



Advertising modernity in the heat of Yangon

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This curious artefact is brought to you from Myanmar in Southeast Asia. The country has been referred to as Burma until recently and it is famous mostly for its golden pagodas and its military dictatorship out of which it emerged only in 2011. Buddhism is part and parcel of people’s everyday activities and large groups of monks roam the streets in the early morning hours until lunchtime, waiting in front of shops and cafés with their alms bowls to be filled with rice. One day in November 2013 I was walking in downtown Yangon, the former capital of Myanmar, and noticed a group of monks gathering in front of a small shop. A salesman distributed hand fans to the people - a common thing to take with during daytime as the city climate is mostly hot and humid. In contrast to the more traditional hand fans monks often carry with them, these ones seemed



smaller and made out of plastic. Something was written on them, too ...

The seller noticed my curiosity and handed me one of the objects: The fan advertised vaginal ultrasounds and other examinations by means of high-end medical apparatuses for which a 30% discount was available ... the monks and me continued our way through the criss-crossing streets of Yangon, cooling ourselves in the traditional way while advertising most modern technology.

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