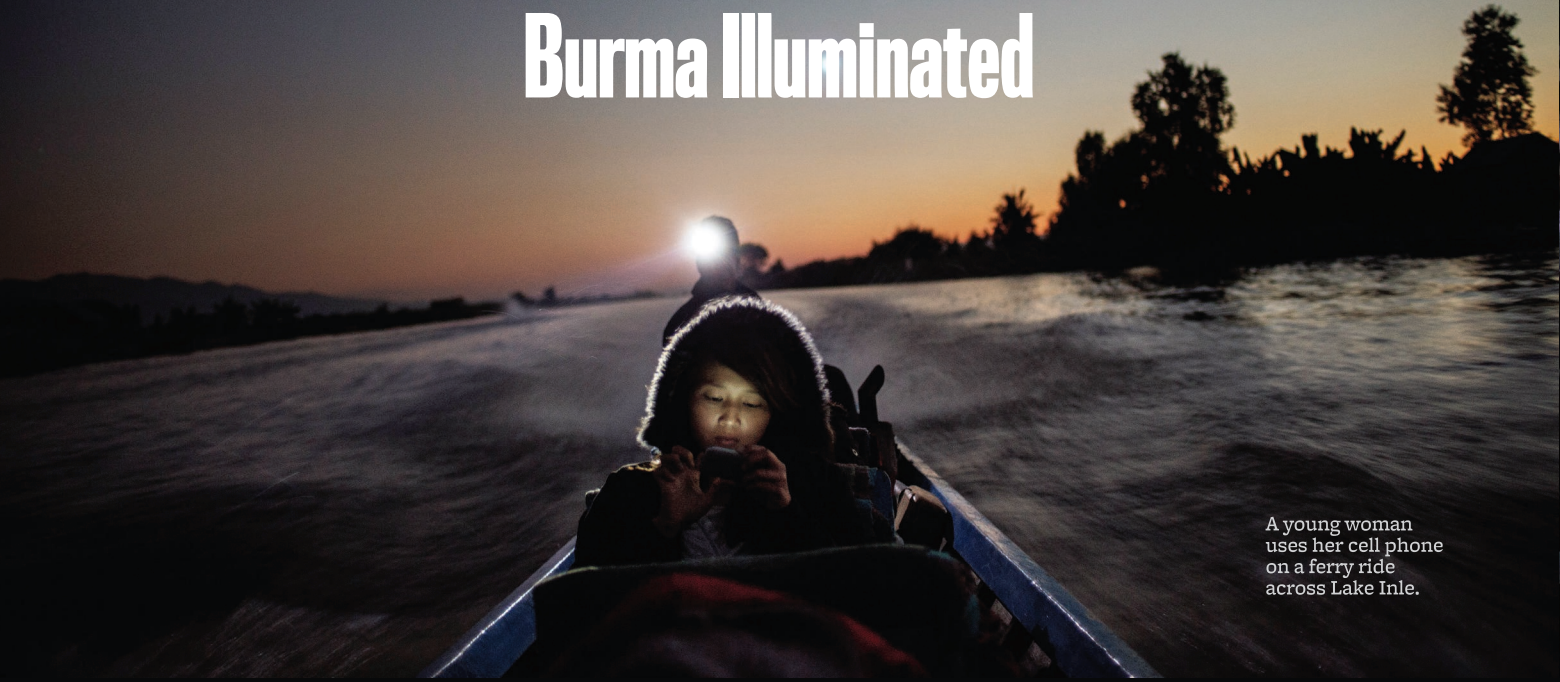


PICTURED | SIM CHI YIN

# Burma Illuminated



A young woman uses her cell phone on a ferry ride across Lake Inle.

**W**HEN PHOTOJOURNALIST Sim Chi Yin traveled to Myanmar in the spring of 2012, Aung San Suu Kyi's smiling face was plastered on posters and stickers, hats and T-shirts. The air crackled with hope and expectation. Change was finally coming to Myanmar.

When Sim returned a year later, in 2013, she could see that change had indeed arrived, and very quickly. Now that restrictions on vehicle imports have been lifted, affordable cars have brought more traffic jams and honking horns to the streets of Yangon, embodying globalization's onslaught. There is a sense of trepidation, Sim says, intermingled with the enthusiasm for a

new Myanmar (still called Burma by many). Some Burmese are vexed by the darker, nonnative influences. They see teenage girls dropping out of school to work in nightclubs so they can buy clothes and mobile phones, and they say it's as if some people have become obsessed with money overnight. Others worry that the Burmese are losing their sense of community as their world expands well beyond the country's borders.

How did it happen so fast? As one local tour guide told Sim: "We were like a spring kept totally compressed inside a box for a long, long time. And now, suddenly, the lid of the box has been taken off and the spring has jumped out." **FP**

SIM CHI YIN/VI MENTOR PROGRAM



Advertisements for Western-style clothes tower over Yangon food stalls selling traditional noodles.



See more from this series at [ForeignPolicy.com/pictured](https://www.foreignpolicy.com/pictured).

Passengers crowd into a bus as dusk falls in downtown Yangon.



Children play in a fountain at Yangon's Junction Square, a brand-new mall.