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STUDENTS CALLING FOR HUMANRIGHTS

DEMOCRACY AND
HUMANRIGHTS ARE
ESSENTIAL FOR
INTERNAL PEACE..

HTUN AUNG GYAW.

TOO FAR OF DEMOCRACY
WE DON'T WANT TO
GO BACK UNTILL
DEMOCRACY IN OUR
MOTHER LAND -

EDITORIAL

by

Htun Aung Gyaw

Chairperson of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front

As students who love democracy and respect human rights, we all have strong confidence that these can be achieved in Burma, even though the struggle may be long and difficult.

We all believe that democracy and human rights are essential for internal peace, reconstruction and development of our country. The Burmese people are now struggling to obtain the precious opportunity to develop their country in the way they want. Under a military regime such as now rules the country, such development can never take place.

We admire countries which have genuine democracy and human rights, and sympathize with those which are struggling for democracy and human rights as we now are.

We believe this news letter will play a major role in developing communications and understanding between the Burmese people and the international community. We also hope it will help bring the Burmese students and students in the outside world closer together. For the past 26 years, under the rule of the military, we have been isolated and now we long to re-establish these friendships.

DAWN

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All Burma Students' Democratic

Front

NEWS EVENTS-----NEWS EVENTS

Burma is listed as one of the ten poorest countries in the world. Yet, the Burmese people have basically remained passive and kept up their sense of humor despite all of the economic difficulties.

However, in mid-1987, Ne Win suddenly demonetized 80% of the country's currency. There was probably not one person in Burma who was not hurt by this move. Students, who were preparing for year-end exams were especially shaken as they suddenly did not have money for food, rent and other necessities. They began moving into the streets to show their displeasure.

The military, which has been in charge of the country for much too long, struck back, and in these first confrontations, several students were killed. Slowly the protests grew as did the repression against them. By August 1988, a general strike had been called all over the country, and public services came to a stand still.

By September, the Burmese people felt that they were winning in their struggle for an end to one-party rule and the dismantling of the Ne Win government which has already lasted 26 years.

But on the 18th of September, General Saw Maung staged a military coup, most certainly under the orders of Ne Win, and began not only shooting any demonstrators on the streets, but

also started house to house searches for anyone

thought to be connected with the protests. No one can possibly know how many unarmed students and working people were killed during this time of terror, but many observers estimate that at least 8,000 Burmese have been killed by the military in the past year.

Approximately 8,000 students then fled to the Thai/Burma border areas where they took refuge. A few also move into Thailand where they live as illegal refugees. They desire to go back to their homes and families, **but only if the Ne Win government steps down and allows an interim government to organize free and democratic elections.**

Japan, West Germany and the US, who have been the major aid donors to Burma, cut off all their support in protest of the brutal attacks against the protesters. This was supported by the Burmese people. It is through this kind of international pressure that the Saw Maung government will finally have to negotiate.

However, things turned for the worst on December 14 when Thai Army Commander in Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh made a visit to Burma. It was the first official visit of any country to the Saw Maung government, and was seen as a de facto recognition of this brutal regime. Gen Chavalit showed no interest in the few protests against the visit by both Thai and Burmese students.

General Chavalit's visit did several things. One, it opened up the door to Thai economic involvement in Burma. Several Thai firms have already signed lucrative deals with the Saw Maung government to exploit the vast teak wood forests and fishing areas of the country. This will help finance the Burmese governments oppression against the students.

Secondly, it basically recognized the Saw Maung government, and indicated that the thousands of unarmed students and working people who had been killed during and following the coup were of little interest and should be forgotten.

Finally, it resulted in an agreement between Saw Maung and Gen. Chavalit to make serious efforts to get the dissident students all back to Rangoon. Almost as soon as Gen Chavalit arrived back in Bangkok, he announced that the Burmese students should all return home and that Saw Maung had promised that his government would not do any harm against them.

It is hard to understand how Gen Chavalit can be so certain of this. Can he guarantee the safety of the students if they do return home? Most certainly not! There are plenty of reports of students who have returned to Rangoon only to be arrested, tortured and executed. The Burmese students can hardly afford to trust Saw Maung, despite the assurances from Gen Chavalit.

However, more sadly yet, Saw Maung has offered a 5,000 baht (about US \$200) reward to anyone who can capture or encourage a

student to return to Burma. Thus, each of the approximately 8,000 students in exile now have a price on their heads, and there are plenty of people who would love to add 5,000 baht to their pockets!

In order to facilitate the "return" of these students, the Thai military has set up a processing center in Tak province of Northern Thailand. It is suppose to be operated by the Thai military, Thai Red Cross, Burma Embassy and Burma Red Cross. Students do not believe that any of these organizations can possibly insure their safety should they decide to go home.

However, pressure on them to use this service is increasing. Many have been arrested by Thai authorities and forcible taken to the center. It is known that in at least some cases, those responsible for the arrests were paid the 5,000 baht plus any taxi fees or other expenses.

On December 26, a group of about 80 students became the first to be repatriated. The Thai Red Cross was suppose to help receive them in Rangoon, but unfortunately, for unknown reasons, was not present. No one can now know what has happened to these 80 students, or what they will face in the future. They are now isolated totally from any international protection. The future is bleak indeed. The students are at the whim of bounty hunters, and there is no one who can provide any assurance that, once they are forced back to Rangoon, they will not become another victim of torture, rape and execution.

The All Burma Students' Democratic Front therefore calls for the following actions:

1. All repatriation be immediately ended and the processing centers closed. An end to the 5,000 baht bounty is also a necessity.

2. Temporary refugee camps be opened for those students who can not live in the jungles. These camps should be operated by the United Nations which will provide for the security of the students. Those students who really want to return home can then decide to do so without coercion.

3. Foreign embassies in Rangoon make efforts to locate and observe those students who have already returned in order to help insure their safety.

4. Foreign countries continue to observe an economic boycott of Burma in order to pressure the Saw Maung government to finally listen to the voice of the people and set up an interim

government. Those countries which have started making economic contracts with Burma should withdraw those contracts immediately until there are positive democratic changes in the country.

The ABSDF asks all international friends to lend support during this difficult time. It is difficult to live in exile, but to also have to live with a bounty over your head and to be forced to return to a government which will most certainly arrest, torture and possibly kill you is dehumanizing.

We ask our friends to write letters to your own government asking them to support the above actions. Also write letters to:

Prime Minister Gen Saw Maung
Prime Minister's Office
Rangoon, Burma

Request that his government show some respect for human rights by withdrawing the bounty on our heads, and demand that they listen to the call of the Burmese people for an interim government and truly free and democratic elections.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

On December 24, 1988, two Thai government officials entered a Burmese student camp inside Burma. Their intention was to pressure students in these camps to join the Tak Center for repatriation to Burma. Although they never mentioned the reward of 5,000 baht for each student which the Burmese embassy has promised, it is speculated that this was a part of their plan.

The students detained the two officials and requested a press conference so they would be able to express their views on the repatriation program. Through trickery, the press conference was cancelled. In the following interview, one of the student leaders from the camp shares the feelings and intentions of the students.

"There are three branch camps in Thay Bow Boe, and they are under the ABSDF organization. I have come to the main camp to explain the incident which happened in our branch camp yesterday.

Two Thai guys came to a market near our camp to try to persuade us to return to Burma against our will. When they first came to the market, they met two students from our camp and asked, "Do you have any unmarried girls in your camp? Do you want to sell them?" This hurt us very much and the students couldn't stand it. Then they asked another question, "Do you want to go back to your country via Bangkok in the plane?" So the students answered "Yes, we want to be back in our country. There are many

students in our camp who are willing to go back to our country. Would you like to go back together with us to our camp?" The two students said this so they could get the two Thai guys back to the camp where the rest of the students could help.

So the two Thai guys agreed and the students brought them into the camp. We detained them and interrogated them about their intention, why they came here. Then we took them to Major Soe Soe and he also interrogated them. An agreement was made that they would not come to our camp again and that they would not try to persuade the students to return to Burma against their wills again.

We detained these two officials only to give them a warning because at least 90% of the students do not want to go back to their country. If they are forced, directly or indirectly, to go back to their country by any person it hurts their feelings very much.

This has happened twice already. The first time was on December 21 and the second on the 24th. On the 24th, one of the men who came was the deputy governor of Po Pha district in Thailand. The man who accompanied him was a civilian or an assistant of some kind I think. This was the second time so we were very upset. That is why this time we detained them for a longer time. In fact we did not arrest them, we only detained them in order to ask them questions about their intentions.

We have several reasons for detaining them. First, we know that the Thai government is a democratic government and they love democracy. If we detained these two Thai officials, someone from Thailand would surely come to us and we would have a chance to hold some discussions with them. This was a golden opportunity. Through this opportunity we want to express that our students really don't want to go back to our country. They came here to do the revolution. They did not come just for the fun of it. We came with a strong determination. Through discussions with other Thai authorities and the press, we would have a chance to express these feelings so people in other countries could understand us a little better. Another reason is we want to inform the Student Reception Center established just inside Thailand, that we really do not want to go back to our country. We are under force to do so and we can't stand it. So we detained the two officials so we can express our desire to revoke the reception center which has been set up in Thailand.

I think the Thai government does not really know the true situation in our country. They don't know what has truly happened in our country. They only got half the information about what happened in our country through the Burmese military. I think that information is something tricky. It is information in advantage for the Burmese government and is not true. When the Burmese military generals tell the Thai government that there are many students along the Thai/Burma border who want

to go back to Burma, it is not true. It is not the reality of the students along the border. The military junta gave untrue information to the Thai government. It is a trick to force the return of the students.

We believe that the Thai government's intentions are noble and good, but at the same time we believe that the Thai government doesn't have any true information at all about the situation.

Only two or three students have gone from our camp to these centers. Some students have been arrested by the Thai police in Bangkok and forced to go back to Rangoon against their will.

When we released the two officials, we asked that foreign reporters come so we could express our intentions. We met them on the bridge which crosses the river from Burma into Thailand. As we were getting ready to talk to the reporters, the two Thai officials suddenly crossed the bridge into Thailand, got in a car and drove away. Without them, the press conference could not be very effective. We wanted to explain our intentions as clearly as possible to the press and to the Thai officials who had gathered, and after that we would release the two men. They, (Thai officials) were just tricky. They were not gentlemen. They just walked away without making any discussion with us. So it hurt our feelings. Now we are not given a chance to tell the world what we think. We have no freedom to tell our side of the story. This is unjust!

On January 4, 1988, a student called some of the ABSDF staff in Bangkok from somewhere near the Tak Repatriation Center. The following is the information he shared over the phone. We can not give his name as he has been repatriated to Burma and we do not want to endanger him or his family.

"Several days ago I managed to get out of the Tak Repatriation Center in order to take a sick friend to the hospital. I tried to call you then, but you were not in. When I returned to the center, the Thai military found out that I had tried to call, and I was beaten.

Life in the center is difficult. We are not allowed to meet journalists who come through. We are also given a lot of menial tasks to do, and if the guards do not like the way we do them, we are forced to do them over.

We are afraid in the center. There are 14 Burmese Red Cross workers there, but only one of them really works with the Red Cross. The other 13 are Burmese Military Intelligence agents. We have to be very careful what we say or do. They used many methods to force us to return to Burma.

Some of us do not want to go back to Burma. One group of us were arrested in Mae Hong Son by the Thai police and brought here against our wills.

Sixteen of us are determined not to go back, and are planning to hold a hunger strike to protest. The hunger strike will last four days.

The following is an article taken from THE NATION newspaper which is an eye witness account of what still goes on inside Burma. This is evidence that the return of students to Rangoon is dangerous, and the Saw Maung's promise of safety rings hollow and untrue.

BURMESE PORTER RELATES HIS HARROWING EXPERIENCE

By Bo Aung Din

THE NATION newspaper, November 28, 1988

On the evening of November 15, 1988, all Insein township males between the ages of 18 and 40 were summoned to meet at their respective local areas in the suburbs of Rangoon.

When those ordered to assemble arrived at the appointed areas, they were rounded up by the military, loaded on trucks and driven to Insein Jail. More than 500 were taken away that fateful evening to spend the night behind bars.

They were awakened early the next morning and trucked to Hlaing Bwe village in Karen territory. The army trucks, each carrying 40 people, arrived at the destination at 3.00 pm the same day and the passengers were taken to the army compound of the 28th Light Infantry Regiment.

Dinner was served at 6.00 pm. At 10.00 pm, the group, numbering over 500, including students, teachers and other professionals, was

escorted by troops of the 44th Light Infantry Division to No 4 State High School, where they were bedded down for the night.

Hustled out of their beds early in the morning on the 17th, they were assigned to be porters for the army and told to carry heavy ammunition into the jungles. After a four day trek, the group arrived at Hill No 568.

The march did not end at that point, but continued for another two days before the hungry and weary group arrived at an army camp near Mae Taw Waw where a fierce battle was raging between Burmese troops and the Karen revolutionaries. But they found no food awaiting them at the end of their journey.

After six days without food at the army camp, 20-year-old Maung Tin Htay managed to escape from both the troops and the scene of the battle. He fled to the Karen-controlled area and was provided with food and shelter and medication at Kler Day camp.

Maung Tin Htay is now recovering from a shrapnel wound he received just prior to his escape from the Burmese army and eventual death.

"My brother," he said, "was killed by a mortar shell. He was 24 years old. Another four people from a seven-member family group who were my next-door neighbors in Insein also died in the skirmishes between the army and the Karens, while two other persons were shot by the soldiers as they tried to escape from the camp"

The frail-looking youth suffering from malnutrition continued to relate the harrowing experience and suffering he and others had been subjected to after they were forcibly taken from their homes.

Maung Tin Htay said that many more of the original Insein group, of which a great number were starving, had died because they were too weak to run for shelter on the battlefield.

Two teachers were among the press-gang left behind in the battle zone and their fate is unknown. Maung Tin Htay described them as U Tin Hla who teaches primary school, and U Myint Than Lwin, a high school master. He said both of them lived in the same bloc as he in Insein.

Apart from the group with which he was taken from Insein, Maung Tin Htay said another 1,000 people have also been abducted by the army for forced-labor purposes, and that nobody seems to know where these people are.

Some of the students who arrived at Kler Day camp reported sighting decayed corpses at two locations on their way to the Karen camp. At one place they came across 25 bodies covered with flies and maggots and had to circumvent the area because of the smell of rotting flesh. In another place they found 30 more bodies with their faces so deformed that it was impossible to identify them.

Meanwhile, a source who asked not to be identified said that the military is continuing to harass and exterminate people in Rangoon and

throw their bodies into incinerators. Gunshots can be heard every night, and in the mornings bodies are found in dumpyards or floating in the Rangoon River.

There have also been reports of incinerators being built at Insein jail. Two have already been set up and six more will be installed in the near future.

Rangoon watchers believe the army may have now adopted a new strategy in eliminating dissidents. Instead of shooting them in public as in the past and running the risk of the world's condemnation, they now round up all able-bodied males and use them as porters --- before starving them to death in the jungles.

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The following is a Press Release from the All Burma Students' Democratic Front concerning Gen Chavalit's visit to their country and the agreements he has made with Gen Saw Maung.

"Mae Sa Rit: Tun Aung Kyaw, the chairperson of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) will present a letter today to Gen. Chavalit Yonchaiyuth, the Commander in Chief of the Thai Army. The letter to Gen. Chavalit says in part, 'We, the students of Burma from the ABSDF are very sorry to know that you have visited Burma and made an agreement with the Saw Maung's cruel and brutal military regime without knowledge of the wishes of the Thai and Burmese students and people. This indicates that you have recognized the cruel military coup to which most of the democratic countries have

rejected and have cut off relationships with this government in every way'.

'Our dear General, if you recognize the Thai students and peoples' opinions, and if you have sympathy of the Burmese students and people, we would like you to hear our demand by revoking the agreement between you and the so-called 'Government of the Union of Burma' for the sake of the Burmese students and peoples and the better mutual understanding between the Thai and Burmese people.

'In addition, Win Moe, the Vice-Chairperson of ABSDF also stated that "we are so sad to learn that the first person to recognize the military regime of Saw Maung, the brutal criminal, is Gen. Chavalit.

"Win Moe stressed that "the security of the students who have returned to Rangoon can not be guaranteed by time. Rather, it can only be guaranteed by conditions, for instance, the abolition of the curfew, reopening of schools and campuses, freedom to form a student union as well as other people's organizations which are not political parties, freedom of press, and announcement of the exact date for a free and fair election in which students can play an active role especially their participation in the election commission."

Please join with us to help bring human rights back to our country. At this point, your support is crucial. We ask you to copy this report and share it with other friends and groups in your country. Together we can bring about positive change.

THE NEWSPAPERS SAY

December 15, 1988

THE NATION

Chavalit back with pledge of safe deal for students

ARMY Commander in Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, whose one-day visit to Rangoon yesterday is widely seen as a de facto recognition of the Burmese regime, said he will try to convince Burmese students seeking refuge in Thailand to return to Burma.

He made the promise after Gen Saw Maung, who came to power in the Sept. 18 military coup, repeated assurances of safety for Burmese students who return home and reiterated that a general election will be held - though conditions regarding its timing allowed for no set date to be announced.

Chavalit referred to Saw Maung, who is blamed for the killing of hundreds of students and civilians, on various occasions as "brother".

"I will do my best, brother to make them (Burmese students) understand that what they want is democracy and we can reach democracy...by peaceful means," Chavalit told Saw Maung in English after a luncheon hosted by the Burmese leader to welcome the Thai general's 29-member delegation.

Chavalit was the first known senior foreign dignitary to visit Rangoon since the coup. The one-day visit came amid strong opposition by Thai and Burmese students who said the action accorded recognition of the regime. The visit broke an informal international boycott of the Saw Maung government which has been condemned worldwide for its brutalities.

Saw Maung repeated Rangoon's offer of a Bt 5,000 reward for anyone who helps a Burmese student return to Burma.

Saw Maung told Chavalit that 536 people were killed in the uprising. He claimed that only 15 were killed in pro-democracy protests while the rest were looters and rioters.

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December 20, 1988

THE NATION

Thai firm to redevelop the Rangoon Strand

A THAI businessman has clinched the latest and biggest deal with the Burmese government to undertake a fishing project, a logging concession, and development and management of a department store and the famous Strand Hotel in Rangoon.

Phanas Nopprapai, a timber trader, on behalf of Thip Tharn Thong Co, told reporters yesterday his company has also signed a contract with the Saw Maung government to export used cars and parts, construction and electrical equipment to Burma.

The deal, which carries no cash transactions but exchange of goods, will further permit the Thai company to conclude up to US\$ 10 million worth of trade transactions with the cash-starved Burmese government.

The company will also be permitted to handle trading in precious metals out of Burma which is a well-known source of gems, jade and pearl.

The two other companies are Mars & Co (Thailand) Co and Atlantic Co, both of which have been granted fishing rights in Burmese waters out of Ranong Province. Other fishing venture contracts are with members of the Ranong Chamber of Commerce which were described as deals "at local level".

The company has been assigned to improve and expand the Strand and President hotels in Rangoon. The 3-story Strand Hotel was built by the British and has been in dilapidation ever since.

Thip Tharn Thong will invest about US\$ 12 million to expand the Strand with an additional 200 rooms in a new 15-story building. The company will manage the premises.

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January 10, 1989

THE NATION

Govt to continue advising Burmese students to return home

Tak - Officials at the repatriation center here said yesterday that reports of arrests and deaths of students returning to Burma had not altered Thai policy towards 108 students still at the center.

He said the students had heard the US State Department's announcement, last Thursday, of "credible reports" that up to 50 returning Burmese students had been arrested and that some had died while in custody. But he stressed that the report had not yet been confirmed, and he said the students had seen tapes of Burmese television reports which showed recent Tak returnees reuniting with their families.

Students here said the US announcement, which they heard over the VOA and BBC radios, had reinforced fear of returning to Burma.

"The little news we get had not been good," said Kyaw Kyaw Aung, who described himself as a leader of 12 students currently refusing, for a variety of reasons, to return to Rangoon.

Most defiant among the group were Aung Soe Moe and two close friends from the southern Burmese city of Tavoy. Aung Soe Moe said his 20-year-old brother had been shot dead by soldiers outside Moulmein University on Sept 19. "I am not afraid to go home," Aung Soe Moe said. "I am too angry to go home. I would go to any country before going to Burma.

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January 11, 1989

THE NATION

Chavalit defends policy to send back Burmese

ARMY Commander in Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh tried to justify Thailand's policy of repatriating Burmese dissidents in talks with two US senators yesterday.

The army chief told reporters that he explained to Senators Richard Lugar (Republican-Indiana) and Thad Cochran (Republican-Mississippi) that the Burmese students are being offered a chance to return home "to continue their studies and to build democracy by peaceful means".

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Chavalit said he tried to convey Burmese leader Gen Saw Maung's attitude toward the students to the Americans.

The army chief visited Rangoon last month and promised Gen Saw Maung, who seized power Sept 18 in a military coup, that he would attempt to convince thousands of Burmese students seeking refuge in Thailand to return home.

Chavalit said he raised a recent statement by the US State Department that a number of returning Burmese students were reported to have been arrested and killed with the two senators.

He said he asked for "sympathy" from the US over the matter but did not elaborate.

Some senior American officials are reportedly unhappy with Chavalit's Rangoon visit and have questioned its motive.

January 12, 1989

BANGK POST

Chatichai rejects Amnesty charge

PRIME Minister Chatichai Choonhavan last night blasted Amnesty International for accusing Thailand of forcibly repatriating Burmese students to face torture and ill-treatment.

"It's absolutely untrue," the prime minister said.

"All the students voluntarily returned," he said.

He said they had returned home with smiles on their faces.

Deputy Supreme Commander Gen Pat Akkanibutr said no Burmese students have been forced to return against their will and the military had helped send the students back for purely humanitarian reasons.

He said that Amnesty International and other humanitarian organizations are welcome to observe the repatriation.

Asked about the Burmese students, acting Supreme Commander Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh repeated assurances by Thai military officials that those who returned to Burma did so voluntarily.

"It's up to the students to go if they want. All those that have gone back have returned voluntarily," he said of the students who had flown to Rangoon from Tak.

Asked about the Amnesty report, Gen Chavalit pointed to assurances given by Rangoon officials.

"I don't say that I believe the reports or that I don't. What I say is, you have to take time to judge what is right or wrong. You should not rely on your emotions," he said.

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January 12, 1989

BANGKOK POST

Amnesty attacks repatriation of fugitive Burmese

AMNESTY International on Tuesday accused Thailand of forcibly repatriating Burmese students to face possible torture and ill-treatment by Rangoon security forces.

In a telexed message sent to the Bangkok Post and international news agencies, Amnesty said it is concerned that 22 Burmese students who had fled to Thailand following the military takeover on last September 18, had been forcibly repatriated to Burma on January 6.

It also alleged that other students had been forcibly repatriated.

Amnesty, which also sent the message to Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan and Army chief

Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, urged the Thai Government to let Burmese students remain in Thailand if returning them to Burma would endanger their safety and security.

Thai Foreign Ministry and Army spokesmen also said they doubted the reports and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen Sunthorn Kongsompong said the students returned willingly and "no one forced them."

"Amnesty International's concern in this regard is based on increasing evidence that many political prisoners arrested for having been actively involved in the March-September uprising have been held incommunicado without charge or trial since their arrest and that some of them have been subjected to torture or other forms of severe ill-treatment.

"Despite an initial unconditional amnesty offer to returning students, a Burmese military spokesman involved in the repatriation programmed reportedly said on December 26 that returnees' records would be checked and action would be taken against those who took a very active participation in the demonstrations or who joined an underground movement.

"Amnesty International's concern is also based on information that Thant Zin, who was repatriated on December 26 together with some 80 other students, is said to have been arrested following his arrival in his home town of Mergu in Burma's southern Tenasserim division," it said.

It also said it is concerned that Sai Myo Wyn

Tun and Kyai Moe, two 23-year-old Shan students who had a leading role in the August and September demonstrations in their home town of Taunggyi in Shan State, were among the 22 forcibly repatriated.

Thai authorities initially promised that students would be granted temporary asylum. However, Gen Chavalit visited Gen Saw Maung in Burma on December 14 and reportedly agreed to repatriate the students, Amnesty said.

Press reports said that many of those who boarded the plane on December 26 showed evident signs of fear, and other reports from Rangoon indicated that students had been taken away from their homes and were imprisoned or had disappeared or died after returning for the amnesty.

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January 12, 1989
BANGKOK POST

Burmese student "killed after returning home"

A Burmese student was reportedly killed at his home in a Burmese town opposite Tak last week after having returned to the country from a Karen rebel camp, an official of an anti-Rangoon organization claimed yesterday.

Dr. Tu Ja, a senior member of the Democratic Alliance of Burma, an organization of Burma minorities set up recently, said Tan Lwin, 22, a student from Moulmein University, was shot and killed by gunmen who witnesses claimed were Burmese soldiers.

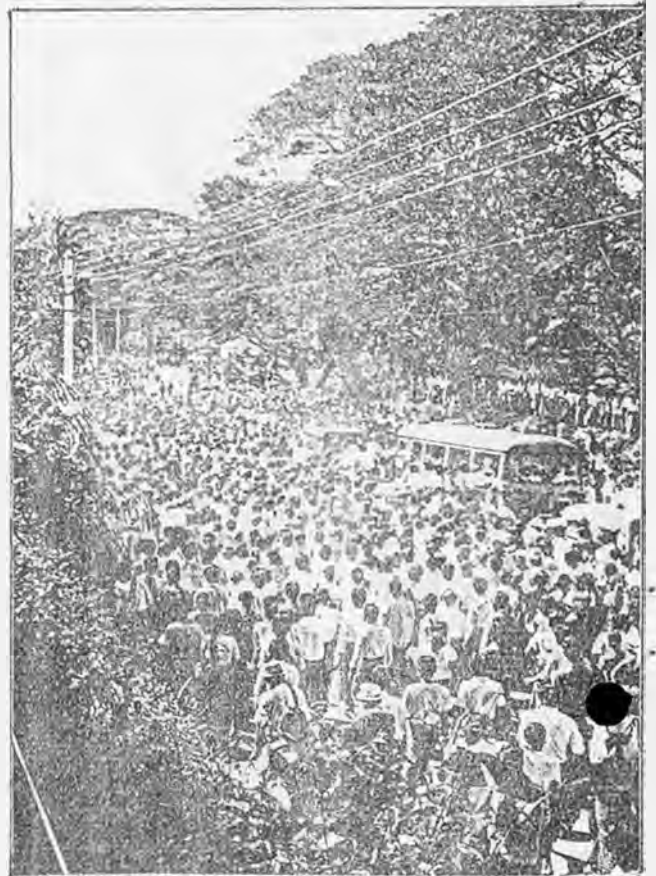
He said the victim was severed in half by sub-machine gun fire in the attack on Jan 2 while taking a bath at his home in Moulmein.

He said Tan Lwin left Kler Day camp of the Karen in late December to return to Moulmein. He did not join the repatriation programme set up by the Thais because he believed it involves a long process, he said.

The report of the student's murder came amid an allegation made by the London-based Amnesty International of Thailand forcing the Burmese dissidents at the Tak's reception center to return to Burma where they may have faced arrests and tortures.

A Thai Government House source yesterday said the Thai National Security Council and the Foreign Ministry believed that the rumors about student arrests and tortures were initiated by those who did not want the students to go back.

"We all cannot help crying."
 On the funeral parade of Daw Khin Kyi, widow of General Aung San, National Hero a km road full of mourning people and students, showed their discipline and solidarity that Burma is now in proper situation for free and fair election. Together with members of National League for Democracy, students and people expressed their great respect for human right and Democracy. Min Ko Naing, Mou Thi Zon and other leaders of



student leaders gave speech - "We can use this advantage but we'll not. We have creativity for human right and Democracy in our country." People and students took part in that ceremony, singing student Unions songs and shouting slogans, "We all the students and people cannot help crying while singing student Unions songs."

Fr. inside Burma
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NEWS BREAK

On January 6, 1989, a group of 22 ethnic Shan students boarded the plane in Tak province for the return to their homeland of Burma. Most of the students had been rounded up in Mae Hong Son province several weeks earlier by Thai police. Once in the Tak Center, they requested the right to see Sai Myo Wyn Tun and Kyai Moe who were the leaders of their Shan group. The Repatriation Center authorities told them that first they must promise that they would go back to Rangoon. Without such a promise, they would not be able to contact their leaders. They finally agreed to this and were allowed to contact the two Shan student leaders.

Sai Myo Wyn Tun and Kyai Moe, then came to meet with them in the Tak repatriation center with the hope that they could convince the authorities not to send their friends back to Rangoon. The group also held a four-day hunger strike to protest the repatriation. However, their negotiations were unsuccessful, and the entire group was sent back by plane a short time later. Before boarding the plane, they staged a final protest by holding up a poster reading "Uphold Human Rights", and shouting, "We don't want to go back to Burma!".

Both Sai Myo Wyn Tun and Kyai Moe played leading roles in the August and September demonstrations in Taunggyi which is their home town. They joined their friends at the Tak Center because they are leaders of the Shan students, and believed that they should be with their friends. They did not want to return to Burma according to reports from other Burmese friends.

According to a Burmese military-controlled state radio report, the two students were detained by authorities shortly after their arrival in Burma.

A few days later the father of one of the other Shan students phoned to Bangkok to say that a total of 12 of the Shan students, including his own son, had been detained already. It is not known yet what awaits these detained students. We are concerned very much about their safety.

Saw Maung has promised safety to the students who return through the repatriation program, but these detentions raise doubts.

Amnesty International has also voiced their concern about the fate of these and many other students who have been returned to Burma. According to one report which Amnesty International has received, Saw Win Tun, another detained student who was active in the pro-democracy uprising in Rangoon, died on December 30, less than 48 hours after he was released from military custody. There are rumors of many more students dying while in custody. Although these reports can not yet be confirmed, the number of such reports, and their similarity raises a lot of suspicion that

unfortunately there may be some truth in them.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH
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Thank you all very much for your kind
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*We are looking
forwards to your advice
and letters to our
ABSDF and to our
committee for News letter.
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