**Cover:** King Mindon (r. 1853-1878) with female consorts. Opaque water color on cotton, c. late 19th or early 20th century, artist unknown. H. 78 cm x W. 74 cm, Burma Art Collection, Northern Illinois University. IL, USA. BC2007.03.05. Gift of William Wise, 1989.

**Cover design:** Jeff Strohm, Northern Illinois University.

Bequested under the title, "Scene of King Mindon,” this undated painting is possibly posthumous and likely based on well-known photographs of Mindon late in his reign wearing golden earrings, a rolled white *phaw lone* turban; and, while bare-chested here, dressed in exactly the same silk *pahso* worn in one such portrait: in the wavy *Lun-taya acheik* pattern fashionable during the Konbaung dynasty. The king's knees are shown as completely tattooed, which would have been the lowermost extent of the typical male "trousers" tattooage which extends up to the waist. Seated on a richly flowered carpet in the "royal ease" posture, Mindon holds a long unlit *cheroot* in his left hand. The four courtly ladies are similarly attired in white muslin *eingyi* jackets; while the leftmost figure, in a darker-colored *htamein*, elegantly grasps the edges of her organdy *pawd* shawl. The dreamy expression of a glorious ruler, now long past his prime, may be emblematic of a once powerful kingdom soon to be eclipsed and overthrown by the British.

—Catherine Raymond, Curator, Burma Art Collection at Northern Illinois University