

Burma: The Next Killing Fields?

by Alan Clements

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FOREWORD BY HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

This book is dedicated to the thousands of Burmese who have been imprisoned, tortured or executed because they've dared to speak the truth and to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1991, as she continues her courageous "Revolution of the Spirit."

FOREWORD

Recent changes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have provided ample grounds for optimism. Our century has seen a contest between force and regimentation on the one hand, and pluralism, individual rights and democracy on the other. The results of this great conflict are now clear. While no system of government can be perfect, democracy is closest to humanity's essential nature.

In contrast, events in Burma have been cause for great sorrow. Plainly, the greatest source of violence in our world is the existence of large military establishments. The very presence of a powerful military force in a country risks destroying the happiness of its people.

In their elections and the demonstrations that followed, the Burmese people simply expressed their human need for freedom, truth and democracy. The shocking subsequent and continuing brutal suppression of these simple aspirations will ultimately prove counterproductive. Those who practice deception and the use of force may gain considerable success in the short term, but eventually they will be overthrown.

In the past, oppressed people have always resorted to violence in their struggle to be free. In Burma, following in the footsteps of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has led a peaceful and nonviolent campaign for democracy. The practice of nonviolence requires determination, which Suu Kyi and her supporters have shown in full measure.

By its nature, nonviolent protest also depends on patience. In this regard, I pray that those who are struggling for democracy in Burma, despite the brutality of their suppression and the struggle they have before them, always remain peaceful.

Their success will depend on strong international support. Signs of late that this is already

having some effect should encourage further efforts in the United Nations and similar bodies to influence Burma's military rulers. In rallying such support, increasing awareness is crucial. To this end, the work of the Burma Project USA and the publication of Alan Clements' book *Burma: The Next Killing Fields?*, are most valuable.

I offer my prayers, that conflict, killing and oppression will cease and that genuine peace will come to prevail throughout the troubled regions of Southeast Asia.

The Dalai Lama