

DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

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LIFE UNDER SLORC





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AUNG SAN SUU KYI

FREE HER NOW!

Aung San Suu Kyi has now served more than one year under house arrest. The military regime of Burma is obviously afraid of this one woman because she speaks directly and she speaks the truth. Nothing is more terrifying to a dictatorship than the truth.

Many countries around the world have called on Burma's military leaders to release Aung San Suu Kyi immediately. They see her house arrest, not only as a violation of her human rights, but also as a sign that the military government has no intentions of giving the people the democracy they desire.

Slorc, in response, has criticized these countries of interfering in the internal affairs of Burma. Is human rights an issue confined to certain borders? We do not think so. Human rights is a human issue, and all human beings should and must be concerned about it no matter in what national borders it is violated. To speak out against human rights violations in a country is not to interfere in that country's internal affairs, but rather to stand on the side of those whose human rights have been violated. This is a just and right cause.

We applaud those governments, international organizations and individuals who have had the courage and wisdom to speak out on behalf of Aung San Suu Kyi and thousands of other political prisoners in Burma. This voice is crucial to the creation of democracy in Burma.

At the same time, we would like to point out that those governments which support the military dictatorship in Burma are also violating the human rights of the Burmese people. This is a sad state of affairs. To ignore the actions of these countries is to turn a blind eye to their help in the oppression of the Burmese people. People in these countries must be willing to speak out against their own government's unjust actions. If they do not, they too are guilty of violating the human rights of those who must suffer under Slorc.

Aung San Suu Kyi, and the thousands of other political prisoners in Burma, are committed to speaking out the truth. They will never give up this just cause. Raise your voice with ours in calling for their immediate release. Raise your voice with ours in calling for the Slorc to immediately turn state power over to the legally elected government of the people.

DICTATORSHIP CAN NEVER BE ALLOWED TO GO UNCHALLENGED!

"Dawn". PO Box 1352, Bangkok 10500, Thailand

TOURISM IN BURMA

Pagan is the ancient site of one of Burma's great kingdoms. Thousands of pagodas and stupas dot the plains of Pagan which rests along the mighty Irrawaddy river.

For many generations, the people of Pagan have lived here amidst the ruins, watching over them and keeping the history of the area alive.

Tourists came to visit the area, but the numbers were small. Transportation into the area, though not difficult, was time consuming. Therefore, the life of the villagers, and the sanctity of the area were little disturbed by the foreign visitors.

Now, the Burmese military regime, which took over power through illegal means, and continues to withhold power from the legitimately elected people's government, has decided to make Pagan a major tourist attraction.

In order to "clean up" the area, the villagers who have traditionally lived here, have been forcibly moved out. New hotels are being planned. People, whose homes have been here for generations, and whose livelihood depends on this area, are suddenly without rights so that foreign tourists can see a "clean and beautiful" Pagan.

A French tourist company using the name Asia Voyages, and based in Paris and Bangkok, has recently opened charter flights from Chaing Mai Thailand direct to Pagan. Last month, their first charter flight was welcomed in Pagan by the chairman of Nyaung-Oo SLORC office and a French lady.

Do these French tourists ever stop to think what suffering the people of Pagan have had to endure so that they can have this pleasure trip? Pagan is a sacred place. Its history is complex and runs deep in the blood of the Pagan people. Is mass tourism a way to respect and uphold that history?

Tourism, in its just form, does not destroy the art culture or livelihood of the people. It allows for productive exchanges between people of different cultures in order to build up understanding and mutual respect. How can this happen when peasants are forced to relocate so that tourists do not have to see the issue of poverty and suffering? How can tourism benefit the art and culture of the people

when they are forced to lose their homes, their work, and their sacred places of worship to the foreign visitors? What value is tourism if the tourists are isolated from the local population? Mutual understanding and respect, under these conditions, is impossible.

It is clear that SLORC's policy in promoting tourism is simply financial gains for their military campaigns, and has no room in it for compassion for the people.

Boycott these tours! Protest this violation of the human rights of the people of Pagan! Your letters raising these issues can be sent to Asia Voyages, Chan-Issara Building, Rama IV Road, Bangkok. They might make a difference.

BRAVE STEP

It's up to you if you want to break off
hold on firmly and break off daringly.

It's up to you if you want to crush
crush forcefully.

It's up to you if you want to bloom
bloom beautifully.

If I am dropped
I am ready to float on the winds

Do not be afraid to
break off, crush
bloom or fall.

You have the choice whether or not to
break off, crush
bloom or fall.

If you cannot decide
If you are confused for too long,
Your opportunity may disappear.

DAUNG YIN NI

FORGIVE ME MOTHER

RANGOON TODAY

Following the mass demonstrations which took place throughout Burma in 1988, the military junta has taken "demonstration control" seriously. Areas around pagodas and government offices have been cleared of houses and the people moved to "new towns". The road from the large military compound in Minglagoon to Rangoon has been widened in order to make troop transport into the city quicker.

Another sign that the military greatly fears another popular uprising of the people is the construction of fences along streets, and pedestrian bridges at strategic corners. The fences will make it very difficult for demonstrators to run away, and thus easier for the military to capture or shoot them. The pedestrian bridges give the military a clear view down the streets, and an excellent point from which to shoot down into the demonstrators.



A pedestrian bridge in the center of Rangoon near the Sule Pagoda. Every street leading to the Sule Pagoda, scene of many demonstration in 1988, has a new pedestrian bridge constructed over it. From these bridges, the military can shoot in any direction.

Strong fences can be seen in the photo along a major street in the center of Rangoon near the Sule Pagoda. In the event of another demonstration, the fences will act as a funnel to force the demonstrators into the guns of the military.



LIFE IN A BURMESE PRISON

MY EXPERIENCES IN INSEIN JAIL (1975-1980)

I was a leader in the U Thant funeral demonstration which took place in December 1974. Tin Maung Oo also participated in that protest. We hid together in a secret place after the rally so the military were unable to arrest us. After that, we took part in the Shwe Da Gon demonstration in June 1975.

On the August 23 1975, I was arrested by the National Intelligence Bureau which tried me for high treason. I was given a life prison term by the military tribunal.

During the Shwe Da Gon demonstration, Tin Maung Oo fled to the Thai-Burmese border because the government announced that he was on their wanted-person list and his photo was displayed in the newspaper. He re-entered Burma to take part in the memorial march for Tha Khin Ko Daw Mhine, a prominent author, also known as the "Peace Father" of Burma. The day before the march, Tin Maung Oo was arrested by the military intelligence which immediately tried him and sentenced him to death. On June 26, three months later, the government killed Tin Maung Oo. He was the first student leader to be killed by the military junta.

Shortly after Tin Maung Oo was imprisoned, his parents were arrested. They were charged because they allowed their son to live in their home. For this "offense" they were each incarcerated for five years. The student leader's younger sister, Ma Hla Mying, and his younger brother, Maung Hla Shwe, were sentenced to nine year and seven year prison terms respectively because they were also caught taking part in the memorial march. The remaining three children in Tin Maung Oo's household, nine, seven and five years of age, went to live with one of their aunts.

The day before Tin Maung Oo was killed, the detained members of his family were given a chance to see him because, according to the prison authorities, they were going to be shifted to another prison the next day. In reality, the authorities were giving the family one last chance to meet together. The next day Tin Maung Oo was killed.

The prison authorities used a trick to prevent Tin Maung Oo's family and anyone else from protesting

his killing. On June 25 shortly the family reunion in Insein prison, Tin Maung Oo's younger sister and his mother were shifted to Tha Ya Wa Di jail. His father and younger brother were shifted to Taung Ngu jail. That night at 10:00 pm, in Insein prison, prison guards commanded all prisoners to line up for inspection. They said they were searching for someone who was missing from jail. The prisoners were very sleepy but they were forced to line up. The guards then returned to their quarters.

At midnight and again at 2:00 am, the guards forced the prisoners to line up as they had at 10:00 pm. By that time the prisoners were extremely tired and confused. Tin Maung Oo was killed by the prison authorities at 4:00 am on June 26.

The night before his death, Tin Maung Oo told the warden of the prison that he knew he was going to die soon. He was forced to play chess with warden during the time of the prison inspection. He kept a level head that night. In the early morning of June 26, he walked steadily to the gallows chanting "The Ne Win regime must collapse. We must attain democracy." He is an admirable democracy hero.

When Tin Maung Oo's parents were released from prison, they asked the prison authorities the date of their son's death. His parents were given only excuses and were not told what they wanted to know. That proved that although the military government has the courage to kill a student leader, they do not have the courage to admit their sins. Therefore, they are aware of the total injustice of their actions.

I was imprisoned from 1975 to 1980. In 1980 I was released from prison in a general amnesty. While I was in prison, I learned that, all diaries and short novels written, and all pictures drawn by prisoners of their harsh conditions in jail, were confiscated by the prison staff during searches. They could never take my memories away from me.

The structure of Insein prison

The prison is surrounded by high walls built in a the shape of a square. The inside of Insein is shaped like a grandfather clock. The main entrance is located at the base of the clock. Those doors lead you to the main road of the prison. To the left of this road are the staff's quarters, as well as death

teeth. They never receive their full quota of food. The Bodekai keep the best food which they sell later. They also make fish sauce from fish they have stolen. Some of the prisoners come from distant states so their relatives cannot come to visit them and bring them food. The food they receive in the prison is insufficient and they become malnourished. As a result, some of them die.

2. Bathing

The prisoners are very dirty when they return from the factories in the evenings. The communal water tank is three feet wide, forty feet long and three feet deep. One member of the prison staff, Tann Se, and six other people are in charge of the prisoners while they bathe. If the prisoners want to get sufficient water, they must pay bribes in the form of cigarettes and money to Tann Se and the others. There is often a lack of water in the tank as all the prisoners use the same tank.

Sixty prisoners line up on both sides of the tank. Bodekai and the head of the kitchen take their positions near the tap because they are allowed to receive more abundant water. Only when the command is given are the prisoners allowed to pick up the cups and start washing themselves. There are many more prisoners than cups, so most of the prisoners must use plates with which to collect water. When the second command is given, the prisoners can start to pour water over their bodies. If the prisoner misunderstands and pours water before the command is given to do so, he is beaten with a thick leather strap and is sometimes kicked in the face. Some days, when water is abundant, prisoners can use ten cups of water for their bath. When water is scarce, however, prisoners can use only three to five cups of water. After the prisoners have used up their five cups of water, the command is given to wash with soap. Sometimes the prisoners cannot clean the soap from their bodies in time because there are insufficient amounts of water. Thus, when there is only a small amount of water in the tank, the prisoners usually do not use soap. Even if the prisoners have not cleaned the soap from their bodies, they must leave the bathing place. In some cases, if someone has not cleaned the soap off his body, he must wait for the next bathing group. He then squats under one of the other prisoners and rinses his body from the water which runs off the other bather's body.

3. Hospital

Because of the lack of water, prisoners suffer from skin diseases such as edema, ringworm and exemia. Most of the exemia cases occur between fingers, in armpits, on hips, on stomachs, on thighs and on the

calves of legs. Prisoners suffering from these diseases are allowed to attend the jail hospital. However, as a form of torture, when a prisoner is suffering from a serious case of exemia, the headguard, do not allow them to go to the hospital. Prisoners are at the mercy of their headguard. If the prisoner can pay a bribe, he can easily gain permission to go to the hospital. The exemia patients are placed in one section of the hospital. The doctor gives them some medicine, a small piece of bread and some milk which has been diluted with water. This food is very valuable to the prisoners. They enjoy being treated for exemia in the hospital because of the food and rest they receive.

Serious cholera patients receive only six Tharasult tablets. Thus, many cholera patients die because of insufficient medicine. If the patients have money, they can buy medicine to control their fevers. Sick patients bend over and are injected with a quarter a tube of Penicillin. The hospital staff report that each patient receives one whole tube of Penicillin. The staff then sell the remaining three tubes on the black market.

In the hospital, there are both patients who are seriously ill, as well as, wealthy prisoners who pay bribes to rest in the hospital. The doctors usually neglect their medical oath and treat the prisoners very poorly.

The head cook in the hospital sells bread and milk which he steals from the prisoners quota. Any prisoner who wants to be head cook in the hospital must pay a bribe to obtain that privilege. At the same time the head cook is responsible for giving whole chickens and milk to the high ranking prison officers. In the hospital, the staff are requested to donate blood for the front line soldiers. Although the prisoners do not particularly like the soldiers, they donate their blood anyway because blood donors receive eggs, milk, bread and seven days rest in the hospital for their donation. When the number of blood donors gets too high, the hospital staff lowers the amount of bread and milk given the donors. In those cases, milk and bread may only be given for three or five days instead of seven. Noone dares to protest. If a prisoner demands his rights, he may be expelled from the hospital for good.

Some prisoners have waited only two weeks after donating blood, but they lie and try to donate blood again too soon, in order to have access to eggs, bread and milk. As a result, some of the prisoners die. Sometimes prisoners sell their quota of eggs, milk and bread in order that they may buy cheroots for smoking. Life is unbearable in that prison.

row. To the right of the road, are the prison administration offices, a hospital and a large kitchen. At the top of the grandfather clock, is an oval-shaped dining hall, a watch tower and a statue of the lord Buddha. The road circles the dining hall. The occupational training buildings, and the hand loom, carpentry and shoe making factories are located on the outer side of the road. The No.1, No.2, No.3, No.4, No.5 and the extension prison wards surround the dining hall. Wards number 1, 2, 3 and 4 are each 440 foot-long two-storey buildings. Each floor is divided into four long rooms.

In the prison, the responsible ranks of authority are as listed below:

1. Taung Pyin Gyi -- prison warden,
2. Du Taung Pyin Gyi -- deputy prison warden,
3. Taung Mhu Gyi -- chief of the junior officers
4. Taung Mhu Or Ah Saung Mhu -- headguard

Although they have a lower rank, the headguards in reality exercise more authority than the prison warden. The warden must pay respect to the headguards as they work for the military intelligence. The deputy prison warden is also a military official, but the prison warden is a mere civil servant. The headguards hold military ranks from private to sergeant. They work in the wards, the hospital, the offices, the solitary confinement wards and the visiting rooms.

Prisoners are separated according to the length of their prison terms. Long-term jail prisoners and temporary detention prisoners are further divided into two more separate groups, those for political detainees and those for criminal prisoners. The government, however, does not legally recognize the existence of political prisoners in Burma. In 1977, U Sein Lwin, Home & Religious Affairs Minister, gave permission to the headguards and the criminal prisoners to beat the political prisoners. Many of the political prisoners suffered from broken legs and hands, and some detainees became disabled. Later, the government abolished the concept of a political prisoner. All prisoners were considered criminal. When the government sent prisoners to the labour camps, the political prisoners were left behind and were named the "ward transfer junior prisoners". Despite the name change, it is commonly known that these prisoners were arrested on political charges.

"Leaders" of the wards are prisoners who are appointed by the headguards. Those leaders must keep track of the number of prisoners entering and leaving the dormitories. Ward leaders are known to

threaten the wealthier prisoners in order to obtain money and food which the prisoners' families provide them with during visiting hours. The leaders share these items with the headguards. If the prisoners refuse to give these necessities to the ward leaders, they beat the detainees and force them to sleep on the bathroom floors among other things.

Most of the ward leaders are senior prisoners who have been charged with murder, robbery, rape, theft and pickpocketing.

Methods of oppression

1. Food

In the morning, the prisoners receive soya bean curry with rice to eat. At lunchtime, the prisoners eat leaf soup with a portion of rice. Every Monday, the detainees get meat curry so they look forward to Mondays with anticipation. Soya beans are boiled the day before they are served. In the morning, the headguard and members of the lower prison staff, bring the boiled soya beans for the prisoners' breakfasts but leave an insufficient amount of soya beans for the prisoner's lunch. They have to dilute those boiled soya beans with boiling water, a little oil and some chilies for their lunch. Another curry (nga pi) given to them, is made of rotten fish mixed with tamarind and chilies. The mixture is cooked slightly.

Two prisoners carry the food and plates in large wooden buckets on their shoulders with yokes. When the food arrives in the wards, the prisoners line up by the table. The plates are stacked at the front of the table. Each prisoner picks up a plate and then must beg for rice and curry to be dished out to him. The prisoners who serve the food have been given this special privilege, often because they have paid bribes to the prison warden. They are called Bodekai. Sometimes, the Bodekai skim the oil off of the top of the pots of curry. They filter all of the food particles out of the oil and then sell it to prisoners who have enough money to buy it. This results in a flavourless liquid, without oil which is given to the other prisoners. At other times, the Bodekai allow the soya beans and other curry ingredients to sink to the bottoms of the pots. They then give the curry water to the prisoners and keep the nutritious food which they sell back to the prisoners who use their precious cheroots to pay for the food.

The rice given to the prisoners to eat is not clean. It contains rice husks, sand and small stones. The fish used for the nga pi curry often are so rotten, they are infested with maggots. The nga pi also contains a lot of sand which damages the prisoner's

4. Visiting Rules

Both temporary detention prisoners and long-term prisoners can meet with their families twice a month. Mondays and Tuesdays are the designated visiting days for temporary detention prisoners. The other days are for the long term prisoners. When the visiting room staff call out a prisoner's name, his father's name and a sentence of guilt in front of the wards and factories, the prisoner takes a ticket and proceeds to the visiting office. The prisoners have permission to go into the visiting room to meet with their families. There are two screens five inches apart which divide the prisoner from his family. The families are given fifteen minutes to be together. If a family wants to give clothing or food to a prisoner, they must put those things in a plastic bag and leave it at the headguard's offices. Headguards and some prisoners work in the visiting rooms. After the detainees have met with their families there, the prisoners must squat on the ground outside the visiting office. Then, all the plastic bags, containing food and clothing from the families, are put on a large plate on a long wooden table. The staff calls out the prisoner's name and his father's name. The prisoner must answer "present" and go toward the table. The staff, then, tear open the plastic bag and check everything including curry, cheroots and fried preserved fish in front of the prisoner. Finally the jail staff divides some of the best goods into four cups setting them beside the large plate. They ask a prisoner very politely, "May we have some of this food?" after which they take what they want before giving the prisoner a chance to reply. They also take half of the cheroots given to the prisoner. If a detainee is not liked, the jail staff sometimes break the cheroots so that the prisoner cannot use them as money in the prison. Some of the prisoners are starving as their families can come to visit them only once a year. They dare not protest their inhumane treatment in the jail. All they can do is gnash their teeth.

After the clothing and food given by the families has been distributed, the staff order the prisoners to go to the main jail room to the right of the dining hall. The prisoners carry their gifts in their longyi because the staff have torn the plastic bags. These prisoners are checked again by the prisoners who serve as staff in the main jail room. They receive some of the gifts the prisoners have just received from their families. If a prisoner does not want to give something to those prisoner staff members, they will find a later opportunity to seek revenge on the prisoner. Thus, for their own safety, prisoners usually give something to the main jail room staff. They receive an abundance of food, sometimes enough to

feed four or five prisoners. The main jail room staff exchange their extra food for the services of the others prisoners, such as massages or washing clothes.

If a prisoner's family is poor, he will usually die from malnutrition as he does not receive food from his family. Some prisoners after they have been released suffer from serious bed sores and die outside the prison.

5. Homosexuality

Homosexuality is commonly found in the prison. Prisoners from the dining hall and the main jail room organize some of the younger prisoners, who have light skin and feminine features, to work as prostitutes. They are paid with food. Some of those young men are forced with sharp iron sticks into having intercourse with men at night in the wards. Prisoners who desire these young boys will give two packs of cigarettes to the headguard as a bribe in order to leave the ward. According to the laws of the jail homosexuality is strictly prohibited. However, wards are very difficult to supervise at night. Most of the organizers of the homosexual activity are senior prisoners who do so in order to satisfy their sexual desires.

6. Opium and other drugs

Those prisoners with money, can buy many kinds of drugs in prison such as Commathazin, heroin, raw opium, fancidar and marijuana. The poor drug addicts cannot afford these drugs. Headguards bring drugs into the jail. Those who are in prison for drug trafficking, can continue their drug trafficking in the prison. For example, although the drug lord Tan Kyi Lin and his son are in prison, they continue their business behind bars. The son organizes the headguards by giving them heroin. When they become addicts, they are his servants.

In 1980, the government announced a general amnesty, and the drug lord Law Sit Han was released from prison. While he was in prison, he had a special house to stay in and special privileges including being given the permission to wear a watch, to walk on the main road and to meet with his family at any time.

Political prisoners are never given these privileges. According to government law, a general amnesty does not apply to cases such as Law Sit Han. However, he was released anyway. Presently, SLORC has given a contract to Law Sit Han's younger brother, Law Sit Min, to build a highway from Shan state to central Burma.

7. Punishment of solitary confinement

If a prisoner steals, tries to escape, does not work or comes into conflict with one of his superiors, he is beaten with a half-inch-thick leather belt and placed in solitary confinement for a week to a month.

Well-known political prisoners are detained in solitary confinement for any length of time from a week to a month as soon as they are incarcerated. Later, they are shifted again to No.6 solitary confinement and detained for a week to two months. They are then shifted back again to their original solitary confinement cell.

The solitary confinement cell has a one foot square window barred with iron opposite the door. The cell is very stuffy and some prisoners get emphysema. Prisoners can lose their sanity while locked up in solitary confinement. Those cells are No.1, No.2, No.3, No.4, No.5 and No.6. Cell No.6 is notorious because its small window faces a nearby outside wall thus blocking of the light and the air which might otherwise enter. There is also one mortuary.

I spent eight months in solitary confinement. I was then moved to ward No.3. When I was in solitary confinement, my friends Ko Than Shwe from Arakan state and U Sein Maung, former minister U Nu's assistant, died of dengue fever because the government did not give them any medical treatment.

A Chin tribesperson sent a letter to his friend in Rangoon. The letter was only one sentence long. It said, "The Burmese can help our Chin national movement". The intelligence opened and read the letter in the general post office. The 16 year old student in Rangoon was arrested because the military thought that he might be a member of the same organization as his friend who wrote him the letter. Headguards in Insein prison seriously beat the boy with a leather belt. When he fell unconscious, they sent him away into solitary confinement. When the student regained consciousness, he cried and appealed the guards to release him. He was detained in solitary confinement for seven days after which he lost his sanity and was sent to the hospital.

The memories I have shared are all still very clear in my mind. Prisoners are not educated; they are tortured, exploited, oppressed and robbed. They are not treated as human beings in prison. They live like animals. The prisoners' spirits are destroyed and they are forced to think like criminals. When they are released from prison, they are covered with skin diseases, have discovered their homosexual tendencies and have become more brutal.

This all occurred under the B.S.P.P. Now the situation is worse. At the demonstration on March 19 1988, many students were arrested and packed into police vans to be taken to Insein prison. The vans were over-crowded and many students suffocated to death on the way to the jail. On August 8, prisoners protested their living conditions by burning down the prison. Many prisoners were killed and new wards were built. Now, there is a new prison in Pu Tao, northern Burma. The situation in Burma has gotten steadily worse under the rule of SLORC. The Burmese people live in perpetual fear and suffering. What I have written describes the true situation found in Burma today.

Burma must be liberated from the heel of the military's boot.

Htun

Aung Gyaw.

(A.B.S.D.F)



FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Australian Foreign and Trade Minister Gareth Evans said yesterday that he had urged Gen Saw Maung to promptly transfer power to the winners of the Burmese election.

In his message to Gen Saw Maung, Senator Evans also reaffirmed his call for the release of detained NLD leaders so they can take part in national reconciliation and reconstruction.

Senator Evans said the clear results of the election had made it urgent that leaders and other political prisoners should be released so they can help ensure a peaceful and orderly transition of power.

BANGKOK POST, July 5, 1990

US Congressmen, in a letter to military strongman Gen Saw Maung, have urged the Burmese junta to commit itself to a rapid transfer of power to civilian rule.

In a separate letter, the same group of House representatives and senators asked Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama to continue suspending aid to Burma until the power transfer takes place.

BANGKOK POST July 17, 1990

Burma's major pro-democracy party, landslide winner in May elections, has formally called on the military government to release leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, party sources said here yesterday.

The National League for Democracy also planned to organise a procession here tomorrow to mark Martyrs' Day, which commemorates the 1947 murder of General Aung San, Burma's independence hero, the sources said.

The NLD sent a letter last Thursday to military leader General Saw Maung urging him to release Aung San Suu Kyi, Gen Aung San's 45-year-old daughter, they said.

But last Friday Major-General Khin Nyunt, head of military intelligence, implicitly told a press conference here that the charismatic NLD secretary general was not to be freed as the first anniversary of her home confinement approaches this Friday.

THE NATION, July 18, 1990

About 150 youths marched yesterday and shouted demands that the military government free opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, still detained after completing a one-year sentence.

Witnesses said the youths shouted anti-government slogans as they marched to the Martyrs Mausoleum, hoisting the "fighting peacock" banner of Ms Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy.

The number of military guards around her lake-side house in Rangoon have been increased in recent days.

BANGKOK POST, July 20, 1990

Twenty Burmese ammunition porters who deserted the Burmese army and fled to this northern district were sent back yesterday after an investigation by Thai authorities, said an informed border officer.

The porters told the officer, that they were among 200 who crossed the Moei River on Sunday evening from Burma's Thay Baw Bo to Baan Muen Rue Chai in Phop Phra district. They added that they were forcibly conscripted in Myawaddy, Kawkaik in early July.

They were then forced to carry heavy artillery shells to Pa Loo and Thay Baw Bo, which is now the base of the Burmese army's 79th battalion of the 33rd Division. The porters said altogether 22 fled Thay Baw Bo because of hardship but two drowned in the Moei River. The youngest of the group was 13-year-old Maung Win and the oldest Maung Oo, 39.

THE NATION, July 24, 1990

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Gareth Evans on Monday expressed Australia's "profound" disappointment at Rangoon's decision to extend the house arrest of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Evans said it was extremely regrettable NLD proposals for a dialogue with the military authorities on procedures for a power transfer and for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi have been consistently ignored.

THE NATION, July 26, 1990

The United States on Thursday called on Burma's military rulers to release opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and to hand over power to a civilian government.

"We strongly deplore the failure of the Burmese to release Aung San Suu Kyi and others detained on political charges," the US statement said.

BANGKOK POST, July 28, 1990

Soldiers and riot police with automatic rifles and tear-gas launchers patrolled Rangoon yesterday after small demonstrations by students in the past week marked the most open defiance of army rule in more than a year.

Witnesses said at least five high school students were detained on Monday afternoon when soldiers broke up a crowd of over 200 students who briefly blocked traffic and chanted pro-democracy slogans in the main district of Rangoon.

THE NATION, July 28, 1990

Thailand yesterday warned that pressure by the international community for rapid political change in Burma might backfire.

The warning was issued during the post-ministerial conference between ASEAN foreign ministers and US Secretary of State James Baker.

Thailand also pointed out that Burmese people are suffering from aid cuts and economic sanctions, the sources said, adding however that the West did not appear so convinced by the Thai line of thinking.

THE NATION, July 28, 1990

Burma's ruling junta announced plans yesterday to set up a national convention to lay down guidelines for a new constitution. The announcement was the government's first clear-cut measure since the opposition National League for Democracy swept elections in May. The 485-member parliament will draft the constitution based on the national convention's guidelines, the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc) said. The constitution would need to be approved by Slorc

and then be voted on in a national referendum, Slorc spokesman U Kyaw Sann said, adding that only then would power be handed over to the next legal government.

THE NATION, July 28, 1990

The opposition challenged Burma's hardline army rulers yesterday, rejecting military plans for a protracted transfer of power and calling on the army to convene a new parliament to speed formation of a civilian government.

The National League for Democracy issued a toughly worded statement calling for a rapid handover of power and attacking the military's delay as "shameful".

"It is against political nature that the League, which has overwhelmingly won enough seats in the parliament to form a government, has been prohibited from minimum democratic rights," the statement said.

THE NATION, July 31, 1990

An overseas Burmese political action group yesterday condemned the Japanese government's resumption of assistance to the military government in Rangoon with an advance grant of \$22 million.

The US-based Committee for Restoration of Democracy in Burma (CRDB) said in a statement issued yesterday that the aid was tantamount to an endorsement by Japan of Burma's rulers.

"With this money safely in the bank, the Slorc's Goebblesque spokesman Kyaw Sann was emboldened on Friday to announce the invention of more roadblocks to prevent the transfer of power because Slorc is now officially backed by Tokyo," the group's general secretary, Ye Kyaw Thu, said in the statement.

"Aid resumption under current conditions constitutes egregious breach of faith, and should, by any normal diplomatic standard, be interpreted as an endorsement by Japan of the policies of Slorc," the general secretary said.

THE NATION, July 31, 1990

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Since the military coup in September of 1988, the SLORC has established military tribunals throughout Burma to replace the legal courts. These tribunals have been described in detail in past issues of DAWN.

Recently a message was received from inside Burma which reported the execution of 5 people by military tribunals in Pa-an. The information received is as follows:

1. U Tin Maung

He is 55 years old and worked as a merchant. His address is Myat Lay Street, Ward II, Pa-an.

2. Sonny Thein

He is 25 years old and a 4th year student at the Rangoon Institute of Technology. His address is Dana Street, Ward II, Pa-an.

3. Yan Gyi Aung

Yan Gyi Aung is 25 years old and a 4th year zoology student from Moulmein University. He had originally lived in Kaladay camp on the Thai/Burma border, but returned to Burma in December of 1988. He is from Ward V in Pa-an.

4. Kyaw Hein

He is 22 years old, and also lived in Kaladay camp in 1988. His home is in Ward II of Pa-an.

5. Myint Oo

Myint Oo is 26 years old and a trishaw driver. In April of 1989, he returned to Burma from Wan Kha camp. His home is Myat Lay Street, Ward II, Pa-an.

According to the report, the 5 persons were executed by the military tribunal on July 22, 1990. The charge was simply that they had contact with insurgent groups. There is no evidence that this is true, and they were not given a chance to defend themselves in a legal court of law. Under the military tribunals, the military decision is final, and there is no need for witnesses or evidence.

We deplore this crass violation of human rights by the military junta. It is a terrible thing they have done, and it is also a sign that they have no respect for the Burmese people.

The elections have recently been held, and the people openly voted against the military rule. For

the military to carry out these executions at this time is to tell the people that power over life and death still remains in the hands of the military, and they are determined to keep it.

We call on governments all over the world to step up pressure on the military junta to turn over power to the elected government immediately. The longer this is postponed, the more the life of the people of Burma will be in jeopardy. We do not want to see more blood spilled in our motherland. Please help us put an end to it.

THE TIME WHEN SON RETURNS

In a far away place,
I, a son, take part in a revolutionary war.

Although, I want to write a letter to
mother,
I have no opportunity to do so.

Although I also want to read her letters
which give direction to my life,
I am given no chance to do so.

The period of school closure has been long,
and although I want to hear the nice sound
of the school bells,
I do not want the next generation to inherit,
oppressive lives,
limited curriculums,
and artificial history.

One happy day,
when the sun shines on the people,
and all darkness has disappeared,
when Burma sees new days,
I, your son...
will return to you, mother.

MIN THAT SAN.

NLD STATEMENT

We would like to call on the entire world to listen and follow the voice of the people of Burma.

The SLORC has to stop delaying the transfer of power to the people's elected government. Slorc continues to be one of the world's worst dictatorial regimes, and their rule over the country must come to an end.

On the 28th and 29th of July 1990, nearly all of the 392 NLD Hluttaw representatives met at the GANDHI HALL in Kyauktada township in Rangoon and discussed measures to smooth the transfer of power to the people's elected government.

Following is the translation of the GANDHI HALL DECLARATION made by the National League for Democracy Party on the 29th July 1990

NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY
YANGON
GANDHI HALL DECLARATION
8TH WAXING DAY OF WAGANUNG BE 1352
29 JULY 1990

1. We, the NLD Pyithu Hluttaw members, after assembling here at Mahattama Gandhi Hall in Kyauktada township, Yangon, on the seventh and eighth waxing days of Wagaung BE 1352, 28 and 29 July 1990, and after consulting and discussing the matters and convening of the Pyithu Hluttaw (parliament), unanimously adopt this Gandhi Hall Declaration.

2. In the first Multi-Party General Elections held in 30 years, on 27 May 1990, the NLD enjoying the overwhelming support of the nation, won 392 seats out of 485 seats. Thus, the NLD has a total majority of over eighty per cent to lead the pyithu Hluttaw and to form a strong government in accordance with the practice of democratic countries.

3. Now, the Multi-Party Democratic General Elections have been successfully held. It is only natural that the Pyithu Hluttaw be convened shortly after the elections. This is also the expectation of the people. However sixty days have gone past since the election, and the Pyithu Hluttaw has not been convened.

The NLD, which has won an overwhelming majority in the elections, and based on short-term and long-term interests of the State, has proposed to the SLORC to hold frank and sincere discussions with good faith and with the object of national reconciliation. However, the SLORC has not given a reply to our proposal in any way.

4. The entire nation, including rahans, people, peasants, workers, students, youth and service personal, all aspire a speedy transformation into a democratic administrative system so as to be free from current economic hardships, fear and anxieties that have arisen out of restrictions on democratic rights.

5. In every civilized society and country that practice democracy the Pyithu Hluttaw is regarded as the highest body and the dignity of a country is promoted by the respect shown by the people to the Pyithu Hluttaw. We firmly believe that only when the democratic Pyithu Hluttaw functions in Myanmar Naing- ngan (Burma), will the country gain honor in the international community.

6. Only the Pyithu Hluttaw constituted of Pyithu Hluttaw representatives who have been elected with the confidence of the people will be able to solve, in accordance with the wishes of the people, the political, economic and social crises faced by the people today.

Therefore, in accordance with Article 3, Chapter 2 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Elections Law, which states:

"The Pyithu Hluttaw shall be formed with the Hluttaw representatives who have been elected according to this law from the constituencies,"

it is of vital importance to convene the Pyithu Hluttaw expeditiously.

7. We believe that, according to the law and ethics, it is not only impossible for those who are responsible to fail in the task of convening the Pyithu Hluttaw, but will not be proper and right not to carry out such a task if there is any compassionate and thoughts for the aspiration of the people and various crises of the nation.

Therefore giving birth to the Pyithu Hluttaw is an inevitable task. In accordance with Article 2(a) Chapter 1 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law which states: "Hluttaw means the Pyithu Hluttaw, we fully understand that Pyithu Hluttaw to be formed is not a constituent assembly.

8. We are glad to learn that the NLD has already drafted a constitution in connection with power prescribed by the law or transfer of power prescribed by the law. We also support the proposal of the NLD to hold consultations with other parties on 'the 1990 Provisional Constitution(Draft)". It is our unanimous opinion that this provisional constitution will bring about the transfer of power in accordance with the law.

9. Only the Pyithu Hluttaw represented by us has the responsibility to adopt the new constitution which aims at building a new democratic union. We on our part shall hold consultations widely in carrying out the task.

However, a constitution drawn up at any time at any other place than Pyithu Hluttaw, without power being bestowed, without the executive power, facilities and glory of the Pyithu Hluttaw, and without the ratification and adoption of the Pyithu Hluttaw, will not have an executive power. A constitution drawn up in such a way will not have any honor, either.

Therefore it is clear that it is of vital importance to convene the Pyithu Hluttaw expeditiously so as to draw up a new constitution which aims at building a new democratic union aspired by the people.

10. We understand that until a democratic government is formed, problems concerning democratic rights which will inevitably arise will have to be tackled with prudence.

It is not desirable that democratic rights should be restored only after the formation of a democratic government and that such rights be prohibited until the formation of such a government.

We believe that a democratic environment must be created before a democratic government is formed. Only then a new democratic union can take shape smoothly and peacefully. Only in a democratic environment, will the people be free from fear and anxieties and will be able to live with physical and spiritual happiness and join hands to conscientiously build a new democratic union.

During this period the people shall, as a minimum, enjoy the freedom of publication and expression. It is against political nature that NLD, which has

overwhelmingly won enough seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw to form a government, itself has been prohibited from the minimum democratic rights. It is shameful in the eyes of the people and the international community.

As we have accepted the verdict of the voters through the elections we deserve to be conferred with a decent standard accordingly. We should at least be free from harassments and intimidations.

11. Under the present circumstances, we are fully aware of the crises, hardships and problems which must be solved during the transitional period from one-party system to multi-party democratic system in the country. We hope that solutions will be reconciliation based on mutual respect between the NLD and the SLORC.

Today the intricate problem of a war which can devastate the whole mankind has been prevented up to now by means of consultations. In the same way, we believe that all problems between one another in our country will smoothly be solve by face to face dialogues. In holding such talks:

- (1) frankness, sincerity and mutual respect,
- (2) national reconciliation,
- (3) practice of peaceful means, and
- (4) general harmony without hard feelings

are essential policies which must be observed.

12. Calling for the convening of the Pyithu Hluttaw constituted of people's representatives is the most basic legal right of the people. We, the people's representative, have the duty to call for that right on behalf of the people.

In accordance with the wishes of the people, Article 3 Chapter 2 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Elections Law, the essence of the democratic system and international procedures, we, the NLD Pyithu Hluttaw, unanimously call on the SLORC on this day to convene the Pyithu Hluttaw, during september 1990.

NLD PYITHU HLUTTAW MEMBERS
MAHATTAMA GANDHI HALL
BO AUNG GYAW STREET
YANGON

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE JUNGLE

I Wish I Could See Him Again

"I met him that day for the first time. Not for a moment could I forget him who, with a determined face, gave a concise and brilliant speech."

August 28, 1988 was an exciting day. In fact, the entire month of August was of great historical and political importance for Burma. Moreover, this was the eventful day when I first met him.

The Student Union, which laid the foundations of the spirit of nationalism and played the main role in the struggle for independence against British colonial rule, had disappeared from Burmese soil since July 7, 1962. The building which housed it had also been turned into a pile of brick and bits of mortar which can be seen in the Rangoon University campus in Rangoon to this day.

The place where our proud Student Union building used to stand, is open ground now. It was the place where I first saw him.

The first demonstrations of 1988 which finally brought about the downfall of the 26 year-long BSPP dictatorial rule were held on this special ground. These demonstrations showed the BSPP that, even though they could blow up the building and try to erase the Student Union from Burmese history, the spirit of the struggle for freedom and justice remained strong and determined.

I had returned to my home following the great nation-wide strike of 8-8-88, but immediately rushed back to Rangoon upon hearing the news that the Student Union would be given a new birth. I was lucky to have reached there in time for the great even of August 28.

The gathering of students at the university site of the old Student's Union building was held in order to legally reform the Student Union. Tens of thousands of students rallied to participate in the event. Thousands of other people also came to join in, but were not allowed to enter the place by the military since they were not university students.

Martial law was still in force, and army trucks could be seen patrolling along University Avenue. However, they did not interfere in events on this day.

The ceremony began at eleven.

Speeches were first given by student leaders who had come to prominence during the previous strikes and demonstrations. Their speeches centered on the present political situation of Burma. Others, who had been a part of the old Student Union also gave speeches and retold the history of the great events which once took place in this building, now reduced to rubble by a military dictator who deeply feared his children, the students of Burma.

Then young monk from the Young Monks' Union shared his feelings and thoughts. The rain began. A fine drizzle fell from the heavens as the monk read a poem which stirred up the inspiration of the students. Shouts of enthusiasm came from the crowd of students.

The rain began to fall heavier. Some of the students tried to raise their umbrellas, but quickly lowered them as a shout from the crowd went up, "Let it rain as much as an oceanful. Close your umbrellas!"

The ceremony continued in the heavy rain.

Then his turn came to speak. Through an articulate speech, he shared with the students the true character of the military regime.

I was some hundred feet from the stage and I missed some of his speech since I could not hear well above the pounding of the rain. Yet I could see his vehement manner as I talked with emotion.

His last words came clearly to my ears through the rain, and I can still hear them ringing out loudly,

"I am wounded,
But I am not yet dead.
Let me lie down
And bleed a little while.
Tomorrow,
I will rise and fight again!"

He was a good soldier. He almost lost his life drifting in the open sea for days while he was protecting the waters of his beloved land.

He is an author. I have grown into manhood reading his literary works. His writings have guided me all my way through many difficulties. In fact, they have been my constant companion for all my life.

He is a reformer and a revolutionary. He wants to mend the ways of military mismanagement of the past 26 years and set his people free from the tyrannical yoke of this military. The resentment he has borne in his mind is something that rises up out of the suffering of his people.

He has been struck down with paralysis and can barely walk. Nevertheless, he has kept on resisting the rule of the military. Finally he was arrested for attempting to break up the unity of the army, an accusation that the dictatorship holds to keep the opposition down.

A military tribunal, which has the license to kill, has sentenced him to 20 years imprisonment with hard labor.

I saw him that day for the first and last time.

I often wonder if I can see him again, and enjoy his writings for the rest of my life. I still wonder if he can survive in the hell of the devils prison.

He is a paralysed old man, yet he will not give in nor will his brave soul break down in sorrow.

I wish I could see him again!

(Written as a tribute to Maung Thaw Ka (a) U Ba Thaw)

Naing Lu Aung