

# Burma: The Struggle for Democracy



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# Geography

- Located east of India
- Current capital: Naypyidaw
- Previous capital: Rangoon (Yangon)
- Currently run as a Military Dictatorship





# Geography

- Burma is located in South East Asia
- Slightly smaller than the state of Texas with 261,227 Miles<sup>2</sup>
- Population of about 50 million people
- About 90% of Burmese citizens are Buddhists



## BURMA

<p><b>KAREN</b></p> <p>★</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>— · — · —</p> <p>— · — · —</p>	<p>State or Division</p> <p>National Capital</p> <p>State or Division Capital</p> <p>Town</p> <p>International Border</p> <p>State or Division Border</p>
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0 miles 150

0 kilometers 150

Note: Boundaries portrayed do not represent an endorsement or acceptance of territorial claims.

# Burma: Economic Conditions

- Natural Resources - Immense Potential
- “Burmese Way”
- Worsening Economic Conditions
  - Per capita income < \$200
- **1987** U.N.’s “Least Developed Nation” status
  - Failure of leadership
- **09.05.87** Radio Broadcast
  - 25, 35, 75 Kyat Worthless (60 - 80%)



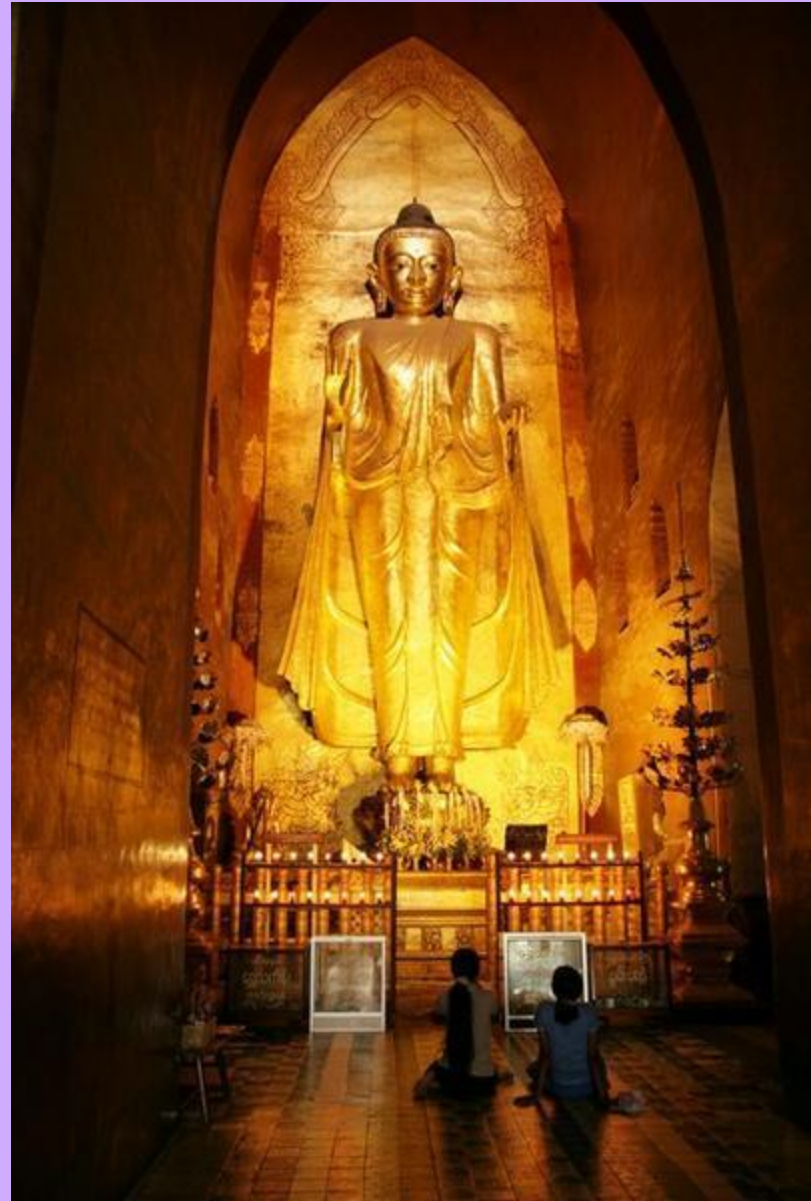
# Burma: Economic Conditions



# Burma: Economic Conditions



Burma is one of  
the most  
Buddhist  
countries in the  
world with  
respect to its  
architecture













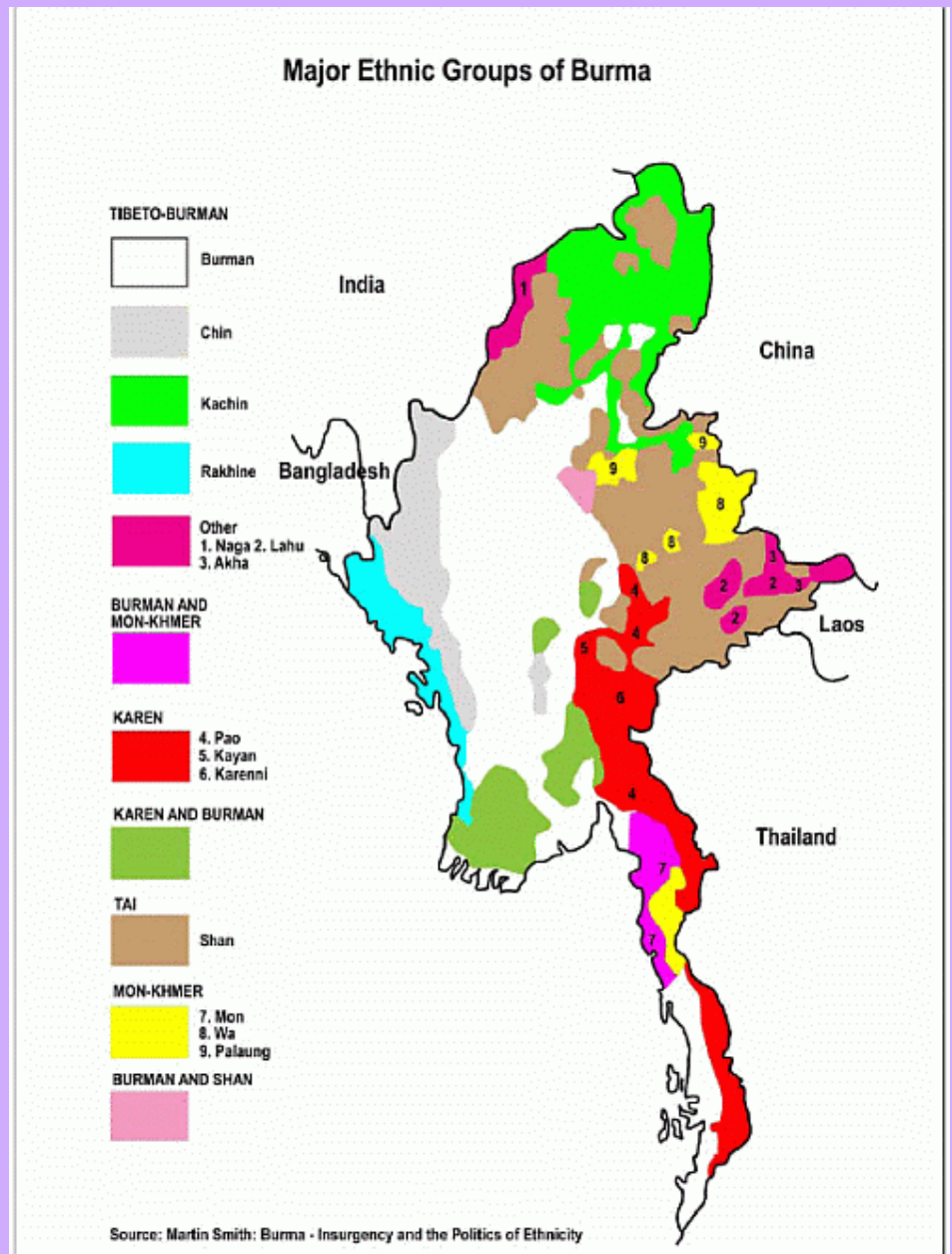
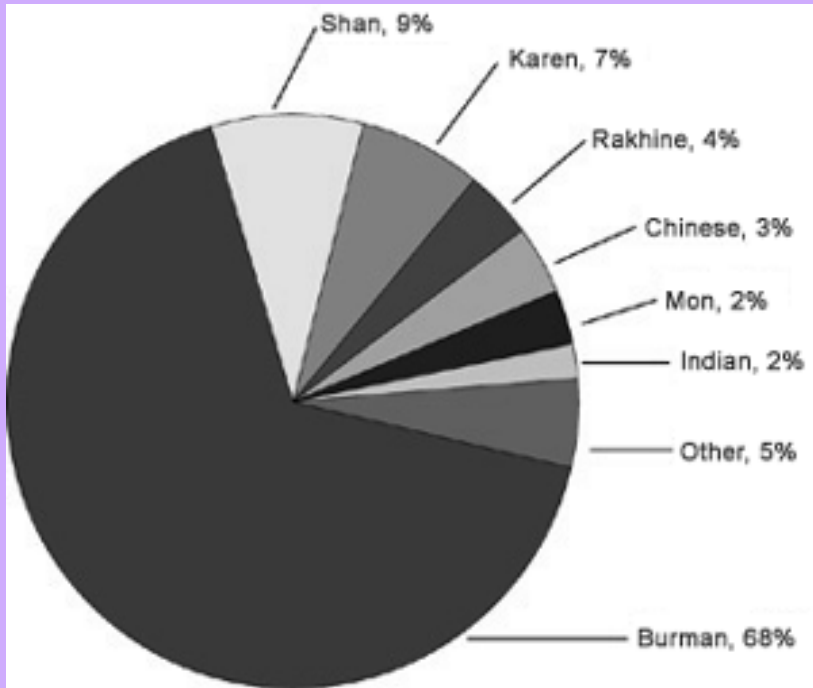


Burma is a beautiful country. But it is also a country that is under one of the most oppressive military regimes in the world.

# Ethnic Groups

Burma is comprised of more than 100 different ethnic groups and sub-groups, making it one of the most ethnically diverse populations in South East Asia.







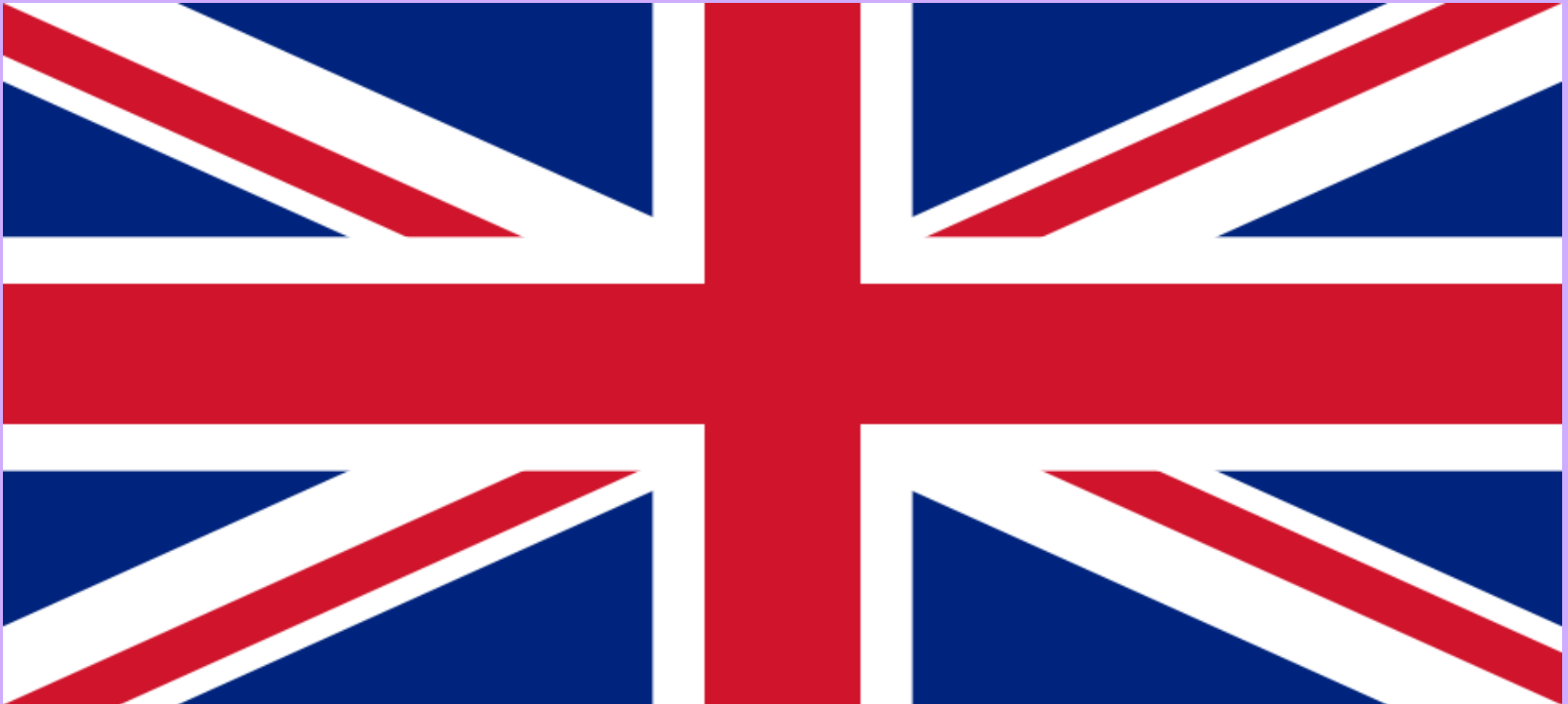
# Timeline

- World War II: Government was overthrown by the Burma Defense Army (BDA) led by General Aung San
- June 1947: General Aung San Assassinated
- January 1948: Burma becomes independent
- April 1962: Coup d' etat by the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP)
- 1987: radio announcement stating all money will “cease to be legal tender”
- 1987: Burma forced to apply as Least Developed Country (LDC)
- March 1988: Fight between students and locals that balloons into demonstrations where students are killed by riot police
- Aug. 8, 1988: Millions of people all over Burma join the demonstrations and the military fires on open crowds
- Aug 26, 1988: Aung San Suu Kyi makes 1<sup>st</sup> public appearance
- Sept. 18, 1988: Military steps in to end the protests, fire onto open crowds
- Sept. 24, 1988: National League for Democracy (NLD) formed with Aung San Suu Kyi as general secretary

**A History  
Of The  
Struggle for Democracy**

# British Rule (1824-1886)

Britain ruled Burma for over 62 years and incorporated it into its Indian Empire. Burma was administered as a province of India until 1937 when it became a self-governing colony; independence from the Commonwealth was attained in 1948.



# Emergence of a Hero



## General Aung San

*“His place in history as the Father of Burmese Independence and national hero will remain unchallenged.”*

# Burma: History



- **1885** Britain gained complete control over Burma
- **1930s** “Thirty-Comrades” drove out British
  - Japanese Occupation
- **1945** Burma aided U.S. & Britain in defeating Japanese (WWII)
- **07.19.47** Aung San & cabinet members assassinated
- **1948** Britain officially granted Burma independence
- **1948-1962** Constitutional Parliament & Democracy (U Nu)
- **1962** Coup d’etat led by Ne Win



On January 27, 1947 Aung San and British Prime Minister Clement Attlee signed an agreement in London guaranteeing Burma's independence within a year. Aung San was responsible for this negotiation and what was to become the country's first taste of political freedom.

# General Aung San

- General in Burma  
Independence Army
- President of Anti-Fascist  
People's Freedom League
- United many ethnic groups
- AFPFL won 196 of 202 seats  
in 1947 election
- Assassinated July 19, 1947,  
before Burma gained freedom
- Remains national hero



# Tragedy Strikes



On July 19, 1947, only months before Burma's independence was to be officially granted, tragedy struck the country with the assassination of Aung San and six other cabinet members during a cabinet meeting. The assassination was supposedly carried out on the orders of a rival politician, U Saw.

Only 32 years of age at the time of his death, Aung San was turned into a martyr, a symbol for a country seeking freedom. Monuments have been erected and streets and parks named after him. He continues to be a national hero despite many efforts by the current government to erase him from Burma's history.



# Independence....

Burma obtained independence on January 4, 1948. For the next 14 years it had a parliamentary and democratic government run mainly by Prime Minister U Nu. Life was looking good but the country was full of political division.

# But not Freedom.

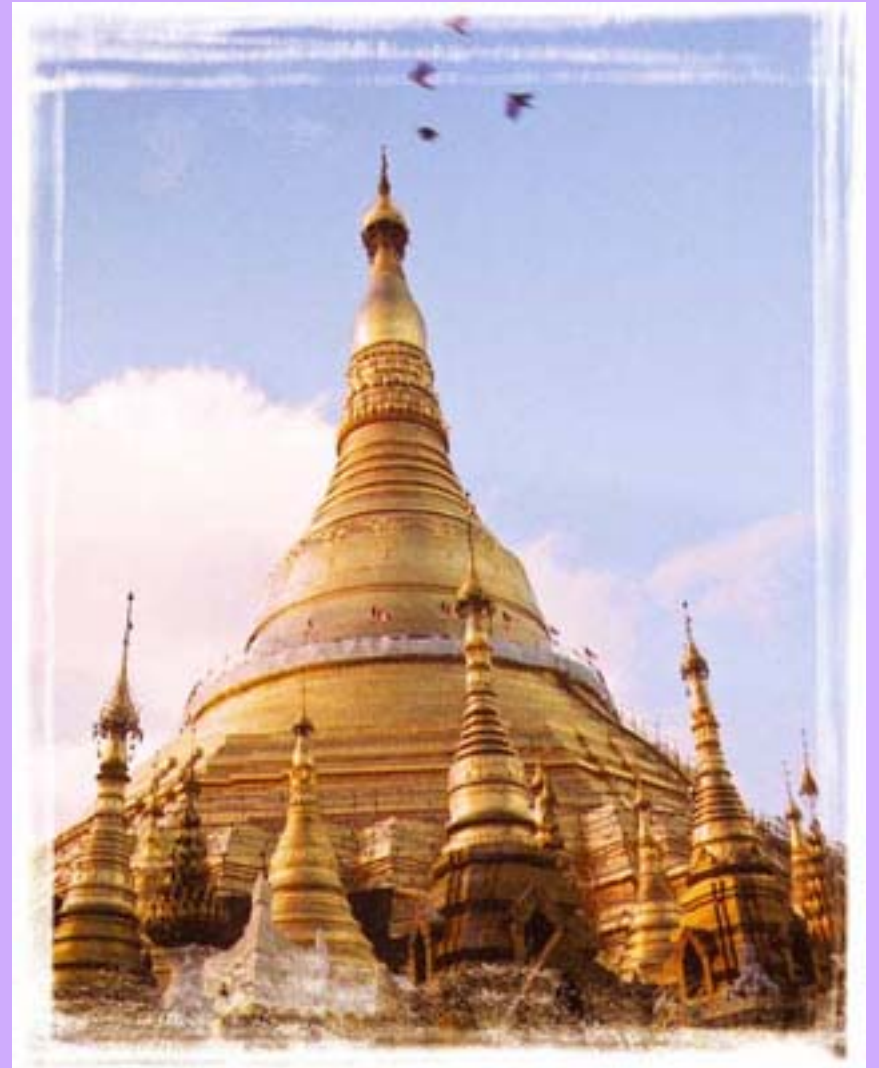
On March 2, 1962 Burma saw a change for the worst. U Nu was overthrown in a coup d' état led by head of the military Ne Win. U Nu and other leading officials were thrown into 'protective custody' in an army camp outside Rangoon.



# The Beginning of the End

Once in power Ne Win made numerous changes:

- Instituted a system involving elements of extreme nationalism, Marxism, and Buddhism.
- Planned to completely isolate Burma from the rest of the world.
- Expelled foreigners.
- Imprisoned political activists.
- Sold off natural resources to pay for military expenses.
- Demonetized the nation's currency, in effect wiping out many families' bank accounts.



# Burma: The Sparks

- Worsening Conditions.
- Oppression & Isolation.
- **03.12.88** Tea Shop Incident
  - Students marched to the People's Council Office
  - Police suppression.
- Pro-Democracy Demonstrations
  - Continually met with harsh military crackdown
- **July 1988** Ne Win Resigns
  - “The Butcher” Sein Lwin replaces him.



# Time For A Change

The deteriorating conditions and pent up anger finally exploded in an uprising on August 8, 1988.

8/8/88



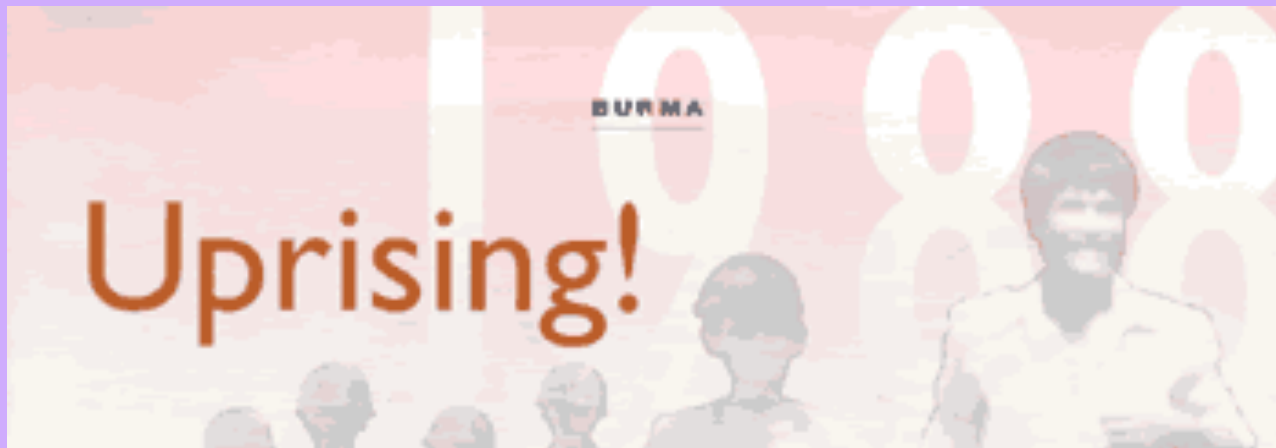
# Burma: 8.8.88



- **8:08 AM** Dockworkers Begin
  - Bundeola Park - City Hall
- Peaceful protests all across Burma
  - Millions of people
- **5:30 PM** Commander Brig. Gen. Myo Nyount
  - Warns the Demonstrators
- **11:30 PM** Armed Soldiers Arrive
- **11:45 PM** Shots Fired Into Crowd
- Continues until 3:00 the next morning
  - August 9th - 11th in Rangoon

# 8/8/88 Massacre

- Demonstrations all over the country
- Buddhist monks carried their alms bowls upside down to symbolise that the whole country was on strike
- Demands were made to restore the democracy that was seen prior to 1962
- Carnival like atmosphere at first
- At 11:30 PM trucks with troops rolled into the city and after two warning shots, started to open fire into the crowd



# Burma: People Power

မိမိတို့တောင်းဆိုတာ

- ၁- လွတ်လပ်စွာ ဆန္ဒထုတ်ဖော်ခွင့်
- ၂- လွတ်လပ်စွာ ပြောဆိုခွင့်၊ အာဏာပိုင်များကို တရားရုံးသို့ တောင်းဆိုခွင့်
- ၃- လွတ်လပ်စွာ စုပေါင်းဆန္ဒထုတ်ဖော်ခွင့်
- ၄- လွတ်လပ်စွာ စည်းရုံးခွင့်

ထိုကြောင့် အာဏာကို ပြန်ပြောင်းပေး  
ပေးရန် အတိတ်ကဲ့သို့ အစောင့်အရှောက် ကျင့်သုံးရန်  
ပြန်ပြောင်းလျက်ရှိကြောင်း

- WE WANT DEMOCRACY
- DOWN WITH TYRANNY
- PEACEFULL DEMONSTRATION
- PEACEFULL RESISTANCE
- DOWN WITH ONE-PARTY
- UNITY & DISCIPLINE
- UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL
- WE CALL FOR STUDENTS' UNION
- CONSIDER STUDENTS' AFFAIRS
- DON'T FORGET COLD BLOODED MURDER OF STUDENTS

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# Burma: People Power





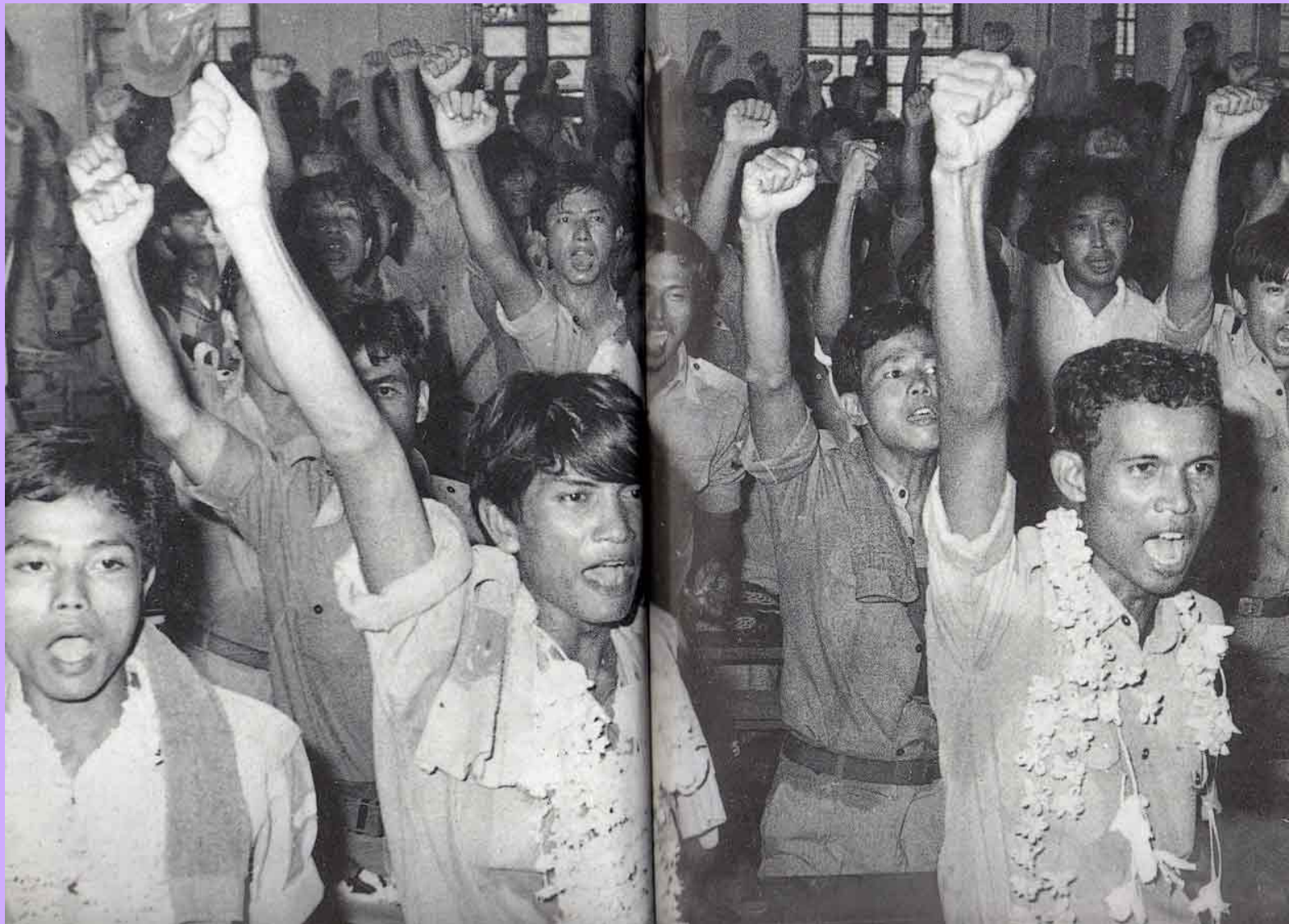


# Rangoon Institute of Technology students demonstrate





Immigration, police and custom officials march



Air force members join the movement  
(*Guardian*, Rangoon)

People's Railroad Police  
demonstrate in Rangoon  
September 1988



Navy









# Monks

# Burma: People Power



# Burma: People Power



# Burma: People Power



Estimates of the number of casualties surrounding the 8-8-88 demonstrations range from hundreds to 10,000. SLORC military authorities put the figures at about 95 people killed and 240 wounded.

# September 18, 1988

- After a month of protesting and demands for a democratic country, the military stepped in again
- More organized than before killing large crowds then disposing in large mass graves
- The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) said it was to “prevent disintegration of the Union”



On September 18, 1988, the military retook power in the country. General Saw Maung repealed the 1974 constitution and established the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), “imposing more Draconian measures than Ne Win had imposed.” Protests were violently broken up. The government announced on the state-run radio that the military had assumed power in people’s interest. Troops went into cities throughout Burma, indiscriminately firing on protestors. Within the first week of securing power, 1,000 students, monks and schoolchildren were killed, and another 500 were killed whilst protesting outside the United States embassy.



# Burma: Aftermath



- **08.13.88** Sein Lwin Resigns
- Daily Democracy Marches - Millions
- **08.26.88** Aung San Suu Kyi
  - Becomes Voice of The Democracy Movement
- **09.18.88** Military Coup d'etat
- Government agrees to elections
- **07.20.1989** Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest
  - Many other opposition figures
- **05.27.1990** National Elections - Landslide Victory-
- National League for democracy won 392 out of 492 contested seats (80.8%) compared to 10 seats by the government
- Government still maintains control

# Emergence of a New Leader



Aung San Suu Kyi

- Daughter of National Hero Aung San
- Burma's voice for the democracy uprising
- Nobel Peace Prize winner
- Placed under house arrest out of fear of what she could accomplish if free
- Won a landslide victory in the 1990 election, but it would not be honored by Ne Win
- Gave her first speech in front of 500,000 people on August 26 at Shwedagon Pagoda

# Burma: Aftermath



# Election Rally



# Aung San Suu Kyi



- Born June 19, 1945
- Rangoon, Burma
- Father General Aung San
- Mother Daw Khin Kyi
- Had two brothers

# DAW KHIN KYI

- Met Aung San as a nurse during WWII
- Became a member of parliament in 1947
- Appointed President of the Women's Association in 1958
- Became Ambassador to India and Nepal in 1960
- Died in December 1988 after having a stroke



# Education



- Educated in Rangoon until the age of 15
- Traveled with mother to India in 1960
- Studied politics at Delhi University
- Received BA in economics, politics, and philosophy from Oxford University
- Goes to New York for graduate study in 1969

# Working for the U.N.

- While in New York she stays with family friend Ma Than E, staff member at the United Nations
- U. Thant of Burma is Secretary-General
- Becomes Assistant Secretary for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions





# Married Life



- January 1, 1972 Aung San Suu Kyi marries Michael Aris
- Moves with Aris to Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan
- Return to England in 1973, for birth of first son, Alexander
- Aris takes position at Oxford University
- In 1977, their second son, Kim, is born
- Begins writing and researching for father's biography, while raising children in England



# Return to Burma



- On March 31, 1988 Suu Kyi was told that her mother had suffered a stroke.
- Flew to Rangoon the next day.
- While caring for her mother, she became aware of the unrest.
- General Ne Win resigned on July 23.
- 8-8-88
- August 15, Suu Kyi took her first political action.
- August 26, first political speech.
- September 18, military established the State Law and Order Restoration Council and announced multi party elections.
- Suu Kyi became the leader of National League for Democracy.

# Leader of NLD

- NLD has a policy of non-violence and civil disobedience.
- Suu Kyi made political tours across the country.
- In 1989, Suu Kyi was banned from running for election.
- On July 20, Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest.
- On May 27, 1990, the NLD won the election with 82% of the seats.
- SLORC refused to recognize the results and arrested many of the people elected.



# House Arrest

- October 12, 1990, Suu Kyi granted Rafto Human Rights Prize.
- July 10, 1991, European Parliament awarded Suu Kyi the Sakharov Human Rights Prize.
- October 14, 1991 Norwegian Nobel Committee announced Suu Kyi was the winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize.
- December 1991, her book, *Freedom from Fear*, was published.
- Briefly released from house arrest in 1995.

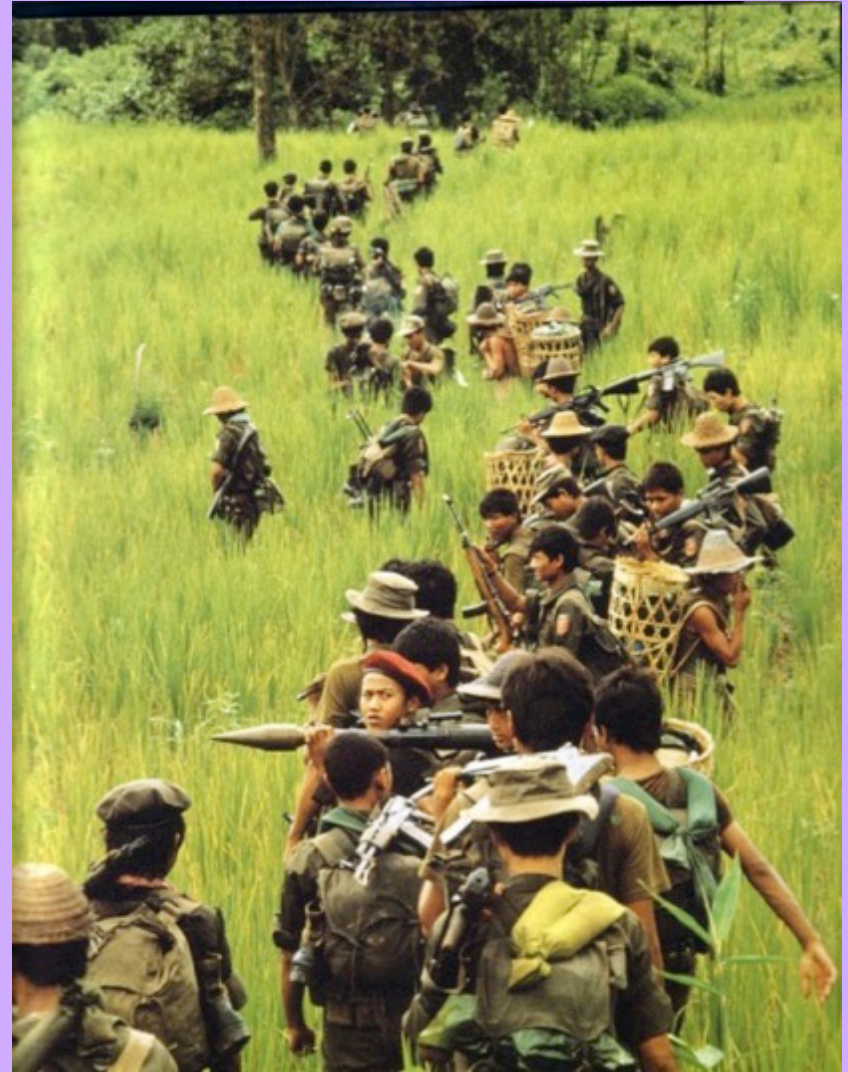


# In and out of House Arrest



- Since 1995, Suu Kyi has been interviewed and has given statements to organizations around the world.
- In 1999, her husband died of prostate cancer in London.
- Michael Aris had petitioned for a visa but was denied.
- Suu Kyi was free to leave Burma but did not, for fear she would never be able to return.
- In 2002, Suu Kyi was arrested again and then re-released, only to be arrested again in 2003.
- She is still under house arrest today.

The military dictatorship negotiated separate peace treaties with each ethnic group, thereby defeating them one by one.



# Government's Strict Actions...



The man on the left was imprisoned for 7 years for telling a joke about the Government

## LINKS TO PICTURES

- P2 - Top (Aung San) [http://nn.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aung\\_San](http://nn.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aung_San)  
Bottom (Ne Win) [http://www.voanews.com/burmese/Archive/images/burmese\\_unewin2\\_150.jpg](http://www.voanews.com/burmese/Archive/images/burmese_unewin2_150.jpg)
- P3 - Two Kids [http://www.uniya.org/research/view\\_burma.html](http://www.uniya.org/research/view_burma.html) (two kids)  
Rice <http://ramblingspoon.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2006/06/Ricefield.jpg>
- P4- Family <http://www.karen.org/refugees/humanrights/Images/woman.gif>
- P5- Sturggling <http://www.cfob.org/images/photos/13.jpg>
- P6- Crowd [http://www.dpns.org/8888\\_imgs/pr\\_sitin.jpg](http://www.dpns.org/8888_imgs/pr_sitin.jpg)
- P7- Kneeling <http://www.uscampaignforburma.org/slideshow/ultrafinal/slide12.jpg>
- P8- Document <http://www.burmaborderben.com/8%208%20manifesto.JPG>
- P9- 4 Pictures [http://www.dpns.org/8888\\_imgs/tank.jpg](http://www.dpns.org/8888_imgs/tank.jpg)  
[http://www.burmaborderben.com/8888\\_belief.gif](http://www.burmaborderben.com/8888_belief.gif)  
[http://peopleinneed.cz/download/pagePhotos/texts\\_531.jpg](http://peopleinneed.cz/download/pagePhotos/texts_531.jpg)  
[http://www.dpns.org/8888\\_imgs/pr\\_match2.jpg](http://www.dpns.org/8888_imgs/pr_match2.jpg)
- P10- Demonstrators [http://www.dpns.org/8888\\_imgs/pr\\_sing.jpg](http://www.dpns.org/8888_imgs/pr_sing.jpg)
- P11- Soldiers [http://www.dpns.org/8888\\_imgs/soldiers.jpg](http://www.dpns.org/8888_imgs/soldiers.jpg)
- P12- Hurt Man <http://www.cfob.org/images/photos/9.jpg>
- P13- Aung San Suu Kyi <http://www.shanland.org/articles/weeklydiary/151/Aung%20San%20Suu%20Kyi.jpg>
- P14- Aung San Suu Kyi <http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/ArakanRally.jpg>



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