

*Terraced pagodas and monuments
overlook the Irrawaddy River
in Sagang, Burma*

A watercolor painting of a dirt road in Sagang, Burma. In the foreground, a person is riding a motorcycle away from the viewer. The road is flanked by lush green vegetation. In the background, several terraced pagodas and monuments are visible, overlooking the Irrawaddy River. The style is soft and painterly, with visible brushstrokes and a warm, golden light.

A RIDE ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY

Watercolor paintings from a landscape echoing Rudyard Kipling's
poetry along the Irrawaddy River in Burma, and in Thailand

Paintings by Michael Killelea © 2014

BURMA, also known as Myanmar, labors under a legacy of British colonialism as much as under the monsoons and stifling summer heat. But today, its charming people, beautiful land and ancient culture readily accommodate outsiders in the spirit of the Buddha. When Rudyard Kipling wrote about the road to Mandalay, he spoke of the Irrawaddy River and the life that flows along that fertile aquatic highway.

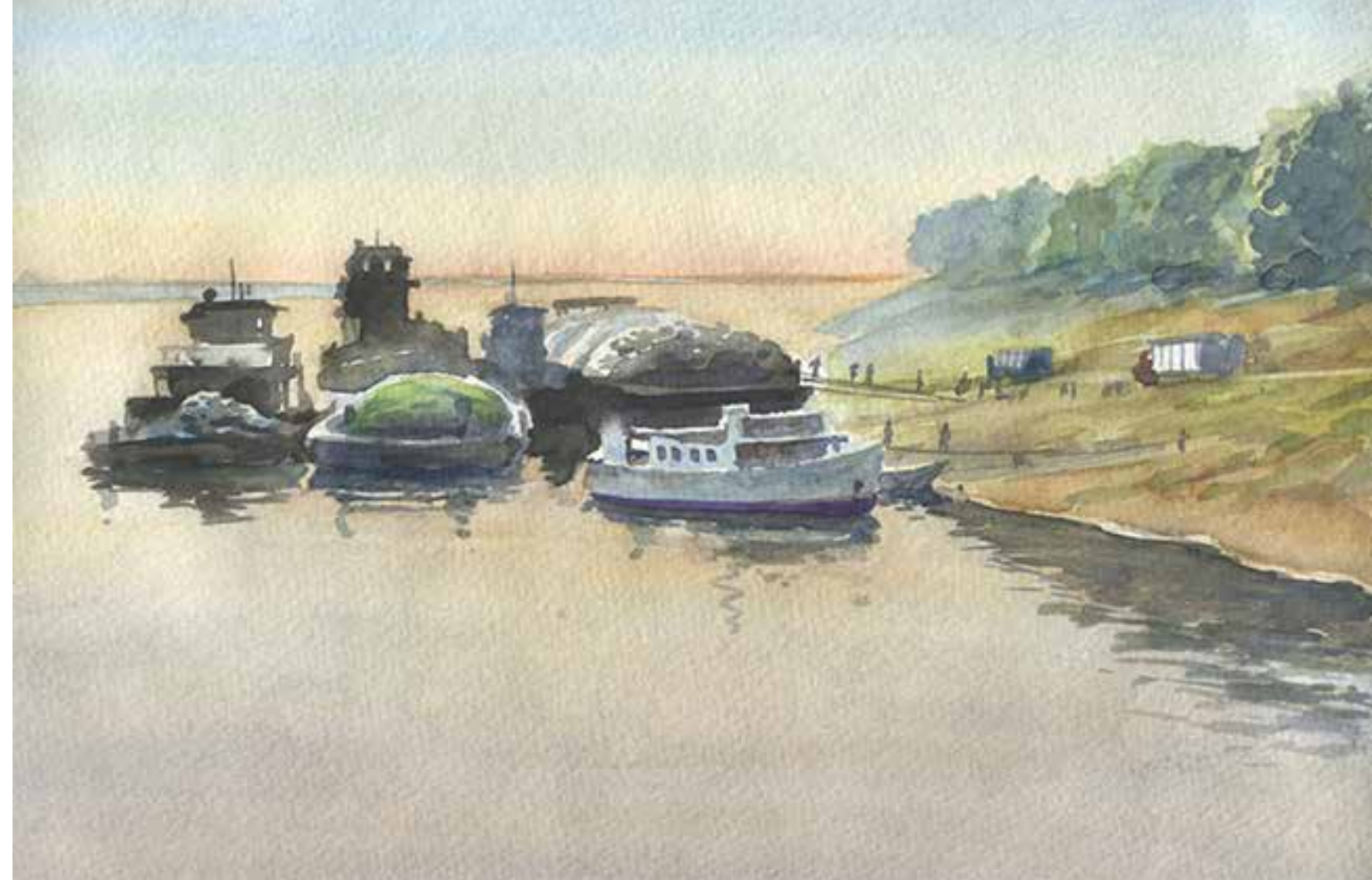
Sun setting behind the riverside village of Sagang brings a social time for the village.



The central railroad station in Rangoon (Yangon) was first built in 1877 and today suggests the country's colonial heritage and native roots.

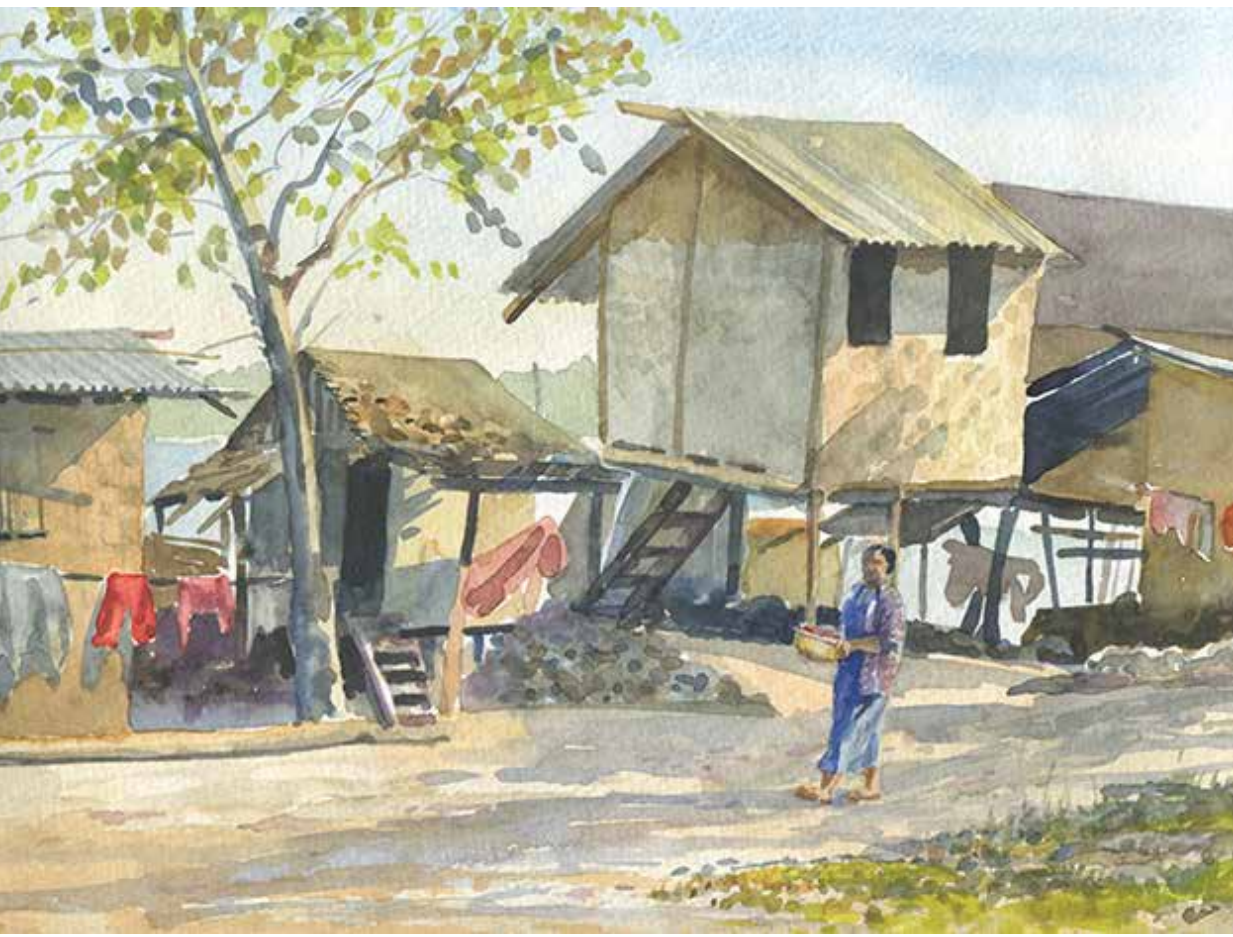
Golden sunlight paints a warm glow on long-abandoned temples scattered by the thousands across the plains of Began.





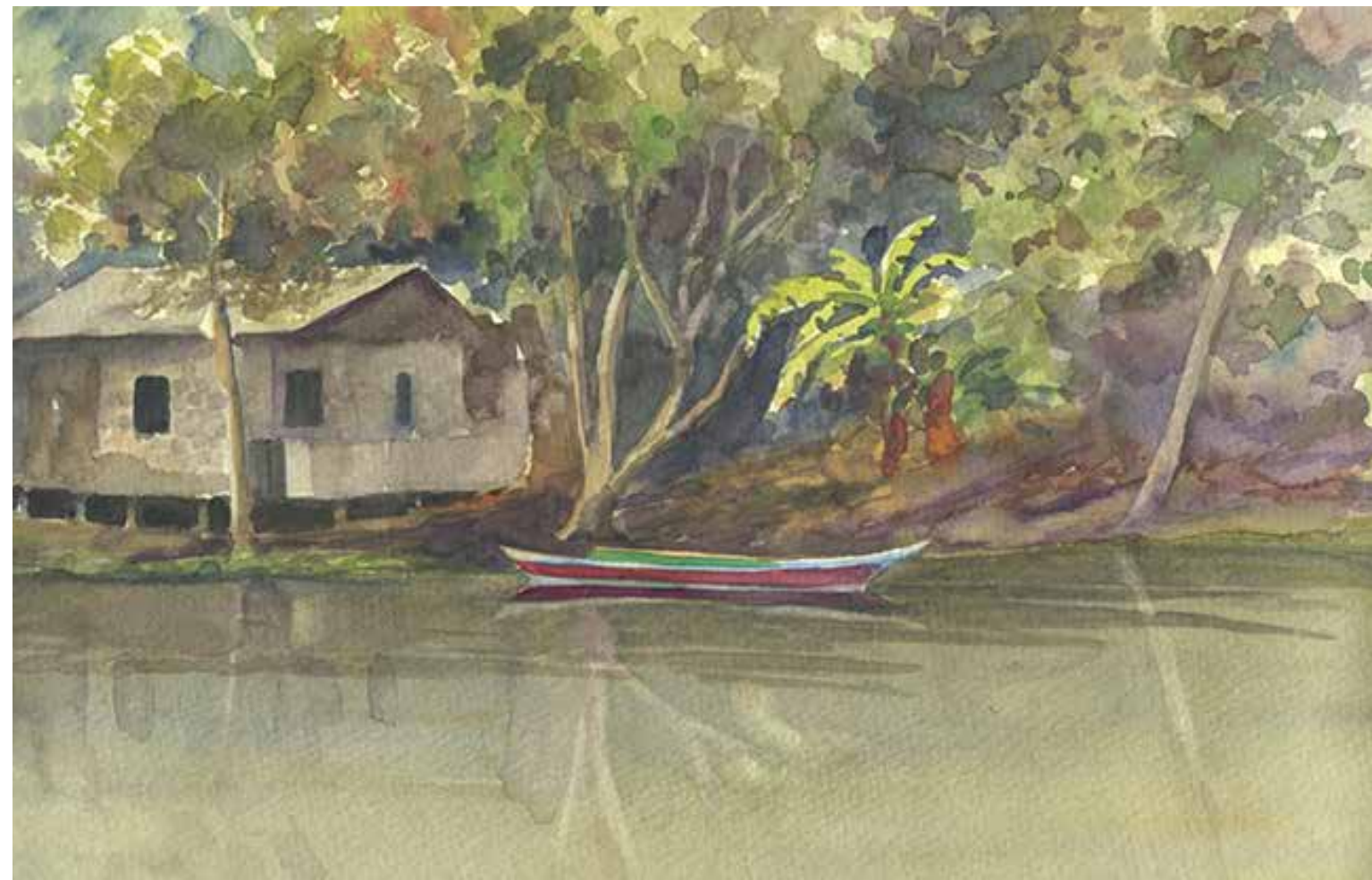
In a country with little manufacturing, rice sacks are carried ashore on the back of laborers at Myan Mu.

Sampans lay idle, tied to the muddy banks of Royal Lake in Yangon.



A shipment of new urns and pots are offloaded and floated ashore at a busy landing area close to Began.

Laundry dries between houses in the riverside village of Sagang, where tin roof houses with bamboo siding follow the mood of the river during seasonally low levels.





BANGKOK Wildly colorful temples and pagodas seem to lurk all over this boisterous city. (Wat Hua Lamphong, above) Equally colorful are nearby floating markets like Khlong Latmayom (below), which now cater more to the tourists than local produce buyers.



With his paintbrush in hand, **Mike Killelea** and his wife Kathy followed Rudyard Kipling's invocation to "ship me somewheres east of Suez... For the temple-bells are callin... On the road to Mandalay".

The people are indeed charming, gracious and very welcoming.

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