

## Message to the Reader



Dear Reader:

Once again, another sincere apology for the delay of the July issue.

It was difficult to be away from work, especially when you knew people were expecting you to do your best. But it was more difficult not to leave it for a while, when you knew someone who had been close to you, one who had refused to leave you when you were "eating dust and facing bullets," was dying of a terminal disease.

"King Cobra", who died on 4 August, two and a half months after he was diagnosed with liver cancer, was, like other successful reporters, born for the job. He had a way of coaxing news from sources who were tongue-tied or simply didn't want to talk. When there was some news in the wind, he barely needed prompting from us. He would just chase it like a hound and get it back to you in time.

Moreover, he made friends with people by being a friend to them.

I didn't shed any tears when he passed away, but when I read ex-Beatle Paul McCartney saying of their band: "We're all really the same person. We're just 4 parts of the one," he was certainly expressing the way I felt about King Cobra.

Of course, the thought that my own time was also gradually approaching did flicker into my mind. But, being a fighter all my life, my standing motto being "Have pen, will fight", with or without King Cobra at our side, I'll go on fighting for your right to know till my last breath.

At least I'm sure that's what King Cobra, wherever he is, expects of us.

Mysoong! (Wishing You Progress & Prosperity)

SHAN

S.H.A.N.

## SHAN DIARY

### May - June 2005

#### Think Piece

#### DEMOCRACY

*Even though democracy is their central faith, their dogma even, (the EU and the West) tread softly, very softly, being mindful of the Asean and Chinese dismissal of democracy and human rights as alien.*

Chao Tzang Yawngghwe (1939-2004),  
12 December 2000



*The EU, which supports the territorial integrity of Burma/ Myanmar, is also concerned by the increased tensions involving the nationalities especially in the Shan State and the Karen.*

Press release, Council of the European Union, 17 June 2005.

#### International Relations

##### 3 May

Press Freedom Day and Burma is at the bottom of the list of countries with the least press freedom: 165th place, above North Korea (167th) and under Laos (153rd), Vietnam (161st) and China (162nd). (AFP)

##### 17 May

President Bush renews Burma sanctions that were imposed on 20 May 1997. (Statement)



### 20 May-1 July

Three Pagodas Pass closed by Burmese authorities with only pedestrians being allowed to cross over. (Kao Wao)

### 3 June

Cambodia, North Korea and Burma are lumped together as Asia's worst human trafficking violators in a State Department annual report. (AFP)

### 10 June

Paris-based Financial Action Task Force keeps Burma on a blacklist of countries that fail to cooperate in fighting money laundering.

### 19 June

Irish musician Damien Rice releases Unplayed Piano, a song about one of Ms Suu Kyi's few pleasures under detention until her piano broke down. (Bangkok Post)

### 29 June

Lawsuit against TotalFinaElf brought by 4 Burmese nationals in 2002 for "complicity with the Burmese junta in crimes against humanity in Burma" turned down by the Belgian court of appeal. (RTBF Radio 1)

## Politics

### 1 May

The ENC which currently represents organizations resolves to reconstitute itself based on existing states. (S.H.A.N.)

### 7 May

Three bomb blasts in Rangoon kill at least 11 and injure 162. DVB

says it was able to identify 61 deaths.

### 14-23 May

Nai Htaw Mon succeeds late Nai Htin as New Mon State Party Chairman. (DVB)

### 28 June

Burma launches a new journalism course designed to counter negative reports by foreign media. (Irrawaddy)

## Shans

### 18 May

449 refugees, out of more than 1,800 refugees in Loi Taileng, ordered by the Thai Army to relocate away from the borderline. (The removal takes place 4-7 June)

### 20 May

325 Shan State National Army members from 19th Brigade surrender in Nampawng, Lashio township. (New Light of Myanmar)

### 21 May

Shan State National Army and Shan State Army 'South' announce merger. (Bangkok Post)

### 25 May

A joint declaration by SSA 'South' and SSNA says they support the establishment of a "state-based" federal union. (Statement)

### 18 June

13 Shan groups form Committee Representing Shans. (S.H.A.N.)

### 24 June

Shan Women's Action Network

and Women's League of Burma have jointly been awarded International Women's Rights prize by US-based Peter Gruber Foundation. (DVB)

## Human Rights

### 19 May

Guy Horton, who has been gathering evidence of rights abuses in Burma, leaves for US, UK, Canada and the Netherlands to present a 600-page report: Dying Alive, daring to use the word "genocide". (International Herald Tribune)

### 28 May

DVB's new television service makes its debut.

## Environment

### 30 May

Burma and Thailand sign an MoU on developing hydropower projects on the Salween and the Tenasserim. (Xinhua / Bangkok Post)

## War

### 8 May

Testimony from two Burmese soldiers deserting to the Karenni rebels says the Burma Army is using chemical weapons against armed resistance movements. (Mizzima)

### 25-26 May

More than 200 Chinese-made military trucks crossed the border into Muse. "The largest convoy", according to a long-time China resident. (Irrawaddy)

## THE GOOD

# Shan women honored



Reebok Human Rights prize in May this year. She and 3 Karen women are also among the 1,000 nominees worldwide for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

Her group, the Shan Women's Action Network, was on 24 June announced as a joint winner of the US-based Peter Gruber Foundation's International Women's Rights prize together with the Women's League of Burma, of which SWAN is a member.

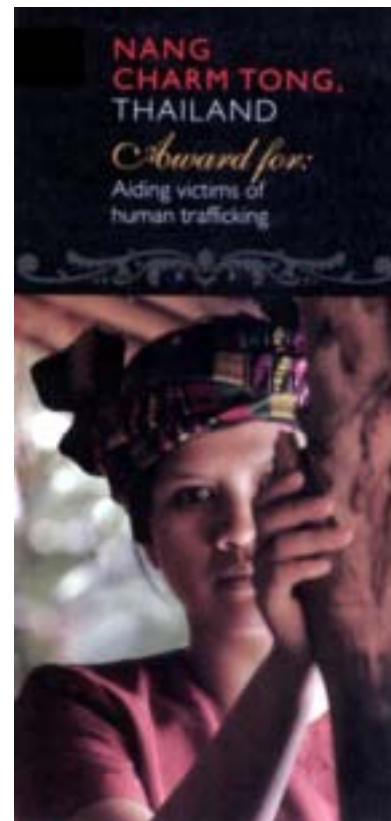
It was a difficult pill to swallow for most Shan men who had risked their lives and broken their backs working for the freedom of their people. But the fact remains that their battles, whether victorious or lost, have not been accorded the honor they deserve.

Instead, it has been the Shan women who have burst open into the arena with their powerful report *License to Rape*, the story of how the Burma Army has been employing sexual violations as a WMD (Weapon of Mass Destruction) in 2002 that has touched the souls of those who had read it. "I read it and put it down," said Kraisak Choonhavan, Chairman of Thailand's Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, to *Khom Chad Leuk Daily*.

"Then I picked it up again to read it. It was a very tormenting experience. I couldn't understand how the rapes could have been committed, how they could have happened." A young student from the United States put it recently: "I never knew people could be that evil."

Shan women representatives were invited everywhere to speak about the report. Whereas the Shan men's military campaigns, despite inflicting heavy casualties on the Burma Army, had not caused the generals in Rangoon to flinch in the least, the women's verbal campaigns shook them to their roots.

Nang Charm Tong, 23, who had been declared one of Marie Claire's Women of the World, late last year, was again awarded a



# Old friends, new alliance



Col Yawdserk

Col Sai Yi

**S**ai Yi and his friend Yawdserk joined the resistance in 1976. Four years later, both became known as intrepid fighters and able commanders.

In 1995, Sai Yi teamed up with Gunyawd who broke away from the Mong Tai Army to form the Shan State National Army and smoke a peace pipe with Rangoon, a move that broke the backbone of MTA and brought it to its knees 6 months later.

In 1996, the two boyhood friends, together with the Shan State Army, another ceasefire

group, were united again under a pact by which the three groups would thenceforth exist under one name, SSA:

If the three had hoped that Rangoon would accept the merger and the SSA ‘South’ would automatically become a ceasefire group thereby bringing the whole Shan State into a peaceful struggle for its rights, they were mistaken. The generals’ threefold reply made certain of that:

- ◆ Each group will be recognized only by its former name

- ◆ No merger will be honored by any official recognition from Rangoon

- ◆ The campaign against Yawdserk will continue until he surrenders

Then on 21 May, 2005, nine years after Rangoon’s rejection, a new merger between the SSA ‘South’ and the SSNA was announced. Ironically, it was Burma’s military rulers themselves who had made the fusion possible, according to the SSNA officers:

- Shan leaders Hkun Htun Oo and Hso Ten were arrested on 8-9 February

- SSNA units were pressured into surrender one by one, beginning with the 11th Brigade in April

- Sai Yi himself was notified by the Burma Army’s regional commander to “make his choice”

Ever a no-nonsense man, Sai Yi took it as a cue and promptly moved out from his Khaihsim headquarters in Hsipaw on 9 April. A month later, he arrived at the SSA ‘South’ main base of Loi Taileng, across from Mae-hongson.

Former name	New designation	Popular Label	Commander
1. Shan State Army	SSA – 1st Region	SSA ‘North’	Sai Nawng (Later Maj-Gen Loi Mao)
2. Shan United Revolutionary Army (breakaway from MTA)	SSA – 2nd Region	SSA ‘South’	Col Yawdserk
3. Shan State National Army	SSA – 3rd Region	SSA ‘Central’	Col Gunyawd (later Col Sai Yi)

## Shans form pact

Another encouraging development was the formation of a committee representing Shans on 18 June among 13 (later 14) Shan groups that include the Shan Democratic Union, Shan State

Army “South”, Shan State National Army and Shan Women’s Action Network, among others.

The meeting also resolved to unite with indigenous non-Shan groups of Shan State and to re-

solve political issues by political means.

The latest reports indicate that the group’s representatives will be meeting with their counterparts from non-Shan groups sometime in August to form a Committee Representing Shan State.

## THE BAD

# Shans thrown out



According to Shakespeare, Julius Caesar was most hurt by the sight of Brutus among his killers. That was exactly how many Shan refugees felt when the order by Thailand’s Third Army came on 18 May 2005 to move out across the border. “It was painful,” said a Shan officer in Loi Taileng, opposite Maehongson, “because it came right after the month-long attack by the Burmese Army and the Wa”.

Loi Taileng, straddling the Thai-Burma border, is a home away from home for 1,819 refugees and some 1,000 fighters from the Shan State Army. What the

Thai Army wanted was for 449 of them who were technically in-

side Thailand to move out.

The Thais had finally extended the deadline from the end of May to the end of June, but the joker was that no provisions would be allowed to go in until all had departed. To the SSA, who were expecting another attack soon from the Burmese-Wa alliance, it had become a matter of life and death. By 7 June, the relocation of 68 households (201 people) was completed, leaving only 248 orphans, who together with their school and boarding houses were allowed to stay until the end of the present academic year. q





**2 May**

A replica of the palace of Shan King Surkhanfah (1311-1364) would be constructed as part of the plan to promote tourism in Ruili, known by Shans as Mongmao, said a Chinese official at a cultural symposium held there. q

**BRIEF**

## Survey on Shan State Independence

On 17 April, a group called the Interim Shan Government declared Independence from Burma. The following survey was conducted at the School for Shan State Nationalities Youth, an education institute set up on the border in 2001.

According to the 1931 census, 47% of the population of Shan State are Shans. However, the Shan State Government

(1948-1962) maintained there were 68% Shans. Burma's current rulers meanwhile have a different figure. The state-run Working Peoples Daily, the predecessor to today's New Light of Myanmar, placed the population of Shans at a mere 38.6%. In the face of these conflicting statements, most dispassionate Burma watchers used the 1931 figures. ▶



**24-26 June**

Chins formally accepted into the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, known as the Shadow UN. Other members from Burma are Karenni, Mon and Shan states. q

**S.H.A.N. survey****21 MAY 2005**

## RESPONDENTS

Shans	- 31
Non-Shans	- 12
Total	- 43

**1. Should the new Shan State be an independent sovereign country?**

<b>Shans</b>	Yes	28	90.4%	<b>Non Shans</b>	Yes	6	50%
	No	1	3.2%		No	6	50%
	Not sure	2	6.4%				

**2. Should the Shan State join the new Federal Union of Burma?**

<b>Shans</b>	Yes	5	16%	<b>Non-Shans</b>	Yes	10	87%
	No	25	81%		No	2	13%
	Undecided	1	3%				

**3. Should non-Shans have a self-administered sub-state of their own in the new Shan State?**

<b>Shans</b>	Yes	10	32%	<b>Non-Shans</b>	Yes	12	100%
	No	20	65%		No	0	0%
	Undecided	1	3%				

**4. Do you think the Shans in the new Shan State will practice discrimination against non-Shans like the Burmans are doing today?**

<b>Shans</b>	Yes	2	6.5%	<b>Non-Shans</b>	Yes	5	42%
	No	29	93.5%		No	-	0%
					Undecided	7	58%

**5. Which language should be official in the new Shan State?**

<b>Shans</b>	Shan	0	64.5%	<b>Non Shans</b>	2	16.7%
	Burmese	.2	6.5%		1	8.3%
	English	20	64.5%		9	75%
	All	3	9.7%		2	16.7%

**6. Do you believe the Shan State should have its own constitution?**

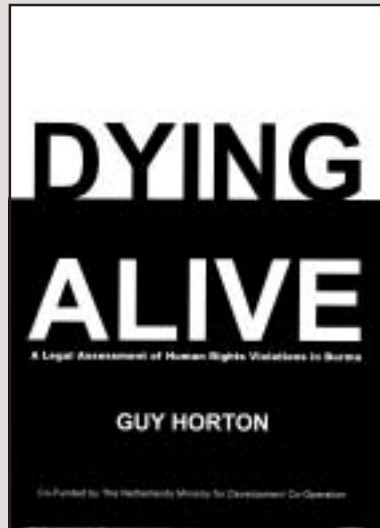
<b>Shans</b>	Yes	31	100%
	No	0	0%
<b>Non-Shans</b>	Yes	11	91.7%
	Undecided	1	8.3%

# The puzzle

On 19 May, a cocky British rights activist Guy Horton, who had been gathering evidence of rights abuses in Burma for 7 years, left for US, UK, Canada and the Netherlands to present his 600-page report: *Dying Alive*. His charge against the regime in Rangoon: Genocide, which is according to the UN, any attempt “to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.”

The 1948 convention says genocide is committed in at least one or more of 5 ways:

- killing members of the group
- genocide-sterilization
- kidnapping children
- causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calcu




lated to bring about its physical destruction

While ordinary non-Burmans have no doubts that Guy Horton is right and should be given all the moral support he needs, activists however have been put in a bind: What if his campaign turns out to be successful and we just stay quiet? What if he fails after we’ve gone flat out for him?

S.H.A.N. had tried to sound out the participants at a community meeting in early July, but nothing came out of it. All appeared they would rather wait for the results of Horton’s trip until they felt ready to commit themselves. q



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