



The Shan Case

ROOTING OUT THE MYTH

OF

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

DISTRIBUTED

By S.H.R.F. 1994



“Since a person cannot be free if the nation of which he or she belongs is not allowed to decide its destiny through the exercise of the right to self-determination, the efforts of the United Nations to promote the guarantee of independence to colonial countries and peoples are basically Human Rights efforts”.

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**Foreword for the
First Edition**

This is one of the few attempts made by the Shans to introduce themselves to the world at large. I sincerely hope that this brochure helps clear up at least some of the gravest misconceptions about the Shans and our homeland.

Khun Kya Oo
Chairman
Shan Human Rights Foundation
December 1, 1992



Foreword for the Revised Edition

The first publication, which came out a year ago, was the result of very hasty preparation by the Shan Human Rights Foundation in anticipation of the International Tribunal of Burma held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 9-10 December, 1992. For this revised edition, we have tried our best to improve on the first. We hope the readers will be amply rewarded for their time.

Please forward any criticisms, questions or suggestions to the following address:

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THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE



This is the Golden Triangle as most of the tourists and, sadly, some lawmakers know it. Contrary to the much publicized myth, there are no poppies grown here. Poppy fields are much further west and north in what is known as the Shan State. This is the story of how the people there came to produce opium.



COUNTRY PROFILE

LOCATION

Lies between 19 and 24 degrees latitude North, and stretches from 96 to 101

degrees longitude East; covering approximately 64,000 square miles. It is bordered in the north by China, in the east by Laos, in the south by Thailand and the Karenni, and in the west by Burma.

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Bisected north to south by the Salween, one of the longest rivers in Asia. It lies at an average at 2,000 feet above sea level, and the highest point (in the Shan plateau), Mount Loileng, is 8,777 feet. It is composed of broad valleys, thickly wooded mountain ranges and rolling hills, forming scenic landscapes.

CAPITAL

Taunggyi

POPULATION

Approximately 8-10 million, most of whom are Tai, of the same ethnological stock as Thais and Laotians, plus several other racial groups including Pa-O, Palaung and Wa of the Mon-Khmer stock; and Kachin, Akha and Lahu of the Tibeto-Burma stock.

ECONOMY

Primarily a self-sufficient agricultural economy. Rich in mineral resources and abundant in timber; blessed with fertile soil. Given a favorable political climate, there is no reason why the Shan State could not become one of the richest and most economically dynamic countries in Southeast Asia.

THE SHANS AND THEIR COUSINS IN ASIA SHAN, TAIS, DAIS, THAIS, LAOTIANS AND TAI AHOMS ARE CLOSE COUSINS



The Thai Royal Family with the Shans



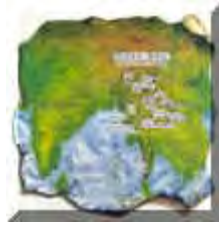
TAUNGGYI

“Founded by Shwe Yoe (Sir George Scott) in imperial days, this is the capital of Shan State, where people proudly regard themselves as so distinct from the Burmans of the plains that they talk about going *down to Burma*”. Back To Mandalay, by Gerry Abbott, Impact Books, 1990.



Shan in their different local costumes





GLORIOUS PAST

Shans under the leadership of King Surkhanfa the Great (1291-1364) carved a large empire in South Asia.

The Shan ruled Ava Kingdom, now called Burma, till 1555, when it fell to the Toungoo Burmese.



UNDER BRITISH PROTECTION



In 1885, Burma became a British Crown Colony. The Shan States, later to be known successively as the Federated Shan States (1922) and the Shan State (1948), became a British Protectorate two years later.

British troops at Hlaingdet near the Shan foothills, attempting to come into Shan States to negotiate and open the trade route.



WORLD WAR II



Due to the Atlantic Charter of 1941, which promised independence to all colonial and protected countries, the Shan fought on the side of the Allies, while the Burmese fought on that of the Axis.



First from left, Sao Khunserk Mangrai, brother of Sao Saimong Mangrai, who wrote “The Shan States and British Annexation”.

Third from left, Sao Htunyin Nawngwawn, who won the “Victoria Cross” for his gallant performance during the British retreat to India. He lost his left arm in action. This photo was taken in Assam, India.

Burma and the Federated Shan States were invaded by Japan in 1942, and the bogus independent Burma was created in the following year. However, the Japanese war-time premier, General Hideku Tojo’s stand on the Shan was quite clear when, on January 2, 1943, he delivered a speech, and said: “With regard to the territorial composition of the New State of Burma, it is to include the whole territory of Burma, with the exception of the Shan and Karenni areas”.



Sao Zarm Htun,
Prince of Mongpaw. His wife's funeral which
many Shan leaders attended,
started the historic
Panglong Conference.



THE PANGLONG CONFERENCE

For the purpose of determining their postwar destiny, a national conference was held in the southern Shan town of Panglong in February, 1947. Burma was represented by Aung San, head of the Interim Burmese Government, the Chins and the Kachins. The result was the Panglong Agreement, which guaranteed, among other things, 'full autonomy in internal administration', "rights and privileges which are regarded as fundamental in democratic countries" for the Shan State.



[THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT, 1947 \[original\]](#)

THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT

Dated Panglong, the 12th
February 1947

THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT, 1947

A conference having been held at Panglong, attended by certain Members of the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma, all Saohpas and representative of the Shan States, the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills:

The Members of the conference, believing that freedom will be more speedily achieved by the Shans, the Kachins and the Chins by their immediate co-operation with the Interim Burmese Government:

1. A Representative of the Hill Peoples, selected by the Governor on the recommendation of representatives of the Supreme Council of the United Hill Peoples (SCOUHP), shall be appointed a Counsellor for Frontier Areas shall be given executive authority by similar means.
2. The said Counsellor shall also be appointed a Member of the Governor's Executive Council, without portfolio, and the subject of Frontier Areas brought within the purview of the Executive Council by Constitutional

Convention as in the case of Defence and External Affairs. The Counsellor for Frontier Areas shall be given executive authority by similar means.

3. The said Counsellor shall be assisted by two Deputy Counsellors representing races of which he is not a member. While the two Deputy Counsellors should deal in the first instance with the affairs of their respective areas and the Counsellor with all the remaining parts of the Frontier Areas, they should by Constitutional Convention act on the principle of joint responsibility.
4. While the Counsellor, in his capacity of Member of the Executive Council, will be the only representative of the Frontier Areas on the Council, the Deputy Counsellors shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Council when subjects pertaining to the Frontier Areas are discussed.
5. Though the Governor's Executive Council will be augmented as agreed above, it will not operate in respect of the Frontier Areas in any manner which would deprive any portion of those Areas of the autonomy which it now enjoys in internal administration. Full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas is accepted in principle.
6. Though the question of demarcating and establishing a separated Kachin State within a Unified Burma is one which must be relegated for decision by the Constituent Assembly, it is agreed that such a State is desirable. As a first step towards this end, the Counsellor for Frontier Areas and the Deputy Counsellors shall be consulted in the administration of such areas in the Myitkyina and the Bhamo Districts as are Part II Scheduled Areas under the Government of Burma Act of 1935.
7. Citizens of the Frontier Areas shall enjoy rights and privileges which are regarded as fundamental in democratic countries.
8. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial autonomy now vested in the Federated Shan States.
9. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial assistance which the Kachin Hills and the Union Hills are entitled to receive from the revenues of Burma, and the Executive Council will examine with the Frontier Areas Counsellor and Deputy Counsellors the feasibility of adopting for the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills financial arrangement similar to those between Burma and the Federated Shan States.

<u>Shan Committee.</u> (Signed) Saohpalong of Tawngpeng State.	<u>Kachin Committee.</u> (Signed) (Sinwa Naw, Myitkyina)	<u>Burmese Government.</u> (Signed) (Aung San)
 (Signed) Saohpalong of Yawngphwe State.	 (Signed) (Zau Rip, Myitkyina)	
 (Signed) Saohpalong of North Hsenwi State.	 (Signed) (Dinra Tang, Myitkyina)	

(Signed)
**Saohpalong of Laihka
State.**

(Signed)
(Zau La, Bhamo)

(Signed)
**Saohpalong of Mong
Pawn State.**

(Signed)
(Zau Lawn, Bhamo)

(Signed)
**Saohpalong of
Hsamonghkam State.**

(Signed)
(Labang Grong, Bhamo)

(Signed)
**Representative of
Hsahtung Saohpalong.
(Hkun Pung)**

(Signed) (Signed)
**(U Tin E) (U Htun
Myint)**

Chin Committee

(Signed) (Signed) (Signed)
(U Kya Bu) (Hkun Saw) (U Hlur Hmung, Falam)

(Signed) (Signed) (Signed)
**(Sao Yape (Hkun Htee) (U Thawng Za Khup,
Hpa) Tiddim)**

(Signed)
(U Kio Mang, Haka)

THE KING'S WITNESSES

Lord Bottomley, His Majesty's Government representative, who accompanied Aung San to Panglong (February 9, 1947)



Col. Rees-Williams (later Lord Ogmores), who headed the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry (FACE), seen with his fellow committee members. On his left is Sao Sam Htun, Prince of Mongpaw, who died mysteriously after he was superficially wounded during the assassination of Aung San on July 19, 1947.



THE 1947 UNION CONSTITUTION

Before 1962, there were only 4 states, namely ; the Kachin, Karen, Karenni, and Shan. The Kachin and the Karen states were expressly denied the right to secede. Thus Article 201 applies only to the latter two states.

CHAPTER X.

Right of Secession.

201. Save as otherwise expressly provided in this Constitution or in any Act of Parliament made under section 199, every State shall have the right to secede from the Union in accordance with the conditions hereinafter prescribed.

202. The right of secession shall not be exercised within ten years from the date on which this Constitution comes into operation.

203. (1) Any State wishing to exercise the right of secession shall have a resolution to that effect passed by its State Council. No such resolution shall be deemed to have been passed unless not less than two-thirds of the total number of members of the State Council concerned have voted in its favour.

(2) The Head of the State concerned shall notify the President of any such resolution passed by the Council and shall send him a copy of such resolution certified by the Chairman of the Council by which it was passed.

204. The President shall thereupon order a plebiscite to be taken for the purpose of ascertaining the will of the people of the State concerned.

205. The President shall appoint a Plebiscite Commission consisting of an equal number of members representing the Union and the State concerned in order to supervise the plebiscite.

206. Subject to the provisions of this Chapter, all matters relating to the exercise of the right of secession shall be regulated by law.

THE FIRST PRESIDENT

Sao Shwe Thaik, the Prince of Yawngphwe, who spearheaded unity with the Burmese, was rewarded with the Presidentship of the newly independent Union. He discovered later that it was merely a ceremonial office. He later sponsored the translation of Pali Scriptures into Shan. He was reported to have said, "I will, if necessary, offer my head for its successful completion". He was in robust health when he was last seen in jail after the Burmese military took power in 1962. He later died under mysterious circumstances.



SAVING THE UNION

The Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO) rebelled in 1949. It was the Shans, together with other national groups, who helped pull the Burmese government from the brink of disaster.



Saw Ba U Gyi, the Karen leader, until he was killed in action on August 12, 1950.

TREACHERY

Late in 1949, the Chinese Nationalist Army (Kuomintang), defeated by the communists, fled into the Shan State. In 1952, the Burmese sent their troops into Shan State, ostensibly to fight the Kuomintang, but actually to occupy it. They declared it under martial law. Their rule since then has been a reign of terror. Nothing in the Shans' experience can be compared with it.



Discussing ways and means to repatriate the Kuomintang (KMT) soldiers from Shan State. Far right is General Chartichai Choonhavan, then a Lieutenant-Colonel.





Former KMT base at “Tham Ngop” in Chiang Mai Province, near Thai-Shan State border, in 1969.

SAVING THE SHAN STATE?

A contemporary observer wrote: “Strangely enough, in the (Burmese) barracks. Bullets are rusting and heaps of guns need to be oiled. Co-existence (with the KMT) seems to be their mutual agreement.” (Shan State Today and Tomorrow, by Sai Pan, Tai Youth Magazine, 1957-58 issue) This “agreement” broke down only because China threatened retaliation.



OPPOSITION TO OCCUPATION

Burmese abuses drew sharp criticisms and opposition from the Shan people. Below is the compilation of articles written by one of the most prominent Shan politicians, Htun Myint Taunggyi. One, “Shanland’s Grievances”, was read and discussed widely both at home and in Rangoon. Another one, “The Secession Issue”, which came out as the ten-year trial period with Burma drew to a close, was an instant bestseller. For this “crime”, he was repaid by the Burmese in full. When they seized power in 1962, he was among those who suffered the most during his detention by the Burmese. Over thirty years later, he is still under close surveillance by the Burmese.



REBELLION

To head off any Shan attempt to secede, the Burmese Army, under General Ne Win's command, seized power in 1958. His unsavoury methods either thoroughly intimidated the opposition or pushed them into open rebellion.



Sao Noi Mangkorn

Sao Noi Mangkorn, who launched the first Resistance movement, the Noom Serk Harn (Brave Young Warriors), on May 21, 1958.



THE FEDERAL MOVEMENT



After the elected government returned to the Union in 1960, the Shans proposed that for the union to last, they should be allowed to introduce amendments to the 12-year-old Constitution. The resulting proposal, which was supported by all the non-Burman national groups and the justice-loving Burmese people, contained the following recommendations:

1. To make Burma a state;
2. To grant equal powers to the two Houses of Parliaments;
3. All states should be allowed to send an equal number of representatives to the Upper House, i.e. the Chamber of Nationalities;
4. To serve some mutual matters for the Central Government, and the remaining matters for the states;
5. To distribute the revenue collected by the Federal Government among all the states in fair proportion.

Lung Khun Maha



The attempt to gain peace in 1960 was quashed by the Burma Army, that treacherously arrested Khun Maha, who had come to negotiate. This was a serious blow to hopes of the country regaining peace.



The 1947 Constitution was also declared null and void, thus ending the only legal tie between the Burmese and the Shans.

AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY

Sao Kya Seng, Prince of Hsipaw, an outspoken leader, with his Austrian consort, Sao Nang Inge. The Prince disappeared shortly after he was taken into custody by the Burmese in Taunggyi.



HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL GENOCIDE

Bangkok Post Home News

Shan minority resents
Kengtung Palace destruction



The Kengtung Palace before it was destroyed by the Burmese on November 11, 1991, ostensibly to provide a site for the city's major hotel. (Picture below)

Two days later, 6 people suspected of being ringleaders of the protesters were arrested. A tourist wrote afterwards: "One cannot help wondering what consistency there is in a program that opens a country to tourism at the very time it is destroying the tourists come to see."

The ruins of King Bayinnaung's Palace seen here with the ambitious plan for its renovation. Which makes one wonder why the Burmese are so eager to resurrect this dead Palace of theirs, when a live one-that of the Shans-had been barbarously put to ruin.



Yawnghwe Palace



While the Burmese are resuscitating the ruins of their long dilapidated palaces at enormous cost, the Shans' existing historic buildings are being deliberately neglected. One example of this is the palace of the Prince of Yawnghwe (who was the first president of the independent Union of Burma); no one knows when it will be destroyed.



Inlay Lake and the famous Phawng Daw Oo Temple

Though seemingly quiet and peaceful, local people are becoming increasingly anxious about their future. The Burmese authorities are planning to build a dam which will flood many rice fields and to build hotels which will force many people to evacuate their homes. At present, people are being forced to build the Shwenyaung-Namzang railroad.

SLORC generals propose to make Inlay Lake region a major tourist destination and to build a railroad between Shwenyaung and Namzang.

In September 1993, at a meeting during the visit of the Thai Foreign Minister, Burma agreed to receive more tourists via Bangkok Airways and to increase the duration of their stay.

According to that agreement, the Inlay region has been chosen as one of the most attractive spots for tourism and the following proposals have been made:

1. In order to keep the lake surface all year round as high as the water level during the rainy season, a dam will be set up near the Mowbi Bridge.
2. Tourist hotels of an internationally high standard will be built between the villages of Khong Teng and Mongsawk-Panui.
3. To connect the Inlay region with Southern Shan State, the Shwenyawng-Namzang railroad will be built.
4. Local people are ordered to bury weeds under the lake bed, clear away the water hyacinth and erect frontier posts etc. every day.

The results of these proposals of the SLORC will be as follows:

If the lake level is to be as high as during the rainy season all year round, 7,500 acres of rice fields will be flooded and over 600,000 baskets of rice paddy will be lost annually.

Many houses will be forced to move or be destroyed to adjust the lake bank into a straight line in accordance with the proposal.

Many people will be forced to work on the railroad construction. (SLORC's 425th Infantry Battalion has already listed 8,500 names among the population of Seeseng and Morkmai areas.)

To help cover the cost of the railroad, people in the northern area of Yawngnaw township are being forced to pay a rate of 600 Kyat per family.

Furthermore, to avoid any rebellion of the local armed group, which has made a cease-fire agreement, the SLORC is cooperating with them in setting up gambling dens and entertainment centres in the area. Though the SLORC knows very well that the local armed group is committing armed robbery against the people in the area, it simply ignores them. In this way, communal disturbances between Pa-O and Intha are being created.

Intha National Youth Association



The above secret document, dated 10 October 1988, promised the Burmese soldiers extra allowances for getting married to Shan women:

- K. 500 monthly for marriage to daughters of ordinary citizens;
 - K. 1,000 for daughters and nieces of village and town elders;
 - K. 1,500 for degree holders;
 - K. 2,000 for those of royal or rich families.
-

TRUTH NOT ALLOWED TO BE EXPRESSED

The popular singer, Sai Mao, was jailed for singing “The Promises of Panglong”, and instant hit written by Khamleik, a composer well-known both in Shan State and Burma.



It contains the following stirring lyrics:
A free homeland for the Tai
This we agreed upon at Panglong
The vows and promises so solemnly made
And now though it has never been told
By whom the promises were broken
We know who betrayed whom
But the Tais have always been true
Where are the vows and promises of Panglong
Have they, I wonder, all gone with Aung San?



THIS AT LEAST WAS GONE WITH AUNG SAN

During British times, Shan characters could be seen alongside those of English and Burmese on coins and banknotes, as well as in steamers and railway stations. They were omitted after independence.



LAND RICH, PEOPLE POOR- AND MADE POORER

Large mineral deposits and gemstones have been discovered in the Shan State, as evidenced by the Indian geological survey reports (1933) made by Dr. Coggin, Dr. Sondhi and G.V. Hovson.



The Namtu Silver Mines, dug by the Chinese for 400 years, were rehabilitated in 1904 by Herbert Hoover, who became the 31st President of the United States of America.



The world is familiar with the Murng Kut (Mogok) Ruby land in the northern Shan principality of Mongmit. Now people are increasingly becoming acquainted with Mongsu in central Shan State. The lion's share of the proceeds goes to the conquerors while the real owners have to be contented with the bones.



Murngkut, mis-spelt and mis-pronounced by the Burmese as Mokok.

The bridge on the Nam-nga which runs through the town of Mongsu. It has been the centre of a gem rush since 1992, when Burma declared it a gem-land.



Shops and houses burnt by the Burmese in the Mount Saileng area on 5 February 1993.



Even houses of former resistance fighters who had made peace with the Burmese were not spared.



People in the nearby villages of Poongsan, Namtong and Pang-nga digging for gems on Mount Lookpaw. They were not allowed to enter the Mount Saileng area, where gems of better quality and in more quantity are found.



Some of the local populace enjoy only the right to pick the “bones” along the stream.

In the meantime, what earnings the people have are being looted, what sons they have are being sent to distant lands as porters, and what daughters they have are being raped. Besides this, the people also have to go to work in the fields, formerly owned by them, but now owned by the Burmese military,

carry water, cook and also supply ingredients such as rice, chicken, pork, etc. all free contributions. Any default on the people's part is punished severely.



Even these kinds of houses “ if they can be called houses at all” are not spared from Burmese pillage.



DEATH WITHOUT COMPENSATION

Even when one slaughters animals for food, only fatter ones are chosen for the purpose. However, the Burmese military are immune to such sophisticated notions. They do not care whether Shans are male or female, strong or weak, young or old, as long as they are Shans. Mistreatment and neglect are common during a military campaign. The following are photos of people who fled from the Karenni battlefields in October - November 1992. They carried bizarre stories, like of how a son of the former Prince of Mongkerng, Sao Orn, was forced to go with them and died after a few days from the harsh labour, malnutrition and dysentery.



Porters who escaped from Burmese soldiers during battles in Karenni State (31.12.92). They were forced to carry back-breaking loads, and were tortured and starved, so they risked their lives to escape.



Unable to endure the frequent forced labour and unpaid portage anymore, young people from rural areas in central Shan State (Mong Kung, Lai Kha, Kesi and Wan Sarm) joined the resistance in mid-1993.



Zang Ya village, Nam Pawng township, Northern Shan State. On May 2 1994, troops of No 68 SLORC infantry regiment from Lashio clashed with the resistance near the village of Zang Ya. The battle left three SLORC soldiers dead and two wounded. The SLORC soldiers accused the villagers of Zang Ya of supporting the resistance because they had failed to give them information about its presence. They therefore set fire to the village. Ten houses, a rice mill with two engine heads, several paddy barns and two bullock carts were burned to ashes.



The “Four Cuts” of the Burmese Army have driven innocent people into the jungle, taking with them what they owned. These photos were taken during late June and early July in the Mong Pu Long area, Mong Plang township. Eastern Shan State.



Many of the Burman race have also been used as porters. They were arrested by the military from their homes, and in the streets and put into Insein Prison. They were forced to wear prison clothes (on the back of which was written in Burmese "Prison Supervision Department") and crowded into trucks covered with tarpaulins. They had to carry army supplies to the battlefield of Mong Kyod in mid-July 1944. Many of them ran away from the Burmese soldiers. Among them, 28 were received by the Shan soldiers and were provided with food, clothes, and money before their release near the Thai border on 26.6.94.



Burmese porters who escaped from the Burmese soldiers during the battle of Mong Kyod (24.5.94)

Another 8 Burmese porters who escaped some time later. Shan soldiers received them and gave them food and clothes on 12.7.94.



Some of the Burmese porters who escaped from the Burmese soldiers.

This teenage Burmese was frightened out of his wits during Loi Phaleng Battle in Tachilek township, in July 1994. He was left in a makeshift hospital and the Burmese troops forced the villagers to pay for his medical treatment. After that, no one came to him. Afraid of being alone, he ran away.



Even monks, who live their lives in meditation, are not spared. One monk, aged 80, the Reverend Oon Lao, Abbot of Mui Taw monastery, while in a meditation trance, was pronounced dead by the Burmese troops of the 99th Infantry. They then cut out his heart, liver and kidneys. Later, in mid-July 1994, a thunderbolt struck them. Many were killed and injured.



The monastery in Mong Thar, Mongton township, east of the Salween, one of the targets of the Burmese PC-9 fighter-bomber raids on June 3, 1994. Four civilians were killed: Kungna, aged 56 (a layman who looked after the monastery); Sai Aye, 33, a cowherd; Ai Yao, 25, and Kungmar, 28. They had sought shelter under the monastery, believing that the Burmese would not attack it because of their common religion. But it turned out that the monastery was in fact their main target.



KIN?

However, taking refuge in Thailand, the Land of Smiles and the land of their cousins, is not as simple as it sounds. More often than not, they are driven back.



The following photos are of 400 people who went into Thailand in March 1992, and were forced back. It is sad indeed that they were rejected by their kin.



INEVITABLE RESULT

Driven to desperation, the Shans have been forced to depend on poppy cultivation in order to feed themselves and their hated occupiers.



Local Burmese warlords, after collecting “taxes”, have turned a blind eye to the fields. “Nobody has to force a farmer who is living on the verge of starvation to grow a cash crop which gives him the bare necessities of life.” (Bertil Lintner)



THE BURMESE WAY TO ERADICATION

To attract aid from the American government, the Burmese have since 1990 been putting “seized narcotics” to the torch continuously, sometimes with the blessing of American dignitaries visiting Rangoon.



US Congressman Charles B. Rangel and diplomats with “seized drugs” in Rangoon.



Bonfire in Mongko, Kokang area, Northern Shan State, in 1990.

Can burning and thrashings of poppy fields end the people’s miseries? Ask the old Kokang woman here, who was crying after seeing her poppies destroyed. This photo proves that the Burmese Government’s BAD (Border Area Development) program is just what it says it is -- bad.



AERIAL SPRAYING AND ITS EFFECTS

In 1985, the Burmese government, with planes and chemicals supplied by the United States, launched Chemical Warfare against the Shan people. The United States said it was not dangerous. Yet, 2, 4-D was a compound used by the American troops during the Vietnam War. The effects on American servicemen has been much publicized. Due to its toxicity to humans and the environment, the Thai government rejected its use in Thailand. Even the US government warned its own people against allowing grazing on treated fields less than two weeks after application. Not surprisingly, the Shan people and their land suffered.



2,4-D destroys not only poppies but also vegetables.

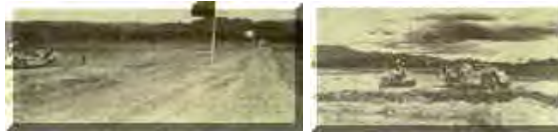


Ayers Turbo Thrush spray aircraft, supplied by the State Department, were used against the Shans. When there were reports about Yellow Rain in Laos, there was an uproar from the United State. But when 2, 4-D was used against the Shans, there was only the sound of silence.



AND TODAY

And now there is more destruction with the coming of roads. "They come, they kill, they enslave, they destroy. Above all, they destroy. The sole change ... is the scale" (Oliver Hargreave). What is more, the Burmese have made Development the ugliest word the Shans have even known.



Through concessions given to foreign logging firms since 1988, the Burmese government is rapidly reducing the Shan State to a desert. If this is development, the Shans say, they prefer to stay under-developed.



Timber trade: logs ready to be move on the Thai-Shan State border.



THE DEATH RAILWAYS

The 102-mile long Loikaw-Aungban railway was built with the blood, sweat, tears, lives, money, homes, and lands of the people. And now, since January 6, 1993, the same has been happening with the Shwenyaung-Namzang railroad. People of both sexes, aged between 15 and 59, are being ordered to work for weeks. Absentees are fined K. 3,000 upwards.



Despite Burmese propaganda about how their development programs are benefiting the Shan people, more and more people are fleeing to neighbouring countries.



The train on the new Aungban-Loikaw line.



More and more people are also driven into poverty and prostitution. Is there are any way we can prevent this?



These children, can we provide any future for them?



The Kengtawng Falls in southern Shan State. Scenic and rich in hydropower. There are a countless number of beautiful landscapes like this in Shanland. Can this paradise be regained by the world?



Finally, development programs, instead of improving the people's life, have only succeeded in making them poorer. This has forced them to depend all the more on poppy cultivation for their survival, which in turn has threatened the world with more problems of addiction, crime and social fragmentation. The only way out is to stop these Shans -- as soon as possible -- from growing poppies.



But to what extent are we ready to achieve this aim without helping the Burmese to kill them?



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