

**(E.2)**

## **Graduation Ceremony of the Advanced Internship Program In Human Rights and Law**



On 12 December 2007, the BLC held a graduation ceremony for the seventeen successful students of the 2006-2007 Advanced Internship Program in Human Rights and Law. Parents and relatives of the students, members of the Peace Law Academy Academic Board, leaders of political organizations on the Thai-Burma border area, members of the BLC Executive Board, invited guests and the staff of the BLC attended the ceremony to honor the program and the students.

Notable speeches included the presentation by Colonel Hkun Okker, Executive Board Member of BLC, who said that opening a Peace Law Academy by the Burma Lawyers' Council is the first step in the preparation for democracy. He described how the Peace Law Academy graduates will benefit the organizations in the border areas and explained the importance of the graduates in the future federal union of Burma.

U Aung Htoo, General Secretary of BLC, explained that the aim of the Program is to promote the legal education of Burmese youths so that they become advocates, leaders and trainers. The various ethnic groups need guidance in practicing institution and civil society building. The speech recognized the contributions of the Academic Board Members and the visiting international lawyers who taught at the Peace Law Academy. He said that the legal knowledge taught in the law school was at least as good as that of Rangoon Law University.

General Saw Tamalabaw, President of the Presidium of the National Council of the Union of Burma, thanked all of the guests and mentioned how proud he was to attend the graduation ceremony. He supported the importance of rule of law, emphasizing that the country will never get peace and justice if there is no rule



of law and the country will lose unity and conditions will worsen. The graduating students' duty is to promote human rights understanding among the peoples of Burma, to create peace and to establish justice in the future federal union of Burma. Diversity will lead to disunity and the result will be the loss of democracy. Dr. Vinkat Iyer, Associate Professor of the University of Ulster, Ireland

and Member of the AIP Academic Board, expressed how proud he was to attend the graduation ceremony and also how he had the personal pleasure of teaching law to the students. He said that BLC has built friendships with a number of countries and has obtained the goodwill from people and organizations around the world, evidenced by the international lecturers who participated in the teaching. He was proud of the achievements of the law students in terms of the rule of law and institution building.

Dr. David Fisher, Professor of International Law, Stockholm University, Sweden and Member of AIP Academic Board, was happy to see the impressive progress of the studies in human rights and rule of law in the Peace Law Academy, which are essential for the future democratic Burma. Having seen in the media how the regime forcibly and brutally crushed the democracy movement, it is necessary to replace the authoritarian rule with a free society. In doing so, the knowledge of human rights and democracy must be widespread in the people. To change from regime rule to a people's democracy, the rights of children, women and workers must be respected, protected and understood clearly.

Words of thanks were given by AIP graduates Hkun Kaung Seth (in Burmese language) and Lway Poo Ngeal (in English language) to the Burma Lawyers' Council and the numerous other organizations and individuals who participated in the progress of Advanced Internship Program.

Finally, U Thein Oo, Chairperson of BLC, told the audience that this day was one of his happiest days because of the successful completion of the Advanced Internship Program and earning of "Diploma-in-Law" by the students. The students have learnt Rule of Law, Constitution, Civil Rights and Democratic Rights and they should continue to learn more with strong determination and perseverance for the sake of the people of Burma and their country. They should bear in mind that they are the leaders for their country and their peoples. Lastly, on behalf of BLC, he congratulated the students for successfully achieving the "Diploma-in-Law" certificate.