturally from the Burmese, they converted the Karens to their religion and also created a separate literature and privileges for them."

The Burmese's antipathy was expressed in the revolts of student strikes and political participation in government to agitate for reforms, including separation from India and later for independence. Student leaders, such as Aung San, organised student groups to call for independence. Finally Myanmar became independent on 4 January 1948.⁷

1.1.3. Post-colonial Era

1. 1.3.1. The Parliamentary Period

By the constitution of 1947 Myanmar was formed as a quasi-federal Union made up of Arakan, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Kayah States with Chin Special Division. However, armed insurrection soon broke out which threatened the government. The government response was a strengthening of the Army which was assisted by western governments who

⁶ Quoted in F. Von Der Mehden, *Religion and Nationalism in South East Asia: Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), 191.

⁷ For more detailed accounts of this period see J. F. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1958); G. E. Harvey, *British Rule in Burma* (London: Farber and Farber, 1946); Thant Myint-U, *The Making Of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

were concerned about the spread of Communism in Asia.⁸ In 1958, there was a split in the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) which led to the army's intervention and the imposition of a caretaker government for eighteen months. General Ne Win's government tightened administrative discipline to promote modernisation and curb separatist tendencies. In 1960, U Nu came back to power. His promotion of Buddhism as the state religion and his sympathies for ethnic minority rights led to the army coup of 2 March 1962 (under General Ne Win) which has led to 48 years of military government.

1.1.3.2. Military Rule

Since 1962, the military has introduced three significant systems such as the Revolutionary Council,⁹ Burma Socialist Programme Party Government,¹⁰ the State Law and Order Restoration Committee, and the State Peace and Development Committee.¹¹

⁸ Tun Aung Chain, "The Myanmar Situation," Unpublished Paper presented at the Myanmar Council of Churches Round Table Meeting, Yangon, October, 1999.

⁹ For a personal account of U Thant's funeral and resulting crackdown, see his grandson's book, Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps: A Personal History of Burma* (New York: Faber, Strauss and Giroux, 2006), 310 – 315.

¹⁰ Chain, "The Myanmar Situation," 2. For more detailed information of the Ne Win government see Mya Maung, *The Burma Road to Poverty* (New York, 1991); J. Silverstein, *Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977); Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Insurgency* (London: Zed Books, 1999); David I. Steinberg, *The Future of Burma: Crisis and Choice in Myanmar* (Langham and New York: The Asia Society and University Press of America, 1990); for a descriptive study of the pro-democracy demonstrations, see Bertil Lintner, *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1990).

¹¹ See Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom from Fear and Other Writings*, ed. Michael Aris (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

Illustration 2 Military Rule

The Revolutionary Council

- •build an effective totalitarian government.
- adopted a far right doctrinaire socialism
- nationalized many economic enterprises, private institutions like schools, hospitals and social welfare centers
- to cushion the system from outside influences, a thoroughgoing isolation was imposed.
- •Student demonstrations such as the July 7 event led to an army crackdown resulting in student deaths and closing down of the colleges. In November, 1974, when the body of U Thant, the Secretary General on the UN, was brought back for burial, student demonstrations once again led to killings and closure of colleges.

Burma Socialist Programme Party Government

- •The Constitution of 1974 drawn up on socialist principles
- •U Ne Win and his army cohorts were voted into power as civilian government
- the Army was still in full control evident in ruthlessness on the battlefields.
- Practicing the "Four Cuts," cut from people support, supplies, communication, transport, against the ethnic armies,
- By the 1980s unravel system with decline economy. In 1987 the devaluing of the currency led to protexts and riots, in 1988 it led to Ne Win to officially retire from politics.

State Law and Order Restoration Committee and State Peace and Development Committee

- Pro-democracy demonstrations broke out known as 8-8-88 movement led by Brigadier Aung Gyi with General Tin U, a former Defense minister and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of U Aung San
- September 18, 1988, General Saw Maung announced the formation of the State law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and pledged to restore law and order and hold free and fair elections.
- The elections were held on May 27, 1990 and the party led by Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory but SLORC declared there could be no civilian government until a constitution was written.
- Aung San Suu Kyi had been put under house arrest.
- A national convention selected by the SLORC to draft a new constitution began meeting in January 1993. Meetings broke off in 1996 and were restarted in 2004.
- •In 2008, there was a referendum on the constitution which guaranteed 25% of the seats to the army. The army has ordered many of its officers to become civilians and lead the government party.
- •SLORC now renamed SPDC is making such the Army continues to play a dominant role in the governing of Myanmar
- •SLORC Won the election in Oct, 2010 eclection.

1.2. Authority and Submission in the Myanmar Context

1.2.1. Political Influences

1.2.1.1. The Kingship System

The pre-colonial Myanmar state and society was a hierarchical structure, with the king at the apex/centre of power and the village units at the bottom/periphery. The basic political and social unit was the village which was controlled by a hereditary headman. However, there are a few cases where women have been reported as taking over this role, either at the death of a father (with no sons) or of a husband. The headman (or woman) had control and management of the village. Hereditary chiefs (called *sawbwa* in Shan, *duwa* in Kachin and *sawke* in Karen) ruled over several villages and towns. The system in place was a patron-client system with the king, the princes, administrators and governors ensuring security, decision making, preventing riots and gaining political loyalty by making the presence of their local elite at court mandatory and by rewarding them through the assignment of *appanages*, while the chiefs supplied tax revenue (in money or in kind), and labour as needed. The army was used to quell any dissent or conflict, especially concerning the use of *corvée* or the collection of taxes

The king was the symbol of power and authority and his people looked to him to provide security and stability in their lives. That is why even a weak king (like the last Konbaung King Thibaw) was strongly lamented by his people when he was dethroned and taken into exile. They felt totally bereft and at a loss; it was as if they were completely without a mooring. For the Burmese, the power and authority of the king was legitimised in myth and religious teachings. For instance, the king was alleged to have descended from the first king of the earthly world, *Mahasmmat (thammata)*. According to Taylor:

The king was 'elect' in two senses. First, he was chosen by the people; secondly, and more importantly he was morally superior to them, and therefore it was safe and wise to entrust all power to him.¹²

He was king because of his *karma*. Buddhism, through the doctrine of *karma*, explains one's present life as being the result of merit that one has accumulated in previous incarnations. Therefore a person who had lived a life according to Buddhist tenets and made meritorious deeds would be born as king.

In contemporary parlance, a king's *hpon* (charismatic glory, innate power), *let-yon* (force, especially military force) and *a-na* (domination, authority) were proportional to the maturity of his Perfections and the accumulation of good *karma*. These in turn were the keys of Omniscience.¹³

The concept of *hpon* is of utmost importance for power and authority. The first king of the Konbaung Dynasty, Alaungpaya explained the downfall of the Nyaunggyan dynasty in terms of the saying, "When a man of *hpon* comes, the man without *hpon* disappears." ¹⁴

In order to continue in such conditions in the next existence, the king would have to continue his merit-making during this present life. First, as defender of the Faith, he was: responsible for the edifivation and purifying of the faith; acted as patron to the *Sangha* (monks) and accumulated merit through building pagodas, temples, monasteries. He also looked after the welfare of the people. Second, as Bodhisattva, through compassion he should work to liberate others not just himself. It should be noted that this tradition would be foreign to Theravada Buddhism, as practised in Myanmar, where each person is responsible for his/her own liberation. Third, as *dhammarajah* (or lord of the law), he was to keep order by his own moral example and moral superiority. He was justified through his *a-na* to use force

¹² Robert Taylor, *The State in Myanmar* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009), 55.

¹³ Victor B. Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles: Anarchy and Conquest, c. 1580-1760* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 72.

¹⁴ Chain, "Legitimation Ploys in 18th Century Myanmar," *Selected Writings of Tun Aung Chain* (Yangon: University Historical Commission, 2004), 153.

for the good of the nation. Thus he had justification for violating the Buddhist doctrine about the evil of wars and killing. Through the system of *yazawut* (criminal law), crimes of theft, arson, murder and rebellion were judged and law and order maintained. As *dhammarajah* he also had the power to cleanse or crush the *sangha*, if they did not live according to *vinaya*. These are the rules of conduct for monks which included the prohibition against any form of participation in state and political affairs. As *dhammarajah* he was the law's protector and had the unquestionable power. This was tested by the beginning of his rule and was the reason that it was necessary to eliminate all likely princely rivals (as King Thibaw did on his ascension to the throne). If the king himself was eliminated instead, it was thought that his *karma* was not strong enough to ensure his continued reign.

Fourth, as *cakkavatti* (universal monarch or world conqueror), the king claimed to be the supreme ruler and all humans were to obey him. The king's throne was regarded as the centre of the universe from which all power and authority flowed by which to control the world through establishing a patron-client relationship with a vow of allegiance (or *thitsa soh*). As long as these kingdoms paid yearly tribute, and were faithful and loyal, the king allowed them to function and govern their territories without much interference. But if there were any sign of discontent or rebellion, the king would not hesitate to use his army against these kings.

1.2.1.2. British Colonial Authority

The British ruled Myanmar as part of their imperial Indian Empire: a distant white queen (and then later white king) ruled through authorities such as the Indian junior staff and British

¹⁵ The Orange Revolution of the Buddhist monks in Pakkoku, Mandalay and Yangon in September, 2007 was construed by SPDC as going against the monks' precepts so the detention, disrobing and even killing of the monks was legitimate.

District Commissioners and officials. With the exception of territorial areas like the Shan States, Karenni (Kayah) state and the hill regions, a new administrative pattern totally replaced the old lines of authority. For internal security, Indian soldiers were deployed alongside British officers. Later, these armed forces would recruit more ethnic nationalities other than the Bamars, leading to accusations of 'divide and rule' by the people. 16

In spite of these forces to control the populace, there were riots, disturbances, labour uprisings and student strikes at least once a year. During the peasant revolt of Saya San (1930) - 1932), not only these forces, but army troops from India were brought in to ruthlessly crush the mainly unarmed peasants. Karen battalions were also raised to fight against the Burmese 'rebels' in the delta areas. It was a great show of strength and demonstration of power. The Burmese would learn well from their British 'masters' and later use these same tactics on their own people.

The British colonial authorities felt that they had done their duty to the people by introducing western-style education. In pre-colonial times, the only form of education was monastic and this was based on the Buddhist scriptures and the teaching of morals and ethical living. In contrast, the British educational system was secular and its aim was to produce clerks and officials for the colonial administrative machine. The Burmese called it 'slave education' because it taught dependency and submission. F.S.V. Donnison, Chief Secretary of the Colonial government, noted that the education provided by the government "was an alien affair imposed from above, not an indigenous growth developed to meet modern needs." The knowledge imparted "was artificial and did not grow out of the experience of the

¹⁶ Mary P. Callahan, Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 22.

people."¹⁷ The curriculum was not contextual. Students learnt more about British kings and queens than they did of their own Burmese history. Furthermore, the teachers were foreigners. In the government system, there were schools where the medium of instruction was only Burmese and Anglo-Vernacular schools where the teaching was bilingual. Students from these schools, as well as from mission schools, had more chance of getting into Rangoon University and getting good jobs after graduation. In 1920 there were student strikes against the education system and national schools were established that employed Burmese teachers and used a curriculum more in keeping with the culture and religion of the country. The students also protested against the University Act as it was very restrictive and ensured that few Burmese could gain admission. The Burmese students made up only thirty percent of the student population and there were few nationals on the faculty.

Apart from the government schools there were elitist private schools and mission schools which were partially supported by state grants. Mission school education, besides its westernised curriculum, also held many classes in Christian religious education together with worship services as this was considered one of the main instruments for evangelising the Buddhists.

1.2.1.3. Totalitarian Army Control

Even though the Myanmar Army and its founder, Bogyoke (General) Aung San had meant to drive out the British colonial powers and defend its citizens from any outside interference, the army still maintains control through the use of force and other forms of terror and intimidation since General Ne Win came to power in 1962. The ruthless massacre of unarmed

¹⁷ F.S.V. Donnison, *Public Administration in Burma: A Study of Development During the British Connexion* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1953), 46-47.

Rangoon University students, on 7 July 1962, demonstrates how such action became the normal way for the Army to terrorize the people into submission.¹⁸

Apart from the political reasons, such as the struggle against the ethnic groups who had supported the British and similarly against the ideological insurgents of the left, ¹⁹ the Army assumed that it alone had the authority (*hpon or tagoe or a-na*) to completely control the affairs of the country. *Hpon* means absolute authority and maintains hierarchical status in the political order. ²⁰ The *hpon* of the Army has been acquired by its 'merit making' (receiving reward from the religious hierarchy), and, to continue to maintain *hpon*, the Army has always promoted Buddhism. Without merit making, the Army's *hpon* will decline. This has led to the building and renovations of pagodas (such as the building of the Maha Wizaya by U Ne Win) and the holding of the Buddhist Synod by General Khin Nyunt in 2006.²¹

But the Army's *hpon* was used in the putting down of the peaceful demonstrations of the monks in September, 2007 by force of arms. It waged a ruthless war against the ethnic military forces and also the civilians caught in the crossfire, so that displaced villagers became refugees in Thailand and India or Internally Displaced People. The rape of ethnic women by the soldiers of the Myanmar Army is also well-documented.²² Government

¹⁸ Chain, "The Myanmar Situation," 2.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Mikael Gravers, *Nationalism as Political Paranoia in Burma: An Essay on the Historical Practice of Power* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993), 15 – 16.

²¹ Mya Maung, *Totalitarianism in Burma: Prospects for Economic Development* (New York: Paragon House, 1992), 39.

²² See Shattering Silences: Karen Women speak out about the Burmese Army Regime's use of Rape as a Strategy of War in the Karen State. Maesot, Karen Women's Organisation, 2004; No Safe Place: Burma's Army and the Rape of Ethnic Women, Refugees International, April 20, 2003; and License to Rape: the Burmese Military Regime's Use of Sexual Violence in the Ongoing War in the Shan States. Shan Human Rights Foundation and the Shan Women's Action Network, May 2002.

soldiers use rape to "intimidate the local population, to extract information from women detainees and to extract bribes."²³

According to David Steinberg:

Under military rule in Burma, the normal legal institutions were abolished and rule was for long periods by decree (1962-74, 1988- present). There was no separation of powers. Law was executive fiat. 'Policy' was substituted for law, which was anything the leadership wanted, and titular law, which has been important became simply an instrument of state policy. Policy, in turn, was a product of personalized power of the leader and his coterie, and could be changed by will or whim . . . This personalization of power and flexibility of regulations has also led to the problem of corruption. 24

Examples of how 'law' in Myanmar works according to the army's whim is demonstrated in the continued house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi; the detention without trial of the demonstrating monks of 2007; the long prison sentences for peaceful demonstrators, like Phyo Phyo Nwe, and the jail sentences for the defending lawyers. Law in the hands of the corrupt and the powerful becomes a source of terror for the people.

1.2.2. Religious Influences

1.2.2.1. The Buddhist Faith and the Sangha

The Buddhist faith as practised in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Sri Lanka is Theravada Buddhism or the 'narrow wheel.' This is different from Mahayana Buddhism (or the Great wheel) which is practised in China, Vietnam, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Tibet and Japan. Religion and culture are so intertwined that to be a Burmese is to be a Buddhist. Converts to Christianity were thought to have become 'bo' westerners.

²³ UN Economic and Social Council (57th Session), *Integration of Human Rights and the Gender Perspective: Violence Against Women*, E/CN, 4/2001/73, January 23, 2001.

²⁴ David Steinberg, "Legitimacy in Burma/Myanmar," *Myanmar: State, Society and Ethnicity*, eds. N. Ganesan and Kyaw Yin Hlaing (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), 120.

According to Manning Nash, the major ideas of village Buddhism rest on three pieces of knowledge: first, the ideas of *kan* and *kutho*; second, the notions of the precepts and their observance; and finally, the folk version of the levels of existence and the cosmology that entails. ²⁵ *Kan* is the Burmese version of *karma*, the sum of one's past deeds which has placed an individual in the situation faced today; *kutho* is the merit one can earn in order to shape one's *kan* (fate/destiny). As a result of the *kan* of the people, it was just accepted that they should be controlled by the Army. The Army has *hpon* and its *karma* is such that the army and its cohorts of the economic elite should rightly enjoy the luxuries of life.

Strict Buddhists rely on themselves to work out their own liberation by meditation, following the Buddha's precepts and performing *kutho*. Buddhism is a very individualistic religion, for, although each person can share *kutho*, in the end, what a person's *kan* will be depends upon the individual alone. However, for the ordinary Buddhist, prayers may be said to the Lord Buddha and propitiation made to spirits called *nats*. The Shwedagon (the holiest pagoda in Yangon) has a number of *nat* shrines to which prayers, coconuts, flowers and gifts are offered.

The *sangha* are the monks who are voluntary members of a loosely organised brotherhood whose aims are the perpetuation of the *dhamma* and to live according to the monastic rules so that the monk may free himself from all desires. The monk has no parochial duty towards the laity, but on holy days will preach a sermon at the monastery, when those invited to a *soonkywe* will partake of breakfast offered as *kutho*. Every morning they go on their morning rounds with their alms bowls so that the laity may gain *kutho* by donating the daily food. This must be consumed before noon. Before the start of the hot

²⁵ Manning Nash, *The Golden Road to Modernity: Village Life in Contemporary Burma* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), 105-6.

²⁶ Officially there are 37 major *nats* and their worship is closely entwined with Buddhism.

season, the monks have a non-stop reading of the Scriptures to ensure the safety of the people.

They provide monastic schooling for the children who cannot afford state education.

In the pre-colonial period the kings were patrons of the *sangha* and, when necessary, were also responsible for the purification of the orders. As Buddhism flourished, so did the monasteries and the *sangha* residing there. Under British colonial rule, Buddhism and the *sangha* were no longer encouraged, which led to the discontent of the *sangha* and the Buddhist populace. In the struggle for independence, prominent monks who had led the movement were jailed. Three monks, U Ottama, U Sammasar and U Wisara, went on a hunger strike. It is also interesting to note that most strikes and demonstrations in colonial and post-colonial times were based in the precincts of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. Aung San Suu Kyi's first public address to the pro-democracy demonstrators was made there.

The young monks took an active part in the pro-democracy demonstrations against SLORC and later SPDC. A form of religious protest is for monks to refuse to receive 'soon' (daily food offering) from those they deem evil. In such a case, the effect on the devotee is the denial of merit-making, that is, acquiring *kutho* for a better *kan* in a future existence. For the monks who took part in the Orange Revolution in 2007, many still remain in detention or have been defrocked. Some monasteries have been closed down and remain unoccupied. These actions of the monks are condemned by the senior monks in the Buddhist Sangha at the instigation of SLORC/SPDC. But the moral and spiritual authority of the *sangha* has risen as a result of their actions.

1.2.2.2. Christianity and the Missionaries

Christianity was first brought to Myanmar by Father Pierre Bonfer, a French Franciscan, who went first to the Mons, in Syriam, in the 17th century. However, this first attempt was

unsuccessful and it was only when the Portuguese adventurer, Philippe de Brito, set up a colony at Syriam that Jesuit fathers, who first came in as chaplains, were successful in their evangelistic efforts. Their most famous convert was Natshinnaung, king of Toungoo and a poet of merit.²⁷

The first Protestant mission was initiated by the British Baptists based in Serampore, India. Chater and Felix Carey, sons of William Carey and renowned 'father of the modern mission movement,' first established a mission in Rangoon. However, once more, it was the arrival of the American Baptists, Adoniram and Ann Judson in 1813 that really established a Protestant mission. The Baptists constitute the majority among the Christian population which makes up six percent of the whole population.²⁸

Christianity, arriving in the country together with merchants and colonialists, is tainted in the eyes of the Burmese Buddhist majority with western colonialism. The early Christian missionaries had to face many forms of adversity in their evangelistic work. Once Myanmar became part of the British Empire, the colonialists encouraged Christianisation as part of the process of bringing the country into submission. Mission schools were subsidised and were required to teach British history. British colonialism brought benefits for segments of the population. For example, the ethnic minorities who could now enrol in schools could also find employment and join the armed forces. These groups also welcomed Christianity as the missionaries transcribed their languages and Bibles and their oral literature was recorded and

_

²⁷ Tung Aung Chaing, "Myanmar," *Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, eds. Scott Sunquist, John Hiang Chea Chew, David Chusing Wu (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2001).

²⁸ The last census taken in Burma was in 1934. There is no current official census, but the population of Burma is taken to be about 50 million. Although Christians claim a higher percentage than six percent, the government statistics only show this figure. Church statistics only show baptised members.

published in their languages. To focus on one major ethnic group and their response to Christianity is most revealing. ²⁹

One of the ethnic groups, the Karens, accepted what the missionaries told them and accepted their conservative authority. They were told that to be good Christians they must be good citizens. As they obeyed the missionaries' teachings, very few Karens became involved in the Independence movement. Indeed, the Karen Rifles were used to suppress revolts and riots. By supporting the British colonial authorities throughout the two World Wars, the Karens felt that the British would be sympathetic to their demand for autonomy. Consequently, they felt betrayed by the British when it was their fate to be lumped together with the Burmese and other minorities in the Union of Burma. In their struggle against the Burmese-dominated central government of U Nu, they expected help from their 'white brothers.' 30

1.2.3. Myanmar Women, Authority and Submission

Myanmar women are part of the patriarchal and hierarchal structures in the home, society and religious institutions. However, foreigners have noted that, in comparison with other Asian women, Burmese women experience relative equality with men. As Hla Yi notes, some Burmese women say as much themselves: "Myanmar women are fortunate enough to have equal rights as men in every aspect of life because of Myanmar's long traditions and culture

²⁹ Anna May Say Pa and Christopher Day, "The Karens: Claiming the Rights of Identity and Self-Determination," *Engagement*, Vol. 3 (December, 2004): 37.

³⁰ See Gen. Simith Dun, *Memoirs of the Four-Foot Colonel* (New York: Comell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1980).

unlike other countries."³¹ They attribute this situation to Theravada Buddhist teachings, cultural traditions, social customs, traditional laws, and existing laws.³²

Tin Hla Kyi, Professor of Economics at Yangon University confirms this view:

Myanmar women have equal rights as men under national laws, they have the right to vote, they have the right to independently buy, sell, own, inherit and manage property and other resources. They have almost equal literacy rates with men, equal access to health services, and their life expectancy is moving towards 65.³³

Aye Cho adds that women are given equal rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance. Burmese law and culture does not oppress or marginalise women. There is therefore no need for women to demand their rights or for Burmese women's liberation movement to initiate a campaign.³⁴ Maung Maung, a noted jurist, also confirms that in Burmese law there is no discrimination against women, but he also states that the husband is the head of the household and has power over his wife and children.³⁵

In studying the Pagan pagoda inscriptions, Pe Maung Tin points to the role and status of women as slaves employed in the fields and the house and as free women working as nurses, cooks, poets, dancers and lacquer workers. There is mention of a high-ranking nun, a number of princesses and of rich women who build pagodas and donate slaves for its upkeep and also two head-women. He notes that the female donor of the pagoda inscribes

...And I wish to be freed from this state of a woman and when in future existences I pass through the abodes of men and of spirits I wish to be born a man endowed with virtue, understanding, truth and faith.³⁶

³³ Tin Hla Kyi, "The Status of Women in a Changing Myanmar Economy," *In God's Image* 19, no. 2 (2000): 22.

 $^{^{31}}$ Hla Yi, *Women in Myanmar* (Yangon: Myanmar Council of Churches, 1998), $1-2.\,$

 $^{^{32}}$ Ibid., 40 - 41.

³⁴ Aye Cho, *Myanmar Ein Thu, Myanma Mu* (Yangon: Sarbay Beikhman, 1990), 44, 50.

³⁵ Maung Maung, *Law and Custom in Burma and the Burmese Family* (Netherlands, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), 45-46.

³⁶ Pe Maung Tin, *Women in the Inscriptions of Pagan*, Fiftieth Anniversary Publications, No.2 (Rangoon: Burma Research Society, 1960), 412.

However, Tin Hla Kyi notes that women are missing in higher-ranking posts in public offices and in top decision-making positions: "Active, publicly visible positions of power and authority are generally accepted as the preserve of men." Brenda Belak has also stated that women are excluded from the creation and interpretation of the law. Provisions for women are founded on the principle that they are the weaker sex, in need of protection and supervision. In particular, customary law, which rules in cases of marriage and divorce, is explicitly discriminatory, and in practice puts women at a great disadvantage in the event of marital dissolution. Customary law, the *Dhammathat*, based on the Hindu Code of Manu, even allows a husband to chastise his wife with a stick.

The view regarding the roles and status of women in Myanmar is therefore not very clear-cut. However, a further exploration of the issue through the stages of women's lives will shed more light on the issue of domination and submission.

In Burmese Buddhist families, young boys are initiated into the *sangha* for a period of time through the *shinpyu* ceremony which bestows *hpon* on the young novice and *kutho* to his parents and sponsors. No similar affirmation of spirituality and power is bestowed on girls. Instead, they make do with an ear-piercing ceremony that is merely a social occasion and does not rival the religious significance of the *shinpyu*.

There is a Burmese saying, "Sons are for the future and daughters for the present," meaning that by fulfilling the parental duties of making monks of their sons, parents earn merit for a better incarnation, whereas daughters must provide for the lives of their parents with their service and sacrifice in the present. Furthermore, before the Christian missionaries introduced their schools for girls, only the sons were allowed to attend the monastic schools.

³⁷ UN Thematic Group on Gender, *Myanmar Gender Profile*, Yangon, 2000, 29.

³⁸ Brenda Belak, *Gathering Strength: Women in Burma on their Rights* (Chiangmai: Images Burma, 2002), 226.

The nobility, aristocracy and the elite provided some education for girls in the form of literature and music taught privately by tutors, but the main education of girls and young women was to prepare them for married life. Most women were illiterate, with little knowledge of the world and were under the control of their fathers, husbands and, later on, sons.

Today, women have the opportunity for education, but there are still barriers. The registration of boys and girls at the primary level is about equal, but the dropout rate for girls is higher. The disparity is much higher in rural areas than urban.

A young boy is encouraged to be adventurous, aggressive and bold. However, the young girl is chastised for displaying these characteristics. Instead, she is to be quiet, submissive and obedient. At birth, an enculturation process begins which aims at producing a docile and submissive bride at the time of marriage.

Buddhist stories and legends reaffirm this role of women. Young Burmese girls are told to be:

As beautiful as Onmar Dani, As clever as Amaya, As loyal as Madi.

These were the wives of the Lord Buddha in his previous incarnations. Madi was the wife of Prince Waythandaya, the last existence of the Lord Buddha before his final birth as Prince Siddartha. He was just a step away from Enlightenment and as Prince Waythandaya needed to practise *dana*, "merit-making through [the] giving away of alms." Madi willingly considered herself as *parami pyithu*, 'fulfiller of destiny.' To achieve this, Madi accepted her husband's giving away of her two children into slavery and herself to another man.³⁹ By

45

 $^{^{39}}$ See Maung Htin Aung, *Burmese Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 94 – 97. As this is a popular drama, young girls and women are inculcated with the concepts of sacrificial living and male dominance.

praising Madi, young Burmese women are encouraged to work for the welfare and ambitions of her husband at all times, even if that calls for her self-sacrifice.

In the past, the same values were apparent in the marriage of daughters. It was usual for parents to arrange marriages for their daughters that would be advantageous to the family. This was more prevalent during the monarchic period when daughters were used as political pawns. In 1403, Mingaung I, King of Inwa, gave his 13-year old daughter to Anawrataminsaw, King of Rakhine, to establish personal relationships in the interest of royal power and authority. This example can be multiplied throughout the history of Myanmar.⁴⁰

Today, arranged marriages are not as common as they used to be, but in certain ethnic groups, the rich and powerful still manage to arrange advantageous alliances for their daughters. One such was the marriage of General Than Shwe's daughter to Major Naing Wai Hlaing. The ostentatious wedding reception added to the aura and authority of the General.⁴¹

In marriage, the husband was traditionally regarded as *ain oo nat* (spirit of the house) and obeisance was paid to him by the wife and children. Nowadays, the latter practice is no longer followed except in very traditional families. Nevertheless, the concept of the husband as head of the house is still fully accepted. Proverbs highlight this:

Husband the Lord, woman the ruled. The topknot follows where the head leads.

The most educated and advanced of Burmese women all accept this dictum. Mi Mi Khaing, western-educated and headmistress of the leading school in Taunggyi writes:

Although the women of Burma figure as actively and have the same rights as men in the fields of business, property, and professions of the modern world, we always keep alive in us the religious feeling that we are "below" mankind. It is not so much a feeling that women are a lower race as that a man has the nobility of manhood in him.

⁴⁰ See Tun Aung Chain, "Women in the Statecraft of the Inwa Kingdom," in *Selected Writings of Tun Aung Chain* (Yangon: Myanmar Historical Commission, 2004), 61-72.

⁴¹ See "A Star-Studded Night: The Wedding of Ma Thanda Shwe and Major Naing Wai Hlaing," secretly documented and distributed privately.

We call it *hpon*, the glory, the holiness of a man, and we respect this not with subservience but with the same feelings as we respect monks and parents.⁴²

Daw Mya Sein, lecturer of the History Department, Rangoon University and the only woman delegate to the London Round Table Conference of 1931 and the Paris UNESCO Conference of 1946, had this to say about Myanmar women:

We like to give precedence to our men in our homes because we acknowledge them, until their death, as head of the household. . . . We believe that when a Buddha comes to the world it will be as a man (though to be sure, one of us who is now a woman may, in later life, be born as a man and eventually progress to Buddhahood). We feel that this gives men an inherent superiority: mentally they can reach higher than women.⁴³

There is the women's 'order' of nuns or *thilashin* who are offered uncooked food, unlike the monks. Sein Sein notes other differences:

But the most important of all is that a nun does not undergo any form of ordination like that of a monk, and that is the crucial difference between a monk and a nun. The joining of a woman into an organisation of the nuns is never an elaborate affair as the ordination of a monk . . . She is described as a mere religious woman with shaved head and wearing a different kind of dress.⁴⁴

Interpretation of Buddhist texts in Burma however is weighted against women. Such texts as:

Womanfolk are uncontrolled, Ananda. Womenfolk are envious, Ananda. Womenfolk are weak in wisdom, Ananda. 45

Monks, I see no single form so enticing. So desirable, so intoxicating, so binding, so distracting, such a hindrance to winning unsurpassed peace from effort – that is to say monks, as a woman's form. Monks, whatever clings to women's form – infatuated, greedy, fettered, enslaved – for many a long day shall he grieve, snared by the charms of a woman.⁴⁶

⁴² Mi Mi Khaing, *Burmese Family* (London: Green and Co., 1946), 39.

⁴³ Mya Sein, "The Women of Myanmar," *Atlantic Monthly*, 1958, 24.

⁴⁴ Sein Sein, *The Position of Women in Hinayana Countries* (Master of Arts Thesis, University of London, 1958), 69. See also Mi Mi Khaing, *The World of Burmese Women* (London: Zed Books, 1984).

⁴⁵ Anguttara Nikaya IV. VIII 80. *The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Anguttara Nikaya), The Book of the Fours*, Vol II, F.L. Woodward, Trans. Pali Text Society, Translation Series, No. 24, (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 2001), 93.

⁴⁶ Anguttara Nikaya, V. VI 55. *The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Anguttara Nikaya), The Book of the Fives*, Vol III, E.M. Hare, trans, Pali Test Society, Translation Series, No. 24 (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 2001), 56.

For Burmese scholar Khin Thitsa, it is this denigration of women in Buddhism and the view of women as having low karma for past misdeeds that has led to women sacrificing themselves for their families as prostitutes in Thailand.⁴⁷

Women are people without *hpon* and are capable of lowering of men's *hpon*. So that a man will not be polluted and his *hpon* lowered, a husband's clothes must never be washed or ironed together with his wife's and daughter's clothes, and when washed must be hung on a higher line.

In a clear attack on Aung San Suu Kyi's actions which are perceived as contrary to Burmese cultural norms for female behaviour, a pro-SPDC woman historian writes:

In Myanmar society there is a saying, "It is woman who destroys the country" referring to bad women. Women who are sharp but anxious to be popular misusing their abilities and qualifications should take that point into consideration. Women and men are equally responsible for nation-building tasks and [the] preservation of culture. However, such Myanmar women should not place too much reliance on their strong qualities lest they be put on record in the list of women who destroy the motherland.⁴⁸

Ethnic groups with their own ancestral faiths may not use the word *hpon* with regard to power and authority, but women are still considered taboo in certain important instances such as ritual festivals, village meetings and ploughing rites. Their presence would dissipate the power of the occasion and make it null and void. In some tribal groups, women were not allowed to be the first person to step into a newly-built house, for it might bring a curse; whereas a man's foot would be a blessing. To sum up, the culture of dominance is evident in the sayings:

Bronze drums are for beating. Wives are for battering. The buffalo and the wife.

48

⁴⁷ Khin Thitsa, *Providence and Prostitution: Women in Buddhism* (London: Change International, 1990),

⁴⁸ Ma Tin Win, "Maternal Strength," New Light of Burma, 19 June 2005, 7.

1.2.4. Myanmar Christian Women, Power and Submission

Burmese Christian women's behaviour is influenced by church teachings and biblical interpretation. The majority of churches are fundamentalist and literal in their interpretation of the Bible regarding women. Their reading of the stories of Eve, Potiphar's wife, Lot's daughters, Moabite women, Delilah, Jezebel, Herodias and Salome, show women as weak, prone to temptation and as seducers of men.

Traditionally, the story of Eve is that, because she disobeyed God and tempted Adam to sin, God cursed her with the pain of child bearing and subordination to the rule of Adam and being the desire for her husband. This has been seen as a divine injunction for perpetuity so that women should always accept the power and authority of men over them. Therefore, they must resign themselves to this inferior position and not attempt to take positions of leadership in the home, church or public affairs. In this way, texts are read, interpreted and taught literally.⁵⁰ But there are some challengers of this tradition. Submission to authority becomes problematic for Burmese women.

Nang Thuzar Mon from Kengtung, a border town from where young girls are trafficked for sex into Thailand, questions the traditional interpretations of Genesis 2 and 3. She thinks that the traditional interpretation of Genesis 2 has contributed to the present problem. "A woman is made to feel that a man is her master. He is the lord and the woman is

⁵⁰ See Anna May Say Pa, "Because of Eve: Reading Genesis 2 and 3 from Feminist Perspectives," *Engagement* 5 (December 2005): 31-36.

⁴⁹ Ywah Plaw Paw, "Religion, Culture and Gender in Myanmar," *In God's Image* 19, no. 2 (June 2000): 25.

his slave because she is created out of the rib of a man. She cannot raise her voice against violence because she has been taught not to."⁵¹

Miriam's role in the saving of Moses' life and her role as prophetess in singing the song of victory are extolled (Exod. 2:1 - 10; 15:19 - 21). At the same time, Miriam's role as instigator of revolt against Moses' leadership is used as an example of what happens to women who do not know their place (Num. 12:1 - 16).

Ruth is held up as a model for today's Myanmar woman for her loyalty and submission to her mother-in-law, Naomi. She forsakes home, country, God and the security of a new husband to follow Naomi. Thus she displays all the traits that good Burmese women should have. Ruth is loyal and submissive to the extent that she obeys Naomi's advice to make Boaz marry her for their future security.

Esther is praised as a brave woman for harkening to the voice of her guardian, Mordecai, whereas Vashti is vilified as the disobedient and arrogant wife. In the story, the Persian king, Ahasuerus, fears that there will be adverse repercussions on a husband's authority over their wives if Vashti's act of defiance were to go unpunished (Esther 1: 10 - 22).

Mary, the mother of Jesus is venerated not only by Catholic, but also Protestant women in Myanmar. She is portrayed in art and song as gentle and obedient. Her answer to the command of the angel Gabriel is exemplary in its docility and submission to the will of God, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." (Luke 1:38). Women are taught to emulate Mary. However, more feminist readings have questioned Mary's obedience and have re-read the text in more empowering ways. Mary's 'Let it be to

⁵¹ Nang Thuzar Mon, *Victimization of Women in Kengtung Area* (Bachelor of Theology thesis, Myanmar Institute of Theology, 1994), 42 – 43. Today, Mon is the Vice-President of Myanmar Baptist Convention, the largest Christian denomination in Myanmar and the General Secretary of the Shan Baptist Convention.

me,' can be seen as an acceptance of the call to radical discipleship and her Song as a Song of Liberation (Luke 1:46-55). ⁵²

The fact that Jesus chose only men as disciples has often been used to downplay the role of women in the ministry of Jesus and to legitimise the domination of men in the religious institutions. However, feminist scholars in Myanmar are now reconstructing a more affirmative role of women through stressing the leadership of Mary Magdalene, who was called the 'apostle of apostles,' and was the first woman missionary. In addition, reference is made to the act of Christ in pausing to talk to a Samaritan woman (showing no discrimination in his dealings) and to the sisters Mary and Martha who personify the dual ministries of proclamation and service. ⁵³

For Huai Man Cin, Jesus valued women in his ministry and recognised their worth and dignity. As a result, women responded to Jesus' ministry. In relation to the gospel and Burmese women, especially Chin women, she states:

When the gospel came to the land it released women from such a cultural bondage and lifted them up to share equal rights and opportunities in society and church. As a result there are now a number of ordained women ministers in the Baptist and other denominations in Burma, especially since the 1980s.⁵⁴

However, Khaing Oo, who has been a seminary lecturer and General Secretary of the Southern Shan Baptist Convention (although never ordained), still has some reservations about the role and leadership of women in the church and society. Using the story of the woman with the flow of blood (Mark 5:25 - 34) and connecting it with the purity laws in Leviticus 12; 15:19 – 30 she writes:

⁵² Naw Htoo Htoo, "Mary's Song of Praise," *Dee Hline Than* 1, no. 2 (November 2008): 78 – 80; see also Million Htwe, "Most Blessed are You, Mary," *Dee Hline Than* 1, no. 2 (November 2008): 84 – 87. (In Burmese)

⁵³ See Pyo Pyo May, "My Story," *Dee Hline Than* 3, no. 1 (November 2009): 30 – 31. (In Burmese); Alethea, "Mary Magdalene: Apostle of Apostles," *Dee Hline Than* 3, no. 1 (November 2009): 75 – 82.

⁵⁴ Huai Man Cin, "Jesus' Attitude to Women in the Gospels," *In God's Image* 19, no. 2 (June 2000): 17.

In most of the (Baptist) churches, women are not encouraged to share equally in the ministerial work. Women are considered unclean during menstruation and after childbirth. She is not fit to serve the Lord's Supper or give baptism. A theology has then developed to support the male dominant role in the church. Actually the teaching or understanding is purely from the world of Myanmar and an Old Testament 'purity law' is used to support a cultural custom. ⁵⁵

Myanmar women have often heard the injunctions against women speaking out in church and women leadership (1 Cor. 14:33b - 35; 1 Tim. 2: 11-15); the household codes have also been recited to them at wedding services and wedding anniversaries (Eph.5: 22 - 6:9; Col. 3:18 - 4:1; 1 Peter 2:18 - 3:7) advising submission to one's husband.

Myanmar Christian women were also very strongly influenced by the lives, examples and teaching of the missionaries, especially the missionary wives and unmarried female missionaries. These women were seen as brave and resourceful in support of their husbands' work. Most exemplary were the three Mrs Judsons, Ann Hasseltine, Sarah Boardman and Emily Chubbock. They left comfortable homes and their country to serve the people. The first Mrs Judson was a Bible translator in her own right; the very first woman to translate portions of the Bible into Thai. She also started the first school for girls with the first Burmese woman convert, Ma Min Lay. Sarah Boardman was married to George Dana Boardman, first missionary to the Karens. He died after a short mission but the work was carried on by his wife, until she married the widowed Judson. Single women missionaries went into the dark interior of the malaria-infested country: Eleanor Macomber and Sarah Cummings to the Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen respectively. 56

However, both married and unmarried missionaries remained under the authority of the men in the organisation. At the time her husband was being held in captivity by the

 $^{^{55}}$ Esther Khaing Oo, "The Woman Who Touched Jesus' Robe: Mark 5:25-34," *Myanmar SCM Women's Magazine* 1, 1996, 32-45.

⁵⁶ See Maung Shwe Wa Genevieve and Erville Sowards, *Burma Baptist Chronicle* (Rangoon: Board of Publications, 1965), 32 – 59, 67 – 74, 99, 327 – 328.

Burmese authorities during the First Anglo-Burmese War, Ann Judson acted assertively and with autonomy. However, this was acceptable because she was without any male Christian protectors. Sarah Josepha Hale said such "a decision of character...[was] rare in women," and she continues, "[s]uch decision only becomes necessary to woman in adversity. Let no one imagine its exertion contributes to the happiness of the female. It may be her duty, it should never be her desire." ⁵⁷

Myanmar Christian women saw new possibilities for themselves in Christian teachings. The lives of the missionaries became examples for them to follow. Yet they remained under the authority of men in the home and religious institutions. Although they might be more educated and enlightened, they could not break out from the authority of the male, legitimised as it was by the Bible, Burmese culture and even the lives of their new liberators, the missionaries.

1.3. Conclusion

The Myanmar political, social and religious context is strongly patriarchal and power and authority resides in the male (the terms: king, *sangha* and men). Throughout Myanmar's turbulent political history, religion and culture have legitimised the domination of the male and the subordination of the female through Buddhist concepts. Myanmar Christian women are also influenced by the traditional beliefs and practices of the Church where men are priests and leaders, dominating religious life. The Bible texts, in many instances, are used to legitimise such power and authority of the male over the female. A postcolonial feminist

_

⁵⁷ Sarah Josepha Hale, *Sketches of American Character* (Boston, 1833), 90. See also Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Mission for Life: The Story of the Family of Adoniram Judson* (New York: Free Press, 1980) for a more balanced picture of the Judson wives.

reading of problematic texts would serve to challenge those traditional powers or authority and empower women or 'the others' in their struggle for equality, autonomy and identity.

"Authority and subordination are conditions not only inevitable but also expedient; in some cases things are marked out from the moment of birth to rule or to be ruled." (Aristotle's Politic 1254a 22-24)¹

SECTION II

POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN THE SOCIAL REALM: THE HOUSEHOLD CODE IN THE MYANMAR CONTEXT

Section II Introduction

Letty M. Russell states that power is "the ability to accomplish desired ends and social power as the ability of one individual or group to affect the behaviour of another individual or group." On the other hand, authority is "a power that is legitimated by the structures of society. It is exercised in most situations through hierarchy and is controlled." This kind of power was exercised in the household, a microcosm of a country, a society and a religion, in the early Christian and Graeco-Roman society. The pro-*status quo* texts such as Ephesians 5: 22-6:9; Colossians 3: 18-22, and 1 Peter 3: 1-7, 2: 18-22, call for the submission of women (particularly the wife), children and slaves and promote the authority of the husband, father and master. The household code became core teaching with which the State and religion (church) would be affected or benefited.

¹ Aristotle, *Aristotle, The Politics and The Constitution of Athens*, ed. Stephen Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16.

² Letty M. Russell, *Household of Freedom: Authority in Feminist Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 21.

Postcolonialist R. S. Sugirtharajah names these codes as the 'professional code' created by scholars, interpreters and academic leaders to maintain stability. He notes "[t]his is produced by trained experts, scribes, rabbis, and doctors of law."³

For the author, these texts have direct connections with the gender, sexism, child abuse, and human trafficking issues within the political, social, cultural, multi-religious and economic situations in Myanmar under dictatorship. Cultural values and poverty force mothers, wives, daughters and sisters to become victims, through fulfilling family obligations and struggling to make a living. These are also the impacts from the global capitalist, neo-colonialist/imperialist exploitation and domination of the Myanmar people, especially its marginalised children, women and female workers. Therefore Postcolonial feminist highlights global capitalism's exploitation.⁴

In this section, the first chapter will show how household codes began with the reinforcement of the Graeco-Roman imperial and the patriarchal society. It will scrutinise how the culture of patriarchy, the colonial mentality, and feminist emancipative elements are found in the texts. The second chapter will investigate how the traditional, liberation, feminist and postcolonial interpretations from both the West and the East analyse household codes and whether their interpretations speak to household situations in Myanmar today. The third chapter will show how postcolonial feminists have reread the texts though the eyes of resistance to the neo-imperialist and patriarchal systems found within the Myanmar Buddhist context.

³ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81-82.

⁴ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 116,

CHAPTER 2 DE-IMPERIALIZING AND DECOLONIZING THE HOUSEHOLD CODES IN GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

2.1. Introduction

The household codes were created for a household (in Greek, *oikia*, in Latin, *familia*) composed of husbands, fathers, master, wives, children and slaves. The New Testament codes in Col. 3: 18–4: 1, Eph. 5: 22–6: 9; 1 Pet. 2: 13–3: 7 are known by the German word *Haustafeln* or 'house codes'. These prescriptive instructions describe the reciprocal responsibilities given to the family members such as husband/wife, parents/children and master/slave. Submission and obedience from the inferior partners was demanded, whilst the authority and power of the superior partners was legitimised. The NT household codes were probably written during the period from 69 AD until 117 AD, when the Graeco-Roman culture flourished, under emperors such as Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, and Trajan. The codes were addressed to colonised Christians living in the Roman Empire, particularly in the region of Asia Minor. At that time, Christians believed that they were not only the members of their earthly households, but also of the household of God or the Church. Managing their

⁵ Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green and Marianne Meye Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament: its literature and theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 524.

⁶ Pheme Perkins, *Reading the New Testament: An Introduction* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988), 5-7. The author dates Colossians between 62/70AD, while Ephesians was written later, with echoes of the former. 1 Peter was written c. AD 90 and Titus c. AD 100/110.

⁷ Pliny, *The Letters of the Younger Pliny*, Betty Radice, trans, (London: Penguin Books, 1963), 13. Domitian was remembered for his reign of terror.

⁸ John Roberts, ed., "Asia Minor," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Asia Minor was once the main land of Persia. Later it had a strong influence on the Graeco-Roman Empire. It was composed of six provinces: Asia, Pontus and Bithynia, Galatia, Lycia and Pampihylia, Cilicia and Cappadocia. The main religion was a ruler cult, but it had a Roman administration system. The locations of the addresses to which the codes were sent is disputed, but generally accepted to be located in Asia Minor.

⁹ At that time, the 'church' was known as the 'house church' or 'household of God' (οἴκος Θεος΄ 1 Tim 3: 15) where worship was conducted. The 'church' was composed of all the members, as a whole: (1 Tim 2:1-7); men and women, (1 Tim 2: 8-15); overseers, (1 Tim 3: 1-7); deacons and deaconesses, (1 Tim 3: 8-13). Christians were designated as members of God's family or household (1 Pet 4:7), citizens (Eph 2: 19) and members of Christ's body (Eph 5:30).

households was as important as establishing an organised household of God (1 Tim 3: 5) just as each household was an important feature of a secure society for the Graeco-Roman rulers.

Household codes, in their patriarchal and hierarchal structure, are necessary for the good of society, ¹⁰ such as dealing with social, moral or ethical problems. ¹¹ They were developed and used by commentators for ethical instruction in the Hellenistic world. ¹² Moreover, they were created for political purposes. ¹³ Many parallels can be found ranging from the very beginning of Greek kingdoms to the decline of the Roman Empire. The *Haustafeln* in the NT are therefore not unique. Two groups used such codes. The first were the political leaders and their advisors who used them for political purposes; to create good citizens. The second group, with an apologetic purpose, was intended for minority religious groups, who were under suspicion from the established political order. ¹⁴

A postcolonialist feminist's 'subversive hybridity,' Empire studies, and decoding, rereads the codes in their patriarchal and imperial contexts. Thus, the following questions arise: How did Graeco-Roman political rulers and apologists create and exercise a system of authority and submission by using the household codes? Are these codes similar in structure

¹⁰ Kruse Kronicle, "Household: The "The Household Code," http://krusekronicle.typepad.com/kruse_kronicle/2007/07/household-the-h.html (accessed 25 September 2009).

¹¹Ibid., Writing instructions for the proper household management was a common practice of Greek social philosophers. These instructed the father/master/husband to "rule" over his household wisely, to preserve social order and to bring submission of the subordinate. Instructions were not given to the wife, children, and slaves.

¹² W. R. F. Browning, "Household codes," *A Dictionary of the Bible*. 1997. *Encyclopedia.com*. 23, http://www.encyclopedia.com (accessed 23 September 2009).

¹³ David L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Chicago: Scholars Press, 1981), 23.

¹⁴ Ibid., 132-138.

¹⁵ Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 166. The author defines it as an approach which rejects 'the privileging of imperial texts and institutions as the standard of all cultures at all times, for such prioritizing characterizes imperialist ideology of claiming superiority in order to suppress differences.'

¹⁶ Ibid., states that there are not only social enterprises (patriarchy, hierarchy, gender, class), but also a political interface between colonialism (or imperialism) and their subjects: colonised or marginalised.

and functions? How did the NT household codes agree with (or reject) imperialism or colonialism and the system of patriarchy and suppress 'the others'?

2.2. The Colonisers' Household Codes

2.2.1. Greek Colonial Household Codes

2.2.1.1. Greek Colonies and the True Face of the Codes

The NT household codes had their origin in the household codes of the Greek colonial period, especially the Archaic (750-480 BC), or oriental period, with the flowering of the Greek alphabetic script and literature (Homer and Hesiod), and the Classical period (500-323 BC), during which time philosophers (such as Plato and Aristotle) flourished.¹⁷ Greek colonisation was caused by an expansion in population, when the traders and nobles started to establish far-flung centres on their new trade routes. Slavery was practised to further the economy in trading or manufacturing. Consequently, many small self-governing communities, known as *polis* or city-states, were created as a social and religious tie to the colonies.¹⁸ Athens became a leading city of Greek culture and was later renowned as being the city of philosophers, who included; Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates.¹⁹ They influenced the development of a direct-democracy, governed by the Athenian privileged male citizens. Women and slaves were

¹⁷ Greek history can be divided as the Greek Dark Age (c.1100-c.750 BC), the Archaic period (c.750-c.480 BC), the Classical period (c.500-323 BC) and the Hellenistic period (323-146 BC). It was when Greek culture and power expanded into the near and middle east. This period begins with the death of Alexander and ends with the Roman conquest. See John Roberts, ed. "Greek (History)," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁸ John Roberts, ed. "Polis", *The Oxford Dictionary of the Ancient World*, Also see Marko Marelić, *Brief Athenian History, Psephisma, Alexander the Great, Greek Colonies as in Adriatic and Corcyra Nigra, S. Francisco – USA*, http://www.korcula.net/history/mmarelic/mmarelic_korkyra.htm (accessed 11 June 2010).

¹⁹ Rafael Leyre, "Greece," *An Essay on Violence, Tradition and Modernity*, http://www.essayvtm.netfirms.com/Greece.htm (accessed 11 June 2010).

excluded from political rights.²⁰ The written law codes reflected the life of the *polis*, affected and shaped the lives of the citizens and legalised previously oral traditions.²¹ According to Angela Standhartinger, the origin of the household codes went far back to those found in Pseudo Charondas and Pseudo Zaleukos²² which were dated between the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, the beginning of the classical period.²³ They seem to be alluded to in the words of popular (or 'street') philosophers, such as Charondas and Zaleukos, in the 7th Century BC.²⁴ These codes related the management of the household to the welfare of the city:²⁵ "A person should take great pains to be well-disposed toward the authorities, so that they are voluntarily obeyed as fathers and held in esteem" (Ps Charondas 61:16). They also demanded corresponding duties: the husband should treat his lawful wife with love and should not waste his seed which is 'natural lawful glory' on another woman. Moreover, wives should be faithful to their husband.

Every man should love his wife who lawfully belongs to him and beget children with her. He should not waste his seed on any other. He may not squander or mistreat that which is his natural and lawful glory. For nature produces seed for bearing children and not for licentiousness.' (Ps Charondas 62:30)

The wives should be faithful to their husband and not to cheat on them. Their unfaithfulness can lead to God's wrath. (Ps Charondas 62:34)

²⁰ John Roberts, ed., "Slavery," and "Women," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World*.

²¹ Lin Foxhall and A.D. E. Lewis, *Greek Law in its Political Setting: Justifications not Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 10. According to Foxhall and Lewis, by writing down the oral and traditional laws, the aristocrats 'froze' the current legal position thus avoiding the revolutionary demands which would try to destroy the authority of these laws.

²²Angela Standhartinger, "The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 2001; 23; 117, 120-122, http://jnt.sagepub.com at University of Birmingham on August 21, 2009; P. N. Ure, "Zeleucus and Charondas" Review of by Max Muhl, "Die Gesetze des Zaleukos und Charondas," *The Classical Review* 43, no.5 (November 1929), 170-172.

²³ David Balch, "Neopythagorean Moralists and the New Testament Household Codes," *ANRW*. II.26.I, 389-404.

Foxhall and A.D. E. Lewis, *Greek Law in its Political Setting: Justifications not Justice*, 9.

²⁵ Standhartinger, "The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians," 117.

The rules for slaves and free persons were different: the slaves should work from fear and the free persons should work with respect. (Ps. Zaleukos 228:13).

On the other hand, for Andrew T. Lincoln and David Balch, the origin of the household code goes back to the Classical period (third period), when Plato, Aristotle, ²⁶ and philosophy in general, flourished. ²⁷ At that time, centralised rule and control over the periphery was revived to great effect by Philip II of Macedon. ²⁸ The household codes flourished and played an important role in these Archaic and Classical periods when the city-states or an independent republican or local government system or democracy was practised. ²⁹ During these times, the urban-centre governments relied on the livelihoods of the households ³⁰ living within their state. ³¹ As a consequence, the lawmakers and philosophers of

²⁶ Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians* (Toronto: Wycliffe College, University of Toronto), Downloaded from http://jnt.sagepub.com at University of Birmingham on August 21, 2009, 100. Leges or laws 3: 690A-D, 6.771E. 7. 824C; Pol 1: 1253b, 1259a

²⁷ John Roberts, ed. "Philip II," *The Oxford Dictionary of Ancient World*. In 338 BC, Philip of Macedonia (382-336 BC) and his army extended his kingdom to the north and west and took over the Thebes and Athens to form *de facto hegemon* of all of Greece. He was succeeded by his son Alexander the Great (336-323 BC) under whom the Roman Empire was established.

²⁸ Carol G. Thomas, *Alexander the Great in his World* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 154-155.

²⁹150 city-states were occupied by other weaker ethnic groups or nations (e.g., Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Liosia, Turkey, Italy, Mecedonon) led by the strong and powerful Athens and then Sparta (16 years) and Thebes (a few years) and united to fight against the other powerful Persian Empire. This so- called Delian League came to an end with Athenian exploitation of the other cities in 404BC.see John Roberts, ed., "Delian League," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World*.

³⁰ David C. Verner, *The Household of God: the social world of the Pastoral Epistles,* Dissertation series (Society of Biblical Literature); no. 71 (Chico CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 28. In the Greek world, the household was the basic unit which played an important role in all areas of society: in social life (family, education, cultural entities, law courts, local authorities), economic (production, distribution, marketing, labouring), religious (temples, sects, cults, churches) and political (state, aristocrats, civil services, government, authorities, management, army, parties, taxation). The household was primarily not an individual or social entity but a political entity.

³¹ The Phoenician cities of Canaan (such as Tyre and Sidon); the Sumerian cities of Mesopotamia (such as Babylon and Ur); the Mayans of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica (including sites such as Chichen Itza and El Mirador); the central Asian cities along the Silk Road (which includes Samarkand and Bukhara), and the city-states of Northern Italy (especially Florence, Genoa, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Siena and Venice). See "Delian League" and "Polis," *The Oxford Dictionary of Ancient World*.

politics were concerned with the constitution of the whole states which related to 'the city' and to 'the house.'32

In the Classical period, the relationship between household codes and the states became more defined. For Plato, the household or state was the place where there were people to rule (male or husbands or rulers or guardians) and people to be ruled (subordinate groups: wives, children and slaves) (*Laws* XI 917A).³³ According to Aristotle, the city-states (*Pol.* 1252b 28-31) were established by the combination of several villages (1252b 16) which had been formed by several households (1252b 9-10).³⁴ However, in *Nicomachean Ethics* (VIII 1160b 23-1161a 10), Aristotle showed the connection between city-state and the household by comparing their constitutions: he claimed that those between father-sons and master-slaves to be the constitution of 'tyranny' whilst that between husband-wife as an 'aristocracy.' It is possible that this has a correlation with Plato's model of state/body/society, or, in other words, production/abdomen/slaves; protection/chest/soldiers and Governing/ head/ rulers.³⁵

Aristotle gave details on household management in smaller units: master/slave, husband/wife and father/children, where 'the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child' (Pol, I 1253b 1-14). The possession of different levels of 'soul' (or 'reason') is used to justify this hierarchical structure. In this case, the men have a natural and perfect reason to use authority or power (*Pol.* I 1260a 15).³⁶ As a political animal (*Pol.* I 1253a 2-3), man is the most important person for household management (*Pol.* I 1259:13).³⁷ He holds the right to own the lands, manage the source of wealth, and undertake civic duties, such as

³² Balch, Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter, 25-26.

³³ A. E. Taylor, *The Laws of Plato* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1934), 309.

³⁴ Everson, 11-12.

³⁵ John Roberts, ed., "Plato," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World*.

³⁶ Everson, 29.

³⁷ Ibid., 28.

holding public office, equipping warships and supporting religious rites. Women have less reason and no authority to use what they have, while children have only incomplete reasoning, and slaves have none (*Pol.* I 1260a 9-14).³⁸ In the Republican government, the ruler and the ruled usually interchanged the authority. However, according to Politics I.1259b, the husband and wife never interchanged authority because the husband was, by nature, better as he represented the soul, while wife represents the body (Pol I. 1254b).³⁹ This was the basis on which classes were formed and discriminations created.

The householder's κυρίος position was hereditary, being passed from father to son in the form of citizenship. Although women could be (and often were) citizens, they did not possess the same civic rights as male citizens and could not become householders.⁴⁰ These household and city-state relationships, and the household management rules, legitimated the authority of men and the subservience of women, children and slaves.

2. 2.1.2. The Colonial Household Codes and their Penetrations

The ancient colonial household codes were created mainly for concerns of the state, but were known as rules for cultural, social, and economical enterprises. First, the codes were used to preserve the patriarchal system based on the 'honour and shame' ethic in Mediterranean cultural concepts. The male's honour was maintained through his status, power and reputation. Through loyalty and unity, kinship groups (or city-states) protected each other from outside attack.⁴¹ Consequently, aggressiveness, virility, sexual prowess, and the

³⁹ Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Praxis of Coequal Discipleship," *Paul and Empire*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, International, 1997), 238.

⁴¹ Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Family in the New Testament World* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, Press, 1999), 37-40.

³⁸ Ibid., 29.

 $^{^{40}}$ Verner 29

reproduction of sons were important. Protecting the weak, which was seen as the duty of the strong male or patron, was also associated with 'honour'. Moreover, honour entailed the attainment of sexual purity, modesty and the procreation of legitimate sons. Without these duties, women's life could lead to shame. Carries A. Miles terms this culture 'agonistic' (competitive), where a person preserved and promoted themselves and their family first. Revenge would follow if their honour was betrayed. Disrespecting the honour of a household was considered a threat, and therefore shameful, in Graeco-Roman society.

A second aspect of this code was that building a proper marriage also had a political dimension. Even though marriage is a common human social phenomenon, according to Plato, marriage was "a civic duty that one should undertake with the interest of the polis in mind." Man should marry to benefit the state (*Laws* 6:773B). For Plato, marriage was important as a 'starting point of generation in the States'. Those who refused marriage were to be punished (*Laws* 4:720-721C). In this way, trying to avoid obedience or submission could lead to disastrous consequences. This policy caused rich men to choose wives from poor families to maintain the stability of the state and avoid the superior role of wives in the family (*Laws* 6:773BC). Another intention was to produce the next obedient and loyal generation (*Laws* 4.721 AB). A man should get married by a certain age and he could divorce if the wife did not produce children within 10 years (6.784 AD). 46

⁴² Ibid., 37-40.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Carries A. Miles, "Patriarchy or Gender Equality?: The Letter to the Ephesians on Submission, Headship, and Slavery," http://www.godswordtowomen.org/Patriarchy_or_gender_equality.pdf, (26 September 2007), 76.

⁴⁵ Lincoln, *The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians*, 101 and Carolyn Osiek *Family in the New Testament World*, 37-40.

⁴⁶ Verner, 71.

As half of the population of the state was female, if the state's constitutions failed to regulate the position of women, their law-breaking could lead to the destruction of the state (*Pol.* I.1269b). Women's emancipation was beyond discussion.⁴⁷ They were possessions, under the guardianship of their fathers then husbands and sons and did not hold any rights.⁴⁸ Women from Athens (such as concubines, wives and companions) were treated as objects by men.⁴⁹ Pseudo-Demosthenes' speech against Neaira 122 confirms this; "Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households." ⁵⁰

The third aspect of this code was in education and discipline, which was equally important for children and women (*Law* VII 788A-824C and *Pol.* I 1260:20). Aristotle considered strong and healthy children to be of great importance for the State; educating them was essential as they were the citizens of the future.⁵¹ The polis had official responsibility for children (*Laws* 7.794 B). ⁵² It had a duty to take care of them and should establish public education. (*Pol.* VII 1337a *ff.*) Aristotle pointed out that it was the lack of proper education and discipline for women that had led to the failure of Sparta. (*Pol* II 126b 1270a). ⁵³

The Fourth aspect of the code was economic. The household was the source of wealth.

Slaves played an important role in the day-to-day running of the state economies. Even

⁴⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁸ Ben Witherington III, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 10-15.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 15 quoted from Pseudo-Demosthenes, Against Neaera 122, Private Orations III (Loeb Classical Library; London: Wm. Heinemann, 1939), 444-7, Apollodorus, *Against Neaera*, 18-42, 45-60, 72-3, 78-9, 85-7, 110-14, 122. tans. K. Freeman. G, http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/wlgr-greeklegal90.shtml (accessed 13 September 2009).

⁵¹ Everson, 30.

⁵² Verner, 73.

⁵³ "Aristotle: Politic," *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-pol/#SH7d, (accessed 7 September 2009) and Verner, 73.

though only the wealthy families could afford slaves,⁵⁴ Aristotle avoided the abolition of slavery. Strict control was needed as the slaves were deemed not to have the ability to reason.⁵⁵ There was also no need to talk about justice or friendship since slaves were the property of the masters and were equated with 'lifeless tools' (*Pol.* I 1253:30) or 'like an ox.' (*Pol.* I 1252:10, IV 1295:20).⁵⁶ Female slaves were treated worse than males. Evidence of their treatment can be found in Demosthenes' narration concerning Neiari who was sold to many masters as a slave and was trained as an entertainer-prostitute with other girls. She was sold on to other masters, which was against the law.⁵⁷

In summary, it was the combination of the Greek philosophers, culture, economic system and colonial politics that established the household codes which manipulated the lower classes and the marginalised, while promoting the authority of men, masters, fathers and their elites.

2.2.2. Roman Imperial Household Codes

2.2.2.1. Political Needs of Household Codes

The household was still the basic social/political structure in the Roman Empire, even though major economic and social changes had occurred during the Hellenistic period (323-146BC).⁵⁸ When senatorial families lost their economic influence, there was "increased

⁵⁴ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁵ Op.cit.

⁵⁶ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol 42, ed. Ralph P. Martin (Dallas: Word Books, c1990), 416.

⁵⁷ Apollodorus, *Against Neaera*, 122 and Ken M. Campbell, *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 103-105, 107.

⁵⁸ During the Hellenistic period (323-146 BC) there was a fundamental shift away from city- state culture to Hellenistic culture which spread to the south and east. However in the same period, with the influence of Hellenisation, the communities in Asia, Europe and Persian still used classical Greek town planning, education, art, and local government system and Athenian Greek language (*koine*).

distribution of wealth [that] led to the founding of many more household communities."⁵⁹ The Emperor took control over these households. He reformed the household model to legitimise himself as *paterfamilias* and so replaced the former Republic movement's city-states model.⁶⁰ This secured his authority and encouraged strong relationships with his servants and citizens.⁶¹ Thus he put all people under his authority and protection.

Caesar Augustus' governing body (63 BC-19 August AD 14) was known as the imperial household or Caesar's household. It included not only his extended family, but also his administrators or senators from all over the Empire.⁶² He was designated as the father (or the head), not only of the imperial family, but also the whole empire (lord, κυριος or *despotes* or Latin as *paterfamilias*).⁶³ For example, the inscription of Corinth states: "Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augusturs Germanicus, Supreme Pontiff, in the sixth year of his tribunician power, designated consul for the fourth time, hailed Imperator for the eleventh, Father of his country, constructed this road."

Senior officers of the army ranked second.⁶⁵ Their organisations were strictly hierarchal and patriarchal.⁶⁶ The elite formed only a very small part of the total population. The rest of the population was the 'lower class' which was composed of freeborn citizens,

⁵⁹ Roberts, ed. "Senate," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World.* Derek Tidball, *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1983), 79.

⁶⁰ Krusekronicle, "Household: the Household of Caesar (Part I)," http://krusekronicle.typepad.com/kruse_kronicle/2007/05/household_the_h.html (accessed 20 June 2009).

⁶¹ Tidball, 79.

⁶² Verner, 47.

⁶³ Peter T. O'Brien, "Caesar's Household, Imperial Household," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, c1993).

⁶⁴ Moyer V. Hubbard, *Christianity in the Greco-Roman World: A Narrative Introduction* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing LLC, 2010), 128.

⁶⁵ Verner 48-50

⁶⁶ Miguel Martínez López, "The life of the Essenes and the life of the Utopians: A case study," *Moreu~lo* 31/118-119 (June 1994): 54.

non-citizens, freed persons and slaves.⁶⁷ In these ordinary households, fathers, who had the power of life and death over them all,⁶⁸ took care of the family and controlled extended family members for up to three generations of wives, children and slaves.⁶⁹

David C. Verner describes this social structure as a steep social pyramid where the Emperor elevated himself.⁷⁰ Derek Tidball comments:

[Consequently] the empire became on a macrocosmic scale what the household was in microcosm. The empire was a complex network of households which all loyally interlocked into one grand system under the authority and protection of the Emperor.⁷¹

Under the ruler, every individual (or city) believed they were secure financially, economically, protected from external enemies and enjoying total freedom. The emperor upheld the power in order to maintain the peace among them.⁷² His power was passed on to *paterfamilias* and the ruling, elite class, which again controlled family life in the whole Empire by means of the household codes.⁷³

2.2.2.2. Emperors and the Household Codes

The ruling patriarchal, hierarchical system was vital for the state to preserve order.⁷⁴ The emperor's speeches included the household codes⁷⁵ since these were equally important in the

⁶⁸ Ibid., 33.

⁶⁷ Verner, 53.

⁶⁹ Tidball, 79.

⁷⁰ Verner, 47.

⁷¹ Tidball.79.

⁷² Ibid., 77.

⁷³ Lincoln, "The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians," 100.

⁷⁴ Ibid.,100, 141.

⁷⁵ Osiek, A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity, 119-120.

political arena to maintain social, cultural and religious stability. Augustus tried to reconstruct Roman society in the family, which he accused of as being godless and immoral. He lamented, "O most immoral age! First you tainted marriage, the house, and the family. Now from the same source flows pollution over fatherland and people." (Horace, *Carmen* 3.6)⁷⁷ Therefore, Augustus legalised all unwritten traditional laws and regulations known as *mores maiorum* or *Patria postestas* (or 'customs of the fathers/ancestors') which conservatively prescribed most of Roman behaviour, making citizens subject to Caesar, aristocratic domination and fathers and masters in the household. Thus Augustus promoted the virtues of "simplicity and self-sufficiency, a strict upbringing and moral code, order and subservience within the family, diligence, bravery and self-sacrifice." Roman laws ensured that all people should serve only the Emperor by keeping their families in order.⁷⁹

In the case of creating a household code for Augustus Caesar, his friend and teacher, the stoic philosopher Arius Didymus, ⁸⁰ edited Aristotle's law. ⁸¹ "The slave is wholly lacking the deliberative element; the female has it but it lacks authority; the child has it but it is incomplete" (*Politis*, 1260a11). ⁸² His work can be seen in Musonius Rufus' translation: (Stob II. 147: 26-149: 11). It stated that a house is like a small city (148:10) which was formed of

⁷⁶ Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Knowing How to Preside over His Own Household: Imperial Masculinity and Christian Asceticism" in the Pastorals, *Hermas* and Luke-Acts," in *New Testament Masculinity*, ed. Stephen D. More and Janice Capel Anderson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 265-95.

⁷⁷ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990), 156.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Miles, "Patriarchy or Gender Equality?: The Letter to the Ephesians on Submission, Headship, and Slavery," 76.

⁸⁰ A citizen of Alexandria 1st century BC-1st Century AD, Arius Didymus lived in the time of Augustus. He claimed that he was more beloved of Augustus than Agrippa.

^{81 (500} years after its author).

⁸² Where women should be inferior and slaves and children did not yet exist. Verner, 73. Kruse Kronicle, "Household: "The Household Code."

parents and children, as monarchy; men and women as aristocracy; and children to one another as a democracy (Stob II, 148:15). The text perpetuated the inferior status of women as begetters of children and the slaves as base helpers, and the man's superior status as the head; a rational and controlling ruler over the household (Stob II 149:5). Through this code, Arius Didymus reinforced the authority and the legislation of Augustus and continued the *status quo* of the members.

In Nero's time, his tutor Seneca, a full member of the senate, ⁸⁴ gave his advice only to husbands/ fathers/masters. ⁸⁵ His Letter 94.1 advises, "how a husband should conduct himself towards his wife, or how a father should bring up his children, or how a master should rule his slaves..." ⁸⁶ Anyone failing to comply became useless to society. ⁸⁷ For him, fathers should treat their children strictly which is an expression of ideal love and be interested in their education. ⁸⁸ The Emperor Nero and Seneca thus maintained the existing patriarchal norms. However, Seneca's view on slavery was somewhat of a development, in that he saw slaves as human beings and encouraged owners to treat them fairly. Unfortunately he never went so far as to recommend (or achieve) the abolition of slavery. ⁸⁹ Compared to the time of Aristotle,

⁸³ Balch, Let Wives Be Submissive, 41-42.

⁸⁴ Lucius Annaeus Seneca (often known simply as Seneca, or Seneca the Younger) (c. 4 BC – AD 65) was a Roman Stoic philosopher, statesman, dramatist, and in one work a humorist in the Silver Age of Latin literature. He was tutor and later advisor to Emperor Nero. He was executed by that emperor for complicity in the Pisonian conspiracy to assassinate this last of the Julio-Claudian emperors; however, he may have been innocent.

⁸⁵ David M. Hay, *Colossians*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c2000), 140.

⁸⁶ Seneca, *AD Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, Richard M. Gummere (trans), The Loeb Classical Library, vol III, eds. E Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, (London: William Heinemann, mcmxxv), 11.

⁸⁷ Brad Inwood, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 116.

⁸⁸ James S. Jeffer, *The Graeco-Roman World of New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (New York: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 247.

⁸⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, 416.

first century AD slavery was less harsh than before: there had been some improvement in treatment of slaves and changes in legislation concerning them. Claudius ordered that slaves who were abandoned by their master should be freed. Nero also ordered that the complaints of slaves should be considered by the city prefects and Domitian forbade the castration of slaves. Furthermore, gaining liberty from slavery was easier than before: 90 manumission was permitted after servitude of ten to twenty years. 91

Under Emperor Trajan, Pliny "accepts without question the employment of slaves and gladiators and the political necessity of suppressing a fanatical Christian minority." Pliny confirmed that citizen children were still under their father's authority (Pliny 10:11). The role of fathers was important as it was a reflection or affirmation of the emperor as father of his empire.

2.2.3. The Victims of the Household Codes

In early Roman law, after marriage, a wife was under the control of her husband. However, in the late republic period, in relation to high-class women, their father's authority of them was no longer transferred to their husband. They remained under the father's as the legal heir. After a father died, his daughter became a property owner. Augustus himself exempted

⁹⁰ Tidball, 114, suggests the condition of the slaves was not extremely harsh, so that it was not necessary for the early church to consider the abolition of the slavery. This may be considered to be a manipulationist response. Paul arrived in Rome a year after the Proletarian riot in AD 61, which was followed by the murder of the city prefect, Pedanius Secundus who had 400 slaves. According to the law, if the slave could not protect their master from an attempt at murder, they should be punished. Some senators wanted to make this law lighter, and but some senators (e.g., Gaius Cassius) wanted the law preserved. The slaves were executed on the grounds that they had failed to protect their master.

⁹¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 418.

⁹² Pliny, *The Letters of the Younger Pliny*, 27-28. Actually, Pliny was a generous and thoughtful master to his slaves in his household by giving freedom, (8:16). He was a person who thought a temple not more than art gallery, and was a devoted husband.

⁹³ Ibid., 264.

women from a guardian's control after the birth of three children. (Gaius, *Inst.* 1.145, 171). Thus, Roman women were entitled to greater material and legal freedom than other women.

In the case of the parent-child relationships, fathers had the power over death and life. Augustus himself legitimised punishment for adult children as Roman family law was authoritarian in the name of the *paterfamilias*. ⁹⁴

In the first century AD, slaves still faced forced labour, corporal punishment, torture and sexual abuse. Dio Chrysostom, II *Discourses* 15 reveals that some men had sexual intercourse with slave girls as a matter of course. "Do not many Athenian men have intercourse with their maidservants, some of them secretly, but others quite openly?"

2.2.4. Equality Vs Household Codes

Even though Augustus gave some freedom and legal status to women, practising gender equality was not tolerated. However, the gender equality practices in Egypt⁹⁶ had started to penetrate his world.⁹⁷ This led women to take less responsibility in their marital obligations⁹⁸ and to demand more rights,⁹⁹ which, in turn, seemed to threaten marriage and the patriarchal structure (including religious observance).¹⁰⁰ Therefore, codes were created to make sure that,

⁹⁴ Peter Garnsey & Richard P. Saller, *The Roman Empire, Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 126, 130, 136, 139.

⁹⁵ Campbell, Marriage and Family in the Biblical World, 116-117.

⁹⁶ According to both Witherington and Verner, in the Hellenistic age, especially in Macedonia, Egypt and Sparta, women gained positions in society, a legal right to earn money and to own property, rights in marriage and civil society. See more in Witherington, 6-16 and Verner, 35-45.

⁹⁷ Balch, "Hellenization Acculturation in 1 Peter," *Perspective on 1 Peter*, ed. Charles H Talbert, NABPR special studies series; 9, Macon (Georgia: Mercer University press, 1986), 81-82.

⁹⁸ Verner 38

⁹⁹ Ibid., 64. These were the personal choice of a spouse, recognition of monogamy and the right of women to initiate divorce.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 39.

in marriage, women were domestically and socially retiring, and altogether submissive to their husbands.¹⁰¹

A position of gender equality in the political sphere was beyond the emperor's beliefs. Augustus condemned the weakness of Mark Antony's forces who had submitted to the authority of Cleopatra; 102 a woman who espoused democracy and gender equality (Dio Cassius 103 50.25.3: "...Antony now ...has abandoned his ancestors' habits....but pays homage to..." Augustus also spoke against the soldiers who were serving Cleopatra, who, "...worst of all, are slaves to a woman and not to a man," και το μεγιστον γυναικι ἀυτ ἀνδρς δουλευοντες (50.24.7, 34.7). He also called Cleopatra an 'accursed woman' (Dio Cassius 50. 26.5) and demanded that people "allow no woman to make equal herself to man" (Dio Cassius 50. 28. 3).

In the realm of religion, a tension existed between the imperial society and the colonised people in terms of defining the 'head of the house.' For example, classical Athens believed that the gods were the head and protectors of the home. ¹⁰⁶ As a result, women and slaves were obliged to change their religion from their father's to their husband's, or from one master to another respectively. Children adopted their parents' religious rites. ¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, religion reinforced the concept of the *paterfamilias*, with the emperor as the head. ¹⁰⁸ Women

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 65.

¹⁰² Ibid., 73.

¹⁰³ An historian in the late second century BC.

¹⁰⁴ Dio Cassius, *Dio's Roman History*, V, Earnest Cary (trans), The Loeb Classical Library (London, William Heinemann Ltd, MCMLV), 491,

http://www.archive.org/stream/diosromanhistory05cassuoft#page/n5/mode/2up (accessed 4 October 2009).

¹⁰⁵ Dio Cassius, *Dio's Roman Hist*ory, Vol 5, Herbert Baldwin Foster (trans), (London: William Heinemann, MCMXVII). 487-497.

¹⁰⁶ Verner, 28.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Lincoln, The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians, 101

and slaves suffered, as any deviation from that social standard was deemed unacceptable and designated as 'moral scandal' that required punishment.¹⁰⁹ The Dionysus and Isis cults, as well as Judaism, attracted women devotees and their consequent refusal to worship their masters' (or husband's) gods¹¹⁰ created problems in the household. Angela Standhartinger states, "Mystery cults were particularly exposed to the suspicion of questioning social roles, and hence of undermining the olkóç"¹¹¹ For example, Jews and the worshippers of Isis were banished from Rome, being accused of moral scandal.¹¹² They had been the focus of Imperial propaganda since 186 BC.¹¹³ Augustus' accusation of Cleopatra was based on her democratic values and the position of gender equality which had originated in the cult of the goddess Isis who demanded, "give the women the same power as men."¹¹⁴ The Emperor Tiberius in AD19 and Claudius in AD 49 also expelled Jews from Rome.¹¹⁵

One of these cults, Christianity, included calls for equality between genders (e.g., Gal 3:18) and between classes and races in all religious gatherings and also denied the concept of imperial divinity. These declarations inevitably made Roman governments, especially those of Nero and Domitian, suspicious of the cult, which led to grave persecution of Christians. 116

¹⁰⁹ Standhartinger, "The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians," 126-127 states, "the banishing from Rome of both Jews and adherents of the cult of Isis during the reign of the emperor Tiberius was the result of a moral scandal."

¹¹⁰ Lincoln, The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians, 101.

¹¹¹ Standhartinger, 126. Downloaded from http://jnt.sagepub.com at University of Birmingham. (accessed 21 August 2009).

¹¹² Ibid.

Erwin J. Urch, "Early Roman Understanding of Christianity," *The Classical Journal* 27/4 (January 1932), 255-262.

¹¹⁴ Balch, "Hellenization Acculturation in 1 Peter," 81-82.

¹¹⁵ Cynthia White, *The Emergence of Christianity* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 12.

¹¹⁶ Urch. 255-262.

Nero blamed Christians for the fire in Rome¹¹⁷ and Domitian persecuted Christians for lacking *mores maiorum*.¹¹⁸ In the times of Trajan, Pliny the Younger's¹¹⁹ charge against Christianity can be seen fully in 10: 96 where Pliny advised Christians to pay sacrifice to the statues of the Emperors and to renounce their faith. Anyone who refused would be charged and punished. This charge was confirmed by Trajan in Pliny 10: 97.¹²⁰

Therefore, the Graeco-Roman writers (including Arius Didymous, Apion, ¹²¹ Pliny and emperors such as Augustus, Tiberius, Nero, Domitian and Trajan) criticised and attacked the mystery cults and their followers, fearing that their beliefs would lead to social instability. Consequently, they retained the use of Roman household codes, reviving them as necessary to maintain the subservience of wives, children and slaves. ¹²²

2. 3. The Household Codes of the Colonised or the Marginalised

The imperial household codes did not stand alone, for there were other codes from colonised cults such as the Greek inscription of SIG (Sylloges Inscriptionum Graecarum) from Philadelphia referring to a private mystery temple in the first and second century BC. ¹²³ Jewish historians such as Josephus and Philo also created codes for Hellenistic Jews and there were Christian NT and other apocryphal written codes for Early Christian groups in the first and second centuries AD. It was important for them to safeguard communities by writing

¹¹⁷ Jurgen Malitz, *Nero* (Oxford: Blackwell 1999), 70-71.

¹¹⁸ Bernard W. Henderson, *Five Roman Emperors: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, A.D. 69-117* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 46-50.

¹¹⁹ Radice, 12-15.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 293-294.

Apion was a Graeco-Egyptian who lived in 20BC to 46-48 AD. His main concern was to criticise Jewish culture and history.

¹²² Lincoln, *The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians*, 101.

¹²³ Standhartinger, 126.

apologetics in order to deflect any suspicions as viewed by the state.¹²⁴ Such codes were normally imitations of colonial/imperial household codes, with some minor changes and modifications. The addressing of the subordinate groups first, the demand for reciprocal responsibilities, the re-legitimation of the existing position of each group member, and the reaffirmation of their religious beliefs were all ways to reinforce such colonised codes and to strengthen the religious character of colonial/imperial codes.

2.3.1. The Colonised Greeks and Household Codes

The author of SIG 985 (from Philadelphia)¹²⁵ included, in his inscription, the codes of law by using the outline of Ps Charondas and Ps Zaleukos, in order to protect his shrine from suspicion from the state and to safeguard his community.¹²⁶ During the first and second century BC, mystery cults were being accused of "celebrating orginatic sexual rites, thus undermining conventional morality as well as conventional notions of gender and social arrangement." ¹²⁷

As the former colonial Greeks became themselves colonised, from a nationalistic and racial point of view, Plutarch, the Greek historian of first century, encouraged wives not only to rely upon childbirth, their dowry or beauty, but also to hold their husbands with conversation, character and comradeship (Moralia 141A). They needed to share the same friends and gods as their husbands (Moralia 140D). Plutarch also wrote 'On the Education of Children' (*De liberis educandis* 2-13), in which he recommended that fathers, wanting to

¹²⁴ White, 120, 127.

¹²⁵ Standhartinger, 113-11.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 126-127.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 126.

¹²⁸ Campbell, 120.

get their wives pregnant, should not drink alcohol, in order to avoid alcoholism in their offspring. If a mother is unable to feed her baby she should hire a nurse who should be Greek and well educated, in order to instil good character in the child. He warns that barbarians and persons of low character should not be employed in this role. Greek fathers had 'to direct their sons' characters to piety toward his parents and the gods, chastity toward women, even-tempered, not dissolute, impulsive or brutish in temper, and so on.' Reinforcing Plato's view, Plutarch advised fathers to

betroth[e] to his sons women who are not greatly above them either in birth or wealth... since those who take to wife women far above themselves unwittingly become not the husbands of their wives, but the slaves of their wives' dowries (Moralia 13F-14A). 130

2.3.2. Hellenistic Jews and the Codes

Hellenistic Jewish writers, such as Philo¹³¹ and Josephus,¹³² included the household codes in their writings by adopting, in outline, Aristotle's household code with reference to Mosaic Law.¹³³ Philo attempted to justify Jewish culture and traditional teachings¹³⁴ to the Graeco-

¹²⁹ Ibid.,127-128.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 129.

¹³¹ Philo (20 BCE - 50 CE), known also as Philo of Alexandria, Philo Judaeus, Philo Judaeus of Alexandria, Yedidia and Philo the Jew, was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher born in Alexandria.

Josephus (AD 37 – c. 100), was a first-century Jewish historian and apologist of priestly and royal ancestry who survived and recorded the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. His works give an important insight into first-century Judaism. Eusebius reports that a statue of Josephus was erected in Rome. Josephus's two most important works are *The Jewish War* (c. 75) and *Antiquities of the Jews* (c. 94) *The Jewish War* recounts the Jewish revolt against Rome (66–70). *Antiquities of the Jews* recounts the history of the world from a Jewish perspective. These works provide valuable insight into first century Judaism and the background of early Christianity.

¹³³ Lincoln, The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians, 100.

¹³⁴ Verner, 44, 46, states, like Greek and Roman societies, Hellenistic Judaism also had a more prominent patriarchal household structure. In Rabbinical and Mishnaic traditions, husbands could divorce their wives for any reason but wives could not instigate separation Monogamy was encouraged in Roman and Greek societies while Jewish traditions encouraged the levirate (where a widow marries her brother in law). This custom ceased in the time of Philo.

Roman culture and show that they share identical principles.¹³⁵ Philo lived in the time of Tiberius and one can assume that Philo knew the suspicions of the Emperor towards the Jews, that led to their expulsion in AD 19. Therefore, Philo, in Decalogue 165-67 and Hypothetica 7.1-3, advised reciprocal obligations between inferior (young/subjects/ and those who received the benefits/slaves/women) and superior groups (the elder/the rulers/the benefactor/ the masters/the husband) of the Jewish community.¹³⁶ The inferior should obey, be submissive, receive instruction gladly, and should not act against their superior,¹³⁷ while the superior should control, teach, set a good example and treat the inferior kindly.¹³⁸

Josephus was a loyal and law-abiding Jew and was an important apologist in the Roman world for the Jewish people and culture, particularly at a time of conflict and tension under Emperor Vespasian and his son. He tried to show that Jews were educated people and their culture was as civilised as that of the Graeco-Roman world. According to Lincoln, Josephus' reinforcement of the household codes with the subordination of wives, children and slaves to the *paterfamilias* (Apion 2.10-21) by associating it with divine ordination, was to show that the Jews were not subversive of the conventions and social standards demanded by the state (cf. Apion 2.24, 27, 30, 19, 206, 216). In *Against Apion* (I 25: 4-5), written in 93/94AD, Josephus asserts that, [a] woman is inferior to her husband in all things.

¹³⁵ Raymond F. Surburg, *Introduction to the Intertestamental Period* (Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), 155-156.

¹³⁶ Hay, 142.

¹³⁷ The death penalty with stoning will be his punishment.

Philo: "Hypothetica," *Early Jewish Writings*, http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book37.html (accessed 6 September 09)

John Roberts, ed., "Josephus," The Oxford Dictionary of the Ancient World.

¹⁴⁰ Lincoln, The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians, 101.

^{141 &}quot;Let her, therefore, be obedient to him; not so that he should abuse her, but that she may acknowledge her duty to her husband,"

God hath given the authority to the husband..."¹⁴² In the same text, (II 28), we find; "The law ordains also, that parents should be honoured immediately after God himself, and delivers that the son who does not requite them for the benefits he hath received from them, but is deficient on any such occasion, to be stoned."¹⁴³

2.3.3. Early Christianity and the Household Codes

The household codes can also be seen in the two main groups of Christian literature: the non-canonical early Church Fathers' writings and the canonical Christian writings.

2.3.3.1. Early Church Fathers and their Codes

The early church fathers' household codes - 1 Clem¹⁴⁴ 1.3; 21: 6-8; Ign. Pol. ¹⁴⁵ 4-6; Pol. Phil. 4:2-6:1, Did¹⁴⁶ 4:9-11; Barn¹⁴⁷ 19: 5-7 - were written between the end of the first century and at the beginning of the second century when Christians (including Clement) were persecuted by Domitian that was caused by his confusing Christianity with Judaism and Atheism. This was the consequence of Vespasian's terms in the treaty that followed the Jewish war where

^{142 &}quot;Josephus," available from http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/josephus/apion2.html. Internet, accessed 6 September 2009. "A husband, therefore, is to lie only with his wife whom he hath married; but to have to do with another man's wife is a wicked thing ..."

It also says that the young men should pay due respect to every elder, since God is the eldest of all beings.

¹⁴⁴ Kirsop Lake (trans), *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol I [Book on-line](Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann LTD, MCMLXV), 2-5, http://www.scribd.com/doc/32350777/THE-APOSTOLIC-FATHERS-KIRSOPP-LAKE-VOLUME-I-1965-EDITION (accessed 6 June 2009), dated Domitian's reign in 96 AD. Clement was writing against the deposition of certain leaders caused by the trouble in Corinth. He was the third or fourth bishop of Rome during the last decade of the first century AD.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 166-167. Ignatius was the third bishop of Antioch of Syria, and was executed, in Rome, in the time of Trajan in 108AD in Rome. , He wrote his letters from Smyrna to encourage respect to for the elders in the church, and to oppose the trend towards Docetism;, a belief that Christ's suffering was only appearance.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 305-307. *Didache* or *Teaching of the twelve apostles* was written in the early second century and known also as 'Apostolic Constitutions' and the 'Church Ordinances.'

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 337-339. *The Epistle of Barnabas* is a general treaty which warns Christians against the Jewish reading of the Old Testament especially the laws written between the end of first and the beginning of second century. It was probably written between AD70-131 and addressed to Christian Gentiles.

Jews were ordered to pay a 'Jewish tax' and homage to Jupiter.¹⁴⁸ Ignatius of Antioch was also put to death (thrown to lions) in the time of Trajan.¹⁴⁹ Ignatius' works were, probably apologetic, similar to the NT codes. Except for a few instances, they do not have specific addressees.¹⁵⁰ The Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas mention two subordinate groups: slaves and children; 1 Clement and Ign. Pol. (slaves and women); Pol. Phil., women and children. These codes were written for leaders to teach subordinate groups to be submissive and are more similar to Aristotle's code.

The husbands' authoritative role over his wife has been reinforced: 'let us lead our wives to that which is good' (1 Clem 21: 6); 'you taught them to remain in the ruler of obedience and to manage their households with seemliness, in all circumspection' (1 Clem 1:3); to 'let them make the gentleness of their tongue manifest by their silence,'(1 Clem 21: 7). Like Christ men are 'to love their wives as the Lord loved the church.' (Ign Pol 5: 1). Women's submissive roles are: to be pure in morals, to love and be dutiful to their husband, and also to teach their children, (Pol Phil 4: 2). They were also to 'be content with their husbands in flesh and spirit' (Ign Pol 5: 1).

Fathers are to teach their children to grow up in the fear of God (Did 4:9, Barn 5: 6). However they should not neglect corporal chastisement. (Barn 19: 5). The children are also taught to learn virtues like purity and love to please God (1 Clem 21: 8).

Treating slaves harshly is not allowed (Barn 19: 7). 'Do not be haughty to slaves, either men or women; yet do not let them be puffed up, but let them rather endure slavery to

¹⁴⁸ Henderson, 44-45.

¹⁴⁹ "From Syria even to Rome I fight with wild beasts, by land and sea, by night and by day, being bound amidst ten leopards, even a company of soldiers, who only grow worse when they are kindly treated." *Ignatius to the Romans*, 5.

The writers used general personal pronoun: the second person 'you' or the first person like 'we' or 'let us' and the third person 'let them' or 'they.' Two direct forms of address only can be seen, 'my sister' and 'slaves'.

the glory of God, that they may obtain a better freedom from God. Let them not desire to be set free at the Church's expense, that they be not found the slaves of lust. '(Ign Pol 4:3 and Barn 19:7) In this way the church was discouraged from helping slaves to buy their freedom in order that their lust was not encouraged. Direct instruction to slaves can be seen in: 'you who are slaves be subject to your master' (Did 4: 11) and 'Thou shalt obey thy masters as a type of God in modesty and fear' (Barn 19:7).

The theology and Christology which legitimate authority and submission, as found in these letters, are as follows: The household codes as the law of God (1 Clem 1:3); the instruction in Christ (1 Clem 21:8); the commandment of the Lord (Pol Phil 4: 2; 5: 1); the community should be revered and honour Christ's blood (1 Clem 21: 6, Ign Pol 5:2); the people with holy and pure mind deserve Christ's salvation (Pol Phil 4:3); because God studies human hearts and conduct and [he] can take away this salvation when [he] wants (1 Clem 21:9); God is also the God of wrath (Pol Phil 6:1); People should live purely and worthily as [his] servants and citizens (Pol Phil 5:2); so that 'God is not mocked' (Pol Phil 5:1); God is the master to both masters and slaves on earth (Barn 19:7); God can give freedom to slaves (Ign Pol 5: 3).

2.3.3.2. The Colonial and Patriarchal New Testament Household Codes

The codes in Col 3:18-4:1; Eph 5:22-6:9 and 1 Pet 3:1-7; 2: 18-22¹⁵¹ re-legitimise the *status quo* of colonised people's social/political relationships by adapting, revising, editing and christianising the previously discussed Graeco-Roman and Jewish household codes with the concept of 'the lordship of Christ' as the model for Christian conduct. Even though they

¹⁵¹ Lincoln, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, 106. Most scholars agree that the Colossians version was the first but revised by Ephesians and 1 Peter versions.

¹⁵² Ibid., 104.

were religiously motivated apologetic codes,¹⁵³ colonial and patriarchal elements were still promoted. Thus, the conventional views were legalised within these adapted codes (now given by God or Christ who is the real father, husband, master and ruler).¹⁵⁴ Old Testament references were also used (Eph. 5: 31, Gen. 2:23-24; Eph. 6: 2, Ex. 20: 12, Deut. 5:16; and 1 Pet. 3:6, Gen 18:12).

The most distinctive linguistic usage in the codes is the imperative mode and the use of participles for exhortations such as 'be subject' to your husband ὑποτάσσεσθε in Col 3:18; 'be subject' to husband or to the master ὑποτασσόμεναι in Eph 5: 21 and 1 Pet 3: 1, 2: 18; 'love your wife' ἀγαπᾶτε in Col 3:1, Eph 5:25 and 'live with them' συνοικοῦντες in 1 Pet 3: 7; 'obey your parents or your masters' ὑπακούετε in Col 3:20, 22 and Eph 6:1, 5; father 'not to provoke their anger' in Col 3: 21 μὴ ἐρεθίζετε and Eph 6: 4 μὴ παροργίζετέ masters 'to treat' the slaves well παρέχεσθε in Col 4:1 and 'to do' the same ποιεῖτε in Eph 6: 9. This style is uncommon in other household codes. Such devices reveal not only the colonial and patriarchal elements, but also the oppressive tone of the work for those who were identified as 'inferiors'.

2.3.3.2.1. The Colonial Christianised Elements

The distinctive christianised elements in the context of these household codes are their Christology, ecclesiology and futurist-eschatology. 155

¹⁵³ They are not only codes for solving family or social or religious problems, but also religious apologetic ones.

This is achieved by using the terms such as 'for wife to husband' as 'fitting in the Lord', 'as church subjects itself to Christ, as Sarah obeys and calls Abraham Lord; for children to father, 'as pleasing God', in the Lord for this is right; for slaves to their masters, 'as serving the Lord', 'as servant of Christ', 'as Christ who suffered for you and follow his example.'

¹⁵⁵ Georg Strecker, ed., "Household Rules," *The Encyclopaedia of Christianity*, Vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001).

Significantly, New Testament household codes used Christology as their foundation e.g., the Colossians' demand: that wives' submit as 'fitting in the Lord' (3:18); that children obey as a 'duty in the Lord, (3:20); and that slaves should obey as 'fearing the Lord', 'done for the Lord,' '[to] serve the Lord' (3:22-4:1). These serve to remind the faithful that Christ is the Lord of the laws whose norms and rules one should follow. This Lordship starts from the household (the microcosm of the *polis*) extends to the society and then to the whole universe. Lincoln confirms that, as Christ is the Lord of universe and wisdom above all cosmic powers and knowledge, he is still the ruler of *paterfamilias*. ¹⁵⁶

Ephesians' teachings on children's obedience 'in the Lord this is right' (6:1) and slaves' obedience as 'doing the will of God' and as service to the Lord (6: 6-7) are also ethically and morally christologised. The household codes are centred around the Lordship of Christ. Human beings are then presented as the slaves of Christ (Eph. 6:5, 9).

1 Peter on the 'household' displays another interesting hierarchy and patriarchy paradigm which starts from God (2:19, 3:5) and then goes to Christ. Here it brings in the concept of the suffering servant (2: 21) which slaves should follow as an example. This paradigm makes the Christ's Lordship different from the role of the Emperor.

Ephesians' household code adds the church in its social structure, where the church is under Christ. It goes against the fact that Roman emperors normally demanded the people to follow their laws and kept religious institutions under his control. Lincoln describes it as an 'ameliorating of the structure,' where Christians want to be under the rule of Christ rather than any other earthly masters. The head and body metaphor (5: 23), which places Christ as head and the church as the body, parallels Plato's concept of the headship of a ruler in that

¹⁵⁶ Lincoln, Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter, 106.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

hierarchal and patriarchal setting. The character of the benefactor is highlighted as 'the saviour', 'the one who can make holy of his body members,' who can give his life for them, who can lend his own resources to cling to another body and who can provide them with what they need (5:23-31).

Another important element of Christology was the hope in the *Parousia*. The teaching to the slaves mentions that Christ was the heavenly Master (Col 4:1; Eph 6:9) who is different from the earthly master. (Col 3:22; Eph 6:5). Obedience to the earthly master is also obedience to the heavenly master, who, based on a person's deeds, can both punish and award. Consequently, they need to take 'fleshly relationships' seriously, with a social concern, and to seek stability.¹⁵⁸

2.3.3.2.2. The Colonised or Marginal Lives from the NT Household Codes

The New Testament household codes themselves help to reveal the situations and tensions of that time and also the integration of contemporary values, traditions (or customs) and religious beliefs. The reciprocal duties of the different parties still serve to maintain the *status quo*. Unlike Aristotle's division of each member's status being based on their capacity to reason, the NT household member's status is based on the concept of 'from or for God/Christ'. Furthermore, unlike Aristotle, the codes addressed the subordinated groups first. Possibly, this is because the codes attend to those people who need most the attention and guidance; those who are the marginalised and living on the periphery of society. However, this can mislead later generations by seeming to put such a strong emphasis on 'submission' and less emphasis on the reciprocal roles.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 108.

2.3.3.2.2.1. Marginal but Privileged

Among the colonised members of the early church, there appeared to be many who, despite being marginalised, were also privileged. The first group were the rich and high-class women (Eph 6:7). 1 Peter highlights that these women flamboyantly wore fine clothes and jewellery in an inappropriate manner. This caused them to be stumbling blocks in conversion of their husbands who might not be Christians (1 Pet 3: 1-5). Here religious tension can be seen between wives and husbands. Peter encourages them to follow the example of Sarah whose name can be found three times in the NT (Rom 9:9, Heb 11:11 and 1 Pet 3:6). The first two references refer to the power to have a son as a promise from God. Although unnamed, but identified as a 'free woman', Sarah is also mentioned in Gal 4: 26-31. The freedom of Sarah contrasts with the slavery of Hagar. Apparently, women like Sarah were treated as honoured and powerful people, although in 1 Pet 3: 7, they still need to humble themselves in their relationships with other more powerful people; such as men. This creates the picture of a power pyramid. Nevertheless, women can also be powerful as men and discriminate against other women.

Other fortunate marginalised people, males and husbands, were described in terms of power. For example, they were compared with being like 'the head' (Eph 5: 23) and even with Christ. The husband should love his wife as Christ loves the Church and thus will cleanse the sinful life of women (Eph 5: 26). Husbands were portrayed as the providers and protectors in the family (Eph 5: 29), and as being the stronger sex. (Co 3:19) 1 Peter instructs husbands to treat their wives as the heir of life in order to prevent hindrance to their prayers (1 Pet 3: 7). Even though the writer of Ephesians encouraged the husband to love his wife and treat her like his own flesh, he concludes by reinforcing the patriarchal system and encouraging wives to respect their husbands (Eph 5: 33). 1 Pet 3: 7 portrays husbands as

those who believe in prayer and as the heirs in the family. They were entrusted as teachers of their children, for the fathers $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\epsilon\varsigma'$, should not provoke their children's anger.

2.3. 3.2. 2. The Margin of the Marginal People in the Household

The most marginal of the marginalised in the NT household codes are the female daughters, poor wives, slave wives, prostitutes and female slaves who are portrayed as having bad reputations and no position in society. Moreover, it is possibly indicative of their low status that they are mentioned only a few times (Acts 16: 16, 16: 19). In these household codes their voices are barely heard.

Having seen the religious tensions between the major and minor groups in the Graeco-Roman world, 1 Pet 3:1-2 reflects this and emphasises that the Christians (or the minority group) should be careful with their behaviour and to abide with the standards of the major groups, in order to win over non-Christian husbands or masters.

In Ephesians, wives are compared to the church and designated as sinners who are blemished (Eph 5: 27). However, 1 Peter clearly demands women's modesty, morality and submission to their husbands as a way of adoring God. Additionally, 1 Peter states that women are the weaker sex. However, the author of the epistle accepted women as being the heirs of life (1 Pet 3:6).

For children, obedience to their parents, τοῖς γονεῦσιν in everything is their duty given by God (Col 3: 20) and a right, (Eph 6:1.)

In the case of the Christian slaves, all three letters emphasise the submission of slaves in everything as 'done for the Lord (Col 3: 22); as 'as obeying Christ or doing the will of God' (Eph 6: 5-6); no matter how bad the masters are (1 Pet 2:18); by following the example of Christ. They are also warned that they are watched over (Col 3: 22; Eph 6: 6). Tension will occur when they fail to fulfil their duties as they carry out the main household tasks or

services (Col 3: 23, Eph 6:7). Instead, they are exhorted to follow Christ's example (1 Pet 2:21) and to hope for rewards from Christ, or from God's approval (Col 3: 24, Eph 6:8, 1 Pet 2: 20). The lack of teaching for the masters in 1 Peter and only a mild instruction to the husbands might suggest that they were not Christians. However, Col 4: 1 and Eph 6:9 exhorts Christian masters to be just and not to threaten their slaves as they share the same master, who is Christ.

2.4.3.2 3. The Colonised Apologetic Concerns

The household codes were also known as apologetic codes. According to Lincoln, the writer of Colossians included the household code as the first Christian version of a wisdom code in order to respond to the other teachings in the Colossian church, such as asceticism, philosophy and magic (usually known as 'deviancy from social norms'), all of which led to the neglect of social duties. As Christians were conscious of the danger of subverting the social order, the codes became the established teachings within the Christian gospel.¹⁵⁹

According to W. R. F. Browning, the codes were an attempt by Christian leaders to establish a pattern of family and social life that was similar to traditional Gentile and Jewish families (their contemporaries in the Graeco-Roman world). The more patriarchal codes represent a reaction against the egalitarian organisation of the earliest Church in Jerusalem (Acts 2: 44–7) and a counter to Paul's radical teaching against sexual discrimination (Gal. 3: 28). 160

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 100, 110-111, Lincoln suggests that the household codes were discussed (and responded to) the debates on social stability with the inclusion of a Christian 'Wisdom' mode in which Christ is the Lord and the source of wisdom from above (heaven) and below (the earth). This was also in response to the ascetic wisdom of the church in Colossus.

¹⁶⁰ Browning, 23.

According to Angela Standhartinger, a possible reason for including the household codes in the NT Letters is to safeguard the community from the State's misunderstanding and to mollify outsiders that, "the hierarchical *oikos*-model would be honoured in the congregation, and to exclude any threat to a 'peaceful society." Andrew Lincoln shares the view that there were no subversive actions against the State, even though the women and slaves joined the Christian religion. This led to the formation of the hierarchical and patriarchal concept of Christ as Lord and believers as servants. According to Balch, the deutero-Pauline and deutero-Petrine Christian household codes were a conservative reaction against Paul and Matthew's Christological setting of the Jesus movement, which treated the household members equally by encouraging women's leadership and the manumission of slaves.

2.5. Conclusion

Within 800 years, from the Ancient Greek to the early Christian era, there were no major changes to the codes and their authority. Two main groups created the professional codes: the colonial/imperial group (comprising the philosophers, writers, historians and the Roman authorities), and the colonized/imperialised group (that included writers, historians, apologetists and church fathers). Politics and patriarchal concerns were the main reasons for the superior to legitimate their authority, and to control or suppress any possible revolts by the inferior concerning their rights to economic, social and religious, and political status. The

¹⁶¹ Standhartinger, 127.

¹⁶² Lincoln, Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter, 101.

¹⁶³ Op.cit., 130.

¹⁶⁴ Balch, Families in the New Testament World: Households and house churches, 30, 123.

inferior on the other hand tried to safeguard or defend their safety, identity and stability. However, their dependence upon the superior was unavoidable which meant that they remained in their submissive positions. These ideas were also applied in other areas, such as: cultural values, marriage, education and discipline, economics, and religion. This helped to reinforce state control over the people. These codes legalised and served to prolong gender, class, age and racial discrimination. The philosophers implied that the inferior group needed to be controlled, due to their limited (or lack of) reason. Roman authorities, (like fathers), implied that, like children, the inferior should not demand equal rights. The colonized groups, including Christians, adapted these imperial codes, adding to them their own cultural values and religious beliefs. The prominent Christian assertions in the codes are: women as the weaker sex; husband and wife as Christ and church; and God and Christ as a master. The codes become God's law or professional codes. These contentions have become the foundation for households in today's Christian churches and which postcolonial feminists need to continue to decolonise or depatriarchalise.

CHAPTER 3 DECOLONIZING/DE-PATRIARCHALISING DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HOUSEHOLD CODES (1950S-2000S)

3.1. Introduction

The household codes were the core ethical teachings for Christian families. Sermons from these texts are preached on numerous occasions; for example parents,' father's, mother's and children's days. Initially, these days were Christian celebrations and became, later, commercialised in the West. However, Myanmar Christians still hold them as sacred days and occasions on which to remind their children of their Christian responsibilities. These rules, whilst standard for Christian families, are similar to the Buddhist family rules. As shown in Chapter Two, they were very important in early Christianity and this chapter will discusses how the household codes are still vital, as authoritative texts, for traditional and conservative Christians from the 19th -21st centuries. It will also investigate how western scholars have reread them with colonial, missionary, historical, modern, liberationist, postmodern and feminist critiques. Finally, this chapter will consider interpretations from colonised peoples from Asia and in particular from Myanmar, in order to decolonize their interpretations and trace any imperialist, colonialist or dominated resonances.

3.2. Western White Scholars' Interpretations: The Hermeneutic of Consolidating Christian Ascendancy and Security

To give a sample of decolonising work of white western male scholars, the focus will be on missionaries to India during the colonial period (such as, Stephen Neill and Harold K. Moulton) and commentators from the 1970s (such as, Ralph P. Martin and E. Schweizer). For the 1990s, Ben Witherington III is chosen. Views from contributors to the Commentaries for

¹ Mother's day was inaugurated in 1909; Father's Day in 1910.

the Word Biblical Commentaries, the Anchor Bible and Abingdon New Testament will also be examined. Finally, the Southern American Christian's view on slavery will be discussed.

3.2.1. Colonial Missionaries' Interpretations

One of the missionaries' main duties is to convert people to Christianity by propagandising their own beliefs and by providing local needs, such as education and health care. First, they usually judged others as being socially, morally and spiritually in need. Second, they portrayed Christian teachings and beliefs as applicable for every age or condition. Third, they claimed that Christianity was better than other religions and that Christ was the only Truth. Staunch in their belief that Christian biblical traditions could transform other cultures, their religious teachings often reinforced patriarchal and colonial discriminations. This applied to those missionaries who used the household codes. R. S. Sugitharajah has termed this a 'colonialist mentality' as it looks down on, or essentialises, the others.² Such interpretations inevitably call for the colonial civilisation of the 'natives.³

Moreover, the missionaries still retained some of the indigenous abusive systems.⁴ For example, they condoned the Chinese who retained their ancestor worship and the Indians for their caste system. This 'accommodation approach' was used, especially, by Roman Catholic missionaries to adapt (or assimilate) a so-called Christian gospel to local situations.⁵

² R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 75-79. See more about 'Orientalist mentality.'

³ Sugirtharajah, *Asia Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998), 54-60.*

⁴ See examples in J. Russell Chandra, "Development of Christian Theology in India: A Critical Survey," in *Readings in Indian Christian Theology*, vol. 1, eds. R. S. Sugirtharajah and Cecil Hargreaves (London: SPCK, 1993), 4-13.

⁵ Stephen Neill, "Accommodation," *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission*, eds. Stephen Neill, Gerald H. Anderson and John Goodwin (London: Lutterworth Press, 1970).

The missionaries' position is thus a delicate one; admitting or permitting elements of traditional religious and social practices (such as ancestor worship), which then can risk compromising their (so-called) liberating message of Christianity. However, an outright refusal to see merit in traditional practices can easily lead to straightforward cultural imperialism. The missionary approach is different from the postcolonial approach, which accepts some positive religious identities as the tools for liberating people. Dialogue is valued as a good way to show the mutual dependence of all human realities⁶ and, at the same time, may present opportunities to resist oppressive religious institutional beliefs and practices.

The antithesis of the postcolonial approach will be discussed through examining the works of two male missionaries and scholars: Stephen Neill, a missionary to India during the British colonial time, and Harold K. Moulton, a missionary and professor of the New Testament, who worked in South India from 1927 to 1957. Neill and Moulton's interpretations of the household codes reflect the context of colonised people. Even though they had some positive views, both men were still victims of colonial and patriarchal systems of thought.

In the eyes of a postcolonial feminist, Neill can be viewed as part-postcolonialist because he considered Romans and Greeks to be colonialists and considered colonial Christian missionaries in India as 'false teachers.' However, his view on Christ as the only saviour (compared to sacred figures of other religions) places him as a Christian ascendancy advocator or Christian occidentalist. At times, Neill shows a willingness to see merit in Indian

⁶ Michael Amaladoss, SJ, "Mission," *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*, eds. Virgin Fabella and R. S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), There are three kinds of dialogue: Jesus' good news of the kingdom to call for conversion, his siding with the poor, the powerless, the sinners and the marginalised and challenging oppressors to convert.

⁷ Stephen Neill, *Paul to the Colossians* (London, Lutterworth Press, 1963), 9-13.

⁸ Ibid., 15.

beliefs; at others times, he criticised native Indian people as being superstitious for accepting Christ as just one of their many gods:

It seems likely that they were prepared only to accept Christ as *one* of the unseen powers, just as many in India today are prepared to accept Him as *one* of the saviours of mankind.⁹

Neill seems to disapprove of the Indian people's perception of Christ since he should exclusively be the only saviour, unique and supreme.¹⁰ By entitling Col 3: 18-4:1 as 'the transformation of all relationships in Christ' he centralised Christ as the sole source of change in the family.

...the life of the family is one of those 'all things' that are to be brought under the rule of Christ. Here, too, there are duties and responsibilities; but these are to be accepted and used, not as a burden, but as a means of serving the Lord, the principle of whose service is love. ¹¹

Neill appears to understand the situation of women, children and slaves and recognised their human rights by saying "I do not forget that women and children also have their place...."

However, as one of the patriarchal victims, his emphasis on the superiority of Christ and Christian ethics left no path for human rights. He did not want to change the social *status quo* and he maintained the view that the husband's authority was given by the Lord and could not be changed. He asserted that children should obey their parents in everything and that masters are the ones who "have acquired dominion over your [the slaves'] bodies..." He commented that submission was not to be viewed as a burden but as a service to the Lord. Thus, "On the wife, then, rests the duty of obedience and submission; this is recognized as seemly by non-Christians as well as Christians." Women have freedom, but they should use it appropriately;

⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰ Ibid., 15.

¹¹ Ibid., 63.

¹² Ibid., 20.

¹³ Ibid., 64-66.

'not to cause scandal and offence.' He might have the freedom and rights of western women in mind, but he neglected to apply these to the context of Indian women at that time. Similar thoughts are expressed regarding slaves. For Neill, they are free in Christ, but they should fulfil their position as slaves on this earth. In other words, they should not bewail their position as slaves and blame God for treating his/her children with partiality. However, he had a proper judgement regarding a masters' behaviour over his slaves. He should treat Christian slaves as his brothers and the non-Christian slaves as God's creatures, being under the authority of God. Nevertheless, speaking against or espousing interpretations that were contrary to the authority of the Bible was not his task and, in turn, he still supported the maintenance of Indian customs (such as caste system and *status quo* of women) even though, in his later writings, he insisted that people in Christianity were free from caste system. He did not realise that, in consequence, this reinforced existing mistreatment in India.

Harold K. Moulton¹⁷ perceived the household codes in a similar way to Neill. Both Ephesians and Colossians emphasise Christ at the centre or superior to other beliefs.¹⁸ Therefore, believers should live according to Christian ethics and thus be worthy of being part of the body of Christ, with Christ as the head.¹⁹ He related the household codes to his own time, as a Christianised ethical standard. His attitude to women's submission is reflected in his words, "be obedient or be subject." According to him, this is the marriage promise for women in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer where it states that wives shall obey and serve

¹⁴ Ibid., 63-64.

¹⁵ Ibid., 65-66.

¹⁶ Neill, "Caste and the Christian, Churches," Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission.

¹⁷ Greville P. Lewis in his introduction to Harold K. Moulton's work said that this commentary is relevant to his time for preaching purposes. H. K. Moulton, *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians, Epworth Preacher's Commentaries* (London: Epworth, 1963), 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 127-128.

¹⁹ Ibid., 3.

their husbands. He argues that there is nothing wrong with social submission in the society where the Lord is head.²⁰ Here one can assume that the society he was addressing was Christian and, accordingly, he sees the standard of this as higher than any other. Moulton clearly states that there is nothing to claim about one's rights in the text. The duty is only to serve, love and help one another. Only with God is the marriage made perfect.²¹ Here he legalised the first century norm of marriage for the twentieth century as a perfect union of two people whose foundation is God. He tried to reinforce the domestic duties of wives by suggesting that they enjoy cooking and rely on their husbands who bought them presents and showed their pleasure in them.²² In this respect, he still sees women as being dependent and domestic helpers. In the case of children, he accepted that the parents, in his time, were too lax and so they needed to discipline their children with 'the standard of the Lord' (although he fails to explain what this might be). For him, slaves should work from their hearts so that their labours would be transformed and meet the 'standard' of the original household codes, which, in his view, were still applicable to his time.²³ Moulton observed that those who were in authority refrained from threatening slaves in order to avoid rebellion. However, he felt that Christian teaching offered a better method; for slaves who had done well should be rewarded 24

Both Moulton and Neill knew about the subordinated and discriminated situation of women and slaves in India. Apart from Neil's encouragement for masters to treat their slaves as human beings and his recognition of human rights, neither man attempted to alter the existing social norms, nor challenge the authority of the Bible, especially with issues related

²⁰ Ibid..56-57.

²¹ Ibid., 59.

²² Ibid., 128-129.

²³ Ibid.,57, 58.

²⁴ Ibid.,130.

to the household codes. Instead, they integrated Christian teachings into the existing social pattern and claimed that Christian teachings were superior to the Indian traditions and thus added to the burdens of marginalised people.

3.2.2. 1970s Scholars' Interpretations: The Household Codes as Maintaining Order

Most of the commentaries in the 1970s deal with the literary, historical, ethical, pastoral and theological issues of the letters, maintaining the validity of the household codes as Christian ethical teachings to reform the disorder; even though they seem to be aware of the second wave of the feminist movement, of the equality in law and culture (between 1960s and 1980s)²⁵ and the liberation movement.

The Baptist Ralph P Martin believed that he could apply the letter of Colossians, including the household code, to his own times. Amount and the contradicted submission as preserving divine order in domestic life (1 Cor 11: 3-9). However, this contradicted the last phrase of his own title for the letter of Colossians, The Church's Lord and Christian's liberty'. He states that, "[i]t is the wife's duty to take her appropriate place in society..." and, for him, this is what Paul defined as 'Christian duty.' Instead of claiming liberty for women, Martin assumed that women were against traditional culture and divine order. The obedience of children (of every age) was also unconditional: 'Children in the Christian household are expected to act in a way which, above all is acceptable and pleasing to the Lord. This is no exceptional case... of the Christian's goal and motive in the entire range of his life.' Martin was right to see that

²⁵ Alice Ogden Bellis, Feminist Biblical Scholarship, Women in Scripture: a Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in Hebrew Bible, The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical and the New Testament, ed. Carol Meyers (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2000), 25, 26.

²⁶ Ralph P Martin, *Colossians: The Church's Lord and Christian's Liberty* (Exeter: the Paternoster Press, 1972), x-xi. He was a Baptist New Testament scholar and lecturer in Bible Schools in UK and later, in 1969, became a professor of Fuller Theological Seminary. For him, Colossians is still meaningful. Here Christ is the New Human whose life reflects God, a truly incarnated one. He is not just a God of the cosmos.

²⁷ Ibid., 129-131.

slaves were left with no choice when asked to work from the heart for the sake of Christ. However, he did not give any further judgement on slavery, but noted that even though Paul did not abandon the slavery system, he made some amelioration by asking their masters to treat them justly.²⁸

Based on the ecumenical theological view,²⁹ Eduard Schweizer, a Swiss NT scholar,³⁰ viewed the household code in Colossians as a counteraction to asceticism which he saw as destroying the order of God, 'exaggerated enthusiasm' and led to 'abusing Christian freedom and equality.³¹ For him, the household code reveals the physical weakness of women, the injustice of slavery and the hierarchical power of males. However, for the sake of Christianity, the household code prevents social or militant revolution and emancipation, and calls for inward change in Christ, rather than external change. In this respect, the household code maintains the political order of the first century and functions through the reconciliation and reconstruction, brought by Christianity, in modifying secular ethics through Christology and the Soteriology.³² Schweizer added that the 19th century was the time of moral renewal, inspired by the nature of the death of Jesus.³³ Therefore, he seems to reinforce the patriarchal system by using the code as moral teaching to maintain order.

²⁸ Ibid., 134.

²⁹ This is not in the sense of dealing with doctrinal issues in different denominations, but in the sense of boundary crossing between Swiss and Germany publishing houses. Drafts were read by Roman Catholic colleagues. Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, trans. Andrew Chester (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 10.

³⁰ Switzerland has been one of the most advanced countries in economic, social and political spheres. However in terms of women's rights it has remained backward compared even to some developing countries. Rights for women were only granted in 1971 although the campaign had started in 1893. It had been rejected by both men and women. "The Women's Suffrage movement in Switzerland," Expatica.com 20/03/08, http://www.expatica.com/de/lifestyle_leisure/lifestyle/What_s-faster_-The-women_s-suffrage-movement-in-Switzerland-or-a-legless-narcoleptic-climbing-the-Matterhorn__11547.html?ppager=1 (accessed 19 September 2009).

³¹ Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 282-285.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 287.

3.2.3. 1980s -2000s: Revisiting Superiority of Christian Teachings, Christian Conformity and the Problems of the Subordinate

3.2.3.1. Submission of Women/Wives

3.2.3.1.1. Scholars' View

Ben Witherington III believes that, for the West, 'The Bible has been the basis of our law codes,'³⁴ and that biblical teachings are historical and relevant in every era.³⁵ Like other previously discussed 1950-80s scholars, Witherington also holds to the superiority of Christian beliefs. The concepts 'being in Christ' (in Colossians) and the 'church and Christ' marriage analogy (in Ephesians) made the Christian household codes different from the other Hellenistic and Jewish cultures. These ideas transformed the social structures and called for the household members to be responsible and moral persons.³⁶ For example, Paul's view on women that expressed liberationist elements³⁷ gave Christian women a higher status than other wives in Graeco-Roman world.³⁸ However, as a family model,³⁹ and not a gender concern,⁴⁰ women should take on Christ's 'humility and servanthood' in imitation of Christ to God (1 Cor 11).⁴¹

³⁴ Ben Witherington III, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xiii.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 154 -158.

³⁷ Ibid., 162.

³⁸ For example, in rabbinic teaching, marriage was solely for procreation.

³⁹ Op. cit. 149. He differed in view from Ralph Martin, who suggested that the household code was included to bring unity to the family and then to the church to be ready to worship harmoniously.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 150.

⁴¹ Ibid.,152-154.

3.2.3.1.2. Biblical Commentaries' View

For David Hay⁴² and Andrew T Lincoln, 43 as moral guidance and norms, the household codes reflect the desire to build Christian conformity and unity, first to society and then to the state (in the Graeco-Roman period) without creating social upheaval⁴⁴ or misinterpretation of their aims by the State. 45 According to both Hay and Lincoln, religious and patriarchal conflicts caused disturbance and dissension within society. The demand for wives' subservience arose from the Christian wives' unwillingness (and unsuitability) as good Christians to fulfil their pagan husbands' wishes, which could have caused familial and social problems. Therefore, Hay said 'these hierarchical structures are part of the every day...Christians must in a measure accept if they intend to participate in household relationships. '46 Although equality in Christ (Col 3:11) was a much desired aspiration, the hierarchical system was part of everyday life which, if Christians were to remain in society, was unavoidable. Therefore adherence to the household code was the reaction of some Christians against the view of Christianity as a radical egalitarian movement. The Christological and ecclesiological formulation accomplished the author's concern to urge believers to remain socially conformist (paraenesis).⁴⁷ Subordination is a norm for wifely duties and also follows the will of the heavenly Lord, 48 Christ's life and teachings. Thus he encourages the readers to see both the

⁴² "Philo and the origin of Christianity," Religious and biblical scholar, http://www.nd.edu/~philojud/36.htm (accessed on 11 January 2010).

⁴³ Andrew T. Lincoln is the Portland Professor of New Testament at the University of Gloucestershire.

⁴⁴ David M. Hay, *Colossians*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c2000), 142, 148.

⁴⁵ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol 42, ed. Ralph P. Martin (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), lxxv-lxxxi. The letter concerns Christian identity and conformity, their privileges and status and their relationship to the world. Readers were informed about how to maintain these, with the church's unity, in their speech and sexuality.

⁴⁶ Hay, 150.

⁴⁷ Lincoln, Ephesians, 389.

⁴⁸ Hay, 148-150.

positive and negative views in the texts. Lincoln elaborated this argument, that the equality of gender, class and race were, at that time, seen as inappropriate and that submission offered the better route to social stability.⁴⁹

3.2.3.2. Submission of Children

In the case of the legalisation of submission (or obedience) of children, Lincoln and Hay were ambiguous. Like Philo, they said that children should obey when parents were just and profitable.⁵⁰ Christian teachings added Christ as the object of 'to obey'⁵¹ and the obedience of the children was equated with devotion to Christ⁵² and part of their commitment to the Lord.⁵³ For Witherington, that means unconditionally pleasing to God.⁵⁴ All these interpretations did not address the contemporary situation of children.

3.2.3.3. Submission of Slaves

The above commentaries view references to slavery in the household codes as just the moral teaching of a Graeco-Roman culture. However, surprisingly in the 21st century, legitimising the submission of slaves in the household codes was revived with the support of some Christians, especially Southern Americans, who believed that the teachings of the Bible are relevant, valid, and morally right.⁵⁵ They cannot accept the abolitionists' statement that

101a., 557-558

⁵³ Lincoln, 408-410.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 357-358.

⁵⁰ Hay, 145 and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 408-410.

⁵¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 408-410.

⁵² Hay, 144.

⁵⁴ Witherington, Women and the Genesis of Christianity, 152-154.

⁵⁵ This denomination has become stronger in this century.

slavery is immoral. This is a good example of Christian neo-colonialism. Clearly they accept slavery by stating that:

This entire issue of slavery is a wonderful issue upon which to practice. Our humanistic and democratic culture regards slavery *in itself* as a monstrous evil, and it acts as though this were self-evidently true. The Bible permits Christians to own slaves, provided they are treated well. You are a Christian. Whom do you believe? ⁵⁶

The Southern American finds that the Roman slavery system was 'anti-scriptural,' against God's will,⁵⁷ and abusive. However, the Christian system of slavery, ordained by God, was more humane, albeit imperfect. Eph 6:5- and Col 3:22-4:1 teach the slave owners how to treat their slaves. These texts are the legislation for the institution of slavery with the caveat that, 'beyond those requirements, the church may not presume to legislate.' The authors researched the histories of several slaves and concluded that the southern American slavery system was not an inherently unjust institution. Nevertheless, they opposed slave trading as forbidden by the scriptures (Ex 21:16, 1 Tim 1: 10). In contrast to the abolitionists, who give a distorted and negative description of slavery, their literal reading of the texts on slavery recurs periodically and highlights its positive values. Instead of condemning the practice, they sanctify it.

⁵⁶ Steve Wilkins & Douglas Wilson, Southern Slavery As It Was," [booklet on –line] Moscow: Canon Press, 1996, http://reformed-theology.org/html/books/slavery/southern_slavery_as_it_was.htm (accessed on 7 December 2008).

⁵⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Wilkins's interviewed 2300 former slaves from the time of Roosevelt and reported the positive side of slavery.

⁶⁰ Ibid., The abolitionists' view coheres with Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states: "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms."

3.3. Western Females' Interpretations

Several female interpreters and feminist theologians have examined the texts from various viewpoints. However, this section will focus on the interpretations of conservative Christian commentaries and feminists, together with some work produced from first and second wave feminist interpreters.

3 3.1. Conventional Female Biblical Interpretations

Unlike some male interpreters, Pheme Perkins' interpretation of Colossians understands the code as not being an absolute, but conditional command. She supports positive interpretations. She suggest that the problems addressed by the code arose, not because of women's pride as Christians and rejection of duty, but through their zeal for evangelising their pagan husbands. Perkins also asserts that wives do not need to submit if their husbands are unworthy. This supports an interpretation of the text that offers women a choice. She agrees with the teaching of the Graeco-Roman world that adult children should not obey parents who forbid them to study philosophy. In the case of slaves, Perkins argues that there was an advantage in being a Christian slave because, in Jewish and pagan communities, slaves were not even deemed to be morally responsible, whereas, in Christianity, they are fully realised human beings and share mutual responsibilities with their masters.

⁶¹ A Roman Catholic lecturer at Boston Theological College who was interested in Graeco-Roman culture.

⁶² Pheme Perkins, *Ephesians*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 30. For her, a marriage should be holy and cannot be considered as being a part of this world, even though it is a social-political institution.

⁶³ Ibid., 132.

⁶⁴ Ibid..137.

⁶⁵Ibid., 138-139.

3.3.2. Feminist Hermeneutics: Revisiting Positive History, Highlighting Abusive Elements and Finding Liberative Elements

3.3.2.1. First Wave Feminist Interpretations

The Women's Bible's interpretation of Eph 5: 22-33 questions the love of husband: "If every man were as pure and as self-sacrificing as Jesus is said to have been in his relations to the Church, respect, honour and obedience from the wife might be more easily rendered." It highlights the flaws of the husband as the cause of wives' subversive actions. Elizabeth Cady Stanton also states that women's love of jewellery or fine clothes (1 Pet 3: 1-7) is also the reflection of their husbands' love of wealth, of position and his ambition for his family. As the texts demand men's headship, they habitually exercised their power as the head, the saviour, the teacher and guardian of women, sometimes unjustly. In response, Stanton suggests, "Unless she rebels outright, he will make her a slave, a subject, the mere reflection of another human will." In the case of children, she relates this 'headship' to her contemporary situation where people used the public treasury for buying votes, building monuments for dead men and honouring men in high places while the poor children had no home and no space to play. Stanton's Bible highlights the ailments of patriarchal society and the suffering of women and children.

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians," in *The Woman's Bible*, eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Revising Committee (New York: European Publishing company, 1898), republished in (Seattle: Coalition on Women and Religion, 1974), 160.

⁶⁷ Stanton, "Epistles of Peter and John," 174-175.

3.3.2.2. Reactions of Second Wave Feminists

It also tries to find ways to recover from this source of oppression.

3.3.2.2.1. Reconstructing the Positive History: Household Codes V. Baptismal Tradition

Feminist hermeneutics attempts to further women's liberation by examining gender issues and patriarchal background, which replaced the positive early Christian history of gender equality.

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza discussed early positive church history.⁶⁸ The baptismal tradition of Gal 3:28 exemplifies the equality in gender, race and class in the early Christian community, and is echoed in other texts (1 Cor 6:20, 7:23; Gal 5:1; 2 Cor 3:17). This tradition focuses on the NT term, 'in Christ,' where inequality ceases to be.⁶⁹ The baptismal confession of Gal 3:28 reshaped the structure of the church and society. Women became full members in the church and also had religious (or faith) equality.⁷⁰ Schüssler Fiorenza argues that 'in Christ' there was originally a distinction between woman and man, but not inequality.⁷¹ However this baptismal tradition was 'spiritualised' and 'moralised' by the later Pauline traditions which developed and established the household code as a Social Christian ethic under the influence of Aristotelian political thought and the mores of the Graeco-Roman world.⁷²

There are several reasons for this. First, there were conflicts between patriarchal males and their wives and slaves who adopted the empowering view of baptism, freedom and equality. She states that, "[a]s we have seen, the early Christian vision of the discipleship of

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, in *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis books, 2001), 183, said that *A Hermeneutics of Re-Membering and Reconstruction* is about remembering the lives of women in the context of the biblical texts and reconstruction their sufferings to be visible. It also tried to recover the history of women's rights and struggles in the past.

⁶⁹ Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Praxis of Coequal Discipleship," *Paul and Empire*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, International, 1997), 225.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 226.

⁷¹ Ibid., 228.

⁷² Ibid., 237.

equals practiced in the house church attracted especially slaves and women to Christianity but also caused tensions and conflicts with the dominant cultural ethos of the patriarchal household." Second, the views expressed in texts (such as the realised eschatology and dualism in Colossians and Ephesians) automatically reinforced the patriarchal order and weakened the concepts of Christian 'coequal discipleship', in mission or in the baptismal formula. Such a world view would necessarily dismiss equal discipleship and retain the *status quo*. Their third reason, as stated previously, was to convert pagan husbands through the submission of Christian wives. Moreover, women's and slaves' conversion to Christianity became a threat to a household where a different belief system was held, and could lead to disaster in business, domestic and political arenas. Thus women and slaves were, by nature, inimical to the patriarchal household system.

According, to Schüssler Fiorenza, to solve the above problems, early biblical exegetes chose to reinforce the patriarchal view and customs in the household codes in order to present an 'apologia for the Christian faith' in their confrontations with Rome.⁷⁷ Her liberationist interpretation clearly states that:

...the author addresses Christians, who are powerless and without legal recourse, urging them to adapt to the *politeuma* of Rome and its ancestral customs. ... The author wants to strengthen their rejection of the 'old religion' 'but he does so by relinquishing the new freedom of those slaves and women who became members of the new priestly people. The wives' submission and quiet behaviour is a strategy for survival in this precarious situation ('let nothing terrify you') but it also has missionary interests at heart... ⁷⁸

⁷³ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroads, 1992), 251.

⁷⁴ Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Praxis of Coequal Discipleship," 241.

⁷⁵ Ibid.`, In Memory of Her, 262.

⁷⁶ Betsy J. Bauman-Martin, "Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine Haustafel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123, no. 2 (Summer 2004), 266-68.

⁷⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 262.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 262.

Schüssler Fiorenza argues that this apologetic intention changed the positive Christian history to a negative and abusive one which made the life of women revert to the pre-Christian stage. This is what Elizabeth Johnson has termed a retreat from the gospel of equality to the hierarchical and patriarchal history and a denial of equality of Gal 3: 28.⁷⁹ For Mary Rose D'Angelo, the issue of gender equality does not arise in the texts, as the household code emphasises the structure to be 'fitting in the Lord.' Moreover, the household code was the beginning of the restriction and abuse against women, children and slaves. Consequently, she rejects these submission texts as the 'word of God.' 81

3.3.2.2.2. Finding Subjugated Christology

Another important contribution of feminist reading is to see wives' submission as the result of a sugar-coated Christology of domination that is promoted through NT analogies such as, 'the marriage of Christ and the church,' 'the suffering servant,' 'realised Christology' and 'ethos of kyriarchy.' For Johnson, by using the 'marriage' analogy, the household code made wives submissive to one of the most 'remarkable features of the table of domestic responsibilities.' She contends that, there is no way to compare human marriage and the relationship between Christ and the Church because human beings cannot live according to a divine standard. Johnson further argues that, even though Jews and Gentiles became equal from a religious point of view in Ephesians, there is still an inequality in marriage. There is a tension between

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Johnson, "Ephesians," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London: Westminster: APCK; John Knox Press, 1992), 340.

⁸⁰ Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Colossians," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (London: SCM Press, 1996), 321.

⁸¹ Ibid., 322-323.

⁸² Johnson, 340.

the gospel's liberating power and its social conservatism – a view that reveals the author's unfortunate patriarchal view on marriage as based on a gender bias.⁸³

A similar view is held by Sarah J Tanzer⁸⁴ who observes that, by using the 'Christ-Church' analogy of Ephesians, the wife was asked to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ. This leads the wife to be in an inferior position while reinforcing the husband's superiority by encouraging him (proactively) to love his wife as Christ loves the Church.⁸⁵ It gives him the role of 'caretaker' of what belongs to him.⁸⁶ The reference to Gen 2:24 also serves to reinforce male superiority: for the female was created out of the rib of the male and women were created as the helpers of men.⁸⁷

Another Christology of subjection is the 'suffering servant' or the 'servanthood of Christ' metaphors of honourable living found in 1 Peter. For Betsy J. Bauman-Martin, it is difficult for Christianity to confront the issue of domestic violence because of such compelling biblical texts (1 Pet 2: 21).⁸⁸ Here she suggests that the author's culture did not lead him to problematise the issue of women slaves who were facing sexual demands, whilst, at the same time, his priority was to promote the ideals of sexual purity (1 Pet 4:1-6).⁸⁹ Consequently, he included the household code in order to encourage the stability of the house and lessen the tension between Christian households and 'pagan' patriarchal households.⁹⁰ Bauman-Martin suggests that, as the author did not want the Christians to react with violence

⁸³ Ibid., 341.

⁸⁴ Sarah J. Tanzer, "Ephesians," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, 334, says Eph 5: 21 is not part of the household code and Eph 5: 22-24 does not promote mutuality because the wife should submit to the husband in everything.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 334-335.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 338.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 339.

⁸⁸ Bauman-Martin, 253-279

⁸⁹ Ibid., 269.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 257.

to their persecution, he urged them to follow Christ's example (fulfilling Isa 53, 'the suffering servant'), where Jesus is innocent but abused as a slave.⁹¹ Submission means here a respectful response that calms the aggressor.⁹²

This 'suffering Christology' urges both slaves and women to endure every circumstance and wait for the reward from God in heaven; such hope will lessen their suffering. This kind of interpretation legitimises the suffering of women under patriarchy. However, as Johnson observes, this kind of text is not usable. ⁹³ 1 Pet seems to accuse women who marry non-believers as disobedient; thus they have to suffer by submitting to their non-believer husbands; an acceptance that is empowerment. She argues that, '[t]he endurance of pain, specifically by society's most powerless members, was consistently represented by Christian writers as an empowering reversal of social constrictions and definitions.' The endurance of suffering, therefore, became a good example and a rule for Christians. ⁹⁴

For Schüssler Fiorenza, as for Hay and Lincoln, the concept of a 'realised Christology' strengthened the submissiveness of wives. There is the tension of dualism: the belief in this world and the heavenly realm. Early Christians believed that, as they became citizens of Heaven, they did not need to practise any earthly moral or ethical rules, ⁹⁵ which is also affected by the belief in their realising the coming of Christ. To control this potentially anti-social perception, NT authors reinforced the patriarchal system and the political *status quo* of inequality and exploitation in the name of Jesus Christ. ⁹⁶

⁹¹ Ibid., 271-272.

⁹² Ibid., 272.

⁹³ Ibid., 258, However she tried to interpret the text in positive way, in that women through suffering revealed their struggle and resistance for the equality and freedom.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 274-277.

⁹⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Praxis of Coequal Discipleship," 241.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 237.

Another Christological concept in the codes is 'the ethos of kyriarchy.' Schüssler Fiorenza describes this as one of the 'discourses of domination.' In this case, it helped to maintain the state order and to control households (which were the microcosm of the state and essential to the larger economy of the empire); the Roman emperor claimed that he was the lord of lords, father of fathers and called for submission.⁹⁷ Women agreed to submit to the husband's authority, which was analogous to the emperor's. Christian women believed that the husband's authority was given by Christ who is the real Lord of Lords. As a result, submitting to their husband was following the law of both religion and state.⁹⁸ These examples of Christologies have legitimised the submission of women, slaves and children to the authority of husbands, their masters, and fathers.

3.3.3. Evangelical Feminist Reading

In contrast to the views of fundamentalists and of the Plymouth Brethren Church in which she was raised, ⁹⁹ Virginia Ramey Mollenkott ¹⁰⁰ believes that Gal 3:28 does not deal with a specific church problem, but should rather be read as a normative text is normative. However, she understands the household codes as addressing specific problems within the church and so should not be viewed as normative. ¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 151- 152 argues that this ethos is calling for submission to the lord, emperor or master or father.

⁹⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Praxis of Coequal Discipleship, Paul and Empire," 240.

⁹⁹ Mollenkott is Professor Emeritus of English at the William Paterson University of New Jersey and also a Christian humanist and an influential evangelical feminist. Mollenkott has designated herself as an evangelical biblical scholar, too radical and too addicted to the Bible and rejects the notion of infallibility or inerrancy of the Bible.

¹⁰⁰ Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, "Emancipative Elements in Ephesians 5: 21-33: Why Feminist Scholarship Has (Often) Left Them Unmentioned, and Why They Should Be Emphasized," *A Feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (London: T & T Clark International, 2003), "Virginia Ramey Mollenkott," http://virginiarameymollenkott.blogs.com/ (accessed 26 July 10).

¹⁰¹ Jacquelyn Grant, White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus, feminist Christology and Womanist response (Atlanta Georgia: Scholars Press, 1989), 95-102.

The strength of her argument lies in her criticisms of the conservative church's interpretations which she sees as being guilty of reinforcing violence against women and children, ¹⁰² and the selectivity of male scholars' textual justifications. For example, even though black male scholars try to find support for the liberation of slaves in the household codes, they take the subordination of women literally. Mollenkott argues that, if one fights for the liberation of slaves, one must also fight for the liberation of women. ¹⁰³

She also criticises feminist theologians, such as Schüssler Fiorenza and E. Elizabeth Johnson, in that they do not search for liberationist elements in the texts, but only patriarchalist ones. Unlike them, she has claimed that she goes beyond the discussion of the social context (Eph 5: 21-25). Although the author of Ephesians was in an unavoidable social condition in needing to demand submission of wives, he also proposed the liberationist elements, such as: 'mutual relation' (Eph 5: 21); the demand for the self-emptying of the husband as in Christ; the interdependency of the head (husband) and the body (wife); the husband's love for his wife as the love of his own flesh and blood; by giving up the

¹⁰² Mollenkott, 40 states that 'They fail to teach a liberating ethic of human equality and to train the bible students who will deal with these violence. Even some ask for the male leadership role. This is the church's sin of omission.'

¹⁰³ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 44, 58.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 56-57, for Mollenkott, Johnson's commentary work has no liberating word for women because she does not take Eph 5:21 seriously and she does not interpret the husband's self-giving as giving up 'self-priority' or superiority. She does not recognise the 'head' as source but as 'leader' and neither does she see the head and the body being mutually interdependent. Thus, she comments, 'for those women who view Ephesians as the divinely inspired and inerrant word of God, such interpretation is truly devastating.'

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 45-48.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 45-90. This is to love their wife as Christ loves humanity. She knows that women did not get the privilege of loving as the male did, but if the husband took on Jesus' servanthood there would be no abuse.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 54, Mollenkott rejected Johnson's idea of loving one's wife as oneself is only for realising self-serving motivation. For her, Johnson could not see the husband as saving the wife from the bondage.

patriarchal privileges of male superiority, 110 and in retaining a Christian vision of equality of gender. 111

In summary, although Mollenkott claims that there are emancipatory elements, overall she defends the Bible and its authority as a source for males' rights, and criticises those who have revealed the oppressive situations of the Bible. In my view, her weaknesses are her universalisation of Christian marriage as a divine standard (such as the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule); hiding truths such as the divinisation of the husband and the burden of the wife; relegitimising the position of the headship of the husband as the source or head of the wife (highlighting the fact that as without saviour there is no church so without man there is no woman); and denying the patriarchal mentality of the texts. When Schüssler Fiorenza and Johnson point to the text as the product of a patriarchal and hierarchal system, she states that only people with patriarchal 'mindset' can see the hierarchal system in the text. Although Mollenkott attempts to liberate women, ultimately, her loyalty is to the authority of the Bible.

Most of the feminist scholars discussed above see the abusiveness of the codes and their patriarchal bias and have tried to highlight some positive and liberationist elements in these texts. Even though some of them state that the codes were an apologetic response to state misconceptions, their discussions rarely include why the NT authors created the metaphor of the 'suffering Christ' or 'the Lordship of Christ' related to the colonial or imperial hegemony.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 53-54.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 55, for Johnson, the church accepted the equality of Gentiles and Jews but equality in marriage is still 'a religious vision, rather than a practice in everyday life.'

¹¹² Ibid., 53.

¹¹³ Ibid., 51.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 50.

3.4. Asian Interpretations

Asia is a place where colonial, neo-colonial and patriarchal systems are experienced and multi-faith and multiculturalism are practised. Factors such as, dictatorships, globalisation and the consequences of neo-colonialism (such as, poverty, the abusiveness of child labour, human trafficking, prostitution or modern slavery) combine to make the hermeneutics of Christian scholars and theologians distinctive from what had gone before. Usually, they recognise both the abusive and liberationist elements in the Bible, but, significantly, their interpretations are mixed with their experiences of faiths, cultures, nationalisms, orientalism, gender bias and their own loyalty to the Bible. They also offer important critiques of more mainstream scholars (or pastors) and those feminist interpretations which ignore or betray both the Bible and the oppressed.

3.4.1. Advanced Reading in Early 60s: Counteracting Professional Codes

In 1963, the Committee on Cooperation of Men and Women in Home, Church and Society discussed the relationship between men and women in Asia with the aim of forming a doctrine, or rule, for relationships in the home. In this way, they decided to reject the existing code. Unlike any other western scholars or missionaries at that time, they tried to identify biblical texts that expressed equality between men and women, from the era of Genesis to the time of Christ and Paul. For them, men and women are equally created in God's image and also equally responsible for the fall. In the OT, there are women leaders such as Miriam, Hulda and Deborah. However, following the formation of the Law, women

_

¹¹⁵ Jacob S. Quiambao, ed., "Men And Women in Home, Church and Community in Asia, Papers and Statements of an Asian Consultation on "The Christian Home in a Changing Society," *Committee on Cooperation of Men and Women in Home, Church and Society, East Asian Christian Conference held in Rangoon, Burma, 1963* (Bangkok: Rajadaromp Printery & Typefoundry, 1963). 1.

were believed to be unclean and were not allowed to attend the temple or enjoy direct access to God. This tradition remained even to the time of Jesus. This was challenged by Jesus (Mk 12:24-25) and the early church who treated women equally with men (Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 11:7, 1 Cor 14:34,35, 7:4 and 1 Cor 11:11). This effectively emancipated women, 117 which caused problems within and outside the church. As a result, Paul felt compelled to speak about women's submission. 118 The committee interpreted Eph 5: 21-33 as saying that there should be a mutual relationship between those who are in Christ, 119 so that headship is exercised without dominion and that submission is not equated with slavishness (22-27). For them, the metaphor of the head and the body, as a comparison for the relationship between Christ and the church (28-30), expresses a complementary rather than a hierarchical significance. Quoting Gen 2: 24, the text highlights the Christ, who leaves heaven to be with the church in a similar way to the husband leaving his home for his wife (31-33). The committee suggested that a new concept of the 'democratic home' should be adopted. Furthermore they argued that patriarchal customs and slavery should not be practised. 121 The committee then investigated whether the democratic family was actually a suitable institution for the Asian context. They asked questions such as: 122

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 2-3, 5.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 5, Paul had earlier written about the equality of man and woman (Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 11:7, 1 Cor 14:34,35, 7:4 and 1 Cor 11:11). This concept was based on a realised eschatology; that one lived in between the 'now' and 'not yet;' both in Christ and, at the same time, 'in flesh.'

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

They commented that in the outside world there is no mutual relationship between men and women, but that Eph 5:22 assumes that there is a mutual relationship.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 6-7.

¹²¹ Ibid., 9, This is different from other types of reading. The first arises from the pre-fundamentalists who avoided modern social change and modern biblical criticism. Second, the fundamentalists believe that they are bound to the word of scripture. Third, non-biblical literalists feel that 'subordination and headship have meaning today.' A house or an institution needs ahead in order to solve internal disagreement.

¹²² Ibid., 10.

- Should Christianity be based on western thoughts (such as, equality, personality and democracy) rather than on the Bible?
- Can we be true to biblical concepts by going back to the patriarchal family?
- Can the patriarchal family obey the command to love as Christ loved with patriarchy's insistence on forbidden worldly domination?
- Can we discover a type of subordination without inferiority, headship without domination?

These questions are still relevant to today's third world countries. The first question alludes to the nationalist idea of western-phobia or modernity-phobia. The second question challenges both the authority of the Bible and the patriarchal system. The third question confronts how to show unconditional love of Christ to the powerful and the powerless. The fourth question that the committee answered is that family situations today cannot be solved through the submission of the wife and the authority of the husband. The solution lies in the habits of equality and partnership. The committee's readings of these texts challenge and question interpretations which are likely to result in abusive situations, patriarchal values and the democratic system. They are obviously pioneer readings of the Bible through liberation and feminist perspectives. Nevertheless, they failed to address some concerns, such as the patriarchal aspects of other religions and the negative consequences of colonial domination in Asia.

3.4.2. Twenty First Century Reading: Controversial Liberationist/Contextual Readings

Contemporary Asian biblical interpretations are primarily based upon experiential social scientific criticism, feminist, liberationist and/or contextual approaches. Two examples of

¹²³ Ibid., 59.

work on household codes will be discussed. The first concerns James Burudas, ¹²⁴ who has criticised both interpretations of the Bible and male domination. He claims that the Bible was interpreted literally throughout history in the Roman Catholic world. ¹²⁵ Embedded within gender issues there are also issues of justice and injustice. ¹²⁶ Subordination to the husband in Eph 5:22-27, Col 3: 18-19, 1 Tim 2: 8-15 and 1 Pet 3:17 is evidence of clear discrimination. Other areas of discrimination include: prohibition of divorce; asking women to endure abuse from husbands and the denial of women's ordination. These are injustices towards women which are supported by the Bible. Gurudas argues that, as all interpreters are male, they inevitably highlight male superiority and female inferiority. ¹²⁷ Moreover, most are androcentric, patriarchal and tended to masculinise God. Gurudas claims these values as giving rise to violations of gender equality. ¹²⁸ As a consequence, blind loyalty to the word of the Bible should be avoided. ¹²⁹

Although James Gurudas speaks of the injustice done to women, surprisingly, he uses the term 'mother of injustice' to point out what the Bible has done to women. As a 'mother,' a source of spiritual nourishment, the Bible is, therefore, portrayed as fostering or nurturing

¹²⁴ A scholar from the Philippines.

¹²⁵ James Gurudas, "Gender Justice in the Bible," *Journal of Dharma* 29/2 (April- June 2004): 130. Until 1943, with Pope Pius XII's *Divino affante sipritu*, no historical critical biblical studies were permitted. The fathers, the doctors and scholars at that time interpreted the Bible literally without any historical, social or cultural influences taken into account. As the Bible is believed to be the foundation of all dogmas, moral theology, ecclesiastical structures, whether it is logical or illogical, justifiable or unjustifiable, the church looked into it as the main source or infallible answer.

¹²⁶ Ibid.,129, 139, 140, 1 Tim 2: 15 also suppressed women by arguing that they should learn in silence. Some interpreted this as implying that the women tried to gain the authority over their husbands at that time, so the author was prompted to discipline them. But the Bible can be used to liberate women as well; see Gal 3: 28 on the equality of men and women.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 131, 138, gives a number of authorities: Tertullian: 'women are the gateway to evil.' Augustine who said that women had caused the fall as in Gen 3; and Aquinas, that women's subordination came from the procreation (Gen 3). Martin Luther also argued that women's subordination was based on Gen 3 and 1 Tim 2: 11-15.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 132.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 134.

injustice. He employs terms such as, 'mother of gender-based injustice,' when referring to a fundamental theological principle (creation story), or, '[the] mother [who] natures the injustice' to ritual purity.¹³⁰ Gurudas appears to be a 'male feminist' in Asia who fights for women's liberation whilst still retaining a gender bias.

Yusak Budi Setyawan reread Eph 5: 21-33 from a Javanese context, with both liberationist and conservative views. In order to argue that women and men mutually share submissive roles as well as responsibilities, she looks at v. 21 (on mutual submission) within the situation of Eph 5:22-33 (wife's submission)¹³¹ and offers three interpretations. First, as a 'survival claim or response' (or claim to moral responsibility) based on Christ's obedience and Christ's superiority over the Emperor, ¹³² this apologetic code ¹³³ asks for wives' *voluntary* subjection: 'The wife has her dignity in voluntarily subjecting [herself] to her husband, and at this point the vision of Ephesians is heading towards a new society characterized by the equality of woman and man. ¹³⁴ Second, for her, the terms such as *hupotasomanoi* (be subject to one another, v. 21) and *agapete* (love your wife in vv.25, 28) express the same value and equality. This *hypotassomenoi-agapete* model can also liberate men and women or wives and husbands from cultural bondage. ¹³⁵ Third, the 'one flesh of wife and husband' concept also erases the view that woman was created from man. ¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Ibid., 135.

¹³¹ Yusak Budi Setyawan, "Be Subject to Your Husband as you are to the Lord' in Ephesians 5:21-33 as Illuminated by an Indonesian (Javanese)," *The Asian Journal of Theology* 21, no.1 (April 2007): 55. In the Java Bible this wording is divided from v. 22 so that the submission concept stands alone.

¹³² Ibid., 56-59. For her, the author of Ephesians included the submission of women because of the political context of that time that needed stability in the house, church and society. It was not only to assert Christian identity but also to convince the authorities that Christians were not a threat to the Empire. Thus, she sees the code as the survival response or claim. Second, motivated by Christ's obedience to (yet superiority over) the Emperor, the author calls for a Christian's voluntary submission and moral responsibility.

¹³³ An apologetic code is a confirmation that Christians were not a threat to the State.

¹³⁴ Setyawan, 59.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 59-60.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 60-61.

Setaywan tried to compare the Javanese ideology of *priyayi* with Eph 5:21-33. For Javanese, 'I' and God can be unified and this is the highest achievement in life. Unfortunately, 'I' applies only to males. So men are nobler than women and possess the highest status as the only beings that can unite with God. Later, she concluded that the Javanese concept of 'I' is the result of patriarchal influences, while Eph 5: 21-33 portrays a harmony between church and society and calls for mutuality. Her contextualisation ends with loyalty to the Bible, by highlighting the so- called mutuality in Eph 5:21-22, while challenging Javanese ideology as being patriarchal.

Hope S. Antone¹³⁹ affirms that the household codes were created to dispel the rumour that 'the new faith was out to break down family' due to the new freedom of women in Christ. For her, "the household codes [were] as a reminder to Christians [at that time] of their responsibility of bringing Christ's lordship to bear on their everyday work and life." Antone has said that there is an opposition between the concept of 'authority' and Jesus Christ. This is because authority seeks the highest position, whereas, Christ's incarnation demonstrates that he takes the lowest position of all. She calls for 'power within' instead of 'power over.' She gives the example of flying geese in an inverted V shape, illustrating the geese's habit of alternating which goose took the position of leader when they got tired.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Ibid., 51. Setyawan, also claims that Java is the most important island in Indonesia where the people have achieved great progress in economic, educational, juridical and industrial spheres since the colonial period. However the status of women has remained the same, and is framed in inequality and subordination.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 61-62. As the Javanese *priyayi* theology emphasises the harmony of the universe, so did the Roman Empire. If there is harmony in the house there will be harmony in the society as well, and so on; as demonstrated above.

¹³⁹Hope S. Antone is a publication secretary of the Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology and joint executive secretary for Faith, Mission and Unity of the Christian Conference of Asia.

¹⁴⁰ Hope S. Antone, "Leadership in Marriage and Family," *In God's Image, Journal of Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology* 29, no. 2 (June 2010), 48-57.

3.4.3. Asia and Child Abuse

Asian scholars' interpretations of the household codes have included an awareness and emphasis on dealing with child abuse. There are many cases committed by Buddhist monks, Hindu gurus, and Roman Catholic clergy through the abuse of their power. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro claims that the Roman Catholic church, as an entity, commits child abuse in five ways: first it betrays the trust of the people by this offence; second, the church indirectly encourages this crime by being silent; third, the church does not correct its doctrines, teachings, local practices and cultures of shame and honour; fourth, the church does not deal with abuse because its clergy or pastors do not recognise that children have their own rights; and fifth, the church blames the victims for tempting ministers.¹⁴¹

This child abuse is a cultural issue based on a patriarchal culture and which is reinforced by the Christian traditions of 'obedience' (which is used as a cover for the sexual abuse of children). The church should re-examine the biblical and cultural values of obedience and how the abuser can manipulate norms to suppress accusations of abuse. Although the church claims to be the body of Christ, it neglects the rights of the child and, more fundamentally, the image of God in the child that is so evident in biblical texts. The church should take the lead in turning parents away from oppressive biblical doctrines and cultural values which make them think that children are objects in their possession. The church should also be open and honest in the case of child abuse or moral evil and it should not encourage the abusers (even as they avoid their weighty responsibility at the doctrinal and

¹⁴¹ Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, "The Church and Child Sexual Abuse," *In God's Image* 25, no. 2 (June 2006): 19-24, 19- 20.

¹⁴² Ibid., 39.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 22. For example, Prov 1:8; 13:1,24 taught that the parents should punish children as a discipline. The parents should be reminded that the children are not only important for the one who will carry the name of the family and the tribe. (Ps 127:3-5). The Christian preachers and Bible study leaders have only read the texts of comfort and avoid the texts of terror (see also Phyllis Trible) or about incest (for example, Gen 19:31-35) and the prohibition of it (Lev 18:6-16, and 1 Cor 5:2,5).

pastoral level). As the abused child has hope in God and Christ, ¹⁴⁴ the truth should be told and the church should embrace the teaching of Jesus who valued children (Mt 18:1-5, Mk 10:14; Lk 18:15) and it should turn against those adults who abuse children (Mt 18:6). Orevillo-Montenegro asserts that, indeed, the church should be a recovery centre for the abused persons. ¹⁴⁵

Four decades ago, the Asian Men and Women Relationship Committee released the statement that, '[t]he unquestioning submission of children is no more desirable than the unquestioning submission of the wife.' Attitudes promoting this type of submission make the lives of children more difficult. For them, love and understanding should be the basic gift or legacy of their parents and would reduce the rebellious actions of young people against authoritarian adults.¹⁴⁶

All the Asian scholars discussed above have interpreted the codes in the light of Asian experiences and theological backgrounds. However some interpreters found gender bias and the superiority of a biblical culture unavoidable. Some recognised that the churches need to fight against the child abuses.

3.5. Myanmar Interpretations

Although the foreign missionaries did not specifically write any Burmese commentaries, their translations of the Bible and their books give hints of how they understood the household codes and there relation to Burmese families. Surveys from three Bible Institutes and

¹⁴⁴ Mayumi Mori, "Voice of Hope: Healing from the Effects of Child Abuse," *In God's Image* 25/2 (June 2006): 16-18. Based on the experience of being sexually abused as a child and the process of healing with forgiving, loving and cleansing, Mayumi Mori discusses that God and Christ are her hope in the midst of her sufferings, struggles, fear, guilt and shame.

¹⁴⁵ Orevillo-Montenegro, 23.

¹⁴⁶ Quiambao, ed, 60.

Christian magazines will give the view of the interpretations of the household codes from Myanmar Christian perspectives.

3.5.1. Burmese Bibles and the Codes

Judson translated the terms 'be subject' (or 'submission') in Ephesians 5: 22, Col 3: 18 and 1 Pet 3:1-2 into Burmese to mean 'accepting the ruling.' The Anglican version translates 'be subject' as 'A non a tar' which only means 'tolerance' or 'forbearance.' The meaning is milder than the use of the word 'submit', which is found in English versions. However, the word 'head' was translated as the 'a tut a tate', which means 'the ultimate.' Here, this word authorises a male's authority as being ultimate. It also added that the wife should forbear under her husband. The word 'obey' is used 'nar kan' and the word 'order' as 'a mate daw' or 'the royal order.'

Another version, which is a translation from the Good News Bible by the natives, ¹⁴⁷ translates the word 'authority' as '*a mate ar nar*' which means 'order and power' and has been used in all three letters. This Burmese version divides the texts into sections with titles. Col 3: 18-22 is entitled, 'Relationship in New Life'. This title assumes that the writer had created new rules that were different from (or better than) other cultural teachings, for new life as Christians. Without realising it, by reading and preaching these translations, churches in Myanmar have legalised the code as the rule for the Christian family.

3.5.2. Missionaries' Perspectives on Family Members

Through their biographies, journals and reports, we can see the missionaries' views on family relationships or gender roles. R. Pierce Beaver, in his book *All Loves Excelling*, revealed the

¹⁴⁷ Lwin Lwin Aung, *Myanmar bibles, Their Beginning and Development*, (BRE Research Paper, MIT, 1991), 17.

works and lives of women missionaries and the wives of missionaries in Burma to which not much attention had been paid previously. Beaver stated that the American Mission Board made decisions concerning missionary marriages and also encouraged males to have wives while working on the mission field amongst 'barbarous' people because they believe that wives could endure hardship more than their husbands, and, because of their belief that woman was made for man, they would be supporters of their husbands. Their main duty was, 'being a helpmeet, companion and mother of children' which limited their activities to the domestic circle. The only suitable jobs outside the home were teaching their children and other women. 148 The secretary of the American Board, Rufus Anderson, described a similar pattern in 1836. He encouraged the missionary families to be exemplars of the Christian home to the native 'heathen' families; whose lives there were full of disorder and in need of good guidance. 149 The missionaries also believed that education for girls was very important for the growth of Christianity. Many schools for girls were established in the early nineteenth century. One might think that it was a development programme, providing new opportunities for girls, but actually these schools trained the female students with an emphasis on traditional homemaking and how to be good wives. Indicative of this attitude is Beaver's comment, "[m]any of the graduates became teachers, bible women and pastors' wives." 150

On the other hand, the missionary wife Ann Judson's aim was to save female orphans and slaves and to give them an education. A system of slavery still existed at that time because the large amount of tax demanded by the 'despotic government of the Empire' that forced people to live in debt. They needed to sell their wives and children and also

¹⁴⁸ R. Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 52-53.

¹⁴⁹ Rufus Anderson, "The Introductory Essay on the Marriage of Missionaries," Memoir of Mrs. Mary Mercy Ellis, Wife of Rev. William Ellis, Missionary to the South Sea and Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society, William Ellis (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1836), xi.

¹⁵⁰ Beaver, 121, 127.

themselves. Some children became orphan slaves through the death of parents mired in debt.¹⁵¹

Up to this point, the views of the male missionaries or the Centre Missionary Board regarding the people of Myanmar were different from those of missionary wives or female missionaries, who saw the real lives of the women, the slaves and the children. Man makes the rule and the woman follows the rule beyond their limit with motherly passion.

3.5.3. Interpretations from Myanmar Oldest Christian Magazine

The interpretations on the household codes or the discussion on the family matters in the Christian magazine¹⁵² reflect the political contexts and Christian conservatism of Myanmar. During the period of parliament government¹⁵³ (1948-1962), democratic and Christian conservative interpretations can be found. Meh Ka Kway has suggested that it was a period when the emphasis was on building the democratic family in which everyone should have freedom of choice, discussion and decision-making. It suggested that these actions should not be monopolised by the father alone.¹⁵⁴ In the same issue of the magazine, an anonymous author states that the family is the source (or the beginning) of Democracy. Even though the writer quoted Gen 2: 18, Col 3: 17-21, s/he asserted that everyone in a family not only has duties or responsibilities but also has rights. Even children should have the same rights as the elders in the family.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Ann H. Judson, An Account of the American Baptist Mission to the Burma Empire: A Series of hitherto Letters Addressed to A Gentleman in London (second edition, London: Joseph Butterworth and Son, 1887), vi.

¹⁵² From 1843, Adonirum Judson, the Baptist American missionary produced a Christian magazine named 'Than Daw Sint', later changed to 'Myanmar Taman' in 1952. It was the magazine of The Myanmar Baptist Christian Union formerly known as The Burma Baptist Christian Union.

¹⁵³ It is also known as Union of Burma, http://www.myanmars.net/myanmar-history/myanmar-timeline.htm

¹⁵⁴ Meh Ka Kway, "Democracy," *Myanmar Taman* (Myanmar Messenger Magazine), 15 September1954,

¹⁵⁵ Anonymous, Myanmar Taman, 15 March 1956, 12-13.

However, another contributor from a more conservative viewpoint proposes that a wife should love, respect and exhibit piety towards her husband (based on Col 3:18, Tim 2:4, 4:5, 1 Cor 11:3, 1 Pet 3: 1, Eph 5: 22). If a wife has these qualities there is no 'authority' or 'submission' in the family. Throughout 1956, in every monthly issue, the magazine included a section entitled 'Things for a wife to remember.' In this section, wives were usually advised to dress decently for worship services, to speak politely, to offer good hospitality, to have good health, to open day care centres for the children, to use their money wisely and to know that they were valued as housewives. This means that women should fulfil their duties within the domestic arena, rather than working outside the home. Contrary to the current democratic aims, women were asked to turn back to their traditional way of life.

During the socialist government period (1962-1988), no one talked about democracy and the priority issue became 'good citizenship.'. The authority of the household codes was reinforced at this time, as the house was believed to be a microcosm of the country (and also of heaven). This time, Christian leaders tried to form professional codes. First, the famous Christian family advisor, Aung Din, wrote the advertisement entitled, 'Wanted: Christian Daughter in Law' in which women/wives were stereotyped with characteristics such as, moral uprightness, prioritising the family, fulfilling all domestic works and supporting their husbands. Aung Din also added that a wife should protect her husband's honour and follow her husband's leadership. He encouraged husbands to be kind to their wives as being the weaker sex. Unlike Aung Din, Aunty Soe discussed the mutual relationship in the Christian

¹⁵⁶ Anonymous, *Myanmar Taman*, 15 February 1954, 13.

¹⁵⁷ Anonymous, *Myanmar Taman*, 1 December1963, 7.

¹⁵⁸ Aung Din, "Wanted, Daughter in Law," *Myanmar Taman*, 12 December 1967, 1-15.

¹⁵⁹ Aung Din, "Descriptions of Godly man," Myanmar Taman, 4 April 1969, 1-15.

home based on Eph 4: 1-3 and did not include any terms like leadership and submission.¹⁶⁰ Regarding children, she wrote that they should be taught to respect the country, school and family¹⁶¹ and that children should be disciplined in God's way.¹⁶² In return, children should obey and follow their parents' teachings.¹⁶³

From 1988 to the present, with the awakening of feminist theology, the magazine reflects the combination of both traditional and the liberationist views. An article entitled 'Be Martha's Hand and Mary's Heart' advocates that all women should have the practicality of Martha and the spirituality of Mary. D Aung Ye countered with two conflicting arguments based on the fact that, as God is the father and Christ the son, the husband is head and the wife should agree with her husband. Conversely, he argues that, as God is both mother and father and takes care of the children (Eph 3: 14-15), the wife and husband, as one, should respect each other even though they have different functions. These male writers express conflicting views on the role of women and gender definitions, encompassing both as submission and equality.

Unlike the above interpretations, the traditional male hierarchical view encourages husbands' to practise leading roles because: they are made in the image of God (Gen 1: 26); have the Spirit (Gen 2: 7); the first commandment (Gen 2: 16); they are the provider and protector of children, wife and the church of God. The woman/wife, on the other hand, needs to fulfil domestic works, save money (which is earned by husband) and teach their

¹⁶⁰ Aunty Soe, 7/3 March, 1969, 14.

¹⁶¹ Aunty Soe, "Ten Rules for Parents," *Myanmar Taman,* 1-15March 1967, 3, created 10 rules for parents. The fourth rule is about children.

¹⁶² "International Children's Day," *Myanmar Taman*, Jan/Feb 1979, 14-15, 21.

¹⁶³ "Parents' Day," (*Myanmar Taman*, 1-15 May 1971, 3-4.

¹⁶⁴ Anonymous, "Be Martha's hand and Mary's heart," *Myanmar Taman*, 30/10 October 1993,11-12.

¹⁶⁵ D Aung Ye, "The essence of Christian Family," *Myanmar Taman*, January 1995, 10-11.

¹⁶⁶ Samo Thoung, "Being a man," Myanmar Taman, July/August 1995, 21-23.

children to live a good moral life. Parents should understand their children, guide and teach them, and show them good examples. Children need to obey their parents and to live a good moral life which will lead to good citizenship. 167

3.5.4. Interpretations from the Pastor's Handbook

In 2007, the *Pastor's Handbook* was published by the Karen Baptist Convention. Its author was Honour Nyo, the great evangelist, who authorised the household codes as set out in the following references (Eph 5:23, 25, 28, 29, 33, 6:3 1 Pet 3: 7, Col 3: 19). The husband is the head of the wife and the wife is also the honour of the husband. The spiritual growth of the children depends on the mother's guidance (Eph 5: 22, 24, 33, Titus 2: 45, 1 Pet 3: 1-6, Prov 12: 4, 31: 10-30). Parents should lead their children to grow spiritually and physically, mentally and intellectually (1 Tim 5: 8). Children should work hard, be obedient, be the ones who love God, (1 John 1:4) and should make their parents proud and joyful, or happy. (Eph 6: 1-3, Jh 19: 26-27). These rules became the guide and standard norms for pastors in Myanmar to affirm and prolong the patriarchal view.

The above lay ministers and Christians' interpretations from different periods have reflected changes in political and theological positions and their impacts. The majority of them still hold traditional and patriarchal views.

¹⁶⁷ Aung Din, "The rules and regulation for the Christian family," *Myanmar Taman*, November, 2004, 11-

¹⁶⁸ Honour Nyo, ed. *Pastoral Hand Book* (KBC, Pastoral Department, Yangon, 2007), 112-115.

3.5.5. Readings from Christian Theological Seminaries

I will re-examine the household codes which have been interpreted from the perspectives of Christian education, ¹⁶⁹ biblical studies, liberation and feminist studies in the Research papers and theses of Myanmar Institute of Theology, Karen Baptist Theological Seminary and Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology.

3.5.5.1. Traditional View

Christian Education students still hold traditional patriarchal views and take the teachings of the Bible literally. They neglect the real situations of women and children and the struggles of feminist and liberationist groups. However, they relegitimatise submission and authority in different ways. For them, wives' submission is essential, as they are the helpers of men (Gen 2:18). They are physically, psychosocially and spiritually weak, and should, therefore, follow Christ's example of obedience. Husbands practise authority that has ordained by God and they have responsibilities to protect women and to bring harmony between the world and the women (1 Tim 3:4-5), discipline, train and make final decision as they are Christ-like, priests, prophets, models and kings.¹⁷⁰

Biblical exegetes view the codes as having a higher status than their contemporaries. For some, submission, as a part of divinely ordained hierarchical order, should be a joyous subjection. However, a few exegetes hold the positive view that the codes demand a mutual relationship and, accordingly, condemn the irresponsible use of the code.¹⁷¹ Interestingly, male interpreters have blamed women and reinforced the view that they should submit so that

¹⁶⁹ It is a subject taught under the practical department in theological seminaries in Myanmar. It is an important subject, as it has great impact on the Christian families as they usually deal with family problems and the moral standards of churches in Myanmar through Sunday school programs.

¹⁷⁰Van Zing or Elly Mang, "A Model of Christian Family" (M. Div Thesis, MIT, 2001, MIT), 31-39. Marip Bawk Mai, "The Essence of a Genuine Christian Home" (BD Thesis, MIT), 40-42.

¹⁷¹ Naw May Blue, "The Letter to the Ephesians" (BTh Research Paper, MIT, 1981), 5.

order is maintained in families that suffer economically and from exploitation and criminal activity. For example, while husbands work abroad, a wife may be unfaithful, or a wife's nagging due to poor economic situation could lead to the husband becoming a drunkard.¹⁷²

3.5.5.2. Feminist and Liberationist Views

In opposition to the views previously discussed, Sabaw Lu San¹⁷³ offered a clear feminist position. She states that Christianity is one of the religions which have oppressed women. Texts like 1 Cor 11-14 and 1 Tim 2 and Colossians and Eph 5 reinforce the traditional view of women and demands their submission and subordination in five ways.

- •There is a God-ordained hierarchy in creation that extends to marriage and the family, placing the man at the top with authority over the women
- •The husband is to be the loving leader and the wife is to be the submissive follower.
- •Although the husband and wife may discuss major decisions, the husband has the final word in decision-making, thereby attributing to him the most power.
- •The primary role of the husband is to be the breadwinner of the family, whilst the wife's role primarily involves staying at home and raising the children.
- •The chief goal for children is to respect and obey their parents.

Earlier Burmese Christian interpretations did not address the texts that concerned the slaves' submission. However, Feminist biblical scholars have started to discuss issues surrounding slavery (such as, human trafficking, child labour and child abuse) more openly.

L. Zau Lat has examined the trafficking of women in Myanmar, taking a biblical perspective on human rights. He recognises that the Bible has been used as a patriarchal and

¹⁷² Khua Tin Thang, "The Petrine Letters" (BTh Research Paper, MIT 1984), 64-65. Saw Kwa Lar Yo Tha Taw, "Christian Marriage in Myanmar" (BTh Research Paper, KBTS, 2002), 18-20. Saw Khu, "Evaluation of Today's Christian Families' Rules and Responsibilities" (BMin Research Paper, MICT, 2009), 31-34, 38-43, 66.

¹⁷³ Sabaw Lu San, "Violence Against Women" (MDiv Thesis, MIT, 2002), 11.

androcentric text. For him, without rereading the texts from other perspectives, one will be led astray from the main biblical teaching of 'the worth of human being.' According to him,

The issues of women and children trafficking will not go away, until and unless people in authority (both civil and religious) recognize them as real human beings who possess full human rights like any other male citizen of this world. To educate these people in authority as well as those who are victimized is the first step for the elimination of trafficking of women and children. So then, it is understood that human rights are women's rights. Trafficking of women or children or any other human being is violation of "human right." ¹⁷⁵

For him, Human Rights can be found in the Bible texts which point out that, in Christ, women and men are equal (Gal 3: 28) and that even the outcast has human rights.¹⁷⁶ Therefore, for Zau Lat, the society or Christian community which violates human dignity and rights with human trafficking is sinful. Consequently, he calls for everyone to follow the example of Jesus, who liberated the poor. ¹⁷⁷ His article highlights what Myanmar Christians do not usually see (or choose not to see), such as modern slavery, human rights and the gender equality, in the Bible.

Anna May Say Pa has given the example of modern slavery from a woman's perspective with her case study of the 'Nissan baby girls.' She describes how fathers in the Shan State, or in its border areas, sold (or trafficked) their 12- or 13-year-old daughters into Thailand. With the proceeds from these transactions they could buy a Nissan truck, or build houses. Before this, fathers used to cry when daughters are born, but now they are happy. Say Pa points out that, for the sake of becoming Buddha, even Gordama gave away his wife to

¹⁷⁴ Lahpai Zaw Lat, "Women and Rights: Biblical Perspective," *Engagement*, Judson Research Center Bulletin, Myanmar Institute of Theology 5 (December 2005): 38.

¹⁷⁵ Ihid

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 42-49. In Old Testament, God created human being in his image and he said it was good. God is the source of the equality of human beings. He also gives them full dignity and freedom of choice (Ps 8: 5-6). Human right can be seen in Covenantal laws, such as the Noachic and Sinai covenants, in which God valued human dignity. Prophets also cried out against social injustice, for justice is human right. Jesus always was with the powerless, the poor, and the outcast whose human right was denied by society.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 49.

King Mahawthada. For their daily survival, women need to work 15 hours a day, both outside and inside the house. Therefore, Say Pa reread Gen 2: 24 (which is quoted in Eph 5:31) as indicating the coequal position of men and women. In this way, women are not just helpers or slaves, as many commentators have interpreted this text. For Anna May Say Pa, they are the same bone and flesh with men.¹⁷⁸

3.6. 'Post' Readings

3.6.1. Postmodern Readings

Postmodernism is a worldview acknowledging that there are no absolutes, no objective truth and no intellectual unity. It focuses on diversity and marginality and the fight against the imposition of monolithic male-dominated systems.¹⁷⁹ Based on the Indian context, and, by using social, literary and postmodern¹⁸⁰ criticism, Jayachitra L discusses how the subordination of women (Eph 5:21-33) was passed down through the patriarchal Graeco-Roman world and Jewish society to Christianity.¹⁸¹ In the social context, submission is the predominant key in maintaining an ideal stable society. It is a conservative response to the emancipation of Christian wives and slaves and is against the call that wives and slaves can be fitted cooperatively into Christian household (based on the model of Christ).¹⁸²

Anna May Say Pa, "Because of Eve: Reading Genesis 2 and 3 from Feminist Perspectives," *Engagement*, Judson Research Center Bulletin, Myanmar Institute of Theology 5 (December, 2005): 31-36.

¹⁷⁹ See Katherine K. Young, "Introduction" in *Feminism and World Religions*, eds. Arvind Sharma and Katherine K. Young (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 10,16.

¹⁸⁰ Jayachitra L, "Marital Gender Norms: Root of Domestic Violence," *In God's Image* 22, no, 1 (March 2003): 9. First she questions all unequal power relationships between man and woman; second, she tries to deconstruct 'the legitimisation of truth claims' which is to find the absolute truth claims which have the oppressive meanings in the text, and third, she analyses these findings to construct a feminist reflection.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 10, The women or the wives at that time need to endure their husbands due to their age and educational gaps. However the people could not deny that women possessed the same intellectual and moral capacities with that of the men.

¹⁸² Ibid., 10-11.

In its literal context, Eph 5:21-33 emphasises 'the inferior position of the wife' and therefore submission, like Christ, is the 'proper social behaviour of women' (5:23-27). The term *hupotasso* is a hierarchical, military or political term which stresses the relationship towards 'superiors.' The term *phoboamai* (or 'fear') in the imperative form supports the submission of wives. For Jayachitra L, the love of the husband is self-loving rather than self-giving. Therefore this unequal relationship (or responsibility) adds to the burden of wives. ¹⁸³

Jayachitra L also observed that western traditional males legitimised the truth of encouraging the husband to practise authority, and marginalised the female's status. As men are presented as being superior, they developed a superior image and treated the women as their private property. In India, to own a woman is a burden, so the man asks for the dowry. The ideal type of wife is also submissive and tolerant. This legitimation of the low value of women leads to domestic violence. This action in itself is also safeguarded by Scripture.

In this situation Jayachitra L looked for emancipatory elements in the bible. First, Gen 2: 24 (quoted in Eph 5: 31) highlights the equality between the husband and wife. Second, there is no difference between husband and wife because, through marriage, they are united in one body and one flesh. Therefore, a man should not unite with a woman in order to dominate her nor should he see the relationship as a dichotomy. There should be only mutual coexistence. Eph 5:21 should be taken as the basis for a mutual subordination to the marital state, and equality between husbands and wives.¹⁸⁵

As a postmodernist, Jayachitra L sees that patriarchy influenced the texts and their male interpreters, but she does not discuss women interpreters' views and/or colonial

¹⁸³ Ibid., 10-13. The text reinforces this hierarchical system (the submission of wife) with the headship of Christ under which the church should submit.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 11,14.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 14- 15.

elements. She touches upon India's dowry situation, and the reinforcement of the Bible to all other such patriarchal systems. Her postmodern interpretation shares some similar views in both feminist and postcolonial studies.

3.6.2. Postcolonial Readings: Decolonising and Resistant Readings

Postcolonialists usually analyse first the imperial ideologies which oppressed people in the biblical texts. ¹⁸⁶ Then they take diverse ways from other traditional and liberationists' views and look for resistant elements in the texts.

Jennifer G. Bird tries to decolonise the concept of authority and submission in the household codes from a western female postcolonial view. She states that the household code was the mimicry of the propaganda of the State; ¹⁸⁷ the *ekklesia* (or the church) as a 'counterempire;' and the weak crucified Christ portrayed as 'the heavenly divine emperor' who is above the earthly 'divine' emperors, oppressors and all other authorities. ¹⁸⁸ She states that 'the cycle of domination of one power over another continues. ¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, the text reveals a subversiveness and a sense of the superiority of Christian belief through its replacement of the social-political status of this world with a heavenly citizenship¹⁹⁰ and with the peace of Christ which frees the believer from terror, intimidation and military actions

¹⁸⁶ Jennifer G. Bird, "The Letter to the Ephesians," *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings, A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings, eds.* Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 265-266. Most commentaries neglect the political intention in Ephesians and emphasise the spiritual realm. Some sources even said favourably that Roman Empire built the peace. Ephesians says that the recipients were in the heavenly realm and already inherited it as they became children of God. However Postcolonialists do not take the beliefs or teachings of the Bible as spiritual or heavenly realms as an escapist tendency or an apolitical agenda but see them as religio-political claims.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 273. 'The point of political propaganda was to engender devotion to the Roman Emperor's agenda by extolling his benefactions and creating a sense of unity and like-mindedness.'

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 266-267. Raising Christ as the power over other powers including the emperor was the intention of the author. This is the household of the heavenly empire of God and it is a 'counter-empire' to the Roman one. In this household not only Israel but also other Gentiles became citizens. This realised eschatological idea led to a psychological, spiritual and at times physical withdrawal from the world.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 267.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 270.

within the *Pax Romana*.¹⁹¹ The idea of submission with the fear of Christ highlights the centrality of Christ, who rules and controls other earthly rulers.¹⁹² For Bird, even though the word 'fear' has the idea of devotion in Jewish community (i.e. 'awe'), she notes that it does not necessarily have positive connotation; 'fear and control go hand in hand.' The reason why the author used these terms is that he wanted to avoid the accusation of being seen as threatening the earthly-empire through the 'counter-empire' (heavenly order).

Regarding women and slaves, Bird suggested that they were important for the economic success of both earthly and heavenly empire. Consequently, these empires tried to control them. The Christian empire used the concept of the counter-empire, which reinforces the submission of slaves and women and rejects their equal opportunities and rights. Thus, a hidden economic intension with imperial ideology became a part of Christianity. 193

The metaphors of the body and bride of Christ call for wives' submission in the same way that the church is to be subject to its counter ruler (5: 23-25, 27, 29, 32). 'Thus the systemic, androcentric, patriarchal dynamic of marriage is reinscribed within these communities." This concept of true 'Christ-like-ness' abolished the early Christian doctrine of equality (Gal 3:28). Bird confirms that, "while this may not manifest itself directly as a socio-economic exploitation, it is a similar dynamic of subject-ruler as the one in the

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 272. Margaret MacDonal sees that the Ephesian Christians realised their identity as a new universal international movement which resisted the *Pax Romana*. This identity is citizenship in the *ekklesia*. However, this *ekklesia* is a heavenly (or spiritual) one and is different from Paul's *ekklesia*, which was a 'political gathering of the people in Christ'. The term *ekklesia* has a relationship with the household as it is part of the gathering in God's empire.

¹⁹² Ibid., 274. For Bird, 'Ephesians mimics political propaganda, painting a picture of a new heavenly empire, ruled by a king whose right-hand man, his servant, has conquered all powers, rulers and authorities of this age. The act of committing to writing such religious claims, imbued with imperial terminology, is one of desire to control and to engender conformity within the heavenly empire.'

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 275.

Roman Empire, where every aspect of their lives was overshadowed and controlled by their subject status."¹⁹⁵

The postcolonial perspective understands the way that the household code built gender roles and the way it copied the hierarchy and patriarchy of the empire. It also recognises the (indirect) economic concern to maintain order and how the codes relate to the social-political structure of household code. Moreover, it identifies ways in which they modified political propaganda to the Christian way of obedience.¹⁹⁶

After decolonising the text through a resistant reading, she observes that, "[i]nstead of controlling those who threaten the system, the focus is on empowering them to lead the way into new understandings of community and liberation for all people." Here Bird fails to show how those fighting against oppressive power were empowered.

On the other hand, Gordon Zerbe and Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, both with third world and multi religious backgrounds, see that Colossians "is full of passages which either cradle or promote a colonial ideology." This has been seen in the interpretations of white male missionaries and scholars. When Bird argued that Christ was portrayed as a ruler of a 'counter-empire', from a perspective of their third world multi religious background, Zerbe and Orevillo-Montenegro saw that a doctrine of the supremacy and absolutism of Christ could, in turn, result in attacks on other religions (1: 13-20; 2: 8-3:4). This has been a powerful tool for the colonial enterprise which rejects all other indigenous rituals, practices and beliefs. For these writers, the absolute Christology was a survival strategy of the minority

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 276-277.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 276.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 278.

¹⁹⁸ Gordon Zerbe and Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, "The Letter to the Colossians," *The Postcolonial Commentary*, 294. The letter to the Colossians is about the faith and practices of the community which encountered rival teachers. It promotes social cohesion within and outside the community. Here the author wanted to challenge the view that the cosmic powers and cosmic supremacy of Christ and the baptism in Christ was located in heaven, as introduced by the rival teachers (2: 4, 8, 16, 18).

movement in Paul's time, but it is not relevant for the contemporary, colonially oriented, exclusivist and triumphalist Christianity: this survival Christology has become a threatening strategy in order to wipe out the other faiths, cultures and traditions.¹⁹⁹

The household codes can be seen as being the texts which support androcentric, patriarchal, classist perspectives and the *status quo* of religious legislation.²⁰⁰ Zerbe and Orevillo-Montenegro analysed their western interpretations and how they safeguarded the Christian order as it related to the (so-called) outside world.²⁰¹ They also examined alternative, emancipative feminist interpretations.²⁰² They saw that, even though the writer of Colossians calls for new humanity in Christ, reference to any gender equality had been omitted from the text (Col 3:10-11) as in 1 Cor 12: 13. "By omitting the gender issue, the text encourages continuous colonizing of women as 'the other' who must bear the brunt of intersectionality." or resistance reading. Zerbe and Montenegro suggest that, if one can say 'but Christ is all in all' (Col 3:11) with an inclusive sense, a Christian should also welcome 'the other' or the 'marginalised,' including women.²⁰³ So for them, all should be equal and there should be no 'others' or 'the marginal.' Here, they suggest that excluding gender equality itself is a colonial mentality.

Postcolonialist critiques clearly emphasise the impact of the colonial power on the texts, interpretations and overarching social systems. They view the texts, their theology and Christology as counter-imperial (see Bird), or as a tool against the other religions (Zerbe and

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 295-297.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., These "men are to love and not to rule, parents must provoke but not to rule, slave master must treat justly but not just to oppress them."

²⁰¹Ibid., 298. They interpreted the code as a Christianising of Graeco Roman morality. It arises also from the fact that Christianity wanted the transformation of within instead of protesting outwardly, due to its millenarian perspective and its desire to avoid external hatred or hostility. This is a coping strategy in their specific social setting. "All of this continues to put Paul in the service of death."

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 299.

Montenegro). Bird gives the resistant view of colonised Christianity empowering and liberating socio-economic-political victims, whilst Zerbe and Montenegro, in their resistance reading emphasise the inclusion of 'the others.'

3.7. Conclusion

The decolonising and depatriarchalising of the different interpretations reveal the following outcomes.

The first group, negative (or manipulative) interpretations, reveals the colonial/patriarchal western Christian interpreters' civilization and a Christ-centred Christianisation. They neglect the human rights and gender equality of others. They use the codes as the standardised and patriarchalised 'professional' ethical codes.

The second group comprise the interpretations from contextualization (or liberation) perspectives. These still display a patriarchal bias and affirm the superiority of Christian beliefs even though they intend to liberate people from the oppression and suffering. For them the codes become negotiative codes that can be adapted to different situations and experiences. Some interpretations view the codes simply as the Greco-Roman apologetic codes and function as 'shields' or strategies to protect the church from being misunderstood by the State or society.

The third group consist of positive (or empowering) readings. They first reject the codes as being God's law as they violate human rights. Second, they question any Christologies that demands inhuman abusive actions towards 'the others' and women. Third, they challenge the powers which use the codes for their own benefits, such as political stability, maintaining social *status quo* and economic profits, whilst at the same time,

excluding 'the other' in their power realm. Finally, they recognise the victims' reactions towards the powers and help to raise their voices.

For the author, fighting or empowering from unbiased liberation or postcolonial feminist perspectives, resistant reading on abusive Christologies, and the rewriting of the democratic or resistant codes, need further discussions.

CHAPTER 4 POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISTS' RESISTANT READING

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will reinterpret the household codes in the Myanmar context with a postcolonial feminist resistant code. R. S. Sugirtharajah has encouraged his readers to react to globalisation, not in the way that the colonizers tried to introduce it or to replace the local religions (or cultures) with those of Christianity, but through exploring and reviving culture-specific hermeneutics. This should help to avoid past errors. It will also include articulating and then applying, in the light of the unfolding world events, theology to the variety of Myanmar cultures, religious beliefs and traditions. The aim is to find a new truth which can be aligned with local and global, biblical and non-biblical, Christian and non-Christian, as well as, political elements within the nation.²

Therefore, this part of the thesis will try to avoid the mistakes made by the colonial (and colonised), patriarchal, traditional interpretations made by male and female scholars, which added greater burdens to the 'others' (or the subordinate household members) who were suffering from poverty and oppression or various forms of modern slavery. Sex trafficking, forced or child labour and child soldiers are the consequences of neo-colonialism, neo-imperialism or oppressive political regimes and globalisation. This chapter will look at the positive aspects and expectations of feminist, postcolonialist, Asian and Myanmar interpretations, such as resistant readings. It will examine ideas for the formation of; democratic households, slavery-free zones and engagement with other faiths.

The traditional view of 'head and body' hierarchical metaphors in the household codes portray the male as supreme head (or power) and the female as the subordinate (or inferior)

¹ See Introduction.

² R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Troublesome Texts: The Bible in Colonial and Contemporary Culture* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 127-128.

body, as if there was a division at the human neck. The postcolonial feminist does not see any possibility of bringing these two parts into equal positions. Consequently, this analysis will use the 'body halves' metaphor. This metaphor depicts the whole body is being divided lengthwise and where women and men are denoted by the head and body equally. In this way, the body metaphor represents the binary worldviews such as west and east, and male and female. However, these halves have become unequal. Edward Said notes, "the world is made up of two unequal halves, the Orient and the Occident." This inequality can be caused if one half (e.g., west, man) takes all the power or food or supplies without sharing them with the other half (e.g., east, woman). Taking in unhealthy supplies can also cause the other half paralysis. I believe this metaphor highlights the importance for both halves being healthy in order to function satisfactorily as a whole.

4.2. Naming the Dominant Half: the Burmese Context

4.2.1. The Myanmar Regime and State Laws

Mohanty points out that the State has involved itself in various areas of family life – in "family, population, labour management, housing, sexual behaviour and expression, provision of child care and education, taxation, income redistribution, and the creation and the use of military forces." This is also true of the Myanmar military authority, since their control of power extends to all areas of life. This is confirmed by the regime's logo: "Army is your

³ "Half man half Woman," Collage Humour, November 3, 2009, http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://7.media.collegehumor.cvcdn.com/30/29/collegehumor.322e9057 09ecfcbc204976ca08238115.jpg&imgrefurl (accessed 12 January 2011). This metaphor is modified from the metaphor inspired by the human body portrayed by Aristophanes in Plato's The Symposium which claims that a former human body had both male and female bodies attached together from the back, but shared the same head with two faces looking in opposite directions. As they worked together, they became a threat to Zeus and were divided by him into two different sexes. *Plato: Symposium* trans. Walter Hamilton (New York: Penguin Books, 1951) 59. Neel Burton, "Plato's Metaphors: The Sun, Line, and Cave," Octre Monde, 25 September 2010. http://outre-monde.com/2010/09/25/ (accessed 12 January, 2011).

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 12.

⁵ Ibid., 65.

mother and Army is your father." However, even though the regime claims to be parents, it does not hesitate to oppress or kill its own children and neither does it supply what the people need.

The following illustration (3)⁶ compares the Myanmar government's declaration on women and children rights⁷ with those of the United Nations.⁸

⁶ This chart is just an example and it does not fully represent all the comparisons between Myanmar reports and UN CEDAW's articles.

⁷ Myanmar CEDAW/C/MMR/1, Article 154, reported to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW 22nd Session, 17 January- 4 February 2000, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/22sess.htm (accessed 23 January 2011).

⁸ CEDAW, A Fact Sheet, "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex" (Article 1) and Convention 138, International Human Rights Law, UN Human Rights Law, International Labour Organisation Conventions. http://www.right-to-education.org/node/165 and In 1999, Convention 182 was approved in order to force 132 and take immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Appl. 22.182, Report Form for Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182), 1999.

http://www.globalempowerment.org/policyadvocacy/pahome2.5.nsf/allreports/6EA413806B8E0C5788256E460 08360C0?OpenDocument (accessed 23 January 2011).

Myanmar Article 154

•(a) Women shall enjoy equal political, economic, social and cultural rights; (b) Mothers, children and expectant mothers shall enjoy those rights as prescribed by law; (c) Children born of citizens shall enjoy equal (d) Women shall enjoy freedom of rights guaranteed by law as regards marriage. divorce, partition of property and succession and custody of children.

CEDAW Article 1

- Legal representation and protection
- Education both academic and recreational, as well as resources to allow for effective learning
- •Work, to pursue employment opportunities of one's choice; maternity leave with pay and employers special consideration and equal treatment of women at work during pregnancy
- •Health care
- Individual autonomy in matters of nationality and movement, including the right to live free from forms of physical violence such as domestic violence and rape.

Children Rights

- •Convention 138, Article 2
 The minimum age specified in pursuance of paragraph 1 of this Article shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years.
- •Convention 182, Article 3
 (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
 (b) the use, procuring or
- offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
 (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illigit activities in
- illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

As a member of the United Nations, Myanmar has signed most UN treaties. However, these are obviously not practised by the regime. Moreover, often such standards are breached. For example, according to *The New York Times*, the regime has become the worst perpetrator of

child soldier recruitment. Likewise, even though the Junta signed the CEDAW guideline on women's rights in 1997 and submitted article 154 (see above) to the CEDAW, it neglects the human rights of women who experience forced laboured in the military, as well as the Army's use of sex slaves and their practise of selling women as prostitutes. The World Health Organization ranked Myanmar 190th of 191 countries according to health performance. Out of a poor healthcare system, few healthcare services are available for women. In its violations of the human rights of its own people, the Myanmar regime is blocking the survival of those who are held hostage and are helpless in their power.

4.2.2. The Regime and Asian Neo-capitalism

Unlike other third world countries which are affected by globalised capitalism of the west, ¹¹ Myanmar has China, India and Thailand as its neo-capitalists. The regime's prime minister, Thein Sein, claims that the country is little affected by the global economic crisis as they have little economic contact with the west. Instead, the country's economy grows by trading (or exporting) with its Asian (capitalist) neighbours: oil, gas, precious stones (jade and rubies), and rice, as well as electricity from its Hydrodams. ¹² The regime uses national funds for its own military purposes or to strengthen their power; for example, by building a new capital city or the expansion of the army. However, the common people do not benefit from these

⁹ Opinion, "Child Soldiers in Burma," *The New York Times*, http://uk.oneworld.net/guides/childlabour and http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/12/opinion/12iht-edbecker.1.16101114.html?_r=1 (accessed 14 October 2010).

¹⁰ B.K Sen, "Women and Law in Burma" *Legal Issues on Burma Journal* 9 (August 2001), http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/LIOB09-women_and_law_in_burma.htm (accessed 3 October 2010). B. K. Sen is an Executive Committee Member of the Burma Lawyers' Council.

¹¹ Mohanty, 155.

¹² William Boot, "Burma Little Affected by Global Financial Crisis, Says Prime Minister" *Weekly Business Roundup* (April 20, 2009), posted by The Irrawaddy Magazine, Monday, April 20, 2009, Business and Conflicting Reports on Burma's Gems Industry," The Irrawaddy Magazine, Monday, March 30, 2009, Business. Wai Moe, "Burma's Economic Growth to Slow in 2009: Asian Development Bank," The Irrawaddy Magazine, Friday, April 17, 2009, Business. http://www.irrawaddy.org/ (accessed 3 October 2010).

trades. Indicative of this is how the country suffers from an inadequate electricity infrastructure that results in constant power blackouts. In addition, people were forced to move for the construction of hydrodams.¹³ There are many children, young people and women who have to become migrant workers, child labourers and prostitutes. In this way, they become double victims of both the regime and globalisation. It is obvious that the so-called parent regime does not supply what its children need.

Cultural and religious values reinforce this regime's capitalism. This may come in the form of taking care of parents, obeying elders or paying back to them what they have done, as a way of gaining good merit for the next life. Through following the Burmese saying *ta lote sar bu thut kyay Su* ("never forget the benevolence of a morsel given by others such as one's parents and employers") and the lasting impact of the household codes leads Christian children to do whatever they must in order to feed their parents and family. It also creates a climate in which they hardly ever question the authority of parents and employers, which, in turn, reinforces the negative effects of the globalised economic system.

4.2.3. Myanmar Patriarchal Traditions and Customary Laws

Mi Mi Khaing notes that, Myanmar laws favour women's equality,¹⁴ such as retaining their given name after marriage, inheriting from their parents, being able to initiate divorce and own their own property. However, again, Mi Mi Khaing claims that "family law is based entirely on traditional and customary codes,"¹⁵ so that the legal system will never change some traditional practices and beliefs held by society. For example, the Burmese male

¹³ Boot, "Burma to Host Asean Energy Summit," *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, Friday, April 03, 2009, Business. And "Indian State Firm Rethinks Costly Burma Hydrodams" *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, Monday, March 30, 2009, Business, http://www.irrawaddy.org/ (accessed 3 October 2010).

¹⁴ Mi Mi Khaing, *The World of Burmese Women* (London: Zed Books, 1984), 25.

¹⁵ Ibid., 265.

maintains and asserts his status by never entering the kitchen,¹⁶ as he is the head of the household. The traditional law permits men, but not women to practice polygamy. Even though the law allows women to initiate divorce, Muslim women do not.¹⁷ Persistent patriarchal attitudes distort the progress of legal right, and hinder the empowerment and protection of women, children and the poor.

4.2.4. Myanmar Buddhist Household Rules

Myanmar Buddhist traditions function in controlling women in the same way as the NT household codes. Postcolonial feminists compares the household rules of Buddhism and Christianity to reveal the biases (or truths) of both religions.

There are four categories of marriage set out by the Buddha: There will be balance in marriage if both partners are calm and submissive (Category 1) or both are authoritative (Category 4). A husband should be submissive or a follower when a wife is authoritative and leading (Category 2) or a wife should be submissive and a follower when the husband is authoritative and leading (Category 3). These four categories of marriage seem to have gender equality with the exception of Category 3; which is the one most frequently practised. Moreover, the seven types of wives in Buddhism (such as, mother, younger sister, friend, obedient servant, thief, torturer and master) also make for a rational wifehood with balances between mastership and servanthood. The duties given in the *Sigalaowada Sutra* to husbands and wives¹⁸ are also fair enough to say that there is nothing calling for wives' submission.

¹⁷ Ibid.,25.

¹⁶ Ibid., 54.

¹⁸ Viola Abeygoonerwardena, "Women in Buddhism and Temple Authoritarianism," *God's Image* 25, no. 4 (December 2006): 57- 62.

Illustration 4 Duties of Husband and Wife

The Duties of a husband towards a wife

- (a) respecting the wife
- (b) not abusing or demeaning her
- (c) not being promiscuous
- (d) letting her run the household
- (e) buying her clothes and other adornments

The Duties of a wife towards a husband

- (a) doing her trade and work well
- (b) being a good hostess and pleasing people
- (c) safeguarding resources
 (d) not having
 'relationships' with men
 other than the husband
- (e) being diligent in all activities

However, with the growth of Buddhism these rules have changed and later expressions of Buddhism give rules for wives which are five times longer than those for husbands. It explicitly stereotypes and institutionalises women's subordination. These rules state that: wives should not have evil thoughts; be cruel or harsh; nor should they be dominating in action or word, but only be virtuous, chaste, polite, industrious, hard working, compassionate, faithful, loving, modest, and respectful. Like the New Testament household codes, these codes have patriarchal natures and present abusive or restrictive views.

As Sugirtharajah states, that no book that is held sacred (be it the Koran, Bible, Dharmma, or Bhagvadgita), is a pure text and will not be the eternal gospel for all people.¹⁹ Both Buddhist and Christian household rules do not favour women and are not liberationist or true for every context. Rather, they all devalue the marginalised, (the poor, women and children) and endorse their subordination.

¹⁹ R. S. Sugirtharajah, Troublesome Texts: The Bible in Colonial and Contemporary Culture, 129-130.

4.2.5. The Suffering Christ Model (1 Pet 2: 21)

Traditional Christians understand that there are two kinds of suffering; suffering as the consequence of the Fall and sacrificial suffering. Women are understood to suffer both. As being responsible for the Fall, they are alleged to suffer as punishment. Moreover, they are encouraged to suffer like Christ²⁰ (as in 1 Pet 2:21). Actually, this belief prolongs the suffering of the people (especially women) under an abusive political regime or patriarchal society. There are two kinds of interpretations from Asian feminist theologians on the suffering servanthood of Christ.

First, Chung Hyun Kyung suggests that:

Servanthood is not mere submission or obedience. It is instead a powerful witness to evil and a challenge to the powers and principalities of the world, especially male domination over women. This suffering servant who is undergoing passive suffering with powerless Asian women and who is also accompanying them in their struggle for liberation by doing [sic] liberation is the prophetic Messiah who creates a new humanity for oppressed Asian women.²¹

For Kyung, Christ's suffering is a *passive* suffering and a reinforcement of servanthood and submission. To encourage women to follow the example of the suffering Christ is to encourage passivity and to condone unjust rulers, husbands, fathers or masters.²²

The second interpretation is Kwok Pui-lan's statement: "For subjugated women, salvation and the good news do not imply a life of passive suffering and endless sacrifice and

²⁰ Flora A. Keshgegian, "Suffering," *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, eds. Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 278-280.

²¹ Chung Hyun Kyung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again, Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 1990), 59.

²² Pheme Perkins, "Philippians," *Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 343-345.

denial. The suffering of Jesus was not to be used to condone state terror or domestic violence."²³

One can draw the conclusion from Pui-lan's discussion that women have rejected the patriarchal interpretation, which presents suffering as the best path to follow, even though it results in suffering under unjust rulers or living in unjust societies. So for women, Jesus, as the passive Suffering Servant, legitimises colonialism or dictatorship and other forms of patriarchy by reinforcing the submission of women.

4.3. Reviving the 'Other Paralysed Half'

In order to revive the other paralysed half, the postcolonial feminist reading tries to channel human rights and democratic power into that body. This interpretation is known as a 'democratising' interpretation, which is different from the traditional Biblical interpretation. It uses elements from the secular world,²⁴ such as democracy and human right standards. It also includes positive elements from other religious and cultural teachings. Furthermore, rewriting the codes is, in itself, a democratising process at work on the traditional texts. Such reading also helps to avoid copying the rules of the colonialists.²⁵

4.3.1. Human Rights as Balancing the Halves

The following chart clearly shows that the current regime together with the NT household codes and Buddhist teachings have all lagged behind the times and still neglect and discriminate against the rights of the marginalised. It is hoped that, in the future, the principles

²⁴ Sugirtharajah, , Troublesome Texts: The Bible in Colonial and Contemporary Culture, 118-119

²³ Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology*, 156-157.

²⁵ Ibid., 128-129. The previous chapters have shown how Christian interpreters or apologists copied the values of the Greco-Roman colonisers' household codes that reinforced the submission of the marginalised and the authority of the dominant

of equality and human rights will be integrated into their political and religious principles in order to benefit and meet the needs of contemporary Myanmar society.

Illustration 5
Different Household Codes with Human Rights

	The International Covenant on	Christian	Buddhist	The
	Civil and Political Rights	Household	household	Regime
	$(CCPR)^{26}$	Codes	Teachings	
Wife	1. The principle of equal	No	No	(ILNIA) ²⁷
and	enjoyment of rights	INO	NO	(ILNIA)
husband	enjoyment of rights			
iiusbaiiu				
	2. The general principle of	No	No	(ILNIA)
	equality and the corollary	INO	NO	(ILNIA)
	principle of equality between men			
	and women;			
	and women,			
	3. The principle of equality	No	No	Yes
	before the law;			
	4. The principle of equal	No	No	Yes
	protection of the law;			
	5. The principle of non-	No	No	(ILNIA)
	discrimination.			
		37/4	27/4	37
	6. The right to marriage and	N/A	N/A	Yes
	choice of spouse;			
	7. The right to own property	Both Yes	N/A	Yes
	alone as well as in association	and No	- 1/22	
	with others;			
	,			
Children	1. The right to inherit;	N/A	Yes	Yes

²⁶ Wouter Vandenhole, *Non-discrimination and Equality in the View of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies* (Oxford: Intersentia, 2005), 250-252.

²⁷ ILNIA= In Laws but not In Actions.

	2. Equal rights for children born in and out of wedlock, or in registered customary marriages;	N/A	N/A	Yes
Labour Rights	1.Equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the labour market.	No	N/A	Yes

4.3.2. Buddhist Teachings and Burmese Traditions as Empowerment

4.3.2.1. The Middle Way Vs Christian Dualism

The household codes highlight dualisms in the Christian religion (Christ and the church, husband and wife, father and children and master and servant). In particular, the Christ and the church analogy reflect the dualism of heaven and earth, or spiritual and physical, or God and the world, or holiness and sinfulness. This creates gaps between the different parties in human relationships as represented in the household codes. Even though the Hebrew bible and Christianity reject metaphysical dualism, they do accept a dualism of male/ female, mind/body and supernatural/natural. In this way, they encourage the notion that one is superior to the other. A consequence of this type of thinking is that it challenges the belief that men and women are created in the image of *Theos*.²⁸ This gender dualism has been challenged by many different schools of thought and pressure groups.

In contrast, the Buddhist 'middle way' offers a different approach to dualism. Khin Myo Chit proposes that, with 'right thinking,' both feminists (who believe that women should do that all men can do) and patriarchal men (who believe that they are the crown of the

²⁸ Marie J. Giblin, "Dualism," *Dictionary of Feminist Theology*, eds. Letty M. Russell & J. Shannon Clarkson (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

universe), should not follow extreme ways.²⁹ The middle path and right thinking are the heart of Buddhist belief, which the controlling hegemony of Buddhist culture and Myanmar regime understand very well but never practise. Right thinking is one of the Noble Eightfold Paths and is also the fourth of the four Noble Truths (or the way to the cessation of suffering - the Middle Way by which one achieves Nirvana). What is right thinking? It is a thinking which frees one from ill thoughts towards others. It is a state of mind based on the realities of life by avoiding 'self-deception and self-delusion'. It decreases lobha (desire), dosa (anger) and moha (incorrect thinking or delusion, thinking wrong is right and right is wrong). It is any thinking which increases dana (giving) and decreases lobha; increases metta meditation (sharing or thinking of loving kindness) and decreases *dosa*; and increases *panna* (wisdom) and decreases moha is 'right thinking.' The right mentality is expressed in ten deeds. These are: generosity (dana), morality (sila), meditation (bhavana), reverence, selfless service, transference of merit, rejoicing in another's merit, listening to the *Dhamma*, teaching the Dhamma and correcting wrong views.³⁰ Patriarchal and colonial systems are wrong because they are based on *lobha* (or greediness) as they are founded upon the desire to keep power or authority in their own hands. They also have moha because they cannot see women, men and children as human beings who also have feelings. Why does one want another person to be subordinated and controlled? It is only through wrong thinking (such as lobha, dosa and moha), can this occur.

In a family, a right mind is also important. A Thai girl recently wrote of her experience and confessed that she was no longer attracted to Buddhism because its original meanings (such as peace, non-violence and harmony) had been lost. She gave the example of

²⁹ Khin Myo Chit, A Wonderland of Burmese Legends (Bangkok: The Tamarind Press, 1984), 3-4.

³⁰ Rasika Wijayaratne, "Buddhist Positive Thinking," http://www.vihara.org.au/t7/youth/articles/authors/rasikaw/pdf/Buddhist_Positive_Thinking.pdf. (accessed 8 February 2008).

her father who was a very generous person and gave away half of his income to the monastery while, at the same time, he would abuse his wife and children when there was nothing to eat. According to her, the patriarchal system of Buddhism causes prostitution and child labour. The tradition encourages children to show gratitude to their parents: boys through entering the monastery, having a proper education and a good life, while girls must find a job or end up becoming prostitutes in order to make payments in gratitude to their parents and other relatives.³¹

It should be noted that Buddhism itself is not a religion of oppression, but the people (without right minds) abuse and manipulate their followers by making their own (so-called) Buddhist traditions and institutionalising them. Therefore, it is important that political regimes and traditional cultural leaders should reconsider whether their understanding of religious and social worldviews comes from right thought or wrong thoughts – or if they are following the middle way. Nevertheless, Say Pa criticises Buddha himself for leaving his wife behind to pursue his own enlightenment. His wife was even tasked with supporting her husband and their children in the forest where he meditated. Was his extreme egocentric mind correct in terms of the middle way? The middle way is a path to liberation from the world of suffering (or craving or egoism). Those who have followed this path have held neither authority nor power or discriminated with gender. This kind of perception can only be gained through right thinking or right mindfulness. The way lies where power is in the middle, where parents, husbands, masters, together with children, women, the marginalised and the oppressed equally share the space.

-

³¹ Ouyporn Khuankaew, Feminism and Buddhism, A Reflection through Personal Life & Working Experience, http://www.bpf.org/tsangha/ouyporn.html (accessed 12 December 2007).

4.3.2.2. 'Selfless' and Egolessness

The Buddhist's selflessness is portrayed by Rita M. Gross as an opposite of a zombie, a life that is cheerful, empowered, lively, peaceful and considerate because s/he has eliminated ego. However, a person with ego has the mind of 'me' (or 'my'/'mine') and, necessarily, the 'other.' It is a state of mind that results in dissatisfaction, worries, suffering, and a clinging to desires. She suggests that these types of people tend to depend on others, feel shy and timid and have no more or less ego than the one who is dependent and forceful. They all want to grasp or possess something. However, in terms of gender issues, the Buddhist attitude of pride in maleness has encouraged the building up of the ego. Society stereotypes certain characteristics (or virtues) as belonging to men but not to women. Men are believed to be more spiritual, calm and peaceful, and possess authority, or superiority over women. Gross argues that, "[a]ll these practices of gender privilege and gender hierarchy encourage clinging to male ego; they do not encourage egolessness [sic]." Furthermore, even though Buddhism claims to encourage egolessness in gender issues, its samsaric traps (or reincarnations) foster ego because it teaches that maleness is a result of a better karma from a previous-life..³² Emptiness in the gendered sense is about what Gross describes as 'femaleness.' Enlightenment or bodhisattva (future Buddha-like state) for a Mahayanist is to discover this enlightenment which realises its real self and which usually is overlaid by/concealed by ego and attachment. 33 Likewise the word 'himself' in Eph 5: 23, 25, 27, 28, 33 mentions men's selfhood or ego in comparison with that of Christ. The household code allows man to keep his 'self' and take on the headship of Christ model, while it encourages women (or slaves) to follow Christ's 'selfless' servanthood. Postcolonial feminist critique rejects the model of

³² Rita M Gross, "Strategies for a Feminist Revalorisation of Buddhism," *Feminism and World Religions*, ed. Arvind Sharma, Katherine K. Young (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 89-91.

³³ Ibid., 92.

Buddha who left his wife and children for his enlightenment (or a way of egolessness) and, instead, embraces the other version of Buddha who sacrificed his life for his fellows in order that they might live – as can be seen in the story of the Buddha as monkey king, who gave his life for others.³⁴

4.3.2.3. Men and Women in Co-ownership

According to Burmese tradition, there are terms and proverbs indicating equality between husband and wife in Burmese families. The husband is called *Ainshin* (house owner or lord), while the wife is called *Ainshinma*, (house owner or house lady or housewife). The lives of both are entwined in the tasks of earning living and giving birth: "Man rides the raft, woman gives birth to the child." Both share the same workload: "Damsel one load on head, Stalwart one burden on shoulder." They experience the same work training: "Man the hunter, woman the decoy trap setter." They work together: "Husband climbs the toddy tree. Wife cooks it into jagaree." It can, therefore be seen how *Aishin* and *Ainshinma* work together as a team. However, in the Myanmar context, *Ainshinma* is taken to mean just a housewife who is subordinate and dependent on her husband. The New Testament also suggests that there were not only masters but also mistresses in households during imperial times (Ephesians 6:7). Nevertheless, demands were made of the mistress to submit to her husband (e.g. Sarah in 1 Pet 3:6). However, today 'co-ownership' should be reactivated with a different emphasis, such as in Fiorenza's 'co-discipleship,' where responsibilities or leadership roles are shared, whether that be in rewards or sanctions.³⁶

³⁴ Mahakapi Jataka, "The Great Monkey King, Jat 407, Tipitaka. Suttapitaka. Khuddakanikāya. Jātaka. Mahākapijātaka, http://home.flash.net/~cameron/Buddhism/BuddhistTexts/Jataka_Monkey_King.pdf (accessed 15 February 2010).

³⁵ Khaing, The World of Burmese Women, 60, 184.

³⁶ See chapter 3 for detail.

4.3.3. Empowerment in NT Codes

Having said that the household codes are not comparable with human rights because they abuse human rights, it will be ironic to find hidden empowering elements in these codes. However, as postcolonial feminists read the Bible as both safe and unsafe,³⁷ it is possible to see positive elements within the texts.

4.3.3.1. Women as Church

In Eph 5: 23-25, women are compared with the church, the earthly figure, and the representation of the down-trodden. Politically, in Graeco-Roman times, the church, like women was without freedom and was oppressed and colonized. Being a member of the church and therefore part of the minority, even the writer of Ephesians included himself in this group (Eph 5:30).³⁸ In one way, he claims that those who were males also needed to submit to authority. However, today, the church does not represent the poor or the marginalised, but has appropriated the image of 'body' as being the patriarchal, hierarchal body, the coloniser which has the authority to rule and manipulate the people. Kwok Pui-lan confirms this, stating that, '...the church is associated not only with patriarchal authority but also with colonial power.'³⁹

Feminists in general do not perceive the 'church' to be like this. 40 For African feminists, ecclesiology focuses on a community rooted in sharing and participation. Therefore, African feminists reject the idea of a patriarchal church in favour of the church as a

³⁷ This has been discussed in Introduction of this thesis.

³⁸ "We are members of his body" Eph 5:30.

³⁹ Pui-lan, Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology, 59.

⁴⁰ Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Marks of the Church," in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, eds. Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson (Mowbray: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

family that recognises and integrates itself in a society where human rights and dignity of women and children are practised. For the Asian feminists the church is the 'local' church or the body of Christ where the Word of God has come down (incarnated) from heaven and has been realised. There is, therefore, only freedom, equality and dignity. Following on from these theories, 'ecumenical ecclesiology' emerged in the 1980s as an ecclesial model when 'women began searching for egalitarian, non-discriminatory ways of being church.' According to Rosemary Radford Ruether: "Women-Church represent the first time that women collectively have claimed to be church and have claimed the tradition of the exodus community as a community of liberation from patriarchy."

On the other hand, postcolonial feminists argue that the woman as church is delighted to represent all oppressed and colonised people and that their task is to challenge and free itself from patriarchal and colonial mentalities and power.

4.3.3.2. Women as Co-heirs of Life (1 Pet 3: 7)

Normally in the Bible, inheritance applies only to the male child who is not a slave (Gal 4: 1) and daughters cannot inherit (Gal 4:7). However, 1 Pet 3: 7, in contrast, describes women as heirs of life. According to Myanmar legal laws and custom, daughters are also heirs and can inherit. The writer of 1 Peter assumes that God is the one who makes women and daughters equal heirs as men and sons. What is the meaning of life in 1 Peter? There are only two

⁴¹ Laurenti Magesa, "Ecclesiologies: African" in *Third World Theological Dictionary*, eds. Virginia Fabella, and R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000).

⁴² Luis Anthony G. "Tagle, Ecclesiologies: Asian," in *Third World Theological Dictionary*, surveys the pluriformity of eccelsiologies in Asia. They emphasise the centrality of the local church; the mission of evangelisation and the church; dialogue; the church as discipleship of Jesus in the service of life in Asia; the Communion of communities, and other special issues such as first, the initiative of China's Catholic episcopate being selected by local churches and not from Rome, so forming an Independent Catholic church and second, the Philippines' ecclesiology of *Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI)* which revolted against Spanish colonial rule. Other forms of 'ecumenical ecclesiology' are also described.

⁴³ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-church* (Eugene, O.R.: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001), 57.

relevant references in the first Epistle of Peter (3:7 and 3: 10) and a further in 2 Pet 1:3. It is difficult to discern the intention in 1 Peter: if it describes an eternal life which believers will inherit only after death, then the text does not support the view that, in this life, women should share equal rights. The question is whether Christianity stands only for (and gives guarantee to) life after death. As long as Christianity does not try to address the question to this life, its truth cannot be taken as the ultimate truth.

4.3.3.3. The Peripheral Christ or the Incarnated Christ (Eph 5: 31)

The Christology of the present church should move from its focus on Christ as being the very centre of a series of concentric circles, which is far from the concept of Christ in the community or in the individual. Instead, Christ should be understood as the immanent liberator of the abused whose suffering is heard and healed.⁴⁴ This view should be embraced by the community of Christ which must acknowledge and heal the people who have been sexually abused and let them know that God and the church are with them.⁴⁵ Louise Carr sees this as the church's present task; that it should liberate abused children and espouse an immanent Christology in place of the Christology of centrality which portrays a circle where Christ at the centre and the abused people (or the 'other') at the periphery. Immanent Christology emphasises the Jesus who is with the marginalised and who fights against the abusers. Just as a man leaves his parents to be with his wife, Jesus left the patriarchal/imperial headship of men and joins with the women (or the church or marginalised people), offering a selfless life. This can be seen as the active suffering of Jesus.

⁴⁴ Louise Carr, "Feminist Theological Approaches to (the) Sexual Abuse of Children," *Feminist Theology* 12 (May 1996): 29.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 30.

4.4. Actions in the Empowered Paralysed Half

4.4.1. Questioning the Authority of Canonisation⁴⁶

When one looks into the household codes found in Colossians, Ephesians and 1 Peter, the writers freely reinterpreted, re-quoted and contextualised one another (as did they the Graeco-Roman household codes). Taking up the work of Colossians, the writer of Ephesians adds to it the Christian theology of the Christ/Church analogy, the *parousia*, together with the social, traditional norms and Old Testament references. In the case of the relationship between children and parents, Ephesians reaffirms the Old Testament texts on obedience. Concerning slaves and masters, Colossians and Ephesians reinforce the master/slave relationship with their main theme that the master is Christ. Contrary to this concept, 1 Peter portrays him as the *suffering* Christ. It can therefore be seen that these texts were adapted and changed by their writers who were themselves victims of the values of patriarchal, colonial and imperial systems of the time. Nonetheless, they continued to reinforce those systems, creating more victims. They used their freedom of authority in the form of apologetic writing and, at the same time, they became the manipulators of the dispossessed.

Consequently, these values are embedded in texts, which are then perpetuated in the writings of the church fathers and their doctrinal choices and then, later still, in the decisions of papal/Episcopal councils. The State, especially under Constantine, also had a great impact on canonisation, as it had authority over whether to accept or reject a certain scripture. For example, Protestant canonisation came mainly from Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Even women compiled their own canons to create a new Women's Bible. One thing to note is that these canonisations mostly took place among those with power from western countries.

 $^{^{46}}$ The creation of 'the Canon' is the recognition/authorization of the doctrines of the Church or the books in the Bible.

⁴⁷ Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2007), 320-321.

There are power struggles between the Christian authorities on canonisation with various doctrinal biases (carrying their own particular fundamental beliefs) which have considerable significance on doctrine to this day. Most of the canon was the work of male, educated and powerful westerners. Consequently, the canonisation of the Bible creates a boundary between so-called truth and untruth and the authorised from the unauthorised.

Postcolonial feminists call for the canon to be recreated and so be more balanced in the hands of both the marginalised and the colonisers. The church should accept the challenge made by the marginalised. Jon Berquist states that the canon is the postcolonial literature or a decolonizing ideology which allows the voices of the 'other' (or the colonized) to be heard. On the other hand, the colonised writers should use their vernacular languages and abandon the absolutising of their own assertions and thereby avoiding further imperialisation.⁴⁸

4.4.2. The New Postcolonial Feminist Household Code

Rewriting the code is one option of resistance. A Filipino theologian, Mary John Mananzan, rewrote Col 3:18-19 as: 'Husband and wife, love and obey each other.' She uses this reading as part of a new liturgy for marriage.⁴⁹

Key features in the rewriting of the Myanmar code from a postcolonial feminist perspective can be summarised as:

• Wives and husbands should be subject to (and empower) one another. For there is no hegemony in the household; only loving and serving one another. Just as the non-gender church is the other half of the non-gender Christ and being one flesh there is no division between Christ and church because they are one. Without one's half how can

⁴⁸ Jon L. Berquist, "Postcolonialism and Imperial Motives for Canonisation," *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*, ed. Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 92-93.

⁴⁹ Mary John Mananzan, "Woman and Religion" *Woman and Religion*, ed. Mary John Mananzan (3rd revived; Institute of Women's Studies, St Scholastic's College): 3-14.

the other half survive? There is no authority or subordination, but only friendship, fellowship and partnership. Neither gender is weak or strong; they all share life together. Without husbands or wives there will be no marriages or families. Without the church there will be no Christ.

- Children and parents respect each other, as in the Burmese saying *Gyi thu* (the elder) *ko Yo thay* (respect), *Nagi thu* (the younger) *ko lay sa* (respect).
- There are no masters and slaves; there are only colleagues and co-workers. The household members will share authority and submit together. No one will get more or less; there is only equality in the world of democracy, middle way and Gal 3:28.

4.5. Conclusion

Postcolonial resistant readings decolonise those Myanmar hegemonic halves. These include the regime as neo-imperialism, paper laws, globalisation and neo-capitalism which encourage women, children to serve in families like modern slaves. Concepts of Christian suffering, together with a distorted Christology and Buddhist patriarchal teachings, as well as traditions and culture are all part of the critique.

Postcolonial empowerment (and balancing of inequality) are created from many sources, such as: Supporting human rights and democracy; reusing Buddhist and Christian positive teachings (such as the Middle Way or right mindfulness, and egolessness); women, as the church (or the world) depicts them, are not living in a male, utopian, heavenly realm, but a world which represents those who are suffering, the oppressed victims or the 'others.'. It is through the sharing of experiences and the entering into of dialogue that are the focus of this way of life. Christ and Buddha are with (or for) women. In other words, they are present at the margins of society and with the colonised, instead of being beyond reach at the

hierarchal apex, (or centre). Women are also co-heirs and share co-ownership with men.

Challenging the canon and rewriting the codes are the actions of the healed paralyzed half.

Section II Conclusion

The apologetic colonised household codes found in the Greco-Roman world have become the civilised/Christianised codes or professional codes of the colonial period. They persist as unconditional ethical laws in modern society and in the literary and historical analytical texts of the modern and post-modern world. For some Western scholars, Asian and Myanmar Christians, these texts were seen as God's inspired laws without realising that they encouraged inhuman laws, regulations and traditions.

For the postcolonial feminist these are colonial, hierarchal and androcentric codes. They are reinforced by the canonisation and interpretations of both ancient and modern worlds. They are authorised, centralised or universalised as church dogma or church rules. These household codes also establish the gap between the powerful, civilised, business, educated men as independent and objective, and the others such as wives, children, slaves or employees as dependent and subject. Supporting or using the codes, revive or prolong the patriarchy, capitalism, neo-colonialism, neo-slavery system and hinder the practised human rights and gender equality. They are the texts of terror for the marginalised when they are the professional or hegemonic texts for the power holders.

By using the 'body- halves' metaphor rather than the 'head and body' metaphor, postcolonial feminist, resistant readings see that the hierarchy of groups in the codes are all possessors of equal life in a whole body, side by side in coexistence and cooperation rather than split between the head and the rest of themselves. This metaphor will encourage the marginalised voices to be heard and the periphery to be included. This 'the body halves' code

represents that one cannot live without the other. Interdependency or complementation is essential. Manipulating one half of the body can cause the whole body to suffer. Both power (head) and service (body) are shared.

SECTION III

POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING ON THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN SOME NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS IN A MYANMAR CONTEXT

Section III Introduction

The New Testament includes texts that are both pro-government (Rom 13:1-7, 1 Pet 2:13-17 and Tit 3: 1) and anti-government, (Acts 5:29; Col. 2: 15, and Rev.13). This section will focus on those texts that are pro-government and which explicitly call for a subjection to ruling authorities, as sanctioned by God (or Christ). These texts can be described as a 'hegemonic code,' as explained in the introduction of this thesis.

The motivation for this postcolonial feminist rereading of the concepts of political authority and submission comes from personal experience of the actions of the Myanmar political regime. For many years it has used and abused its authority through the use of political, social and religious pressures in order to oppress the Myanmar people. As discussed in Chapter 4, by abusing human rights, the regime has inflicted suffering to every aspect of daily life and, consequently, the country is constrained by the negative values that are imposed from neo-imperialism, neo-colonialism and neo-capitalism. For example, currently, China is a perfect example of neo-imperialism. In response to increasing pressures for reform from such nations as the USA and UK (and organisations, such as the UN), the regime has sought to take refuge in China for political support and armaments, as well as financial support with condition-free loans. In return for these alliances, the country's resources are being largely controlled by the Chinese government. Kanbawza Win contends that:

¹ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 80-81 or see pg 11.

... not only Chinese imperialism but economic colonialism is felt as the men on the dragon throne successfully create its own economic colony without empire. Perhaps the next step would be like Tibet that Burma will soon became an autonomous region of greater Imperial China. (Sic)²

In this situation, women are the most affected. A statistical survey shows women as being treated as objects or second class people; this can be seen in the silent and submissive wives, daughters, mothers. Furthermore, as political victims³ who have suffered in every area of life, there are 12 or 13 times more women than men.⁴ In the political arena, when there is war, there is inevitably rape. Women become objects of pleasure for soldiers who are numbed by constant fighting. Women are also used by the military as porters of their arms. Female images are frequently used as derogatory metaphors against the enemy. For example, in a political cartoon, Than Shwe is portrayed as a woman's menstruation pad in order to belittle him: his polluted life is compared to an image of the so called 'utmost shame.' He has also been portrayed as a woman whose father is China and whose step-father is Russia. 'She' got married with India and now she has secret affair with North Korea. Thus, Than Shwe is depicted as the prostituted female who is in alliance with other nations. Moreover, women are also accused as the ones who can destroy the country (*Mainma phyat taut Pyipyat*).

Women's participation in the struggle against the political regime is invisible with the exception of some popular figures like Aung San Suu Kyi. In response to protests, the Myanmar regime tries to reassert its power even if it means that its people suffer. Speakers, at government addresses held at Christian conferences, use Romans 13: 1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17 and

² Kanbawza Win, "Is Burma the First Causality of Chinese Imperialism?" Asian Tribune Striving for Asian Solidarity, 27 May 2010, [Journal on-line], http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/05/27/burma-first-causality-chinese-imperialism (accessed 2 July 2010).

³ Ywah Plaw Paw, "Religion, Culture and Gender in Myanmar," *In God's Image* 19, no. 2 (June 2000): 24-26.

⁴ Tin Hla Kyi, "The Status of Myanmar Women In a Changing Myanmar Economy" *In God's Image* 19, no. 2 (June 2000): 20-23.

Titus 3:1 to encourage Christians to submit to authority.⁵ Some Myanmar Christians also preach (or write) on these texts in order to reinforce the regime's authority. However, as Musa Dube and Kwok Pui-lan encourage the ordinary women to reread the texts and to participate in liberation movement,⁶ these 'hegemony codes' (Rom 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2:13-17) will be reread from a postcolonial feminist perspective. This section reveals how these texts were written during the Graeco-Roman period and then, throughout history, interpreted dichotomously (male-female, west-east). To reread and rewrite these texts from a resistant perspective is to liberate people (especially women) from patriarchal, colonial and neocolonial authority.⁷

⁵ The author of this thesis has personal experience of hearing these texts quoted by a General in a Christian conference.

⁶Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 24-43. Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 81-84.

⁷ Kwok Pui-Lan, "Making the Connections: Postcolonial Studies and Feminist Biblical Interpretation," *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 48-49.

CHAPTER 5 THE COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM AND PATRIARCHY AND THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

5.1. Introduction

Rom 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2:13-17 are respectively addressed to Christians in the imperial capital city of Rome (Rom 1: 14) and to aliens living in the colonised land of Asian Minor (1 Pet 1:1). Both groups were instructed to submit to the authority of the government (or the political leaders), especially the Roman emperors, senate and the magistrates.

For two centuries, through the imperial economic and colonial system, the Roman male elite had been colonising large areas of Asian Minor, Europe, Africa and the territories around the Mediterranean Sea. In the Graeco-Roman world, both Roman and colonised males held positions of authority as, heads of the local administration, the economic system, their households as well as being the makers of laws and regulations. Roads were built across the empire and *Pax Romana* or peace and security (*pax et securitas*) was their slogan. Interestingly, the texts were written during the time of Nero (54-68 AD) and Domitian (81-96AD) who both had notorious reputations. Nero was alleged to have persecuted Christians who were perceived to be troublemakers (Tacitus in Annals 15:44); these included Paul and Peter (Sulpicius Severus, Chronicle 2:29). After five years of peaceful reign, Nero accused the Christians of starting the fire which destroyed Rome (Suetonius, Nero 16). Heavy taxation was also imposed by Nero in order to construct a new golden building. Domitian imposed

⁸ Amy L. Wordelman, "Everyday Life of Women in the Period of the New Testament," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1992), 390-396.

⁹ David F. Burg, "Gaul Revolts," in *A World History of Tax Rebellions: an Encyclopaedia of Tax Rebels, Revolts and Riots from Antiquity to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2004), 34.

emperor worship on the whole empire (Suetonius, Domitian 13).¹⁰ Although his historians portrayed his reign as peaceful, evidence suggests that the whole empire was under extreme measures of taxation arising from the emperor's tyranny.¹¹

The writers of the letters knew that the people were suffering from both social and political causes (Rom 8: 17-18, 35-36; 1 Pet 1:6, 2:19,20, 3:13-17, 4:12-19, 5:9). Why then did these writers, suffering under colonisation, instruct their readers to submit to the colonial government? Were the government and political leaders good to the people? In those passages that appear to be addressed to people in general, do the authors have the experiences of women in mind at all? This chapter will scrutinise these pro-governmental texts, first to trace their colonial and patriarchal background and then to discuss the ways their context influenced their formation. Finally, it will examine how and the why writers omitted the 'silent voices.'

5.2. The Imperial Texts

Neil Elliott confirms that Rom 13:1-7 reflects the imperial propaganda¹⁴ as written by philosophers (such as, Cicero), aristocrats, senators, historians and religious apologists (as well as Jewish historians of the Diaspora such as, Philo and Josephus).

 10 C.K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (London: SPCK, 1987), 15-18, 19-21.

¹¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), 333 -335.

¹² Ernest Best, *I Peter*, New Century Bible, ed. Ronald E. Clements (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd. 1971), 39.

¹³ This outline is based on one of the postcolonial tasks of R.S. Sugirtharjah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 251.

¹⁴ Neil Elliott, "The Letters to the Romans," in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 204. Neil Elliott, "Romans 13:1-7 in the Context of Imperial Propaganda," *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard G. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 184-204.

Certain themes are common in the writings used by rulers throughout history to control their subjects, to suppress resistance and to maintain stability. First, the ruler should be respected and reliable. As a result, kings and emperors usually claimed that their power was given by god and was, therefore, not an ordinary, mortal power. Second, submission to authority was part of the propaganda. Roman political propaganda tended to emphasise traditional family values and gender roles as a reflection of the hierarchical character of the empire. These values were spread through the arts, music, literature and trade – even in Roman coinage. Rom 13:1-7 became one of the means for spreading imperial propaganda on authority and 1 Peter 2:13-17 through its application of the household code (1 Pet 2: 11-3:7).

5.2.1. Imperial Propaganda

In the pre-imperialist phase, Aristotle proposed that the ideal regime was where state, the people, the power and democracy went hand in hand.¹⁹

- •Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good. (Pol I. 1252.1-5)
- •We should consider, not only what form of government is best, but also what is possible and what is easily attainable by all. (Pol IV. 1288b 35-37)

¹⁵ Gail Paterson Corrington, "The 'Divine Woman?' Propaganda and the Power of Celibacy in the New Testament Apocrypha: A Reconsideration," *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson (London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1993), 210.

¹⁶ Luke T. Johnson, *The Writings of New Testament: An Interpretation* (SCM-Canterbury Press Ltd, 2003), 27, sees the Roman Empire as a world which helped the extension of Christianity with their easy and safe communication.

¹⁷ Carolyn Osiek and Margarety Macdonald, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 119-120.

¹⁸ Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London: SAGE, 2006), 54-55.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *The Politics and the Constitution of Athens*, Stephen Everson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). 11, 92, 105,

- •There is a true union of oligarchy and democracy when the same state may be termed either a democracy or an oligarchy; those who use both names evidently feel that the fusion is complete. (Pol IV. 1294b 14)
- •In a well attempered (Sic) polity there should appear to be both elements and yet neither; also the government should rely on itself, ... not through the good will of a majority-they might be equally well-disposed when there is a vicious form of government- but through the general willingness of all classes in the state to maintain the constitution. (Pol IV 1294b 38)

However, based on the Roman imperial pyramid power system, the first-century AD philosophers concentrated on the character of the rulers of the empire, instead of its institutions. Nevertheless, there were some tensions and power struggles between the senatorial institution and imperialism. Some Hellenistic and Roman autocrats, senators, and philosophers praised their emperors, while others openly rebuked them; some issued them warnings by restating the negative (or the ideal) abilities and decorum of the previous rulers. Emperors showed respect to the senate and were remembered well, while others (such as, Caligula and Nero) were known as tyrants. They held treason trials, ordered confiscations and purges, and directed illegal acts of violence against the social and political elite who regarded themselves as above such treatment. ²¹ The emperors used every means to take control over the empire.

5.2.1.1. Emperors of Good Character

Imperial propaganda, which legitimised the emperor as being heroic, good, noble, divinely appointed (or even divine in person), was disseminated through literature, coins, and their association with religious affairs. This can be found from the early stages of imperial period in writings (such as, Virgil's *Aeneid*) and in the numerous poems and sayings about the divinity of imperial rule. For example, it was claimed that, "Rome was appointed to rule the

²⁰ Michael Gaddis, *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ, Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (London: University of California Press, 2005), 17.

²¹ Ibid.

world and impose the habit of peace." The Augustan age was believed also to possess a 'messianic' aura.²²

During Nero's period, teachers and followers had claimed that the emperor had been appointed to the throne without any bloodshed. The propaganda claimed that he was an innocent, trustworthy man and a promised god, who would rule in peace, prosperity and liberty and not by the sword.²³ The Roman poet Calpurnius Siculus flattered Nero with his assertions that his reign was a golden, peaceful and prosperous time.²⁴

The emperors also usually claimed that they were establishing a *Pax Romana*: for example, by implementing good communication systems in order to control the Empire effectively in peace and order.²⁵ Augustus sacrificed at the *Ara Pacis* (the altar of a goddess who personified the Augustan concept of civil religion) to secure *peace*. The ultimate vision of the empire at peace, was claimed by Augustus and his dynasty.²⁶ The altar was not just for the worship of '*pax*' but '*pax Augusta*.' ²⁷

Another mode of imperial propaganda was the production of coins which bore an image of the emperor and inscriptions confirming that he was blessed by the gods. Art works also portrayed the gods and the emperor as one: in Corinth, as Apollo Augustus, in Rome as Pax Augustus and in Philippi, as Mercury Augustus. Old temples were renovated and dedicated to the emperor and new temples were built for the imperial family. People came to

²² Everett Ferguson, *Background of Early Christianity* (Third Edition) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 114.

²³ Elliott, "The Letters to the Romans," 204 and "Romans 13:1-7 In the Context of Imperial Propaganda," 184-204.

²⁴ Moyer V. Hubbard, *Christianity in the Greco-Roman World: A Narrative Introduction* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing LLC, 2010), 129-130.

²⁵ Celia B. Sinclair, A Guide Through the New Testament (Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 78-79.

²⁶ Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of church Order* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 36.

²⁷ Ibid., 65.

pay homage at these altars and they also celebrated numerous festivals and birthdays (especially that of Augustus) in honour of the emperor.²⁸

5.2.1.2. Legitimising the Emperors as Gods

It is a matter of dispute whether the imperial cult was created by the emperor or the senate. However, Allen Brent argues that Augustus began to control the ruler cult which then made way for him to be worshipped, not only as a priestly figure, but also as a god.²⁹ According to Everett Ferguson, the senate normally expressed its gratitude, homage and loyalty to its benefactors (or rulers) by honouring them. Although they were not designated as deities, it was believed that such figures possessed godlike qualities and had the powers of the gods.³⁰ Ittai Gradel also suggests that the senate started to honour the dictator as a demigod from the time of Thapsus (46 BC) and then Munda (45BC) as an unconquered god.³¹ It is to be noted that the senate only claimed the divination of Augustus after his death. This was the single highest honour that they could attribute to the great emperor but it did not make him an absolute god. Divinity was relative, but, nevertheless, held an enormous power over worshippers.³² Gradel notes that: "He [the emperor] was decreed state divinity, with a cult name Divus Julius, a state priest (flamen), a state temple, and a sacred couch – pulvinar – for his image." He received all the honour given to the main deities of the Roman state.³³

One possible reason for the promotion of emperor worship was to control the people.

Greek, Eastern people (Egyptians) and Romans were all willing (and predisposed) to honour

²⁸ Hubbard, 129-130.

²⁹ Brent, 32-35.

³⁰ Ferguson, 199.

³¹ Ittai Gradel, Emperor Worship and Roman Religion (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 2002), 54-55.

³² Ibid., 27-32.

³³ Ibid.,54-55.

or pay homage to their ruler (or hero) as god. According to Stephen Moore, centralising emperor worship and the *Dea Roma* (Rome as goddess) was a successful way to impose Roman hegemony over the whole empire. Actually, even though there was no cult of Rome itself, the imperial hierarchy fostered it to glorify the centrality of Rome where the emperor resided. Moore confirms that festivals and religious performances for the emperor became symbols of "the omnipresence and immanence of absolute power in the absent person of the Roman Emperor, whose arms encircled the civilised world by virtue of the *imperium Romanum*."

Emperor worship was first applied to the conquered Greeks whose indigenous gods had a relationship with the city-state (*polis*), both in its political and individual spheres. The colonising Romans sought to replace the Greek gods with the emperor as *soter* (or saviour), primarily within the political context, by claiming him as the one "who secured and protected the peace and prosperity for his subjects." The notion of a human being, who achieves something great, being conferred the attributes of a divine being was an easy transition for those people who understood gods to be the supreme type of human. Greek beliefs did not make any clear distinctions between honour, homage and worship. Great benefactors were treated like gods; for example, when Philip of Macedon defeated Persia, the greatest honour was given and divinisation was deemed the most appropriate. The conquered force in the color of the conduction of the

Second, the concept of the ruler as god holds sway over other Eastern peoples. The Egyptians believed that the Pharaoh was a divine being or the son of a god. Their king was an official deity, a divinity, who was a chosen servant of the gods. As the political order was

³⁴ Stephen D. Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse, Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 103-105.

³⁵ Antonia Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, c. 2002), 15.

³⁶ Ferguson, 200.

divinely ordained, the king could automatically be a mediator between the gods and the people and should, therefore, take the place of the divine. The Seleucid rulers, further east in Asia Minor, were known as the 'sons of Apollo.' 37

Third, emperor worship traces its origins to the worship of Numa Pompilius, the second King of Rome and who had been born on the day of the foundation of the city itself. Coming to power in 715BC, his right to the throne was validated by an augur (sign from the gods) – in this instance, it was granted by Jupiter. This was so successful that it led Numa to cultivate a direct and permanent relationship with the gods. As the lawgiver and the king, he encouraged belief in his divine power or 'genius' ('spirit or life principal')³⁸ that protects the house, the family, and the individual. Later, this became the preferred word for the head of the family (paterfamilias). In the early imperial period, Augustus' genius became a state religion and was connected with the public cult of *lares* (or household gods). Thus, imperialism was religiously legalised. The genius of the senate was portrayed as a mature, bearded man in a toga, while a youthful genius represented the Roman people and private life.³⁹ According to Jonathan Draper, it was through the cults that the emperor became the genius, or numen (literally. 'cloud'), of the house. The emperors participated in every part of the cults' performances with the aim of preserving the Empire in security and prosperity. Draper points out that this is a specifically Roman type of colonization and is different to its more modern forms.40 The cults enabled the emperors to retain power as a permanent and absolute

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 167.

³⁹ Ibid.,171-172.

⁴⁰ Baudouin Decharneus, "Mithra's Cult: An Example of Religious Colonialism in Roman Times?" in *Orality, Literacy, and colonialism in Antiquity*, Semeia Studies; No. 47 ed. Jonathan A. Draper (The Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 102-103.

prerogative. This model permeated society, so that other authority figures, such as the master of the house, shared in it in their private spheres. 41

5.2.2. Submission: a Feature of Propaganda

One of the characteristics of propaganda is that a society is encouraged to value honour (or dishonour), praise (or punishment), and reinforces the concept that a good person avoids crimes. According to Cicero, the two values work hand in hand: "The fear of the penalties ordained by the law as by the sense of shame which nature has given to man in the form of a certain fear of justified censure." While the upper class was ruled by consent, the slaves were ruled by force: "So that those who up to now obeyed us willingly would be held faithful by fear alone (3.41)." During the time of Tiberius, the historian Velleius Paterculus also states that, "justice, equality, and industry, long buried in oblivion, have been restored to the state. ...Rioting in the theatre has been suppressed; all citizens have either been impressed with the wish to do right or have been forced to do so by necessity" (*History of Rome* 2:126).⁴²

5.3. The Texts and the Imperialised

Those who were imperialised/colonised also had legitimated imperial propagandas. In 9BC the proconsul wrote to the Koinon of Asia stating that the goodness happened when Augustus ruled the Empire and even for humankind and he was the saviour who ended war and brought peace (lines 32-37). The combination of 'peace' with the mediator of that peace, is the good news that he brings.⁴³

⁴¹ Gradel, 32-35.

⁴² Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 198.

⁴³ Brent. 68-72.

Such views can also be found in Josephus's *The Jewish War* which refers to the emperor as; being ordained by God, a god, a commander, and a merciful ruler. For Josephus, the Jewish expectation of the Messiah was fulfilled in Roman emperors such as Vespasian and Titus. God was on the side of the Romans. Moreover, resisting Rome was impossible because Rome won all the battles. Josephus also composed the speech for Agrippa II which stated that the Jews in Jerusalem should not resist the Romans.⁴⁴

5.4. The Historical and Political Background to the Formation of the Texts

By placing the texts recommending submission to authority in the setting of ethical teaching (Rom 12:1-15:13) and the household code (1 Peter 2:11-3:7), Christian authors, like their contemporaries, praised the emperors and reminded their readers of the good virtues of their rulers. Some authors produced anti-imperial texts or accused the rulers of persecuting the Christians.⁴⁵ However, the writers of the pro-government texts deliberately included an underlying message about submission to the rulers in order to achieve particular goals. There are some texts of this style to be found in the writings of Paul and the author of 1 Peter.

First, as part of his missionary calling, it is probable that Paul was careful to praise the emperor and to instruct his far-flung communities to submit to authority so that he could visit Rome and preach the gospel to Jews, Romans and Greeks without difficulty.⁴⁶ However, at first he was prevented (Rom 1:13). This was probably because he had met with political

_

⁴⁴ Menahem Stern, "Josephus and the Roman Empire as Reflected in the Jewish War," *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, eds Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 72-77.

⁴⁵ Gaddis, 17.

⁴⁶ Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Romans," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 314.

opposition similar to which he had encountered in Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:18), where the governor prevented him from entering the region.⁴⁷

Second, Paul wrote the text during the first five years of Nero's peaceful rule; when the empire was well governed from Rome and when the later excesses had yet to unfold.

Third, it is probable that Paul wrote as he did in order to safeguard the Roman Christians who were facing anti-Jewish propaganda in Rome.⁴⁸ It is as an apologetic style of writing, similar to that of Philo and Josephus, which favoured the emperor and the authorities. The author of 1 Peter also included 1 Pet 2:13-17, probably, to reduce the suffering of Christians who were persecuted as being members of an illegal sect, or suspect movement.⁴⁹

Another explanation is offered by Michael Gaddis, who suggests that Paul and the author of 1 Peter inserted these pro-imperial texts in order to flatter the powers in Rome while, at the same time, reminding them that they are under the control of God.

5.5. Imperial and Patriarchal Elements in the Texts

The imperial and patriarchal contexts of these writings are indicated by their terminologies and ideologies which have Greek and Roman roots. Terms such as, 'governing power, or institution', 'ruler', 'minister', 'servant' (Rom 13:1-7) together with the terms 'Lord,' 'king', 'governor' (1 Pet 2:13-17) are frequent. First, people are instructed to submit to the rulers (Rom 13:1a, 5, 1 Pet 2:13, 17, Titus 3:1); second, they are instructed not to resist rulers, or they will be punished (Rom 13:2); third, they are instructed that rulers are ordained or given authority by God (Rom 13: 1b, 4). In this way, they are the ministers of God (Rom 13: 4) or

⁴⁷ Karl P. Donfried, "The Imperial cults of Thessalonica and Political Conflict in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard G. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 219.

⁴⁸ Elliott, "Romans 13:1-7 In the Context of Imperial Propaganda," 201.

⁴⁹ Edward G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1964), 55.

servants of God (Rom 13: 6) and are, in fact, sent by God (1 Per 2:14). Such propaganda assured the people that their imperial masters were working in their best interests (Rom 13: 3a, 4 and, that they should respect them and obey their rules (Rom 13:2-3, 5-6, 1 Pet 2: 15-17) which included paying taxes (Rom 13: 6, 7). Nearly all the members of the Senate and government body were men, so the use of male terms was conventional. Generalised phrases such as 'foolish men', 'free men', 'brotherhood' (1 Pet 2:15-16) and 'citizens'— a legal state only applying to men - reflect the invisibility of women within the imperial system of governance.

5.5.1. Authorities, their Laws and Punishments (Rom 13: 1-4)

5.5.1.1. The 'Authorities' in the Graeco-Roman World

Roman 13: 4 states that the authorities have the right to punish those who broke the laws that were promulgated by emperors as constitutions (normally under judicial decision), maintained by governors and praetors and expressed in the edicts of magistrates. On the death of an emperor, his successor could change his laws. A governor had unlimited power over life and death in his province, as imposed by the emperor and senate. Laws were made by precedents and augmented by later juridical decisions. ⁵⁰

5.5.1.2. Taxation (Rom 13: 7)

Paul reminds his readers, as inhabitants of the empire, to pay their taxes. The main tax was levied on agricultural products. In the Augustan period, the direct tax set by the government was collected by the governor and his provincial staff and then delivered to the tax-raisers (in the west, financial masters) or tax collectors (in the east, local wealthy men officially

⁵⁰ Ferguson, 63-66.

contracted to pay taxes to Rome) who collected the indirect taxes. The tax collectors usually collected a higher level of tax than that which was set by law. When Paul discussed the tax system with the Roman readers, the tax was being collected by the western tax-raisers who collected more fairly than the tax-collectors from the east. ⁵¹

It is possible that there might have been resistance to the paying the taxes among his readers as Nero had levied the taxes for the construction of his golden house which had resulted in revolts and anti-taxation plots in a number of places (such as, Gaul, Iceni, Judaea and even in Rome). Paul did not know that tax riots became one of the reasons for Nero's flight.⁵² Nevertheless, Paul's reaffirmation of paying tax can be read as his support of a corrupt emperor (Rom 13: 2).

5.5.2. Citizenship or Freeperson⁵³ (1 Pet 2: 16)

The author of 1 Peter encourages his readers to live as free people who are no longer slaves or foreigners and are recognised as Roman citizens (residents, transients and rural folk), with a social status just below the aristocratic class. Other Greek alliance cities also gained special citizenship status under Roman rule (for example, Alexandria).⁵⁴ Only 5 million out of the 50 million inhabitants of the Roman Empire were free or full citizens. Citizenship, at that time, was not as important in the political sphere as it was during the Greek period because the emperor eliminated election to offices. However, a citizen had certain privileges that were unavailable to non-citizens, such as, eligibility to the armed forces. They were also protected by the Roman government from extreme forms of punishment such as crucifixion and

⁵¹ Ibid.,95-96.

⁵² David F. Burg, "Gaul Revolts," in A World History of Tax Rebellions: an Encyclopaedia of Tax Rebels, Revolts and Riots from Antiquity to the Present, 34.

⁵³ NRSV translates 'freeperson' while other translations (such as, NIV, RSV) translate it as 'freeman.'

⁵⁴ Ferguson, 58.

execution without trial, and could make appeals. Furthermore, they could vote in public elections, attend public performances and were exempted from many taxes (such as, market sales, the sale and manumission of slaves and customs dues). Citizens also gained legal status (or lawful protection) for inheriting property, making legal contracts, the adoption of a child and marriage. In summary, their main obligations were to fight and to pay taxes. Citizenship could be attained only by being the offspring of a Roman citizen or a free man (mostly inhabitants of Italy of Latin heritage) or of foreigners who had served faithfully in the military for several years. It could also be gained by buying citizenship.⁵⁵

It is still disputed whether women were citizens of the Empire. However, since they were not allowed to vote or participate in political activities, they could not be full citizens. Nevertheless, it is evident that Roman women had superior status to Athenians or other colonised people.⁵⁶ Granting citizenship with limitations to men only created more hierarchies and class discriminations against women and slaves.

5.6. The Texts and their Hidden Elements

Having discussed that the writers had certain aims in the writing of these texts, this section examines the ideas in the texts that appear to challenge the emperors' authority. First, the authors present God and Christ as the source of all authority, to whom all submission is rightfully due. Second, they encourage their readers to follow the example of the suffering Christ and do what is right. They also instruct Christians to act as freemen and maintain their customs and identities.

⁵⁵ James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1999), 198-200.

⁵⁶ Moya K. Mason, "Ancient Roman Women: a Look at Their Lives," http://www.moyak.com/papers/roman-women.html (accessed 20 July 2010).

5.6.1. Confronting the Authorities

The confrontation of authorities usually arises among rival groups with the same rank of power and/or wealth. For example, emperors were sometimes accused and confronted by the senate. Among writers of the mid 50s AD, individuals, such as, Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio Cassius, came from the upper class whom Nero had alienated. Their writings contain negative portrayals of the emperor and they openly confronted Nero.⁵⁷

Paul and the author of 1 Peter, both of whom came from a lower class, also confronted the emperors in a subversive critique, portraying God as the one who appoints the holder of authority as his servant and minister (Rom 13: 1, 2, 4, 6) and Christ as the one who sanctions that authority (1 Pet 2:13-14). These texts identify God and Christ as being above the emperors, thereby proposing a new model of rulership. Re-evaluating the whole theology of Paul, Richard Horsley states that, for Paul, Christ was the one who would bring down all the other authorities (1 Cor 15:24). For him, true power was in Christ and, therefore, the foundation of God's kingdom (1 Cor 1: 18-20), which was not the Roman Empire. According to Horsley, Paul's gospel claimed God as the God of history, the builder of an alternative new society in opposition to the imperial dominance.⁵⁸ Paul's gospel also announced that a new political order was to be instigated by the resurrected Jesus. In this way it challenged people to choose for or against the God who gave authority. This is how Paul indirectly confronted the hegemony of the emperor, who considered himself as the greatest person in (and the embodiment of) the Empire.⁵⁹ By using imperial propaganda, Paul reminds emperors that they are appointed by God, under His control and, therefore, subordinate to Him.

⁵⁷ T. L. Carter, "The Irony of Romans 13," *Novum Testamentum* 44, Fasc 3 (2004): 209-228.

⁵⁸ Horsley, "1 Corinthian: A Case Study of Paul's Assembly" in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 246.

⁵⁹ Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of The Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2004), 107-109

5.6.2. Confrontations with Encouragements

The writer of 1 Peter called for submission for the Lord's sake (2:13, 19, 3:14). By following Christ' example of suffering (2:21, 4:1), one would share in the glory, as Christ did (4:13, 5:1). This claim is reflected in Paul's theology (Rom 8: 17-18), where the cross itself becomes an anti-imperial concept. Suffering may seem to be hard, but there is glory in the end. This gives those suffering oppression a future hope.⁶⁰

The Petrine author also encouraged his readers to silence 'the foolish men' by doing the right thing (1 Pet 2: 15). For him, 'doing right' is a willingness to do what is good, not fearing intimidation and, if necessary, suffering for the righteous and defending everyone in need. It is through these actions of the oppressed that the oppressors will be put to shame and forced into silence (1 Pet 3:13-17). This is a statement of resistance and would appear to contradict the statements on submission to authority. Both authors called for their readers not to fear (Rom 13: 3 and 1 Pet 3:14) as they are doing right.

In 1 Pet 2:16, the writer states that the individual should act as a free person. This is another contradiction of the exhortation to submission. Moreover, he asserts that it is the responsibility of the free person to reveal the truth. This is the calling of resistance. He then reminds his readers that they are not the slaves of rulers, but the slaves of God.

The author of 1 Peter confronted the emperor from a different perspective. He argued that the priority of his readers should be to love their fellow Christians and to act like freepersons (1 Pet 2:17), whereas Paul urged the people to fit into the Roman order (Rom 13:7). Paul appears to leave everything in God's hands when he states that the readers should

⁶⁰ Neil Elliot, "The Anti-Imperial message of the Cross," in *Paul and Empire*, ed. Richard A. Horsley, 180-183.

live in peace with one another, do what is right, and repay evil with good, as revenge belongs to God (Romans 12: 9-21). Even submission to the rulers, for Paul, equates to submission to God (who controls the rulers). However, the author of 1 Peter is more concerned for people, because he suggests that the responses and activities of his readers will make a difference. He also perceives his readers as being responsible people.

5.6.3. Confrontation with Christianisation

Christianisation is one of the methods for confronting imperialism. Statements, such as 'authority appointed by God' (Rom 13: 1,2) and 'for the Lord's sake' (1 Pet 2: 13), were aimed at Christianising the Roman government by the integration of authority under the controlling sovereignty of God and Christ. They are the servants (διάκονός,) ανδ the 'ministers (λειτουργοι. of God' (Rom 13: 4) and they are sanctioned by God (1 Pet 2:14). These statements equate rulers with the apostles and the religious leaders of their time. The Greek term διάκονός (broadly used by Christians to mean 'minister'), is used by Paul in such contexts as; 'a minister of a covenant' (2 Cor 3: 6), Jesus as 'minister of circumcision' (Rom 15: 8) and a woman, Lydia, as a 'minister,' (Rom 16:1). The term λειτουργοι was also used by Paul to refer to ministers who brings the gospel to other nations (Rom 15:16) and who help the needy (Phil 2: 25). The 'freemen' (those with the citizenship of the Roman Empire) are also Christianised into a new freedom which is granted to the believers by Christ.

5.7. The Silent Elements in the Texts

5.7.1. The Silent Voices of the People

Although these texts were addressed to readers in the Roman colonies and Asian minor, they stand as the authors' commands rather than their exposition. They do not appear to contain (or

even reflect) the voices of the general population. In other words, the sufferings of the people seem to be neglected in Rom 8:34-36 and 1 Pet 3:13-4:19. Rather than encouraging resistance, both writers demand that people should submit to authority because God (or Christ) appoints those who rule. Paul reminds his readers that the rulers have the right to punish them if they do wrong. Even the author of 1 Peter encourages Christians to suffer for their faith by following Christ's example. There is a contradiction in the authors' encouragement of Christian passivity while acknowledging rulers as being powerful and sanctioned by God. They draw a line dividing those who rule, (strong and high figures) from those who are the ruled (low and weak figures). There is no opportunity for the colonised (those who are ruled) to speak out and express their feelings about their subjugation, but, instead, they flatter those in authority over them.

5.7.2. The Least Recognition of Women in the Texts

Even though one can assume that the authors wrote to both male and female Christians, women are the least recognised as addressees. As discussed previously, the power structure of the Graeco-Roman world was male-dominated, except for rare cases where woman had political leadership. Some of these rare exceptions include the Egyptian queen Cleopatra, and a few notable women from Roman aristocratic families who fought for the right of possession against the *Lex Oppia* (the law forbidding women's possession, made in 215 BC). In the mid first century BC, ⁶¹ Cornelia (a writer, matron and the mother of Tiberius and Gaius) trained her sons how to rule justly (Nepos fr. 1:1-2) and was, accordingly, praised in Cicero's words that her sons were nourished more by her conversation than by her breast (Brut. 104,114). ⁶² Another Roman matron, Laelia, knew the law accurately and passed her education on to her

⁶¹ Richard A. Bauman, Women and Politics and Ancient Rome (London: Routledge, 1992), 31-32.

⁶² Ibid., 42-43.

two daughters (Brut. 101).⁶³ However, in general, women's writings, journals or diaries from this period are scarce. Consequently, knowledge of these women and their political roles can only be gained through the viewpoint of their male contemporaries. This means that it is almost impossible to know what women thought about wars, political authorities, slavery, laws, education, citizenship and taxation, apart from these brief instances.

The lives of a handful of women from aristocratic families cannot represent the whole range of female experience in the empire. The Roman woman's position was remote from that of colonised women, who lived without full citizenship and who could not vote. Generally, women participated in politics indirectly by agreeing to politically useful or economically advantageous arranged marriages. By giving birth, they could raise good sons for the state or empire and ensure that they educated their children to preserve their culture. They could also support their sons and husbands in their political careers by managing their households.64

5.8. Conclusion

The pro-government texts that came from the Graeco-Roman world reflect how the hegemony of the emperors (as rulers and gods) was promoted through politics, religion and customs. Rome replaced the, albeit, limited democratic Hellenistic state for a more restrictive hierarchy, where women and slaves formed the unseen foundation of the pyramid. The texts discussed in this chapter run parallel to imperial writings that praised imperial authority or which, indirectly, informed that authority about how to rule justly. Therefore imperialistic and/or patriarchal terms are prevalent. The texts are also similar to those written by colonised/imperialised authors which reveal an apologetic tendency. They are written in order

⁶³ Ibid., 45.47.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2. and Mason, "Ancient Roman Women: A Look at their Lives."

to demonstrate loyalty to the state and, at the same time, safeguard Christian communities from any charges of disloyalty or disobedience to the imperial state. Nevertheless, they also challenge the government by Christianising the rhetoric of imperialism and, by indirectly, asserting that God is greater than any human authority. While the writers confronted imperialism and supported Christian values, they also imposed their teachings, rather than responding to what their readers needed and felt. The texts reflect the political constitutions and the legacies of authorities which, in one way, seems to remind the authorities how they should rule the people. As only women from elite groups and aristocratic families played any part in politics and, thereby, leaving a trace of their activities, the presence of women from other classes is absent from public or private documents. Thus, it is inevitable that the progovernment texts (discussed here) are legitimised as they were for the eyes of emperors, the ruling elite, and for male readers in general. For them, women's participation would only undermine social and civic stability leading to chaos.

CHAPTER 6 INTERPRETATIONS ON ROM 13:1-7 AND 1 PET 2:13-17: THE COLONIAL PERIOD AND ITS AFTERMATH

6.1. Introduction

Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2: 13-17 has been the norm for political interpretations or theoretical or political ethics from Martin Luther to many mainstream versions of Reformation Christianity.¹ For Martin Luther,² the texts are about how Christians should subject themselves to the government which is ordained by God. Obeying it is better than obeying the OT Laws as they are free from them through faith.³ Luther's interpretation is similar to that of Augustine⁴ who also claims that Christians should submit to authority while living on this earth even though they have liberty as Christians. They should endure and love authority for the sake of social order and submit even though it results in the material loss or even persecution.⁵ Regardless of their political struggles, they have reinforced the authority of the texts.

After examining the texts and their backgrounds; and the authors and their ideas, this chapter is concerned with examining, decolonising and decoding three different interpretations of the period between colonisation and aftermath: first the traditional or

¹ Martin E. Marty, "Reformation Christianity," in *God's Rule: the Politic of World Religions*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Contributor William Scott Green (Georgetown University Press, 2003), 116.

²Martin Luther was charged as heretic by the emperor Charles V because of his works against the Roman Catholic's doctrines. He was involved in the Peasants war (1524-1526) but lost support as he upheld the right of authority to suppress the revolts. "Martin Luther (1483-1546)," BBC History, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/luther_martin.shtml (accessed 25 March 2011).

³ Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. J. Theodore Mueller, (London: Oliphants, LTD, 1954), 163-168.

⁴ Augustine of Hippo (534-430AD) was a Roman citizen who believed that the government was ordained by God and servants of God. Through government Christianity will spread and be safeguarded. However if there is a conflict between obeying God or government, one must choose to to obey God and accept the punishment from the State. His work on The City of God reflects his view on the Politics. "Augustine's Political and Social Philosophy," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, http://www.iep.utm.edu/aug-poso/ (accessed on 25 March 2011).

⁵ Paula Fredriksen Landes (Trans), *Augustine on Romans, Prepositions from the Romans Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans,* Texts and Translations 23, Early Christian Literature 6, Society of Biblical Literature (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982), 41,43.

Western white male and female; second, the Asian; and third, Myanmar Christians and scholars. It will scrutinise whether interpreters have legitimitated authority or challenged it. Moreover, this chapter seeks to discover whether such interpreters have been aware of imperialism, colonialism, patriarchal or gender issues in their interpretations of Rom 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2: 13-17. This chapter examines how these interpreters deal with the texts within their contemporary political situations.

6.2. Western White Male and Female Interpretations of the Texts

6.2.1. White Males' Interpretations

Some western male commentators and theologians experienced both the colonial golden age of mission to the colonized countries and also the fall of colonialism. Their general view was that the emperors came from God or were given authority by God and their existence was essential for the order of the state. Like the colonizers, they saw the people as problem-makers: uncivilized, chaotic, rebellious or naïve people who did not know what the order of the state was, how to fit into it, and did not follow the laws of the state (as for instance the Jews who did not want to pay taxes). These people needed the gospel and to be controlled in an ordered world. Most western male interpreters adhere to this hegemonic code; that government is ordained by God and brings order and peace; and whether consciously or otherwise, they remake the laws of Christian ethics named as the professional code which asks people to be submissive to authority and to be good citizens as part of their religious obligation.

6.2.1.1. Legitimating the Government or the Colonialism

6.2.1.1.1. The Interpretations of the Colonisers

During the colonial period, the British colonizers or preachers perceived the people of India as problematic and uncivilized. When there were riots against the colonists, British churchmen preached against the protesters using Rom 13:4, and encouraged the British colonizers to punish rebellious elements among the colonized peoples. These sermons usually described Indians as barbarians and pagans, with institutions such as 'widow burning and child drowning and other matters...'

6. 2.1.1.2. The Interpretations after the End of the Colonial Period (1950s)

These interpretations mainly reinforced the colonial authorities and demanded strong attachment and loyalty between colonial and colonised churches. Basing his thoughts on 1 Pet 2:14, Max Warren⁷ supported the government institutions of the colonies as essential, because the practice of justice, peace, love and power were their duties. Even though he was familiar with the flaws of colonialism in Africa and Asia, he still held the view that this form of government was suitable for people who lived in chaotic situations and who needed the gospel.⁸ Karl Barth, confirmed that the government was essential to keep order and to lay down the duties for people who lacked responsibilities. Moreover, for him, the state and the

⁶ R.S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4-5, 67-82.

⁷ "Diaries of Dr. Max Warren," Mundus, Gateway to Missionary collections in the United Kingdom, http://www.mundus.ac.uk/cats/44/1190.htm (accessed 16 July 2010). He is an evangelical missionary, statesman, priest, traveller in Asia and Africa, and a writer of books on Christian mission.

⁸ Max Alexander Cunningham Warren, *Caesar the Beloved Enemy: Three Studies in the Relation of Church and State:* Reinecker Lectures at the Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia February 1955 (London: SCM Press, 1955), 28, 48.

church were equal under Christ's reign. His legitimization of the authority of the state had indirect or direct influence on Christians in the colonized countries.

Some of the commentators understood these texts as ethical teaching with the goal of creating good citizens. For them, Christians should obey their rulers. For example, for C.H. Dodd, 10 'It is a part of natural moral order' and '...it serves moral ends, he must submit to it.' 11 For C. K. Barrett, 12 "it [the text] has been prepared for by the exhortations to humility, to live an honest life in the eyes of the world, to live at peace...." This authority is the gift of God who protects the people from wrongdoings. "In order to protect his creatures from the consequences of unbridled sin he provided them with civil rulers just as he provides them with sun and rain."

Unlike these interpreters, theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) who was executed by the Nazi regime, interpreted Rom 13:1-7 as for Christians rather than their governments. It should not use the text to justify itself. Christians should repent and obey, should not fear the government, should behave appropriately and receive praise from the good State, if there is one. For him, disciples should obey God rather than obeying and seeking praise from the State.¹⁴

⁹ Karl Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1959), 157-160.

¹⁰ C H Dodd was a famous British theologian in the 20th century especially in his realized Christology. As seen in his book, *The Authority of the Bible* (1928), he proposed that the crucifixion was an historical event which reshaped not only the western world but also other cultures, thus making Christianity unique as a world religion.

¹¹ C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1959), 211-12.

¹² He is a New Testament scholar, whose work has led to the renown of the Department of Theology. He is a Methodist but greatly influenced by Anglican and Roman Catholic thought. "C K Barrett turns 90," Posted by Ben under Durham, *Paul and His Interpreters*, University of Durham. http://dunelm.wordpress.com/2007/05/10/ck-barrett-turns-90/ (accessed16 July 2010).

¹³ C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle of the Romans* (second edition), (London: A & C Black, 1991), 223-229.

¹⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Dischipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller, rev.ed. (London: SCM, 1959), 236.

6.2.1.2. Mission and Moral Oriented Interpretations from 1960s and 70s

Ernest Best¹⁵ suggested that the social situation might be accepted as it was with "(i) the belief that civil authority was God's creation; (ii) the belief that the end of all things was at hand (4:7)." For him Christians needed the texts as their moral guideline to preserve the stability and status quo in society before the second coming of Jesus. Moreover in order to spread the gospel without any hindrance, Paul wrote Rom 13:1-7 by praising the authorities.¹⁶ However he did not realize that his universal claim of submission to authority would be abused by rulers. William Barclay¹⁷ agreed that Paul supported imperial authority because it was building *Pax Romana*, which was advantageous for the spread of the Christian gospel and mission. The government was seen as doing the work of God.¹⁸ Here he seems to support both imperialism and colonialism as gaining advantage in mission.

6.2.1.3. Text and Author Oriented Interpretations from 1980s and 90s

These interpreters underscore the authors and their contexts in the writing of the texts from different perspectives. For Graham Shaw on the other hand, it was an act of social consciousness for Paul, who did not want to arouse suspicions and be accused of causing social discontent. Thus, he called for submission to the rulers and for conformity while

¹⁵ New Testament scholar and Chair of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of Glasgow from 1974 to 1982. "Biography of Ernest Best," The University of Glasgow Story. http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH2236&type=P, (accessed 16 July 2010).

¹⁶ Ernest Best, "1 Peter," New Century Bible Commentary (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd, 1971), 112-113, 148-150.

¹⁷ William Barclay was a minister of Church of Scotland and a professor of the University of Glasgow dedicated his interpretations to be understood by lay readers.

¹⁸ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, The Daily Study Bible (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975), 174.

waiting for the coming of a legitimised Christendom. For Shaw, Paul used his authority bluntly, in a manipulative and even 'vindictive' manner.¹⁹

For Joseph A. Fitzmyer, the Christians of Paul's time might have been hostile to their rulers in thinking they were freed from them, as they were now citizens of God. Thus Paul called Christians to submit to the authority of the state: "...freedom is neither license nor a right to civil anarchy. The reason is that civil authority itself comes from God, whom Christians are called to reverence and respect." Agreeing with Barth, M. Eugene Boring states that as God was the God of order (1 Pet 4: 19), subordination is essential and rebellion and resistance means a refusal to be fitted into an ordered society. These interpretations sustain the legitimacy of the state and its hegemony without realizing the illegitimate aspects in the state's subjugation of the people.

6.2.1.4. Interpretations with an Ironic Approach

Some interpreters such as T. L. Carter and N. T. Wright²³ have suggested that these texts meant the opposite of what they stated or were written to convey an opposite meaning. Therefore, when Paul says to submit to the authority, it actually means not to submit to them, by using an ironic rhetorical method that mocks opponents by saying good things about them that are clearly counter to their characters. Ironic writing was widely employed in the later

¹⁹ Graham Shaw, *The Cost of Authority* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 173-174.

²⁰ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Romans," *The Anchor Bible*, Vol 33 (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), 663. He is a priest and a New Testament scholar, and co-editor of the *Jerome Biblical Commentary*.

²¹ He is the author of the People's Commentary which is based on the fundamentalist view that New Testament is the book of the people.

²² M. Eugene Boring, *I Peter*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 108.

²³ He is Anglican theologian, Bishop of Durham, and also New Testament scholar. His main interests are the historical Jesus and a new perspective on Paul. Sarah Pulliam Bailey, N T Wright Retiring as Bishop. Sarah Pulliam Bailey, "N.T Wright Retiring as Bishop," Christianity Today, April 27, 2010. http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2010/04/n t wright to r.html. accessed 17 July 2010.

part of the first century AD, so the intended audience would be familiar with 'praising as blaming' when they heard it. Thus, for T. L. Carter, Rom 13:1-7 is the only text which favours the emperor but subverts the oppressive authority structure of the empire. Paul's letter would be read by the authorities, who would receive it as a praising text, while the readers of his time understood the contrary. But a traditional Christian reading takes such writings as part of the 'compendium of Christian doctrine', its surface conveying the true meaning.²⁴ For N. T. Wright, Romans 13: 1-7 has the background of emperor worship. Everyone was required to worship the emperor as he was lord. To counteract that worship and to make it rhetorical persuasion to the audience, Paul avows that God is the only supreme God and the emperors derive their authority only from that divine source.²⁵

6.2.2. White Western Feminist Interpretations

Some female interpreters have avoided or completely neglected to interpret Rom 13: 1-7 or 1 Pet 2: 13-17. Therefore, it is difficult to find individual articles by women scholars, treating such texts about submission to the State. Interestingly, the Woman's Bible does not include them. Therefore my main discussion will come from the *Women's Bible Commentary* and a feminist commentary. Unlike the above western male writers, feminist commentators have paid much more attention to the gendered and patriarchal systems in their interpretations of these biblical texts.

²⁴ T. L. Carter, "The Irony of Romans 13," *Novum Testamentum* 44, Fasc 3 (2004): 209-228.

²⁵ N.T. Wright, "Paul and Caesar: a New Reading of Romans," *A Royal Priesthood: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically*, ed. C. Bartholomew (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 173-193.

6.2.2.1. Women's Bible Commentary's Interpretations

The Women's Bible Commentary was created as a companion volume to the Women's Bible. The volumes are concurrent and quite similar in interpretations but have a different emphasis, with the latter focusing on Christian women's behaviour in, and the operations of, early Christian churches. The Women's Bible Commentary (1998), gives no direct comments on the texts in question. Beverly Roberts Gaventa²⁶ states summarily that Rom 13:1-7 is an ethical teaching, and does not relate it to ideas of imperial power. She tries only to give Paul's aim of writing the letter to reconcile the conflicts between Jews and Gentiles.²⁷ On Claudius' expulsion, Jews left Rome and Gentiles became the dominant body in the Church of Rome. But when Jews came back to Rome after the death of Claudius, conflict arose concerning leadership between Jews and Gentiles in the church. She does not relate it to the issue of submission to authority. However, she compares the suffering of the people with the experience of a mother who is giving birth (Rom 8:18-25). It is a painful transition, to enter a 'new age.'²⁸

Sharyn Dowd²⁹ also omits discussion of 1 Pet 2: 13-17 in her work on 1 Peter, even though she mentions that Christians suffered from social rejection once as strangers, aliens or pagans. When women and slaves became Christians, they worshipped different gods from those of their husbands and masters. This inevitably caused conflicts and instability in society

²⁶ She is a Priceton Theological Seminary's Helen H. P. Manson Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis, specialises in the Puline studies and Luke-Acts. "Berverly Roberts Gaventa," Princeton Theological Seminiary, available from http://www3.ptsem.edu/Content.aspx?id=1928 (accessed 12 April, 2010).

²⁷ Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Romans" in *Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 313-320, states that one of Paul's aims in writing to the Romans was to reconcile the conflict between Jews and Gentiles in the church of Rome.

²⁸ Ibid., 313-320.

²⁹ Sharyn Dowd is an Associate Professor of Religion in Baylor University was a stff of First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC and taught New Testament and Greek at Lexington Theological seminary from 1987-1999. She is now active in the Society of Biblical Literature, Baptist Women in Ministry and the National Associatio of Baptist Professors of Religions, "Sharyn E. Dowd," Baylon University, Resouces for Media. available from http://www.baylor.edu/pr/guide_source.php?source_id=9 (accessed 23 March 2011).

(2:18-3:7). To conform to society and to maintain their Christian identity, the author of 1 Peter calls for female and slave submission to the authority of husbands and masters. ³⁰ She avoids discussion of the political or imperial problems which also have great impact on discrimination against women. Even though these two women scholars are aware of some political problems, they emphasise the social contexts of racial and female issues.

6.2.2.2. A Feminist Commentary's Interpretations

Unlike Dowd's approach, Elizabeth A. Castelli includes Rom 13:1-7 in her interpretation on the letter of Romans. She defines the state as the 'dominant social order'. Unlike some male interpreters, first she sees Paul as one who never rejected the dominant social order, nor encouraged anyone else to resist it. Rather, he made an extraordinary claim that the people should submit to the state. She also notes that Paul uses religious and Hellenistic administrative words such as *diakonos* (servant); *leitourgos* (servant, minister); *aekdikos* (avenger); *hypotassestho* (submit [to authority], 13:1), *antitassomenos* (resist, 13:2), and *hypotassesthai* (subjection, 13:5) in discussing relations between the authorities and the ruled. These terms are the opposite of equality of gender and class, where one finds the term *hypakouein* which means 'free obedience.' Her discussion highlights how the author uses terms reflecting hegemony to make people submit.

Like Dowd, Kathleen E. Corley, does not include discussion on 1 Pet 2: 13-17 or related political or imperial problems. She only comments that the conversion of slaves and women led to social instability among Christians and their neighbours. For her, 1 Peter, unfavourably

³⁰ Sharyn Dowd, "1 Peter," *Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 370-372.

³¹ Elizabeth A. Castelli, "Romans," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, Vol. 2. ed. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York: SCM Press, 1994), 295-296.

asks the slaves and the women to endure their unjust suffering by following the example of Christ.³²

6.2.2.3. Textual Interpretations

Based on a textual analysis, Winsome Munro has suggested that these political texts (Rom 13:1-7, 1 Pet 2: 13 and Titus 3:1) are independent and not related to previous or later church readings. Probably they are interpolations from church fathers or later writers of the second century AD, rather than from the hands of the apostles.³³ These reflect the time when the biblical scholars were engaged with the problems inside the Bible and their contemporary issues of canonization.

6.3. The Authority, the Texts and Asian Christians' Interpretations

Apart from Japan and Thailand, all the other Asian countries were colonized by North America, Europe, and Japan and left in a chaotic state when the colonisers departed. After independence, the situation in these countries appeared to have changed but actually remained the same. Even though Asia was free from colonialism, imperialism as a form of neocolonialism (or an indirect version of colonialism) still operates in the region.³⁴ Asian countries have been ruled mostly by military, authoritarian regimes. South Korea defeated its military regime in 1962, Indonesia in 1969 with widespread massacre. In Pakistan, a military regime took over the government, ending a period of failing democracy in Pakistan. Thailand

³² Katheleen E. Corley, "1 Peter," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, vol. 2. ed. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York: SCM Press, 1994), 349-350.

³³ Winsome Munro, *Authority in Paul and Peter: The Identification of a Pastoral stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 40.

³⁴ K. Matthew Kurian, "Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity: Towards a Relevant Theology" in *Papers from the Asian Theological Conference*, January 7-20, 1979, Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka, ed. Virginia Fabella, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980), 63.

has endured military regimes in 1972 and 1976.³⁵ Taiwan has been ruled by a harsh military regime for twenty-five years. Singapore's ruler, Lee Kuan Yew had violated all norms of freedom and democracy. The longstanding President of the Philippines, F.E.E. Marcos (1965-1986) was a notoriously authoritarian political leader.³⁶

The commentator C. S. Song³⁷ has said:

The Joy of Liberation from the old colonial powers seems short-lived. People in the Third World, especially the poor and powerless masses, have found themselves again in the bondage of poverty and oppression.³⁸

In this situation, Asian women have been not only victims of colonialism (Japanese women in Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Korean women under Japanese colonization)³⁹ but also of neocolonialism with its political and economic changes. Unavoidably they are still suffering under a patriarchal social and political system.⁴⁰ Rose Wu has said,

[However], independence for nations has not translated into political independence for women who are relegated to the margins of a patriarchal political system in which the purpose of power is to dominate others for economic wealth and social status.⁴¹

In this overall situation, have Asian interpretations on Rom 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2:13-17, led to resistance or been used to reinforce the authority of the state?

6.3.1. Asian Male Interpretations

During the period of Japanese colonial expansion, two Samurai, educated elite Christian scholars Ebina Danjo (1859-1937) and Uchimura Kanzo (1861-1930) had interpreted Rom 13

³⁶ Ibid., 71.

³⁵ Ibid., 70.

³⁷ The Taiwanese liberation theologian.

³⁸ Choan-Seng Song, *Third-Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian Settings* (New York: Orbis Books, 1975), 159.

³⁹ Malini Devananda, "Power, Choice and Sexuality: Violence Against Women and Children," *In God's Image* 17, no. 3 (1998): 7-9.

⁴⁰ Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2000), 13.

⁴¹ Rose Wu, "Asian Women as the Subject of God's Vision" *In God's Image* 16, no. 2 (1997): 27-31.

from both imperialistic and nationalistic theological perspectives. ⁴² As Samurai patriots, they accepted their emperors as fathers and as ordained by divine right (Rom 13:1-7). ⁴³ However, while Kanzo did not support colonial expansion into Korea or other countries, ⁴⁴ Danjo encouraged it. To support his position, Danjo quoted Rom 13:1-7, to show that the establishment of Japanese empire and submission to the emperors were both God's will. Those who fought against the government were thus fighting against God's will. ⁴⁵ For Danjo, the rationale for war was to fight with and for Christ for the expansion of the kingdom of God (Mt 10:35). So Danjo called for Korean people obey the New Testament teaching to 'love your enemy', which he interpreted as no longer resisting the Japanese and to cooperate with these new rulers. ⁴⁶

Another example may be drawn from Chinese political interpretation of such texts. Following the imperial era, China⁴⁷ has been ruled by the communist regime since 1945. At that time the regime gave some degree of freedom to external religions but at the same time tried a measure of control. Thus it was stated that there should be no activity outside the registered church. Christians who wanted to spread the Christian gospel were thus explicitly forbidden to do so.

The 'Three-self' churches (or the Three-self patriotic movement) as in the registered church at that time interpreted Rom 13:1-7 as a means to 'establish a theology adapted to

⁴² Japan colonised Korea, China, Myanmar and other countries.

⁴³ Kanzo Uchimura, "Shusenronsha ni yotte Inyo seraruru Kirisuto no Kotoba"[The Words of Christ Cited by Warmongers] in *Seisho no Kenkyu* 51 (1904) in *Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu* 12. Toshiro Suzuki et al., eds. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981), 140-149.

⁴⁴ Kanzo Uchimura, "Heiwa no Fukuin" [The Gospel of Peace] in *Seisho no Kenkyu* 44 (1903) in *Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu* 11. Toshiro Suzuki et al., eds. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981) 404-409.

⁴⁵ Danjo Ebina, "Romasho" [Romans] in Shinjin 6.5 (1905): 33.

⁴⁶ Danjo Ebina, *Kokumin Dotoku to Kirisutokyo* [*National Morality and Christianity*] (Tokyo: Hokubunkan, 1912) 146.

⁴⁷ China has a similar political regime to Myanmar and has a major influence on Myanmar politics.

socialism.' This was a direct call to Christians to submit to socialism. However, the house churches or 'Little Flock' church under the leadership of Watchman Nee⁴⁸ did not accept the Three-self's view, but took up Peter's words, 'We must obey God rather than men' (Acts 5: 29). For them, spreading the gospel is to obey God rather than to obey men (the government) and to stay inside the churches. Therefore they disobeyed the government by living outside the churches.⁴⁹ This is their resistance against both the main church and the authority. Later Watchman Nee changed his mind to cooperate with the Communists. This was to help "the Communist government rebuilds the war-torn and poverty-stricken country." In the spirit of Rom 13:1-7, Watchman Nee taught that Christians should give up material comforts and live as devoted Christians and good Chinese citizens. In exchange for cooperation in rebuilding the country, Little Flock has demanded freedom to preach, baptize and proselytize.⁵⁰ In this instance, Little Flock seems to reinforce the texts (Rom 13:1-7) as a Christian ethic but he still challenges the authority of the state by demanding Christian rights.⁵¹ In this case the church has autonomously chosen to obey or to resist the state by using those biblical texts which validate their views.

Song developed 'the politics of resurrection:' he was motivated by the situation in the Asian churches, suffering first from the colonial oppression and then from their own national authoritarian rulers, (e.g., the Korean struggle for the liberation first from Japan, and the

⁴⁸ Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Watchman Nee and the Little Flock Movement in Maoist China," [Article on line] available from http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=4056, (accessed 12 January 2008). For further information about Little Flock and its leader Watchman Nee, see this article.

⁴⁹ James E. Wood, Jr. "Religion, Revolution, and Nationalism in Asia" (Editorial), HeinOnline 14 J. Church & St. 17 1972. 5- 17. [Journal on line] available from Libaries, Law Jounal Library. http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/jchs14&id=1&size=2&collection=journals&index=journals/jchs (accessed 12 January 2010).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Watchman Nee, *Authority and Submission* (Anaheim, Living Stream Ministry, 1998), 57.

North Korean communists struggle with their own authoritarian ruler in 1972).⁵² For Song, there is hope for people in the resurrection of Christ. Song rereads Rom 13:1-7 in two parts: first from the perspective of the ruled and second, from that of the rulers. The ruled should not refuse to participate in governments,⁵³ yet should use disobedience if it is necessary. For him, this is also a way to defeat evil with good (Rom 12: 23; Karl Barth's interpretation).⁵⁴ Second, for rulers, he says,

The politics of God is therefore not only a politics that liberates an oppressed people from oppression and injustice but also liberates the oppressors from the false pretences and acts of violence with which they strengthen their rule ([see]Paul and Agrippa incident in Acts 26). ⁵⁵

Power should be used for the good of others.⁵⁶ Asian male church leaders, theologians and colonialists have placed a different emphasis on their interpretations. They are either 'pro or against', or 'both pro and against' the State, and try to maintain their own authority in their societies. Nevertheless they have not promoted any changes in gender roles in relationship to the state

6.3.2. Asian Women's Interpretations

In Asia, politics are considered as 'a power oriented enterprise' and only suitable for 'rational' men rather than 'emotional' women. This is the inheritance of patriarchy.⁵⁷ Although Asian women have participated notably in freedom struggles, their interpretations

⁵² Song, Third-Eye Theology: theology in Formation in Asian Settings, 180-183.

⁵³ Ibid., 211.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 212.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 218, 254-256.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 225.

⁵⁷ Wu, 27-31.

of the texts considered here are rare.⁵⁸ However, they have interpreted other New Testament texts as a way to challenge the authority of their rulers. For example, Korean feminist theologian Lee Oo Chung argued prophetically against the South Korean government. She stated that even though the government claimed to have brought benefits to the country in terms of health, prosperity and security, there was no true peace, for by their abuse of peace, the government oppressed the people. True peace should be only like Mic 4:3. Prophetically, Lee Oo Chung also discussed Eph 2:14-18 in the context of working for reconciliation between North and South Korea.⁵⁹

As a postcolonial feminist, Kwok Pui-lan has argued that although Paul resisted imperialism in Rom 13:1-7, he did not challenge gender and sexual roles. She comments that Asian women see how males play the leading role in politics or other power struggles without appreciating or recognizing women's suffering or struggles with state oppression. ⁶⁰

6.4. Myanmar Christians and The Texts

How colonial missionaries and Myanmar Christian leaders have interpreted the texts on 'submission to authority' are of great concern in postcolonial feminist critiques.

6.4.1. Missionary Translation and Interpretation

In his work, Judson translated the word 'authority' as *ar na set*, which has a negative connotation of power. He translated the word 'the superior authority' as *min* or king who

⁶⁰ Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 91.

⁵⁸ Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*, 49, has called for the promotion of women scholars in religious studies, hitherto uncommon. The writer is still collecting the interpretations of women on those texts from different Asian countries.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 56-57.

ruled Burma at that time.⁶¹ His interpretations were later used as theoretical support for neo-imperialism, and the current regime of Myanmar that exercises sole authority in the style of an absolute monarch.

Unlike his contemporary colonial western commentators, Paul D. Clasper⁶² interpreted Rom 13:1-7 differently. He had a great understanding of how Asian Christians had difficulty living in a non-Christian world, as in Paul's time.⁶³ Clasper sees Paul as being inconsistent in many cases. He promoted certain values but lived by others at the same time.⁶⁴ He taught people to submit to authority and to be good citizens (Rom 13:1-7)⁶⁵ so that Christians could avoid charges of disloyalty to the state. On the other hand he preached against earthly assertions of authority because for Paul, Christ was the ultimate authority, not the state (Acts 17:6,7).⁶⁶ Clasper suggests that "Paul is not a ready answer for all our questions, but an example of the way to face our questions and to think them through in the light of the new life in Christ and the circumstances of the times."⁶⁷ Clasper's views have challenged Myanmar Christians to re-examine their interpretations of the key texts.

6.4.2. Myanmar Male Christian Interpretations

After independence and during the Parliament government, briefly, there were freedom of speech and publication in Myanmar. Some Christians' views on the government and their

⁶¹ That time ranged from Bodawpayar (1782-1819), King Bagyidaw (1819-1837) and King Tharawadi (1837-1846) and to King Pagin 1846-1852. "Kings of Burma," Burma, http://asiarecipe.com/burmaking.html (accessed 7 January 2010).

⁶² Paul D. Clasper was a vice President of Myanamr Institute of Theology in 1952.

⁶³ Paul D. Clasper, *New Life in Christ: A Study of Paul's Theology for To-Day*, World Christian Books, No. 39, Second Series (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 45-46.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 54.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 55.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 57.

policy can be seen in Christian magazines which argued against communist ideology on the grounds that equality of class or race, for example, are worthy ideals, but that in practice no such policies were promoted. The communist idea of building a new world on earth is radically opposed to Christian belief. Communism claims to bring salvation, but its only objective is freedom from the economic crisis. Thus the Christian way is incompatible with Communism.⁶⁸ Rev. U Boe Tun has also argued that because of wars and colonization, Myanmar had no peace. Moreover, Myanmar may have gained its independence, but it is still in the bondage of immorality. Prime Minister U Nu⁶⁹ asked people to fight a spiritual war with Buddhism's five precepts, and Rev. Boe Tin also asked Christians to fight as Jesus did, with non-violence and forgiveness for bringing the true freedom to Myanmar.⁷⁰ These articles show that fighting against a bad government is a religious responsibility.

On Independence Day, a prayer service was held by Christians as part of the celebrations, in Bandula Park on 4 January 1952. It was attended by pastors, soldiers and Christians.⁷¹ In that service, U Pe Maung Tin, the Christian leader led the people in prayers for the country and made the Oath as follows:

- •We will not let our nation's name be stained because of our injustice, unrighteousness and cowardice
- •We will respect and obey our leaders.
- •We will aim for the growth of our country through justice, peace and brotherhood.
- •We will try our best to develop our nation.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, *Myanmar Taman*, 15 April 1950. 3-4.

⁶⁹ U Nu was a nationalist, political figuer and the first prime minister of independent Union of Burma from 4 January 1948 to 12 June 1956, 28 Feb 1957-28 Oct 1958 and 4 April 1960-2 March 1962.

⁷⁰ U Boe Tun, "Independence of Burma," *Myanmar Taman*, 15 May 1952.

⁷¹ U Pe Maugh Tin, "Sermon on Independence Day," *Myanmar Taman*, 1 Feb 1952. This was the prayer made by Christians during the Independence Day programme held in Bandula Park in 4 January 1952. The event was attended by pastors, soldiers and Christians.

This oath reflected Christian loyalty to the country and the government. In the same magazine, Law Khun Bawk wrote an article on 'the righteousness of the citizens', in which he encouraged the people of Myanmar to live according to God's will. He also recommended government officials not to take bribes, not to practise capitalist and to practice justice, love, peace and purity. All the nation's leaders should work for the country to grow, prosper and be filled with justice. All teachers should protect the education of the country. Family unity should be established. All workers from all classes should fulfil their responsibilities, and participate in nation building.⁷²

Since this period, recordings, articles, or other writing about the government has hardly been seen or read. But more recently, with the upsurge of anti-dictatorship movements, Christians have attempted to reread the texts. D. Aung Yi, for example, looks at Rom 13:1-7: that every government is appointed by God to rule the people with justice, equality and peace. He uses the Burmese term *nyein wot pi pyar mu* which means 'suppression'. This replicates the government's term for the State Peace and Development Council which uses the same word for 'peace.' As everyone knows the difference between good and bad, both the regime and the people should rule and be ruled for the good. The people should follow the examples of Paul (Acts 23:1-5) and Christ (Mt 17:24-25, 22: 17-21) to show respect to priests (Mt 26: 63-64). However if there is a violation of religious freedom, the people should choose God (Acts 4:19).⁷³ Here D. Aung Yi emphasizes the religious freedom of Christians, rather than their material suffering. It means that as long as there is religious freedom, Myanmar Christians should obey the government regardless of its abusive actions.

⁷² Law Khun Bawk, "The Righteousness of the Citizens," *Myanmar Taman*, 1 February 1952, 5-6.

⁷³ D. Aung Yi, in *Bible Study Lessons on Romans*, CA 2000 Baptist Mission, Advanced Bible Study Lessons, Vol 7. 72.

Simon Pau Kan En⁷⁴'s article, "A quick observation to Romans 13:1-7" confirms that this text is popular because both Christians and the government of Myanmar approve of it.⁷⁵ As Christians accept these texts as God's word, the regime reminds Christian with these texts so that the people will not cause them any difficulty.

En interpreted Rom 13:1-7 literally and traditionally, as legitimizing the state; he also added his own comments. First, he said that if there is no ruler or government there is no civilization. Second, Christians should think of the state as their parents. They should know that they are first class citizens (unofficially, in Myanmar, Christians are not first class citizens) and should be able to talk or negotiate with the government. They should pray for them to rule the country fairly. Third, as human beings, the authorities may have weaknesses. En also tries to remind the authorities of their responsibilities as rulers who should rule fairly. He suggests that God appoints the authorities and give them authoritative power not to seek for their own benefit, but to use the authority for the security, prosperity, peace and development of the people and the country. To achieve this, the people should give them support. En wants Christians to participate in the movement of national development.

Even though En refers to other in the resistant examples of Rev 13, some German churches' responses to Hitler's regime, ⁷⁸ and the South Africa black liberation movement ⁷⁹ he implies that Rom 13:1-7 must be adhered to by Christian in Myanmar, as good citizens, avoiding stirring up riots among believers or between believers and State which can lead to

⁷⁴ Simon Pau Khan En was a principal of Myanmar Institute of Theology in Myanmar and a General Secretary of Myanmar Baptist Convention.

⁷⁵ Simon Pau Kan En, *21th Century Christian Theological Thinking* (Yangon: Alin Ein Christian Publishing House, 2005), 309.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 310-311.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 311-313.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 314.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 316-317.

the disturbing the order of the state. So too, Christians should practise active non-violence for the development of the country. 80 Thus, he reinforces the powers of rulers by his statement that Christians are good citizens who never try to resist authority. It is his strategy to ensure that Christians are not harmful to the State.

En's voice stands as a representative of Christianity in Myanmar. If he criticizes the government, it will inevitably persecute Christians or stop them from practicing their faith. His two-sided argument also reflects that only this kind of writing can be published. So En's interpretation appears to legitimize or reinforce the authority of the state, in a way similar to Neil Elliot's 'survival strategy'. 81

Richard Chan Cung Hei⁸² also believes that Rom 13:1-7 emphasises obedience to God, rather than to the state. However, contrary to En, he maintains that Christian obedience should not be passive but should be active, as in the manner of Jesus' obedience:

Genuine Christian obedience results in discernment, conscience, responsibility, humility, courage, and generous willingness to surrender one's own desires to a higher good. For this reason, Christian obedience may sometimes require courageous resistance to human commands. The Christian is called upon to be obedient unto death to God in the way of Christ but was always, in the case of conflict, to obey God rather than humans. It is then, obedience becomes a moral virtue in Christian life."⁸³

His discussion confirms that obedience is a good, from which understanding, knowledge, humility and willingness come to surrender under the good or worthy one. So if the authority is not worthy, Christians can resist them by their disobedience. As an assistant lecturer at MIT, Hei is in a position to interpret the texts more freely than En. However Hei still holds the view that obedience is a Christian virtue.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 318-321.

⁸¹ See full discussion in 6.5.

⁸² Richard Chan Chun Hei is a lecture in New Testament in Myanmar Institute of Theology.

⁸³ Richard Chang Cung Hei, "Christian Obedience in the Myanmar Context," *Our Theological Journey*, Vol 2. Writings in Honour of Prof. Rev. Edmund Zabik, edited by Department of Theology (Yangon: Myanmar Institute of Theology, 2008), 137.

6.4.3. Myanmar Female Interpretations

As with other Asian women, Myanmar females have rarely interpreted the texts of submission to the state in the past. However, when they do, their views are more critical and confrontational in tone than those of male writers. Mar Lar Win, for example, argues that Paul takes a very positive view of the state by making submission a duty in Romans 13:1-7. She suggests that if Paul had known of the brutality of the state, he would have criticised it. Unlike D. Aung Yi, she affirms that Christians should challenge the government if it is violating the rights of the people, as such action is against God's will.⁸⁴

Other Myanmar women used other texts to respond to the current regime. For example, Anna May Say Pa⁸⁵ has stated that the dragon (naga) is a symbol of power, authority and demonic power in Buddhism. The dragon usually tried to fight Buddha but Buddha tamed him with metta (love). In Revelation 12, the demonic power or dragon tries to eat the son of the woman who 'is clothed with the sun,' has the moon under her feet and twelve stars over her head. According to Say Pa, the dragon or the demonic power attacks those women in Asia who are trying to give birth to Asian feminist theology. Say Pa also wants to highlight that just like other Asian women, Myanmar women are facing the dragons of wars, violence, and militarism, especially from their home regime. Therefore, she invokes a 'theology of empowerment'. By using cultural and religious imagery or symbols, women "must fight against prejudice, intolerance and anything that dehumanizes people; must stand firm for

⁸⁴ Mar Lar Win, "The Concept of Obedience in the New Testament" (MDiv Thesis, MIT, 2003), 47-50, 53.

⁸⁵ Anna May Say Pa is a former principal of Myanmar Institute of Theology. She is a Biblical scholar and the first theologian who introduced feminist theology to Myanmar. She is now a professor of Old Testament and Feminist studies in MIT. She is also a renowned scholar and Christian leader in Myanmar.

truth, justice and peace; and must work to change things in [our] culture and religion that devalue women."86

Myanmar women's voices against injustice, violence and dehumanization by the regime are brave and open, in a way the voices of male critics cannot be. This challenges the view that women are not really brave (as men are) or that women's voices are not considered valuable or relevant, as in the Burmese saying, 'The sun never rises when the hen crows.'

6.5. Postcolonial Readings

This section examines how postcolonial scholars decolonize the texts. A further question is whether these newer interpretations include gender issues or rather still legalize a patriarchal approach by 'doing' decolonization. Neil Elliot, from the postcolonial perspective, stated that Paul's attitudes towards Roman government were more reserved than those of other Jews and that he only reluctantly agreed that the imperial rulers were appointed by God. Thus, as 'an ad hoc survival strategy' or 'realistic caution', he suppressed his concern. Paul believed that the empire was to endure for a long future, so that Christians should learn to live with it. Thus he indicates that Christians 'must be diligent for the common good' (12:3-21) and 'fulfil the obligation of mutual love' (13:8-10). He wished to defend the security of Christians in Rome who were suspicious of anti-Jewish attitudes.⁸⁷ Elliot's interpretation is similar to that of En, who had used a 'survival strategy' approach, but he does not assert that Paul's strategy became the means of legitimizing Christians' submission to authority in later times.

⁸⁶ Anna May Say Pa, "Birthing an Asian Feminist Theology in the Face of the Dragon: a Burmese Perspective," in *Feminist Theology Workshop* (Hmawbi: Women Theologians' Fellowship, Association for Theological Education in Myanmar, 2002), 7-27.

⁸⁷ Elliott, "The Letter to the Romans," 197 and Elizsabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The First Letter of Peter," in A *Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, eds. Fernando R. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 380-403.

For Richard A Horsley, Paul was not only the victim of imperialism but also the victim of western scholars and colonizers. Actually Paul was an anti-imperialist who tried to build an alternative society within the Roman colony. Unlike Elliot, Horsley argues that for Paul, the Roman Empire was about to be destroyed (1 Thess. 5:3). He suggests, "History was running not through but against Rome and its empire." However, Rom 13: 1-7 has been used as "a justification of tyrants and a basis for acquiescence in the face of rulers' gross injustice and abuse of their subjects." There are two reasons for this: first, separating this text from the longer argument and second, recognizing it as God's word. Horsley states that Romans 13: 1-7 was a 'coping strategy' for those under hostile imperial authorities, as in the case of Philo, and at the same time, an eschatological belief that God would ultimately control those authorities, just as currently God lets them rule. These authors re-examine the texts from the perspective of Paul's supporters, thus are not searching for the silent voices in the texts or any gender issues.

The Australian scholar Mark Brett suggests that there are contradictions in Paul's portrayal of the authorities. In Rom 13:1-7 he praises them but not in 1 Cor 2:8. Rom 13 has ambiguity and implicitly questions the authorities' power. In Romans 12: 9 he encourages the reader not to take revenge on others as that is God's task. However, soon after, in 13: 4, he states that authority can execute wrath on wrong doers by using the sword. For him this is the authority taking the role of God in vengeance. Moreover the texts reveal that 'authority' can exercise it whenever it wishes even though Nero spread propaganda that he did not use the sword. Another example of this irony is found in 13: 8 where Paul asserts that people should not owe anything to anyone except love, but then in 13: 9, adds that his readers owe tax, fear,

⁸⁸ Richard A Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories and Imperial Biblical Studies," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 162-172.

⁸⁹ Horsley, ed. *Paul and Empire, Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 142-143, 146, 147.

respect and honour to authority. However, in 13:11-12 he reminds his readers that these ideas are fragile, as the day of the Lord is coming. So the authority given to emperors was only for a limited time. Agreeing with Elliot, Mark Brett suggests that Romans 13:1-7 has hidden resistant or ironic meanings. He says, "Paul seems to articulate the most accommodating deference to rulers in Rom 13: 1-7..." yet he questions that the rulers use swords, and enjoy vengeance which is only God's. Moreover this is "a strategy of resistance of the early Christian centuries into a means of legitimating the Holy Roman Empire." Roland Boer also thinks that Paul has an ambivalent mind in many cases based on the changes in social-economic situations. Thus he could not decide whether to oppose the empire or accommodate to it. 92

Unlike male postcolonialists who engaged only with Paul or the author and their response to the empire, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza saw double power: patriarchy and colonialism in 1 Peter which responds to the sufferings of the Christians in Asia Minor who were non-citizens, migrants and second-class people. By using 'the methodology of the oppressed' her task was to find the signs of power and to deconstruct those signs and to create new vision, to oppose all exploitation. Out of three strategies: the suffering strategy, the honour and shame strategy, and the strategy of subordination, political submission, 1 Pet 2:13-17 becomes part of a strategy of subordination which confirms it as the will of God. It emphasises the honour of patriarchy, then christianises and moralises it as the dominant

_

⁹⁰ Mark Brett, *Decolonizing God, the Bible in the Tides of Empire* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 159-162.

⁹¹ Mark Brett, 172.

⁹² Roland Boer, "Resistance Versus Accommodation: What to Do With Romans 13?" in *Postcolonial Interventions: Essays in Honour of R. S. Sugirtharajah*, ed. Tat-Siong Benny Liew, The Bible in the Modern World 23 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 109-120.

⁹³ Schüssler Fiorenza, "The First Letter of Peter," 393.

kyriarchal ethos of Roman imperialism. The author includes the text for the purpose of doing mission.94

One can conclude that the Roman culture of subjection called for the equal subordination of migrants, non-citizens and women and was in effect a way to ease unjust suffering. To reconstruct the argument of the subordinates, Schüssler Fiorenza proposes two resistant actions; first is that the recipients have the subversive action through their 'alternative separatist strategy.' The people separated themselves from the society which oppressed them. Similarly, a slave runs away from his exploitative master. 95

The second one is the 'oppositional conscious'. This is what non-citizens feel themselves to possess: as the sons and daughters of God, they were the elect, holy ones who were different from Gentiles. 96 Their withdrawal from the society reflects the 'oppositional conscious'.97

Schüssler Fiorenza has done the initial outline for a postcolonial feminist reading. Her decolonizing and resistant readings have touched all the areas in which postcolonial feminism has involved itself.

6.6. Conclusion

Except Bonhoeffer, Clasper, and Kanzo, most Western and Japanese colonial interpreters, theologians or preachers strongly supported the forces of colonialism and encouraged or even demanded the subordination of the people to the state. These colonial interpreters' foreign values were based on their patriotism, missional purpose, and politics of 'civilization'

⁹⁵ Ibid., 399.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 400.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 394-395.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 380, 400.

avoiding the rights of the subordinate and colonised. Some western and Myanmar male interpreters reinforced and legitimised the authority of colonial governments and accepted the NT texts discussed here as Christian doctrines for the guidance of their people. The patriarchal influences on the texts were inevitably overlooked. On the other hand, many female interpreters paid much closer attention to the social and gender issues embedded in these same texts. However, some of them did not see imperialism as the main problem of the oppression of women (Gaventa, Dowd), with the exception of Corley and Castelli. However these last two writers have not drawn upon the experiences of colonized women in third-world countries in their interpretations.

Most of the third world and Myanmar male interpreters have used the reinforcement of authority as a survival strategy (China Three-self church, En) and apologetic and resistant readings for fighting Christian identity and rights (China Little Flock). Their readings give a chance to hear the voices from the people (Song, Uchimura, Little Flock). No one had discussed the patriarchal system and less engagement on the texts while Asian women tried to fight against the authority and the patriarchal system which are the source of oppression.

Unlike male and some female interpreters, Mar Lar Win has claimed that active criticism is needed to fight against an unjust regime. Anna May has suggested a more symbolic means to raise awareness, using the dragon symbol, Buddhist and local Myanmar traditions and experiences, to reveal the true face of the Myanmar regime and has called for active means to achieve freedom.

Postcolonial interpretations have shared third world interpretations of survival and resistance strategies. These different interpretations are shaped by the interpreters' origins, contexts, academic backgrounds, social and national interests and their genders. In the past, women have been reluctant to debate the Biblical texts on authority as they are aware that

they are perceived as non-political beings. However their interpretations have led into the work of / or/ have shaped the thoughts of subsequent postcolonial feminist critics.

CHAPTER 7 RE-READING THE PRO-GOVERNMENT TEXTS: A RESISTANT POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE WITHIN MYANMAR CONTEXT

7.1. Introduction

In previous chapters 4 and 5, the writer has discussed that the authors included both the colonial/patriarchal mentalities and resistant elements in Rom 13: 1-7 and 1 Pet 2: 13-17. For some Eastern or western interpreters, the texts became universal truths and ethical standards. This legitimised the authority of the State under which they live. However for the postcolonial feminist who lives in Myanmar which is ruled by one-party rule or dictatorship, it is quite unacceptable to legitimate the texts.

The aim of this chapter is to answer the questions such as: How can one name the regime which claims to be Buddhist but rejects the teaching of Buddha and violate the human rights? As the pro-government texts support the regime, what are the roles of God/Christ in their relation to the regime? What has inspired the political activist Aung San Suu Kyi to resist the regime and How? What are the resistant readings of the postcolonial feminist in response to the regime from a Myanmar context?

To answer these questions, firstly, the texts should be decoded by 'Naming the Dragon' method.¹ This reveals the texts, which reinforce the power of the regime through a distortion of the concepts of Christian God and Christ. Secondly, the texts should be demoded and reread for the empowerment of women, for freedom from political oppression, and fighting for democracy and human rights by using the 'killing the dragon' method. This is to

¹ This is inspired by Ranjini Wickramaratne-Rebera, "Recognizing And Naming Power," *In God's Image* 17, no.1 (1998), 38-42.

go beyond one's own culture, religion, ethnicity and identity to achieve a broader understanding of the texts.²

7.2. Naming the Dragon³

7.2.1. The Regime as Dragon

Anna May Say Pa has stated that the dragon is the symbol of negative political/patriarchal powers (Isa 27:1, Revelation 12),⁴ and is seen also in the Buddhist beliefs as the symbol of evil.⁵ Ne Win, the founder of Myanmar's dictatorship regime was symbolised as 'Dragon'. According to the Burmese Buddhist culture, Ne Win's name with alphabet letter 'na' points to his birth on a Saturday: is day of the dragon. Accordingly, he is supposedly as strong and as powerful as the dragon.⁶ His name informs us of his nature in his dictatorship role. Further, China, the chief supporter of the Myanmar regime is symbolized by the dragon. Since Ne Win, the regime seems to have revived the primitive kingship,⁷ promoted his power or *a-na*, superiority, and his glory or *hpon*, patron-client relation, lord of the law, defender of faith and supreme ruler whom the whole country should obey. Being self-appointed, their cruelties, inhuman persecution and economic exploitation of the people make it quite reasonable to symbolize them as 'the dragons.' In this way, does God appoint them? Based on the progovernment texts, many Christians would confirm that God appoints them. Likewise the

² Kwok Pui-lan, in *Discovering the Bible in the Non- Biblical World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995), 66 terms this 'Multifaith hermeneutics'.

³ Dragon will be used as a term encompassing both python and snake.

⁴ Detail disccusion can be seen in 6.4.3.

⁵ According to Buddhist legend, the dragon attempted to overpower Prince Siddartha in his quest for enlightenment but was finally overcome.

⁶ In Burmese culture, people usually take seriously the day on which they were born. Seven days have their own representative creatures: tiger for Monday, Lion for Tuesday, Elephant for Wednesday, Rat for Thursday, Hamster for Friday, Dragon for Saturday and Roc for Sunday. People give their children's first name as the alphabet letter for the creature of the day they were born.

⁷ This was discussed in Chapter I, pages 32-34.

regime might have favoured the texts as it endorses their authority as coming from a Christian God^8

7.2.2. Is God or Christ a Dragon? (Rom 13:1, 4, 1 Pet 2:13-14)

Some male Empire scholars such as Neil Elliot and Richard A Horsley suggest that Paul tried to establish an alternative kingdom to the Roman Empire in which God is the king. In Rom 13:1, 4, God is portrayed as a male figure with the power to conquer all other male political powers. 1 Pet 2:13-14 states that Christ is the Lord who sends the authority to rule. He was superior to the Roman emperors who designated themselves as 'lord'. Christ is also the Lord of Lords and the one who will ultimately overcome all other powers. This kind of interpretation subversively resists the imperial power but it still has the notion of domination.

Churches have seen Jesus as Lord and emperor throughout history, such as in the time of Constantine, the churches under the emperors in the medieval period, or even the church of Germany in the 1930s with its declarations representing Hitler as the equal of Christ. So the perception of God/Christ as the lord of Lords may easily be equated with the dragon of dragons.

On the other hand, feminists in Asia see Christ differently. Margaretha Hendriks-Ririmase states that

Many Christological titles developed in the church for a long time represent this paradigm (cf. the kingship and lordship of Christ). The affirmation of Christ as the Lord and the King over the whole universe very much justifies the 'power over'

⁸ The author heard a speech of a General in which he cited Rom 13:1 at a Karen Baptist 175 year Jubilee held on . Simon Pau Khan En also confirms that the regime uses the texts.

⁹ Joerg Rieger, *Christ & Empire, From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 35-36.

paradigm in Christian theology, which can be carried on to legitimize the abuse of power and the practice of violence in our society and church.¹⁰

Therefore the counter power of Asian feminists' is not power as men acknowledge it. According to Ranjini Wickramaratne-Rebera, the supreme power of God is the power of passionate sacrifice, unconditional love and presence in the world. Women want to see Jesus as liberator, bringer of hope, and a love-inspired figure, the one who is with them and who struggles together with them, in a way quite unlike that of male abusive power holders. Virginia Fabella also agrees that women will not use the term 'lordship' for Jesus although they will still keep Jesus as the liberator who suffers together with them. Therefore she calls for the church to think about the enslaving entities in cultures and religions. To show the universal love of Jesus, the churches should remove their non-liberating, non-loving practices, exclusivenesses, and hierarchal systems.

Likewise in Myanmar, this counter 'lordship' happened in the British Empire, when people needed to call the white colonial people 'Lord'. To counteract this, Myanmar Independent Movement leaders put 'lord' *thakin* as a prefix to their name, ¹⁴ putting the people of Myanmar on the same level as their rulers. At that time for women, both white colonial and Myanmar males became 'lord' for them. The Myanmar saying *thar ko thakin, lin ko payar* confirms the patriarchal and colonial view that women should respect her

¹⁰ Margaretha Hendriks-Ririmase, "Theology and Violence Against Women," *CTC Bulletin. Bulletin of the Program Area on Faith, Mission and Unity (Theology Concerns) Christian Conference of Asia* 21, no.3 (December 2005): 6-11.

¹¹ Ranjini Wickramaratne- Rebera, "Understanding Power: Intellectual Elitism or Catalyst to Change?" *In God's Image* 17, no. 3 (1998): 2-4.

¹² Elisabet Johansson, "Images of Christ in the Hearts of MY Asian Sisters," *In God's Image* 22, no.4 (December 2003): 56-70.

¹³ Virginia Fabella, "Christology from Asian Woman's Perspective," *Asian Faces of Jesus*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 218-220.

¹⁴ Aung San Suu Kyi, Freedom from Fear (London: A Penguin Book, 1991), 8-9.

husband as 'god' and her son as 'lord'. Therefore, like Asian women, Myanmar women find it difficult to refer to Jesus as 'Lord' as it places a double burden on them.

7.2.3. Is a Dragon's Anger, God's Wrath? (Rom 13:4)

Contradictory to the emperor's propaganda that authority was good and Nero would not rule the empire with the sword, Rom 13: 4 says that authorities had the sword in their hands. This revealed the truth of the emperors that they were ruling with swords. In Rom 8:35-36, it is vividly revealed that people were killed and persecuted with swords. Paul downplays the real situation of the people's suffering and authorises the rulers as the servants of God to hold swords to punish (show wrath to) the people. Paul has usually used 'wrath' when referring to God, however, in this text, he uses it in relation to the rulers. This suggests a shift, that Paul is now seeing the rulers as being the instruments of God. Moreover, Paul calls for the people to obey the rulers to avoid punishment (wrath). This suggests a God of wrath who wants to punish people with the sword and famine because of their disobedience (Rom 8:35). As women usually understand 'wrath' as 'wars, horror, concentration camps and holocaust' so this kind of God is not a God of women.

For Myanmar women, a God should not be like the regime which abuses its power and persecutes people. Instead, as Say Pa portrays,

God is the God who reveals in the Exodus and the magnificent, the God who challenges unjust regimes and rescues those who suffer injustice, and the God revealed in the crucifixion, the God who takes up Godself, the suffering which comes from political evil and injustice. The God revealed in Jesus Christ is in solidarity with those who suffer injustice.¹⁷

¹⁵ Rom 1:18, 2:5, 3:5, 5:9, 9:22, 12:19.

¹⁶ In Christian tradition God's wrath is understood as the righteous act. God is angered by and punishes disobedience, idol worship and wrong doing.

¹⁷ Anna May Say Pa, "Reading the Bible with the Eyes of Women," *Reading the Bible with New Eyes* (Yangon: Myanmar Christian Council, 1999), 9.

At this time, women need the God who will stand for women but not the God who will use the rulers to judge them.

7. 3. Crushing the Dragon's Head

For the present writer, the dragon or the serpent is the enemy of the whole people but especially the enemy of the women (Gen 3: 15a). Even though Genesis 3:15b states that only her offspring will crush the head of the dragon's offspring, here, for a postcolonial feminist, the woman herself will crush the head of the dragons such as the Myanmar regime, the Christian traditional belief and Christian canon. As Asian women have developed a form of interpretation that brings in Asian myths, fables, and stories from their cultures and religions in order to reinterpret the Bible, ¹⁸ to crush these heads, the first step here is to use the strategies of Aung San Suu Kyi and her interpretation of Buddhist rules for the rulers. Second is to reread a Karen folk tale about saving Naw Mu Aye. Finally there will be a rewriting of the pro-Government texts as a way to challenge the power. These approaches will challenge all the traditional beliefs, practices and powers which oppress women and people and reaffirm the elements which empower women. It is the task of postcolonial feminism to encourage women not to read the texts passively but to "exercise the freedom to choose and reject what she thought was harmful for women."

7.3.1. Aung San Suu Kyi's Voices with Buddhist Teachings

As we have discussed the interpretations on authority from a Christian perspective and have recognized the importance of crossing boundaries, it is necessary now to examine the

¹⁸ Anna May Say Pa, "Chorus of Voices: Reading the Bible from Many Perspectives," *CTC Bulletin. Bulletin of the Program Area on Faith, Mission and Unity (Theology Concerns) Christian Conference of Asia* 21, no.3 (December, 2005): 59-70.

¹⁹ Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 77.

contribution made by the most famous voice of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi. Her voice stands for that of the voiceless people and women in Myanmar who are suffering under the regime. She is a hero for the Myanmar people and also a scandal for the regime. Aung San Suu kyi's open resistance and perseverance in taking a stand against the regime which claimed that it is a woman who is destroying the country, by misusing her abilities and qualifications against the culture.

7.3.1.1. Buddhist Teachings and the Dragons

Aung San Suu Kyi has based her political struggle on the Buddhist scriptures. For example, contrary to Rom 13: 1-7 and 1 Pet 2:13-17, she mentioned that the Buddhist scriptures never encouraged kings to rule wilfully: "The Buddhist view of kingship does not invest the ruler with divine right to govern the realm as he pleases." Second, she said that government is not essential for human existence and instead it can be a necessary evil, an abuse of power. The Buddhist teachings on kingship are different from the texts which teach that the rulers are sanctioned by God and that the government is essential for guiding, ruling and punishing the people.

The Buddhist rules came with the colonization of Asoka whom Aung San Suu Kyi highly regards as noble and pious king. Asoka was the one who ruled India's biggest empire of all time from 268 to 239 BCE. He ruled the empire peacefully, justly and with unity. His concern as a king was always the promotion of the well-being of all the people, that is, to make them happy in this world and to enable them to attain nirvana. He encouraged his people to live morally and peacefully without using any violence. He himself gave up

²⁰ Aung San Suu Kyi, Freedom from Fear, 170.

²¹ Mikio Oishi, *Aung San Suu Kyi's Struggle: Its Principles and Strategy* (Penang: Just World Trust, 1997), 7-8.

hunting, fighting in wars and eating meat. Therefore many Buddhist rulers try to follow in his footsteps.²² In *Sutta*, the king has no right to abuse the people he rules.²³

Aung San Suu Kyi also highlights the ten virtues of the kings mentioned in the stories of Jataka in *Buddhisattva*. They are "generosity, moral virtue, self-sacrifice, harmony and integrity, gentleness, self-control, non-anger, non-injury, forbearance and non-opposition/uprightness." Ten rules for the kings are,²⁴

- 1. A ruler should prioritize the welfare of the people with their generosity.
- 2. A ruler must 'bear a high moral character to win the respect and trust of the people, to ensure their happiness and prosperity and to provide a proper example.'
 - 3. A ruler should give up all his/her life for the sake of the people.
- 4. A ruler should live and rule by truth and integrity as there is a Burmese saying 'with rulers, truth, with ordinary people, vows.'
- 5. With kindness the ruler should care and be the strength of those who are weak, helpless and unable to demand for their rights.
- 6. A ruler should observe the duty of austerit, live a simple life, and cultivate self control and spiritual discipline.
- 7. 8. 9. A ruler should not allow personal ill feeling such as anger and rage but develop forbearance. Instead of those ill feelings they should cultivate loving kindness, liberty. They should not enjoy forcing people into submission.
- 10. A ruler should not oppose but support the will of the people. This is the democracy of Buddhism. So if the people are willing to dethrone him/her, he/her should leave the throne or the government.

²² Brian Peter Hervey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 8th printing), 115-117.

²³ Ibid., 114-115, 118 and Aung San Suu Kyi, Freedom from Fear, 170.

²⁴ Aung San Suu Kyi, 170-173.

These rules maintain that he/she should serve the people for their order and prosperity. The kings should rule in righteousness and compassion and in accordance with Dharma. The regime distorts these rules and rules the country in reverse ways. This is violating the rights or the duties of rulers or governments. Using any means to hold onto power leads to violation of every religious rule, human rights and even the most basic of human instincts.

According to *Maha-vastu*, a Lokottaravadin school text, the prosperity of the country depends on the karma of its ruler. If the ruler acts with unrighteousness, the bad karma will spread to other people and then it will turn the order of sun and moon out of their path and can cause natural disaster.²⁵ The regime has built pagodas and paid homage to the monks to increase their merits or good karma. Recently, Myanmar suffered a cyclone. The Buddhists believed that this was caused by the bad karma of the regime. According to this ideology the king or the ruler should be dethroned or should resign from the government to remove this bad luck. Unless he/she gives up his/her position, there will be no improvement in the country. The regime on the other hand brainwashes the population with the belief that these kinds of disasters were caused by the dissatisfaction of the *nats* with the people.

7.3.1.2. Right Mind and the Dragons

In chapter 4, 'right mind' or 'middle way' was discussed as a necessity for changing patriarchal society and that should be practised also in a political system. Gustaaf Houtman describes how the 'right mind' is known as 'mental culture' or mental training to release human beings from the cycle of rebirth. It is also known as 'high culture' or a spiritual quest which overcomes difference and transcends locality. For Aung San Suu Kyi, mental culture is the understanding and empowering of the poor and the helpless with democratic reforms

²⁵ Harvey, 114-115, 118.

through human rights, and negotiating the boundaries such as self, prison, country, cosmology and *samsara*.²⁶

On the other hand, in Ne Win's period (1962-1988), the military understood mental culture as

to practise mental culture is to purify the mind and thereby remedy and overcome dangers of lawlessness and greed. It bears a direct relationship to the reform of a hopelessly degraded society. Successful practice is supposed to lead people to change their minds to the extent that they will naturally become inclined to understand and observe laws and order.²⁷

Aung San Suu Kyi and the military interpret mental culture differently. Where Suu Kyi emphasizes democracy, human rights and empowerment, the military claims that achieving mental culture comes from living with laws and order. Than Shwe, the General of SPDC claimed that as a soldier and a Buddhist, he has no hostile feelings towards Americans because they are human beings.²⁸ What he wanted to say here was that he had 'a right mind' on the USA, but his wrong thinking and wrong deeds towards his own marginalized or oppressed people are still evident in the history such as the shooting of demonstrators in the 1988 pro-democracy protest and the monks in the Saffron Revolution of 2007. A pious and genuine Buddhist would never have wrong feelings or act in a negative, oppressive way towards others, including his/her own people.

7.3.1.3. The Dragon Ruling Vs Democracy

The Asia Women and Men Association debated family lives in Asia in 1960 and sought to adopt a democratic form of decision making in the home. However, they found themselves

_

²⁶ Gustaaf Houtman, *Mental culture in Burmese Crisis Politics, Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy*, ILCAA Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa Monograph Series No. 33, London: The Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1999), 182-185.

²⁷ Ibids., 268.

²⁸ Ibids., 269.

facing the question of the nature and definition of democracy and whether the term can be used in the Asian cultural context.²⁹ Actually any system that stands for full human dignity should give the term serious consideration. The word 'democracy' comes from the Greek words demos, 'people' and kratos, 'the ruling'. So it means 'the rule of people.' I have discussed the rule of city-states or direct democratic systems in the ancient Greek world, where the people had the power to make decisions. According to Aristotle's Politics VI 1317^a 40- 1317^b 1, the basic of a democratic state is liberty: for all to rule and to be ruled in turn...the majority approval must be the end and the just outcome... the poor have more power than the rich... and the will of majority is supreme.³⁰ However since the Greek city states excluded women and slaves in the 'majority male group' or 'people' who could rule, there was no genuine democracy. Mahatma Gandhi completed the true meaning: "My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest."³¹ So it is clear that the democratic system favours the decision of both the majority and the weakest who are the other half of the human race – the women – and the ordinary people, the poor, or marginalized. For Aung San Suu Kyi, democracy is freedom from fear and want. Like Gandhi in his time, she fearlessly opposes wrongful power.³² Today the system of democracy, with human rights enshrined, is as Zehra Arat (quoting T. H. Marshall categorization) has set out, below:³³

²⁹ Jacob S. Quiambao, ed., "Men And Women in Home, Church and Community in Asia, Papers and Statements of an Asian Consultation on "The Christian Home in a Changing Society," Committee on Cooperation of Men and Women in Home, Church and Society, East Asian Christian Conference held in Rangoon, Burma, 1963, (Bangkok: Rajadaromp Printery & Typefoundry, 1963). 9.

³⁰ Aristotle *The Politics and the Constitution of Athens*, ed. Stephen Everson (Cambridge, University Press, 196), 154.

³¹ Zehra F. Arat, *Democracy and Human Rights in Developing Countries* (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2003), 15.

³² Houtman, 296-297.

³³ Arat. 3.

•Civil Rights: Freedom from slavery and servitude, torture and inhuman punishment, and arbitrary arrest and imprisonment; freedom of speech, faith, opinion, and expression; right to life, security, justice, ownership, and assembly;

•Political Rights: Right to vote and nominate for public office; right to form and join political parties;

•Social and Economic Rights; right to have education, work, food, clothing, housing, and medical care.

For a democratic form of government, all the above categories are needed, as none can exist without the other.³⁴ A democratic system tries to help people to be equally treated and fairly governed. However the Myanmar regime neglects the essence of democracy and violates all the above. It did not hand over the government to the Democratic Party which was voted in by the majority in 1991 and committed the serious, undemocratic offence by stating that the people were not ready for it and could easily abuse it. On the eve of the 7 November 2010 election, they created false votes to retain their power. Therefore democracy and the regime of Myanmar stand in opposition.

7.3.1.4. Aung San Suu Kyi and Non-fear Way and Non-violence

Aung San Suu Kyi's first resistant way is the non-fear way. Both Rom 13:3 and 1 Pet 2:17, 3:14 call for people not to fear the authorities. Aung San Suu Kyi's famous saying is "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it." Here she points out that both the regime and the people have fear which keep them in the status quo. The second resistant way is the non-violence method which she believes is the best way of resisting violence and

³⁴ Ibid., 3-4.

³⁵ Aung San Suu Kyi, Freedom From Fear And Other Writings, 180.

establishing democracy.³⁶ The author of 1 Pet also calls for people to follow suffering Jesus' example (1 Pet 2:21). This has been rejected as passive suffering and submission.³⁷ On the other hand active and open non-violence or suffering raises the oppressed voices, presents their actions and reveal their striking for freedom. These are similar to Suu Kyi's suffering with the people and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 'a life of voluntary poverty.³⁸

7.3.1.5. Aung San Suu Kyi and Patriarchy

Woman Nationalists and politicians are not essential feminists. As the daughter of the leader of the movement for independence, Aung San, Aung San Suu Kyi could enter into the political struggle with great influence. She has said, "Basically, I think people do believe I will uphold my father's values, they trust me because they trusted my father and they believe I will carry on in his tradition which was one of integrity." She has confirmed this more simply: 'I am my father's daughter. He being a father's daughter indicates the power of the family in Asia in general. It confirms the unchanging role of women from the early patriarchal societies such as Greco-Roman world where only the women from elites and daughters of great people can become the influential persons to the current situation in Myanmar. Even though Aung San Suu Kyi has become a great representative for the voiceless people, the patriarchal culture is deeply rooted in her life. She also confirms that she does not see herself as a feminist. It can be seen in her writings, where she uses some male

³⁶ Aung San Suu Kyi, *The Voice of Hope*, 112, 114.

³⁷ I have discussed it in chaper 4.

³⁸ Dietrich Bonoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 35.

³⁹ Louise Williams, *Wives, Mistresses and Matriarchs, Asian Women Today* (London: Phoenix Press, 1999), 172.

⁴⁰ Ibid.,174.

⁴¹ Aung San Suu kyi, *The Voice of Hope Conversations with Alan Clements* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 120.

universalised terms such as 'kings' instead of 'rulers,' 'man' instead of 'people' or 'human beings.' Aung San Suu Kyi has said that the national symbol should be a 'dancing peacock' - the student movement's symbol is 'fighting peacock'. Her suggestion reveals her ignorance of patriarchal language. The image should be changed to 'dancing peafowl' and 'fighting peafowl.'

7.3.2. Crushing the Dragon (Christology)'s Head Using a Karen's 43 Story

As mentioned above, the regime and God/Christ are portrayed as dragons. So who can save the people from the regime? Can a woman be a saviour? A Karen story is worth rereading. It was frequently told by missionaries among the Karen people as an example of Christ's dying for sinners. A husband, Ku Law Lay tells his wife, Naw Mu Aye that she must never leave the house while he is away at work. A python, Kalaw, who is the rival of Ku Law Lay comes and wraps itself around the family pig to make it squeal. The wife goes to try to rescue the pig and gets captured by the python. When the husband returns the python says it will not release the wife unless the husband sacrifices his own blood. He tries to trick the python by giving it blood from a pig and a chicken. But the python refuses until the man gives his own blood by cutting his throat.

Traditionally, the story was metaphorically interpreted, with the husband as Christ, the wife as humanity, and the python as Satan. The wife is caught by the python because of her disobedience. Satan only wants human sacrifice, not animal blood. This interpretation relies on a cultural tradition: in the pre-Christian period, the Karen were animists who believed in

⁴² Ibid.,173.

⁴³The Karen are one of the seven major ethnic tribes of Myanmar. They have been fighting for their own freedom and nationhood since the British colonial period.

animal sacrifice. So Christian preachers tried to demonstrate that Christianity was superior to animist belief, and that only the blood of Christ could set humanity free.

In this story, one can see both imperial and patriarchal systems. The woman or wife is identified with humanity. She is full of sin and makes trouble for her husband by being caught by the python, whilst a man or husband is identified with Christ as saviour or the 'rice winner' of the house.

From a postcolonial feminist perspective, the story can be interpreted differently. The wife was under house arrest by her husband; there was no freedom for her. She got caught by the python only because she was trying to help the pig which is also a victim. In reality she was in pain while the python and the husband were arguing. However, in the story, the voice of the wife is hardly heard: she is not the troublemaker but the victim when there are power struggles between the husband and the python. The python's target is not the wife but the husband. According to this re-reading, Christ is the one who prolongs suffering and does not teach humanity how to protect itself, but rather to wait for him to come and rescue the world. The wife is victim of both the python and the husband. So asking women to suffer more for the sake of Jesus is just putting a double burden on women's shoulders.

A postcolonial feminist perspective can generate another interpretation. Both the wife and the husband are the rice winners. She is not the one who stays at home and depends on her husband. She and her husband together fight against the python and overcome it. According to Say Pa, a woman's sarong is the skin of the python; shedding it means that the woman had defeated the python. An alternative, true story was told by Zoya Phan about her mother, who was a commander of 30 Karen soldiers. One day they found a python in a jungle. Zoya Phan's mother made a plan to catch this python. She told her soldiers that she would jump on the neck of the sleeping python and try to kill it. She did as she had said, and with the other soldiers and

other women battered the python with bamboo sticks until it was dead. 44 Aung San Suu Kyi herself is also designated as an angel or female bodhisattva who can free the people from the enslavement of military captors.⁴⁵

Fundamentally, these versions question whether one needs God or Christ for women's freedom. As we have discussed in the 'Naming the Dragon' section above, if God and Christ are as the authors of Romans and 1 Peter have portrayed, if God and Christ are still the God and Christ of the patriarchal and imperial system, women do not need either figure for their struggle. As Pui-lan has expressed it:

In contrast to political theology by their male counterparts, Third World feminist political theologies do not lay so much emphasis on God as an actor in and judge of human history. Aware of the limitation of anthropocentric discourse about God, feminist theologians avoid portraying human history as the only arena for God. 46

Women need only a gender free [God/Christ] or a power who will struggle with them. Another power-chain in our history over which gender is the more powerful is unthinkable.

7.4. Rewriting the Texts

Rom 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2:13-17 were written for a Roman imperial and patriarchal society to enable the authorities to extend their power and to ensure that the ruled were powerless. There are so many interpretations which reinforce their authority. From a postcolonial feminist point of view they are texts of terror. God and Christ, male king and lord, are calling for suffering by overburdening women. It is time to rewrite the notion of Godhead from a postcolonial feminist perspective to raise the voice of women's theology, ideas and equality.

⁴⁴ Zova Phan, Little Daughter: A Memoir of Survival in Burma and the West, ed. Damien Lewis (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 20-21.

⁴⁵ Houtman, 282-283.

⁴⁶ Pui-lan, Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology, 166.

To emphasize what Pui-lan has said, "It is the task of postcolonial feminism to encourage women not to read the texts passively but to exercise the freedom to choose and reject what she thought was harmful for women." This example is also inspired by the New Revised Standard Version, which translates the Greek word Υποτάγητε the passive voice of ὑποτασσέσθω (1 Pet 2:13-3:7) into 'accept' instead of 'submit' as used in several other versions. The NRSV also translates masculine terms into common or inclusive words such as 'man' into 'human,' brothers' into 'brothers and sisters.' (Gal 1:1)

Postcolonial Feminist Democratic Government Text:

- 1. Let every oppressed individual resist and dethrone the governing authority which abuses the people. For the non gendered God of the oppressed did not appoint them,
- 2. Therefore it is the will of God to resist them and there will be no condemnation for this; instead there will be rewards. In truth the governing authority is the one who opposes God's will by oppressing the people.
- 3. There is nothing to fear in them and there is democracy and human rights.
- 4. For we all (both the rulers and the people) are at one with God for the good. So be afraid, you Rulers! For the voices of the oppressed will make you suffer and give you unrest in mind and body which will haunt you always for what you have done to the people.
- 5. Do not force the people with your rules and regulations because they know how they should be as citizens.
- 6. Do what is right, respect the life of the people and their human rights.
- 7. Help and empower each other for the struggle against power and authority as this is for the sake of the oppressed. Do not suffer under injustice.
- 9. The right of the oppressed is to do right and to silence foolish rulers.
- 10. Act as free men and women and do not hide evil, but use your courage and free will.
- 11. Honour all humans, love siblinghood, struggle together for the freedom from all oppressions.

7.5. Conclusion

Through the 'naming the dragon' method, God and Christ were named as dragons, similar to the Myanmar regime, leading to a re-examining of postcolonialists' counter-imperial critiques of power. While the male reinforces the power and the dominant position of God and Christ,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 77.

women see them as powers of terror and abusiveness which come as the wrath or punishment. The 'crushing the head of the dragon' method challenges the regime and the texts with Buddhist rulers' rules. Buddhist teachings on the rules for the rulers depict people-centred, democratic and constructive characters whereas Christian texts have ruler-centred, oppressive and suppressive characters. Without following Buddhist teachings, the regime also violates people's democracy. Therefore the present writer has concluded that government institutions are not honourable unless they are 'for' the people. The writer realises that crushing patriarchal power should go along side crushing political power. Postcolonial feminist's interpretation also has highlighted both the flaws and good points of the liberators such as Christ and Suu Kyi. Rereading traditional stories helps women to see their ability and strength and to identify the hegemony which has suppressed them. Rewriting the texts from a postcolonial feminist perspective crosses the boundaries of the Christian canon and confronts traditional beliefs on the absolute authority of the Bible.

Section III Conclusion

In the Greco-Roman world, the pro-government hegemonic texts of Rom 13: 1-7 and 1 Pet 2: 13-17, variously copied, christianised, counteracted or ironically criticized imperial propaganda. By christianising the government, where God reigns supreme above the emperors, the texts legitimise the authority of empires and those who support the authority of oppressive regimes. An example was drawn from the work of colonial missionaries who used Christian beliefs to further colonization and domination over indigenous peoples. Women's voices were rarely heard in the political power struggle. Instead they are seen as victims or are accused of obstructing political affairs. Legitimizing the authority of government becomes

the legitimization of male authority and power. Until recently these texts were not considered as related to women's issues. Therefore silent voices are revealed.

The renaming of political regimes as the dragon reveals that the God/Christ portrayed in masculinist terms as the head of all authorities metamorphoses into the dragon of dragons. Like the aristocratic Greco-Roman women, Aung San Suu Kyi holds a position in the Political realm. Her resistant actions with democracy, right mind and non-violence and the Buddhist teachings for rulers have highlighted that the pro-authority texts do not stand for the suffering people in Myanmar. However for the writer, her patriarchal stand becomes her limitation. The Karen python stories also highlight that the woman is the real dragon killer or the co-fighter of python. Rewriting the pro-people text has challenged the patriarchal and colonial/imperial canonization and authority of the Bible.

SECTION IV

POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READINGS ON RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN A MYANMAR CONTEXT

Section IV Introduction

The texts such as 1 Cor 11: 2-16, 14: 34-35 and 1Timothy 2:9-15 set out how women should behave in worship services generally. Specifically, these texts prohibit or limit women's participation in leadership roles by demanding the wearing of a veil while praying and prophesying, commanding women to keep silent and not to teach in the church. These have been the normative texts for some traditional Christians and have had a great impact on the debate on the ordination of women. They also become stumbling blocks for feminist and/or liberationist readers.

There is some evidence that there were women leaders in the early Christian era (Rom 16, 1 Cor 1). It was not until the end of the second century AD that the hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons emerged. The literal view of Jesus as a man and a high priest led Christians to believe that priests must be males. However, according to the Acts of Thomas, in Syria, from third until the fifth century, deaconesses baptized and taught women. However, later the male priest performed the rituals, and women could only take his place in emergency situations. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the priesthood of women is hardly ever raised. In the ancient and medieval worlds, it was believed that "the male alone was fully representative and exemplary of human being." According to Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, a foetus is intended to be born as a boy but something fails, so that it is born as a girl. He suggested that women were defective human beings because their "genitals" had not

¹ Eva M. Synek, "Women and Worship From the Perspectives of Christian Churches and Canon Law," *Women: Perspectives from World Religions*, Journal of Dharma 26, no. 2 (April-June, 2001): 157-196.

descended, as in men. Therefore in this situation the women should not be given a high degree of eminence, as they are not stamped in the image of God and may be not be ordained.²

Women had to wait until the 18th century in both the Protestant and Catholic Churches to be allowed to be deaconesses,³ and even so they were small in number. From the 1960s, male clergy voted against the discrimination against women and request for equal rights, and stated that that there is inequality in Gal 3:28. For them there is no liturgical discrimination of women, except in the rejection of women's inclusion in ordained ministry. Women can participate in all lay ministries such as reader, cantor and commentator. In time of emergency and need, laywomen can perform the Eucharist and rite of baptism. Women are not usually allowed to preside at weddings, yet for funerals, women can take the service if the deceased or his/her relatives are comfortable with the situation. Protestant churches and theologians also forbade the ordination of women until late in the twentieth century. At that time women could attend the seminaries but only to become pastor's wives and their position was the same as sisters in the Roman Catholic Church. The rules for dress and ritual functions are reinforced by some denominations.⁴ The Baptist writer Andreas J. Köstenberger confirms his anti-women leadership view:

Personally, as one who favours deaconesses, but one who has spoken out strongly against women elders and pastors ... I believe this is a good opportunity to show that we recognize the ministry of women just as we do the ministry of men and that we do not discriminate against women in ministry.⁵

² Daphne Hampson, *Let Us Think about Women*, Pamphlet for the group of Women Ministry in the Scottish Episcopal Church, Gillian Clark (January 1979): 1-5.

³ According to Arme Georges Martimort, *Deaconesses, a Historical Study* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 229-230 states that the blessing for the nuns as the deaconesses has been existed since the first half of the fourteenth century. This assumes that the deaconess institution has been existed but not fully recognised.

⁴ Synek, 157-196.

⁵ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The New Testament Pattern Of Church Government*, http://www.biblicalfoundations.org/pdf/pdfarticles/midwestern 3.pdf (accessed 15 October 2010).

Throughout history, the priesthood of men has been strongly rooted and patriarchal power has been used in the church in what Paul Beasley-Murray defines as:

[I]mposing own style of worship, using sexuality to help one get one's own way, being manipulative in church meetings in order to get one's own way, not providing a lead when it is needed, pushing through a course of action that was unpopular, laying on the guilt of members of the congregation, hiding behind God in order to get one's own way, intimidating weaker people into a course of action.⁶

However, Myanmar Christian women, especially Baptist Christians, gain a certain level of position in the religious realm. They hold the leading role in teaching at the theological schools and working as ministers. But there are only a few female ordinary pastors and ordained pastors. The question is what is so special about being a leader in the church and why the role should be only for men. Is this view supported by Myanmar Buddhist culture and teachings?

This section will highlight how authority, power and enforced submission are used in the religious sphere from Graeco-Roman imperial times, colonial and postcolonial periods, to reinforce the authority of the religious male leaders and neglect the right of 'the priesthood of all believers' (1 Pet 2: 5, 9)⁷ especially women's rights to leadership roles. This issue has been discussed by many scholars in Christian history, but this section focuses on how the postcolonial feminist reflects on the way the patriarchal religious system has been colonized/imperialized to reinforce discrimination against women, and then finds resistant ways to empower women to take up leadership roles.

⁶ Paul Beasley-Murray, *Power For God's Sake: Power and Abuse in the Local Church* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1998), 85-86.

⁷ 1 Peter 2:5 "...like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

CHAPTER 8 DECOLONIZING/DEPATRIARCHALIZING COLONIAL/ IMPERIAL AND PATRIARCHAL GRAECO-ROMAN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

8.1. Introduction

Depatriarchalizing and deimperializing the religious structures of Graeco-Roman world will answer why 1 Cor 11: 2-16 demands women's veiling through a critique of the hierarchical structure of Christianity, where God is the head of Christ who is also the head of men who is the head/glory of women; why 1 Cor 14: 33-35 asks women to be silent in the church and to ask questions only at home; and why 1 Tim 2: 9-15 prescribes women's dress and behaviour, that they may not teach and must keep silent, with giving birth as their salvation. The main concern is to find out how Graeco-Roman colonialism/imperialism played an important role in religions or 'only men in office and passing on knowledge' and influenced Christian authoritarian religious or ecclesiastic structures that reinforced the suppression of women and marginalized them in society. It is necessary also to examine the cultural or imperial influences on colonialist/ imperial cults and priesthood systems which tried to supersede or assimilate local or colonized religions, including goddess cults, to control and interfere in the lives of people. This chapter scrutinizes how pantheistic beliefs shifted to the monotheistic belief through the workings of the colonial/imperial authority and how these authoritative ideas were reused by New Testament writers in the texts under examination here.

8.2. The Anti-women's Leadership Texts and their Immediate Contexts in Brief

The anti-women leadership texts are generally accepted to have been written by Paul, 1 Corinthians (c. 53-57AD), including 1 Cor 11: 2-16 and 14: 33-34; although some scholars believe that they are later interpolations. These texts are related to Christian behaviour in worship: first, the veiling of women in worship (1 Cor 11: 2-16) and second, the proper practice of prophecy and speaking in tongues in worship (1 Cor 14: 1-40). 1 Corinthians

seems to deal with divisions or disputes on peculiar behaviours coming from different gifts, cultural, economic and social backgrounds. Thus, Paul taught or encouraged the church to avoid improper behaviours in services of worship.⁸

1 Timothy was written in the late first century or early second century AD,⁹ and is known as one of the pastoral deutero-Pauline letters. This text also set rules for how women should act in the church services as some of churches were failing or dividing through encounters with other mission groups that taught different doctrines and drew away some followers (Tit 1: 5, 10-11; 1 Tim 1: 3-7, 19-20 4:1-2; 6:20). Well organized community rules for the certain groups were needed as Christians groups were growing to some extent, and rules had relaxed in the process. There were about 13 or 14 households with members between 100 and 150, including servants for each household.¹⁰

Are these divisions, disputes, different teachings and growing churches the only main causes for the formalization of the hierarchal or patriarchal system, with rules and limits putting women in a subordinate position in the church?

8.3. Decolonizing/Deimperialising/Depatriarchalising Greco-Roman Religious God's Order and Functions

Religion is what Melford Spiro, a cultural anthropologist, calls "An institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings." Moreover it

⁸ S. J. Hafemann, "Letters to Corinthians," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, A Compendium of contemporary Biblical Scholarship,* eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 166.

⁹ Based on the organised structure of the church and the possible acknowledgement of Gnostic groups (1 Tim 6: 20).

¹⁰ E. E. Ellis, "Pastoral Letters," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 661-662. There were two house churches in Colossae (Philemon 2; Col 4: 15); two in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 1: 16; 4: 19); four at Corinth (Rom 16:23, 1 Cor 1: 11, 16: 15-16); and four or five in Rome (Rom 16: 5, 10-11, 14-15).

¹¹ Melford Spiro, *Burmese Supernaturalism* (New Jersey: Prentice- Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, 1967), 96.

is the intermingling of cultures, philosophies, beliefs, moral and social values, political strategies with worshippers and superhuman beings.

Generally in each category listed above, there are two types, such as rich and poor, civilized and uncivilized, gods and goddesses, priests and priestesses, major deities and minor deities, central and peripheral, top and bottom, 'I' and 'others'. There were two groups in Roman government: "one party, *Optimates*, represented the interests of Rome's elite, and the other party, the *Populares*, represented the interests of the poor." There were also two groups of worshippers and religions: the Graeco-Roman colonist, elite, imperial or upper class, all worshipped important Greek deities, Roman deities and imperial and civil cults and/or performed leading roles in controlling the people; and the 'others', the colonized, marginalized, the poor, non-citizens, women, slaves and foreigners normally approached the divines such as the 'others' religions, groups or mystery cults including the Greek Dionysus, or Egyptian Isis. Why these binary divisions were formed is a question that needs to be answered.

8.3.1. Graeco-Roman Colonialist/Imperialist/Patriarchal and Hierarchal Religion

8.3.1.1. Greek Patriarchal and Colonial Views on Religions

8.3.1.1.1. Philosophers' Hierarchal and Patriarchal Deities and 'Others'

Originally, the Graeco-Roman world was a polytheistic universe: people liked the idea of 'the more the better.' Diversity and multiplicity was essential. The male and female deities with their different functions tended to explain the different aspects of life and the needs of

¹² D. Jasmine Merced-Ownbey, *Roman Isis and the Pendulum of Religious Tolerance in the Empire*, 6. http://inquiry.uark.edu/Merced_Final_for_On-line11-08.pdf (accessed 24 July 2010).

different people and nations.¹³ However this diversity or Olympian divine society was reshaped by writers and philosophers such as Homer and Hesiod into a more hierarchal framework, as below.

Illustration 6 Hierarchal Olympian Divine Society

Zeus or Jupiter (rulers interllecturals, judges, warriors, fathers, god of sky), Apollo (god of expedition and the protector of colonists), Hermes (the god of travelers, merchants, thieves, and shepherds), Dionysus or Bacchus (god of wine and grapes, god of hearvest).

Virgins goddesses or male like characters, Atherna a wisdom, a warrior, a protector, Artemis (huntress, helping women's menstruation, childbirth and death) and Hestia (the household hearth or the foundation of life, center of the temple), born from male gods as they had masculine characters, independency and performed masculine or patriarchal tasks when married goddesses were portrayed as evil and destructive like female mortals.

Goddesses such as Ge (the creator and the controller, able to dethrone the other gods), Thea, Hera (the queen of the gods), Demeter, Aphrodite (a fertility goddess) and Cybele were known as the powerful mother goddesses and they became a threat to the divine society. So they were portrayed as adultery, Zeus tried to stop their power by giving birth on his own.

As female domination was possible in prehistory or the Neolithic era, subordination should not be seen as natural.¹⁴ However, the goddesses became subordinate with male-like characters and followed the male deities and mother-like or fertility character at the bottom.

¹³ Lynn R. LiDonnici, "Women's Religions and Religious Lives in the Greco-Roman City," in *Women & Christian Origins*, eds, Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 80-81. The well known gods and goddesses common to both Greek and Roman society are Zeus (Jupiter), Hera (Juno), Poseidon (Neptune), Apollo, Artemis (Diana), Athena (Minerva), Hermes (Mercury), Ares (Mars), Aphrodite (Venus), Demeter (Ceres), Dionysus (Bacchus) and Hephaestus (Vulcan).

¹⁴ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, c1995), 12,15.

Three virgin goddesses ¹⁵ were portrayed by Greek writers, and in Roman Virgil's *Aeneid* as the ones who are capable of performing the same duties, such as in military and political affairs, as their male counterparts and like male mortals, they possessed physical strength and aggressiveness. ¹⁶ The goddesses who were powerful and became a threat to the divine society are pushed to the bottom and they were portrayed as adulterous, even Zeus tried to stop their power by giving birth on his own. ¹⁷ On the other hand, male deities' sexual affairs with other male and female mortals and immortals were portrayed as the power of maleness over the 'other.' Homer states that Zeus's affairs are not for lust but for leaving heirs or establishing gods' domination. He said "it is to bring some system into the divine society." (Odyssey 9:269-78)¹⁸

Philosophers also designated the 'others' such as robbers, murderers, drug users, adulterers or those who induced abortions as morally impure persons and did not allow their participation in the rituals. These regulations or codes were legalized as the commands from god (Zeus). Limitation on women's leadership roles can be seen in restrictions on women's prophesying as the restriction of the gods. When women joined some cults where they could exercise their freedom, the intellectuals, philosophers and aristocrats created a separation between male and female cults. In Laws 8.828, Plato said "they shall have festivals for women, distinguishing those which ought to be separate from men's festivals and those which

¹⁵ Sarah B. Pomeroy, 2- 8 and "The Virgin Goddesses," Classic 242 Summary Notes on the Virgins, http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/Cls/s05/CLS242-01/virgins.html (accessed 5 June 2010).

¹⁶ Judith P. Hallett, "Women's Lives in the Ancient Mediterranean," Women & Christian Origins, eds, Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22-23.

¹⁷ "Goddess," http://www.goddess.com.au/goddesses/Ge.htm (accessed 5 June 2010).

¹⁸ Everett Ferguson, *Background of Early Christianity* (Third Edition), (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 155-156.

¹⁹ Ibid., 184-188.

ought not." Later women had different deities and worshipped in different places, on different days and in temples separate from men. ²⁰

They also disliked the feminine or sham forms of worship such as the cult of Cybele (the goddess of the earth or Gaia in Greek), Dionysus (a deity "who had been raised as a girl and was himself called male-female and sham man"), Demeter of Corinth and Artemis of Ephesus. They might have different and distinctive ritual rites. First, men castrated themselves and wore women's clothes to worship and women also dressed in men clothes. Second, priests also wore veils and jewellery. Men wore veils and long hair as signs of their dedication to the god while women did the opposite, to show their devotion.²¹ Third, they performed rituals with loud cries, madness, glossolalia and prophesy as a gift from Dionysus. The worshippers were known as maenads or 'mad ones.' Yet still their emotional expression in their worship was a refuge from household, social and societal neglect, where social contacts between men and women were seen by male philosophers and religious leaders as worthy of scorn and censure.²²

8.3.1.1.2. Greek Colonialist and 'Others'

The propaganda of colonist Greeks (e.g. the writings on Alexander the Great, the military, political offices and merchants) brought their deities to the native people and made their priesthood more prominent. By accepting, syncretising and assimilating the native deities, the Greek or the western deities gained more power.²³ During the Hellenistic period, when men

²⁰ Catherine Kroeger, "The Apostle Paul and the Greco-Roman cults of Women," *JETS* 30, no.1 (March 187): 25-38.

²¹ Ibid. and Michael Marlowe, "Head Covering Customs of the Ancient World," http://www.bible-researcher.com/headcoverings3.html#note9 (accessed 9 June 2010).

²² Ibid

²³Antonia Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B.Eerdmans, c2002), 9-11.

did mission work with colonial and political intentions, women played the missional or mediatorial role of prime movers in religion and also introduced the cult of Demeter into the city of Eleusis in Italy and the cult of Dionysos in Greece.²⁴ Through this, the colonists controlled both their allies and enemies under one power and hegemony.²⁵ According to Allan Brent, "The conquest of Alexander produced a universalizing and personalizing of religion as of so much else." It meant that colonisation made the religion of the conquerors to be both general in the sense of universalising and personal in the sense of making it reach to everyone.²⁶ However as the Greek religion was largely practised by the elite, administrators and citizens, or their families, and did not really help the individual pain or problem.²⁷

Many people without money or influential status found no relevance or value in worshipping the deities of the State other than as spectators. They were disenfranchised, unable to change their condition. They did not find any value and comfort in such festivals and religious rituals even though they enjoyed the spectacle.²⁸ The people wanted to be included in religious life, wanted to be treated as individuals and helped in their problems. Therefore the turn to lesser deities or heroes rather than the greater deities, grew more desirable.²⁹ They worshipped Greek deities who were mostly related to agriculture, raising their cattle and fertility and to be protected from their enemies, healed their illnesses and helped them cope with their miserable lives. For example, the deities such as Asklepios and his daughter Hygieia were famous for their healing powers. The Asklepios, a Greek god of

²⁴ LiDonnici, 97-98

²⁵ Baudouin Decharneus, "Mithra's Cult: An Example of Religious Colonialism in Roman Times?" *Orality, Literacy, and colonialism in Antiquity*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper, Semeia Studies; no. 47. The Society of Biblical Literature, 2004. 103.

²⁶ Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of church Order* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 26-29.

²⁷ Ferguson, 184-188.

²⁸ LiDonnici, 87.

²⁹ Ferguson, 164 and Tripolitis, 14.

doctors and medicine was known as the god who could bring someone back to life. So his suffering for others attracted a large following.³⁰ Festivals were celebrated and cultic rituals performed to ensure abundant harvests, healthy herds, and their own more prosperous lives.³¹ In the archaic period, the majority who took part in religious observances believed that deities would grant them blessings if they asked as a community. Every house had a shrine, performed sacrifices and attended regularly to prayer.³²

The mystery religions became popular because they reached out to the grassroots. They seemed to answer the questions of human life as encountered in the people's experience. These were 'salvation religions' in which a deity was to be born, live, die and be resurrected to give eternal life to human beings.³³ Such deities displayed more sympathetic care for the people.

8.3.1.2. Roman Imperialism and 'Others' Religions

The Roman emperor, the senate, the ruling classes' and magistrates' were all involved in religious affairs and rituals, they all participated in the imperial strategy of controlling the 'others.' Firstly, they made themselves highly respected in the religious world, secondly, they made limitations or rules for the 'others', and thirdly, they suppressed any threat from the 'others.'

³⁰ Ibid., 88-90.

³¹ Ferguson, 161.

³² Ibid., 184-188.

³³ LiDonnici, 97-98

8.3.1.2.1. Imperial Propaganda

First, they made themselves to be gods. Gail Paterson Corrington confirms that the transition of power from the Hellenistic to the Graeco-Roman world was legitimised by the emperors' claims to be gods themselves, or that their power came from the gods and was not the power of ordinary mortals.³⁴ According to Franz Cumount, this was a political strategy, to reform Roman society and the failing Roman traditional cults to have dominance over aspects of the Graeco-Egyptian civilization.³⁵

Second, they centralized the Roman State cult,³⁶ the Rome city cult and the civil cults as the most important, and included (some of Roman traditional, Greek and Eastern cults) in the constitutions. For example, Jupiter or Zeus was designated as the chief god who protected the state and its laws.³⁷ Moreover, Roman state cults and emperor worship also served the state and the interests of the government.³⁸

Third, performing priesthood was also another political strategy in both Greek and Roman politics. It made a strong appeal to aristocratic rich citizens, magistrates, as well as their emperors, to become priests to perform both administrative and ritual acts, in order to build a following and gain honour from their worshippers. This system was of great benefit to the state as it legitimised the emperor's and his elite's supremacy over the affairs of the empire.

³⁴ Gail Paterson Corrington, "The Divine Woman?" in *Propaganda and the Power of Celibacy in the New Testament Apocrypha: A reconsideration, Studies in Early Christianity: a collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson (London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1993), 169-182, 210, 211, 217.

³⁵ Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (London: Open Court Publishing Co, 1911), 4.

³⁶ Ittai Gradel, *Emperor worship and Roman religion* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 2002), 12.

³⁷ Ibid., 27-32.

³⁸ Ferguson, 184-188.

Fourth, restoration was part of imperial propaganda. For example, Augustus restored the old cults, replaced the priesthoods and built eighty-two temples. "The Augustan restoration was another demonstration of the close ties between civic life and religious observances." Livy also confirmed that Augustus Caesar was "the founder or the restorer of all the temples." Through this he tried to build peace and stability.⁴⁰

Fifth, the Emperor tried to integrate the Roman cult and the other cults as a form of political alliance. For instance, Augustus united Artemis of Ephesus with the temple of Rome in 5BCE. In 2 CE, the Artemis temple became the bank and financial centre of the province of Asia. Rome sent a college of virgin priestesses chosen from noble families to replace the old incumbent priests. The most striking change was the integration of the goddesses: Julius Caesar claimed that he had divine origin from the goddess Venus or Aphrodite. Two other goddesses were used as part of the designation of himself as a god. *Pax Aris* was changed to *Pax Augustus* and goddess Roma to *Pax Roma* or the peace of Rome which represented both Rome and Roman government. Moreover, for Augustus, if people wanted to designate him as a god, they should worship the goddess Roma. He and the government of Rome took the place of Roman goddesses and placed Greek gods in the highest places in state religion. The Roman emperor as priest was also a great honour. At the altar of Ara Pacis (the Roman goddess of Peace), one can see the picture of Augustus and Agrippa wearing veils as priests. This represents *pax deorum*. According to Res Gestae 12-13 the senate dedicated it as

³⁹ Ferguson, 180-184.

⁴⁰ Brent, 26-29.

⁴¹ Ferguson, 198.

⁴² Wallace Hadrill, "God", available from http://www.technominx.net/Ancient/gods.html, Internet, accessed on 7 February 2010.

⁴³ Brent. 34-35.

thanksgiving when Augustus came back with victory from Spain and Gaul, leading to peace in 13BCE.⁴⁴

Another incident was the priestly functions of the twelve Arval brothers or state college priests to the goddess Dea Dia which was restored by Augustus as part of restoration programme for the old cults of Rome. Augustus, the other emperors and the senate members became members of the goddess college. ⁴⁵ According to the Acta inscriptions which record the rites and activities of the priests until the 240s, the priests usually worshipped Dea Dia and celebrated her yearly festival, after which they went around to the state deities in Rome to sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor and his family on such days as imperial anniversaries and birthdays. They offered special sacrifices for military victories or the detection of conspiracies and yearly vows. So here the Arvals recorded the striking domination of the state cult in Rome. ⁴⁶ This college of the goddess Dea Dia parallels the twelve disciples of Jesus in its structure. As Romans had more goddesses than gods ⁴⁷ the priests might have worn head coverings in serving goddesses. Augustus acts as a priest at a goddess' altar probably owing to his implanting of Roman culture into Greek culture or the usurpation of the women's priesthood in goddess cults.

The absolutism, syncretism, the limitations, prioritizing of power, and centralizing came along with Roman imperialism that superseded the equality of the other, reaching out, freedom, flexibility and tolerance.

⁴⁴Barbara F. McManus, "Augustus: A Man for All Seasons," http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/augustus2.html. (accessed on 23 March 2010).

⁴⁵ Gradel. 18-20.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 21-22.

⁴⁷Gregory Flood, "Gods and Goddesses, a List from Roman Mythology," http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/romangods/a/101910-Roman-Gods-And-Goddesses.htm (accessed 25 March 2010).

8.3.1.2.2. *Imperial Suppressions and Limitations*

As the 'others' joined the mystery religions and abandoned their responsibilities in civic cults or other state cults, 48 these mystery religions were restricted or suppressed. For example, between 64 BC-49 BC, the Senate under Julius Caesar demanded the private *collegia* to close for political and social turbulence. Only the most ancient cults such as Judaism were allowed to have their *collegia* designated by Caesar as a *religio licita* and exempted from restriction. 49 The cult of Isis was a great threat to the Roman Empire from the Republican period. The Senate had tried to abolish this cult as it gained power, by accusing it of leading people into immorality. 50 Augustus was against Isis and himself banned the building of shrines for the cult in the sacred centre of Rome, even though later emperors had favoured and worshipped Isis until it was totally abolished by Constantine. 51 Claudius (41-51AD) adopted the Cybele cult as a Roman ancestral Julian *gens* to compete with the cult of Isis but still gave the latter some recognition. 52 The emperor Nero was totally hostile to exotic cults, whereas Domitian claimed that he was the incarnation of Isis. 53

The reasons for restrictions or suppressions were first, religious: the cult of Isis was as powerful as the state cult. Isis, the longest enduring Egyptian goddess, had all the attributes of the so-called gods and particularly had curing and redemptive power. Not only that, she was the mythical mother of the kings and believed to be the one who could turn a prince into a

⁴⁸ LiDonnici, 88-90.

⁴⁹ Peter Richardson, *Building Jewish in the Roman East* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 111, 113-114.

⁵⁰ R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 222-242.

⁵¹ Ibid., 222-242.

⁵² Cumont, 55. And George La Piana, "Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire" *Harvard Theological Review* (Cambridge University Press) 20, no. 4 (October 1927): 295-296.

⁵³ Witt. 57.

monarch.⁵⁴ Second, socially, she attracted a lot of people which the state cult did not serve. Isis's sufferings, her multiple losses and betrayals made her a strong force to come to the aid of the 'other.' She answered all prayers from both men and women and her compassion was extended to both men and women.⁵⁵ Third, the cult of Isis was a political threat as the rituals were performed in private places and the cult had its own Egyptian priests, who exercised great influence over Roman citizens and slaves.⁵⁶ It was a cult of the political rival, Ptolemaic Egypt and Cleopatra, who claimed to be the incarnation of Isis, appointing herself the queen of all kings, an exceptional leadership role for a woman of her era.⁵⁷ Fourth, she granted gender equality and stood against male power over women, as shown in the saying against her, "You have made the power of women equal to that of men" (Ocyrhynchus Papyrus 1380).⁵⁸

Most of the civic cults did not admit women, non-citizen or slaves. Imperial priests and citizens needed to sacrifice on behalf of them. Impurity was one of the reasons for certain would-be worshippers to be forbidden to participate in rituals.⁵⁹ In his Moralia, in 140 AD, Plutarch⁶⁰ stated that cultic rites secretly performed by a woman cannot be approved by a god. Aeschylus described the king's opposition to women's praying ⁶¹ for the city in times of trouble. The wording is hostile. ⁶²

⁵⁴ Barbara S. Lesko, *The Great Goddesses of Egypt* (Norman: the University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 155-158.

⁵⁵ LiDonnici, 88-90.

⁵⁶ D. Jasmine Merced-Ownbey, 6.

⁵⁷ Witt, 222-242.

⁵⁸ Merced-Ownbey, 6.

⁵⁹ Ferguson, 184-188.

⁶⁰ Plutarch was a Greek Historian and Roman citizen, in the period 46-120CE.

⁶¹ Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes, A. W. Verrall,(trans)*(London: Macmillan and Co, 1887), lines 180-181. 17.

⁶² Catherine Kroeger, 25-38.

Illustration 7 Saying Against Women's Prayer

Saying Against Women's Prayers You insupportable creatures, I ask,
Is this the best, is this for the city's safety...
To have you falling at the images,
Of the city's gods crying and howling,
An object of hatred for all temperate souls?
What is outside is a man's province; let no
Woman debate it: within doors do no mischief!
But it is man's part, the sacrifice, the
consultation

Of the gods, when the enemy assault us; It is yours to be silent and stay within doors.

The distinction was still retained that if a man entered a place where women worshipped, he would be severely punished, and the reverse applied. For example, Julius Caesar divorced his wife when she allowed a man to enter a house when she and other woman were performing the rite of Bona Dea.⁶³ Therefore with the influence of the Isis cult, women experienced greater freedom as opposed to civic cults. There is also evidence of this in the early stages of the Christian era.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ LiDonnici, 97-98

8.3.1.2.3. The Emperors and Women's Priesthood

There were a number of priestesses and female elders in Graeco-Roman upper class society who performed priestly functions. Corinthian women were more respected as they played an important role in religious cults. Grecian women also were famous for their prophecies and their work in the temple of Apollo. Women in Asia Minor were allowed to hold positions in public and cult affairs, acting as priests and matrons. As some cults required a priestess exclusively, so they were appointed with political intentions and strict rules. Augustus appointed priestesses in the temples of Isis and Artemis, temples identified with patriarchal and imperial power holders. The priestess had to be a descendant of a priestly or noble family, mature, a virgin, or celibate. These rules expose the difficulties of a female priesthood in the Graeco-Roman religious realm. Women had to cross the boundary, from being wives or living under the control of men by becoming celibate and dedicated to serving deities. Moreover, when women were empowered by divine 'grace' and became divine woman, controlled only by the divine and not by men, they were sometimes accused or suspected of sexual debauchery (1 Cor 11: 4-16, Acts 16:16-18).

The above discussion describes that Graeco-Roman colonial/imperial governments as patriarchal, hierarchal and centralised. They reject the beliefs and practices of 'the other', consigning them to the most inferior position in society, or to the periphery, by applying restrictions or suppressing their cults.

⁶⁵ Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Women's Religion Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 39-41, 245-251.

⁶⁶ Ben Witherington III, Women and the Genesis of Christianity, Women and the Genesis of Christianity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10-15.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 17-18.

⁶⁸ Corrington, 169-182, 210-11, 217.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Even though women did gain status in the earlier phases of religious developments, it is obvious that the Greaco-Roman colonial/imperialism/patriarchal system had restricted and even assimilated women's religious roles. Possibly, this is one of influences leading to the writings 1 Cor 11:2-17, 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2: 9-15.

8.3.2. Other Colonised Religions

8.3.2.1. Jewish Religion and Women's Leadership Roles

Despite the portrayals of major figures such as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel as matriarchs, and of Leah, or Miriam as prophetesses, or Deborah as a judge, the Bible is essentially a patriarchal volume of writings, with androcentric theologies, terminologies, laws, rules, rituals, institutions, philosophies and ideologies.

Judaism was a colonized/imperialized cult in the Greco-Roman world. The temple of Jerusalem was led by the (male) high priest, male worshippers as the primary worshippers, and women and children in lowest status. The synagogue priests were also males. They read the law and the commandments. In some places, there were rulers, elders, or a father or mother of a synagogue⁷⁰ with one exceptional example in the inscription CIJ 741 at Smyrna, from the 2nd century AD: on the tomb of Rufina, a Jewish woman who was head of the synagogue.⁷¹

However, already in the first-century AD, the leadership role of Jewish women was recognized in some regions, especially in Egypt. Philo, a Jewish philosopher from Alexandria was interested in female figures in Jewish scriptures such as Sarah, Rachael and Rebecca, and he also used feminine language to describe the divine. He mentions a disputed fact, that there

⁷⁰Moyer V. Hubbard, *Christianity in the Greco-Roman World: A Narrative Introduction* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing LLC, 2010), 132.

⁷¹ Ross Shepard Kraemer, 251.

were Jewish female philosophers, 'therapeutrides' (healers) who were skilful in medicine and attended philosophical discussions, although they sat separated from the men, hidden behind a wall to maintain their modesty. Philo comments that they had 'the same zeal and purpose.' These female participants were elderly virgins dedicated to seeking Wisdom. They aspired to give birth to the immortal soul instead of mortal offspring. They had a female choir, sang hymns to God, and drank the 'liquor of the god's love' together.⁷²

Another source reveals that there were two prominent Jewish groups in Egypt: the first, a celibate, reclusive group where women and men participated equally, and second, a military, temple-oriented group at Leontopolis where some women were known as priests. ⁷³ Josephus gives a full description of this second community. In War 7 423-24; 421, he records that Onias had been removed from his position as high priest in Jerusalem, moved to Alexandria, and was received by Ptolemy. ⁷⁴ Peter Richardson suggests that Onias was removed from Jerusalem because he wore feminine garments during the cult practices. ⁷⁵ Antiochus was hostile to both of these men. Onias asked Ptolemy and Cleopatra to build a temple in Egypt similar to that of Jerusalem (Ant. 13: 63). Onias later colonized Leontopolis, built a temple for the established Jewish community there and appointed Levites and priests. Onias served Ptolemy and Cleopatra as a military officer and persuaded the Jews to serve under him. Leontopolis was a refuge for Jews, where religious disputes were settled and the community well served. ⁷⁶ One of Onias' descendants became a general of the army of Cleopatra (Ant. 13: 287). Onias' temple was closed in 73AD by the order of the Roman

 $^{^{72}}$ Kraemer, 28-31 and Richardson, 181-182. (Philo *On the Contemplative Life* 2, 32, 65, 68, 69, 89, 1st Century AD).

⁷³ Richardson, 165.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 166-167.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 178-179.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 166-167.

emperor Vespasian suspecting that its community had become too powerful and influential (War 7: 421; 433-355).⁷⁷ For example, worshippers were forbidden to go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, and priests of Leontopolis could not serve in the temple at Jerusalem. In effect, Leontopolis was operating as an alternative or rival to the temple at Jerusalem, employing Levitical priests as was authorized for Jerusalem.⁷⁸

This temple was involved in military as well as religious life. Traditionally Jewish women could not be priests nor get a role in administration of the city. Marin, however, was the priestess or *hierissa* of Leontopolis temple. She served with music, preparation of sacrifices and daily temple duties. Appointing the priestesses was what Onias pointed out as his contradiction to the orthodoxy of Jerusalem temple practice. However, according to Ross Shepard Kraemer, Marin was a capable woman, full of friendship and love, and worthy of the priesthood. The type of priesthood was the combination of both Egyptian and Old Testament practices⁷⁹ as in Miriam's priesthood and prophecy (Num 26: 59; 1 Chr 6: 3) and in Jael, the wife of Heber (Judges 5: 24). As they separated themselves from the Jerusalem temple traditions, they had freedom to interpret the bible, and adopted a way of living like Miriam's in Egypt where women played a larger part in cultic functions. There were priestesses both in the indigenous Egyptian or Hellenistic cults such as those of Anubis and Isis who performed musical and liturgical duties. There were neither classes nor age limitations in the Egyptian priestesshood; there is evidence of many such women in classical and Ptolemaic Egypt. ⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibid., 169-170.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 172.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 178-179, Kraemer, 254-255.

⁸⁰ Richardson, 174-177.

The Qumran, Essene or *Asaya*, ⁸¹ anti-temple or anti-imperial group was also known as egalitarian. Women, daughters, mothers and sisters could be associated members in an Essene group. Slavery was unlawful, and both men and women in a group were free beings. ⁸² However other historians present this group as opposing women in two ways. First, Josephus' view on the Essenes' celibacy is that 'They wished to protect themselves against a woman's wantonness, being persuaded that none of [that] sex kept her plighted troth to one man.' Philo said "For no Essene take a wife, because a wife is a selfish creature, excessively jealous and adept at beguiling the morals of her husband and seducing him by her continued imposture." Second, Essenes could marry, but only after a three-year probation and following reassurance that their wives could bear children. The Essenes probably rejected slavery, women and money because they believed that all these ties could lead them to destruction. ⁸³

Although the counter-Judaism temple led to a totally different stand for the opposing groups, using their freedom of interpretation, syncretism and political choice had its political dangers. For example, favouring a female priesthood might have come from a political agenda, a ruse to gain alliance from Cleopatra through her religious beliefs. If that is so, women were the victims of the power struggles and other manipulations.

The above examples confirm that women were given leading roles only in support of or integration into a political or religious institution (Egypt) which encouraged women's

⁸¹ The word Essene comes from Syrian word *asaya* meaning physician. The group separated themselves from the Jerusalem temple when Simon, not of the dynasty established by Zadok (10th century BC), was appointed High Priest.

⁸² "The Essene," *Rosicrucian Digest* 85, No 2. 2007, http://www.rosicrucian.org/publications/digest/digest2_2007/online%20digest/online_2007_Dig2_1107.pdf (accessed 22 June 2010).

⁸³ Solomon Zeitlin, "The Essenes and Messianic Expectations. A Historical Study of the Sects and Ideas during the Second Jewish Commonwealth," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 45, No. 2 (October 1954), 83-119, University of Pennsylvania Press Stable, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1452899 (accessed 12 September 2009).

roles. For apologetic purposes, patriarchal rules on the virginity or seniority of women were reinforced.

8.3.2.2. Christian Religious Organizations and Women Leadership Roles

8.3.2.2.1. Texts Against Women's Leadership Roles: The Mixtures of Graeco-Roman Ideologies

The New Testament portrays women as the followers of Jesus, deaconesses (Rom 16, 1 Tim 3: 11)⁸⁴ teaching the scriptures and beliefs of the Christian faith (Acts 18:26), practising prayers and prophesying (1 Cor 11:5, 14:24, 31, 39). They were also granted the right to perform religious rituals such as those for baptism and the Lord's Supper and worship service. However women leadership was allowed in a limited way at the time of Paul, as can be seen in NT letters, and they were banned from the role by the second century.⁸⁵ This happened not only for preventing the divisions in the growing or expanding church but also for adaptation to imperial and patriarchal society.

1 Cor 11: 2-16 is a text with a mixture of Graeco-Roman ideologies. 11: 3 is about the Christian hierarchal system: God, Christ, man and woman. 11: 4-7 is against the veiling of Roman men, priests, or even emperors who usually worshipped goddesses, but desired the veiling of women as Roman, Jewish or Greek women used the custom. The distinction confirms that God or Christ is male, requiring the worship of manly priests without veils. 11: 8-10 is a patriarchal rule taking the Gen 2:20-22 view. 11: 11-12 is on gender equality and 11:13-16 is Graeco-Roman cultural reinforcement. 1 Cor 14: 34-35 gives the patriarchal limitations on women's speaking in public or in worship. 1 Tim 2: 9-10 is a critique of rich

⁸⁴ 1Tim 3: 11 advises that women, like the deacons, should be serious, faithful and self-controlled. It can be assumed that women are also among deacons.

⁸⁵ Synek, 160.

women and 2:11-12 repeats the patriarchal limitations of women's submission, silence and the ban on their teaching. 1 Tim 2:13-14 confirms Gen 3:1-6, while reinforcing men's teaching, preaching and reading scriptures as saving himself and those who hear him (1 Tim 4: 11-16). 1 Tim 2: 15 is about different salvation *for* women from the salvation for all by Christ in 1 Tim 1: 15 and reinforcing the curse on women as established in Gen 3:16.

Here the authors explicitly legitimise their prohibitions as coming from God (1 Cor 11: 1, 2), who wants order and peace (1 Cor 14:33, 40) and as the law (1 Cor 14: 4). The texts create a barrier between man and woman, where men can read, teach and preach the scriptures and can save themselves through the doctrine, observances and practices, while women cannot teach and preach and can only be saved through child birth and by self-limiting virtues such as silence, submission, love of family, holiness and self-control.

8.3.2.2.2. Church Fathers' Authority⁸⁶

The patriarchal and Roman institutional rules were vividly reinforced by the church fathers.

- •Ignatius' Magnesians 6:1, Tral 3:1 --- The bishop takes the place of God when the presbyters take the place of apostles.
- •1 Clement 44: 3---The bishops as the leaders of worship rather than the heralds of the apostolic message.
- •Justin Martyr and 1 Apologist 65:3; 67:4-5---A president (proestos) is the one who leads the congregation
- •Irenaeus 3: 3 --- The tradition and the faith preached by the apostles came down to the church through the succession of the bishops.

⁸⁶ Bruce Shelley, *By what Authority? The Standards of Truth in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: m. B. Ferdmans Publishing Co. 19651 Clement, 30. Ignatius, 33-35. Justin the Martyr, 1 Apol. 65:3:

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 19651 Clement, 30, Ignatius, 33-35, Justin the Martyr, 1 Apol. 65:3; 67:4-5, 39-40 and Irenaeus III: 3, 104-105. Clement was a bishop of Rome from 92-99AD. Ignatius was a bishop of Antioch (35-108AD). Justin the martyr, Christian apologist (102-165AD). Irenaeus was church father and apologist (2nd century).

The early church fathers maintained the same restrictions on female leadership roles, on women's character and capacities. For example, there was a prophetess in Caesarea who performed the Eucharist and the rite of baptism. However her action was condemned by Bishop Firmilian (200-258 AD) as having a demonic origin – an attitude inherited from the Graeco-Roman world.⁸⁷

In his Apology 2, Justin Martyr (102-165 AD) wrote about a charge made by a husband against a Christian convert and her religious leader. The husband asserted that on his wife's conversion to Christianity her characteristics had changed. She tried to persuade her husband to give up his bad behaviour but he did not change. So to avoid living with an evil husband, she asked for a divorce which led her husband to accuse her in front of the emperor. These events caused disruption in the church⁸⁸ which led the church fathers to write the texts to suppress women.

In the late 2nd to early 3rd century AD,⁸⁹ Tertullian from Carthage, North Africa, converted to Christianity but later joined the New Prophecy or Montanist sect founded by two women prophets, Maximilla and Priscilla and a male prophet, Montanus. Later, Tertullian separated from the group and commented on the women's behaviour, especially on their dress, the veiling of virgins, modesty and chastity. In 203AD, he criticized those who supported baptism by women, as seen in the earlier story of Thecla (dated 105 AD) who baptised herself. Women's leadership role in the New Prophecy was one of his reasons for his leaving the sect. ⁹⁰ Such attitudes continued for many centuries in Europe.

⁸⁷ Synek, 157-196 and Firmilian of Caesarea, "Letter of Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea to Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, 200-258 AD," Women can be Priests, http://www.womenpriests.org/traditio/firmil.asp (accessed 23 June 2010).

⁸⁸ Kraemer, 66-67.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 160-225.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 259-260.

These church fathers also had patriarchal and hierarchal influences and political apologetic tones which had a great impact on Christian's view on women leadership roles in Christian history.

The following *Illustration* shows the functions of Christianity or church in the Graeco-Roman period, along with its limited female leadership roles. While Christianity, when maintaining its mystery elements, gave roles to women, Christianity with a Graeco-Roman social, political and religious structure limited or barred women from leadership roles. ⁹¹ It is obvious that the later form superseded the earlier one as women were asked to perform their prayers and prophesies with their heads covered, to be silent or to learn silently in church, to learn from their husband at home and to avoid teaching.

Illustration 8
Christianity with both Mystery and Church Structures and Practices

Christianity with Mystery Religious Structure and Practices

- 1) religious freedom and salvation concepts
- 2)a charismatic authority
- 3) discipleship or the priesthood of all believers with prayers and prophesying
- 4)women are accepted as leaders

Christianity with Church Structure and Practices

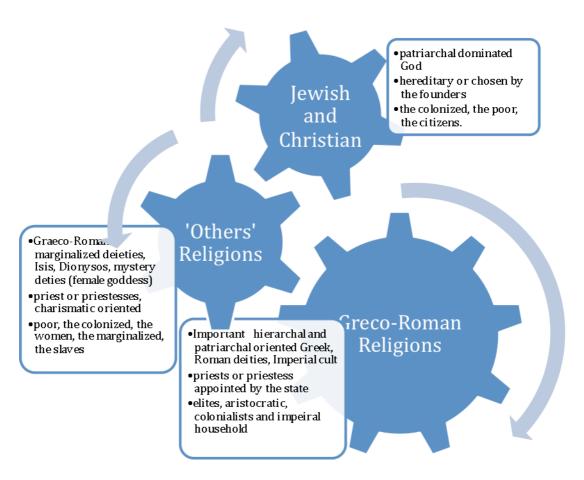
- 1) the cultural, public socialmoral and management standards, of Graeco-Roman world.
- 2) the authority of office
- 3) a club system of the Greco-Roman with bishops and overseers.
- 4) women are not accepted as leader in office

⁹¹ Synek, 157-196. 169 and LiDonnici, 97-98

8.4. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how early Christian anti-women's religious leadership texts had impacts and parallels in Greco-Roman world, in colonial/imperial religious institutions and also in other colonized religions such as Judaism and mystery religions. The Greek pantheistic religion was recreated as the Olympian order or god-centred hierarchal order by many imperialist or colonised writers and philosophers. Greek colonialism also assimilated and syncreticised other localised native religions. In the Roman imperial period, emperors and the Senate established an imperial worship/state cult which centralized the main or superior gods to be the chief gods among so many other deities. The priesthood of both the Greeks and the Romans was centred on male priests, with rulers and aristocrats eager to gain reputation and honour as patrons in order to secure or maintain important roles in politics. The emperors themselves took part in religious rites and rituals as priests and also as sons of gods and, later, Therefore in brief, the pantheistic religions or universal inclusion was destroyed by the Greek philosophers and the Greek colonialists, Roman imperialism and other forms of patriarchal domination. The minor or mystery religious groups or 'the others', as in the cult of Isis, who tried to practise their own beliefs were suppressed or restricted. Christianity, which shared some features with mystery religion, still legitimised male superiority in institutional roles in order to fit into Greco-Roman religious standards i.e. a hierarchal/patriarchal/imperial system in God's realm, and the limiting of women's participation and leadership roles in worship and the life of the church. The inauguration of imperial and patriarchal roles in religious realm led women to have to wear veils while praying and prophesising. They have to be virgin or mature old women, or otherwise keep silent.

Illustration 9
The Structures and the Operations of Greco-Roman Religions



The above *Illustration* shows the summary of this chapter that the two gears: colonial and imperial Greco-Roman and Jewish and Christian are moving in the same direction to hierarchy, patriarchy and colonialism/imperialism, as a controlling system when the gear of marginal religions move in the opposite direction to gender equality, individual freedom and community life.

CHAPTER 9 DECOLONISING CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS

9.1. Introduction

The NT texts against women's leadership roles discussed here have been interpreted by several feminist and other biblical scholars since the awakening of the movement for women's equality. This section will scrutinize the critiques offered by male and female interpreters from the West, Asia, and Myanmar. Interpretations from both the colonial and post-colonial periods have contributed to contemporary feminist studies. This section looks at those interpretations which have reinforced the authority of male ecclesiastical leaders and justified, sometimes by law, the submission of the laity under patriarchal and imperial systems. Those interpretations which legitimize powers and authorities may be reinterpreted to liberate the marginalized; their voices are given a hearing in this section. I will also note some previous and current critics who have resisted the abusive power system, and evaluate their arguments.

9.2. Western Male and Female Anti-women's Leadership Texts

9.2.1. Western Male Interpretations

Western male scholars tend to fall into one of five categories. First, conservative scholars typically regard the Bible as authoritative and binding on all generations of Christians. Hence Paul's teachings on the role of women are normative. A second group tends to mitigate Paul's apparent sexism. They criticized the other traditions or religious beliefs at that time and accused women of misusing their rights within their newfound sense of freedom in Christian beliefs. A third group confirms that the texts were written for a certain situation and were not normative. A fourth group suggests that the texts are interpolations and do not express Paul's

teaching, as the chapters read coherently without the problematic texts. A fifth group criticises Paul and traditional views on women.

9.2.1.1. The Normative Texts

John B. Carpenter² took a conservative view and rejected the idea of women's leadership in the churches today. He criticized those who doubted the authority of the Bible. He gave four reasons why a role for women is rejected in the church. First, women's natural incapability is the will of God. He rejects the Puritans' view on women's skills in leading the church as the gift of God. Carpenter argues that even though robbers have the skill to rob, the bible teaches them not to rob. He believes that if a woman has a right to lead the church, the bible would support that view. "Hence, if a woman has all the skills needed for the pastorate, the natural conclusion would be that a woman, if she has the inclination, could be the pastor of a church." His view on women is based on biblical teaching, which he sees defining men and women as different and unequal. The male is superior as he was created first (1 Cor 11: 8- and 1 Tim 2: 13) and he should lead the church. So making the women leaders in the church is "...is the abuse and the ignoring of male headship that is a product of the Fall."

Second, Carpenter rejects the claim of biblical inconsistency, on the grounds that this would make of God 'a poor communicator.' Third, he argues that Gal 3: 28 has nothing to do with gender roles as the subordination of women is clearly stated in 1 Cor 11: 2-17. Fourth, he rejects any changes made to the bible teachings in line with changes in the world; 1 Cor 11: 1-16 and 1 Cor 14: 33-36 are the fixed or normative texts. He agrees with the Southern Baptist Convention's decision (June 2000) on the fact that God's decision for the pastoral role in the

² John B. Carpenter taught in the Theological Centre for Asia, Singapore, "John B. Carpenter," http://www.apts.edu/aeimages//File/AJPS_PDF/03-2-Contributors.pdf (accessed 15 January 2011).

³ John B. Carpenter, "The Competency of God's Communication: biblical Instruction on Women in Church Leadership- a Fraternal Rejoinder to Revd Dr William Wan," *Church & Society in Asia* 4, no.1 (2001): 11-14.

church is only for men. This conquers or defeats popular culture, which accepts women's role in the church. Furthermore, Carpenter believes that the modern feminist or liberationist beliefs cannot destroy the anchor of the will of God or the truth of the Bible.⁴

It is clear that John B. Carpenter is a literalist, for whom other interpretations are incompetent. This interpretation does not take account of an oppressive system or its victims.

9.2.1.2. Christian Superiority, Paul's Adjustability and Women's Ignorance

According to the evangelical scholar Ben Witherington III, the attitude of first century women who aspired to church leadership was not so much wrong as impudent. Submission and obedience were demanded because women did not behave appropriately and followed other cults' rituals and teachings. For Witherington these three texts follow in sequence and developed one after another. First, the lack of wearing the veil (1 Cor 11:1-16) was copied from the style of the women worshippers of Isis who did not cover their head as other Jewish, Greek and Roman women did. This break with custom had ruined the order of worship, and besides, there is no indication that Paul adapted any Christian formulation of this rite. Witherington points out that Paul maintained tradition (1 Cor 11: 2, 16), scripture (7,12), theological argument (Gen 1-2), human judgment (13) and, nature (14). Paul was not sexist as there was a clear notion of the equality of men and women in 1 Cor 11: 11-16 but he wanted women to fit into the situation at that time, and thus called for submissive ways.⁵

Second, the improper manner of prophesying and praying (1 Cor 14:33b-36) without waiting for one another caused disorder in early Christian worship as it copied the style of worship in mystery cults. Prophecy should be understood by others, not given in a state of

⁴ Ibid., 14-20.

^{1010., 14-20}

⁵ Ben Witherington III, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 166-171.

ecstasy, so one should wait for each other to finish (1 Cor 14:29-32). Witherington does acknowledge that the text demonstrates that women were allowed to engage in prophecy which included teaching, preaching and authoritative exhortation and was also inspired to a certain degree.⁶ Therefore, Paul asked women to be silent because they went beyond the limit of "general church practice, the law, common conventions of what is proper or disgraceful, the word of God and his apostolic authority." The third reason for Paul's decision was that women, especially wives misused the prophetic gift by judging a man's or husband's prophesying, using insubordinate or harsh language and forgetting to be respectful to their husbands. Paul's arguments reflect his culture's patriarchal values and the consequent right to superiority that men held over women in general.

Witherington further suggests that 1 Tim 2: 8-15 was a development from 1 Cor 14: 33b-36 to deal with perceived issues regarding women, such as their sexuality (1 Tim 5:11-16); weakness in faith and guilt in sin (2 Tim 3:6-7) and involvement in other spiritual teachings (1 Tim 1:3) such as sexual freedom, asceticism or syncretism. So the author commanded them to wear proper clothes, behave as Christians, learn quietly and submissively and not to teach other people. Forbidding teaching came from the weakness of women who can fall easily to the temptation of the other false teachers as Eve had done. Agreeing with this part of the Genesis story, Witherington claims that being a mother like Eve is not a curse but a blessing. For salvation, women should not engage in dominating men or in teaching false doctrines but bear children and help them to grow in love, faith and holiness.⁸

⁶ Ibid., 172-173.

⁷ Ibid., 174.

⁸ Ibid., 191-195.

9.2.1.3. Free but Conditionally Limited

Another NT scholar, Richard B Hays, favours the view that the texts are consistent with the writings of Paul even though they are theological readjustments or shifts in canonical history. There were unintended consequences of the texts. Paul lived in the time when the 'symbolic markers' or maintenance of hierarchy or traditional boundary were great concerns. Although women gained spiritual freedom in Christianity, they could not overcome these cultural markers. Paul's did not intend to transform these markers on gender roles, so there were unintended consequences of his words. Therefore Paul gives women the right to prophesy and to praying in public, with the one exception that they cover the head, 1 Cor 11: 3-16. Paul had many women co-workers who played important parts in the ministry and building up the church through prophesying (1 Cor 14: 1-25). These women had freedom and dignity compared to other women in the Graeco-Roman world. However he forbade them to speak in worship (1 Cor 33b-36) in order to avoid any misunderstandings in society at large. Hays encourages the reading of these texts with three theological questions in mind: "how do our actions manifest the presence of the new creation in a sin-dominated world, how do our actions correspond to the self-sacrificed love of the cross and how our actions serve the good of the community"? 10 Hays does not make clear whether these questions are asked of the women or the community in general. As he brings in the nature of sacrificial love and actions, it may be assumed that women need to follow the teachings of the texts by sacrificing themselves, their freedom and rights and conforming to the norms demanded by their society. Hays' theological position thus falls foul of one familiar feminist critique of Christianity;

⁹ Andrew Goddard, "Richard B Hays," Theology and Ethic, http://andrewgoddard.squarespace.com/richard-b-hays/ (accessed 21 July 2010). Richard B Hays is a renowned New Testament scholar and a faculty at Duke University. He has specialized in Paul's ethics.

¹⁰ Richard B Hays, "Paul on the Relation Between Men and Women," *A Feminist Companion to Paul*, ed. Amy Jill Levine (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 137, 143-147.

namely that the ideal of 'self-sacrifice' all too often means women's sacrificing themselves to men.

Thomas Harvey, who writes on theology and ethics, takes the view that Carpenter ignores the biblical references to God's permission for women to exercise authority. Women are clearly given authority and spiritual gifts to exercise over both men and women in the Bible. 11 Paul himself commended the ministry of four women in Rom 16: 6,12. Unlike Hays, who states that Paul did not intend to change the gender roles in his mission, Harvey contends that he was a revolutionary in the patriarchal Greco-Roman society as he let women pray and prophesy in 1 Cor 11:2-16 with customary head covering. For him head covering is not the symbol of subjugation but a glorification of God alone. In the case of 1 Cor 14: 33b-36, he agrees with Witherington that Paul did not command the silence of women in general but only for wives on those days when their speaking in public could have been regarded as rude. Contrary to Carpenter, he suggests that wives' speaking in public might be rude in Paul's time but it is not the case today. God is a God who empowers women to exercise spiritual authority over men. 12 Harvey points out that other evangelicals (except Southern Baptists) accept the right of women to be leaders in the church as it is the calling of God, supported by careful exegesis of scripture. 13

George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury and one of the more prominent supporters of the ordination of women within the Church of England, has written a pamphlet,

¹¹ See Thomas Harvey, "The biblical and Evangelical Justification for Women Serving as Ministers and Pastors in the Church," downloaded from http://www.ttc.edu.sg/csca/CS/2002-Apr/Thom%20Harvey.pdf, 43-44, (accessed 20 October 2007). He states that in the Old Testament, women prophets, spokespersons or leaders (Marian, Deborah, Huldah (2 Kgs 22: 14)) exercised leadership with the permission of God (Micah 6:4). There were also many women leaders noted in New Testament, who are portrayed as deacons or patrons or apostles of the church (Rom 16). 46.

¹² Ibid., 50.

¹³ Ibid. 43-52.

answering the claim that the New Testament forbids women leadership. He makes two points: first, although God creates man and woman equally, sin destroys the relationship not only between God and human beings but also between men and women. Jesus treats men and women equally but the culture of that time prevents him from choosing women as his disciples. This kind of culture also caused Paul to demand women to wear the veil, to be silent and avoid trivial talk, and later even to stop teaching. For him there will be some texts which one cannot accept as God's word because they were written within a specific context and culture. Carey makes clear that the role of women as discussed in the bible is not applicable in other contexts and so it is not necessary to look for the guidance of the church. By accepting what the bible teaches, that men and women complement (perhaps complete) each other, the leadership role of women in the church is justified. He writers discussed in this section take a cultural-contextual view of the NT texts and agree they are framed by norms that do not apply today.

9.2.1.4. Favouring Paul and the Texts as Interpolations

Richard Horsley¹⁶ addresses the widely supported theory that 1 Cor 11: 2-16 and 14: 34-35 are later interpolations. Without 1 Cor 11: 3-16, the texts 1 Cor 10: 23-11:2 about diet is clearly linked to the verses on the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11: 17-34). He suggests, "Much of the vocabulary and phrasing in 11:3-16 are more typical of the Deutero-Pauline letters (e.g., Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy)."¹⁷ He modifies negative views on the authors

¹⁴ George Carey, *Women and Authority in the Church* (London: Movement for the Ordination of Women, 1983), pages unnumbered.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Richard A. Horsley is a renowned professor of Liberal Arts and the Study of religion at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He is also well known for empire studies.

¹⁷ Richard A. Horsley, *I Corinthians*, Abington New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c1998), 152.

of these texts by interpreting the concept of 'head' as 'source' rather than 'authority'. Thus, 'the authority over her head' in v 10 does not have any subordinating meaning. Covering the head is not using the veil, but may recommend the tying up of long hair. Letting hair fall unpinned is a sign of grieving in Jewish contexts and is also a part of religious rites in Dionysus and Cybele and the Great Mother. Horsley does acknowledge the call for women's subordination in 1 Cor 11: 7-12, even though it states that men and women complement each other. Horsley confirms that this text is not a part of the original letter as it differs from the other exhortations within it. First, the eschatological expectation present in the whole letter are not found in this text; second, it differs from chapter 7, which promotes balance between the genders; and third, chapter 7 is not normative, whereas 1 Cor 11: 3-16 clearly concerns established practice or customs based on nature and creation. In conclusion, Horsley states that there was 'male anxiety' which problematised such prophesying in Greek culture as it was suggestive of madness, while hair let loose suggested loose morals or character, destabilising the social order. 18 The text is more properly alluding to the Greek custom whereby women should wear veiling when performing cultic rites. Thus, the silencing of women in 1 Cor 14: 34-35 was totally different from Paul's 'egalitarian formulations about the relative authority and the mutual obligations of husbands and wives' in 7:1-16. Horsley considers that if 1 Cor 11:3-16 and 14:34-35 are Paul's, then he would have addressed his remarks only to married women, not all women.¹⁹ Richard Horsley acknowledges the subordinate position of women in the texts but does not impute negative motives to Paul, or consider him a victim of a patriarchal or colonial mentality. Moreover, he does not discuss the cause and effects of interpolations.

¹⁸ Ibid., 157.

¹⁹ Ibid., 188-189.

9.2.1.5. Against Paul and the Traditional Views

Graham Shaw recognises the inconsistency in 1 Cor 11: 1-16. On the one hand, Paul sees the mutual equality of men and women (v 11), and he permits women to pray in public (vv 4-5). On the other hand, Paul writes that women are created after man (vv 8-9) and their head is the glory of men. Shaw suggests that this theology came from the fact that Paul wants to compensate men for being subordinate to Christ: 'Paul's subordinationist Christology legitimises a hierarchy which compensates men for their submission to Christ by sanctioning their dominance over women.'20 This attitude is reflected in the rules governing the covering of women's hair (vv 4, 7). For Shaw, Paul did not take the women's praying and prophesying seriously, and later prohibited these practices in 1 Cor 14: 34-35. This change of rule came about because women abused the freedom that he had recommended for them. Paul remains a man of hierarchical attitudes, as seen in his list of spiritual gifts; women's assertiveness was condemned as disobedience. Paul's judgements on such issues arise from his perception of his own authority which he believed came directly from God and Christ. He also legitimised his position through scriptural authorities. He reinterpreted the laws and social structure of his time but while he tried to discredit the social order he still retained the old sanctions. His eschatology also enjoined his people to be patient, to wait, advising that "only membership of the apostle's privileged community" would grant entry to the promised heaven. narrative of his own persecution made his authority unquestionable.²¹ He made his authority unassailable and legitimate, with persistent divisive tactics. His belief in the dualism of the flesh and the spirit fed into his social antagonism. Shaw concludes that Paul's self-regarding perspectives are obvious.

²⁰ Graham Shaw, *The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament* (London, SCM, 1983), 86.

²¹ Ibid., 181.

9.2.2. Western Women's Interpretations

9.2.2.1. Conservative Women's Interpretation: Bible Teaching Vs Women's Liberation Unlike the male conservative view which overlooks women's suffering, the female conservative view holds both strong views on the liberation of women and the validity of the Bible. For example, by interpreting 1 Cor 11: 2-16 and 14: 34-36 and 1 Tim 2: 9-15, Sharon Hodgin Gritz, a full-time minister with the American Southern Baptist Church, writing with their support, and out of her personal interest, ²² claims that Paul is consistent in the liberation of women and supports the claims that women's spirituality is equal to men. Paul also cared about the problems of women by amending the freedom misused by women to fit into Christian faith.²³ For her, the word κεφαλη does not only have the meaning of 'source' but also has the meaning of 'head'. (1 Cor 11: 3). It was to express Christian faith reflected in proper Christian relationship, where the gentile community viewed disintegration through divorce and infidelity as the norm. This view implies that the Gentile community lacked morality. In the case of women, hair or head covering in contrast to men's uncovering also arose from the desire of Christian women and men to be differentiated in customs from the pagan women and men or Isis, Cybele, Dionysus worshippers, as previously discussed. Gritz suggests that stronger rules for women were applied, as the glory, or δόξα of a person is manifest, so that women should represent men as they are the glory of men. The word έξουσία has the meaning of both veil or proper hair style and authority by which women affirm and subject themselves to the authority of the husband. The Gentile convert needed to

²² Sharon Hodgin Gritz, Paul, Women Teachers and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: a Study of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15 in the Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc, 1991), ix.

²³ Ibid., 91-92.

have proper manners to participate in Christian worship.²⁴ Therefore Gritz considers 1 Cor 14: 34-35 does not refer to the issue of women's leadership role but the relationship between husband and wife.²⁵

In 1 Tim 2: 11-12 women's behaviour, such as false teachings, elaborate adornment, and any other sins against the household of God are reprehensible. According to Gritz, "Ephesian Christian wives had overstepped their bounds," and she reminds us that 1 Tim 2: 13-15 is only about wives. ²⁶ She concludes that Paul's teachings about women are consistent, liberative and egalitarian. "He affirmed women's spiritual equality with men." He even elevated the status of women. He maintained the proper wife–husband relationship even in the context of the church and the worship service, adjusting women's freedom in Christ and Christian faith. However, Gritz does consider that women were easily deceived, thus seeming to agree with the views of conservative theorists such as Witherington and Hays. She legitimises the silence of women as Christian faith.²⁷ The core problem in 1 Tim 2:11-15 was that of heresy, through the cult of Artemis and others, and with ascetic tendencies which make the relationship between husband and wife difficult. False interpretations of scripture, such as denying Eve's role in Gen 2-3 and exalting women's roles in churches flowed from this heretical trend. Paul includes this text not only to recommend a Christian life in the home, but to refute false ideas and teach women how to behave in the household of God.²⁸ However, although this author seems to understand women, she retreats into a conservative faithfulness on the teachings of the Bible, where women are intended to be representatives of men's glory.

²⁴ Ibid., 85-87.

²⁵ Ibid., 89-90.

²⁶ Ibid., 125-135.

²⁷ Ibid., 91-92.

²⁸ Sharon Hodgin Gritz, 144-145.

9.2.2.2. Feminist Interpretations

9.2.2.2.1. Patriarchal Jewish Culture Vs Women's Leadership

As the first product of the Christian women's liberation movement, the *Woman's Bible* was highly influential in revealing new readings that are pro-women, and depatriarchalized the teachings of church leaders. According to its editor, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the veiling of women in the early church (1 Cor 11: 3-15) was not only a question of appropriate mode of dress but also the fact of women subordination, for veiling was a token of respect for superiors. Further, shaving a woman's head was a social sanction, a punishment depriving her of honour. These values were still reinforced by the church of her day, even if in less overt ways. Cady Stanton suggested that Paul might have been made aware by his teacher, Gamaliel, that in Gen 6 the angels raised women up by grabbing their hair. Paul seems to modify the rigid Jewish custom that imposed the veil. His advice (1 Cor 14: 34-35) that women should ask troublesome questions of husbands in the home came from his assumption that men were wiser than women.²⁹

In 1 Tim 2: 9-14, the author wants women to have long hair instead of braided hair. For men, women braided their hair to be attractive but for women it was merely a more comfortable style than having it loose about them. Lucinda Chandler suggests that Paul and his male contemporaries did not understand this purely practical and simple point, and misjudged women. As often is the case, a woman's attractiveness in male eyes is turned back on them as the inherent sinfulness of their gender. Thus, Paul taught that man alone is the image of God while woman is the glory of man, reinforcing the traditional Jewish man's prayer of gratitude for not being born 'a gentile or an idiot or a woman.' Chandler challenges

²⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "1 Corinthians," *The Woman's Bible*, eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Revising Committee (New York: European Publishing company, 1898), republished in (Seattle: Coalition on Women and Religion, 1974), 157-159.

Paul: if man is formed first and has authority over woman who is formed later, why is it that the animals, who are formed first before Adam and Eve, are under the authority of human beings? She contends that Paul accepted without demur the claim that woman or Eve was the one who was deceived and fell into sin. Accordingly, his texts have legitimised women's subordination and been reinforced by the churches throughout the centuries.

Cady Stanton reaffirms that general canons 'illustrated in the customs of the churches' state 'no woman may approach the altar', 'a woman may not baptize without extreme necessity,' and 'women may not receive the Eucharist under a black veil.'³⁰ She goes on to discuss what the system of oppression has done to women's leadership roles throughout history. *The Women's Bible* is based on an argument for women liberation, on a critique of Paul's writings, the influence of his Jewish culture and his reliance on Old Testament readings, all reflective of the ways in which women have been denied a leadership role in the Christian church from its formation.

9.2.2.2.2. Women, the Victims or Problem Makers

Jouette Bassler, a feminist and Pauline scholar, states that 1 Cor 12-14 is concerned with gifts which should be used for building up the church but not for personal interest. The passage affirms that slaves, free men, Jewish or Gentile, are one in the body of Christ but it excludes the idea of the male and female as a mutuality.³¹ She notes that in Paul's time women lived freely according to the baptismal formula of Gal 3: 28, thus removing their veil in worship services. Paul formulated that freedom but was alarmed when the church overreacted to it. Paul's response was to reconsider the concept of 'headship' and the subordination of women.

³⁰ Stanton, "Epistles to Timothy," *The Women's Bible*, 161-162, 165-168. "Canon Law," http://www.sacred-texts.com/wmn/wcs/wcs05.htm, 114, 124, (accessed 28 June 2010).

³¹ Jouette M. Bassler, "1 Corinthians," *The Women's Bible Commentary*, 332.

However he reversed his argument of inequality with the statement that all things come from God and men and women depend on each other. But later he retreats, stating that women should wear the veil as it is natural and lawful. She states, it is hard to understand Paul's argument as it is inconsistent. By commending women to wear veil, he relegates women to a secondary role.

Bassler argues that 1 Cor 14: 34-36 is not about domestic life and married women but about worship service and all women. However the controversial situation led Paul to reverse his decision and make it 'universally valid'. The inclusion of this text is unfortunate because it reinforced 'the conservative tendencies' and also "...misogyny tone of deutero-Pauline letters and made Paul's work more complex." Paul's controversial and inconsistent views leave her in a puzzled state without any clear solution for women's liberation.

Joanna Dewey³³ sees pastoral letters such as 2 Timothy and Titus, as concerned chiefly with how the church regulates its office as a hierarchical household and also the conduct of its members. Unlike Paul, these two other letter-writers divide people into groups by gender, status, qualifications and duties. When the old freemen are leaders, the others should be silent, submissive and obedient. Dewey notes, "the author seems particularly concerned to control the behaviour of women."³⁴ The author was conservative and wanted conformity in the hierarchal society built by Roman imperial authorities, so this end he wishes to change women's behaviour "to give no offense to men in power, to conform to the values of the dominant pagan culture." The women are forbidden to lead public prayer and teaching, as in 1Cor 14: 34-35, the later interpolated text. He strengthened his restriction of women's

³² Ibid., 327-328.

³³ See "Joanna Dewey," Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, http://www.westarinstitute.org/Fellows/deweyj.html (accessed 24 July 2010.) She is an academic focused on the Gospel of Mark, orality studies, and feminist approaches to the New Testament.

³⁴ Joanna Dewey, *The Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London: Westminster: APCK; John Knox Press, 1992), 353.

leadership by using the temptation of Eve, the first to fall. The fact that women can receive salvation only through childbearing reinforces the belief that the salvation of women is different from men's. Churches throughout the centuries have forbidden women's leadership except on marriage and motherhood.³⁵ Dewey criticizes Paul and the abusive patriarchal and imperial systems of his time which denied every freedom, opportunity and right for women. This interpretation clearly indicates that the texts have alluded to the forbidding of women leadership roles in the church when male scholars have tried to generalize it as concerning the roles of wives in general.

9.2.2.2.3. Women's Unheard Voices

Like *The Women's Bible Commentary*, feminist commentary has produced other critiques of the early church in relation to women's place in the church. In addition, commentators try to search the texts for the unheard voices of women. According to Antoinette Wire, ³⁶ Paul makes no specific reference to the women witnesses to Jesus' resurrection in Chapter 15, although this tradition is pervasive in the Gospels and apparently early. At that time women had neither education nor political power but had started to gain a small space in the church as the worship services which were held in homes, or because of their prophetic power.³⁷ In this situation, she wants to hear the voices from women in 1 Corinthians, as it was written to answer their questions.³⁸ In interpreting 1 Cor 11: 2-16, she sees the authority positions under three heads, of God, of Christ, and of men. The woman's head has only to do with the culture

³⁵ Ibid., "1 Timothy," 355-356.

³⁶ Holly E. Hearon, ed., *Distant Voices Drawing Near, Essays in Honour of Antoinette Clark Wire* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, Saint John's Abbey, 2004), ix.

³⁷ Antoinette Wire, "1 Corinthians," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (London: SCM Press, 1996), 155-156.

³⁸ Ibid., 157-158.

of man's honour or shame. Women's prophesying without head covering can bring shame for men. They were compared with prostitutes and enslaved women who also cut their hair short. Paul might have been afraid of idolatrous influences; when women prayed and prophesied powerfully, with uncovered head, the men saw this as a threat to the glory of God and of man. But women did not realise the significance of their response. Therefore Paul took the first part of Gen 1: 27 and 5: 1-2, that Adam is the glory of other creatures, to strengthen his argument and simultaneously ignored the saying that man and woman are created in the image of God.³⁹ He also dropped the concept of the male and female as a pair from his baptismal tradition in 1 Cor 12: 13. Wire comments that Paul was "raising the spectre of immorality and idolatry to diminish female freedom, conceivably to protect the reputation of his gentile gospel among Christian Jews" ⁴⁰

1 Cor 11: 13-16 is also about his confirmation of women wearing a head covering by saying that "we have no such custom of women" prophesying with bare heads.' Christian Freedom will not change this tradition.⁴¹ Further, Wire sees in 1 Cor 14: 34-35 that "Paul develops his argument as the letter proceeds, increasing restrictions on women's worship participation until he feels able to demand their silence." Here Paul demanded that women should learn by asking their masters, husband or sons at home. Paul's conclusion in 14: 39-40 and using the pronoun 'brothers' clearly states that men can continue to prophesy but women may not. Wire concludes that women's voices can be heard in five ways; first, in their major role in spiritual affairs, second, in their respectability because Paul needs to use the concepts of law and shame; third, in their intellectual interest; fourth, in that prophecy comes direct from God; and fifth, in Paul's appeal to men to legitimise his silencing of women. In

³⁹ Ibid.,176-177.

⁴⁰ Ibid.,178.

⁴¹ Ibid., 179.

this last argument, women were not able to speak as prophets, but clearly this points to their powers of prophecy, and their practice before Paul's prohibition.⁴² Wire employs a 'counter reading' where a positive can be found underlying an apparently negative text. The voices of the female preachers here highlight the essential task of interpretation, to identify a positive resolution for women's liberation from sources of cultural and religious bias.

According to Linda Maloney, 1 Timothy reflects the emerging notion of the 'divine economy', or the church as the household of God in which God as the head, Christ as the heir, elders and other male leaders as stewards and women, slaves and children as obedient occupants. The author of this text still wants to conform to the patriarchal system of his world, and attempts to fix the order in the church, or the order of Episkopos or diakonos within the standards of his society. Therefore the episkopos should have the qualities of the Graeco-Roman household head. Diakonoi includes both male and female in the office but the author would prefer males to fit into society and females to remain in the home. 43 The text has little in common with 1 Cor 14: 34-35 except for the underlying aim, to stop women speaking in the assembly. 1 Cor 14 uses the word 'permit' passively and 'submission' as a verb while 1 Tim 2 uses the word 'permit' actively and the word submission as a noun. While Paul in 1 Cor wants to put limits on women's prophecy, 1 Tim avoids a debate on the subject and chooses to reject women's prophecy, teaching, or authority outright (2:12). Women even should not pray out loud but do good and be silent. Their prophetic role would definitely lead to their exercising the authority over men. So he blames women by taking the Jewish reference which indicates that Eve was the only person responsible for the fall in Sir 25: 24. It is a totally different position from Paul's previous statement that Eve falls into deception, (1 Cor 11:3) but that Adam was first to commit sin (1 Cor 15: 21-22), or that women may only

⁴² Ibid., 187-188.

⁴³ Linda M. Maloney, "The Pastoral Letters," in Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary, 370.

gain redemption through child-bearing.⁴⁴ Maloney's reading clarifies how the authors' teachings silenced women's voices and limited the hope of God's salvation for women.

9.2.2.2.4. Women's Leadership Role and Patriarchal Ecclesiology, Theology and Christology According to Schüssler Fiorenza, in *In Memory of Her*, 1 Cor 14: 34-35 reveals how wives tried to ask questions on scriptural interpretation and prophecies at a Christian assembly, which caused problems to the traditional customs and law of the early church, and the misunderstanding that women's role in these areas was suspect, tainted with oriental cults and a danger to the order of their church. 45 So in 1 Cor 11: 2-16. Paul started to limit the participation of women in praying and prophesying which led to the exclusion of women from pneumatic worship or church offices, resulting in the formation of a patriarchal church. 46 The Theology and Christology of patriarchal submission led to the formation of dualistic church practices where a pious woman became 'a perfect man', with married women under the curse of patriarchal marriage and with religious women forbidden to exercise leadership functions. Schüssler Fiorenza argues that the concept of co-equal discipleship could not prevent the formation of the patriarchal church, or transform a patriarchal marriage/household.⁴⁷ The adaptation of Jewish and Graeco-Roman culture in the early church did not lessen the tension between Christianity and Graeco-Roman society. These apologetic letters include the suffering Christ model which legitimises both men's and women's self-sacrifice and the limited leadership role of women which was accepted both culturally and religiously. 48

⁴⁴ Ibid., 369-370.

⁴⁵ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroads, 1994), 232.

⁴⁶ Ibid., , 233.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 278.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 334.

Male commentators and conservative women have anti-mystery religious or antipagan views while *The Women's Bible* has an anti-Jewish view. Some male and female scholars see women as the victims of both patriarchal and religious traditions accused of being abusers of freedom which they received.

9. 3. Asian Readings on Religious Leadership Roles

Generally, the churches in Asia are culturally quite comfortable with hierarchical models for church structure, known as 'the power-over model', and based on the respect of elders, males, fathers, husbands and sons. Consequently men think that they have a sacred task from God to take control or power over the church members instead of sharing tasks with the other members in working for peace and justice of the community. Malini Devananda states that "Asian churches are still patriarchal, hierarchical and sexist." Malini Devananda states that

On the other hand, feminists and the Committee for Men and Women in Home, Church and Community in Asia⁵¹ point out the need to share roles in sacred tasks between men and women in the churches. This cooperation should be based on integrity and freedom, not on domination or exploitation of one party. The perceptions of women as physically and sexually weak and unclean, their tasks as only in the domestic sphere, and their disabilities or disqualification for working equally with men should be changed. The Church should realize their ability to lead and strive for equality within its community. If God calls women to the

⁴⁹ Kwok Pui-Lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 107.

⁵⁰ Malini Devananda, "Power and Authority in Church Leadership," *In God's Image*, Journal of Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology, 29, no. 2 (June 2010): 26-37.

⁵¹ Jacob S. Quiambao, ed., Men and Women in Home, Church and Community in Asia, Papers and Statements of an Asian Consultation on "The Christian Home in changing Society," (Rangoon: Committee on Cooperation of Men and Women in Home, Church and Society, East Asia Christian Conference, 140 Phidaungsu-yeiktha Road, 1963), 77-84.

ministry, there should be no hindrance in their way to respond to this call. In other word "the priesthood of all believers" should be realized.

Moreover Asian women try to revisit the leadership roles of women in multi-religious contexts and teachings or in the period before colonialism. For example, the female role is important in Korean shaman society. Filipino feminists revealed that the pre-colonial woman's status was much higher than under colonial Roman Catholicism. Buddhist nunneries were formed to challenge the patriarchal family status as they had freedom from household chores.⁵³ Asian women challenge Christian and Asian patriarchal traditions and highlight the need to rethink the positive cultural and religious contexts in Asian cultures that have been ignored. The following discussion will highlight whether the structures found in the texts discussed previously in this chapter are found in Asian interpretations against women's participation in church leadership.

9.3.1. Asian Male Interpretations

James Gurudas sees the humiliation of women in the texts such as 1 Cor 11: 2-16: "With this theology of derivation Paul is unconsciously fabricating the theology of humiliation for women." In 14: 34-35 also he advises women to be submissive, subject, slave-like and silent listeners. On the other hand, Gurudas considers that Paul was not a woman-hater. His teachings for men are much stricter than those for women. In the specific context of temple prostitutes in Corinth some restrictions on the women's behaviour were justifiable. Brutus tries to balance the view of Paul on women and men more positively, and does not discuss women's leadership role in the church.

⁵³ Pui-Lan, 47-49.

⁵⁴ James Gurudas, "Gender Justice in the Bible," *Journal of Dharma* 29, no. 2 (April- June, 2004): 129-147; 137-138.

9.3.2. Asian Female Interpretations

Christine Amjad-Ali suggests that 1 Cor 11: 2-16 is about cultural issues, where Paul wanted to introduce Corinthian women to Jewish culture and men with Greek culture. Paul did not treat men and women equally as his theology reinforced the idea that women were subordinate as the glory of men instead of God. Amjad-Ali suggests, "The problem with Paul's whole argument is that he has reified a cultural practice." She recalls the Pakistani custom of women covering their heads which was reinforced by western missionaries' application of this text. For her, one cannot hope for the 'substance' of women as the image of God if one still believes in the 'forms' of women as subordinate. ⁵⁵

According to Kwok Pui-lan, the Asian Christian Church reflects the patriarchal structure of society. Women are the least in the church's decision-making body. Their subordination comes not only from the church's tradition but also from cultural purity laws and taboos. Women are sinful and dangerous so they should be under the male's control. As in other religions, such as Buddhism, women's menstruation is unclean and they are not allowed to approach the altar, being considered a hindrance to the salvation of men. Paul's texts such as 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 are used to show that women have no right in religious affairs. Women's ordination is also still a question for Asian churches in general because they still internalize the church's teaching of male superiority.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Christine Amjad-Ali, "The Equality of Women: Form or Substance (1 Corinthians 11:2-16)," in *Voices From the Margin, Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (London: APCK, 1991), 210-213.

⁵⁶ Pui-Lan, 99-100.

Likewise, the late Rev. Canon Malini Devananda,⁵⁷ also sees that women's ordination or any other informal participation making was barred throughout Christian history and especially in Asia for three reasons: first the purity taboo on menstruation, second, the Buddhist hierarchal community which historically has rejected the idea of women as monks and third, the Christian tradition that Jesus had only male disciples. However she asserts that "as long as women menstruate they can become co-creators with God in bringing new life into the world." Ordination should not be understood as a step to power or control, but should be a form of power sharing. Among her '21 Facts for A vision of Asian Feminist Leadership', she suggests:⁵⁸

- 6. to address abuses in the home, church and society and the trafficking of women and children;
 - 8. to challenge male leadership, power, laws and all false notions of the same;
 - 11. to be persistent when change is needed;
 - 16. to be firm in using inclusive language, and to create inclusive liturgies.

9.4. Burmese Voices

In Myanmar, except for women from Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, women from other denominations never wear veils during the worship service. Women's leadership roles are also strictly forbidden in churches maintaining this rule. However, some Protestant churches give opportunities to women to participate in church ministries. Women's active role in church works had been vividly demonstrated since 1940. American women missionaries, graduates from colleges at home, gave bible study classes, training for young men and women for leadership, Christian home and daily worship, women's services, bible

⁵⁷ She was an ordained priest of the Anglican church of Sri Lanka, a director of Anglican Church Board of Education and a member of the AWRC coordinating team.

⁵⁸ Malini Devananda, 26-37.

training for young girls, health care, and missionary outreach.⁵⁹ These activities continued until they were deported by the government in 1964. Since then, the above functions have been carried on by Myanmar Christians. For Aye Aye Chit,⁶⁰ this situation came from the liberal education introduced for both men and women in the country. Women's participations in public services and Christian service have become more prominent. Women can teach in the church, as Myanmar Christians believe, like Aye Aye Chit, that "the Scripture does not say that women cannot teach, as some would have us believe," ⁶¹ but they cannot hold office or have the leading role. At present there are only a few women pastors and less than ten ordained women in the Baptist denomination, while the Baptist denomination's view on women leadership role is still in dispute. It is still founded on masculinist Biblical interpretations, Burmese culture and also on the teachings of colonial missionaries and their forms of worship, which is explored further below.

9.4.1. Myanmar Colonial Missionaries and Women's Leadership

9.4.1.1. Male Missionary View

The male missionaries to Myanmar wrote about the female missionaries or 'wives' as they were perceived at that time. The mission agencies had recognized that the wives were very important for the success of the mission by helping their husbands in evangelism and also in teaching local women domestic skills.⁶² In a sermon given to American missionaries on how to teach their wives, the Rev. Jonathan Allen stated, "Teach them to realize that they are not

⁵⁹ Hazel F. Sharnk, Women Over the Seas, a Report of the Woman's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, for 1940-1941,n.d.

⁶⁰ Aye Aye Chit, "The Role of Christian Women," (BD Thesis, MIT, 1986), 37.

⁶¹ Ibid., 38.

⁶² R. Pierce Beaver, "All loves Excelling," *American Protestant Women in World Mission* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 48.

an inferior race of creatures; but stand upon a par with men."⁶³ According to R. Pierce Beaver, women started to have a chance to serve as missionaries when the enterprise in foreign lands opened up opportunities for them. ⁶⁴ They worked as fundraisers, taught young boys and girls, and continued the evangelization of local people. ⁶⁵ Francis Mason testifies that four women missionaries gave their lives for 'teaching the rude inhabitants of its valleys the songs of Zion...' Their task was to save the sinner from their error. ⁶⁶ At this juncture, Mason considered that women missionaries had the same role as their male counterparts in converting the Myanmar people to Christianity.

Contrarily, some agencies and some male missionaries gave subordinate roles to women, who would never be leading missionaries but just 'assistants.' They did not have the right to vote in the USA and had dual responsibility as working in home and teaching.⁶⁷ Beaver mentioned that "Officially the wives might be regarded by executives and board members as necessary but subordinate and secondary; yet they were heroines to the supporting church members at home." For example as soon as Ann Judson could speak Burmese, she started to teach children. Mrs Murilla B. Ingalls also directed some schools and trained some converts to teach in her school as well as sending others out to village schools. She had 'perfect self, good judgment, calm temper, kindness'. But she refused to perform baptisms and marriages.⁶⁸

 63 Ibid., 51. Sermon given at the First Church, Bradford, Massachusetts, in 1812.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 35-40.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁶ Francis Mason, A Cenotaph: In A Woman of the Burman Mission on, views in the Missionary Path of Helen M. Mason (New York: Lewis Colby, 1851), iii-vi, 11, 15. Francis Mason was a Baptist missionary from the USA in Myanmar for 22 years among the Karen and made a translation of the Bible into Karen.

⁶⁷ Beaver, 53.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 116.

Some complained about the women's roles. When the third wife of Francis Mason, Ellen Ballad (Mason) claimed to have had a special revelation and taught differently, they accused her of causing division in the churches. ⁶⁹ Her influential mission work among Karen women and her abilities in fundraising, in dealings with colonial authorities for grants of lands, and giving leading positions to indigenous people led the other Baptist missionaries, especially Rev. Cross, to accuse her of 'jealousy and overzealous prosecution' of her duties. This led to a meeting of American Baptist missionaries in Myanmar to review the case and confirm that she was 'insane and power-hungry'. They also blamed her husband for not controlling her. For William Womack, "...the council [was] concerned with doctrinal issues, but underlying this was a strong interest in politics and the politics of gender." Her husband was allowed to continue his missionary work in Myanmar, but in contrast Ellen's contract was terminated by the council and women's missionary work declined.⁷⁰

Likewise, at first the Freewill Baptist Organization gave opportunities for women to work in offices and in preaching. But later, they forbade these practices based on cultural traditions and again women lost their voice and office.⁷¹

9.4.1.2. Female Missionary View

Ann Judson's letters reporting to America reveal her Baptist missionary role alongside her husband and her perspectives on Burma. Along with male missionaries, she considered that the people in Myanmar were 'heathen, stuck in grossest idolatry, in need of real principle and rude benevolence.' Myanmar is 'a land of the benighted,' she said, 'God calls us to convert

⁶⁹ Gerald H. Anderson, ed. "Francis Mason," *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missionary to Burma* (Grand Rapid MI: William B Eerdmans, 1999), 439.

⁷⁰ William Womack, "Contesting Indigenous and Female Authority in the Burma Baptist Mission: the case of Ellen Mason," *Women's History Review* 17, no. 4 (September 2008): 543–559

⁷¹ Beaver, 43.

the heathen.'⁷² Her leading position can be seen through her several arguments with Buddhists against their beliefs. She criticized the religious toleration which applied only to the foreigners and not to the slaves of the emperor or the native people. Her meeting with Princess T.... to discuss the Christian religion was also a prominent event, when no ordinary Burmese woman could have that chance.⁷³ Ann Judson also wrote a Christian catechism in Burmese and Thai and translated the Gospel of Matthew into Siamese (the Thai language). She later asked for donations for female education which was not encouraged at that time, for which she blamed the Burmese culture: "...it appears that female education forms no part of the Burman system: on the contrary, national prejudice is strongly opposed to the principle."⁷⁴ Her roles both in the mission field and the mission society became models for women in Myanmar.

9.4.1.3. Missionary Translations

Both male and female missionaries in Burma had encouraged or promoted the roles of women in the churches and even in Burmese society up to a certain level, which was quite high compared to the standard of that time. However the big issue is that this standard has remained static for too many reasons. Judson's translations of 1 Cor 11: 3-16 have significant differences and distinctive points in comparison with English translations. He translated 'head' as *a htut a tate*, meaning 'the supreme, the peak, or higher position' so that verse 3 means that Christ is the supreme being of man and man is of woman.

In verse 7 the word 'glory' appears as *a yaung* which means 'glow, hue, radiance, tinge, or sheen.' This also has connotation of power as only holy or powerful people have the

⁷² Ann H. Judson, *An Account of the American Baptist Mission to the Burma Empire: A Series of hitherto Letters Addressed to A Gentleman in London*, 2nd ed., (London: Joseph Butterworth and Son, 1887), 76-78,88.

⁷³ Ibid., 247, 251, 309-10.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

glow or halo. Verse 10 is translated as 'as women should have the sign of submission over their head.' 1 Cor 14: 34-35 is translated as '[Women] should be under authority and there is no right for them to speak in the church service as it is not proper. They should ask their husbands at home as the law does not come from them but to them.' Judson also translates 1 Tim 2: 11-15 as "I will not allow women to teach or have authority over their husband." All these texts were translated as closely to the original Greek as possible, to maintain the infallibility of the Bible even though the works of the women missionaries at this time show a great contradiction with the teachings of the Bible.

9.4.2. Myanmar Male Interpretations

The texts related to women are rarely touched by the male pastors or biblical students of Myanmar. However, with the awakening of a feminist emancipation movement, there are some who have interpreted and reflected on these texts, demonstrating their interest in the women's issues. The great Christian writer Thanlwin Pe Thwin saw women's participation in the church negatively. He asserted that women's preaching, praying and reading of scripture tended to be very long and boring. As they like gossiping, local news can spread quickly and can bring disputes in the church. As they are easily be persuaded by the worldly things, it is difficult for them to have an appropriate concentration on spiritual things. Even though he did not quote the Bible directly, his assumptions of women's behaviour supported the teachings of the texts. His sexist views assume that men's preaching is better; that men do not gossip and that men cannot be tempted by worldly things so easily and thus deserve the leading roles in the church.

⁷⁵ Thanlwin Pe Thwin, *Myanma Taman*, May 1-15, 1972.

Saw Eh Htoo suggests that in Paul's time women needed to wear the veil first as the sign of inferiority and second as a great protection as it symbolises power, honour and dignity. Without her covering a woman is seen as wayward and can be insulted. So she should appear veiled in worship services.⁷⁶ It can be assumed that he sees the second view within the Burmese context where women must dress decently and appropriately, based on a cultural demand to avoid unnecessary danger.

Thaung Biak Par believes that many churches have chosen deaconesses to supplement the board of deacons based on Gal 3: 28. He has sympathy towards women because, without the right to preside, women need to do everything else for the communion service even though they have the same moral qualifications as male deacons. However, he allows that as women are normally accused of gossiping, idle and slanderous talk, they should be particularly careful of their words.⁷⁷ Here he and Thanlwin Pe Thwin share the same devaluing view of women related to their talking.

More positively, Jaw Li has called for the partnership of women and men in the church. The headship of men in 1 Cor 11: 3 is not about domination, oppression, or treating women as subordinate but to enjoin them to lead and promote the congregation. Thus he still sees men in the leading position of the church. He also argues that most women do not wish to be ordained and also that many men do not agree on women's ordination. But for Jaw Li, women should be ordained, on the same basis as men, not to be the master but to be the servant of Christ. If the ideal of servanthood through ordination applies to both men and

⁷⁶ Saw Eh Htoo, "Comparison Between the City of Corinth and the Country of Myanmar," (BTh Research Paper, KBTS, 1997), 15-17.

⁷⁷ Thaung Biak Par, *The Qualification for Christian Ministry According to 1 Timothy* (BRE Research Paper, MIT, 1999), 54-56.

⁷⁸ Jaw Li, Reinterpretation of the Role of the Church (MDiv Thesis 39, MIT, 2007), 55.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 58.

women, it is a worthy statement. However it is not fair to apply this concept of service only to women. Jaw Li also places some limitations on women's leadership by stating that it should not replace the role of men.⁸⁰

Based on the above discussions, it can be argued that Myanmar male views on women's leadership role are in the process of seeing women from patriarchal perspective to an equal role.

9.4.3. Myanmar Women's Interpretations

For Malakan Dau Say, Paul's demands for veiling and silence in 1 Cor 11:8-12 and 1 Tim 2:9-15 were based on the fact that women might be deemed to be prostitutes by others in their manner or dress or outspoken behaviour. The other reason is that Paul himself was a patriarchal victim. Nowadays churches use these texts to prohibit women to speak, long after the cultural framework of Paul's view has disappeared. Dau Say sees this as discrimination and oppression.⁸¹

Aye Aye Chit understands 1 Cor 14:34 as a limitation only on women teaching during the service of an organized church and 1 Tim 2:11-12 as starting that women may not teach without their husband's or minister's permission. She states that as Christians in Myanmar do not understand the nature of the church and the potential of women, they limit women's participation in church services. Thus, "The role of theologically trained women currently being played in the church and mission of the church is limited." She adds that "To my knowledge even if the women are trained theologically in the same way as men, they have to

⁸⁰ Ibid 60

⁸¹ Malakan Dau Say, "Evaluating the ability of women from a theological point of view," (BTh Research Paper, MICT, 2003), 34-36, 37-39.

carry an overload of work but not allow the same leading role... (sic)"⁸² So for her the church should understand more about women's potential and use them in the church as they use men. Women should not be satisfied with the limited tasks previously allowed them by the church.⁸³

Nyunt Nynt Thein writes that theologically trained women in Myanmar urge Christians to see the true nature of the church which bars women from full ministry. They should also find alternative models to encourage both women and the church to include women in Church offices. At the same time, women's awareness and feminist theological reflection are continuous tasks to carry forward. Critical dialogue and cooperation with women of other faiths, who are involved in promoting women's consciousness and status, should also be encouraged.⁸⁴

Taking a positive approach to Paul, Eh Tar Gay has discussed 1 Tim 2: 11-15 as the work of patriarchal church fathers. Paul, who expresses gender equality, would not have written this text. Again she discusses 1 Cor 11: 3-16, pointing out that Paul reveals two contrasting attitudes to women. One supports the submissive role of women and the other expresses the equal and supplementary role of woman with man. The church usually favours the first view. Eh Tar Gay calls for the church to favour the second of Paul's views. Taking a feminist liberationist perspective, she tries to find liberative views in the texts and to recover the writings of Paul from negative connotations. For her the authors of pastoral letters and

⁸² Aye Aye Chit, 38.

⁸³ Ibid., 39.

⁸⁴ Kwok Pui-Lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 102.

⁸⁵ Eh Tar Gay, "Exegesis on 1 Timothy 2:11-15: Debate on Women Leadership," *Rays, MIT. Journal of Theology* Vol 4. ed. Samuel Ngun Ling (Yangon: Myanmar Institute of Theology, 2003), 41-50.

⁸⁶ Eh Tar Gay, "Director Paul's Film of Women with Two Faces, 1 Cor 11: 2:16", *Empowering Women for Justice and Peace, De Hlaing Than Women's Magazine* 1, no. 2 (November, 2007): 88-91. This magazine is in Burmese.

those who canonized the texts are patriarchal authors who suppress women and their role in the church.

These Myanmar female interpreters see that the church, with or without these problematic texts, reinforces the exclusion of women from leadership. Therefore they encourage women to fight for the leading roles.

9.5. Postcolonial Interpretations

From a postcolonial stance and in contesting imperial power and hierarchy, Ralph Broadbent has discussed 1 Tim 2: 9-15 by including the interpretation of many western commentators from the colonial period. He sees that they stereotyped women as being less skilled in teaching, weak and easily deceived when they legalized male leaders as the norm (1 Tim 3: 1-13), and recognised them as bishops of the Church and heads of their households.⁸⁷

Broadbent claims that certain texts in the letters to Timothy and Titus encouraged people "to follow the hierarchical rules of the empire, with the emperor and other local rulers at the top and women, slaves and children at the bottom." Thus the reversal of the egalitarian status suggested in Gal 3:28 into a traditional one resulted from both outside and inside pressures. Economically, wealthy men reinforced their former authority when they saw that women were teaching and slaves had equal status with them. Nowadays, commentators have reinforced the texts to support new forms of imperialism as the British commentators supported the British Empire. Broadbent claims that research and investigation from a postcolonial perspective is 'destabilizing current certainties.'

⁸⁷ Ralph Broadbent, "The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus," in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, eds. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 326.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 327, 328.

Richard Horsley has highlighted how marginal religious institutions such as the Jesus movement, Paul's mission, the Judaeans, Samaritans, Galileans and the priestly scribes who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls attempted to stand against colonial and imperial power and even their own regimes such as the Herodian monarchy and the priestly aristocracy. For him, "Paul's grand narrative, however, was an anti-imperial understanding of history, not an imperially imposed scheme." Nonetheless Horsley does not discuss the issues on women's roles found in 1 Cor 11 and 14: he sees these texts (1 Cor 11; 3-16 and 14: 34-36) as interpolations from other writers. Without these texts, the letter flows smoothly, and further that they are inconsistent with Paul's idea of gender equality in the baptismal formula (Gal 3:28) and the views he expressed his in 1 Corinthians.

Brent sees imperial/colonial values in the texts and interpretations while Horsley does not believe that they can be attributed to Paul, as he held anti-imperialist views.

9.6. Conclusion

Different interpretations on the role of women in the church can be summarised as follows:

- Promoting women's role is a method of civilising or converting pagan people.
 (Myanmar missionaries)
- The texts are consistent and normative; women are not able to hold leadership roles so one should follow the teachings of these texts. (Carpenter, Than Lwin Pe Thin from Myanmar)
- 3. The texts are critical of women as needing to be controlled. (Witherington; Myanmar contemporary male culture)
- 4. They are apologetic texts (Hays) in response to the culture (Carey)

⁸⁹ Richard A Horsley, "1 Corinthians," A Postcolonial Commentary, 224.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 234-235.

- 5. The texts cannot be attributed to Paul as he is pro-women's leadership and antiimperialist (Horsley)
- 6. Paul is not sexist and he favours women yet based on some conditions, he needed to write these texts. (Gritz)
- 7. Paul (or the text's authors) write as patriarchal men who suppress women into conformity in society. (Shaw, Hervey, Feminist Commentary)
- 8. Paul holds Jewish and Old Testament views, with the church fathers and the canon prolonging the suppression on women's leadership roles (Women's Bible)
- Cultural and religious patriarchalism, imperialism or colonialism and Christian teachings have held back women's leadership roles. This situation needs to be changed by present-day churches (Asia and Myanmar feminists)
- 10. Re-evaluating other interpretations, imperial/economic systems which form the 'other' group, (seeing others as lacking in skills, unworthy, weak) anti-imperialism and master-narrative in the texts (postcolonialists)

These different interpretations offer a variety of tools for postcolonial feminists to reinterpret the texts by avoiding their flaws, cultural limitations and religious suppressions. This also aims to revalue and promote the positive aspects of the texts and their interpretations in the light of Myanmar Buddhist context.

CHAPTER 10 POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST RESISTANT READINGS ON RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION FROM A MYANMAR PERSPECTIVE

10.1. Introduction

It is undeniable that almost all religions are patriarchal and political. The great world religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, have males as leaders or founders, whether it be Jesus, Mohammed, and Gordama Buddha. Monotheistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Muslim believe in a 'God' who is perceived as male. Polytheistic religions such as Hinduism are also founded on a patriarchal system even though some goddesses such as Kali and Lakshmi are part of their panoply. As discussed in chapter 8, Graeco-Roman religions became male-centred through the development of ethical, philosophical and religious thought, created by the worldviews of almost exclusively male writers, elites and rulers. Moreover, the authority of religion became more powerful through the support of colonial or imperial powers as the different faiths spread across the world. For example, Christianity became a powerful religion after Constantine's conversion to Christianity. Buddhism spread with Asoka's conquests and missions.

From the perspective of this imperial history, and the long tradition of interpretations which forbid or diminish women's leadership roles in the churches, how can these anti-women leadership texts be re-read in the Myanmar Buddhist context? This chapter attempts a reconstruction of the problematic texts by comparing them with Buddhist teachings, rules, traditions, principles, practices and cultures related to women's participation in religious affairs. It examines whether Buddhist colonialism and its patriarchal system, like the Graeco-Roman world and Christianity, wiped out women's leadership roles and prevented them from redeveloping. The aim is to identify the negative elements or dominating values in these

religious texts, and to construct more positive, egalitarian interpretations by applying a postcolonial feminist resistant reading.

10.2. Levelling Strategy

In Luke 1:52 the first NT postcolonial feminist, Mary, talks of God "putting down the mighty rulers or lifting up the low," and Luke 3: 5 affirms that "every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low." These texts are prophesies of the coming of the messiah who promises to bring equality and justice to God's people. While feminist theology usually emphasises the raising of the poor and oppressed, even to glory or exaltation in their humility, the postcolonialist tries to make those in high places and power become humble and just. Postcolonial feminists use both these strategies. This is to bring down the 'peak' or power of colonial/imperial/patriarchal authority or the male religious leaders and level up all the oppressed: the female half of humanity, the lowly, the marginalised, and the 'other.'

Illustration 10 Levelling Method

Level down the dominate powers such as colonial/imperial/patriarchal/hierarchical/ entities. (Postcolonial approach)

Level up The Others, the marginal, the peripheral, the colonized, the victims of power (feminist liberationist approach)

10.2.1. Levelling Down the Hierarchical Pagoda Tower

10.2.1.1. Sangha as the Pagoda Hierarchical Contour (1 Cor 11: 2-3, 7-8)

Authority, community and discipline are essential in all religions¹ and these tend to form into a hierarchal system. The teaching of 1 Cor 11: 2-3, 7-8 confirms the hierarchical system in Christian belief, that God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of men, and and man is the head of woman, which has blocked the path of women to leadership roles. Women in the Buddhist *Sangha* are treated in the same way.

In Myanmar, Sangha is understood as male or monk² even though its original meaning is 'an assembly' or 'a community committed to the Dharma of the Buddha.' The members of the community are not mediators between gods and humans in a priestly role but have a twofold function: to strive for their own enlightenment and to preserve the Dharma.³ *Sangha* also carries the meaning of a 'gem-like' body of seekers for liberation from *samsara* or rebirth.⁴ It supposed to be a democratic community in the sense that everyone could practise dharma-*vinaya* and could attain nirvana; there is no caste system in Buddhism.⁵ Even though the Sangha community can be seen as collective or total in making decisions or legislation,⁶ in practice, it can be defined as a 'pagoda structure' or 'slender structure', with Buddha at the

¹ Chia-Shin Yu, Early Buddhism and Christianity: A Comparative Study of the Founders' Authority, the Community and the Discipline (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1999), xi.

² See Chapter 1, 38-40.

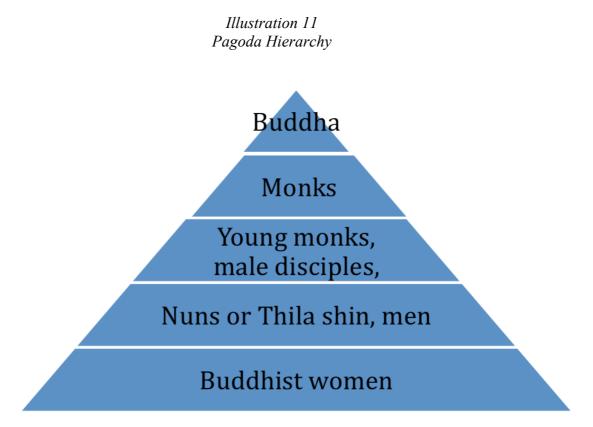
³ David Burnett, *The Spirit of Buddhism, a Christian Perspective on Buddhist Thought* (East Sussex: Monarch Publications, 1996), 58.

⁴ Swarna De Silva, "The Place of Women in Buddhism," *A Talk given to the Midlands Buddhist Society (UK) on Sanghamitta Day, 1988*, First Published: 1988; This edition: (June 1994), http://www.enabling.org/ia/vipassana/Archive/D/DeSilva/WomenInBuddhism/womenInBuddhismSwarnaDeSilva.html#chap1 (accessed on 1 April 2010).

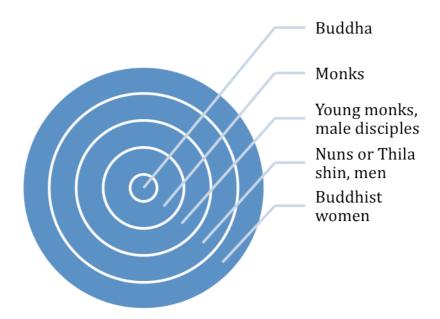
⁵ Yıı 3-7

⁶ Andrew Huxley, "Positivists and Buddhist: The Rise and Fall of Anglo-Burmese Ecclesiastical Law," *Law & Social Inquiry* 26 no 1 (Winter, 2001): 113-142.

top or at the centre, male monks at the second level or layer, lay men at the third level or layer, nuns at the fourth, and lay women at the bottom or periphery. The scholar Viola has termed the order of Buddhism as 'temple authoritarianism'.



⁷ Viola Abeygoonerwardena, "Women in Buddhism and Temple Authoritarianism," *In God's Image* 25, no. 4 (December 2006): 57- 62.



Even though 95% of attendance of the pagoda are women and the rituals' connected responsibilities at the temple are taken care of by women, the 5% of men take the leading roles. Moreover, women are forbidden to enter the inner part of the temple where the relics are kept, to step in the inner part of the Bo tree or to carry offerings to the altars; only men are allowed these duties. The restrictions are based on a taboo that women are unclean. During menstruation, women cannot go to the temple and cannot serve the monks. Being born as a woman is a consequence of having bad *karma* in the previous life. Most Buddhist women still hold these ideas or beliefs as genuine. This also reinforces the condemnation of Buddhist women in religious roles.

Who formed this system? This hierarchal system is believed to be created by former male *sangha* or monks' legalizations of Buddhist canons and Institutions, the colonizing and patriarchal religious transformation of King Asoka and the historical cultural elimination of female monastics or the *bhikkhuni* order from Buddhist religious life.⁹

⁸ Ibid., 57- 62.

⁹ Ibid., 57- 62.

10.2.1.2. Buddha and His Male Followers?

Even though many scholars believe that Buddha himself never claimed that he was an authority figure or master, never appointed a successor or discriminated against any gender or other group, his answers to the questions of his close attendant, Ananda created the pathway to the hierarchal system. First, when Ananda asked Buddha whether the community of Buddhism can be united without any leader, he replied that the disciples should practise the dharma as an authoritative agent, creating an impersonal authority for the unity of the community. Second, when Ananda asked who would succeed Buddha, he answered that the *arahats* (those five close followers who had become enlightened through his teachings) should be leaders. As Ananda was not one of those *arahats*, he felt that there was no equality between Buddha and the *arahats* and that the dharma should be the sole authority. The authority goes into the hands of the teachings of Buddha and the immediate followers or *sangha* or the *arahats*, in which women might have been involved. However the women's position in the *sangha* community is now also invisible.

10.2.1.3. The King or the Emperor?

A possible reason for Buddhist demarcation of women's leadership roles may have come from the same colonization, imperialism and patriarchy which shaped dominant Buddhist beliefs, cultures and traditions. The Buddhist King Asoka is an essential figure in this discussion. His conversion made Buddhism into one of the world's great religions. He was known as a fair man, and the first missionary emperor of Buddhism, although he tolerated

¹⁰ Actually the first five monks can be compared to Buddha as the *arahats* (who were already enlightened by the teaching of Buddha but they were not designated as Buddha) and could attain equal status with their master.

¹¹ Yu, 3-7.

other religions. His twelfth Rock Edict says that honouring other faiths is honouring one's own faith. However in practice, Asoka believed that Buddhism was superior to other religions such as Hinduism or spirit worship. His demarcation is evident: first, *Karma* creates a hierarchal religion with Buddha at the top and the other native spiritual entities at a lower level. For example, the poor or the oppressed are suffering because of the bad karma of their previous lives, while the rulers have a better life or a leading position because of their better karma. Second, he claimed that Buddha is higher than the Hindu Brahman divines, called *Devas* as they are immortal beings who needed to be reborn as mortal men to attain nirvana. As they live in a heaven lower than nirvana they are subjects of Buddha. He

After Buddha, *Sanghas* were Asoka's second priority. He supported them for the expansion of Buddhism and also for his own benefit. "The king['s] duty was to protect the *Sangha* and provide support for the monasteries, and the monks in turn generally helped the kings."(sic)¹⁵ Asoka's generosity attracted many *Sanghas* who joined the order but some had wrong motives such as the pursuit of an easy life and the desire to create their own doctrines. The emperor attempted to restore the order by calling the councils to purify the *Sangha* community. According to legend, he gave everything, including his empire to *Sangha*.¹⁶ Through the support and favour of the emperor, the authority of *Sanghas* increased; the rulers and the religion became inseparable. Later in the tenth century AD, in Sri Lanka, Myanmar

¹² Peter Hervey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 8th printing), 116-117.

¹³ Burnett, 83.

¹⁴ Ibid., 86-87.

¹⁵ Ibid.,83.

¹⁶ Ibid., 88-89.

and Thailand, monarchs became the lay heads, protectors or *Bodhisattva* of Buddhism including both the Dharma and *Sangha*.¹⁷

The Mons, then the Phyu, in Myanmar adopted Buddhism at the same time that Asoka sent missionaries to other places such as Alexandria in Egypt, Cyrene and Epirus. The Phyu were formerly *nats* or spirit worshippers. At first Buddhism and *nat* cults coexisted peacefully by serving the people for different purposes: nat cults for material well-being and Buddhism for their spiritual well-being. Buddhism was recognized by King Anawratta (1044-77) as the State religion.¹⁸ During the Pagan dynasty (849-1287), many temples were built. Trees were cut down to bake the bricks for construction of the temples. Through deforestation, the land turned into the dust bowl. Economically it was difficult to support the sanghas. Moreover with the invasion of the Mongols from China in 1287, the kingdom was divided into Mons, Shan and Thai and Sangha suffered in consequence, as the rules of the order were broken and the members of the community resorted to the practices of medicine and astrology to earn a living. The sangha community (only male monks) was reformed by King Dhammaceti (1472-92)¹⁹ with Kalyanisima tradition leading to the re-ordination and appointing the chief monk or Sangharaja with a council of eight to twelve elders who took control over the property and registration of monks. This organization was prohibited on the annexation of Sri Lanka by the British government in 1885.²⁰ This led the monks to participate in national and religious protects. Here one can see how the male Sangha community came into being with the help of patriarchal, imperial authorities and how the British colonial system intruded into the Myanmar Buddhist traditions and systems.

¹⁷ Hervey, 117.

¹⁸ Burnett, 90.

¹⁹ Ibid., He was a former monk and successor of Queen Shi Saw Pu.

²⁰ Ibid., 99-100.

10.2.2. The Disappearance of the Bhikkuni Order in Myanmar

The *bhikkunis* (female monks) are thought to have been in Myanmar since Emperor Asoka sent his monks Sona and Uttara (c. 250 BC) to reform Buddhadhamma in Suvannabhumi or Mon region.²¹ On that occasion, 3,500 men and 1,500 women converted to Buddhism. Later the Phu people were known as Theravada Buddhists and their children, both boys and girls, were educated in the monasteries until the age of 20. During that time the ordination to the *Bhikkhu* or *Bhikkuni* was open to both boys and girls.²² According to Buddhist history there were also *bhikkunis* in the period of Pagan and the *rahan ma* (*bhikkuni*) even became a chief of the monks.²³

This order disappeared for two main reasons: colonial invasion and the imposition of patriarchal values. First, the Pagan dynasty was overcome by Mongol colonization in 1298 AD. The area fell into political and economical unrest and was divided into smaller countries with numerous rulers, some of which were antagonistic to Buddhism. Only the male *sangha* order survived.²⁴ The second cause was Buddha's prediction that the *Bhikkuni* order would disappear after one thousand years of Buddha. Moreover in an ordination, five same sex members of the order are required to perform the ceremony. As there were no more *Bhikkuni* in Myanmar, the *Sangha* order could not ordain the *Bhikkuni*.²⁵

²¹ The lower part of Myanmar, or Mon region, whose capital city was known as Sudhammanagara.

²² Friedgard Lottermoser, "Buddhist Nuns in Burma," http://www.enabling.org/ia/vipassana/Archive/L/Lottermoser/burmeseNunsLottermoser.html (accessed on 09 April 2010). Lottermoser is a German Buddhist scholar who received BA and MA in Pali from the Universities of Rangoon and Mandalay respectively. She is currently writing a Pali dictionary, and has established meditation and Buddhist centres in Europe.

²³ Mi Mi Khaing, *The World of Burmese Women* (London: Zed Books, 1984), 78.

²⁴ Lottermoser, "Buddhist Nuns in Burma,"

²⁵ Personal Interview with U Gandama who is one of the nine living monks who can recite three *Pitika* by heart, on 9. 07. 10, in Birmingham, UK. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, *Thai Women in Buddhism* (Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 1991), 30.

With the diminishing of the *bhkunni* order, a *nunnery* order was established in Iva's dynasty. They practise the teachings of Buddha but they are not the same as *bhikkunis* and cannot be equated with monks. They are called *thila shin* (the owner of virtue) or *bwa-thila* (grandma of virtue). They have high social status.²⁶ Still they have the same position as laywomen in terms of approaching holy places and the peaks of the pagodas. With the colonial/political changes and the persistence of patriarchal values, the order of the *bhikkunis* in Myanmar was demoted as an enclosed order as a sign of the inferior status of women.

10.3. Sharing Similar Imperial and Patriarchal Cultural Norms in Christian Texts and Buddhist Culture

Like texts which undermine women's leadership, the Burmese Buddhist practices, customs and cultures also show belief in women's religious inferior role and reinforce the headship of God and Buddha; of pastors and monks; the men with the principle of *karma*, and *hpon*. There are similarities: 'proper hair style' 'decent, silent and obedient behaviour' (*eindaray*), and 'preserving glory and honour' (*hpon*) of men (father, husband, brother and son). Other similarities with different emphasis are that they are not allowed to teach (1 Tim 2:13) and Buddhist nuns should be under the teachings of monks; in Christianity, women who bear children will be saved (1 Tim 2:15), while motherhood in Buddhism is equal to the role of Buddha or monk or dharma or teacher. Differences are: in 1 Cor 11 women wear veils and shaving hair is a shame whereas in Buddhism women do not wear veils and shave their hair as renunciation. Burmese Christians do not wear veils or avoid teaching. These rejections and

²⁶ Khaing, 79-80.

retention of customs such as head covering, length of hair or access to teaching can be changed yet the man as head is absolute.²⁷

10.3.1. Eindaray and Authority in Religion

Eindaray is used twice in 1 Tim 2:9, αἰδοῦς (modesty) and 15, σωφροσύνης (self-restraint) as one of the virtues particularly related to women. A Burmese saying states "Women's eindaray cannot be bought by gold." The word eindaray has both physical and spiritual meanings in the Myanmar context. Physically, eindaray in woman is having abundant hair, strong bones, good health, healthy complexion; spiritually, it is about her patience, intelligence and contented mind.²⁸ But eindaray leads to submissiveness and being controlled, which violates women's freedom and selfhood. With these 'supposed' virtues, women are not allowed to have equal status with men or participate in many spheres of the social, political and religious affairs, thus limiting their behaviours, careers, abilities, and defining their moral character. This is described in a descending, inevitable order of depravity, starting with avoidance of laughing or talking loudly, refusing to be under the control and protection of a father or a brother or a husband, having a job involving contact with or leading many men, having more than one partner, turning to prostitution. Oppressive 'virtues' such as modesty, sensibility, good deeds, silence, submissiveness, bearing children, faith, love and holiness, as mentioned in 1 Tim 2:9-15 are all that is available to them. However, since the colonial period in Myanmar, teaching has become the eindaray career for women in the middle and upper classes. The women from the lower class cannot aspire to eindaray but instead must fulfil the

²⁷ Thomas. R. Schreiner, "An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship," in *Women in the church, A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, eds. A.J. Kostenberger, T.R. Schreiner & H. S. Baldwin (Brand Rapids: Baker books, 1995), 140.

²⁸ Mary Dun, "The Image of Women in Myanmar Context," In God's Image 19, no. 2 (June, 2000), 27-29.

needs of their family. Thus they become labourers in harsh conditions, prostitutes and/or drug dealers - a cyclical trap.

Myanmar feminist Aye Nwe redefines *eindaray* with the 'new being' concept. She proposes "Her *eindaray* must describe and affirm her as a true human being who has self-autonomy, self-respect, self-understanding, to redefine herself, who she is and what *eindaray* means to her." This is for her to think, believe and stand up for herself with self-respect as a being full of spirit, worth and dignity. It is a way to rebuild the authentic self, which is not based on society's definitions of who one is. She concludes her definition of *eindaray* as "*eindaray* is their wisdom, freedom, rights, self-autonomy and qualification to make decisions and to bring forth their potentiality and capability to their society." For the writer, this redefinition of the word *eindaray* has to be accepted by both women and imperial and patriarchal society until this redefinition is recognised officially and is changed in the Burmese dictionary.

10.3.2. Theika and Religious Authority

Eindaray is not perceived as a higher virtue than *Theika*, 'dignity' or 'reverence' which is attributed mostly to men. In his dictionary, Judson used it as 'a duty incumbent on a priest' or a layman with right conduct.³¹ *Theika tin* or ordination and *theika ya sayadaw* (Reverend) are used for Buddhist monks and Christian ordained ministers respectively as official terms which might have come directly from English usage instead of Biblical terms. For nuns the word *thila shin* or 'the owner of good virtue' is used.

²⁹ Aye Nwe, "Towards New Being of Myanmar Women," *Our Theological Journey: II, Writings in Honour of Prof. Rev. Edmund Za Bik*, ed. Department of Theology, Myanmar Institute of Theology (Insein: Department of Theology, MIT, 2008), 102.

³⁰ Ibid., 102-107.

³¹ The Judson, *Burmese-English dictionary* Robert C. Stevenson, rev. enl and Rev. F. H. Eveleth, rev. ed (Rangoon: American Baptist Mission Press, 1921), 1022.

Despite common usage, the word 'ordain' does not bear the meaning of *theika tin* but originally meant raising hands to vote for someone or 'the laying of hands' on the person who has been chosen (1 Tim 5:22, 2 Tim 1: 6, Gal 3:19). The Burmese Bible translates the word 'ordain' not as *theika tin* but as 'appointed'.

In the Burmese Bible the words 'reverent' and dignity' are not applied to *theika* for women. Actually the English word 'reverent' (RSV) as a virtue is used in the Bible for women twice in 1 Pet 3: 2, φοβος³² and Tit 2: 3 ἷεροπρεπης which is translated in Burmese as 'pure behaviour' and 'worthy of God's word' respectively. Here reverent women are encouraged to convert their husbands and to teach others. The word 'dignity' in Proverbs 31: 25: "dignity³³ and strength are the clothing of good women" (NIV, NRSV, RSV) is also translated as "the cloths that the good women made are strong and beautiful." The word *thila* is used for the noblewoman's behaviour in Prov 31:10. So it is clear that Judson hardly used the word *theika* for women and uses the word *eindary* or *thila* to conform to the context of Burmese culture.

Myanmar Church traditions have been condoned by these varying translations and the use of the terms: *thila* or *eindaray* for women and *theika* or Reverend for men which conforms to the Buddhist Burmese religious and cultural terminologies. Without realizing it, Christian churches have been treating women in an asymmetrical way and have maintained the inequitable status quo of men and women in their religion.

_

³² In Greek φοβος or φοβεομαι means fear, terror, awe for higher persons (the ruler, Rom 13:3,4 or the master, Col 3:22, Eph 6:5) or fear, reverence (for God or Christ 1 Pet 3:15, 2 Cor 7:15, Phil 2:12) and respect (for persons, Eph 5:33,) and be afraid of; fear, be afraid to do something (1 Pet 3:2).

 $^{^{33}}$ Here the LXX Greek εὔπρεπειαν is used. It means beauty and loveliness. But the different versions translate it as 'dignity. Σεμνοτης means seriousness and dignity as good characteristics for men and king to practice. (Tit 2:7, 1 Tim 2:2, 3:4).

10.3.3. The Concept of Hpon and Women in the Texts

In Myanmar, it is believed that the ideas that women are the reflection of men's glory (1 Cor 11:7) and that long hair is her glory and a cover for her (vv.14-15) have a relation with the Burmese concept of *hpon* or (*bhaga* in Pali) as 'power' or 'glory' or 'holiness'. In Myanmar Buddhism, the monk is known as *hpongyi* or a person with great glory or power. Even his robe is filled with *hpon*.

On the other hand, a popular belief is that the hesitation in allowing women's ordination relates to the very concept of *hpon*, as women are believed to be born with lesser *hpon* than men. Nuns have no rights to be equated with the monks as their robe will not be treated as the robe of the monks. Generally, ordinary women's *longyi* or sarong is thought of as the means to degrade the *hpon* of men. If a man passes under the *longyi* on the cloth line, it is believed that his *hpon* is gone. If a woman enters a water tank or pool to baptize men, her *longyi* will pollute the pure water and lessen the *hpon* of men. Her menstruation during a ceremony of baptism will be a great disturbance of this precious and rare occasion. *Longyi* is the representation of women's sexual organs which are thought of as unclean, lacking in dignity or *hpon*, while the male sexual organ is treated as a pride or glory.

Changing the perception on women's sexual organs as unclean or lacking in dignity will lead to re-evaluation of the feminine, and create a shift towards treating the sexes equally. Only if there is equality in the perception of male and female gender, women's sexuality and their sexual parts, will they be accepted with the dignity accorded to male genitalia. The use of derogatory terms and the persistence of shame-based customs should be re-examined, and prejudice rejected. Such changes are a dynamic way to resist the power of patriarchal values.

10.3.4. Atinn and Tha Din Concepts and Silencing Women

Even though women's speech (1 Tim 4:7), old wives' tales and men's speech (3 John 10) can be trivial or gossip, φλυαρῶν, the apostles demanded only that women be silent. Most scholars believe that women's talking disturbed the order of the worship services. So it needed to be amended. There is a Myanmar saying *main ma pyaw dot a tinn, yought kyar pyaw dot tha din* meaning that women's talk is only gossip while men's is full of news or information. This is reflected in the judgement that women's conversation is all 'story' while men's is all 'history.' Thus, women's talking is degraded in Myanmar culture and women's silencing submissiveness and avoidance of questioning or passing news is encouraged as decent and modest behaviour with the virtue *eindaray*. Interestingly, Hugh Pyper suggests that silencing women was to prevent them from spreading word of men's secret inabilities.³⁴ The males monopolize and lionize their own speaking and talking, decision-making, leading and sharing knowledge as their exclusive privilege. Silencing women or devaluing women's speech as gossip is violating the basic human right of freedom of speech. In addition it prevents the revelation of domestic violence and rape cases.

10.3.5. Patriarchal Male 'God' or Male 'Buddha'

From the early parts of this study, in the Greek empire the male god was located in a higher place than his female counterparts. Later in the Roman imperial period, the emperors positioned themselves at the top of the social and political pyramid alongside male gods at the top of the religious hierarchy. This male headship ideology, born of patriarchal and imperial propaganda and influences, freezes humanity's worldview, that males are destined to be

³⁴ Hugh Pyper, "Speaking Silence: Male Readers, Women's Readings and the Biblical Text," *Journal of Literature & Theology* 8, no. 3 (September 1994): 296-310, lithe.oxfordjournals.org (accessed 6 February 2011).

superior beings. Likewise the divine is personified as a male 'God' or 'god' in the later Christian world, while the ancient Greek word $\theta \epsilon o \zeta$ refers both to god and goddess.

On the other hand, Mahayana Buddhists believe that Buddha has no gender and Buddhahood can be attained by those who realize egolessness and emptiness. 'Certainly it has no gender and is not different in women than in men', as Rita Gross comments, "...since all beings are fundamentally characterized by Buddha-nature, women and men, equally, are fundamentally Buddha." Gender equality should be normative for Buddhist and not just optional position. However, Theravada Buddhists do not share this view. For them 'Buddha' is understood and perceived to be male and the next fifth coming Buddha will also be a male. For them, according to Buddha, everyone including women who have realized sufficient virtues and practices can attain *arahatship* and achieve nirvana. Despite this, only men can become Buddha. Ven Gandama states that women cannot become Buddha as they do not have the same abilities as men to attain Buddhaship which calls for great suffering and endurance, which women do not possess, physically or mentally. In the religious realm, the comprehension of the divine or 'path maker' as a male leader, warrior, father, king, or emperor, which are patriarchal and imperialist concepts, supports the maintenance of a male-dominated society.

10.3.6. Salvation through Childbirth and Motherhood

1 Tim 2: 15 states that women cannot be saved without bearing children. Thus, women should stay at home, play the housewife, and focus on family life. Some commentators state that giving birth is the path to socio-economic salvation for women. Others believe that women

³⁵ Rita M. Gross, "Strategies for a Feminist Revalorization of Buddhism," *Feminism and World Religions*, ed. Arvind Sharma, Katherine K. Young (Albany: state University of New York Press, 1999), 95-97.

³⁶ Personal Interview with U Gandama who is one of the nine living monks who can recite three *Pitika* by heart, on 9. 07. 10, in Birmingham, UK.

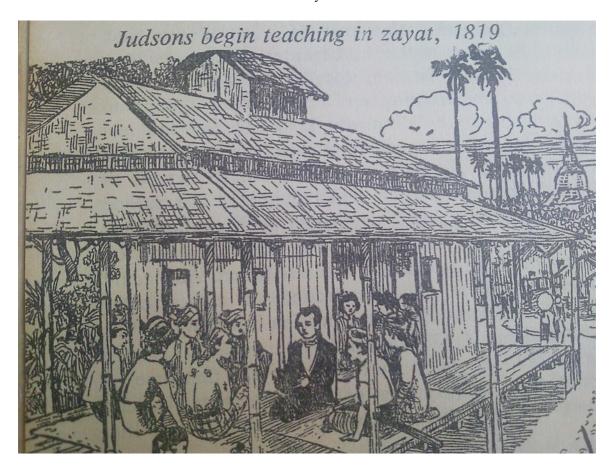
need to work to gain salvation.³⁷ Such views are contrary to the good news or gospel of Christianity that salvation is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ. Likewise, Burmese Buddhist culture highly values motherhood but puts the woman in a domestic realm. Actually colonial/patriarchal society profits through women's child bearing, as children are future investments socially, politically and economically, such as soldiers, traders, breadwinners, child bearers, slaves and others. Motherhood is exploited as they do everything including submission to the exploiter, and feeding her family. However mothers' roles, both at home and outside, such as small trading and training children are not recognised. The saying "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," should change into 'one hand rocks the cradle whilst the other hand rule the world.' Motherhood is not only breastfeeding but also bread feeding.

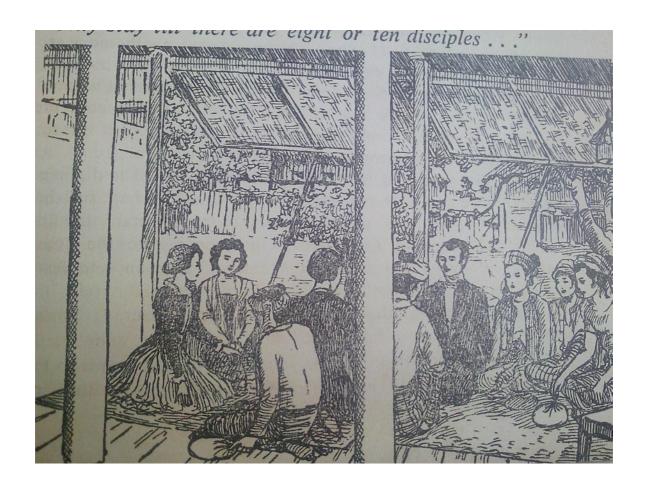
10.4. Zayat Readings or Horizontal Level

A Zayat is not like a pagoda which is built with a pointed roof and a centre for keeping relics and treasures which only men or monks can enter; it is a place where everyone can sit together, discuss things and make decisions. It is the space where everyone experiences equal power. There is no domination, subordination, or gender discrimination. People can put forward their own opinions, make decisions, and have full rights. They do not necessarily agree on the existing rules. The institution of the Zayat offers a positive model for gender and power relations; in a Christian context, it provides a non-hierarchical locus for debate which crucially is part of the local culture rather than an importation from the outside world.

³⁷ Bruce Barron, "Putting Women in Their Place: 1 Timothy 2 and Evangelical Views of Women in Church Leadership", *JETS* 33, no. 4 (December 1990): 456-457.

Illustration 12 Zayats





10.4.1. Non-agreement or Freedom of Choice as Zayat Reading

First, non-agreement or disobedience to a certain rule is a kind of resistance, a freedom of choice for the betterment of society against the authority. This can be seen in Myanmar Protestant churches which have not followed the teachings of the Bible. On the one hand, they conform to Burmese cultural values. Protestant churches unanimously avoid wearing veils during services of prayer, or preaching, contrary to the restrictions of 1 Cor 11: 4, 5, and allow women to teach, which is also contrary to 1 Tim 2: 11-12. These actions should be seen as oppositions to the authority of the Bible and a great boundary crossing. Accordingly they should open the way to overcome all the abusive biblical teachings, ideologies that men are the 'head' of women, who were the first ones deceived by sin and whose salvation comes

only with childbearing. These cultural and religious pagoda-oriented perspectives should be left behind and the Zayat-oriented view should be practised.

10.4.2. Balancing as Zayat Reading (1 Cor 11: 11-12)

1 Cor 11: 11-12 calls for interdependency, co-existence, equal status, shared power and servitude. Ranjini Rebera³⁸ quoted by Kwok Pui-Lan, proposes that in this world of 'power-over-other,' 'power-with-other' should be practised as it calls for partnership and equality within the community, is not based on the hierarchical system, and respects the difference and diversity of everyone. It seeks justice, peace and inclusivity and gives opportunity to everyone, since they are created in God's image and from the source of life giving power.³⁹

Gross proposes that 'post-patriarchal Buddhism seeks balance and wholeness.' Therefore she states that household chores should be perceived as being equally valuable as meditation for enlightenment and that spiritual discipline and teaching are not the only proper ways to attain enlightenment. For her⁴⁰ this follows the Burmese saying, *a lote hu tha mya gohn shet Swa*, or "every labour is proper, valuable and filled with dignity." Human rights should be practised in these labours. Thus, household chores are not only the proper job for women, but also men's work. At the same time, society should also realize that women could perform the duties which men have taken on as their own. Both these quotations are levelling, resistant readings as Pui-lan calls for men to share power while Gross calls for men to share women's tasks and put aside notions of the superiority or inferiority of certain duties.

³⁸ Ranjini Rebera, "Challenging Patriarchy," *Feminist Theology from the Third World*, ed. Ursula King (London: SPCK/ Orbis Press, 1994), 44-49. She is from Sri Lan ka.

³⁹ Kwok Pui-Lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 106.

⁴⁰ Gross, 105, 106.

10.4.3. Prioritising 'the Others'

Rules, regulations, relics or icons become top priorities or central for religious institutions rather than a focus on human beings, especially 'the others.' According to Swarna de Silva, Emperor Asoka's daughter had brought two treasures into Sri Lanka: the *bhakkhuni* order and a sprout of the Bodhi tree. However nowadays in Sri Lanka, the veneration of the Bodhi tree still flourishes while the *bhakkhuni* order has disappeared. She is disappointed with people who keep non-human objects for veneration when they neglect living beings.⁴¹ Prioritizing living beings and women in particular in both Buddhism and Christianity would be genuinely transformative.

10.4.4. Inclusion of 'Others'

The postcolonial feminist is concerned for 'the others' or 'the marginal' who are stereotyped by religious beliefs, teachings and related traditional values. As discussed previously, every religion has gender bias and degrades sections of society with the support of imperial, colonial or other forms of political hegemony that ignore respect and trust in society. Unless ego is removed, there will always be 'others' or marginalised people in the religious realm. Postcolonial feminists should avoid falling into the trap of Anglicanism: the trap of seeing other religions as more oppressive to women than their own. For example, Swarna De Silva claims that faiths such as Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism have more positive views of women than Hinduism, and further, that among them Buddhism is the best in its treatment of women. Similarly, Christians in the early Greco-Roman period accused the cults, such as

⁴¹ Silva, "The Place of Women in Buddhism."

⁴² For Silva, Hinduism never let the women learn the Vedas and perform religious rites. Brahmanism 'did not accord spiritual parity to women'. Jainism also did not give the 'possibility of ultimate spiritual liberation' to women.

Isis or Dionysus of leading Christian women astray, while Judaism also has a strong patriarchal bias. In reality, no religion is free from gender discrimination and patriarchal bias.

Postcolonial feminists using a religious pluralist standpoint are concerned with the importance of 'the rejection of absolutising one religion as the norm,'43 and advocate the inclusion of the faiths of the 'other' or the 'minor' or especially of 'women.' It is important to ensure that 'inclusion' should not be 'a sexism that erases woman's experience by subsuming woman under the universality of man (inclusivism)...' Actually the religious imperialist mind-set attempts to apply its own norms to other religions and further, to apply these norms to women or 'others' within their own faith. So exclusivity regarding other religions can be seen as exclusivity towards women. Marjorie Hewit Suchocki proposes that the inclusive norm be defined as 'justice' which 'knows no boundaries to well-being'. It is a justice for both non-imperialistic inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue. "A supposition underlying this statement is that the world is a network of interrelationship and interdependence." Religions should include each other, while at the same time giving places to women as well as men because they are interrelated and interdependent.

10.4.5. Forming Co-priesthood/discipleship as Zayat Reading

As Christian feminists try to revive co-equal discipleship, some Christians call for the priesthood of all believers. Buddhist feminists such as Viola Abeygonerwardena propose that both Mahayana and Theravada should unite together to reform the *bhikkuni* order. Some Myanmar Buddhists have tried to achieve this. Friedgard Lottermoser states "To restore the order of *bhikkhunis*, a *sasana* reform would be required." The socialist government tried to

⁴³ Marjorie Hewitt Suchochi, "In Serarch of Justice, Religious Pluralism from a Feminist Perspective," in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, eds. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (London: SCM Press, 1987), 149-161.

⁴⁴ Ibid,.

⁴⁵ Silva.

reform the *sasana* by giving identity cards to both monks and nuns and those who did not conform to Buddha's teaching were asked to leave the order. However there has been no restoration of the *bhikkhuni* order in this *sasana* reformation. Other genuine attempts were first made in 1930 by a monk named Ashin Adicca; second, by the teacher of Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw known as Jetavana Sayadaw who wrote *Milindapanhaatthakatha*, in the 1950s; which supports the ordination of *bhikkhunis* by *bhikkhus*; and third, in the 1970s, an application for the reintroduction of the *bhikkhuni* order was sent to the socialist government and twenty leading monks by a Burmese lay woman. For her, higher *sasana* is not completed if the *bhikkuni* order is not available to women. According to Buddha, four groups of disciples, *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunis*, *upasakas* and *upasikas* (male and female followers) are all required, for his teaching to be well confirmed. There are no *bhikkhunis* among the groups at present so one cannot say that the teachings are well established and there will be still be patriarchal reinforcement in Buddhist teachings and practices. Reviving *bhikkhunis* is essential in order to establish a full Buddha's *sasana*.

In Korea, women are trying to form a women's church to share Christian concerns with suffering women.⁴⁹ Pui-Lan writes,

The future church must be free of sexism. It must strive to become a true community of women and men where the connection [between] women's oppression and other forms of injustice is recognized. Furthermore, the future church cannot be engrossed in middle-class concerns, but must become a grassroots movement. The forward-looking church should be a bearer of justice, engaging in the prophetic ministry of Jesus. Finally, the future church has to be a peaceful church, working for anti-militarization, anti-nuclear proliferation to usher in shalom on earth. ⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Friedgard Lottermoser, "Buddhist Nuns in Burma," *Sakyadhita Newsletter* 2 no. 2 (Summer 1991), http://www.enabling.org/ia/vipassana/Archive/L/Lottermoser/burmeseNunsLottermoser.html (accessed 9 April 2010).

⁴⁷ She was a well trained, monastic university graduate in Pali and *Vinaya* or Buddhist scripture.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Pui-Lan, 112.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 112.

My own concern is not to build a women's church but to build a church without any discrimination or any power or inequality, because even building a women's church can tempt some women to hold power to oppress other women.

Therefore, as a postcolonial feminist the writer proposes a co-priesthood/discipleship where hierarchal, patriarchal and imperial priesthoods step down to a horizontal point as co-disciples and 'the others' step up to a level point as a co-priesthood. Through this the hierarchical order will be destroyed.

10.5. Conclusion

By using a levelling strategy, I have tried to level down the powers in both Christianity and Buddhism which are composed of male monks, priests or pastors in the higher position and female nuns or women ministers in the lower. Buddhism's 'temple or pagoda authoritarian' religious structure and the Christian hierarchical order found in 1 Cor 11: 2-3 and 7-8; the disappearing of the *bhikkuni* order in Buddhism and co-equal discipleship/priesthood in Christianity, with all the effects of colonization, wars and patriarchal traditions; the cultural traditions such as hair is the glory of women and headship of men; the concepts of *eindaray*, *theika* and *hpon* in Myanmar Buddhist culture are similar to the concepts of modesty, silence and glory in the Bible's anti-women leadership texts. Both faiths have limited the role of women and promoted male authority as the glory, power, reverence and *hpon*; believing that God and Buddha are male whereas motherhood is the highest position suitable for women. In both Buddhism and Christianity, women's leadership roles were not favoured. It is evident that both Christianity and Buddhism have hierarchical structures which discriminate against women

To amend this, a postcolonial feminist proposal through the *zayat* readings or resistant views rejects anti-women biblical or Buddhist teachings, and proposes a sharing of power or co-equal discipleship/priesthood, the inclusion of 'others,' and the prioritizing of living beings over objects of veneration or gender-limited rites.

Section IV Conclusion

This section has attempted to deimperialize and depatriarchalize anti-women religious practices in the Graeco-Roman world. The colonial/imperial and patriarchal systems have turned inclusivity into exclusivity, equality into hierarchy and democracy into centralising. These affected the roles of Goddesses, priestesses and women and the colonized. As a result of these changes, Christian and Jewish cults conformed or copied the colonial/imperial and patriarchal religious system for survival while other mystery cults retained their position and were persecuted and eventually annihilated.

Different interpretations come up with different codes and modes. Colonial Western missionaries and some male interpreters saw women as unskilful and uneducated, yet helped to establish women's leadership roles to a certain level. Feminist interpreters have offered alternative readings of problematic texts that devalue women, and have campaigned for more prominent roles for women in ordination and pastoral care. Postcolonial, Asian and Myanmar scholars have provided critiques of anti-women attitudes, and have also highlighted Paul's counter-imperialism where God is more powerful and worthy of worship than any emperor.

Postcolonial feminist reading levels down the pagoda structure of both Christianity and Buddhism by criticising their parallel religious and cultural practices, customs and traditions. It rejects the prioritising of religious relics and rules over women's lives. It opposes the accusations that women were the first sinners or were born with bad karma, and need to be

veiled, be decent and silent, to have no opportunity for teaching, and to concentrate instead only on motherhood. The *zayat* structure is a religious life where every person has access without any hierarchical structures. Resistant readings recommend balancing, prioritising and including 'others', and reviving a primitive women's leadership role. In conclusion, with a levelling resistant reading, it is argued that only a co-priesthood/discipleship is needed among Myanmar Christians and Buddhists.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been to apply a postcolonial feminist perspective to the Myanmar theological context. My motivation for this, as set up in the Introduction, to break the silence among the Christian community in Myanmar and to find a public articulation of Christianity as a force for changes. To do this, I have reread the New Testament concepts of authority and submission, in the light of the living Christian tradition of interpretation as a call for metanoia. In **Section I** I discussed first how authority is practised in Myanmar's social, political and religious fields, leading to the suppression of the people's desires and needs. The concept of authority in New Testament letters can be found in the widespread dominance of language and contexts where the male is the patriarchal figure, whether husband, father, master, authority, or head. The experience of women is confined to the regulations and traditions that call for their submission, to avoid shame, to be obedient, silent and not to lead or teach in the church. Thus the New Testament texts on authority and the rules for women's submission to that authority are discussed separately: in the social field in **Section II**; in politics, **Section III**; and in religion, **Section IV**.

Each section (II, III, IV) has three chapters: the first in each case has aimed to depatriarchalise, deimperialise, or decolonise the Graeco-Roman background of the texts. The second has focused on various interpretations from western, Asian and Myanmar sources, in colonial and post-colonial periods. Each third chapter has reconstructed the texts in relation to Myanmar Buddhist teachings, and the culture and secular values of that society so that these NT sources are made more visible as texts of authority. 'Resistance readings' of the texts are then proposed, to raise awareness and empower those who have been led into submission by traditional gendered and imperial/colonial values and to challenge the existing powers.

This thesis offers four conclusions. First, the culture of the New Testament and Buddhism share similar patriarchal, imperialist values, by imposing authority and requiring submission from the female, weak or dispossessed of their societies. Second the proscriptive elements in current theological and Christological trends should be reversed and resisted, and third, the universalisation of biblical commentaries should be revised in order to acknowledge the specificity /multiplicity of contexts. Finally, postcolonial feminist readings have been discussed to show how they have contributed alternative or resistant strategies which give me courage to challenge power in the context of this work, and to encourage groups who are submissive to the status quo also to do so.

1. Most Cultures and Religions are Patriarchal and Colonial/Imperialist in Nature

This thesis suggests that the social, political and religious views on women or 'the other' in the Graeco-Roman world, Christianity and Buddhism are similar. Both the colonizers and the colonized are bound by patriarchal and imperial values in relation to treating women in all social (family), political (governance, economic life) and religious (temple, priesthood, church and *Sangha*) realms.

Illustration 13
Greco-Roman, Christian and Buddhist Social. Political and Religious Views on Women

Realm	Social	Politics	Religion
* Graeco-Roman	* Women should	* No women may	* Goddesses are
World	submit because of	have full citizenship:	inferior deities,
	lesser mental	even if they are	banished early
	capacity, lack of	citizens they may not	* Priestesses are
	honour/status and	vote	suppressed, replaced
	inherent shame, their	* Women are lesser	with male priests,
	role being to build a	rational	magistrates and state

	stable family	* Childbearing is good for society, to produce good [male] citizens/soldiers	leaders/emperors with political male power/values.
* Christianity	*Women should submit to please the Lord *Sinners as the church *To suffer as Christ, to respect husband as lord and master * Christ as the centre/model.	* Not to resist but to submit to rulers as they are appointed by God, but not accountable as citizens	* The male God as the top of a hierarchical order, with women at the lowest level * Women's roles are limited with rites such as veiling, rules of silence and prohibition against teaching for they are outsiders in traditions which are available and to be interpreted only by male disciples and apostles, later deacons or elders. * Women fall into sin first * Women are easily deceived by other teachings or doctrines.
* Buddhism	*Woman should worship her husband as God and respect her sons as lords because of her bad karma from a previous life	*The rulers and authorities should fulfil their responsibilities	* Buddha at the top – only males can become Buddha, *Disappearance of the <i>Bhikkhuni</i> order as the fulfilment of Buddha's prophesy, or due to colonialisation and wars * Women are not allowed to approach the top or the centre of the pagoda as their bodies are polluted

2.....ologies' Need to be De-ologised...

An emergent aim of this thesis is to decolonise or depatriarchalise the studies of 'ologies' such as theology and Christology. 'Ology' or the study of the [patriarchalized] words, is open to critique.

2.1. De-theologising

God as the king of kings, lords of lords and power of powers (Rom 13: 1-2), cannot be accepted by postcolonial feminists. They see this God as an imperial male figure who judges or punishes people in anger. The hierarchalised God in 1 Cor 11: 3-4 also places [his] Self at a great distance from marginalised people.

As the dominant language in the world, the terminologies and vocabulary of English have become normative, universalised in expressing ideologies, worldviews, cultures and beliefs. Therefore these wordings need to be reconsidered. Christians use 'God' as the ultimate God among other gods or goddesses, or the survivor of Polytheism. The hierarchical order of God (monotheism) or the collective idea of one God arose from the gradual development away from pantheism, where divines are perceived in earthly phenomena, to the concept of a transcendent god. Ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates and Aristotle claimed that Zeus/Jupiter was the father not only of the gods but also of the worshippers. Hebrew Scriptures also used the word Elohim, a masculine plural by adaption from the Canaanite word El or god. This God was also legitimized by the monarchical structure. Therefore, even though the Greek word $\theta \epsilon \delta \varsigma$ signifies both 'god and goddess,' its meaning has been masculinised. The Hebrew never refers to God as Elohim, with the

¹ Gail Ramshaw, *God Beyond Gender: Feminist Christian God-Language* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 8-11.

masculine plural, or El אָל, masculine singular or Yahwah הֹהָה, but just 'YHWH' which has no gender, no state, no number, but is simply a common noun. The English usage of capital letters for pronouns such as 'He' or 'His' or 'Him' referring to 'god' also reinforces the divine as male, one and only. These terms reveal the manipulations of dominant western ideology or terminology that excludes the divine-self from 'the role of the others'. According to Gail Ramshaw, "The pattern in western metaphor is culturally stereotypical, reflecting the Greco-Roman belief that the masculine is dominant and rational and the feminine recessive and emotional."²

Changing these terms 'god', 'he', 'him', and 'his' for inclusive terms, with consideration for the others such as the other half of the human race, women, let alone without denoting gender, class, race or dualistic bias, has caused a great challenge to the patriarchal world and has been criticised as "linguistic ugliness, grammatically [sic] inaccuracy, conceptual confusion and dehumanizing." However, it is possible to use inclusive terms for the word 'deities' for example, with pronouns such as 'they', 'their', and 'them'. The Shakers adopted this 'androgynous' mode of address.

2.2. De-Christologising

The following Christologies should be challenged and resistant Christologies should be put into practice.

³ See Ralph Slovenko, "Nonsexist Language Empowering Women, Dethroning men," *The Journal of Psychiatry & Law* 35/Spring 2007 (77- 107), Downloaded/printed from HeinOnline (http://heinonline.org) Sunday 20 Feb 2011 00:06:26 https://www.copyright.com/ccc/basicSearch.do? &operation=go&searchType=0 &lastSearch=simple&all=on&titleOrStdNo=0093-1853, (accessed 20 February 2011).

² Ibid., 24-25.

⁴ This term is still exclusive for people or atheists without 'deities' or believe in them.

⁵ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Christian Understandings of Human Nature and Gender," *Religion, Feminism and Family*, eds Anne E. Carr, Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 104-105.

The terms, 'Christ' or 'Christology' convey an androcentric view. **Firstly** they are patriarchal. Even though Jesus is a male, the term 'Christ' has become problematic for feminists. Therefore they have asked, "Jesus was a first century Jewish male. But need the resurrected Christ be presented only as male?" Rosemary Radford Ruether confirms that

Since divinity, sovereign power, rationality, and normative humanity are all assumed by this culture to be male, all the theological reference points for defining Christ were defined androcentrically. Normative humanity, the image of God in 'man', and the divine logos were interlocking androcentric concepts in the theological definition of Christ, reinforcing the assumption that God is male, and that the human Christ must be a male in order to reveal the male God.⁷

Secondly, to persist with this androcentrism is colonialist or imperialist, as Christology was created as a counteraction to values of the Graeco-Roman Empire. Paul portrayed Jesus as 'the lord of glory' (1 Cor 2: 6-8) which was a term normally used for first-century emperors. The terms applied to Jesus such as 'Lord,' 'holy one,' 'Saviour,' 'Lord of the World,' were borrowed from the Roman court and its cults, and given new meaning. Paul had a cosmic view much influenced by the tradition of Jewish mystical and apocalyptic writing, adopting the word 'parousia' (appearance, or coming) formerly used for the arrival of the king of emperor, but now with the dynamic sense of the Second Coming. The phrase in 1 Thess 5: 3, 'peace and security' was well known from Roman propaganda as *pax et securitas* which also has an allusion to Jeremiah 6:14 and its warnings of a 'false peace.' But Christ is portrayed as the Lord of both in heaven and earth (1 Cor 8:5-6; Col 1: 15-16, 19-20).⁸

Third Christ is the centre or the head of the order and the law (as in Eph 5: 23 and Col 2: 18, 'fitting in the Lord'). To look at previous readings, for Karl Barth, Christ is the final

⁶ Maryanne Stevens, "Introduction," *Reconstructing the Christ Symbol: Essays In Feminist Christology*, (Mahwah: The Centre for the Study of Religion and Society, Creighton University, 1993), 1-2.

⁷ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Can Christology be liberated from Patriarchy?" *Reconstructing the Christ Symbol: Essays In Feminist Christology*, ed. Maryanne Stevens, (Mahwah: The Centre for the Study of Religion and Society, Creighton University, 1993), 9.

⁸ Mark Brett, *Decolonizing God, the Bible in the Tides of Empire* (Sheffield: Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2008), 155-159.

revelation of God;⁹ for Charles Wesley, 'The Church's One Foundation Is Jesus Christ Her Lord'; and for Martin Luther, based on the Augustinian view, Christ is the centre and substance of the Bible, the church and Christian life. ¹⁰ This Christ deserves full obedience, reliance and dependence. ¹¹ With "the adoption of Christianity by the empire under Constantine, Christ became *the centre of society*." ¹² 'Christians began to say that the centre of *everything* "culture, power, history, value, truth, and human kinship was the god-man Jesus." ¹³

Thus, such centralizing has colonial or political characteristics as it arises from making one's own faith to be unique or true, while pushing others to the periphery or to the margin as not qualified or not good enough to be at the centre. Centralization can also be a means to attack other religions, as has been shown from missionaries' devaluing of indigenous interpretations.

Fourth is Christ as the Lord or the king and divine apex of a hierarchical socio-political order. As discussed in Chapter 7, this Jesus' lordship is questioned in Asia and Myanmar, as lordship has its origins in feudalism, which causes poverty, injustice, inequity and violent oppression. It is also a colonial term used throughout the British Empire and has connotations of domination, in its 'dominions.' 14

⁹ Karl Barth, the Doctrine of the Word of God: (Prolegomena to Church Dogmatic), Vol. I, Part I, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936), 124-135.

¹⁰ Tom F Driver, *Christ in a Changing world: Towards an Ethical Christology* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1981), 34, 35, 41.

¹¹ Ibid., 46-48.

¹² Ibid.,51-52.

¹³ Ibid., 39.

¹⁴ Margaretha Hendriks-Ririmase, "Theology and Violence Against Women," *CTC Bulletin: Bulletin of the Program Area on Faith, Mission and Unity (Theology Concerns) Christian Conference of Asia* 21, No.3 (December, 2005): 6-11.

Fifth is Christ as the Priest or the one who has only chosen men as his disciples.¹⁵ When women demanded priestly offices the response was that the priestly function could only be held by the men as the male Christ had initiated the function in the Eucharist. Maryanne Stevens argues that the Roman Catholic Episcopate rejected women's ordination based on this Christology. She asks, "What is the meaning of this use of Christology against women's full participation in the Christian church? If women cannot represent Christ, in what sense can it be said that Christ represents women?" Stevens claims "The patriarchal anthropology informing our understanding of Christ not only excludes women from equality of leadership in the church, it distorts the understanding of what a disciple of Jesus should be."

Sixth, the marriage metaphor of Christ and church as of husband and wife (Eph 5:23) supports the image of Christ as head and husband. As we have seen, hierarchical prescriptions on the role of the wife in the early church have endured, fossilized, for centuries.

Seven, the model of Christ as the suffering servant has been imposed on women or 'the others' as their fate, or duty, rather than any promotion of the idea of Christ as the one who suffers with the oppressed at the margin. The cross of Jesus sanctions child abuse, "kyriarchal power protects itself from those who may otherwise object to their own suffering." Rita Brock, Virginia Fabella and Ranjini Wickramaratne- Rebera have suggested that the symbol of the lamb for Jesus encourages "a concept of power and obedience to authority that is dehumanizing rather than liberating." Thus, controversially, Mark Brett

¹⁵ Jacquelyn Grant, White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and a Womanist Response (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 76-79.

¹⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether, 7.

¹⁷ Stevens, 3.

¹⁸ Lisa Isherwood, *Introducing Feminist Christologies: Introductions in Feminist Theology* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 87-88

¹⁹ Stevens, 3. Ranjini Wickramaratne Rebera, "Understanding Power: Intellectual Elitism or Catalyst Change?" *In God's Image* 17, no. 3 (1998): 2-4. Virginia Fabella, "Christology from Asian Woman's Perspective," *Asian Faces of Jesus*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 218-220.

states that Jesus' death was like the death of a slave. For Paul, this was a contradiction of earthly power, by which he could refer to the terror of the imperial power. Christ's death unmasks the powers of the world.²⁰ Thus the suffering servant model represents that 'the others' are suffering under the persecutions and abuses by authorities and power.

What kind of Christ would be envisaged by postcolonial feminists who reject Christ as male, the Lord or king, with the imperial and colonial connotations of such 'centred,' top down,' in the vocabulary of the priest, head and husband and suffering servant? A postcolonial feminist advocates that the term 'Christ' should be Christ/a/o, or gender free. Christ/a/o should not be universalized or centralized by making 'the other' marginalized. A vision of Christ should be an inclusive one. As R. S. Sugirtharajah states, there is not only one Christology but there are many Christologies which answer different questions or needs. Christologies should provides three 'mutuals': "mutual criticism, mutual learning and mutual well-being." ²¹ As proposed in the thesis, Christ/a/o should be a periphery or incarnated one, an active suffering Christ/a/o who is with/for the marginalised and the colonised. Christ/a/o should be the whole body, both father and mother, both man and woman, friend, equal in human rights, and a being of coherent, full identity and the representative of the suffering 'others'

3. The 'Marginalised' Postcolonial Feminist Commentaries or Canonisations are Wanted!

This thesis has investigated the different interpretations of the texts relating to the concepts of authority and submission and has drawn the conclusion that most Biblical commentaries are

²⁰ Mark Brett, 153, 155.

²¹ R.S. Sugirtharajah, "Reconceiving Jesus: Some Continuing Concerns," *Asian Faces of Jesus*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993). 259-260.

frozen, operating rigidly within western cultural and academic standards. The key texts on authority or the need for submission were framed within the prevailing traditions and customs (1 Cor 11: 2, 16); and instituted (Rom 13: 1); by law or "as the laws also says" (1 Cor 14: 34). The words of Christ on "cleansing her with the washing of water by the word," (Eph 5:26), or the "first commandment with a promise" (Eph 6: 2), on the code of conduct for followers, that "they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct" (1 Pet 3:1) have been ignored. In their interpretations of these teachings especially relating to women, children, and slaves, western commentaries have legitimized their methodologies, academic authority or scholarship as universal. Other traditions of scholarship which go beyond their standards are considered as lacking standards, unacademic or even illegitimate. The question is whether existing commentaries are relevant for current world problems or still valid in a multicultural, multi-religious, multi-social and complex economic world situation. This thesis has concluded that a variety of commentaries are needed for each particular society and context. Current interpreters or critics in the rest of the world should not depend on, copy or only translate western commentaries.

The traditional, mainstream biblical commentators should not condemn non-western interpretations as un-academic or un-biblical. Women's, feminist and/or postcolonial commentaries are equally valid for breaking through the accepted, traditional readings of the texts to date. However it must also be noted that feminist/postcolonial scholars in the West still gain more recognition or validation in the western academic realm. For example, in postcolonial commentaries, the new ideas or interpretations of western scholars are the main focus in their academia (e.g., Bird's concept of the 'counter-empire' or Neil Elliot's 'ad hoc survival strategy' or 'realistic caution'), which are sympathetic to Pauline texts, or Horsley's view of Paul as victim of both imperialist and western scholarship in general. Schüssler

Fiorenza's idea of Paul's survival strategy also falls into this category. Such scholars generalize their views and centralize their interpretations in the biblical realm from a relativist but western-oriented perspective. Third World scholars have focussed on their own experiences as in the cases of Gordon Zerbe and Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, where Christ's centrality became an attack on other religions. Lacking knowledge of the contexts and experiences of the Third World, western commentaries have focused on their own academic, traditions and strictures. Inevitably they exclude others' experiences, yet are exposed to alternative commentaries and follow their trends. R. S. Sugirtharjah provides a good example, through his interpretations of the Epistles of John in his postcolonial commentary. He argues for a possible Buddhist influence on the Epistles of John, as the ideologies of Buddhism and the Mediterranean were exposed to each other.²² Today, Myanmar biblical scholars are trying to translate various commentaries from English into local languages. Hopefully, this thesis will act as an incentive for them to write commentaries for the marginalised, based on their own experiences, voices, rights, cultures and contexts, to meet their own needs.

4. Postcolonial Feminist Resistant Reading as a Challenge to Biblical Scholarship

This thesis' postcolonial feminist resistant reading within the Myanmar context has presented research on both the biblical and Myanmar Buddhist traditions. Within this framework, it has investigated existing power structures, (such as western biblical academic theologies and Christologies; reviving the authority of the Bible by some Christian evangelical and conservative denominations; and patriarchy, neo-colonialism/imperialism, capitalism, globalisation, neo-slavery systems, and political oppressions), suggested how these powers can be challenged. The resistant reading of this thesis has been conveyed through three

²² R.S. Sugirtharajah, "1, 2 and 3 John," A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings, 418.

analogies: the body- halves; Naming the dragon and Crushing the head of the dragon, and the levelling pagoda and zayat readings. The body-halves metaphor counters the head and body metaphor and reveals the causes of power which lead to the paralysis of the other half. Fathers, husbands and masters and the main powers behind them, such as emperors, capitalism, and neo-colonialism are the agents of this paralysis. To prevent the monopolisation of power by one half or to survive paralysis, the positive or supportive secular/legal/human rights norms, together with religious and cultural norms have been invoked, to reveal abusive domination and thus to empower the other half of humanity. In this case, the divine Christ/a/o²³ has been invoked as the unity of the divided body. Such a body should be defined without gender or with all genders. Naming the dragon and crushing the dragon's head, from the political point of view, has been employed as a means to portray the political power or regime as a dragon or python that wraps itself around a victim, and This metaphorical 'wrapping' should be rejected by uncovering its manipulation of religious teachings and the cultural values which encourage good rulership. Killing the dragon is the ultimate goal to end this unjust dictatorship. A levelling structure would level down the pagoda structure and raise up the Zayat structure in which there is no hierarchical structure, or any gender, class and race discrimination in the area of religion.

These resistant readings have represented and raised the voices of the silent women of Myanmar. The social, political and religious hegemonies of the texts are compared with those that take a human rights perspective and positive social, political and religious values. This reveals the border crossings of postcolonial feminist readings beyond traditional readings.

²³ Ann-Sophie Lehmann, "The Rising of Mary Magdalene in Feminist Art History," *Doing Gender in Media, Arts and Culture*, eds. Rosemarie Buikema and Iris Van Dertuin (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 125-126 and Anne Foerst, "The Body Christ: Embodied Robots and Theology," *God, Life, Intelligence and the Universe*, ed. Terence, J Kelly SJ & Hilary D Regan, ATF Science and Theology Series: One, Hindmarsh: Australian Theological Forum, 2002, 58. Christ represent Christ as male, Christa as female Christ who has been portrayed in arts such as sculpture and paintings since 1970s. Christo represents Christ as neuter.

Rewriting the texts is also a way to contribute to postcolonial feminist resistant readings as this thesis has hopefully demonstrated.

With these four factors, this thesis will be an awakening juncture for traditionalist, patriarchal and neo/colonial/imperialist Christians and Buddhists in Myanmar and an empowerment to those who want to see changes made in this country to lead it into a better human society with dignity, full identity, full equality and full rights for all people. It is to be hoped that the four factors set out above will open the path to this destiny.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A

- "A Star-Studded Night: The Wedding of Ma Thanda Shwe and Major Naing Wai Hlaing." secretly documented and distributed privately.
- Abeygoonerwardena, Viola. "Women in Buddhism and Temple Authoritarianism." *In God's Image*, Vol 25, No. 4, December 2006. 57- 62.
- Achtemeier, Paul J. Joel B. Green, Marianne Meye Thompson. *Introducing the New Testament: its Literature and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001.
- Adams, Carol J and Marie M. Fortune, ed. *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook.* New York: Continuum, 1995.
- Adams, Nel. My Vanished World: The True Story of a Shan Princess. Cheshire: Houseshoe, 2000
- Aeschylus, Seven Against Thebes, Translated by A. W. Verrall. London: Macmillan and Co, 1887
- Alethea. "Mary Magdalene: Apostle of Apostles." *Dee Hline Than*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (November, 2009): 75 82.
- Amaladoss, Michael SJ. "Mission." *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*. Edited by Virgin Fabella and R. S. Sugirtharajah. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000.
- Amjad-Ali, Christine. "The Equality of Women: Form or Substance (1 Corinthians 11:2-16)." *Voices From the Margin, Interpreting the Bible in the Third World.* Edited by R. S. Sugirtharajah. London: APCK, 1991. 205-213.
- Anderson, Gerald H. and Thomas F. Stransky, eds. *Third World Theologies, Mission Trends* 3. New York: Paulist Press, Eerdmans, 1976.
- _____. ed. "Francis Mason." *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missionary to Burma*. Grand Rapid, Mich.: William B Eerdmans, 1999.
- Anderson, Rufus. 'The Introductory Essay on the Marriage of Missionaries,' Memoir of Mrs. Mary Mercy Ellis, Wife of Rev. William Ellis, Missionary to the South Sea and Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society, William Ellis. Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1836.
- Anguttara Nikaya IV VIII 80, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Anguttara Nikaya), The Book of the Fours.* Vol II, Translated by F.L. Woodward. Pali Text Society, Translation Series, No. 24. Oxford: The Pali Text Socity, 2001.
- Anguttara Nikaya, V. VI 55. *The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Anguttara Nikaya), The Book of the Fives*, Vol III, Translated by E.M. Hare. Pali Test Society, Translation Series, No. 24. Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 2001.

- Anonymous Articles. The Burman Messenger, April 15, 1950.
- Anonymous Articles. Myanmar Taman, Feb 15, 1954.
- Anonymous Articles. Myanmar Taman, March 15, 1956.
- Anonymous Articles. Myanmar Taman, Dec 1, 1963.
- Anonymous Articles. Myanmar Taman, March 3, 1969.
- Anonymous. 'Parents' Day.' Myanmar Taman, May 1-15, 1971.
- Anonymous. "The International Children Day." Myanmar Taman, Jan/Feb, 1979.
- Anonymous Articles. Myanmar Taman, Vol 30, No 10, Oct, 1993.
- Antone, Hope S. "Leadership in Marriage and Family." *In God's Image*, Journal of Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology, Vol. 29, No. 2, June 2010, 48-57.
- Apollodorus, *Against Neaera*, 18-42, 45-60, 72-3, 78-9, 85-7, 110-14, 122. Translated by K.Freeman. G, http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/wlgrgreeklegal90.shtml (accessed 13 September 2009).
- Appleton, G. Buddhism in Burma. Calcutta: Longmans, Green & co., ltd, 1944.
- Arat, Zehra F. *Democracy and Human Rights in Developing Countries*. Lincoln: iUniverse, 2003.
- Aristotle. *The Politics and The Constitution of Athens*. Edited by Everson, Stephen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- "Aristotle: Politic." *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. http://www.iep.utm.edu/arispol/#SH7d (accessed 7 September 2009).
- Armour, Ellen T. Deconstruction, Feminist Theology, and the Problem of difference: Subverting the Race/Gender Divide. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Arndt, W.F. and F. W. Ginggrich, (eds). u'potassw *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1957.
- Ashcroft, Bill. Post-Colonial Transformation. London: Routledge, 2001.
- "Augustine's Political and Social Philosophy." Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. http://www.iep.utm.edu/aug-poso/ (accessed on 25 March 2011).
- Aung, Lwin Lwin. "Myanmar Bibles, Their Beginning and Development." BRE research Paper, MIT, 1991.
- Aung, Maung Htin. Burmese Drama. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956.
 ______. A History of Burma. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.
 ______. Burmese History Before 1287: A Defence Of The Chronicles. Oxford: The Asoka Society, 1970.

- Aung San Suu Kyi. *Freedom from Fear and Other Writings*. Edited by Michael Aris. London: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Azalea, Naw. "Comparison Between the Christian Marriage and other Two Majors Religion Marriages." BTh Research Paper, KBTS, 2007.

В

- Balasuriya, Tissa. "Globalization." *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*. Edited by Virgin Fabella and R. S. Sugirtharajah. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000.
- Balch, David L, Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter. Chicago: Scholars Press, 1981.
- _____. "Hellenization Acculturation in 1 Peter." *Perspective on 1 Peter*, ed. Charles H Talbert, NABPR special studies series; 9, Macon, Georgia: Mercer University press, 1986. 79-101.
- _____. Dr Carolyn Osiek. Families in the New Testament World: Households and House churches. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1997.
- _____. "Neopythagorean Moralists and the New Testament Household Codes." *ANRW*. II.26.I, 389-404.
- Barclay, William. *The Letter to the Romans*. The Daily Study Bible Commentary. Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975.
- Barnett, Albert E. *The New Testament: Its Making and Meaning*. Abingdon: Cokesbury Press, 2005.
- Barrett, C.K. The New Testament Background: Selected Documents. London: SPCK, 1987.
- _____. The Epistle of the Romans (second edition). London: A & C Black, 1991.
- Barron, Bruce. "Putting Women in Their Place: 1 Timothy 2 and Evangelical Views of Women in Church Leadership." *JETS* 33/4 (December 1990). 451-459.
- Barth, Karl. A Shorter Commentary on Romans. London: SCM Press LTD, 1959.
- Bassler, Jouette M. "1 Corinthians." *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992. 411-419.
- Bauman, Richard A. Women and Politics and Ancient Rome. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Bauman-Martin, Betsy J. "Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine Haustafel." *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Vol. 123, No. 2. (Summer, 2004): 253-279.
- Beasley-Murray, Paul. Power for God's Sake: Power and Abuse in the Local Church. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998.
- Beaver, R. Pierce. *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968.

- Belak, Brenda. Gathering Strength: Women in Burma on their Rights. Chiangmai: Images Burma, 2002.
- Belleville, L. L. "Authority." *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Bellis, Alice Ogden. "Feminist Biblical Scholarship." Women in Scripture: a Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in Hebrew Bible, The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical and the New Testament, ed. Carol Meyers, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2000.
- Berquist, Jon L. "Postcolonialism and Imperial Motives for Canonisation." *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*. Edited by Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. 78-95.
- Best, Ernest. *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- _____. *1 Peter*, New Century Bible. Edited by Ronald E. Clements. London: Marshall, Morgan &Scott Ltd. 1971.
- Bird, Jennifer G. "The Letter to the Ephesians." *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, eds. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, New York: T & T Clark, 2007. 265-280.
- Blankenhorn, David, Con S. Browning, Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, eds. *Does Christianity Teach Male Headship?: The Equal- Regard Marriage and Its Critics*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004.
- Blue, Naw May. "The Letter to the Ephesians." BTh Research Paper, MIT, 1981.
- Boer, Roland. "Resistance Versus Accommodation: What to Do With Romans 13?" *Postcolonial Interventions: Essays in Honour of R. S. Sugirtharajah*. Edited by Tat-Siong Benny Liew, The Bible in the Modern World 23. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009. 109-122.
- Boot, William. "Burma Little Affected by Global Financial Crisis, Says Prime Minister." *Weekly Business Roundup* (April 20, 2009), posted by The Irrawaddy Magazine, Monday, April 20, 2009, http://www.irrawaddy.org (accessed 3 October 2010).
- _____. "Business and Conflicting Reports on Burma's Gems Industry." The Irrawaddy Magazine, Monday, March 30, 2009, Business. http://www.irrawaddy.org/ (accessed 3 October 2010).
- _____. "Indian State Firm Rethinks Costly Burma Hydrodams." *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, Monday, March 30, 2009, Business, http://www.irrawaddy.org (accessed 3 October 2010).
- Boring, M. Eugene. *1 Peter*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- Brent, Allen. The Imperial Cult and the Development of church Order. Boston: Brill, 1999.
- Brett, Mark. Decolonizing God, the Bible in the Tides of Empire. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix

- Press, 2008.
- Broadbent, Ralph. "The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus." *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, Edited by Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah. New York: T & T Clark, 2007. 323-328.
- Brodie, Thomas L. The Birthing of the New Testament: the Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings. Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2004.
- Brown, D Mackenzie. *The White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandi.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953.
- Browning, W. R. F. "Household codes." *A Dictionary of the Bible*. 1997. *Encyclopedia.com*. http://www.encyclopedia.com (accessed 23 Sep. 2009).
- Bruce Barron, "Putting Women in Their Place: 1 Timothy 2 and Evangelical Views of Women in Church Leadership." *JETS* 33, no. 4 (December 1990): 451-459.
- Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. *Mission for Life: The Story of the Family of Adoniram Judson* New York: Free Press, 1980.
- Bryan, Christopher. *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early church, and the Roman Superpower.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Bunker, Alonzo. Sketches from the Karen Hills. New York: Fleming H. Revel, 1910.
- Burg, David F. "Gaul Revolts." A World History of Tax Rebellions: an Encyclopaedia of Tax Rebels, Revolts and Riots from Antiquity to the Present. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Burnett, David. The Spirit of Buddhism, a Christian Perspective on Buddhist Thought East Sussex: Monarch Publications, 1996.
- Burrow, Rufus. "Womanist Theology and Ethics," Encounter 59.1-2 (1998), 157-175.
- Burton, Neel. "Plato's Metaphors: The Sun, Line, and Cave." *Octre Monde*. 25 September 2010. http://outre-monde.com/2010/09/25/ (accessed 12 January, 2011).
- Bawk, Law Khun. "The Righteousness of the Citizens." Feb 1, 1952.

\mathbf{C}

- Cady, John F. *Political Institutions of Old Burma*, Data paper, No.12, SAE Programme. NY: Cornell University, 1954.
- _____. *A History of Modern Burma*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1958.
- Callahan, Mary P. *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Campbell, Ken M. *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- "Canon Law." http://www.sacred-texts.com/wmn/wcs/wcs05.htm, 114, 124. (accessed 28 June

- 2010).
- Carpenter, John B. "The Competency of God's Communication: biblical Instruction on Women in Church Leadership- a Fraternal Rejoinder to Revd Dr William Wan." *Church & Society* Vol 4 No1. 11-20.
- Carr, Louise. "Feminist Theological Approaches to (the) Sexual Abuse of Children." *Feminist Theology.* 12 (May 1996): 21-42.
- Carter, R. R. Langham. *The Powundaung Caves*. Rangoon: Rangoon Times Press, 1939.
- Carter, T. L. "The Irony of Romans 13." Novum Testamentum Vol 44, Fasc 3 (2004): 209-228.
- Castelli, Elizabeth A. "Romans." *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary.* Volume 2. Edited by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza. New York: SCM Press, 1994. 272-300.
- CEDAW. A Fact Sheet. "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex" (Article 1) and Convention 138, International Human Rights Law, UN Human Rights Law, International Labour Organisation Conventions. http://www.right-to-education.org/node/165 and In 1999, Convention 182 was approved in order to force 132 and take immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Appl. 22.182, Report Form for Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182), 1999. http://www.globalempowerment.org/policyadvocacy/pahome2.5.nsf/allreports/6EA41380 6B8E0C5788256E46008360C0?OpenDocument (accessed 23 January 2011).
- Chain, Tun Aung. "The Myanmar Situation." Unpublished Paper presented at the Myanmar Council of Churches Round Table Meeting, Yangon, October, 1999.
- _____. "Myanmar." *Dictionary of Asian Christianity*. Edited by Scott Sunquist, John Hiang Chea Chew, David Chusing Wu. Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2001.
- _____. "Legitimation Ploys in 18th Century Myanmar." and "Women in the Statecraft of the Inwa Kingdom." *Selected Writings of Tun Aung Chaing*. Yangon: University Historical Commission, 2004.
- Chandra, J. Russell. "Development of Christian Theology in India: A Critical Survey." *Readings in* J. Russell. *Indian Christian Theology*. Vol 1. Edited by R. S. Sugirtharajah and Cecil Hargreaves, London: SPCK, 1993. 4-13.
- Chaplin, Douglas Archibald. Two Pauline Communities and Civic Justice: An Examination of 1 Corinthians 6: 1-11 and Romans 13: 1-7 in their Social Context. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1998.
- Chit, Aye Aye. "The Role of Christian Women." BD Thesis, MIT, 1986.
- Chit. Khin Myo. A Wonderland of Burmese Legends. Bangkok: The Tamarind Press, 1984.
- _____. Colorful Burma. Volume 1 & 2. Yangon: Yangon University Press, 1988.
- Cho, Aye. Myanmar Ein Thu, Myanma Mu. Yangon: Sarbay Beikhman, 1990.
- Chung, Hyun Kyung. Struggle to Be the Sun Again, Introducing Asian Women's Theology. Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 1990.

- Cin, Huai Man. "Jesus' Attitude to Women in the Gospels." *In God's Image*. Vol 19, No. 2 (June 2000). 15-17.
- Clasper, Paul D. *New Life in Christ: A Study of Paul's Theology for To-Day*, World Christian Books, No. 39, Second Series. London: Lutterworth Press, 1961.
- Corley, Katheleen E. "1 Peter." *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary.* Volume 2. Edited by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza. New York: SCM Press, 1994. 349-360.
- Corrington, Gail Paterson. "The 'Divine Woman?' Propaganda and the Power of Celibacy in the New Testament Apocrypha: A Reconsideration." *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1993. 169-182.
- Courtauld, Caroline. Burma (Myanmar). Hong Kong: Odyssey Publications Ltd, 1999.
- Carey, George. Women and Authority in the Church: a Scriptural Perspective. London: Movement for the Ordination of Women, 1983.
- Cumont, Franz. *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*. London: Open Court Publishing Co, 1911.
- Cuthbert, Denise. Feminist Perspectives on Postcolonialism. Harlow: Longman, 2000.

D

- D'Angelo, Mary Rose. "Colossians." *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Edited by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, London: SCM Press, 1996. 313-324.
- Darby, Phillip, ed. At the edge of international relations: Postcolonialism, Gender, and Dependency. London: Printer, 1997.
- Debanne, Marc J. *Enthymemes in the Letters of Paul*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006.
- Decharneus, Baudouin. "Mithra's Cult: An Example of Religious Colonialism in Roman Times?" Orality, Literacy, and colonialism in Antiquity. Edited by Jonathan A. Draper, Semeia Studies; no. 47. The Society of Biblical Literature, 2004. 93-106.
- Demosthenes, Against Neiari, 8, 113, 73, LOEB Classical Library, Harvard Classical Library.
- Devananda, Malini. "Power, Choice and Sexuality: Violence Against Women and Children." *In God's Image* 17/3 (1998): 7-9.
- Dewey, Joanna "1 Timothy." *Women's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992. 444-449.

- "Diaries of Dr. Max Warren." Mundus, Gateway to Missionary collections in the United Kingdom, http://www.mundus.ac.uk/cats/44/1190.htm (accessed 16 July 2010).
- Din, Aung. "Wanted, Daughter in Law." *Myanmar Taman*, vol 12. December 1-15, 1967.
- _____. "Descriptions of Godly man." *Myanmar Taman*, vol. 4. April 1-15, 1969.
- _____. "The Rules and Regulation for the Christian Family." *Myanmar Taman*, Nov, 2004.
- Dio Cassius. *Dio's Roman Hist*ory, Vol 5. Translated by Herbert Baldwin Foster. London: William Heinemann, MCMXVII.
- ______. *Dio's Roman History*. V. Translated by Earnest Cary. The Loeb Classical Library. London, William Heinemann Ltd, MCMLV.
 - http://www.archive.org/stream/diosromanhistory05cassuoft#page/n5/mode/2up. (accessed on 04,11,09).
- Dixon, Suzanne. *The Roman family*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University press, c1992.
- Dodd, C.H. *The epistle of Paul to the Romans*. London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1959.
- Donaldson, Laura E. and Kwok Pui-lan, eds, *Postcolonailism, Feminism and Religious Discourse*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Donfried, Karl P. "The Imperial cults of Thessalonica and Political Conflict in 1 Thessalonians." *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society.* Edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997. 215-223.
- Donnison, F.S.V. *Public Administration in Burma: A Study of Development During the British Connexion*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1953.
- Dowd, Sharyn. "1 Peter." *Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992. 462-464.
- Driver, Tom F *Christ in a Changing world: Towards an Ethical Christology.* London: SCM Press Ltd, 1981.
- Dube, Musa W. Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.
- _____. "Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)." *Voices from the Margin*. Edited by R.S. Sugirtharajah, New York: Orbis Books, 2006. 297-318.
- Dun, Mary. "The Image of Women in Myanmar Context." *In God's Image* 19/2 (June 2000): 27-29.
- Dun, Gen. Simith. *Memoirs of the Four-Foot Colonel*. New York: Comell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1980.

\mathbf{E}

- East Asia Christian Conference, committee on Cooperation of Men and Women in Home, Church and Society. Men and Women in Home, church and Community in Asia: Papers and Statements of an Asian Consultation on "the Christian Home in changing Society. Rangoon, Burma: East Asia Christian Conference, 1963.
- Ebina, Danjo "Romasho" [Romans] in Shinjin 6.5 (1905): 33.
- Ebina, Danjo Kokumin Dotoku to Kirisutokyo [National Morality and Christianity]. Tokyo: Hokubunkan, 1912.
- Elliott, Neil. "Romans 13:1-7 In the Context of Imperial Propaganda." *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*. Edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997. 184-204.
- _____. "The Anti-Imperial message of the Cross." *Paul and Empire*, Edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997. 167-183.
- . "The Letters to the Romans." *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, Edited by R. S. Sugirtharajah. London: T&T Clark, 2008.194-219.
- Ellis, E. E. "Pastoral Letters." *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- En, Simon Pau Kan. 21th Century Christian Theological Thinking. Yangon: Alin Ein Christian Publishing House, 2005.
- Esther Khaing Oo, "The Woman Who Touched Jesus' Robe: Mark 5:25 34." *Myanmar SCM Women's Magazine*. Vol. 1 (1996): 32 45.

F

- Fabella, Virginia. "Christology from Asian Woman's Perspective." *Asian Faces of Jesus*. Edited by R. S. Sugirtharajah. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993. 211-222.
- R.S. Sugirtharajah, eds. *The SCM Dictionary of Third World Theologies*. London: SCM Press, 2003.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Background of Early Christianity,* (Third Edition), Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.
- Firmilian of Caesarea, "Letter of Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea to Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, 200-258 AD." Women can be Priests. http://www.womenpriests.org/traditio/firmil.asp (accessed 23 June 2010).
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. Romans. The Anchor Bible. Volume 33. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992.
- Flood, Gregory. "Gods and Goddesses, a List from Roman Mythology." http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/romangods/a/101910-Roman-Gods-And-Goddesses.htm (accessed 25 March 2010).

- Foerst, Anne. "The Body Christ: Embodied Robots and Theology." *God, Life, Intelligence and the Universe*. eds. Terence, J Kelly SJ & Hilary D Regan, ATF Science and Theology Series: One, Hindmarsh: Australian Theological Forum, 2002. 37-60.
- Forman, Charles W. *The Nation and the Kingdom: Christian Mission in the New Nations*. New York: friendship Press, 1964.
- Foxhall, Lin. A.D. E. Lewis, *Greek Law in its Political Setting: Justifications not Justice* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Freston, Paul. *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Fulkerson, Mary McClintock. Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. c1994.

G

- Gaddis, Michael. *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ, Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*. London: University of California Press, 2005.
- Gage, Matilda Joslyn. Woman, Church and State: a Historical Account of the Status of Woman through the Christian Ages. New York: The Truth Seeker Company, 1893. www. forgottenbooks.org, republished by Forgotten Books in 2008.
- Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
- Ganesan, N. and Kyaw Yin Hlaing. eds. *Myanmar: State, Society and Ethnicity*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007.
- Garnsey, Peter & Richard P. Saller. *The Roman Empire, Economy, Society and Culture* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Gaventa, Beverly Roberts "Romans." *Women's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998. 403-410.
- Gay, Eh Tar. "Exegesis on 1 Timothy 2:11-15: Debate on Women Leadership." *Rays, MIT. Journal of Theology* Vol 4. Edited by Samuel Ngun Ling. Yangon: Myanmar Institute of Theology, 2003. 41-50.
- _____. "Director Paul's Film of Women with Two Faces, 1 Cor 11: 2:16." *Empowering Women for Justice and Peace, De Hlaing Than Women's Magazine*. Vol 1 No. 2, November, 2007. 88-91.
- Giblin, Marie J. "Dualism" in *Dictionary of Feminist Theology*. Edited by Letty M. Russell & J. Shannon Clarkson. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Glance, Jennifer A. Slavery in Early Christianity. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2002.
- "Goddess." http://www.goddess.com.au/goddesses/Ge.htm (accessed 5 June 2010).

- Gorman, Michael J. *Apostle of The Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters.* Grand Rapids: Wm B. Erdmann, 2004.
- Gradel, Ittai Emperor worship and Roman religion. Oxford; Clarendon Press, 2002.
- Grant, Jacquelyn. White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus, feminist Christology and Womanist response. Atlanta Georgia: Scholars Press, 1989.
- Graver, Mikael. Nationalism as Political Paranoia in Burma: An Essay on the Historical Practice of Power. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999.
- Gritz, Sharon Hodgin. Paul, Women Teachers and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15 in Light of Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First century. Lanham: University Press of America, Inc, 1991.
- Gross, Rita M. "Strategies for a Feminist Revalorization of Buddhism." *Feminism and World Religions*. eds. Arvind Sharma and Katherine K. Young. Albany: state University of New York Press, 1999. 3-5.
- _____. Buddhism After Patriarchy: a Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.
- Gurudas, James. "Gender Justice in the Bible." *Journal of Dharma* 29, 2 (April- June, 2004): 129-147.
- Kyi, Tin Hla. "The Status of Women in a Changing Myanmar Economy." *In God's Image*. Vol. 19, No.2 (2000): 20-22.

H

- Hadrill, Wallace. "God." http://www.technominx.net/Ancient/gods.html, (accessed 07 February 2010).
- Hafemann, S. J. "Letters to Corinthians." *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Hale, Sarah Josepha. Sketches of American Character. Boston, 1833.
- "Half Man half Woman." Collage Humour, November 3, 2009. http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://7.media.collegehumor.cvcdn.com/30/29/c ollegehumor.322e905709ecfcbc204976ca08238115.jpg&imgrefurl (accessed 12 January 2011).
- Hall, D. G. E. *Burma*. London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950.
- Hallett, Judith P "Women's Lives in the Ancient Mediterranean," Women & Christian Origins, eds, Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Hampson, Daphne *Let Us Think about Women*, Pamphlet for the group of Women Ministry in the Scottish Episcopal Church, Gillian Clark, Jan, 1979.

- Harvey, Brian Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Harvey, Godfrey Eric. British Rule in Burma. London: Farber and Farber, 1946.
- . Outline of Burmese History. Bombay, 1954.
- . History of Burma from the Earliest Times to 1824. London: Longmans, Green, 1925.
- _____. History of Burma: from the earliest times to 10 March, 1824, the beginning of the English conquest. London: Cass, 1967.
- Harvey, Thomas. "The biblical and Evangelical Justification for Women Serving as Ministers and Pastors in the Church."
 - http://www.ttc.edu.sg/csca/CS/2002-Apr/Thom%20Harvey.pdf. (accessed 20 November 2007).
- Hay, David M. Colossians, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, c2000.
- Hays, Richard B. "Paul on the Relation Between Men and Women." *A Feminist Companion to Paul.* Edited by Amy Jill Levine. London: T & T Clark International, 2004. 137-147.
- Hearon, Holly E. ed. *Distant Voices Drawing Near, Essays in Honour of Antoinette Clark Wire*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, Saint John's Abbey, 2004.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *The Philosophy of History*. Translated by J. Sibree. Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001.
- Hei, Richard Chang Cung. "Christian Obedience in Myanmar Context." *Our Theological Journey*, Volume 2. Writings in Honour of Prof. Rev. Edmund Zabik. Edited by Department of Theology, MIT. Yangon: Myanmar Institute of Theology, 2008. 128-141.
- Heine-Geldern. *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia*, Data Paper: No. 18, Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asia Studies. Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, April, 1956.
- Henderson, Bernard W. Five Roman Emperors: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, A.D. 69-117. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969.
- Hendriks-Ririmase, Margaretha. "Theology and Violence Against Women." *CTC Bulletin. Bulletin of the Program Area on Faith, Mission and Unity (Theology Concerns) Christian Conference of Asia.* Vol 21, No.3. (December, 2005): 6-11.
- Herbert, Patricia. *Burmese Cosmological Manuscripts*. Edited by Alexandra Green & T. Richard Blurton. *Burma Art and Archaeology*. London: The British Museum Press, 2002.
- Harvey, Brian Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Hmannan, Yazawindawgyi. The Glass Palace Chronicle. Mandalay: Mandalay press, 1908.
- Horrel, David G. *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interest and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.

- Horsley, Richard A. ed. *Paul and Empire: Religion and power in Roman Imperial Society*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997.
- _____. "1 Corinthian: A Case Study of Paul's Assembly." *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*. Edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997. 242-252.
- . 1 Corinthian, Abington New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, c1998.
- _____. and Kristen Stendhal, eds. *Paul and Politic*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000.
- _____. "Submerged Biblical Histories and Imperial Biblical Studies." *The Postcolonial Bible*. Edited by R. S. Sugirtharajah. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998. 152-173.
- _____. "1 Corinthians." *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*,eds. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, New York: T & T Clark, 2007. 220-245.
- Houtman, Gustaff. *Mental Culture in Burmese Crisis Politics: Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy*. Monograph Series, No. 33. London: The Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1999.
- Htin Aung, U. Folk elements in Burmese Buddhism. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- _____. Htin Aung, U. A history of Burma. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.
- Htoo, Naw Htoo. "Mary's Song of Praise." *Dee Hline Than.* Vol. 1, No. 2 (November, 2008): 78 80.
- Htoo, Saw Eh. "Comparison Between the City of Corinth and the Country of Myanmar." BTh Research Paper, KBTS, 1997.
- Htwe, Million. "Most Blessed are You, Mary." *Dee Hline Than*, Vol. 1. No. 2 (November, 2008): 84 87
- Hubbard, Moyer V. *Christianity in the Greco-Roman World: A Narrative Introduction* Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing LLC, 2010.
- Huxley, Andrew. "Positivists and Buddhist: The Rise and Fall of Anglo-Burmese Ecclesiastical Law." *Law & Social Inquiry*. Vol. 26. No. 1. (Winter, 2001): 113-142.

I

- Inwood, Brad. *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc. 2005.
- Isherwood, Lisa. *Introducing Feminist Christologies: Introductions in Feminist Theology*. New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.

J

- Jantzen, Grace. *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Japinga, Lynn. Feminism and Christianity: an Essential Guide. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- Jataka, Mahakapi. "The Great Monkey King, Jat 407, Tipitaka. Suttapitaka. Khuddakanikāya. Jātaka. Mahākapijātaka, http://home.flash.net/~cameron/Buddhism/BuddhistTexts/Jataka_Monkey_King.pdf (accessed 15 February 2010).
- Jayachitra L, "Marital Gender Norms: Root of Domestic Violence." *In God's Image*, 22/1 (March 2003): 8-16.
- Jeffer, James S. *The Greco-Roman World of New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity*. New York: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Jewett, Robert. Christian Tolerance: Paul's Message to the Modern Church. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1982.
- Johansson, Elisabet. "Images of Christ in the Hearts of MY Asian Sisters." *In God's Image* 22/4 (December 2003): 56-70.
- Jun, Yong Ting. "Understanding VAW (Violence against Women) in the Church: Perspectives of Culture and Theology." *Our Forbidden Tales and Stories*. Workshop on Violence Against Women. 16-20 April 1996, Hong Kong. Edited by Esther Byu, Executive Secretary, CCA- Women's Concerns. (June 1996): 47-50.
- . "Images of Christ in the Hearts of MY Asian Sisters." *In God's Image* 22/4 (December 2003): 56-70.
- Judson, Ann H. An Account of the American Baptist Mission to the Burma Empire: A Series of hitherto Letters Addressed to A Gentleman in London. Second edition, London: Joseph Butterworth and Son, 1887.
- Johnson, Elisabeth. "Ephesians." *Women's Bible Commentary*. London: Westminster: APCK; John Knox Press, 1992. 428-432.
- Johnson, Luke T. *The Writings of New Testament: An Interpretation*. SCM-Canterbury Press Ltd, 2003.
- Jowett, Garth and Victoria O'Donnell. Propaganda and Persuasion. London: SAGE, 2006.

K

- K. Matthew Kurian, *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity: Towards a Relevant Theology*. papers from the Asian Theological Conference, January 7-20, 1979. Edited by Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka. Virginia Fabella. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980.
- Kabilsingh, Chatsumarn. Thai Women in Buddhism. Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 1991.

- Kalyana, U. Hbon zin. Rangoon: Bengalee Job Printing Press, 1882.
- Kanyoro, Musimbi R A, ed. *Asian Women's Theological Experiences: Proceedings of the Asian Lutheran Women Theologians'' Meeting.* Malacca, Malaysia, September 23-29, 1990. Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation Department for Mission and Development Office for Women in Church and Society, 1991.
- Kastfelt, Niels, ed. Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Model in the Middle East and Africa. London: Hurst & company, 2003.
- Katoppo, Marianne. Compassionate and Free: An Asian Woman's Theology. WCC, 1979.
- Katrak, Ketu H. *Politics of the Female Body: Postcolonial Women Writers of the Third World.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006.
- Keller, Catherine, Michael Nausner and Mayra Rivera (eds). *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004.
- Keshgegian, Flora A. "Suffering." *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*. Edited by Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Khaing, Mi Mi. Burmese Family. London: Green and Co., 1946.
- _____. *The World of Burmese Women*. London: Zed Books, 1984.
- Khin, Thitsa. *Providence and Prostitution: Women in Buddhism*. London: Change International, 1990.
- Khu, Saw. "Evaluation of Today Christian Families' Rules and Responsibilities." BMin Research Paper, MICT, 2009.
- Khuankaew, Ouyporn. Feminism and Buddhism, A Reflection through Personal Life & Working Experience. http://www.bpf.org/tsangha/ouyporn.html (accessed 12 December 2007).
- "Kings of Burma." Burma, http://asiarecipe.com/burmaking.html (accessed 7, January 2010).
- Klein, Anne Carolyn. "Buddhist Understandings of Subjectivity." *Buddhist Women and Social Justice: Ideals, Challenges, and achievements.* Edited by Karma Lekshe Tsomo, New York: University of New York Press, 2005. 23-34.
- Ko Ko Naing, U. The Teachings of Buddha for Seminaries of Burma. Limited Publishing.
- Korte, Ann-Marie. "Madonna's Crucifixion and the Woman's body." *Doing Gender in Media, Arts and Culture*. eds. Rosemarie Buikema and Iris Van Dertuin. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009. 117-133.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J. *The New Testament Pattern Of Church Government*. available from http://www.biblicalfoundations.org/pdf/pdfarticles/midwestern_3.pdf,. Internet, accessed 15 October 2010.
- _____. The Teachings of Buddha. Yangon: 1990.
- Kraemer, Ross Shepard. Women's Religion Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

- Kroeger, Catherine "The Apostle Paul and the Greco-Roman cults of Women." JETS 30/1(March 187): 25-38.
- Kyi, Aung San Suu. Freedom from Fear. London: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Kyi, Tin Hla. "The Status of Myanmar Women In a Changing Myanmar Economy." *In God's Image* 19/2 (June 2000): 20-23.
- Kwet, Sa, ed. *De Hlaing Than (The Voice of the Wave*): Feminist Magazine, Myanmar. Vol. 1, No.2 (November, 2007).
- Kway, Meh Ka. "Democracy." *Myanmar Taman* (Myanmar Messenger Magazine), Sept 15, 1954. 7-9.
- Kyung, Chung Hyun. Struggle to Be the Sun Again, Introducing Asian Women's Theology. Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 1990.

L

- Lake, Kirsop (trans). *The Apostolic Fathers*. Vol I. Cambridge, Massachusetts: William Heinemann LTD, MCMLXXV, 1975.
- Lat, Lahpai Zaw. "Women and Rights: Biblical Perspective." *Engagement*, Judson Research Center Bulletin, Myanmar Institute of Theology. Vol 5, December. 2005: 37-49.
- Landes, Paula Fredriksen (Trans). Augustine on Romans, Prepositions from the Romans Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Texts and Translations 23, Early Christian Literature 6, Society of Biblical Literature. Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982.
- Langley, Myrtle S. Eual. Woman: A Christian Feminist Perspective. London: Marshalls, 1983.
- Lee, Joseph Tse-Hei. *The Bible and the Gun: Christianity in South china*, 1860-1900. London: Routledge, 2003.
- _____. "Watchman Nee and the Little Flock Movement in Maoist China." [Article on line] available from http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=4056 Internet accessed 12 January 2008.
- Lesko, Barbara S. *The Great Goddesses of Egypt*. Norman: the University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.
- Levine, Amy-Jill and Marianne Blickenstaff, eds. *A feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles*. New York: Continuum International Publishing group, 2003.
- Leyre, Rafael. "Greece." *An Essay on Violence, Tradition and Modernity*. http://www.essayvtm.netfirms.com/Greece.htm, (accessed 11 June 2010).

- LiDonnici, Lynn R. "Women's Religions and Religious Lives in the Greco-Roman City." *Women & Christian Origins*. Edited by Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 80-102.
- Ligo, Arche. "Feminism." *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*. eds. Virginia Fabella, MM and R.S. Sugirtharajah. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000.
- Liefeld, W. L. "Women submission and Ministry in 1 Corinthians." *Women, Authority and the Bible.* Edited by A. Mickelsen. Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering. 134- 154.
- Lieberman, Victor B. *Burmese Administrative Cycles: Anarchy and Conquest, c. 1580-1760.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians, Word Biblical Commentary*. Edited by Ralph P. Martin, Vol. 42. Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1990.
- _____. *The Household Code of Wisdom Mode of Colossians*. Toronto: Wycliffe College, University of Toronto), Downloaded from http://jnt.sagepub.com at University of Birmingham on August 21, 2009.
- Ling, L.H.M. *Postcolonial International Relations: Conquest and Desire Between Asia and the West.* International Political Economy Series. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.
- Ling, Samuel Ngun. "Towards a Theology of Myanmar: A Study of the Myanmar Situation in the Light of Her Encounter with the Christian Mission and Theology." Rays MIT Journal 1. Insein: MIT, 2000.
- Lintner, Bertil. Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1990.
- Londey, Peter. "Greek colonists and Delphi." *Greek colonists and Native Populations*. Edited by Jean-Paul Desceudres. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. 117-127.
- Longenecker, Richard N. New Testament Social Ethics for Today. Williams. B.Eerdmans, 1984.
- Lottermoser, Friedgard. "Buddhist Nuns in Burma." http://www.enabling.org/ia/vipassana/Archive/L/Lottermoser/burmeseNunsLottermoser.h tml (accessed 09 April 2010).
- Luther, Martin. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Translated by J. Theodore Mueller. London: Oliphants, LTD, 1954.

M

- May, Pyo Pyo. "My Story." *Dee Hline Than*, Vol 3, No. 1 (November, 2009), 30 31.
- Magesa, Laurenti "Ecclesiologies: African." Dictionary of Third World Theologies, eds. Virginia Fabella, and R.S. sugirtharajah, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000).
- Mai, Marip Bawk. "The Essence of a Genuine Christian Home." BD Research Paper MIT, 1999.
- Malitz, Jurgen. Nero. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999.

- Maloney, Linda M. "The Pastoral Letters." *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Volume 2. Edited by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza. New York: SCM Press, 1994. 361-380.
- Marlowe, Michael. "Head Covering Customs of the Ancient World." http://www.bible researcher.com/headcoverings3.html#note9 (accessed 9 June 2010).
- Mananzam, Mary John, ed. "Women in Asia: Status and Image." *Asia Focus* 3. Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1979.
- _____. "Woman and Religion," *Woman and Religion*, ed. Mary John Mananzan (3rd rev.edn; Institute of Women's Studies, St Scholastic's College): 3-14.
- _____. Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996.
- Manning Nash. The Golden Road to Modernity. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965.
- Martimort, Arme Georges. Deaconesses, a Historical Study. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986.
- "Martin Luther (1483-1546)." BBC History, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/luther_martin.shtml (accessed 25 March 2011).
- Martin, Ralph P. Colossians: The Church's Lord and Christian's Liberty. Exeter: the Paternoster Press, 1972.
- Martínez López, Miguel. "The life of the Essenes and the life of the Utopians: A case study." *Moreu~lo.* 31/118- I19 (June 1994). 43-59.
- Marty, Martin E. "Reformation Christianity." *God's Rule: the Politic of World Religions*. Edited by Jacob Neusner, Contributor William Scott Green. Georgetown University Press, 2003. 107-130.
- Mason, Francis. A Cenotaph: In A Woman of the Burman Mission on, views in the Missionary Path of Helen M. Mason (New York: Lewis Colby, 1851.
- Mason, Moya K. "Ancient Roman Women: a Look at Their Live." http://www.moyak.com/papers/roman-women.html (accessed 20 July 2010).
- May, Pyo Pyo. "My Story," *Dee Hline Than*, Vol 3, No. 1 (November, 2009), 30 31.
- Maung Maung. Burma: In the Family of Nations. Netherlands: Dyambatan Ltd., 1956.
- _____. Law and Custom inBurma and the Burmese Family. Netherlands, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963.
- Maung, Mya. The Burma Road to Poverty. New York, 1991.
- McDonald, Lee Martin. *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 2007.
- Mcleod, John. Beginning Postcolonialism. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- McManus, Barbara F. "Augustus: A Man for All Seasons." http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/augustus2.html (accessed 23 March 2010).

- Meggitt, Justin J. Paul, *Poverty and Survival*. New York: Continuum International Publishing group, 1998.
- Mehden, F. Von Der. *Religion and Nationalism in South East Asia: Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963.
- Meng, Thla. "The significance of Christian Home and Family." BD Research Paper, MIT, 1999.
- Merced-Ownbey, D. Jasmine. *Roman Isis and the Pendulum of Religious Tolerance in the Empire*, 6. http://inquiry.uark.edu/Merced_Final_for_On-line11-08.pdf (accessed 24 July 2010).
- Mettananda Bhikkhu. "Was the Lord Buddha Sexist?' The Bangkok Post, Tuesday, May 4, 2006.
- Miguel mart~nelozp ez, "The life of the Essenes and the life of the utopians: A case study" *Moreu~loV* ol. 3 1. 1 1 8- I 19 (June 1994): 43-59.
- Miles, Carries A. "Patriarchy or Gender Equality?: The Letter to the Ephesians on Submission, Headship, and Slavery." http://www.godswordtowomen.org/Patriarchy_or_gender_equality.pdf (accessed on 26 April, 2009).
- Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. *Also a mother: work and family as theological dilemma*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Mitchell, Margaret Mary. Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation. Tubingen: J.C. B. Mohr, 1991.
- Moe, Mary Tin Tin. Christian Home and Family Life." BRE Research, March, 1996.
- Moe, Wai. "Burma's Economic Growth to Slow in 2009: Asian Development Bank." The Irrawaddy Magazine, Friday, April 17, 2009, Business. http://www.irrawaddy.org/(accessed 3 October 2010).
- _____. "Burma to Host Asean Energy Summit." *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, Friday, April 03. 2009.Business. http://www.irrawaddy.org/ (accessed 3 October 2010).
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. Feminist Without Boarders, Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity. Duram & London: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey. "Emancipative Elements in Ephesians 5: 21-33: Why Feminist Scholarship Has (Often) Left Them Unmentioned, and Why They Should Be Emphasized, Why They Should Be Emphasized." *A Feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles*. Edited by Amy-Jill Levine. London: T & T Clark International, 2003. 37-58.
- Mon, Nang Thuzar. *Victimization of Women in Kengtung Area*. Bachelor of Theology thesis, Myanmar Institute of Theology, 1994.
- Moore, Stephen D. and Fernando R. Segovia, eds. *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism Interdisciplinary Intersections*. London: T & T Clark, 2005.
- _____. *Empire and Apocalypse, Postcolonialism and the New Testament*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006.
- Mori, Mayumi. "Voice of Hope: Healing from the Effects of Child Abuse." In God's Image 25/2

- (June, 2006): 16-18.
- Morrison, Clinton. "The Powers that Be: earthy Rulers and Demonic Powers in Romans 13:1 7." *Studies in Biblical Theology* 29. London: SCM Press, 1960.
- Mosley, A. W. "Church and State in Independent Africa and Asia. Kuijzenberg, Otto Diederik van den and Peter van der Veer. Conversion, Competition, and Conflict." *Essays on the Role of Religion in Asia*. Edited by Dick Kooiman. Anthropological Studies free University 6 Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1984.
- Moulton, Harold K. *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians, Epworth Preacher's Commentaries*. London: Epworth, 1963.
- Munro, Winsome. Authority in Paul and Peter: The Identification of a Pastoral stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Mya Maung. The Burma Road to Poverty. New York, 1991.
- _____. *Totalitarianism in Burma: Prospects for Economic Development*. New York: Paragon House, 1992.
- Myanmar CEDAW/C/MMR/1, Article 154, reported to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW 22nd Session, 17 January- 4 February 2000 http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/22sess.htm (accessed 23 January 2011).

N

- Nash, Manning. *The Golden Road to Modernity: Village Life in Contemporary Burma*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965.
- Nee, Watchman. Authority and Submission. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1998.
- Neill, Stephen. Paul to the Colossians. London, Lutterworth Press, 1963.
- _____. "Accommodation," "Caste and the Christian," *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission*, eds. Stephen Neill, Gerald H. Anderson and John Goodwin. London: Lutterworth Press, 1970.
- Nwe, Aye. "Towards New Being of Myanmar Women." *Our Theological Journey: II, Writings in Honour of Prof. Rev. Edmund Za Bik*, ed. Department of Theology, Myanmar Institute of Theology. Insein: Department of Theology, MIT, 2008. 91-109.
- Nyo, Honour. ed. *Pastoral Hand Book*. Karen Baptist Convention, Pastoral Department, Yangon, 2007.

0

O'Brien, Peter. T. "Caesar's Household, Imperial Household." Dictionary of Paul and

- *His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin. Downers Grove, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, c1993.
- _____. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999.
- Odell-Scott, David W. "Let the Women Speak in Church: An Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:33b-36." *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology*. 13/3 (July, 1983): 90-93.
- O'Grady, Kathleen, Ann L. Gilroy and Janette Gray, eds. *Bodies, Vive, Voices: Gender in Theology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, c1998.
- Oishi, Mikio. *Aung San Suu Kyi's Struggle: Its Principles and Strategy*. Penang: Just World Trust, 1997.
- Opinion, "Child Soldiers in Burma." *The New York Times*, http://uk.oneworld.net/guides/childlabour and http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/12/opinion/12iht-edbecker.1.16101114.html?_r=1 (accessed 14 October 2010).
- Orevillo-Montenegro, Muriel. "The Church and Child Sexual Abuse." *In God's Image* 25/2 (June, 2006): 19-24.
- Oo, Esther Khaing. "The Woman Who Touched Jesus' Robe: Mark 5:25 34." Myanmar *SCM Women's Magazine*, vol. 1 (1996): 32 45.
- Osiek, Carolyn. Families in the New Testament World: Households and house Churches. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, c1997.
- ______, and Margarety. Macdonald. *A Woman's Place: house Churches in Earliest Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
- Ossa, Mauel. "Capitalism." *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*. eds. Virginia Fabella, and R.S. Sugirtharajah, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000.

P

- Par, Thaung Biak. "The Qualification for Christian Ministry According to 1 Timothy." BRE Research Paper, MIT, 1999.
- Park, Grace Eun Hye. Korean Woman's Role in Today's Ministry: Some Insights from the New Testament. Birmingham, West Midlands: University of Birmingham, 1995.
- Paw, Ywah Plaw. "Religion, Culture and Gender in Myanmar." *In God's Image* 19/2 (June 2000): 24-26.
- Perkins, Pheme. Reading the New Testament: An Introduction. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988.
- _____. Ephesians, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- . "Philippians." *Women's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998. 433-436.

- Phan, Zoya. Little Daughter: A Memoir of Survival in Burma and the West. Edited by Damien Lewis. London: Simon & Schuster, 2009.
- "Philo and the origin of Christianity." Religious and biblical scholar. http://www.nd.edu/~philojud/36.htm (accessed on 11 January 2010).
- Piana, George La. "Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire." *Harvard Theological Review* (Cambridge University Press) 20, no. 4 (October 1927): 183-403.
- Plato, The Laws of Plato. Translated by A. E. Taylor. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1934.
- Pliny. *The Letters of the Younger Pliny*. Translated by Betty Radice. London: Penguin Books, 1963.
- Pomeroy, Sarah B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York: Schocken Books, c1995.
- Prakash, Gyan, ed. *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*.

 Princeton Studies in Culture/ power/history. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Pui-lan, Kwok. Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World. Maryknoll. New York: Orbis Books, c1995.
 ______, and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza. Women's Sacred Scriptures. Concilium. No. 3. London: SCM Press, 1998.
- ______. Introducing Asian Feminist Theology. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000.

 ______. Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology. Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

 ______. "Making the Connections: Postcolonial Studies and Feminist Biblical Interpretation."
 - The Postcolonial Biblical Reader. Edited by R. S. Sugirtharajah. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. 45-64.

Q

Quiambao, Jacob S. ed, Men And Women in Home, Church and Community in Asia, Papers and Statements of an Asian Consultation on "The Christian Home in Changing Society." Committee on Cooperation of Men and Women in Home, Church and Society, East Asian Christian Conference held in Rangoon, Burma, 1963, Bangkok: Rajadaromp Printery & Typefoundry, 1963.

R

Ramshaw, Gail. *God Beyond Gender: Feminist Christian God-Language*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.

- Rasika Wijayaratne, "Buddhist Positive Thinking." http://www.vihara.org.au/t7/youth/articles/authors/rasikaw/pdf/Buddhist_Positive_Thinking.pdf. (accessed 8 February 2008).
- Rebera, Ranjini. "Challenging Patriarchy." *Feminist Theology from the Third World*. Edited by Ursula King, London: SPCK/ Orbis Press, 1994. 114-122.
- _____. ed. Affirming Difference, Celebrating wholeness: A Partnership of Equals. Hong Kong: Christian Conference of Asian, 1995.
- Renan, Joseph Ernest. *History of the Origins of Christianity*. London: Mathieson & Company, Christian Classics Ethereal Library. available from http://www.ccel.org/ccel/renan/gospels.html, (accessed on 1,08,08).
- Reid, Charles J. Power Over the Body, Equality in the Family: Rights and Domestic Relations in Medieval Canon Law. Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Richardson, Peter. Building Jewish in the Roman East. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004.
- Rieger, Joerg. Christ & Empire, From Paul to Postcolonial Times. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Roberts, John. (ed)., "Asia Minor," "Dalian League," "Philip II," 'Plato," "Polis," "Senate," "Slavery," "Women," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Robins, Wendy S. ed. *Through the Eyes of a Woman: Bible Studies on the Experience of Women.* YWCA of Great Britain: YWCA of Great Britain, 1986.
- Ronser, Brian S. *Paul, Scripture and Ethic: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7*. New York: E.J. BRILL, 1994.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Can Christology be liberated from Patriarchy?" *Reconstructing the Christ Symbol: Essays In Feminist Christology*. Edited by Maryanne Stevens. Mahwah: The centre for the Study of Religion and Society, Creighton University, 1993. 7-29.
- . Women-church. Eugene, O.R.: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001.
- _____. ed. *Religious Women and Their History: Breaking the Silence*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005.
- Russell, Letty M. *Authority in Feminist Theology: Household of Freedom*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987.

S

- Sacks, David. "Apollo." *A Dictionary of the Ancient Greek World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Said, Edward W. Orientalism. London: Penguin Classics, 2003.
- Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. "Feminist Uses of Biblical Materials." *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. ed. Letty M. Russell, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1985. 55-64.

- San C. Po. Burma and the Karens. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2001.
- San Juan, Epifanio. Beyond Postcolonial Theory. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998.
- San, Sabaw Lu. "Violence Against Women." MDiv Thesis, MIT, 2002.
- Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution. Netherlands: The Hague, 1965.
- Say, Malakan Dau. "Evaluating the ability of Women from Theology point of view." BTh Research Paper, MICT, 2003.
- Say Pa, Anna May. "Reading the Bible with the Eyes of Women." *Reading the Bible with New Eyes*. Yangon: Myanmar Christian Council, 1999. 8-13.
- _____. "Birthing an Asian Feminist Theology in the Face of the Dragon: a Burmese Perspective," *Feminist Theology Workshop*. Hmawbi: Women's Theologians Fellowship, Association for Theological Education in Myanmar, 2002. 13-30.
- _____. Christopher Day, "The Karens: Claiming the Rights of Identity and Self-Determination," *Engagement*, Vol. 3 (December, 2004). 33-42.
- _____."Chorus of Voices: Reading the Bible from Many Perspectives." *CTC Bulletin. Bulletin of the Program Area on Faith, Mission and Unity (Theology Concerns) Christian Conference of Asia.* Vol 21, No.3 (December, 2005): 59-70.
- _____."Because of Eve: Reading Genesis 2 and 3 from Feminist Perspectives," *Engagement*, Vol. 5 (December 2005): 31 36.
- Schottroff, Luise. Let the Oppressed Go Free: Feminist Perspectives on the New Testament.

 Translated by Annemarie S. Kidder. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.
- _____. Silvia Schroer, and Marie-Theres Wacker. Translated by Martin and Barbara Rumscheidt. *Feminist Interpretation: The Bible in Women's perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.
- Schreiner, Thomas. R. "An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship." *Women in the church, A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15.* eds. A.J. Kostenberger, T.R. Schreiner & H. S. Baldwin. Brand Rapids: Baker books, 1995. 105-154.
- Schutz, John H. *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*. Monograph Series 26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Schüssler Fiorenza, Elizabeth. *Bread not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990.
- _____. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York: Crossroads, 1992.
- _____. "The Praxis of Coequal Discipleship." *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*. Edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997. 224-241.
- _____. Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation. New York: Continuum Press, 2000.

- _____. Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist biblical Interpretation. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 2001.
- . "The First Letter of Peter." A *Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*. Edited by. Fernando R. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah. New York: T & T Clark, 2007. 380-403.
- _____. *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Schweizer, Eduard. *The Letter to the Colossians*, translated by Andrew Chester Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976.
- Segovia, Fernando F. *Deconlonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000.
- ______, ed. "Interpreting Beyond Borders." *Bible and Postcolonialism* 3. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, 11-34.
- Sein, Mya. "The Women of Myanmar." Atlantic Monthly. 1958.
- Sein Sein. *The Position of Women in Hinayana Countries*. Master of Arts Thesis, University of London, 1958.
- Selwyn, Edward G. *The First Epistle of St. Peter*. London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1964.
- Seneca, *AD Lucilium Epistulae Morales*. Translated by Richard M. Gummere. The Loeb Classical Library. eds. E Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, mcmxxv.
- Setyawan, Yusak Budi. "Be Subject to Your Husband as you are to the Lord in Ephesians 5:21-33 as Illuminated by an Indonesian (Javanese)." *The Asian Journal of Theology*, 21/1 (April, 2007): 50-68.
- Sharnk, Hazel F. Women Over the Seas, a Report of the Woman's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, for 1940-1941. Publication date not shown.
- Sharyn Dowd, "1 Peter." *Women's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992. 462-465.
- Shapiro, Alan. (trans), Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990.
- Shattering Silences: Karen Women speak out about the Burmese Army Regime's use of Rapeas a Strategy of War in the Karen State. Maesot, Karen Women's Organisation, 2004; No Safe Place: Burma's Army and the Rape of Ethnic Women, Refugees International, April 20, 2003; and License to Rape: the Burmese Military Regime's Use of Sexual Violence in the Ongoing War in the Shan States. Shan Human Rights Foundation and the Shan Women's Action Network, May 2002.
- Shaw, Graham. The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983.

- Shelley, Bruce. *By what Authority? The Standards of Truth in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1965.
- Shoemaker, Thomas P. "Unveiling of Equality: 1 Cor 11:2-16." *Biblical theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 17/2 (April, 1987): 60-63.
- Silva, Swarna De. "The Place of Women in Buddhism." *A Talk given to the Midlands Buddhist Society (UK) on Sanghamitta Day, 1988*. First Published: 1988; This edition: June 1994.
 - http://www.enabling.org/ia/vipassana/Archive/D/DeSilva/WomenInBuddhism/womenInBuddhismSwarnaDeSilva.html#chap1 (accessed 1 April 2010).
- Silverstein, J. Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Simon Pau Kan En. 21th Century Christian Theological Thinking. Yangon: Alin Ein Christian Publishing House, 2005.
- Sinclair, Celia B. A Guide Through the New Testament. Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.
- Slovenko, Ralph. "Nonsexist Language Empowering Women, Dethroning men." *The Journal of Psychiatry & Law* 35 (Spring 2007): 77- 107. Downloaded/printed from HeinOnline (http://heinonline.org) Sunday 20 Feb 2011 00:06:26. https://www.copyright.com/ccc/basicSearch.do? &operation=go&searchType=0 &lastSearch=simple&all=on&titleOrStdNo=0093-1853.
- Small, Alastair, ed. "Subject and Ruler: the Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity." Papers Presented at a Conference held in the University of Alberta on April 13-15, 1994, to celebrate the 65th Anniversary of Duncan Fishwich, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 17. Annarbor, Mich: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1996.
- Smith, Bonnie G, ed. Global Feminisms Since 1945. London: Routledge, 2000.
- . Women's History in Global Perspective. University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- Smith, Donald Eugene. *Religion and Politics in Burma*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.
- Smith, Martin. Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Insurgency. London: Zed Books, 1999.
- _____. Burma (Myanmar): The Time for Change. Minority Rights International, 2002.
- Soe, Aunty. Myanmar Taman, vol. 3. March 1-15, 1967.
- Song, Choan-Seng. Jesus, the Crucified People. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- _____. *Third-Eye Theology: theology in Formation in Asian Settings*. New York: Orbis Books, 1975.
- Spiro, Melford E. *Burmese Supernaturalism*. New Jersey: Prentice- Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, 1967.
- _____. *Buddhism and society; a Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes*. London: University of California, 1982.
- Standhartinger, Angela "The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter

- to the Colossians," Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Vol 79 (2000): 117-130.
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. "1 Corinthians," "Epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians," "Epistles to Timothy." *The Woman's Bible*, eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Revising Committee, Seattle: Coalition on Women and Religion, 1974.
- Steinberg, David I. *The Future of Burma: Crisis and Choice in Myanmar*. Langham and New York: The Asia Society and University Press of America, 1990.
- _____. "Legitimacy in Burma/Myanmar." *Myanmar: State, Society and Ethnicity*. eds. N. Ganesan and Kyaw Yin Hlaing. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007. 109-142.
- Stern, Menahem. "Josephus and the Roman Empire as Reflected in the Jewish War." *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*. Edited by Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987. 71-80.
- Stevens, Maryanne. "Introduction." *Reconstructing the Christ Symbol: Essays In Feminist Christology, ed. Maryanne Stevens.* Mahwah: The centre for the Study of Religion and Society, Creighton University, 1993. 1-6.
- Strecker, Georg. "Household Rules." *The Encyclopaedia of Christianity*, Vol 2. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001.
- Stringfellow, William. Conscience and Obedience: the Politics of Romans 13 and Revelation 13 in light of the Second Coming. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1977.
- Stuhlmacher, Peter. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: a Commentary*. Translated by Scott J Hafemann. Westminster, John Knox Press, 1994.
- Suchochi, Marjorie Hewitt. "In Search of Justice, Religious Pluralism from a Feminist Perspective," *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, eds. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter. London: SCM Press, 1987. 149-161.
- Sugirtharajah, Rasiah S. "Reconceiving Jesus: Some Continuing Concerns." *Asian Faces of Jesus*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993. 258-264.
- _____. Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998.
- _____. *Postcolonial Bible. Bible and Postcolonialism*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- _____. *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- _____. *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- _____. *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- _____. *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

- _______,ed. Voices From the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World. New York, Orbis Books, 2006.
- _____. "1, 2 and 3 John." *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*. Edited by. Fernando R. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah. New York: T & T Clark, 2007. 413-423.
- _____. *Troublesome Texts: The Bible in Colonial and Contemporary Culture*, Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.
- Surburg, Raymond F. *Introduction to the Intertestamental Period*. Missouri: Concordia Pub. House, 1975.
- Synek, Eva M. "Women and Worship From the Perspectives of Christian Churches and Canon Law." *Women: Perspectives from World Religions*, Journal of Dharma, April-June, 2001, Vol. XXVI No. 2. 157-196.

T

- Tagle, Luis Anthony G. "Ecclesiologies: Asian." Dictionary of Third World Theologies, eds. Virginia Fabella, and R.S. sugirtharajah, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000).
- Tamez, Elsa. Struggles for Power in Early Christianity: A Study of the First Letter to Timothy. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, c2007.
- Tanzer, Sarah J. "Ephesians." *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary.* Volume 2. Edited by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza. New York: SCM Press, 1994. 325-348.
- Taw, Saw Kwa Lar Yo Tha. "Christian Marriage in Myanmar." BTh Research Paper, KBTS, 2002.
- Taylor, Nicholas. *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 66. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1992.
- Taylor, Robert. *The State in Myanmar*. London: Hurst and Company, 2009.
- Thamein, Hla. Myanmar Proverbs. Yangon: Badamyar Ngamaunt Publisher, 2000.
- Thang, Khua Tin. "The Petrine Letters." BTh Research Paper, MIT, 1984.
- Thant, Myint-U. The Making Of Modern Burma. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- _____. *The River of Lost Footsteps: A Personal History of Burma*. New York: Farber, Strauss and Giroux, 2006.
- "The Essene." *Rosicrucian Digest* 85, no 2. 2007, http://www.rosicrucian.org/publications/digest/digest2_2007/online%20digest/online_200 7 Dig2 1107.pdf (accessed 22 June 2010).
- "The Women's Suffrage movement in Switzerland." Expatica.com 20/03/08.

- http://www.expatica.com/de/lifestyle_leisure/lifestyle/What_s-faster_-The-women_s-suffrage-movement-in-Switzerland-or-a-legless-narcoleptic-climbing-the-Matterhorn__11547.html?ppager=1 (accessed 19 September 2009).
- "The Virgin Goddesses." Classic 242 Summary Notes on the Virgins. http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/Cls/s05/CLS242-01/virgins.html (accessed 5 June 2010).
- Thomas, Carol G. Alexander the Great in his World. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Thomas, M.M and M. Abel, eds. *Religion, State and Ideologies in East Asia: A Collection of Essays*. East Asia Christian Conference: East Asia Christian Conference, 1965.
- Thompson, Betty. "A Chance to Change: Women and Men in the Church." *Rish Book Series* 15. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982. 15-20.
- Thoung, Samo. "Being a Man." Myanmar Taman, July/August, 1995.
- Thwin, Thanlwin Pe. Myanmar Taman May 1-15, 1972.
- Tidball, Derek. *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1983.
- Tin, Pe Maung. "Women in the Inscriptions of Pagan." *Fiftieth Anniversary Publications, No.2.* Rangoon: Burma Research Society, 1960.
- Tin, U Pe Maug. "Sermon on Independence Day." Myanmar Taman, Feb 1, 1952.
- Than, Tun. *Essays on the history and Buddhism of Burma*. Edited by Paul Strachan. Isle of Arran, Scotland: Kiscadale Publications, c1988.
- Thant Myint-U. The Making Of Modern Burma. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- _____. *The River of Lost Footsteps: A Personal History of Burma*. New York: Farber, Strauss and Giroux, 2006.
- Trible, Phyllis. Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Tripolitis, Antonia. *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, c2002.
- Tun, U Boe. "Independence of Burma." Myanmar Taman, May, 15, 1952.

U

- Uchimura, Kanzo "Heiwa no Fukuin." [The Gospel of Peace] *Seisho no Kenkyu* 44 (1903) in *Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu* 11. Edited by Toshiro Suzuki et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981.
- Uchimura, Kanzo. "Shusenronsha ni yotte Inyo seraruru Kirisuto no Kotoba." [The Words of Christ Cited by Warmongers] in *Seisho no Kenkyu* 51 (1904). *Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu* 12. Edited by Toshiro Suzuki et al. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981.

- UN Economic and Social Council (57th Session), *Integration of Human Rights and the Gender Perspective: Violence Against Women.* E/CN, 4/2001/73. January 23, 2001.
- UN Thematic Group on Gender, Myanmar Gender Profile. Yangon, 2000.
- Urch, Erwin J. "Early Roman Understanding of Christianity." *The Classical Journal*. Vol. 27, No.4 (Jan., 1932). 255-262.
- Ure, P. N. "Zeleucus and Charondas." Reviewed on Die Gesetze des Zaleukos und Charondas by Max Muhl. *The Classical Review*. Vol. 43, No. 5 (Nov., 1929). 170-172.
- Ursula, King, ed. Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader. London: OrbisBooks, 1994.

V

- Vandenhole, Wouter *Non-discrimination and Equality in the View of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies*. Oxford: Intersentia, 2005.
- Verner, David C. *The Household of God : The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles /*Dissertation series (Society of Biblical Literature); no. 71. Chico Calif : Scholars Press, 1983.

W

- Wa, Maung Shwe. Genevieve Sowards and Erville Sowards. *Burma Baptist chronicle*. Rangoon: Board of Publications, Burma Baptist Convention, 1963.
- Warren, Max Alexander Cunningham. Caesar the Beloved Enemy: three Studies in the Relation of Church and State: Reinecker Lectures at the Virginia Theological Seminary Alexandria, Virginia February 1955. London: SCM Press, 1955.
- White, Cynthia. *The Emergence of Christianity*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007.
- Wickramaratne- Rebera, Ranjini. "Recognizing And Naming Power." *In God's Image* 17/1 (1998): 38-42.
- _____."Understanding Power: Intellectual Elitism or Catalyst to Change?" *In God's Image* 17/3 (1998): 2-4.
- Wilkins, Steve & Douglas Wilson. Southern Slavery As It Was." [booklet on –line] Moscow: Canon Press, 1996. http://reformed-theology.org/html/books/slavery/southern_slavery_as_it_was.htm (accessed on 7 December 2008).
- Williams, Louise Wives, Mistresses and Matriarchs, Asian Women Today. London: Phoenix Press, 1999.
- Williams. Ronald Ralph. *Authority in the Apostolic Age: With Two essays on the Modern Problem of Authority*. London: SCM Press, 1950.

- Win, Ma Tin. "Maternal Strength." New Light of Burma, 19 June, 2005.
- Wire, Antoinette. "1 Corinthian." *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary.* Volume 2. Edited by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza. New York: SCM Press, 1994. 153-195.
- Witherington, III. Ben. *Women in the Earliest Churches*. Monograph Series/ Society for New Testament Studies 59. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- _____. *Women and the Genesis of Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Witt, R. E. Isis in the Ancient World. London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.
- Wogaman, J. Philip. Christian Perspective on Politics. London: SCM Press, 1988.
- Womack, William."Contesting Indigenous and Female Authority in the Burma Baptist Mission: the Case of Ellen Mason." *Women's History Review* Vol. 17, No. 4, September 2008, 543–559.
- Wong, Wai-Ching Angela, The Poor Woman: A Critical Analysis of Asian Theology and Contemporary Chinese Fiction by Women. New York: P. Lang, 2000.
- Woo, Jeong-Ku. Women's Experience and the Authority of the Bible: A reflection on Feminist Theological Hermeneutic. Birmingham: school of Mission and World Christianity, Selly Oak Colleges, 1996.
- Wood, James E. Jr. "Religion, Revolution, and Nationalism in Asia" (Editorial). HeinOnline 14 J. Church & St. 17 (1972): 5-17.
- Woodman, Dorothy. *The Making of Burma*. London: The Cresset Press, 1960.
- Wordelman, Amy L. "Everyday Life Women in the Period of the New Testament." *Women's Bible Commentary*, Edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. London: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1992. 482-488.
- World Council of Churches. Commission on faith and Order. Study on the Community of Women and Men in the church. Geneva: world Council of Churches, 1978.
- Wright, N.T. Paul and Caesar: a New Reading of Romans, A Royal Priesthood: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically. Edited by C. Bartholomew. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002.
- Wu, Rose. "Asian Women as the Subject of God's Vision." In God's Image 16/2 (1997): 27-31.
- Wymn, John Charles. *Pastoral Ministries to Families*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957.

Y

- Ye, D Aung. "The Essence of Christian Family." Myanmar Taman, January, 1995.
- Yi, Hla. Women in Myanmar. Yangon: Myanmar Council of Churches, 1998.
- Young, Frances Margaret. *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

- Young, Katherine K. "Introduction" *Feminism and World Religions*, eds. Arvind Sharma and Katherine K. Young. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999. 1-25.
- Young, Pamela Dickey. Christ in a Post-Christian World: How can we Believe in Jesus Christ When Those Around Us Believe Differently—or not at All? Minneapolis: Fortress Press, c1995.
- Yu, Chia-Shin. Early Buddhism and Christianity: A Comparative Study of the Founders' Authority, the Community and the Discipline. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1999.

\mathbf{Z}

- Zeitlin, Solomon. "The Essenes and Messianic Expectations. A Historical Study of the Sects and Ideas during the Second Jewish Commonwealth." *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series 45, No. 2 (October 1954), 83-119, University of Pennsylvania Press Stable, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1452899, (accessed 12/09/2009)10:00.
- Zerbe, Gordon and Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, "The Letter to the Colossians." *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings,* eds. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, New York: T & T Clark, 2007. 294-303.
- Zikmund, Barbara Brown. "Marks of the Church." *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*. Edited by Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson, Mowbray: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Zing, Van @ Elly Mang. "A Model of Christian Family." MDiv Thesis, MIT, 2001.
- Zoe, Lu (San Lwin). Myanmar Proverbs. Yangon: Ava House, 1996.

Illustration 2 Military Rule

The Revolutionary Council

- •build an effective totalitarian government.
- adopted a far right doctrinaire socialism
- nationalized many economic enterprises, private institutions like schools, hospitals and social welfare centers
- to cushion the system from outside influences, a thoroughgoing isolation was imposed.
- •Student demonstrations such as the July 7 event led to an army crackdown resulting in student deaths and closing down of the colleges. In November, 1974, when the body of U Thant, the Secretary General on the UN, was brought back for burial, student demonstrations once again led to killings and closure of colleges.

Burma Socialist Programme Party Government

- •The Constitution of 1974 drawn up on socialist principles
- •U Ne Win and his army cohorts were voted into power as civilian government
- •the Army was still in full control evident in ruthlessness on the battlefields.
- Practicing the "Four Cuts," cut from people support, supplies, communication, transport, against the ethnic armies,
- By the 1980s unravel system with decline economy. In 1987 the devaluing of the currency led to protexts and riots, in 1988 it led to Ne Win to officially retire from politics.

State Law and Order Restoration Committee and State Peace and Development Committee

- Pro-democracy
 demonstrations broke out
 known as 8-8-88 movement
 led by Brigadier Aung Gyi
 with General Tin U, a former
 Defense minister and Daw
 Aung San Suu Kyi, the
 daughter of U Aung San
- September 18, 1988, General Saw Maung announced the formation of the State law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and pledged to restore law and order and hold free and fair elections.
- The elections were held on May 27, 1990 and the party led by Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory but SLORC declared there could be no civilian government until a constitution was written.
- Aung San Suu Kyi had been put under house arrest.
- A national convention selected by the SLORC to draft a new constitution began meeting in January 1993. Meetings broke off in 1996 and were restarted in 2004.
- •In 2008, there was a referendum on the constitution which guaranteed 25% of the seats to the army. The army has ordered many of its officers to become civilians and lead the government party.
- •SLORC now renamed SPDC is making such the Army continues to play a dominant role in the governing of Myanmar
- •SLORC Won the election in Oct, 2010 eclection.

Myanmar Article 154

•(a) Women shall enjoy equal political, economic, social and cultural rights; (b) Mothers, children and expectant mothers shall enjoy those rights as prescribed by law; (c) Children born of citizens shall enjoy equal (d) Women shall enjoy freedom of rights guaranteed by law as regards marriage, divorce, partition of property and succession and custody of children.

CEDAW Article 1

- Legal representation and protection
- Education both academic and recreational, as well as resources to allow for effective learning
- •Work, to pursue employment opportunities of one's choice; maternity leave with pay and employers special consideration and equal treatment of women at work during pregnancy
- •Health care
- Individual autonomy in matters of nationality and movement, including the right to live free from forms of physical violence such as domestic violence and rape.

Children Rights

- •Convention 138, Article 2
 The minimum age specified in pursuance of paragraph 1 of this Article shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years.
- •Convention 182, Article 3
 (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
 (b) the use, procuring or offering of a shild for
- offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
 (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for
- illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

As a member of the United Nations, Myanmar has signed most UN treaties. However, these are obviously not practised by the regime. Moreover, often such standards are breached. For example, according to *The New York Times*, the regime has become the worst perpetrator of

Illustration 4 Duties of Husband and Wife

The Duties of a husband towards a wife

- (a) respecting the wife
- (b) not abusing or demeaning her
- (c) not being promiscuous
- (d) letting her run the household
- (e) buying her clothes and other adornments

The Duties of a wife towards a husband

- (a) doing her trade and work well
- (b) being a good hostess and pleasing people
- (c) safeguarding resources
 (d) not having
 'relationships' with men
 other than the husband
- (e) being diligent in all activities

However, with the growth of Buddhism these rules have changed and later expressions of Buddhism give rules for wives which are five times longer than those for husbands. It explicitly stereotypes and institutionalises women's subordination. These rules state that: wives should not have evil thoughts; be cruel or harsh; nor should they be dominating in action or word, but only be virtuous, chaste, polite, industrious, hard working, compassionate, faithful, loving, modest, and respectful. Like the New Testament household codes, these codes have patriarchal natures and present abusive or restrictive views.

As Sugirtharajah states, that no book that is held sacred (be it the Koran, Bible, Dharmma, or Bhagvadgita), is a pure text and will not be the eternal gospel for all people.¹⁹ Both Buddhist and Christian household rules do not favour women and are not liberationist or true for every context. Rather, they all devalue the marginalised, (the poor, women and children) and endorse their subordination.

¹⁹ R. S. Sugirtharajah, Troublesome Texts: The Bible in Colonial and Contemporary Culture, 129-130.

different people and nations.¹³ However this diversity or Olympian divine society was reshaped by writers and philosophers such as Homer and Hesiod into a more hierarchal framework, as below.

Illustration 6 Hierarchal Olympian Divine Society

Zeus or Jupiter (rulers interllecturals, judges, warriors, fathers, god of sky), Apollo (god of expedition and the protector of colonists), Hermes (the god of travelers, merchants, thieves, and shepherds), Dionysus or Bacchus (god of wine and grapes, god of hearvest).

Virgins goddesses or male-like characters, Atherna a wisdom, a warrior, a protector, Artemis (huntress, helping women's menstruation, childbirth and death) and Hestia (the household hearth or the foundation of life, center of the temple), born from male gods as they had masculine characters, independency and performed masculine or patriarchal tasks when married goddesses were portrayed as evil and destructive like female mortals.

Goddesses such as Ge (the creator and the controller, able to dethrone the other gods), Thea, Hera (the queen of the gods), Demeter, Aphrodite (a fertility goddess) and Cybele were known as the powerful mother goddesses and they became a threat to the divine society. So they were portrayed as adultery, Zeus tried to stop their power by giving birth on his own.

As female domination was possible in prehistory or the Neolithic era, subordination should not be seen as natural.¹⁴ However, the goddesses became subordinate with male-like characters and followed the male deities and mother-like or fertility character at the bottom.

¹³ Lynn R. LiDonnici, "Women's Religions and Religious Lives in the Greco-Roman City," in *Women & Christian Origins*, eds, Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 80-81. The well known gods and goddesses common to both Greek and Roman society are Zeus (Jupiter), Hera (Juno), Poseidon (Neptune), Apollo, Artemis (Diana), Athena (Minerva), Hermes (Mercury), Ares (Mars), Aphrodite (Venus), Demeter (Ceres), Dionysus (Bacchus) and Hephaestus (Vulcan).

¹⁴ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, c1995), 12,15.

Illustration 7 Saying Against Women's Prayer

Saying Against Women's Prayers You insupportable creatures, I ask,
Is this the best, is this for the city's safety...
To have you falling at the images,
Of the city's gods crying and howling,
An object of hatred for all temperate souls?
What is outside is a man's province; let no
Woman debate it: within doors do no mischief!
But it is man's part, the sacrifice, the
consultation
Of the gods, when the enemy assault us;

It is yours to be silent and stay within doors.

The distinction was still retained that if a man entered a place where women worshipped, he would be severely punished, and the reverse applied. For example, Julius Caesar divorced his wife when she allowed a man to enter a house when she and other woman were performing the rite of Bona Dea.⁶³ Therefore with the influence of the Isis cult, women experienced greater freedom as opposed to civic cults. There is also evidence of this in the early stages of the Christian era.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ LiDonnici, 97-98

These church fathers also had patriarchal and hierarchal influences and political apologetic tones which had a great impact on Christian's view on women leadership roles in Christian history.

The following *Illustration* shows the functions of Christianity or church in the Graeco-Roman period, along with its limited female leadership roles. While Christianity, when maintaining its mystery elements, gave roles to women, Christianity with a Graeco-Roman social, political and religious structure limited or barred women from leadership roles. ⁹¹ It is obvious that the later form superseded the earlier one as women were asked to perform their prayers and prophesies with their heads covered, to be silent or to learn silently in church, to learn from their husband at home and to avoid teaching.

Illustration 8
Christianity with both Mystery and Church Structures and Practices

Christianity with Mystery Religious Structure and Practices

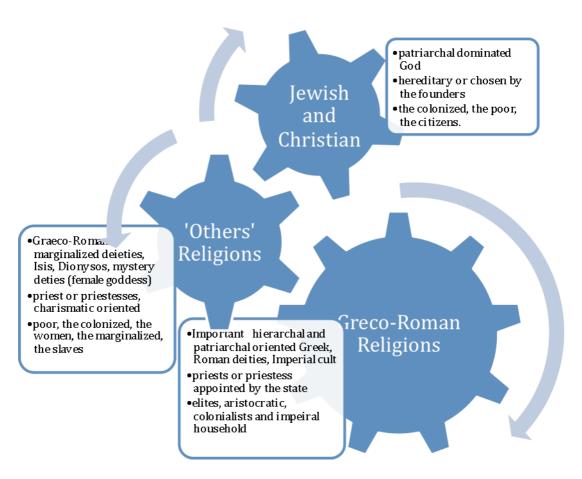
- 1) religious freedom and salvation concepts
- 2)a charismatic authority
- 3) discipleship or the priesthood of all believers with prayers and prophesying
- 4)women are accepted as leaders

Christianity with Church Structure and Practices

- 1) the cultural, public socialmoral and management standards, of Graeco-Roman world.
- 2) the authority of office
- 3) a club system of the Greco-Roman with bishops and overseers,
- 4) women are not accepted as leader in office

⁹¹ Synek, 157-196. 169 and LiDonnici, 97-98

Illustration 9
The Structures and the Operations of Greco-Roman Religions



The above *Illustration* shows the summary of this chapter that the two gears: colonial and imperial Greco-Roman and Jewish and Christian are moving in the same direction to hierarchy, patriarchy and colonialism/imperialism, as a controlling system when the gear of marginal religions move in the opposite direction to gender equality, individual freedom and community life.

religious texts, and to construct more positive, egalitarian interpretations by applying a postcolonial feminist resistant reading.

10.2. Levelling Strategy

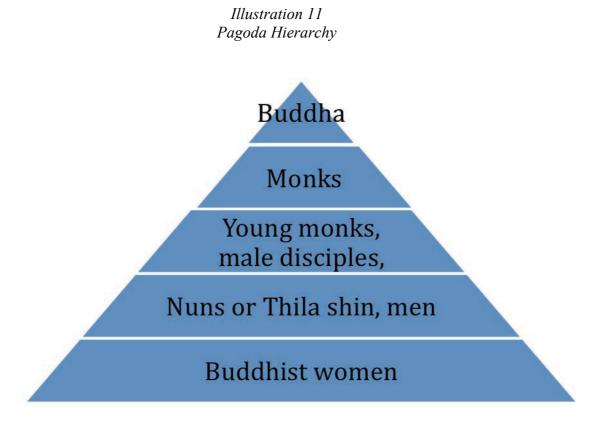
In Luke 1:52 the first NT postcolonial feminist, Mary, talks of God "putting down the mighty rulers or lifting up the low," and Luke 3: 5 affirms that "every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low." These texts are prophesies of the coming of the messiah who promises to bring equality and justice to God's people. While feminist theology usually emphasises the raising of the poor and oppressed, even to glory or exaltation in their humility, the postcolonialist tries to make those in high places and power become humble and just. Postcolonial feminists use both these strategies. This is to bring down the 'peak' or power of colonial/imperial/patriarchal authority or the male religious leaders and level up all the oppressed: the female half of humanity, the lowly, the marginalised, and the 'other.'

Illustration 10 Levelling Method

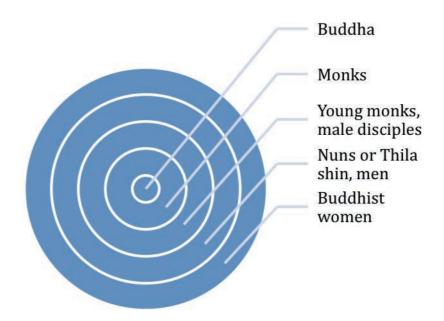
Level down the dominate powers such as colonial/imperial/patriarchal/hierarchical/ entities. (Postcolonial approach)

Level up The Others, the marginal, the peripheral, the colonized, the victims of power (feminist liberationist approach)

top or at the centre, male monks at the second level or layer, lay men at the third level or layer, nuns at the fourth, and lay women at the bottom or periphery. The scholar Viola has termed the order of Buddhism as 'temple authoritarianism'.



⁷ Viola Abeygoonerwardena, "Women in Buddhism and Temple Authoritarianism," *In God's Image* 25, no. 4 (December 2006): 57- 62.



Even though 95% of attendance of the pagoda are women and the rituals' connected responsibilities at the temple are taken care of by women, the 5% of men take the leading roles. Moreover, women are forbidden to enter the inner part of the temple where the relics are kept, to step in the inner part of the Bo tree or to carry offerings to the altars; only men are allowed these duties. The restrictions are based on a taboo that women are unclean. During menstruation, women cannot go to the temple and cannot serve the monks. Being born as a woman is a consequence of having bad *karma* in the previous life. Most Buddhist women still hold these ideas or beliefs as genuine. This also reinforces the condemnation of Buddhist women in religious roles.

Who formed this system? This hierarchal system is believed to be created by former male *sangha* or monks' legalizations of Buddhist canons and Institutions, the colonizing and patriarchal religious transformation of King Asoka and the historical cultural elimination of female monastics or the *bhikkhuni* order from Buddhist religious life.⁹

⁸ Ibid., 57- 62.

⁹ Ibid., 57- 62.