

# BURMA ALERT

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## **Burma News:**

### **UNIVERSITIES RE-OPEN IN BURMA**

Universities in Burma re-opened on 24 Aug amid tight security. Uniformed security guards and university staff checked the students' passes and new walls had been erected around campuses to enable them to be sealed off quickly in case of student unrest. The universities are routinely closed by State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) whenever anti-military unrest erupts. The universities were last closed in Dec.91 after students called for a return to democracy at the time when Norway awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Student leaders who led the protest were sentenced in Jul.92 to 6-20 years imprisonment by a military tribunal. Major-General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1 of the SLORC and Chief of Intelligence who is also Chairman of the Education Committee blamed the faculty for failing to control their students. As a result, over 2,000 professors were sent for re-education and new directives issued forcing university staff to spy on their students [Alert No.3, Vol.3, Mar.92 and A920904, CSM92CS31. Focus/B/BSCSA920325].

### **ARMY BEGINS PORTER ROUND-UP: PRELUDE TO OFFENSIVE**

The Burma Army is arresting hundreds of young men under the age of 20 in the border areas to act as porters. Over 200 escaped over the border into Thailand at Mae Sod. Forty were arrested by the Thai Army and will be deported. The young men said that they were forced to carry arms, ammunition, and food for the Army. Others were forced to work at military construction sites. Thai military officers said the renewed round-up of civilians for porter duty indicates that SLORC is about to launch another dry season offensive against the Karen bases on the border. Although SLORC announced a cease-fire with the Karens at the beginning of the rainy season in Apr.92, they did not withdraw their troops as is the normal practice every year. Instead, they dug in and began fortifying their positions. Karen sources indicate that SLORC will launch its military offensive on 28 Sep.92 [Focus/BBC920828, KNU920915].

### **ASEAN AND DIALOGUE PARTNERS DIFFER ON BURMA POLICY**

ASEAN's 'dialogue partners' called on ASEAN to pressure SLORC to release all political prisoners and transfer power to an elected government. Thai Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin defended ASEAN's policy of 'constructive engagement' with Burma and said that the western way was too aggressive. He pointed to a number of 'positive developments' since the change of leadership in Rangoon last April - the release of political prisoners, dialogue with opposition parties, and allowing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's family to visit her - and said that things were 'going in the right direction'. US Secretary of State James Baker, however, said, *"We do not see much progress on the human rights front and we see zero progress towards democracy"*. As for the ASEAN's contention that human rights are governed by the distinct culture and history of each country, British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd, representing the European Community, said that human rights issues in Burma *"will not go away. We are not talking of the imposition of the values of one section of the world on another section with different values. We are talking about an understanding of shared values"*. Australian Minister for External Affairs Senator Gareth Evans said that he hoped that all countries would agree to impose an arms embargo on Rangoon and that the threat of economic sanctions should remain on the international agenda. Canadian Minister for External Affairs Barbara McDougall said that, *"the tragic situation (in Burma) cries out for concerted action... the time is now ripe ...for a more vocal and firmer action"* [B920821,0807,BM9207,BU920830].

### **FORMER THAI NSC CHIEF - "REVIEW BURMA POLICY"**

Former Thai National Security Chief Prasong Soonsiri on 9 Aug said that Thailand should review its Burma policy. He said that in the past only 'some-powers-that-be' in the country supported the Burmese junta. He said, *"We should do as wanted by the world concerning human rights problems. We should give moral support to the people of Burma who fought for democracy. They deserve the same support as the Thai people who fought for democracy in May"*. He said that the Thai government should not just look at the interests of a certain group of people. As for those who have interests in logging, fisheries and mining in Burma, they should consider abandoning their interests, he said [B920821].

**"BURMA ALERT" - NEW FAX NUMBER: 1 (613) 794-2719**

Burma News:

## BANGLADESHI POLICE KILL ROHINGYA REFUGEES

Rohingya refugees from Burma protesting the Bangladeshi government's plan to repatriate them by force have clashed repeatedly with police as of 14 May. To date, 13 have been killed and 200 wounded. Violence will increase as the rainy season comes to an end and it becomes possible to begin repatriating the refugees. A Bangladeshi official said, *"The situation is very tense and we have called in extra force"*. The work of some relief agencies has been curtailed by Bangladeshi authorities because they claim that the agencies, including the UNHCR, are advising refugees not to go home. The 300,000 Rohingya refugees say they will return only if the U.N. can guarantee their safety and religious freedom. They also want democracy to be restored in Burma and power transferred to the National League for Democracy led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi [A920904,AW920906,BRCRG920430].

## SLORC SIGNS 1949 GENEVA CONVENTION

SLORC Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw officially announced Burma's commitment to the humanitarian principles enshrined in the four protocols of the 1949 Geneva Convention for the war time protection of the human rights of combatants on land and at sea, for the protection of prisoners-of-war, and the protection of civilians in time of war. Significantly, SLORC declined to sign two additional 1977 protocols on the protection of victims of international and non-international armed conflict. International aid and human right groups and governments, including the United Nations Human Rights Commission, have criticized and condemned SLORC for its gross human rights violations and excessive use of force against pro-democracy dissidents, civilians and ethnic and religious minorities. This latest move by SLORC confirm suspicions that SLORC is trying to reduce international pressure for it to introduce political reforms and that it has not in any way made concessions to the opposition [F920910, N920827].

## SWEDISH SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY IN BURMA

The League of Christian Social Democrats issued a statement in support of the Burmese democracy movement and called on the Swedish Government to invite the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) to visit Sweden. The statement advocated international action against SLORC if it perseveres in abusing human rights. Increased humanitarian aid from Sweden for Burmese refugees was also requested [Focus9208].

## PRO-DEMOCRACY BURMESE TRADE UNION TO GENEVA

U Maung Maung, Secretary of the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB), attended the 79th session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva in Jun.92 as part of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers Association's (IUF) delegation. He addressed the Conference whose theme was "Democratization and the ILO". U Maung Maung called on the ILO to take action for the withdrawal of investments in Burma as they do not benefit the Burmese people. He also had discussions with labour leaders from the EC, Norway, Japan, USA, India, Israel and Africa [FTUB920912, DAWN9207].

## CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE FOR A FEDERAL UNION

The Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) hosted a conference on the 'Drafting of a Constitution for the Future Union of Burma' from 10-19 June. The Friedrich Naumann Stiftung of Germany sponsored the consultation. The conference is a result of the work of the DAB's Constitution Drafting Committee which was formed in Mar.90. Participants included representatives from the NCGUB, the National League for Democracy -Liberated Area, the DAB, the National Democratic Front and constitutional experts from Britain, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Switzerland, Thailand, and the U.S.A. [DAB9207, DAWN9207]. Following the Conference, the Burmese leaders signed the 'Manerplaw Agreement' on 31 Jul.92, to establish a Federal Union of Burma (see text on Page 6).

## 14 BURMESE SEEK REFUGEE STATUS IN JAPAN

On 18 Sep, the Burmese Association in Japan (BAIJ) formally handed over the application of 14 Burmese seeking refugee status to the Japan Federation of Bar Associations. This is the first time Burmese in Japan have applied as a group for refugee recognition. The Federation will engage 20 lawyers to help the applicants. In an unprecedented move, Japan which has a very tough asylum policy, granted political asylum to 3 Burmese in Apr.92 including Dr Win Naing, president of BAIJ. Analysts saw the move as an indication of Japan's growing impatience with SLORC [Alert No.5, Vol:3, May92 & BAIJ920919].

## Foreign Trade & Investments:

### POLAND:

On 17 July, the Polish ship "Marian Buczek" delivered 100 tonnes of ammunition, 12 Mi-2 attack helicopters, at least one PZL SWIDNIK W-3 SOKOL helicopter and other equipment to SLORC. The delivery was made in spite of international pressure to stop arms shipments to Burma. The helicopters arrived just in time for SLORC's planned dry season offensive against the pro-democracy opposition. Burmese military pilots are also being trained in Poland [F920813]. SWIDNIK confirmed that a dozen helicopters had been sold to Burma. The plant said the sale was part of an old agreement and that it is not known whether the contacts will be continued. The Polish Foreign Ministry confirmed the deal but refused to disclose details. The Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations explained that the transaction was legal and that the 'Mi-1' and 'Sokol' helicopters were sold with former Premier Jan Olszewski's consent after he talked the matter over with president George Bush during his visit to the USA [WAR920724]. Other sources report that six PZL Swidnik W-3 Sokol light helicopters were supplied to SLORC in 1991 and another six in late 1991 or early 1992. The 'Sokols' were diverted from a cancelled Soviet Air Force order and paid for in hard currency. They have a crew of 2 and can carry up to 12 soldiers with 2.1 tonnes of internal cargo. The 'Sokols' can be fitted with a twin GSh-23 cannon pack, cabin outriggers for Soviet-made AT-6 'Spiral' anti-tank missiles and two 12-round launchers for S-80, 80 mm unguided rockets [JDW920807]. *Alert No.12, Dec.90, reported that 10 'Hoplite' Mi-2 and 10 PZL Swidnik transport helicopters were sold to SLORC. Alert No.4, Vol.2, Apr.91, reported that President Lech Walesa had cancelled the deal which was made by General Manzowiecki's government in June 1990. Recent events show that the deal was not cancelled. The July.92 deliveries may be part of the same deal reported in 1990. It is clear, however, that the PZL Swidnik W-3 Sokol helicopters are not 'transport' helicopters. Helicopters were used last year by SLORC against Karen democratic forces in the Irrawady delta and 3 helicopters (unidentified) dropped 200 SLORC paratroopers on 7 June in heavy fighting against Kachin democratic forces on the Ledo Road in northern Burma - Ed.*

### THAILAND:

The STATE RAILWAY OF THAILAND on 17 Aug accepted in principle SLORC's proposal to re-open the "Death Railway" between Burma and Thailand. According to the proposal, SRT will construct a new railway line along the original route through the Three Pagodas Pass to Thanbyuzayat in southern Burma. A second possible link is from Suphanburi to Mae Sod and then to Pa-an and Thaton [B920828].

The ELECTRICITY GENERATING AUTHORITY OF THAILAND (EGAT) has concluded that eight proposed hydroelectric projects along the Thai-Burma border could generate enough electricity to meet two-thirds of Thailand's current needs. According to the study, an investment of US\$5.1 billion will be needed for a total generating capacity of 6,400 megawatts. The largest dam will be in Burma on the Salween river, 76 kms upstream from where the Salween and Moei rivers meet [Manerplaw, headquarters of the Karens and the pro-democracy opposition is located at the confluence of the two rivers - Ed]. An investment of US\$3 billion is required for this 4,540 megawatt dam. A second 792 megawatt dam on the Salween is planned 30 kms upstream from Manerplaw opposite Mae Hong Son province. An investment of US\$858 million is needed. The other projects call for 3 dams on the Moei river (110, 231 and 288 megawatts), all bordering Tak province - US\$698 million; one on the Kok river (294 megawatts) in Mae Ai district of Chiang Mai - US\$375 million; one on the Klong Kra (130 megawatts) opposite Ranong province - US\$113.2 million; and one on the Mae Sai river (12.5 megawatts) in Mae Sai district of Chiang Rai - US\$74.6 million. The ELECTRIC POWER DEVELOPMENT CO has completed feasibility studies for seven of the dams. Finance is being sought from the ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK for the Klong Kra project which was not covered by the EPDC study [see also Alert No.11, Vol.2, Nov.91, B920703].

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

LEVI STRAUSS, which purchased garments from Burma via DAE WOO and SEGYE LTD of Korea and KALOMEX of Hong Kong, decided at the end of Jun.92 not to renew its contracts. LEVI states, "By doing business with these contractors, we were providing a direct investment or benefit to a government that is one of the leading violators of human rights in the world. Under current conditions, it is not possible to do business in Myanmar without directly supporting the military government and its pervasive violations of human rights". Sabrina Johnson, Levi Strauss, 1155 Battery St, San Francisco, CA.94111.

## International Activities:

### AUSTRALIA:

On 9 Aug, ten Burma-interest organizations formed the AUSTRALIA BURMA COUNCIL to work together to restore democracy in Burma. A ten-man Executive Committee representing the groups and three co-ordinators were elected: Central Co-ordinator - Ms Amanda Zappia in Canberra (Lobbying); National Co-ordinator - U Maung Maung in Sydney who is also president of the All Young Burmese League; and International Co-ordinator - Ken Khin Maung Gyi in Melbourne who also heads the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma (Victoria), Tel/Fax: 011 61 (3) 766-9776.

The OVERSEAS BURMA LIBERATION FRONT sent a representative to Wellington, New Zealand, in Apr.92, to seek help in de-seating SLORC at the United Nations. Phillip Smyth told the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee that unless action was taken, human rights abuses will worsen.

The AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES has produced a BURMA Resource and Action kit. In addition to printed information sheets, the kit offers 3 videos for rent: "Barefoot Student Army" by Lyndal and Sophie Barry which was screened by ABC-TV on 10 May, "Extracts from the ABC's Foreign Correspondent" by Peter George on the Thai-Burma border, and "Guns, Drugs and Liberation" by Calvin Roberts, an American photo-journalist. ACC, Box C199 Clarence St P O, Sydney 2000.

### CANADA:

The CANADIAN FRIENDS OF BURMA raised C\$22,700 for the health training program being given by the Burma Medical Association (BMA) to 50 Arakanese, Mon, Karen, Kayah, Palaung, and Burman students. The 4 senior instructors are: Dr Singh, Dr Myint Cho, Dr Kyaw Thet Oo and Dr Cynthia.

### INDIA:

A general conference of Burmese students taking refuge in various parts of India was planned to be held in Leikul in Manipur in Jul.92. Over 200 Burmese students are living in Delhi, Bombay, Manipur and Mizoram. They are represented by the BURMA STUDENTS LEAGUE, the ALL BURMA STUDENTS UNION and the BURMA DEMOCRATIC GUERRILLA FRONT. The students hope they can be merged into one organization and that they can adopt a common strategy against SLORC.

### SRI LANKA:

On 31 Aug, the Sri Lanka LAW & SOCIETY TRUST conferred a professorial fellowship on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The fellowship is tenable for one year from 1 Sep.92. Daw Suu accepted the award through her husband and agreed to deliver a series of lectures and participate in seminars in Sri Lanka under the auspices of the Law & Society Trust when she is released from house arrest.

### SWITZERLAND:

Thirteen Burmese from various countries and organizations including Dr Aung Naing, Chairman, ALL BURMA STUDENTS DEMOCRATIC FRONT, Zaw Oo, Foreign Spokesman, ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY/BURMA, Dr Em Marta, DAB representative, Dr Kyaw Lwin, Secretary, LIV-ERPOOL BURMA SUPPORT GROUP, UK, and Dr and Mrs Zaw Tun from Canada, attended the session "Regions in Crisis, Regions in Recovery - Learning from Each Other", organized by MORAL RE-ARMAMENT in Caux from 11-17 August. John Htet Khin from Edinburgh initiated the invitation to the Burmese who attended. They heard the experience of people from other crisis areas and were encouraged. New ideas on ways to tackle the situation in Burma were generated.

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The "Burma Alert." published monthly by the Associates to Develop Democratic Burma, monitors foreign investments and trade with Burma to provide data for campaign against the military dictatorship in Rangoon,

Subscription to the "Burma Alert" is US\$100.00 per annum payable to the Associates to Develop Democratic Burma, c/o Harn Yawng Hwe, RR.4, Shawville, Quebec JOX 2Y0, Canada. Fax: 1 (613) 794-2719. Readers are also invited to become 'Associates' by contributing US\$100.00 per annum

In 1992, the Associates to Develop Democratic Burma received grants from the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Montreal, Canada; the Evangelische Missionswerk, Hamburg, Germany; and the National Endowment for Democracy, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

## International Activities:

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

On Martyrs' Day, 19 July, Burmese student exiles demonstrated in front of the Burmese Mission to the United Nations in New York to remember General Aung San and his colleagues, and in support of his daughter, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who was put under house arrest by SLORC three years ago.

In memory of those who died for democracy in Burma on 8.8.88, PROJECT MAJE launched a mail campaign to "Free Burma's Captives". Participants were urged to send a picture of a butterfly to - General Than Shwe, Chairman, SLORC, Ministry of Defense, Sule Pagoda Road, Rangoon, Burma.

On 1 Sep, the RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK, BANK INFORMATION CENTER, BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP, BURMA PROJECT, DEVELOPMENT GAP, FRIENDS OF THE RAINFOREST, EUROPEAN RAINFOREST MOVEMENT, INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN DEMOCRACY, INTERNATIONAL BURMA CAMPAIGN, INTERNATIONAL RIVERS NETWORK, KARUNA CENTER, PROBE INTERNATIONAL, SIERRA CLUB, SYNAPSES, UK BURMA ACTION GROUP and the WORKING GROUP FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE wrote a letter to the WORLD BANK to protest the US\$1.5 million credit to SLORC from the INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION for the Wood Industry II and Timber Distribution Project. Another US\$120 million in credit for a variety of projects is pending. These loans were approved before the 1988 massacres but the group is calling for the World Bank to cancel all development credits which have not yet been disbursed. The group believes that SLORC will use the funds to further oppress those fighting for democratic reform and civil liberties in Burma.

The Center for International Studies at BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE is hosting a symposium entitled "A Tribute to Aung San Suu Kyi" to provide an insight into the first Asian woman to have ever won a Nobel prize, on 8 Oct at 1:00 pm, at Paramus in New Jersey. Daw Win Win Kyi, the Coordinator for Asian Programs who is looking for updated information, articles, clippings, videos, etc. on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Tel: 1 (201) 447-9267 or 1 (201) 648-1281.

On 21 Sept, ASIA WATCH issued a statement expressing serious concern over the Thai plans for a "Safe Area" for Burmese political refugees in Ratchaburi. Asia Watch called on the government to stop the move to Ratchaburi until better screening and monitoring procedures are in place.

"CHANGES IN BURMA?" (September 6, 1992), a 21-page report by ASIA WATCH discussing recent events in Burma is available from Asia Watch, 485 Fifth Ave, New York, NY.10017-6104.

A video (VHS) tape of the 1991 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARD CEREMONY is available for US\$25 (postpaid, USA only). Cheque to: U Kyaw Win, 24941 Mustang Drive, Laguna Hills, CA.92653-5730.

An audio cassette tape of two songs, "Free Aung San Suu Kyi" and "O Burma" in both English and Burmese (Singer: Yuzana\_Khin) is available from the FREE SUU KYI, FREE BURMA campaign, c/o David Arnott, UMOUN, 777 UN Plaza, 11th Floor, New York, NY.10017 or from Wrightson S Tongue Jr, 231 Main St, Oriskany Falls, NY.13425.

A 16-page booklet in Burmese, "*Bogyoke Aung San nin Myanma Azarni mya lok kyan hmu gyi - atwin ye mya*" (The Inside Story - The Plot Against General Aung San and the Martyrs), by Kyin Ho/Naing Win, M.D., is available from Royal Medical Office, 6322 NW 9th Ave, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33309.

"BURMA: THE NEXT KILLING FIELDS?", a 96-page book by Alan Clements with a forward by the Dalai Lama is available for US\$5.00 from Odonian Press, Box 7776, Berkeley, CA.94707. ISBN 1-878825-21-6.

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News sources this issue: A = Asiaweek, Hong Kong, AW — Asia Watch, New York, B = Bangkok Post, BAIJ = Burmese Association in Japan, BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation, BM = Burma Monitor, New York, BRDBG = Burmese Refugee Committee - Pohingya Group, BSCSA = Burmese Students Committee for Social Affairs, BU = Burma Update, Jesuit Refugee Service, Bangkok, CSM = Christian Science Monitor, DAWN = All Burma Students Democratic Front, Bangkok, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, Focus = ABSDF Sweden, FTITB = Free Trade Unions of Burma, JDW = Jane's Defence Weekly, London, KNU = Karen National Union, N = The Nation, Bangkok, P = Working Peoples Daily, Rangoon, WAR = Warsaw PAP Radio.

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Policies:

## MANERPLAW AGREEMENT

### Agreement to Establish a Federal Union of Burma

Burma is a country where indigenous nationalities have lived together in adjacent territories for the last several millennia. It belongs to all indigenous nationalities.

Only when a true federal structure is established based on the desires and aspirations of all the indigenous nationalities will Burma stand united and stable. With this intention, General Aung San and indigenous leaders signed the Panglong Agreement on February 12, 1947. But it was never enacted.

Currently, because of the chauvinistic behaviour of the fascist military dictatorship of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) and the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the indigenous nationalities are deprived of their ethnic rights. Democracy and basic human rights of the people are also abused. National unity has been destroyed and civil war is going on unabated.

Thus, the indigenous nationalities and all the people must topple SLORC and set up a true Federal Union where equality, right of self-determination, democracy and basic human rights are guaranteed.

To attain equality, freedom, unity, security, fraternity, trust and development in the Federal Union, the main tasks which are necessary are to topple the SLORC military dictatorship and to establish democracy, peace and a true Federal Union. To achieve these aims, the:

National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma,  
National League for Democracy - Liberated Area,  
Democratic Alliance of Burma, and  
National Democratic Front

have resolutely agreed to the following at Manerplaw on July 31, 1992,

1. We will struggle together to end chauvinism and the fascist military dictatorship of SLORC,
2. After ending SLORC's military dictatorship and when freedom and peace are attained, a true national convention involving all indigenous nationalities and all political parties will be convened,
3. We will draw up a constitution for a true Federal Union in accordance with the desires of the indigenous nationalities and all peoples,
4. We will follow the principle that no nationality shall have special privileges and no restrictions will be imposed on the basic rights of any nationality or minority in the Union, and
5. We will build a Federal Union where all indigenous nationalities enjoy equality, the right of self-determination, democracy and basic human rights to the fullest extent. In so doing,
  - a) The Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Chin, Mon, Burman, Arakan and Shan peoples will have national States in a Federal Union of States,
  - b) The national States will assign certain powers to the Federal Union and the remaining powers will be exercised by the national States including legislative, administrative and judicial powers,
  - c) The Federal Union will consist of two Houses of Parliament: the National Assembly (Upper House) and the People's Assembly (Lower House),
  - d) In accordance with the principle of civilian supremacy over the military, the Federal Union and State armies will be put under the direct supervision of the elected governments,
  - e) The legislative, administrative and judicial branches of the Federal Union government will be checked and balanced in power, and the judiciary will be independent, and
  - f) The Federal Union constitution will be designed to prevent any re-emergence of chauvinism and fascist dictatorships in the future.

|         |                                          |                                     |                                 |                                    |
|---------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Signed: | (Dr Sein Win)<br>Prime Minister<br>NCGUB | (U Tin Aung)<br>Secretary<br>NLD-LA | (Saw Bo Mya)<br>Chairman<br>DAB | (Nai Shwe Kyin)<br>Chairman<br>NDF |
|---------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|

2nd day of Waxing Moon of Wa-gone, 1354 (July 31, 1992).