

Appendix 1

Mental culture and politics in myth

Buddhist mental culture did not come to play the role it did in Burmese government without prior foundation in concepts of royal discipline and myth. These practices and their resultant mental processes run through the very core of the Burmese value system and underpin its vital legal and political institutions.

1. Vipassana – a late historical transformation of the institution of sacrifice

Buddhism and its teachings on *vipassana* did not arise until after the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment some time in the fifth century BC. The Buddhist texts share with the earlier Upanishads strong scepticism of the emphasis in the early Vedas on ritual and sacrifice. In the older Vedic teachings, rituals of sacrifice (*yajman*) are seen as efficacious in stabilising cosmological imbalances in the relationship between humans and gods. Such sacrificial rituals have proved essential ingredients in conceptions of authority and government and in the restoration of order. Buddhism, on the other hand, favours the view that 'moral endeavour, contemplation and meditation are more exalted than Vedic ritualism'.¹ In Buddhism the older concepts of sacrifice have been reinterpreted to become activities of mental culture, as well as merit-making,² without, in my view, necessarily foregoing some of the social and political impact of the sacrificial ritual itself. A major difference in this shift, however, is the interiorisation of the cosmology within the person.

Shwe Aung, a Sanskrit scholar and former Director of the Department of Religious Affairs, argued that the Buddha introduced *vipassana* as the final and most efficacious replacement for Vedic sacrifice and austerities.³

First, they put their trust in sacrificial offerings (*yajati* [sacrifice]) (to devas) so as to enable them to build their lives as they wanted. When they became dissatisfied with '*yajati*', they turned to '*tapa*' [austerities] practices. Again, when they became dissatisfied with '*tapa*' too, they took up '*bhavana*' (meditation [mental culture]). As the '*bhavana*' they practised was not '*vipassana bhavana*' ... they could not achieve the object they wanted.⁴

Shwe Aung's front cover encouraging the practice of *vipassana* as a form of self-sacrifice, saying 'daring to sacrifice little by little will ensure good future existences.'

The first phase, namely the transformation from the sacrifice of live animals to the practice of austerities has been described by Heesterman in his *Broken world of sacrifice*. In this, instead of physically killing to sustain the gods with food so that they may provide the cosmology with continuity, sacrifice is instead internalized into a mental construct which transforms the physical killing into a ritual performed by vegetarian Brahmins. These Brahmins are devoted to ascetic practices and turn the fire of sacrifice inwards while engaged in the questions of life and death. This development has been characterised as the 'internalizing and psychologising of Brahmanical sacrifice'.⁵

¹ Goyal (1987:96).

² See Amore, Roy Clayton *The concept of practice and doing merit in early Theravada Buddhism*. (Columbia University Press, 1970).

³ Several Buddhist texts reinterpret these older sacrificial rituals as 'understanding' (*pañña*) in various ways:

Atthaka-nipata (AN), Ch 1, par. i, (1). This suggests that loving-kindness substitutes for Brahmanic sacrifice.

Ambattha Sutta (DN): the Brahmin Ambattha challenges the Buddha by claiming the superiority of Brahmins. The Buddha here forbids activities such as sacrifice of human blood to the gods, fire-oblation, auguries and so forth, which are the 'low' activities practised by Brahmins with no benefit. See also *Brahma-jala Sutta* (Burma 1978:4,55).

Kutadanta Sutta. The Brahmin Kutadanta ('Sharp-toothed') went to see the Buddha for advice on how best to conduct the sacrifice: the Buddha recounted the story of King Mahavijita who conducted his ceremony with no loss of life of sacrificial animals and no hardship on anyone, where everyone cooperated willingly. When Kutadanta asks him if there was any sacrifice which could be made with little trouble, but with fruitful results, the Buddha suggested in order of ranking: first, offering requisites to monks of high morality; second, donating a monastery to the order; third, going to refuge in the three jewels; fourth, observe the five precepts; and finally, sixth and most noble, is to go forth from homelife leading to concentration and the highest knowledge – this sacrifice excels all other sacrifices. Here, wisdom is 'less difficult and less troublesome, but bearing greater fruit and more advantages than the sacrifices conducted by Brahmins.' (Vajirañña 1975:12).

Amagandha-Sutta, Sutta-Nipata (KN). The ascetic Tissa demands Buddha Kassapa (Brahmin by birth) answers to the uncleanness of diet, to which Kassapa says: 'Abstaining from fish or flesh, nakedness, shaving of the head, wearing the hair matted, smearing with ashes, wearing rough deer skins, attending the sacrificial fire, all the various penances performed for immortality, neither incantations, oblations, sacrifices nor observing seasonal feasts, will cleanse a man who has not overcome his doubt.' *Five Nikayas* 1977:195).

Bramana-dhammika Sutta, Sutta-nipata. Here the Buddha condemns sacrificial cults at the heart of Vedic ritual and the taking of life. Ko Lei (1991:99).

⁴ Shwe Aung (1995:39).

⁵ Collins (1982:213).

The second phase, namely the transformation from *tapa* to *bhavana* has been described by Steven Collins as representing yet a further development in the internalization of sacrifice.

The social function of the irrationality of final *nibbana* is, I would suggest, the preservation of the Buddhist tradition as an Indian religious system separate from, and in certain crucial respects opposed to, the Brahmanical one. Just as socially the Buddhist tradition has provided an alternative to the Brahmanical religion of the sacrifice, with its supposed cosmic significance, so, too, psychologically Buddhism has refused to recognize the microcosmic correlated of the sacrifice in Brahmanical thought, the 'self' or 'person' within. The absolute indescribability of *nirvana*, along with its classification as *anatta*, 'not-self', has helped to keep the separation intact, precisely because of the impossibility of mutual discourse.¹

Collins proceeds to argue that the reversal in Buddhism of the sacrificial fire-imagery is linked to the Brahmanic concept of non-self.

The opposition between Buddhist and Brahmanical ideas is expressed clearly and symbolically by the reversal of fire-imagery. For Brahmanical thought, the fire of the cosmos-sacrifice-self is the focus of all value; virtuoso practice to gain 'release' involves burning off the distracting bodily and mental accretions to this inner self by the heat of asceticism (*tapas*). For Buddhism it is the cooling of the fire of craving by the detached practice of the Middle Way between sensual indulgence and asceticism which is the task of the virtuoso search. Thus, both the fire of desire, and the fire of life-in-*samsara*, go out. Throughout Buddhist thought, we must recognize this reaction of opposition to Brahmanical ideas and practices; the denial of self (*atman*) is the most fundamental example, and symbol, of this attitude.²

Because of different ideas about *loka* and sacrifice, there is no longer a need, as in Brahmanism, to undergo the 'three births ritual' of a man symbolic to the sacrifice in order to attain to the sacred *loka*. Here, 'the sacred reality of [Brahmanic] ritual [as gaining entry into ritually sacred *loka*] is replaced by states of consciousness attained temporarily in [mental culture]'.³ Also, the states of consciousness developed temporarily during one's life, are identified with the same states that are attained at the end of one's life. In other words, it is through mental culture, and not sacrifice, that one attains the powers of cosmic travel, and even the attainment of *nibbana* in this very life. The efficacy of ritual generally (including sacrifice) in making the cosmos work is entirely attained in the act of mental culture itself. *Vipassana* extinguishes the fire of craving within in a way that permits a transcending of the entire cosmological system in the attainment of *nibbana*.

What I argue in this book, however, is that we are dealing with a real world and a real political context – we are not just dealing with philosophical texts. Though the mental culture of politics begins with an inward turn, once it becomes externalized through a new political philosophy, the insight contemplative act continues, like the sacrificial act prescribed in the Vedas, to fulfil its original political function as a fire sacrifice responsible for restoring order to the universe.⁴ Furthermore, the continued *samadhic* basis upon which *vipassana* attainments rest have, in themselves, continued political significance since these permit identities to persist in the conventional sense.

The prevailing meaning of the Brahmanic idea of sacrifice in the *Sutta-Pitaka*, the sayings of the Buddha, has been in terms of 'the Great Charity' [*Maha-Dana*], i.e. the gift or oblation to the monastic order. This represents charity from the lay person's point of view as an act difficult to perform. It is difficult to successfully offer 'without regret', 'without attachment' and 'with the right aims'. Often, when Burmese monks preach they will emphasize not so much the social benefits of the gift to the monastic order (how monks will enjoy it, and so on), but more the great mental struggle that a donor must go through if the donation is to be performed with any sense of perfection. In the ritual of the gift, this struggle will include the loving-kindness meditation (*metta-bhavana*) at the water libation ceremony marking the formal relinquishment of the gift, and the subsequent distribution of merit to all planes of existence. This is where Spiro's view of Burmese society, as based on Kammatic Buddhism, fails. Today, in Burma, with the economic circumstances as they are, the donor is aware more than ever before of the difficulties surrounding the successful accomplishment of a donation, and is encouraged to practise mental culture and to reflect on the impermanence of their existence.

Masefield has argued that it is not just the donors who perform a sacrifice, but that his readings of the Buddhist texts support the view that the recipients of charity, namely the Buddha and the Buddhist saints, may themselves also be regarded as representing the sacrifice.⁵ They were for all intents and purposes a particular class of Brahmin who managed to be more responsive to the needs of the people than caste Brahmins.⁶ They perpetuated many Brahmin

¹ Collins (1982:41–84).

² Collins (1982:84).

³ Collins (1982:48).

⁴ *Adittapariyaya-sutta, Samyutta Sutta*. The Fire Sermon was delivered to one thousand ex-fire-worshipping ascetics who had come to be ordained as monks under the Buddha. Here the Buddha explains how all six senses burn with the fire of lust, hate, and ignorance; with the fires of birth, ageing and death; with the fires of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair; that one's consciousness that arises in relation to one's senses also burn. The Buddha then proceeded to say that, 'when a bhikkhu who has practised the dhamma develops Vipassana Insight and perceives that each of the bases is burning, he becomes disenchanted with it ... craving fades away ... with the fading of craving, he is liberated ... when liberated there is knowledge that he is liberated' (Ko Lei 1991:99).

⁵ Masefield (1986:156).

⁶ There is considerable emphasis on elevation to Brahmanic status in the rituals of novitiation of boys into the monastic order,

practices, though with different meanings. He argues that, ‘the *savakasangha* [the congregation of the eight aryas] – and particularly the Buddha – were looked upon as Agni in both his aspects as fire and the sun’; and that the significance of the spontaneous combustibility of food offerings and the bodies of the holy ones, continue to perpetuate this ideal of sacrifice.¹ It should also be noted that the requisite tools for sacrifice (*pa-reik-hka-ra* [ပရိက္ခရာ], P. *parikkhara* [ပရိက္ခရာ]), have in Buddhism been reinterpreted as the monks’ Eight Requisites.

Traditions of mental culture appear to maintain the institutional relevance, or fit into the ritual niche, of sacrificial offerings in the old political traditions, but are now adapted to a new context. Until the last century, Burmese monarchy worked by means of advice from the Brahmanic community specially kept at the court for that purpose. They were specialists in Brahmanic sacrifice that underpinned the continuation and manipulation of the mundane world (*loka*). Mindon attempted to turn his new capital Mandalay into a city state supreme in the Buddhist practice of the forest tradition, which also signalled a change in balance: it represents a relatively greater emphasis on ‘high Buddhism’, in particular *vipassana*, over Brahmanism.² The view that a *vipassana* understanding would contribute to the prosperity of the country was reasserted in the U Nu period. Now once again, it resurfaces in the culture of post-military politics.

That ‘mental culture’ is perceived as aiding the restoration of cosmological and political imbalance may be comprehended if we understand it as a ritual of sacrifice. As Nyanaponika put it:

A man with a meditative mind lives at peace with himself, and with the world. No harm or violence will issue from him. The peace and purity he radiates, will have conquering power and be a blessing to the world. He will be a positive factor in society even if he lives in seclusion and silence.³

It is this politically charged conquering power and intense heat of contemplative silence that Weber misapprehended in his analysis of Buddhism as an essentially world-denying religion.

2. The role of mental culture in the world-origin myth

In Burmese origin myths there is a direct correlation between the deterioration of mental processes and the decline of worlds. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that Buddha history is the history of the cosmology, for cosmologies come into being and end within the period of manifestation of new Buddhas.

The best-known myth, with which most legal and historical works start, concerns that of the origin of our current world, humankind, society and government.⁴ Entry into the Brahma planes of existence, which are the twenty uppermost cosmological planes, is attained by means of *jhana* as the result of concentration meditation (*samatha*), a technique that includes *brahma-vihara* or *byahma-so tayà*. The Byahmanas who live there are presumed to be there exactly because they were successful in their concentration meditation, for ‘without Jhana there is no rebirth in the Brahma-world’.⁵

The top realms (nos 21–31), corresponding to the attainment of the fourth *jhana* up to the fourth formless *jhana*, are not subject to destruction when the world-system is destroyed. The other planes are destroyed by wind (nos 18–20, third *jhana*), by water (nos 14–17, second *jhana*), and by fire (nos 12–13, first *jhana*) respectively. The lower eleven planes, including the realms of the devas and the human realm, are destroyed more readily.

With the longest life-spans in the Byahma realms, within the cosmology *ghanas* provide refuge from disaster. They provide an extension of life to bridge certain events deemed undesirable (e.g. disasters deemed to happen in some realms). They also permit control over rebirth into realms that are desirable (e.g. the appearance of a Buddha). Therefore, these heavens provide a depository for future worlds, with continuity of life and the longest memory. They are a reservoir of occult knowledge. This is why concentration meditators often attempt to tap into these realms for ancient knowledge hoping to gain unusual powers.

According to the world origin myth, the world is destroyed by natural disasters. However, these disasters are brought on directly by a-meritorious and immoral behaviour brought about by the mental defilements of greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*), and craving (*tanha*), which arise when the three ‘Buddha periods’ [စုဒ္ဓ ခေတ်] (of his birth, authority and his sphere) diminish in influence in the world. In Burmese, Buddhas, like kings ‘rule [worlds]’, i.e. it is possible to speak of ‘Buddha rule’ [စုဒ္ဓလင်္ကာဝိတ်] just as it is possible to speak of ‘king’s rule’ [ဘုရင်လင်္ကာဝိတ်]. At this time, human beings begin to live shorter and shorter lives. Fire destroys all that has material manifestation. This link between natural

including the use of the Brahmanic cord (Houtman 1984).

¹ Furthermore, the burying of Buddha and saintly relics under the pagodas are a new claim to a more universal domain than that afforded by ordinary human sacrifice employed in the founding of towns and cities, and pagoda building is a major element in Burmese strategies of warfare and consolidation of power even today.

² On Mindon’s attitudes to Brahmanic notions of auspiciousness see *Manḡala Sutta* in part I of this book.

³ Nyanaponika. ‘Right protection’. *Light of the Dhamma*, II, No 1, November 1953. Cited in King (1964:154).

⁴ See *Manuḡye* 5–8, *Manu Wunana* 4–6, *Hman-nan* 1:29–34; *Mahayazawin* 1:5–14. This account originally occurs in canonical Buddhist texts such as *Aggañña Suttanta* (DN) and, without the social contract, in some of the jatakas. It is also found in Buddhaghosa’s *Visuddhimagga* (Pe Maung Tin 1921–25:480–88).

⁵ *Visuddhimagga* XIII, Pe Maung Tin (pp 481–82)

concentration meditation [သမာဓိ] he travels the world system in a state of *jhana* bliss, which permits him to fly freely from place to place. While travelling like this, he discovers the true laws written on the walls of the universe which he takes back to the people. From these, supposedly, the Burmese laws were derived.

After his renunciation he becomes known in the fullest sense as ‘Lord hermit who is named Manu and who is true son of the king of Byahmas’ [ဗြဟ္မာမင်း၏ သားရင်းဖြစ်သော၊ မနုမည်သောရှင်ရသေ့]. His superior knowledge of the law and his status as ‘son of the king of Byahmas’ is directly related to his attainment of the *jhana*.

Thus, there is a strong correlation between *samatha*, the Byahma realm, memory of the past and legal judgment. This underpins concepts of territorial rights and state authority.

4. Mindlessly spilt honey drop causes destruction of Benaris

If the attainment of a one-pointed mind is the attribute of a Byahmana (both as a heavenly being and as a renouncer), a good king and a good judge, absence of this attribute causes the downfall of entire kingdoms.

In the concluding part of *Manugye*, there is an account of how the kingdom of Benaris fell in an apparently innocent dispute over ‘a single drop of honey’.¹ King Brahmadat, its ruler, had carelessly let a honey drop fall onto a white cloth from his table while in conversation with a Brahmin. Neither the Brahmin nor the king cleaned it up. Starting with a fly eating the honey, it ends up with the dog attacking the cat that ate the rat that ate the lizard that ate the spider that ate the fly. Neither the king nor the Brahmin interceded. Eventually, the owners of the dog and cat came into dispute, causing dissension in the royal family and bringing down the kingdom.

The concept for ‘mindlessly’ here is လှေ့ဖြေ့ ချုပ်သည် which is often used jointly with ‘one-pointed mind’ (*samadhi*),² a characteristic of concentration meditation. Mindlessness is also the opposite of the state of mind of ‘awareness’ and ‘mindfulness’ [သတိ] stressed in the *vipassana* traditions practised by the NLD leadership. In short, a king lacking in the state of mind brought forth by meditative practice can bring down a kingdom.

5. Royal discipline requires mental culture

There is a significant overlap between royal discipline and mental culture. Out of the Ten Royal Duties [W>၎် ဝ>၎်ယုတ်ဝ>၎်အံ၎်ဝ>၎်ကံး ဝ>၎်ဝ>၎်ပျံပျံပျံပျံ : ဝ>၎်ပျံပျံပျံပျံ] there is one in particular that pertains to attainment in mental culture, namely no. 6, ‘austerity’ or *tapas* [တပံ] [C32].³ This practice, observed in particular by the teachers Alara and Udaka of Siddharta as a *bodhisattva* until he found the *vipassana* method to become a Buddha,⁴ is extremely close to the practice of *samatha*, which is similarly defined as suspending the impurities in one's being. Today, these are still practised by hermits who are mythically represented in opposition, or in support of, royal authority.⁵

In Burmese history, kings were commonly conceived of as *bodhisattva* who strive for enlightenment through the attainment of the Ten Perfections (*parami*). In linking kingship with imminent Buddhahood, mental culture has significant political and social implications.

6. The mandala – enlightenment and political structures

Mental culture is conceived of as affecting the course of nature and the political order. The Buddha's attainment of enlightenment had a profound effect on the entire universe, ‘causing all the ten thousand world systems to vibrate and resound’, and as a result of which ‘the whole of the ten thousand world systems reached the height of beauty’, with flowers and fruits growing out of season.⁶

With such great effects on nature, it is no surprise that his enlightenment should also have significant effects on the political order of the kingdom he was in at the time and that of neighbouring kingdoms. As Sarkisyanz has argued, both Buddha and king orient themselves and their powers towards the same ideal cosmological centre.⁷

The great influence of enlightenment on political order is evident from the way enlightenment is brought into Burmese history. After referring to the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment (by means of *vipassana*) the Burmese chronicle *Glass Palace Chronicle* (§35:50, §41:62)⁸ refers to demarcated regions which arose surrounding the place of

¹ *SandMA: ကံး ဝ>၎်ပျံပျံပျံပျံပျံ ဝ>၎်ပျံပျံပျံပျံ* (JBS 1915, V, 1:23). Htin Aung (1962:70) ‘A kingdom lost for a drop of honey’.

² The concept သမာဓိ လှေ့ဖြေ့, which brings the two terms together, really means ‘the ability to control oneself in comportment’ or, as Rhys Davids put it in the Pali dictionary, ‘the faculty of concentration’.

³ The practice of *tapa* [တပံတပံ] is usually translated as ‘austerity’ [ခြံခြံသောအကျင့်]. One who practises it is known as Pali *tapassin* [တပံ °], ‘a practitioner who exercises the torment of the impurities’ [တိလေသာကို ပူပန်စေသောအကျင့်ကိုကျင့်သူ], or a ‘hermit’ [ရသေ့] (Htun Myin 1968:87).

⁴ Shwe Aung (1995:39).

⁵ The hermit is a common theme in Burmese plays in their role opposite the king, but it is also occurs in Ne Win's biography and episodes of U Nu's life as a validation of their rule. Their presence seems to function as an independent and objective confirmation of their mandate to rule.

⁶ Mingun (1990–96,2,1:275)

⁷ Sarkisyanz (1965:82–86).

⁸ For a similar account, see also *Mahayazawin* 46, p 36.

enlightenment: 'Having arrived at this *bodhi mandala*¹ districts and states arose in its circumference' [NkUaPWL ၵ>Yā: Ṇa` YSm ၵMṆZ FṆQṆVZα: ṁMṆ-ṁ ၵSṆ ṁ ၵMṆ, Fṁ ၵAm Qṁ]. Various lists are subsequently given of regions which thus arose, including the sixteen provinces, the twenty-one provinces, the twenty countries, as well as various royal lineages.

That royal chronicles invariably start with events leading up to and including the Buddha's enlightenment. That fact that his enlightenment precedes and gives rise to the structuring of political order is a measure of the importance of enlightenment to royal history as a genre and to political history as a whole.

Mara is conceived of as intent on preventing enlightenment and invading the Bodhi-mandala, but due to the exceptional qualities of the Buddha, he was 'unable to enter the immediate vicinity of the Maha Bodhi Tree (Maha Bodhi *mandala*).² Once his enlightenment was attained, as he himself responded to Mara, '... when I have attained the all-knowing truths, I shall be triumphant over the regions of the world.'³ In this context the enlightened and the right-viewed hold the cosmological centre ground, as opposed to the wrong-viewed adherents of Mara-style intrigues who are forced to occupy the margins in the distribution of power.

The importance of the *mandala* to Burmese conceptions of political domain is underlined by Thahkin Kodawhming who, concerned about the tendency to join with India in the dyarchy question, referred to the positive effects of 'the *mandala* pillar of home rule' [တုန်းရူးဝန်းတိုင်မ ဝိုင်ထားလို့].⁴ This concept was taken up by U Nu who, in his broadcasts in 1948, referred to 'the *mandala* pillar of democracy' [ဒီမိုကရေစီမ ဝိုင်] and to 'the *mandala* of pillar of national unity (harmony)' [ညီညွတ်မ ဝိုင်].⁵

7. Vipassana and the founding of the Burmese State

It is this potent, all-encompassing, transformative effect of the meditative and contemplative mind, that inspired the legend of King Anawratha being moved upon meeting the Mon monk Shin Arahant in 1056, to do two things. First, he used Shin Arahant to introduce Theravada Buddhism to Pagan and purified the 'degenerate' Ari monks, subverting their local authority. Second, he established the first Burmese Buddhist state in which regional spirit cults were made subservient to Sakka, the Buddhist king of the gods. Shin Arahant recommended the building of the Shwezigon Pagoda in which the *nat* statues are represented. The Buddhist pagodas built during this post-conversion period lend Pagan its fame today.

The meeting is described as follows:

Shin Arahant arrived in the vicinity of Pagan and was discovered in his forest dwelling by a hunter. The hunter who had never before seen such a strange creature with a shaven head and a yellow robe thought he was some kind of spirit and took him to the king, Anawratha. Shin Arahant naturally sat down on the throne, as it was the highest seat, and the king thought: 'This man is peaceful, in this man there is the essential thing. He is sitting down on the best seat, surely he must be the best being.' The king asked the visitor to tell him where he came from and was told that he came from the place where the Order lived and that the Buddha was his teacher. Then Shin Arahant gave the king the teaching on mindfulness (*appamada*), teaching him the same doctrine Nigrodha had given Emperor Asoka when he was converted. Shin Arahant then told the monarch that the Buddha had passed into Parinibbana, but that his teaching, the Dhamma, enshrined in the Tipitaka, and the two-fold Sangha consisting of those who possessed absolute knowledge and those who possessed conventional knowledge, remained.⁶

Shin Arahant is alleged to have been a *yahanda*, and so his *vipassana* attainment was supposedly complete. He preached to the citizens of Pagan, and Anawratha left behind clay tablets with images of the Buddha, the king's name and Pali and Sanskrit verses in which he expressed his aspiration, 'through this may I obtain the path to Nibbana when Metteyya is awakened'.

It should not be thought that this is just an ancient myth with no contemporary relevance, for Shwe Aung concludes his book with a long section on the renovation of Htee-ta-hsaung Pagoda at Taung-pya village, near Pagan, where Shin Arahant is thought to have gained *pari-nibbana* as a full *yahanda*. The Pakkoku Sayadaw had made a search for it lasting more than 60 years beginning in 1929, and today Shin Arahant's relics are enshrined in this renovated shrine. Furthermore, there is mention that 'the great ... nationalism and patriotism [that] had developed in the people of Bagan' was 'the result of the teachings and the leadership of Shin Arahant and the samgha'. It was only through Shin Arahant's 'great insight' that Anawratha and he met. Hence Shin Arahant and the Ariya that followed him were 'the

¹ *Bāw-di man-daing* [kUaPWL ၵ>Yā] means four distinct things: (i) the clear ground under the bodhi tree, the best place for enlightenment (B-B translates this into Pali as *KUaPṁ-WL Ṇ*); (ii) 'to have arrived at a clear place by means of the power of enlightened intelligence' [kUaPṁF]; (iii) 'centre of a cosmological and political order' (Htùn Myín 1968:257); (iv) in later canonical and post-canonical literature, 'the spot (or "throne"), on which the Buddha attained enlightenment' (Rhys Davids & Stede 1921–25:491).

² Mingun (1990–96,2,1:218)

³ *Mahavastu*, II, 324: transl. Jones, Vol. II, pp 301f; Sarkisyanz (1965:64).

⁴ လူနဲ့ပွဲခိုးချင်းနဲ့ခါနီး၊ သူရိယမဂ္ဂဇင်း၊ တွဲ ၅၊ မှတ် ၂၊ April 1921, p 6.

⁵ ဦးနု၊ စကားကြီးသုံးခွန်း၊ ပြန်ကြားရေး ဘုရား၊ ၁၉၅၂၊ pp 5, 25.

⁶ *Buddhism in Myanmar, a short history*. Roger Bischoff. Wheel Publication No. 399/401. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

greatest benefactors of the Myanmars'. They literally permitted Myanmar to arise.

8. The powers of the universal monarch

The voluntary contract between the monarch and the people at the beginning of the world supposedly came into conflict with reality when it 'was replaced by the capacity of the king to conquer, coerce and rule'.¹ When the Buddha was asked who was the 'ruler of rulers' he answered that it was *dhamma*.² One who aims to make the *dhamma* the central concept of government, rather than the *thamada*-contract, is characterised as a Universal King, or *set-kyā mìn* (short for *set-kyā-wa-dei Mìn* [A: ၵ[KMṁW>ṁ], from P. *cakkavatin*, 'he who sets rolling (*vatteti*) the Wheel (*cakka*)').

The physical and outward qualities of universal kings are virtually indistinguishable from those of universal Buddhas. In this concept, the cultivation of the ten ethical qualities of the king involved 'a long and strict regimen of deep meditation and intense and constant introspection'. The symbols of the Cakkavartin were acquired 'through a mystic contemplation and communion and the source of all his charismatic power is Dhamma itself'.³ His chief emblem, the wheel, is a mystical symbol likened to the disc of the sun.

In order that it may appear before him a *Cakkavatti* has to keep the *uposatha* (fast and penance) on the full moon day, purify himself and meditate.⁴ It is his personal acquisition and cannot be handed down in succession and it sinks or slips down a little as the king approaches the end of his life.⁵

The notion exists that restoration of political order must precede the advent of the next Buddha. During the life before Gautama attained Buddhahood, he was a universal king.⁶ Many Burmese historical personalities have been proclaimed as, or expressed the desire to be, *cakkavatti* in the past.⁷ It suffices to note here that in the Burmese classification five kinds of *cakkavatti* are recognized. The fifth type concerns those who have attained superior knowledge through *samatha* meditation and 'worldly knowledge' (*loki panna*).

Burmese tradition recognizes these five types of universal king [A: ၵW>ṁWṁṁ] [source: : [k\ṁh WEj\ a: ṁW] as follows:

- i) [ṁ [P A: [Mṁ A universal king who rules by means of forceful weapons [ṁZ: ṁ: ၵ: ၵW>ṁWṁṁ], e.g. atomic weapons in the contemporary era, or King Azathat in the former era [ṁ [P A: [Mṁ.
- ii) [Sṁ [K A: [MṁYeCa] A universal king who rules by means of patronage by the wealthy.
- iii) [ṁ ၵL a A: [MṁYeCa] A universal king such as Thiridhammathawká who has the authority to command Kala Naga Min, the king of the dragons, and Karaweik, the king of the birds.
- iv) [SṁSO A: [MṁYeCa] Universal kings such as Mahathokdaná and Kaleingá Bawdí who have the marks of a universal king on their feet, and govern Yugando mountain up into the five spirit realms.
- v) [ṁRYIA: [MṁYeCa] In ancient writings this is referred a universal king by means of 'traditional skills' [ṁ: RY ṁ MMṁ]. It concerns:
 - a) the skills of transforming [ṁ: ṁZṁRṁkṁ ၵ>ṁ] elements such as lead [ṁ: ṁ], iron [ṁ\ṁ], mercury [Sṁṁ] and copper [K: ṁ] into precious silver and gold alchemic stones by means of the mind [kṁk>WkQaWX PaVizṁWṁṁ Tṁkṁ ၵ>ṁ], or
 - b) the ability to enter the earth [kṁWZṁṁ] and fly in the sky [Wṁ=ṁSṁ], or
 - c) the ability to enter the earth [kṁWZṁṁ] and fly in the sky [Wṁ=ṁSṁ] by means of the powers [MṁQṁṁ] derived from mundane medicine [kZa: ṁSkXa<], such as the wonderful *gahta*, *mandan*, *mantarà*, *in*, *aing*, *hkàhlé*, *lethpwé*. It refers to the collection of mundane *weikza* [kZa: ṁ[ṁ]a] and *maw-hsaya* [kṁWaṁBYa], who can thus make happen what they want, and who thereby become *gandari* universal kings 'known as *thama payàwqá itdí wádúná sekkayaza*' [ṁ\ṁWSkXa< ṁQṁ[ṁ] A: ṁYeCa k: c' <ṁRYIA: ၵW>ṁWṁṁṁ ṁ: ṁ].

9. Burmese identity, nationalism and brahma-vihara (samatha)

There is a confluence between ideas about Burman ethnic identity and appropriate mental culture for Burmese people. For example, dictionary compilers such as Hok Sein put the derivation for both Myanmar [ṁṁṁṁ] and Burma [ṁṁ] as Brahma [ṁṁṁ].⁸ This Brahma should be taken to mean the brahma of the Brahma realms, the highest realms

¹ Gokhale (1994:150).

² *AngN* II, p 403; Gokhale (1994:154n27).

³ *DN* II, p 132; Gokhale (1994:153).

⁴ *DN*, II, p 172

⁵ *DN* III, pp 59–60; Gokhale (1994:115).

⁶ *Maha-sudassana-Suta*, II, 37; II, 42

⁷ Aung San was regarded by Kodawhmaing (1938:205,209,212) as the Red Dragon, and as 'a forerunner of Setkyā-Min. See also Sarkisyanz (1965:178) for an interview with U Kyaw Sein, Burma Historical Commission, 4 Nov 1959. Similarly, Nu was considered by some Burmese to have been a *set-kyā mìn* (Sarkisyanz 1965:59–60; Butwell 1965:73). The following Burmese kings have made explicit claim to be Universal Kings: Anawratha and Kyanzitha refer to themselves as 2b/4b (Luce 1969:56). King Narapatisithu and Alaunghpaya have made implicit claims, e.g. by claiming to rule Jambudipa. Thadombiya of Pagan expressed a desire to become a universal king. See Koenig (1990:71–79) and Aung-Thwin (1985:60–62).

⁸ Hok Sein (1978).

of the cosmology.¹

Myanmar [မြန်မာ] and *Bama* [ဗမာ], the words for Burma, are popularly interpreted as having derived from Brahma [ဗြဟ္မာ]. This has, for example, been entered in the Burmese Encyclopaedia.² It is accepted in numerous books and in particular in ideological and nationalist treatises, for example, on warfare.³ Thahkin Kodawhmaing (Saya Lun) wrote a series of articles entitled ‘A chapter in royal chronicle history’ [ရာဇဝင် အခန်းကဏ္ဍ].⁴ In this he argued that prior to literary history, the Burmese were known in Arakanese history as ‘those who derive from the lineage of the first Brahma nats’.⁵

Brahma has at least three meanings in Burmese Buddhism. First, it is used to designate the realms from which heavenly beings migrated at the beginning of this world-system to become human beings. Second, it designates beings who renounced society into the forest prior to the election of the *thamada*. Third, in Buddhism Brahma is associated with a particular kind of ethics (see the citation from *Dhammapada* below).

In other words, it is a term closely related to the beginnings of human society prior to material differentiation between individuals and groups, and prior to politics. This term in turn, as has already been noted, is closely associated with the attainment of *jhana* through *samatha* meditation and the practice of *byama-so tayà*. These in turn, are associated with the political concept of national unity through harmony [ညီညွတ်ရေး], prior to political differentiation because of greed.

In *Thahkin Tika*, Kodawhmaing furthermore traces the meaning and nature of the Dobama movement in terms of its ultimate referent of Burmese (Bama) as derived from Brahma.⁶ He analyses a whole range of meanings to do with Dobama: the meaning of the Dobama concept, the Dobama song, the meaning of ‘us’ (*dó* တို့), what we call Brahma, ways of reading (pronouncing) Brahma, a question posed by Manle Sayadaw, the reply by (Zedawun?) Mingun Sayadaw, evidence from the Pagan Chronicle on Myanma, the concept of Myanma as referred to by Shin Okkan, the concept Myanmar from the Handbook of Words [ဝေါဟာရတ္ထဝတာသနိကျမ်း], Salin Sayadaw's use of Brahma, the transposition between Bama and Byahma, and about *Bama* as used in *Padasodhana ganthi* [ပဒသောဓနဂ ဝကျမ်း]. He also mentions the Taungphila Sayadaw as having drawn attention to the relationship between Brahma and Bama.

Though modern linguists might deride such popular derivations, we must not forget that this is not a consideration held only by the Burmese, for the languages which had early contact with Burma, such as the Indian and the European romance languages, Burma was commonly referred to as Brahma. Indeed, even today in Hindi, Burma is known as *Brahma-desa*. Though further research is needed to substantiate this, it is likely that, since Portuguese contact with India predates contact with Burma, the Portuguese name for Burma, Brahma, may have been derived from early European contact through the languages of India.⁷

Furthermore, in a letter of 1759 in Dalrymple's *Oriental Repertory* (published 1791–97), the English briefly referred to Bûrghmahs and in the same source in 1767 to the country as Buraghmagh. It is not until Sangermano's time that ‘Burmese’ had come into common usage, which Sangermano nevertheless recognized as a bastardization of its Portuguese equivalent: ‘In fact in their own language their name is not Burmese, which we have borrowed from the Portuguese, but Biamma’.⁸

Hobson & Jobson identify ‘Mran-ma’ and ‘Burma’ as ‘identical with that (*Bram-ma*) by which the first and holy inhabitants of the world are styled in the (Pali) Buddhist scriptures’, and ‘*Brahma-desa* was the term applied to the country by a Singhalese monk’ familiar to the authors of the [Hobson & Jobson] Dictionary who returned to Ceylon.

There is, therefore, no doubt that this etymology was popular, and it permitted a particular conception of Burmese ethnicity. Some have played on this to work on the origins of Burmans.⁹ Thaung Lwin looks at popular

¹ Though many are inconsistent in spelling and it is not always easy to distinguish between the different uses, a broad distinction must be made between: Brahma [ဗြဟ္မ], the deity from whom life originated; the Brahmin officiant, renouncer or monk [ဗြဟ္မဇာတိ], and the higher deities living in the Brahma realms [ဗြဟ္မာ]. In the popular derivation of Burma, we are referring more specifically to the latter use of the term.

² See *MSK* 10:338.

³ e.g. စန်းသမိန်၊ မြန်မာ့သွေး၊ မြန်မာ့ဓား၊ မြန်မာ့စစ်ပညာ။ ရန်ကုန်၊ မျက်နှာ ၁၇။

⁴ In ဗြိတိသျှ မဂ္ဂဇင်း (from January 1927 onwards).

⁵ Thus those who live in Sunaparanta Country, in Tampadipa Country, were known as ‘Brahma-kind-of-people’ because they worshiped the Brahma spirits who derived from the lineage of the Brahma nats living at the beginning of the world. In this former era they were also called ‘Byu’, ‘Pyu’ or ‘Myam-ma – Myan-ma’. That is why in old Arakanese chronicles Burma is referred to as ‘The country of the Eastern Brahmas’ (Myin Hswei 1977:363).

⁶ Kodawhmaing (1938:56–80).

⁷ For over a century between the early 16th and 17th centuries the Burmese were known in Portuguese as ‘Bramas’ or ‘Brahmans’. They were referred to as Bramas in 1538 and 1543 by the Portuguese Gaspar Lendas Correa, who chronicled the history of Portuguese India between 1512 and 1561, and by Diogo de Couto in 1606 in his *Decadas da Asia* (published in instalments between 1602–1645). They were known as Brahmans by Fernam Mendez Pinto in 1639 in his *Peregrinaçao de – por elle escrita* (published in 1653).

⁸ Sangermano (1893: 36); Yule & Burnel (1903:132).

⁹ See in particular Guha (1960:11), who in his poem on Tagaung, the foundation of Burma,

rid of his impurities he is called a 'pabbajita'.

389. One should not strike a brahmana; a brahmana should not get angry with his assailant; it is shameful to get angry with one's assailant.

390. For a brahmana there is not benefit at all, if he does not restrain from anger to which his mind is prone. Inasmuch as the intention to harm is desisted, to that extent dukha ceases.

391. Him I call a brahmana who does no evil in deed or word or thought, who is restrained in these three respects.

392. If from somebody one should learn the Teaching of the Buddha, he should respectfully pay homage to that teacher, as a brahmin worships the sacrificial fire.

393. Not by wearing matted hair, nor by lineage, nor by caste, does one become a brahmana; only he who realises the Truth and the Dhamma is pure; he is a brahmana.

394. O foolish one! What is the use of your wearing matted hair? What is the use of your wearing a garment made of antelope skin? In you, there is a forest (of moral defilements); you can clean yourself only externally.

395. Him I call a brahmana, who wears robes made from rags (picked them up from a dust heap), who is lean with veins standing out, who meditates alone in the forest.

396. I do not call him a brahmana just because he is born from the womb of a brahmana mother. He is just a bhovadi brahmin if he is not free from moral defilements. Him I call a brahmana, who is free from moral defilements and attachments. ...

398. Him I call a brahman, who has cut the strap (of ill will), the thong (of craving) and the cord (of wrong views together with latent defilements), who has lifted the bar that fastens the door (of ignorance), and who knows the Truth.

399. Him I call a brahmana, who, without anger endures abuse, beating and being bound to whom the strength of patience is like the strength of an army.

400. Him I call a brahmana, who is free from anger, who practises austerity, who is virtuous and free from craving, who is controlled in his senses and for whom this body (i.e. existence) is the very last.

401. Him I call a brahmana, who does not cling to sensual pleasures just as water does not cling to a lotus leaf, or the mustard seed to the tip of an awl ...

403. Him I call a brahmana, who is wise and is profound in his knowledge, who knows the right way from the wrong way, and who has attained the highest goal (i.e. arahatship). ...

405. Him I call a brahmana, who has laid aside the use of force towards all beings, the perturbed as well as the unperturbed (i.e. the arahats), and who does not kill or cause others to kill.

406. Him I call a brahmana, who is not hostile to those who are hostile, who is peaceful (i.e., has laid aside the use of force) to those with weapons, and who is without attachment to objects of attachment. ...

408. Him I call a brahmana, who speaks gentle, instructive and true words, and who does not offend anyone by speech.

409. Him I call a brahmana, who, in this world, takes nothing that is not given him, be it long or short, big or small, good or bad ...

414. Him I call a brahmana, who, having traversed this dangerous swamp (of passion), this difficult road (of moral defilements), the ocean of life (samsara), and the darkness of ignorance.

Appendix 2

NLD activists: quotations and criticisms

A. Burmese/Burma

- [A1] I was born Burmese, and I am still Burmese. I have no intention to surrender my citizenship. My husband is of course a foreigner, but because of my situation he is in a pitiful situation. He accepted it now and says it is a noble thing to do for one's own country. Therefore he accepts it that I have to put aside my family responsibilities. (Interview with ASSK, pp 72-75)

See also [C19], [D6], [D7], [E10], [E19], [E32], [G2], [J3], [S1],[Y11], [Y13], [Y1], [ZC1]

B. Practice

- [B1] The greatest threats to global security today come not from the economic deficiencies of the poorest nations but from religious, racial (or tribal) and political dissensions raging in those regions where principles and practices which could reconcile the diverse instincts and aspirations of mankind have been ignored, repressed or distorted. Man-made disasters are made by dominant individuals and cliques which refuse to move beyond the autistic confines of partisan interest. (ASSK 1995:245)

C. Bhavana (mental culture, meditation, contemplation, brahma-vihara, byama-so tayà, samadhi, kammathana, samatha, sati, vipassana)

- [C1] The teachings of Buddhism which delve into the various causes of suffering and greed or lust – the passion for indulging an intemperate appetite – as the first of the Ten Impurities which stand in the way of a tranquil, wholesome state of mind. On the other hand, much value is attached to liberality or generosity, which heads such lists as the Ten Perfections of the Buddha, the Ten Virtues which should be practised and the Ten Duties of Kings. This emphasis on liberality should not be regarded as a facile endorsement of alms-giving based on canny calculation of possible benefits in the way of worldly prestige or other-worldly rewards. It is a recognition of the crucial importance of the liberal, generous spirit as an effective antidote to greed as well as a fount of virtues which engender happiness and harmony. The late Sayadaw Ashin Janaka Bivamsa of the famous Mahagandharun monastery at Amarapura taught that liberality without morality cannot really be pure. An act of charity committed for the sake of earning praise or prestige or a place in a heavenly abode, he held to be tantamount to an act of greed. (ASSK 1995:242)

- [C2] Clearly there is no inherent link between greater prosperity and greater security and peace – or even the expectation of greater peace. Both prosperity and peace are necessary for the happiness of mankind, the one to alleviate suffering, the other to promote tranquillity. Only policies that place equal importance on both will make a truly richer world, one in which men can enjoy *chantha* of the body and of the

mind. The drive for economic progress needs to be tempered with an awareness of the dangers of greed and selfishness which so easily lead to narrowness and inhumanity. If peoples and nations cultivate a generous spirit which welcomes the happiness of others as an enhancement of the happiness of the self, many seemingly insoluble problems would prove less intractable. (ASSK 1995:246-47)

- [C4] 'I set my alarm clock for 4:15,' she said, describing for me a typical day under house arrest. 'But eventually I was used to getting up at that hour, and I woke up on my own. I tidied myself up: you want to feel clean and tidy when you meditate. I sat at the foot of my bed, on the mattress, in the usual position of the half-lotus. I can't manage a full lotus. I practised what we call insight meditation. I concentrated on my breathing.' (Edward Klein in *Vanity Fair*, Oct 1995, pp 44-53 in relation to her own account of the period of house arrest.)

- [C5] The Burmese are early to rise and her day dawned at 4.30 am local time with an hour of meditation, 'part of my spiritual strengthening process. I am very grateful to the Slorc that I was allowed this period in which to practise my meditation,' she says, laughing. (Interview with Steve Weinman, BBC World Services in 'Patience pragmatism pays off for "The Lady".' *Nation*, 01.11.1995).

- [C6] She laughs at the possibility of being re-arrested. 'Well, I can always go back to the meditation I have been practising all these years, and let's hope this time at a higher level' (S. Satyanarayan. 'Suu Kyi rejects idea there are different types of democracy.' *Bangkok Post*, 12.09.1995)

- [C7] Later by the time I got used to it I would get up at 4.30 am, meditated for an hour and listened to the radio for a couple of hours. There were different stations I listened to, like the BBC World Service, The VOA and the DVB. So I started the day with a full grasp of what going on in the world outside. Then I divided up the rest of the day between reading and doing house work. (ASSK interview. 'Democratic movement seem to be stronger'. *The Nation*, 02.08.1995)

- [C8] K: What about the people who were in cells around yours?

WH: As my solitary confinement went on, I witnessed three out of ten people suffer severe mental disorders. They were broken. One tried to kill himself by cutting his wrists, but he was not successful. Another man suffered attacks of paranoia. Whenever I spoke to him, he assumed that I was insulting him or injuring him in some way. Often, we had to maintain total silence so as not to disturb him. If I sang a song, he thought it was intended to harm his life, whether I sang a sad song or joyous song. He didn't have any belief in religion; he didn't have any knowledge or experience [of] solitary confinement. So gradually he went crazy. I could withstand solitary confinement due to reason, plus *meditation*. I always tried to occupy my mind with something sometimes reciting the sutras, sometimes *meditating*, sometimes keeping my consciousness on whatever I

was doing. I had to change the methods frequently to keep my mind sane. Sometimes when I went to sleep, I tried to remember vocabulary from the English language from 'A to Z,' assigning words to the letters in alphabetical order, keeping my mind as a dictionary. Gradually, I could fall asleep.

LK: Otherwise, if your mind wasn't focused on something, there was the danger that ...

WH: The danger of angry feelings about the fate I was suffering, the injustice. I was basically successful in curbing my bad feelings with my *meditations*. Since 1982, I had visited a Buddhist monastery annually during the last two weeks of December. That helped me greatly in dealing with the solitary confinement ...

LK: Can you describe the first thing you did after you were released?

WH: Right after I was released, I had to go for a medical check up. After the third year in the prison, I had suffered high blood pressure, migraines, and a numbness in my legs because of all my *sitting meditation*. When I got up, the blood didn't flow to the left leg; when I exercised, the right side of my body would sweat, but not the left. Since these were such strange symptoms, I consulted a neuro-physician. He said I also had spondylosis of the neck, which means the freezing of vital nerves that control the function of the brain. The stiffness of these nerves caused the migraines. Even when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released I was not feeling well. If I sit on the couch for a half an hour, my leg still acts up. When I stand up my knees don't always work correctly. I have to make a great effort to stretch them and walk properly ([my emphasis] Interview by Leslie Kean with U Win Htein on 9 January 1996, Rangoon. *Burma Debate*, June-July 1996).

- [C9] Just yesterday I was informed that my close friend U Win Htein, ASSK's personal assistant (imprisoned for the second time in May 1996), has been moved from Insein Prison in Rangoon, the Hilton in comparison to the freezing hell realm he is now in 500 miles north of Mandalay. He lives in leg irons 24 hours a day, pounds rock 14 of those hours, has one meal daily of uncooked roots in lukewarm water, with no medicines, blankets or clothing. His wife was allowed one visit and was unable to recognize him. He's severely sick, extremely weak and probably dying, while most likely being tortured beyond the daily horrors. U Win Htein is a beautiful man. Fifty-five years old. Father of five. A devout Buddhist and vipassana meditator with a dharma heart of gold. (Alan Clements. 'Independent essay: appeal to western Buddhists'. *BurmaNet News*, 30.08.1997).

- [C10] The truth and value of this Buddhist concept that Hsayadaw U Pandita took such pains to impress on me became evident during my years of house arrest. Like many of my Buddhist colleagues, I decided to put my time under detention to good use by practising meditation. It was not an easy process. I did not have a teacher and my early attempts were more than a little frustrating. There were days when I found my failure to discipline my mind in accordance with prescribed meditation practices so infuriating I felt I was doing myself more harm than good I think I would have given up for the advice of a famous Buddhist teacher, that whether or not one wanted to practise meditation, one should do so for one's own good (ASSK 1997b:9).

- [C11] In the early morning on the day of my house arrest, a hundred or so armed military personnel surrounded my house. Why they didn't immediately enter the compound I don't know, but those extra hours gave my wife and other family members the time to tear up and flush down the toilet every NLD document, letter, and address that was in my office. I prepared

myself mentally and emotionally for my arrest by sitting in meditation ... (Tin U in ASSK 1997b:215-16)

- [C12] Well, it doesn't come easily but remember that I had already spent five years in solitary prior to my imprisonment by the SLORC.

I can't say that you ever get used to prison but it is something that one does adjust to. It depends on the individual. Some break, while others use the isolation and cruel living standards to their favour. As for me, I never felt the slightest bit bored throughout the time I languished in prison. Even though I was very restricted, I had ways to keep my spirit alive. My hut within the prison compound was completely encircled with barbed wire. I was indoors all the time. And the wire was a constant reminder of how precious freedom was. Like in the Buddha's teachings, obstacles can be seen as advantages; the loss of one's freedom can inspire reflection on the preciousness of freedom. This filled me with joy.

Also, I knew from my years as a practising monk the benefits of *sati* – mindfulness meditation. As you know too, with mindfulness everything you see, hear, taste, think, and smell becomes simply an experience, without anything extra placed upon it. Just phenomena.

So in that way too, the thought of imprisonment, is seen as just a thought. It comes and goes. And without attachment to it there's no problem. It's just a thought. That's all.

... I ... observed the eight Buddhist precepts by not taking any food after midday (ASSK 1997b:217-18).

- [C13] Just do everything you do with mindfulness and there is no room in one's mind for negative thoughts. I approached every day in prison as I did as a monk in the monastery, mindfully. I tried to notice everything that occurred in my mind and body. In this way I could keep my mind free of unobstructive emotions that might otherwise upset me. This is basic dhamma. (Tin U in ASSK 1997b:223)

- [C14] It is ironic to hear the SLORC renovating and promoting Pagan as a tourist destination. The well known behaviour of the generals in renovating and visiting their 'Wish fulfilling Pagodas' in a superstitious attempt to consolidate their power bears a striking resemblance to the behaviour of the kings who originally built much of Pagan. SLORC would like to see itself as emulating the harsh 'golden times' of those ancient kings. The irony is that just as Pagan is now ruined memorial of long dead kings and forgotten empires, so will the SLORC's 'empire' crumble and be forgotten. They would be better off practising vipassana than building up monuments to their ignorance and impermanence for the world to see. (Myint Nain Oo. Sydney, Australia. Guest book on the government Internet home page <http://www.myanmar.com/guest/guest.html>)

- [C15] If they have some disease, they should be careful of what they eat. They must observe do's and don'ts. They should exercise daily. If they mope around, feeling anxious about the wife, missing the sister-in-law or mother-in-law or wanting democracy or hoping for amnesty, they can go crazy and face release warrant or order read to them.

An example: When we were in prison, we did not have as much freedom as the bad-hat. We were kept in separate brick cells. Inmates are kept there for security or as a punishment or for their notoriety. There were inmates who had been in there for over decades. They got up early. They took exercise in the morning and evening. *They practised meditation*. They had regular meals. They managed to go to sleep at bed time.

They were so healthy that they could be said to thrive well with prison. The bad-hat must have died because of destiny, as a retribution. He knew he had a disease. He took medicines brought in or given at prison. Yet, he was reckless with food and

lazy and sought luxury so it was not strange that he met his fate thus. There was mumbling to other inmates that he could not sleep well at night. (Byatti. 'Will merits be shared only when democracy is obtained?' *The Light of Burma*, 15.07.1996)

- [C16] Although Buddhism is the principal religion, religious worship is free. Myanmar is one of the few countries remaining that practise Theravada Buddhism in its purest form; and is presently the centre for the propagation of this Buddhist sect. Many devotees, converts, religious scholars from around the globe converge on Myanmar to study, to meditate to don the robes and worship at the world renowned meditation and teaching establishments. Many ancient sacred pagodas and shrines exist all over the country, each with its unique history and legend. Every sacred pagoda has its day of commemoration, when worship is intermingled with festivities and trade; this attracts many pilgrims from all walks of life, thus pilgrimage tours are the main form of local tourism ...

In recognition of its rich heritage in history, culture, traditions and natural beauty, Myanmar was awarded the 'Gulliver de la Revelation de L'Anee' award at the 'Salon Mondial du Tourisme' an international tourism fair held in Paris in April, 1996. Likewise, due recognition was accorded to Myanmar at the I.T.B. World Tourism Fair held in March 1996. ('Myanmar – the land and its people'. *IS*, 19.08.1997.)

- [C17] ANNCR: And what about Buddhism. How important is Buddhism to you ?

ASSK: It is very important. As I mentioned just now, meditation means a great deal to me during my years under house arrest. Buddhist meditation, I think is very important, because it teaches you some awareness and the self discipline. (Live interview with ASSK on ABC Radio National Australia, AM-729, 06.06.1996, 10:15 p.m.)

- [C18] AC: How did this repressive ban of generals – SLORC – emerge from the mystical parenting of an ancient Buddhist culture?

ASSK: Well, one might as well ask how the Khmer Rouge emerged out of Cambodia. It does not mean that just because you have a good, caring religion, everybody practises it. A lot of people give lip-service to their religion. They can recite the prayers, attend the ceremonies, perform all the rites, but they may not really absorb anything into their hearts. You must have known people who meditated not just for days, but for months, even for years, but whose attitudes towards the world did not substantially change, or whose attitudes never changed ... (ASSK 1997b:163).

- [C19] ... In all honesty, I think the SLORC generals should lay down all their weapons just for ten days and undertake a period of *vipassana* meditation practice under a competent Sayadaw [Senior monk]. If their meditation is developing nicely then I think they should extend this practice indefinitely. I think the whole country would applaud them for this noble behaviour. In this way, the meditation practice will automatically reveal to them, by themselves, without anyone's help, their true inner state of being. All Burmese will understand this. They can foster *metta* in this way ...

... it is possible they might change, and then we might be able to see some redeeming qualities in them. But I still think they should meditate first. That may hasten the process. People are suffering. (U Tin U in ASSK 1997b:224).

- [C20] The situation eased sufficiently to enable the government to breathe freely. Cabinet members meeting in early June heard the prime minister announce: 'My friends, I go to the Meditation Centre tomorrow. I have a vow to keep to attain the thin-khar-ru-pek-kha nyan [သင်္ခါရဝတ္ထုညွှန်]. Until then do not send for me, even if the whole country is enveloped in

flames. If there are fires, you must put them out yourselves.'

Fortunately, however, during the period of Thakin Nu's meditation no situation that could be called alarming arose in any part of the country. Thakin Nu fulfilled his vow on 20 July (Nu about himself in Nu 1965:195,198-199).

- [C21] It is at the request of the King himself, who wished to have a work written on royal discipline and mental culture (B. ဘဝဓရာ, P. *bhavana*). The good king noted that, though previous writers wrote on discipline of royalty, as they have tended to lack deference to and profundity in the Buddhist truths (B. ဓမ္မ, P. *dhamma*), these tended to be materialist in orientation, so that following them is like eating curry without salt by which one can never feel contented. (Nyei-yá 1917:9-10).

- [C22] UTU: Totalitarianism is a system based on fear, terror and violence. If one lives under such a system long enough one becomes a part of it, often unknowingly. Fear is insidious. And from fear one easily and most often unconsciously adapts oneself to fear as a way of life, as a way of being. As Daw ASSK has said, 'Fear is a habit'. Of course, as a practitioner of meditation, I have seen that habits can be broken in any number of ways. Perhaps the most important way to break the habit of insincerity is to be in association with sincere people ... (ASSK 1997b:228).

- [C23] ASSK: ... I suppose one seeks greatness through taming one's passions. And isn't there a saying that 'it is far more difficult to conquer yourself than to conquer the rest of the world'? So, I think the taming of one's own passions, in the Buddhist way of thinking, is the chief way to greatness, no matter what the circumstances may be. For example, a lot of our people [political prisoners] meditate when they're in prison, partly because they have the time, and partly because it's a very sensible thing to do. That is to say that if you have no contact with the outside world, and you can't do anything for it, then you do what you can with the world inside you in order to bring it under proper control. (ASSK 1997b:162) (see also [R7])

- [C24] So I gritted my teeth and kept at it, often rather glumly. Then my husband gave me a copy of Hsayadaw U Pandita's book, *In this very life: the liberation teachings of the Buddha*.

By studying this book carefully, I learned how to overcome difficulties of meditation and realise its benefits. I learned how practising meditation led to increased mindfulness in everyday life, and again and again. I recalled the Hsayadaw's words on the importance of *sati* with appreciation and gratitude. (ibid)

- [C25] ASSK: ... I always quote something that Karl Popper said when he was asked, 'Do you believe in evil?' He said, 'No ... but I believe in stupidity.' And I think this is very near to the Buddhist position. I don't think there is a word for 'evil' as such, in Buddhism, is there?

I have not come across [the concept 'evil' in Buddhism the way it exists in Christianity] either. But of course, we talk of greed, anger and ignorance. That's stupidity, isn't it? Ignorance is stupidity. There's also something very stupid about greed. Greed is very short-sighted. Anger also. And short-sightedness is stupidity. I've always said that one of my greatest weaknesses is having a short temper. I tend to get angry quite quickly. This is a lack of ability to raise yourself above the immediate situation. This is where I have found that meditation helps – it gives you a sense of awareness that helps you to observe and control your feelings. This feeling which is so destructive is all tied up with ignorance. (ASSK 1997b:37)

- [C26] AC: Was there any period during your detention that you went into a more intensive period of meditation practice? Say for a few weeks or months, perhaps longer.

ASSK: No. But there were times when I did more meditation

because I was getting better at it. I think this is the same with all those who meditate. Once you have discovered the joys of meditation as it were, you do tend to spend longer periods at it. (ASSK 1997b:106)

- [C27] AC: May I ask what were the joys you discovered?
ASSK: The states I went through are the ones that Sayadaw U Pandita described in his book, *In This Very Life*. I'm just like any other meditator – nothing out of the ordinary. (ASSK 1997b:106; Pandita 1992:269-73).
- [C28] ASSK: The main reason why I meditate is the satisfaction that I derive from the knowledge that I am doing what I think I should do, that is, to try to develop awareness as a step towards understanding *anicca* as an experience. I have very ordinary attitudes towards life. If I think there is something I should do in the name of justice or in the name of love, then I'll do it. The motivation is its own reward. (ASSK 1997b:60)
- [C29] ASSK: It has been a help. But I have to go back to my parents and the way I was brought up and taught. My mother always emphasised honesty and integrity. It wasn't just that she herself was honest and incorruptible but she was also upholding my father's values. So it does go back a lot to nurture. It's not that I didn't know these things before I started meditating. Meditation has helped me to uphold the values that I've always been taught since I was a child. (ASSK 1997b:65)
- [C30] AC: Did they even bother with a trial? [in relation to U Kyi Maung's trial]
UKM: Oh, of course. That's just where the party begins. Everyone was brought to court, charged and sentenced. Mind you, they don't just go through the motions. They take their non-judicial system quite seriously. They paraded me before some brass with seventeen others; all were chained together except me, with handcuffs no less. In the party were engineers, lawyers, artists – democracy folds. Then a SLORC superstar witness stood up and said, 'We raided the NLD headquarters some time ago and seized this document.' Ironically, it was an excerpt from a small booklet outlining the negotiating principles of how to achieve mutual agreement between opponents. They bungled through a stream of witnesses – policemen and other MI goons – trustworthy types. By this time I was getting a bit bored so I asked the judge, 'Would you allow me to cross-question them?' The judge was not the least bit amused. He snarled at me like I had spit on him. So I sat down and smiled. He asked me, 'Are you guilty or not guilty?' 'Not guilty,' I replied. One by one we pleaded 'Not guilty'. One by one each of us was told to stand up to be sentenced. One by one the SLORC judge gave us ten years for those lined up in front and seven years for those behind. Then I was whisked away to my solitary abode to continue the struggle from within. (ASSK 1997b:178)
- [C31] Q: What kind of meditation are you practising?
A: I'm using vipassana, or awareness meditation. It has taught me a sense of awareness. That's very important. It's what keeps you in check. It keeps you from going astray. Or when you do, you don't do it again ...
Q: What do you do to relax?
A: I exercise regularly, about 20 minutes a day, on an exercise machine my husband gave me. It's for my back actually. During house arrest, I sat sewing and reading too much and developed back injuries. Now, they no longer trouble me. I also meditate an hour every day.
Q: Meditation is extremely difficult.
A: Keep practising. It's difficult at first. I was so frustrated that I wanted to cry. I didn't want to go on. But I read the advice of a meditation master, that meditation is what you must do whether you like it or not. So I gritted my teeth and did it.
Q: It gets easier now?

A: It's never what you call easy. It's never like sitting there doing nothing. It's never like that. Well, it's not meant to be easy. (Interview with ASSK by Sanitsuda Ekachai. 'The Lady of Burma'. *The Bangkok Post*, 19.06.1998).

- [C32] The duty of austerity (*tapa*) enjoins the king to adopt simple habits, to develop self-control and to practise spiritual discipline. The self-indulgent ruler who enjoys an extravagant lifestyle and ignores the spiritual need of austerity was no more acceptable at the time of the *Mahasammata* than he would be in Burma today. (ASSK 1991:172)
- [C33] Meditating develops a sense of awareness and that means better control of your emotions ... By nature I'm a disciplined person so it became very easy for me to develop a stringent routine. (ASSK in Victor 1998:107-8)
See also [E4], [J3], [R10], [S7]

D. Brahma-vihara (divine abidings)

- [D1] Loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, Buddhists see as 'divine' states of mind which help to alleviate suffering and to spread happiness among all beings. The greatest obstacle to these noble emotions is not so much hatred, anger or ill will as the rigid mental state that comes of a prolonged and unwavering concentration on narrow self-interest. Hatred, anger or ill will that arises from wrongs suffered, from misunderstanding or from fear and envy may yet be appeased if there is sufficient generosity of spirit to permit forbearance, forgiveness and reconciliation. But it would be impossible to maintain or restore harmony when contention is rooted in the visceral inability of protagonists to concede that the other party has an equal claim to justice, sympathy and consideration. Hardness, selfishness and narrowness belong with greed, just as kindness, understanding and vision belong with true generosity. (ASSK 1995:242-43)
- [D2] What does Brahma Vihara mean? It simply means living together with Brahmas. It can also be interpreted as noble living. There are four Bhavanas [meditation] which can bring about noble living. (Nu 1983a:40) (Of these four (loving-kindness, compassion, happiness and equanimity) Nu was at that time mainly interested in loving-kindness (*P metta bhavana*))
- [D3] ALAN CLEMENTS: Just how far do your Buddhist roots go.
U TIN U: From the time of my birth my parents were devout Buddhists and they would bring me to the village monastery quite often. I was, I think, around eight years old when the abbot taught me the basics about Buddhism. And I still remember how much he stressed the four *brahma viharas* – the qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. My life began in the sweet environment of *dhamma*. (ASSK 1997b:206)
- [D3] His Majesty's desires – quickly they shall be fulfilled. When raiding enemies come up to destroy Pagan, and all four castes of people living there are borne off captive downstream and go to other countries, by the strength, lift and energy of the king, swiftly shall they ascend upstream and take their solace in Pagan again. Of those torn from their dear ones, of those who were sick at heart, by a course of benefits, with water of compassion, with loving-kindness which is even as a hand, he shall wipe their tears, he shall wash away their snot. With his right hand rice and bread, with his left hand ornaments and apparel, he shall give to all his people. Like children resting in their mother's bosom, so shall the king keep watch over them and help them. (About Kyanzitha in Luce 1969,1:47-48)
- [D4] I sincerely hope that she [ASSK] walks on well with loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity,

principles taught by the Buddha, which the majority of the people of Myanmar appreciate.

These principles are known as the Brahma Viharas, the Divine Abidings and have been principles the people of Myanmar have followed for centuries. If Suu Kyi and the members of SLORC abide by the principle of the Buddha's teachings and solve their problems, then they will succeed in building a democracy fit for Myanmar, and peace and stability will be restored to the land. (Rewatta Dhamma)

- [D5] Also at the interview, Suu Kyi called on the Thai government to help the Burmese refugees and migrant workers who were in Thailand.

She said that while she understood Thailand was facing an economic crisis, she hoped that Thais, as Buddhists, should be able to demonstrate 'loving kindness and compassion.'

'It is very easy to be compassionate and kind when things are going well, but it is when things are not going well for you that your kindness and compassion are really valuable. If you have a lot to eat, it doesn't matter much if you toss a cake for somebody, but if you are prepared to share your last bowl of rice with somebody, that is very kind and compassionate,' she said.

I don't think that Thailand is in a state that people are being forced to share their last bowl of rice with the refugees, so I would like to appeal to the Thai government to do what they can to alleviate their suffering, and if they themselves cannot do it, to allow those who are prepared to help the refugees, such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the NGOs. (Steven Gan. 'Burmese Nobel laureate keeps all options open.' *The Nation*, 16.02.1998.)

- [D6] Engaged Buddhism is active compassion or active *metta*. It's not just sitting there passively saying, 'I feel sorry for them.' It means doing something about the situation by bringing whatever relief you can to those who need it the most, by caring for them, by doing what you can to help others.

Of course, the 'sending of loving-kindness' is very much a part of our Burmese Buddhist training. But in addition to that we have got to do more to express our *metta* and to show our compassion. And there are so many ways of doing it. For example, when the Buddha tried to stop two sides from fighting each other, he went out and stood between them. They would have had to injure him first before they could hurt each other. So he was defending both sides. As well as protecting others at the sacrifice of his own safety.

In Burma today, many people are afraid to visit families of political prisoners in case they too are called in by the authorities and harassed. Now, you could show active compassion by coming to the families or political prisoners and offering them practical help and by surrounding them with love, compassion and moral support. This is what we are encouraging. (ASSK 1997a:18)

- [D7] AC: What are the most important qualities of Burmese culture you wish to preserve?

ASSK: The Buddhist values of loving-kindness and compassion. A respect for education. (ASSK 1997b:56)

- [D8] We, the working people of the national races of the Union of Burma believe that man will never be set free from social evils as long as there persist pernicious economic systems which allow covetous men who are devoid of *kindness* and *compassion* to impose their designs on the unassuming majority by exploiting human weakness; that only when the pernicious systems characterised by exploitation of man by man and unjust pursuit of wealth are brought to an end and a socialist economic system based on justice is established in the Union of Burma will all the national races be emancipated from the social ills which flow from man's evil influence and rise to a happy stage of social

development where affluence and human values flower. (*System of Correlation of Man and his Environment*) [my emphasis]

- [D9] These things are happening because there is not enough active compassion. There is a very direct link between love and fear. It reminds me of the biblical quotation, that 'perfect love casts out fear'. I've often thought that this is a very Buddhist attitude. 'Perfect love' should be *metta* which is not selfish or attached love. In the *Metta Sutra* [a discourse by the Buddha] we have the phrase 'like a mother caring for her only child'. That's true *metta*. A mother's courage to sacrifice herself comes out of her love for her child. And I think we need a lot more of this kind of love around the place. (ASSK 1997b:18)

- [D10] AC: Your colleagues have made it perfectly clear to me that SLORC's disinterest in talking with you and the NLD is unequivocally rooted in fear. They've told me that it's their fear of losing power which translates down into a fear of 'losing their security – property, wealth, privilege and status'. They also said that 'they fear for the safety of their families'. And at the root of it all is their 'fear for retribution'. You continually encourage the powerless in your country to rise up against the injustices, but may I ask you for your views on SLORC having the courage to overcome their fears?

ASSK: In order to overcome your own fears you have to start first by showing compassion to others. Once you have started treating people with compassion, kindness and understanding, then your fears dissipate. It's that straightforward. (ASSK 1997b:135)

- [D11] AC: What is the way to activate that compassion that you speak of?

ASSK: Sometimes, of course, it's not by activating compassion that you make people change. Sometimes people change because they find that there's no other way possible for their own good. When you take the old government in South Africa, the Latin-American military dictatorships, and other authoritarian governments in Eastern Europe, I think they accepted change because they realized that it was inevitable and it was best for them to go along with it. But what I'm speaking about is the real change that comes from inside through learning the value of compassion, justice and love. (ASSK 1997b:136)

- [D12] Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand, known as one of Asia's leading social thinkers, describes the 'spirit of Buddhist development' as one 'where the inner strength must be cultivated, along with compassion and loving kindness'. He sees the goals of Buddhist development as 'equality, love, freedom and liberation' and goes on to say that:

... the means for achieving these lie within the grasp of any community from a village to a nation – once its members begin the process of reducing selfishness. To do so, two realisations are necessary: an inner realisation concerning greed, hatred and delusion, and an outer realisation concerning the impact these tendencies have on society and the planet ...

The qualities mentioned, both positive and negative, are not exclusive to Buddhist societies. It can be said that behind the materialism of developed countries lie greed, hatred and delusion. But there is also much of inner strength, compassion, loving kindness and strong support for equality and freedom to be found in these countries. (ASSK 04.01.1998)

- [D13] Buddhists speak of the four 'heavenly abodes' or divine states of mind: *metta* (loving kindness), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (sympathetic joy) and *upekkha* (equanimity). A wise colleague once remarked to me that *upekkha* is well-nigh impossible for most ordinary beings; therefore we should concentrate on cultivating loving kindness and compassion, and sympathetic joy would naturally follow. (ASSK 04.01.98)

• [D14] Paradise on earth is a concept which is outmoded and few people believe in it any more. But we can certainly seek to make our planet a better, happier home for all of us by constructing the heavenly abodes of love and compassion in our hearts. Beginning with this inner development we can go on to the development of the external world with courage and wisdom. (ASSK 04.01.98)

• [D15] Once during my years of house arrest, one of the people who were – shall we say, ‘taking care of me’? – said in an accusing tone that I was always ‘on the side of the people’. Yes, I said, that was so, because I would always stand by those who were weaker; they were the ones who needed support. But, came the query, what if the weaker side were in the wrong? In that case, I replied, I would try to correct them with metta. The only response to this was a somewhat pained smile. But later I asked myself what one would do if metta did not succeed in correcting those who were weak but quite patently in the wrong. The conclusion at which I arrived was that one would have to work at perfecting one’s metta because perfect metta cannot fail.

But then what about self-sacrifice which demands that one puts others before oneself? The work of relief and development agencies often involves a certain degree of self-sacrifice. This is where compassion, the second of the heavenly abodes, comes in. What causes men and women to leave comfortable homes and give up lucrative positions to go out to bleak, even devastated lands for the sake of bringing relief to peoples of an alien race and creed?

The motivating factor is surely compassion. (ASSK 04.01.1998)

• [D16] The fruit of successful development projects should be the greater happiness of the beneficiaries and the reward for those who planned and implemented the projects should be mudita that rejoices in the good fortune of others, free from envy or ill will.

Fundamental to the kind of development that enhances the quality of life is justice. If there is true loving kindness that regards all beings with equal benevolence, and there is compassion balanced by wisdom, justice will surely not be lacking. And it will be the best kind of justice, that which is tempered by gentle mercy.

There are peoples in East as in the West who think the worth of a society is measured by its material wealth and by impressive figures of growth, ignoring the injustices and the pain that might lie behind them. Then there are those who believe that development must be measured in terms of human happiness, of peace within the community and of harmony with the environment. And so we come back to loving kindness and Compassion. (ASSK 04.01.1998)

• [D17] His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is surely one of the leading authorities on, and practitioners of, loving kindness in our world today. He teaches us that:

... we are not lacking in terms of the development of science and technology; still, we lack something here in the heart – real inner warm feeling. A good heart is needed ... The problems human society is facing in terms of economic development, the crisis of energy, the tension between the poor and rich nations, and many geopolitical problems can be solved if we understand each others’ fundamental humanity, respect each other’s rights, share each other’s problems and sufferings, and then make Joint effort ...

Things and events depend heavily on motivation. A real sense of appreciation of humanity, compassion and love are the key points. If we develop a good heart, then whether the field is science, agriculture, or politics, since motivation is so very important, these will all improve ... (ASSK, 04.01.1998)

• [D18] We want a better democracy, a fuller democracy with compassion and loving kindness ... We should not be ashamed about talking about loving kindness and compassion in political terms. Values like love and compassion should be part of politics because justice must always be tempered by mercy. We prefer the word ‘compassion’. That is warmer and more tender than ‘mercy’. (ASSK cited in Stewart 1997:118)

• [D19] At one point during our year together as monks, Tin Oo led me to a secluded spot on the monastery grounds. ‘I am Burmese and you are American, he said. ‘But the Buddha’s teachings go beyond nationality or language. I want to see the people of Burma live in a society built on the higher spiritual values, with human dignity and fairness for all. My belief is that love and compassion must be the guiding principles of our political system. I cherish the dream that, before I die, I’ll see this vision come true. (Tin Oo to Alan Clements in *Burma: the next killing fields*, p 14)

E. Metta (loving-kindness)

• [E1] AC: During your two years in the monastery what would you say that you learned that has had the most lasting influence on you?

UTU: That through attachment one lives a very shallow fearful life; and the value of *metta* or loving-kindness – because we all live to a certain degree with attachment and this *metta* eases the journey. (ASSK 1997b:229)

• [E2] If this seems to you very difficult, please start practising the Thirty-Eight Blessings [Mangala Sutta] taught by our Buddha. ... For even if politicians fall short of the Sotapāñña stage, they can still be a great help if they follow the ethical principles, or even practice loving-kindness towards all beings as taught in the Metta Sutta. [If they do this] the achievement of a Socialist world will not take very long. (Nu quoted in King 1964:252-56)

• [E4] As for that non-violence business, I don’t condemn it, but I’m not a Gandhi. If I see the need for force, I would tackle it head-on without hesitation, if that is the only means available to me.

I was trained to fight and if somebody attempted to manhandle you, I wouldn’t tuck my tail between my legs and run away, listening to you scream with my back to you. That’s cowardice. It’s despicable. Nor would I sit there in meditation, trusting that my *metta* would dissolve the ordeal. I’m no saint. I would try and defend you. Now I don’t like the use of force, but I could never tell you that I would completely abstain from it. But Gandhi said that too. (U Kyi Maung in ASSK 1997b:190-91)

• [E5] ASSK: ... Perhaps what they should try to do is to love themselves better. Not in the selfish sense, but to have *metta* for themselves as well as for others. As you put it, if fear is motivated by lack of trust in oneself, it may indicate that you think there are things about yourself which are not desirable. I accept that there are things about me, as for the great majority of us, which are undesirable. But we must try to overcome these things and improve ourselves. (ASSK1995:19-20)

• [E6] Maybe they are learning something from our words. Maybe it is that they feel the *metta* among the people. Maybe they yearn to have that *metta* directed towards them rather than it being forced or coerced from people. It could be that this *metta* that is being generated among the people is having an effect on them. *Metta* does that you know. Maybe it is opening them to a new way of treating people, seeing them as human beings to be honoured and served rather than oppressed and robbed. It could be that they are moved by the people’s courage.

People who are not only willing to defy them but who are also ready and waiting to forgive them. It's all possible. (Interview with U Kyi Maung in ASSK 1997b:186)

• [E7] AC: ... Do you love your enemy into transformation, or do you criticise them into that transformation?

ASSK: I think I've said to you before that I have not got to the stage when I can claim that I feel *metta* towards everybody. And I do not think I can claim that I have these overwhelming waves of *metta* going out from me towards SLORC. But it is the truth that I don't feel hostile towards any of them. I would be very happy to be on friendly terms with them. And I can say with absolute truth that I have never used abusive terms in speaking about them. I don't mean just in public but even in private. The strongest things I have said against them is either that they are very stupid or that they are acting like fools. (ASSK 1997b:143)

• [E8] The dream of a society ruled by loving kindness, reason and justice is a dream as old as civilized man. Does it have to be an impossible dream? ... We are so much in need of a brighter world which will offer adequate refuge to all its inhabitants. (ASSK 1995:247)

• [E9] ASSK: We've learned from experience that the *metta* approach is misinterpreted by the authorities. they see it as a weakness.

AC: How do they interpret loving-kindness as a weakness?

ASSK: Well, let's take it in the political context. During my six years under house arrest, and while Uncle U Kyi Maung and Uncle U Tin U were in prison, Uncle U Aung Shwe [the NLD Chairman] tried very hard to keep the NLD together as well as trying to establish a harmonious relationship with SLORC. He never said anything to which they could object. During those six years the NLD behaved in such a gentlemanly way that some people accused it of sheer cowardice and the lack of will to act. And what was the result? They [SLORC] just came down heavier and heavier on the NLD.

AC: So there came a point in the struggle that the *metta* approach was determined not as effective as your present approach?

ASSK: We have not given up the *metta* approach. Because basically, we are always ready to work with them on the basis of mutual understanding and goodwill. But that does not mean that we're going to sit and wait. We believe in action. That's active *metta*, doing what is necessary at any certain point. (ASSK 1997b:143-44)

• [E9] You see, we've got to make *metta* grow. We've got to make people see that love is a strong, positive force for the happiness of oneself, not just for others. A journalist said to me, 'When you speak to the people you talk a lot about religion, why is that?' I said, 'Because politics is about people, and you can't separate people from their spiritual values.' And he said that he had asked a young student who had come to the weekend talks about this: 'Why are they talking about religion?' The student replied, 'Well, that's politics.'

Our people understand what we are talking about. Some people might think it is either idealistic or naïve to talk about *metta* in terms of politics, but to me it makes a lot of practical good sense. I've always said to the NLD that we've got to help each other. If people see how much we support each other and how much happiness we manage to generate among ourselves, in spite of being surrounded by weapons, threats and repression, they will want to be like us. They might say, well, there's something in their attitude – we want to be happy too. (ASSK 1995a:18-19)

• [E10] ASSK: I think the very first reason why the Burmese people trusted me was because of their love for my father. They had never doubted his goodwill towards them. And he had

proved with his life that he was ready to sacrifice himself for them. Because of that they loved him and I think a lot of that love was transferred to me. So I started off with an advantage – a ready-made fund of *metta* on which to build. So you cannot separate the fact that I'm my father's daughter from the fact that the people and I have managed to build up solid bonds of *metta* between us. (ASSK 1997b:21)

• [E11] ASSK: When I first think of *metta*, I feel it within our movement, especially between my colleagues and myself. We work like a family – we are not just colleagues. We have a real concern and affection for each other, which is the basis of our relationships. I think this may have a lot to do with the fact that we have to work under such difficult conditions. It's only *metta* that is strong enough to keep together people who face such repression and who are in danger of being dragged away to prison at any moment. And the longer we work together the greater our bond of *metta* grows. From there these ties of friendship and affection have spread outward to include the families of colleagues. From there it spreads further, and with it the feeling of family grows. A family with a love of justice, a love of freedom, a love of peace and equality ... if you are used to giving friendship and affection it's much easier to give it even to people who may think of themselves as your enemies. (ASSK 1997b:119)

• [E12] AC: Daw Suu, when it really comes right down to it, how do you cope?

ASSK: I think what really sustains us, is the sense that we are on the side of right, as it were, to use a very old-fashioned phrase. And the *metta* between us keeps us going. (ASSK 1997b:132)

• [E13] In Buddhist countries an expression of the social dimensions of Dhamma is the guiding and softening influence which the ordained Sangha has traditionally exercised over rulers. Where this influence declines, we see the rulers become ever more cruel and irresponsible, and most of the Sangha equally irresponsible, preoccupied with ritual, textual studies and 'individual' development. No amount of pagoda building or formal respect for the Sangha can substitute for their mutual responsibility to serve the people and the Dhamma. (Rewatta Dhamma. Speech delivered to the Asian Leaders Conference, Seoul, December 1994)

• [E14] The adversities that we have had to face together have taught all of us involved in the struggle to build a truly democratic political system in Burma that there are no gender barriers that cannot be overcome. The relationship between men and women should, and can be, characterized not by patronizing behavior or exploitation, but by *metta* (that is to say loving kindness), partnership and trust. We need mutual respect and understanding between men and women, instead of patriarchal domination and degradation, which are expressions of violence and engender counter-violence. We can learn from each other and help one another to moderate the 'gender weaknesses' imposed upon us by traditional or biological factors. (ASSK keynote address on 31 August 1995 to NGO Forum on Women, Beijing '95)

• [E15] As U Nu put it about the State Religion: 'It is perhaps possible that in some foreign countries their State religion has been discriminatory and has imposed disabilities on followers of other religions. This would certainly not occur in Burma because Buddhism does not curtail the rights of other religions ... Buddhism is not a religion which strengthens itself by persecuting others. Because it has *Metta* at its basis, it can establish in strength the principles of Justice, Liberty and Equality and ensure peace and prosperity to all beings for all times.. The establishment of Buddhism as the State Religion will

in itself make the Union of Burma and exemplary State to other nations. ('State Buddhist Religion in Burma.' *Buddhist News Forum*, Rangoon, October 1961; King 1964:262)

- [E16] Summing up, public servants are to be faithful to the State and fulfil their duties. The Tatmadaw and the People's police force are to protect the public and repulsed and eliminate all forms of danger faced by the public and in the process has used weapons similar to those used by the enemy. With good faith in the goodwill of the Tatmadaw, student youths should relax in the restful shade of their parents metta. (Wun-tha-nu, Maung. 'Relax in the restful shade of 'metta'. *The Working People's Daily*, 01.10.1988)

- [E17] The loving kindness and affection placed on her by State leaders as a real daughter was not reciprocated and the actions and attitude of the Puppet Princess changed completely at once and her dance steps changed and the tune also changed. All the audience who had waited in anticipation to hear and see her display with, original natural sense and concepts and her own style of Myanmar origin, Myanmar sound and steps, were greatly astonished, fed up and disgusted when they heard the English band and saw her to the soap-operas. (Myo Chit. 'Let's tell the truth'. *Myanma Alin*, May-July 1996)

- [E18] AC: It sounds like fear [of dialogue]. What do you think this fear is rooted in?

ASSK: When you really think about it, fear is rooted in insecurity and insecurity is rooted in lack of metta [loving-kindness]. If there's a lack of metta, it may be a lack in yourself, or in those around you, so you feel insecure. And insecurity leads to fear. (ASSK 1997b:4-5)

- [E19] ASSK: When I first decided to take part in the movement for democracy, it was more out of a sense of duty than anything else. On the other hand, my sense of duty was very closely linked to my love for my father. I could not separate it from the love for my country, and therefore, from the sense of responsibility towards my people. But as time went on, like a lot of others who've been incarcerated, we have discovered the value of loving-kindness. We've found that it's one's own feelings of hostility that generate fear. As I've explained before, I never felt frightened when I was surrounded by all those hostile troops. That is because I never felt hostility towards them. This made me realize that there are a number of fundamental principles common to many religions. As Burmese Buddhists, we put a great emphasis on metta. It is the same idea as in the biblical quotation: 'Perfect love casts out fear.' While I cannot claim to have discovered 'perfect love', I think it's a fact that you are not frightened of people whom you do not hate. Of course, I did get angry occasionally with some of the things they did, but anger as a passing emotion is quite different from the feeling of sustained hatred or hostility. (ASSK 1997b:122)

- [E20] ASSK: I encourage people to focus on deeds, rather than on people. I was once speaking about Angulimala [a mass murderer at the time of the Buddha]. I said, even he changed, his deeds were horrendous but the Buddha himself was able to separate the person from the deed. Once Angulimala had been made to understand that what he did was wrong and was genuinely repentant, he set out to follow the right path. And the Buddha was the first to take him under his wing, as it were. (ASSK 1997b:37)

- [E21] ASSK: ... we, in the NLD, have been given a lot of metta by the people at large – our supporters. And when you receive so much, you have to give in return. If you're very much loved, in the right way, then you cannot help but respond. That does not mean that we're totally free of negative feelings. And as long as we are not free of them we will be subject to them. But

the goodwill and the metta we've received have done a lot to push out these feelings from within us. (ASSK 1997b:20-21)

- [E22] U Tin U: The Buddha has said that good friendship [*kalanya metta*] is one of the greatest gifts of life. In our struggle for democracy in Burma we need more good friends – people who cherish freedom and desire to help us gain ours. (ASSK 1997b:239)

- [E23] AC: You often refer to your democracy movement here in Burma as a 'revolution of the spirit' that is rooted in Buddhist principles. How much, if at all, do you draw upon the wisdom of other religions in your approach to politics?

ASSK: I have read books on other religions but I haven't gone into any of them particularly deeply. But I find that the idea of metta is in every religion. The Christians say God is love. And when they say, 'perfect love casts out fear', I think at the core of all religions there is this idea of love for one's fellow human beings. (ASSK 1997b:66)

- [E24] When I was under house arrest for six years, while discussing with the people in charge of my security, I was accused of always taking the side of the people. I said that it was true. I must stand by the people because they are the weaker. So they asked me, 'What if the weaker side was wrong?' So I replied if the weaker side was wrong, they would rectify their wrongs with Metta (loving kindness). You must rectify the wrongs of others with Metta, never by bearing a grudge. (ASSK. Statement at the closing ceremony of the 9th NLD Congress on 15 October 1997)

- [E25] Our League may be a democratic one but we are not an organization that is unjust or repressive to others. If there are any grudges that stem from the past between our party members and the people, we will resolve them. At this time, as I have said, our party is thriving on Metta. We have no power, we have no weapons. We also don't have much money. There is also the matter of that eighty thousand dollars ... (laughter). What are our foundations? It is Metta. Rest assured that if we should lose this Metta, the whole democratic party would disintegrate. Metta is not only to be applied to those that are connected with you. It should also be applied [to] those who are against you. Metta means sympathy for others. Not doing unto others what one does not want done to oneself. It means not obstructing the responsibilities of those whom one has Metta. It not only means not wanting harm to befall one's own family, but also not wanting harm to befall the families of others. So our League does [not] wish to harm anyone. Let me be frank. We don't even want to harm SLORC. But SLORC also doesn't want to harm us. Our Congress has come this far because we have managed to reach a degree of understanding with the authorities. I would like to say from here that I thank the authorities for making things possible since this morning. We do not find it a burden to give thanks where thanks are due. Nor is it a burden to give credit where credit is due. So it is not true that we do not give thanks or credit where it is due. There will be thanks where thanks is due, credit where credit is due ... so be good. One is never overcautious. This is a Buddhist philosophy.

We are not working solely for the benefit of our party. We are not working to gain power. It is true, we are working for the development of democracy. Because we believe that it is only a democratic government that could benefit the country. Let me make it clear that it is not because we want to be the government. And also because we believe that it is only the people that have the right to elect a government. That is why we asked that the government be made up of people that were elected by the people. Not because we want power. Power only gives stress. Power comes with responsibility and I believe that anyone who understands that cannot be power-crazy. I know

how much responsibility goes with a democracy. That is why we are not power-crazy people. We are only an organization that wants to do its utmost for the people and the country. We are an organization that is free from grudge and puts Metta to the fore. (ASSKs statement at the closing ceremony of the 9th NLD Congress on 15 October 1997)

- [E25] AC: How do you work within yourself with democracy as a vision, democracy as a process, and democracy as a state of mind.

ASSK: When we visualize a democratic Burma, we do not visualize it in terms of great power and privileges for the NLD. We see it in terms of less suffering for the people. We're not starry-eyed about democracy. We don't think of it in terms of abstract institutions but in terms of what it can do to contribute towards the happiness and well-being of the people. We want a country where there is rule of law; where people are secure to the extent that one can be secure in this world; where they are encouraged and helped to acquire education, to broaden their horizons; where conditions conducive to ease of mind and body are fostered. That is why I would say that *metta* is the core of our movement – a desire to bring relief to human beings. (ASSK 1997b:134)

- [E26] He [Aung San] was a soldier who could fight – and fight well – when he had to fight, but who when the fighting was over could lay aside his sword without fear and pursue the path of peace. When political power came into his hands he could say with absolute sincerity and a complete lack of self-consciousness that we would govern 'on the basis of loving kindness and truth.' (ASSK 1991:191)

- [E27] The first of the heavenly abodes, metta, loving kindness, plays a crucial part in the process of human development. While Buddhists speak of metta, Christians speak of Christian love. Both refer to disinterested love, a love that seeks to give and to serve, rather than to take and demand. Inherent in the concept of this kind of love is understanding, sympathy, forgiveness and courage. A Father Damien or a Mother Teresa give tender care, for 'the love of Christ', to those whom humanity in general find physically repugnant, because Jesus had shown love and kindness towards the rejects of society, the lepers and the insane, the sick and the lame. (ASSK. 'Heavenly abodes and human development, 11th Pope Paul VI Memorial Lecture, 3 November 1997, the Royal Institution of Great Britain, London)

- [E28] The Lord Buddha too set examples for the practical application of loving kindness. Once when the Lord Buddha and his cousin Ananda came across a sick monk lying in his own filth they washed him and tended him. Then the Lord Buddha called the other monks together, admonished them, for neglecting their sick brethren and taught them that it was more important to care for the sick than to tend to him, the Buddha himself. (ASSK 04.01.1998)

- [E29] Development projects should essentially be humanitarian labour on varying scales. Whether it is distributing milk powder to malnourished children or building a mega dam, it should be done with people in mind, people who need the balm of loving kindness to withstand the rigours of human existence. Projects undertaken for the sake of upping statistics or for love of grandiosity or praise, rather than for the love of live human beings with bodies that can be hurt, minds that can be damaged and hearts that can be bruised, seldom succeed in fostering the kind of development that enhances the quality of life. (ASSK 04.01.1998)

- [E30] His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is surely one of the leading authorities on, and practitioners of, loving

kindness in our world today. He teaches us that:

... we are not lacking in terms of the development of science and technology; still, we lack something here in the heart – real inner warm feeling. A good heart is needed ... The problems human society is facing in terms of economic development, the crisis of energy, the tension between the poor and rich nations, and many geopolitical problems can be solved if we understand each others' fundamental humanity, respect each other's rights, share each other's problems and sufferings, and then make Joint effort ...

Things and events depend heavily on motivation. A real sense of appreciation of humanity, compassion and love are the key points. If we develop a good heart, then whether the field is science, agriculture, or politics, since motivation is so very important, these will all improve ... (ASSK 04.01.1998. Heavenly Abodes And Human Development, 11th Pope Paul VI Memorial Lecture)

- [E31] Only the army is mother,

Only the army is father,
Don't believe what the surroundings say,
Whoever tries to split us, we shall never split
We shall unite forever (Army Slogan billed all over Burma)

- [E32] Where there is no justice there can be no secure peace. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that 'if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression', human rights should be protected by the rule of law. That just laws which uphold human rights are the necessary foundation of peace and security would be denied only by closed minds which interpret peace as the silence of all opposition and security as the assurance of their own power. The Burmese associate peace and security with the coolness and shade:

The shade of a tree is cool indeed
The shade of parents is cooler
The shade of teachers is cooler still
The shade of the ruler is yet more cool¹
But the coolest of all is the shade of the Buddha's teachings.²

Thus to provide the people with the protective coolness of peace and security, rulers must observe the teachings of the Buddha. Central to these teachings are the concepts of truth, righteousness and loving-kindness. It is government based on these very qualities that the people of Burma are seeking in their struggle for democracy. (ASSK 1995:177-78)

- [E33] Q. What about loving kindness and your policy of non-violence?

A. As for loving kindness, that comes to me from my own experiences. In our struggles, what else do we have? We only have people who support our cause out of a sense of sympathy, a sense of solidarity. That's loving kindness, feelings for others. This is what our whole movement is based on. We don't have any weapons, no money, no rights. The laws in this country are used to crush us. What can we rely on? How can we keep together? We keep together because we believe in what we are doing. Some people get burnt out. We have to help each other keep going. And we cannot do that unless we have some basis of loving kindness. (Sanitsuda Ekachai. 'The lady of Burma'. *Bangkok Post*, 19.06.1998)

See D. Brahma-vihara

¹ This passage is taken originally from *Lokaniti* and was also cited by U Ottama, the monk protester against the British colonial occupation of Burma (Lwin 1971:42)

² This was also cited by U Ottama in the struggle against British colonialism.

See also [C19], [C28], [H8], [S5]

F. Karuna (compassion)

- [F1] UTU: ... forgiving the SLORC at this point is not the issue. Compassion is what is needed. The SLORC are the ones who need to feel compassion. If they could feel compassion they might just see that these atrocities are hurting people badly ... I can say to the people that if we have compassion for them we will remain blameless in our struggle to continue forward until that time when they see that we genuinely do not wish them harm ... Compassion [rather than forgiveness] is what is needed'. (ASSK 1997b:232)

- [F2] AC: Your colleagues have made it perfectly clear to me that SLORC's disinterest in talking with you and the NLD is unequivocally rooted in fear. They've told me that it's their fear of losing power which translates down into a fear of 'losing their security – property, wealth, privilege and status'. They also said that 'they fear for the safety of their families'. And at the root of it all is their 'fear for retribution'. You continually encourage the powerless in your country to rise up against the injustices, but may I ask you for your views on SLORC having the courage to overcome their fears?

ASSK: In order to overcome your own fears you have to start first by showing compassion to others. Once you have started treating people with compassion, kindness and understanding, then your fears dissipate. It's that straightforward. (ASSK 1997b:135)

- [F3] [UTU] ... I would say that compassion is something we all need more of in the world. Whether you are a human-rights activist or a despotic leader we can always find ways to be more compassionate. Through our compassion I feel that the world will be a much better place to raise our next generation, and their children. What all of us are struggling for today is a world that is free of fear. In so doing we must try to free our own hearts from fear. Let us all try. (ASSK 1997b:238-39)

- [F4] But compassion must be balanced by wisdom and wisdom must be balanced by compassion. This balance is essential that there might be harmony and that one might be able to make correct decisions for the general good. There are a number of Buddhist stories that illustrate the need for a healthy balance between compassion and wisdom. Of these stories, the following is one that I find most appealing.

Once there lived a dragon at the foot of the Himalayas, a fierce dragon king that breathed fire and smoke and reduced creatures to ashes with his incendiary glare. He was not unnaturally the terror of all who dwelled in the region. One day while the dragon was in one of his less amicable moods, a bodhisattva came by. The dragon king proceeded to give a fine display of his propensity for violence, no doubt imagining that he would succeed in terrifying the holy one (not that the dragon understood anything of holiness) before reducing him to ashes. To his surprise, the bodhisattva showed no fear or apprehension but instead gave him a brief sermon on the joys of non-violence and compassion. The dragon king was instantly converted to the path of non-violence and decided that he would never again harm any being under any circumstances.

Now, in an ideal world, that should be the happy end of the story. But ours is not an ideal world; it is a world conditioned by impermanence, suffering and the unresponsiveness of objects to one's wishes. When it dawned on the children who lived within the vicinity of the dragon's lair that the fire breathing monster had ceased to bristle with pyrotechnic ferocity, they began to approach it cautiously. Their confidence grew until they felt bold enough to touch the dragon king. On finding how docile the dragon king. On finding how docile and patient the dragon had

become, the children handled it more roughly. Eventually the children got into the habit of ill-treating the dragon, making life a miserable for him.

When the bodhisattva came by again, the dragon king complained of how unhappy he had been since following the path of non-violence. The bodhisattva replied that this had come about because the dragon had not balanced compassion with wisdom: when the children became unruly, he should show his fire to stop them from proceeding to cruel acts. The dragon king's failure to balance compassion with wisdom had been harmful both to himself and to the children, who had been turned into little bullies by his excessive forbearance. (ASSK 04.01.1998)

See also Brahma Vihara, and [Y24], [Y25]

G. Karma

- [G1] AC: So no one is above the law, no matter how lawless they may be?

ASSK: They may be above human laws, but not above the law of *karma* because the law of *karma* is actually very scientific. There is always a connection between cause and effect. It's like the light of a star, isn't? The light we see now was initiated so many light years ago, but there it is. In science too, there can be a seemingly long gap between cause and effect. But there's always the connection between them. (ASSK 1997b:61)

- [G2] ASSK: ... I remind the people that *karma* is actually doing. It's not just sitting back. Some people think of *karma* as destiny or fate and that there's nothing they can do about it. It's simply what is going to happen because of their past deeds. This is the way in which *karma* is often interpreted in Burma. But *karma* is not that at all. It's doing, it's action. So you are creating your own *karma* all the time. Buddhism is a very dynamic philosophy and it's a great pity that some people forget that aspect of our religion.

... If something goes wrong, people tend to do something just for themselves, as it were. But I think you can also carry on working for others. Perhaps we should encourage this more; the idea that you can gain a lot of merit by working for others, as much as by working for yourself. In fact, I would like more of our Burmese Buddhists to understand this point. (ASSK 1997b:124-25)

- [G3] AC: You've been called 'Burma's woman of destiny' ...

... ASSK: Well, you know, I'm a Buddhist, so 'destiny' is not something that means that much to me, because I believe in *karma*. And that means doing. You create your own *karma*. And in a sense, if I believe in destiny, it's something that I create for myself. That's the Buddhist way. (ASSK 1997b:140)

- [G4] ASSK: ... In Buddhism ... we believe that you will pay for all the bad things that you have done, and that you will reap the rewards of all the good that you've done. And I think because of that, a lot of Buddhists think that because the authorities are cruel and unjust, you don't have to do anything at all, they will get their own deserts. I don't accept that. I don't think that one should just sit back and expect *karma* to catch up with everybody else ... (ASSK 1997b:127)

See also [Y27].

H. Politics and religion

- [H1] AC: It's a matter of debate, but politics and religion are usually segregated issues. In Burma today, the large portion of monks and nuns see spiritual freedom and socio-political freedom as separate areas. But in truth, *dhamma* and politics are rooted in the same issue – freedom.

ASSK: Indeed, but this is not unique in Burma. Everywhere you'll find this drive to separate the secular from the spiritual. In

other Buddhist countries you'll find the same thing ... almost everywhere in the world. I think some people find it embarrassing and impractical to think of the spiritual and political life as one. I do not see them as separate. In democracies there is always a drive to separate the spiritual from the secular, but it is not actually required to separate them. Whereas in many dictatorships, you'll find that there is an official policy to keep politics and religion apart, in case I suppose, it is used to upset the *status quo*. (ASSK 1997b:7-8)

- [H2] ASSK: ... Organized movements are essential to the way in which Christianity works. Their churches are organized that way, whereas Buddhists are not really organized around their monasteries. Although one might go to the local monastery, or have one's favorite monastery in which to worship, one does not necessarily stay confined to that one monastery only. It's not like Christians who go to the same church for years and years, and in so doing develop congregational relationships. Perhaps your parents too went to the same church and you know a lot of people through your ongoing association with them. You also know what their parents were like and what affiliations they had. I think this is the way the base for organized movement is formed.

I have often thought that this is probably one of the reasons why Christian-based political movements tend to take off quickly and efficiently. The organization is already there. Look at Latin America, you'll find that a lot of their political movements against the dictatorships, although they were not non-violent, were church-based, which made them take off rather quickly. Even in Islamic countries they have the mosque, which is formally organized, with regular mosque meetings taking place weekly. This sort of formal organization does not exist in Buddhist countries ...

I think that it's just the fact that they [Muslims, Christians] can meet regularly. Even in India the government can not say that Muslims must not go to the Mosque. It would create such a reaction. They must allow them to go to the Mosque, so they can always meet regularly a minimum of once a week. Whereas, where can Buddhists meet? If the Buddhists started meeting once a week at a particular monastery, the MI [Military Intelligence] would be on to them immediately to find out what the meeting was about. But you can't stop people from going to church ... There was a great deal of church-based political activity. (ASSK 1997b:111-12)

- [H3] AC: Is it fair to say that the regime – SLORC – are Buddhists?

ASSK: I would not like to comment on other people's religious inclinations. It's not for me to say who is Buddhist or who is not. But I must say that some of their actions are not consonant with Buddhist teachings.

AC: For example?

ASSK: There's so little lovingkindness and compassion in what they say, in what they write and what they do. That's totally removed from the Buddhist way ... This is the problem with a lot of authoritarian regimes, they get further and further away from the people. (ASSK 1997b:2-3)

- [H4] The first intimation that something was amiss in the last bastion of the Burmese monarchy came when rumors of strange happenings at the Mahamyatmuni Shrine began to trickle down to Rangoon. It was said that the breast of the sacred image had been riven in two. While people were still debating on such a possibility and the implications of so distressing an omen, word came out that the monks of Mandalay were making an enquiry into a large crack – some said a gaping hole – that had appeared in the thick gold with which devotees had encrusted the image over the centuries. Fast on the heels of the news about the

enquiry we heard that monks in Mandalay had ransacked mosques because a Buddhist girl was assaulted by a Muslim man.

Traditionally, Buddhists and Muslims in Mandalay have maintained harmonious relations and this sudden eruption of hostilities was a surprise to many. But it was no surprise when we heard there had been attempts by the authorities to place the communal tensions at the door of the NLD. According to an official Information Sheet, 'it is very much regretful to learn that some elements who are bent on creating unrest in the country exploited the situation and managed to agitate some of the Buddhist religious communities in Mandalay to attack Muslim communities and some mosques. On the surface, it seems like a religious clash but it is actually very much politically motivated.' I quite agree that the communal conflicts were probably orchestrated by those with political motives of some kind but I can say with absolute confidence and a clean conscience that the NLD has nothing to do with dirty politics of that ilk. (ASSK. 'Season ripples with riots and revolutions'. Letter from Burma No. 3. *Mainichi Daily News*, 07.04.1997)

- [H5] Lt-Gen Myo Nyunt, minister of religious affairs, met monks who are members of the State Sangha [Buddhist Order] Maha Nayaka Committee in Rangoon on 29th September, Burmese radio reported. The minister and the monks discussed the need to keep religion and politics apart.

The report said: 'It has been discovered that the NLD [National League for Democracy] covertly directed its groups to engage in the anti-government movement by entering monkhood so as to benefit their party. They are doing this to divide the monks. Although they are Buddhists, they are unaware of the sin of dividing the monks.' Myo Nyunt told the monks: 'I would like to inform the Sangha that these monks are covered in the darkness with avarice, anger and ignorance; and they are creating disturbances to destroy the people and the country.'

The report continued: 'He [the minister] also urged the revered monks to clarify and inform all levels of Sangha organizations about their [the NLD's] plan to enter the monkhood. The State Law and Order Restoration Council's Orders No 6/90 and No 7/90, and Law No 20/90 on Organization of Sangha, were issued to protect them from this danger. The Sangha has also been directed to coordinate with the respective division, state, district, township and ward law and order restoration councils.' ('Minister says opposition trying to "divide the monks"'. BBC, 29.09.1996; Radio Myanmar, Rangoon)

- [H6] In my political work, I have been helped and strengthened by the teachings of members of the sangha. During my very first campaign trip across Burma, I received invaluable advice from monks in different parts of the country. In Prome, a Hsayadaw told me to keep in mind the hermit Sumedha, who sacrificed the possibility of early liberation for himself alone and underwent many lives of striving that he might save others from suffering. 'So must you be prepared to strive for as long as might be necessary to achieve good and justice,' exhorted the Venerable Hsayadaw. In a monastery at Pakokku, the advice that an abbot gave to my father when he went to that town more than 40 years ago was repeated to me: 'Do not be frightened every time there is an attempt to frighten you, but do not be entirely without fear. Do not become elated every time you are praised, but do not be entirely lacking in elation.'

In other words, while maintaining courage and humility, one should not abandon caution and healthy self-respect. When I visited Natmauk, my father's home town, I went to the monastery where he studied as a boy.

There the abbot gave a sermon on the four causes of decline and decay: failure to recover that which had been lost, omission

to repair that which had been damaged; disregard of the need for reasonable economy; and the elevation to leadership of those without morality or learning. The abbot went on to explain how these traditional Buddhist views should be interpreted to help us build a just and prosperous society in the modern age.

Of the words of wisdom I gathered during that journey across central Burma, those was a 91-year old Hsayadaw of Sagaing are particularly memorable. He sketched out for me tersely how it would be to work for democracy in Burma.

- ‘You will be attacked and reviled for engaging in honest politics,’ pronounced the Hsayadaw, But you must persevere. Lay down an investment in *dukkha* (suffering) and you will gain *sukha* (bliss). (ASSK)

- [H7] AC: Do you ever teeter on the edge of your existential plight – your individual struggle for spiritual freedom and your socio-political struggle for your people’s freedom?

ASSK: No. Since we live in this world we have a duty to do our best for the world. Buddhism accepts this fact. And I don’t consider myself so spiritually advanced as to be above all worldly concerns. Because of this, it’s my duty to do the best that I can.

- [H8] Has the Slorc changed? It is ostentatious now in its religious devotion; barely a day goes by without reports on state TV or press (both of which failed to report Daw Suu’s release) of generals dedicating pagodas around the county. ‘I hope that they will pay more attention to the essence of Buddhism, that would help a lot.’

But does she regard such piety as politically expedient? As ever, her words come readily, yet are carefully chosen. ‘I would not like to judge other people’s religious activities or attitudes and all I would say is that if there is real respect for the teachings of Buddhism on the part of the authorities, it is all to the good of the nation.’

The junta’s zealotry extends, according to some reports, to desecrating the temples and burial grounds of religious minorities like the Muslims and Christians. ‘If that is so then it’s a great pity because Buddhism after all teaches tolerance and loving kindness – *myitta* – so it would be against the essence of Buddhism to persecute anyone, whether on religious, political or any other grounds.’

This year’s Martyrs’ Day, which commemorates the assassination of my father and eight associates, coincided with the full moon of the Burmese month of Waso, which marks the beginning of the rainy season Buddhist retreat. The National League for Democracy arranged a ceremony for offering food and robes to fifty monks for the sake of merit to be shared between those who have passed away and those who have been left behind. It was an occasion that afforded us with an opportunity to reflect on the three aspects common to all conditioned things: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering) and *anatta* (the unresponsiveness of objects to one’s wishes) and on nirvana, the unconditioned, undefiled state where *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* become extinct. Spiritual matters are as much an integral component of the fabric of human existence as politics, which has to do with how man relates to others of his kind. Whether we like it or not, the spiritual and political will remain part of the design of our lives. (ASSK. ‘Political, spiritual struggles inseparably linked’. *Mainichi Daily News*, 04.08.1997)

See also [E9], [I3], [I4], [I5], [Y20], [Y27].

[H9] A 90-year-old abbot I knew gave me two pieces of advice. He told me that, to achieve happiness, you must be prepared to suffer. He also warned me that anyone who indulges in honest politics must be prepared to be reviled. Monks like him have given me some wonderful advice over the years. Though an old and religious man, he certainly understood politics in Burma. (Interview between ASSK, Rep. Bill

Richardson, UNDP Resident Representative Jehan Raheem and New York Times Correspondent Philip Sheehen on 25.02.1995. BurmaNet News 13.05.1994)

I. Buddhism

- [I1] AC: Do you consider yourself a Theravada Buddhist?

ASSK: I am a Theravada Buddhist but I respect Mahayana Buddhism as well ...

AC: What are the elements of Mahayana Buddhism that you respect?

ASSK: In Mahayana Buddhism there’s much more emphasis on compassion than in Theravada Buddhism. I’m very sensitive to this. because we need a lot of compassion in this world. Of course, compassion is also a part of Theravada Buddhism. But I would like to see more of our people putting compassion into action. (ASSK 1997b:60)

- [I2] UTU: ... Buddhism is very democratic, isn’t it? The idea that members of the *Sangha* talk to each other and admit their mistakes, particularly in the *Pavavana* ceremony that occurs at the end of the rains retreat, is a very democratic idea. In the army you learn to be obedient to authority, whereas as a monk you lean obedience to the truth. As monks, you talk to each other, admit you mistakes openly, and sort out differences in a very respectful and dignified manner. (ASSK 1997b:229-30)

- [I3] AC: ... there are a lot of monks and nuns who have played a very courageous role in our movement for democracy. Of course, I would like to see everybody taking a much more significant role in the movement, not just monks and nuns. After all, there is nothing in democracy that any Buddhist could object to. I think that monks and nuns, like everybody else, have a duty to promote what is good and desirable. And I do think they could be more effective. In fact, they should help as far as they can. I do believe in ‘engaged Buddhism’, to use a modern term. (ASSK 1997b:8)

- [I4] AC: How might they [monks and nuns] be more effective

ASSK: Simply by preaching democratic principles, by encouraging everybody to work for democracy and human rights, and by trying to persuade the authorities to begin dialogue. It would be a great help if every monk and nun in the country were to say, ‘What we want to see is dialogue.’ After all, that is the way of the Buddha. He encouraged the *Sangha* to talk to each other. He said, ‘You can’t live like dumb animals. And if you have offended each other, you expiate your sins and offences by confessing them and apologizing.’ (ASSK 1997b:8)

- [I5] AC: How do you feel the Sangha in Burma could play a more active role in supporting the struggle for democracy?

UTU: The *Sangha* have a responsibility for the health and happiness of their lay disciples. Under such circumstances where the people are so poor and so unhappy, where they are undergoing both physical and mental suffering, the Sangha have a duty to speak out and to speak up for their disciples. They must not just ignore what is happening. They must speak out for whatever needs to be done in order to bring health and happiness, that is, mental and physical ease. If democracy is to be achieved in Burma it is everyone’s duty to help, monks and nuns included. Everyone can do their part. I am not saying that it has to be a big part, but many little parts do make a big difference. That’s what we want from the people. (ASSK 1997b:230)

See also [C17], [D3], [Y20], [Y27].

J. Buddha/Bodhisattva

- [J1] When I said that any human being can become an enlightened being ... This is what every Buddhist knows. And

we have a saying in Burmese ‘if you try hard enough, you can become a Buddha.’ That was what I was saying and that is what I was quoting. I was saying to the young people that you must all try, you must all try very hard to be as noble and as elevated as possible ... And the Buddha became a Buddha as a human being. That is what I said. (ASSK at a press conference on 10 July. Mya Maung 1992:153)

- [J2] AC: ... In strictly Buddhist terms, I have heard you referred to as a female *Bodhisattva* – a being striving for the attainment of Buddhahood – the perfection of wisdom, compassion and love, with the intention of assisting others to attain freedom.

ASSK: Oh, for goodness' sake, I'm nowhere near such a state. And I'm amazed that people think I could be anything like that. I would love to become a *Bodhisattva* one day, if I thought I was capable of such heights. I have to say that I am one of those people who strive for self-improvement, but I'm not one who has made, or thought of myself as fit to make a *Bodhisattva* vow. I do try to be good (*laughs*) ... I'm not saying that I succeed all the time but I do try. I have a terrible temper. I will say that I don't get as angry now as I used to. Meditation helped a lot. But when I think somebody has been hypocritical or unjust, I have to confess that I still get very angry. I don't mind ignorance; I don't mind sincere mistakes; but what makes me really angry is hypocrisy. So, I have to develop awareness. When I get really angry, I have to be aware that I'm angry – I watch myself being angry. And I say to myself, Well, I'm angry – I'm angry, I've got to control this anger. And that brings it under control to a certain extent. (ASSK 1997b:9-10)

- [J3] AC: Many years ago I interviewed Burma's former Prime Minister U Nu who stated as a matter of fact that he was a committed *Bodhisattva* ... I asked him what was it like being the Prime Minister with full control of the army and to have made the vow to become a Buddha. He said rather explicitly, if I remember correctly, that it was a major burden, a nearly constant moral dilemma. What he was saying was that being a devout Buddhist was incompatible with being a political leader who had a responsibility to use the armed forces. Don't you feel any such dilemma?

ASSK: No, I do not see a dilemma. I would not think that I'm in any position to even contemplate taking the *Bodhisattva* vow. My first concern is to abide by Buddhist principles in my worldly dealings. Of course, I do meditate. That's because I believe that all of us, as human beings have a spiritual dimension which cannot be neglected. Overall, I think of myself as a very ordinary Burmese Buddhist who will devote more time to religion in my older years. (ASSK 1997b:59)

See also [C1], [D6], [E20], [E22], [E28], [E32], [I4], [L2], [O12], [Q2], [Q3], [R1], [S1], [T1], [Y15]

K. Freedom

- [K1] Each year large numbers of people of many different races and creeds are driven to an uncertain life as unwanted refugees because of political and economic mismanagement under systems that do not foster the two basic freedoms without which human beings cannot lead dignified, meaningful lives: freedom from want and freedom from fear. As long as there are parts of the world where the two freedoms are not fostered there will be refugees. (ASSK. Message in acceptance of the 1995 IRC Freedom Award, 21 November 1995.)

- [K2] The people of my country want the two freedoms that spell security: freedom from want and freedom from fear. It is what has driven so many of our young girls across our borders to a life of sexual slavery where they are subject to constant humiliation and ill-treatment. It is fear of persecution

for their political beliefs that has made so many of our people feel that even in their own homes they cannot live in dignity and security. Traditionally the home is the domain of the woman. But there has never been a guarantee that she can live out her life there safe and unmolested. (Message in acceptance of the 1995 IRC Freedom Award by Daw ASSK, 21 November 1995)

- [K3] We in the movement for democracy in Burma recognize that democracy and human rights are interdependent, that one cannot survive without the other. In working for democracy and human rights we are striving to establish political and social institutions and values that will free our people from want and fear. We wish our country to be a genuine refuge for all who come under its protection. In our endeavours we are strengthened by the support of organizations that have acquired firsthand knowledge of the indissoluble links between freedom and security. (Message in acceptance of the 1995 IRC Freedom Award by Daw ASSK, 21 November 1995.)

- [K4] AC: And the struggle continues fifty years later [after national independence]. When do you think it will end?

UTU: Soon. Very soon our country will be as lawful as the *dhamma*, a place of peace and justice where our people can enjoy their basic freedoms. (ASSK 1997b:207)

- [K5] AC: Just how repressed is free speech in Burma today?

UKM: You can answer that yourself. Practically, I suggest that you put my words to the test, if you have the courage to do it. Go into the city to a corner teashop and stand on a box and say a few words about democracy. Now see what would happen. You would no sooner get the word ‘justice’ out of your mouth than you would be grabbed and put on the next plane out of her. And for a Burmese to do that, it's a one-way truck-ride to Insein [prison]. This is why I say Suu's compound is the only liberated area in Burma. From there we say all sorts of things. We joke about the SLORC and tell them how much happier everyone would be, themselves included, if they would just talk to us ... (ASSK 1997b:189)

- [K6] Saints, it has been said, are the sinners who go on trying. So free men are the oppressed who go on trying and who in the process make themselves fit to bear the responsibilities and to uphold the disciplines which will maintain a free society. Among the basic freedoms to which men aspire that their lives might be full and uncramped, freedom from fear stands out as both a means and an end. A people who would build a nation in which strong, democratic institutions are firmly established as a guarantee against state-induced power must first learn to liberate their own minds from apathy and fear. (ASSK 1995:183)

L. Personal Attacks on ASSK

- [L1] Hardly a day goes by without an article or two in the state-controlled newspapers vilifying me or other leaders of the NLD or the supposed activities of the party. Every time there is a sign of public unrest or opposition to the military government, or a controversial incident, or an undesirable situation of any kind, it is promptly attributed by the authorities to the NLD. Rising prices, student demonstrations, a bomb going off in the inner sanctum of a sacred relic, communal conflict, even an attack on NLD leaders by hooligans obviously operating in collaboration with official security forces, the authorities do not hesitate to point an insinuating finger at our party. The government either has an extremely high regard for our abilities or has ceased to be concerned with the truth in its obsessive desire to attack the democratic opposition. (ASSK. ‘Season ripples with riots and revolutions.’ *Mainichi Daily News*, 07.04.1997, ‘Summer’, Letter from Burma No. 3)

- [L2] SLORC has been trying to move with false propaganda

about me [ASSK] – all sorts of nonsense. Things like I have four husbands, three husbands, two husbands. That I am a communist – although in some circles they say I am CIA. They have been trying to get prominent monks to say I have been insulting the Buddha. They can say that I'm married to a foreigner – but I've always admitted that freely – I'm not trying to hide that. (ASSK 1995:225)

- [L3] If there's anything they [SLORC] are afraid of ... if they're really *serious* about thinking that I have some sort of neo-colonialist bogey behind me – they've got to talk to me about that ... That's just pure nonsense and I think they know it. (ASSK 1995:259)

- [L4] AC: I know SLORC has made, and continues to make, repeated attempts to smear your character. What are their most frequent criticisms?

ASSK: They focus on the fact that I'm married to a foreigner and have spent many years abroad. They also say other things, such as, I have not kept my promise of not founding a political party. I never made such a promise. I've only said, 'I do not wish to have to found a political party.' ... (ASSK 1997b:37-38)

- [L5] MR. SHENON: Do you have access to monks?

ASSK: When I was first put under house arrest, I wasn't allowed to offer food to monks [Note: a standard and necessary practice for devout Buddhists]. My mother had always made a point of making such offerings on July 19th, the anniversary of my father's assassination. I tried to continue this practice. I also wanted to make offerings on December 27, the anniversary of her death. They told me I couldn't do this, so my aunt, while she was living here, did this for me, in December 1989 and July 1990. Since then I haven't asked to do this again. The SLORC used this for propaganda purposes. Now I won't ask for anything. The same goes for visits by my family. The government says they permit such visits as a favor, but under the law these visits are my right. I am only forbidden to see diplomats and politicians. It is on the basis of my rights that I agreed to the family visits. (ASSK, 25.02.1995; BurmaNet News, 13.05.1994)

- [L6] Those who wish to discredit me and a few who entertain genuine fears have also implied that I am surrounded by communists. While it is true that a number of veteran politicians of varying political colour are giving me practical assistance, I have only accepted their help on the clear understanding that they are working for the democratic cause ... (ASSK 1995:206)

- [L6] There is another reason why we can never forget 19th July. Aung San Suu Kyi came back to Myanmar temporarily – the time which coincided with 19th July. Well, I don't remember the exact year. Up to that time, we were not even aware that she existed. When we became aware of her, we became greatly disconsolated. It is because we came to learn that she had fallen in love and married a long-nosed Englishman Michael Aris and even given birth to two sons. As soon as I learnt this I burst out into uncontrollable rage. She had smeared her own father's face black and had no regard for the honour of own race and honour of her own father, a Myanmar leader. She had forgotten how patriotic leaders had died together with her father in a brutal manner and had joined hands with a person whose race had brutally taken her father's life. I felt so deeply that I even began to utter to myself that she had no shame to come and even live in Myanmar ...

- [L7] On that day, when I saw the picture of ASSK laying a wreath at the tomb of Bogyoke Aung San, my thoughts began to wander – If her father, Bogyoke Aung San should become alive again and rise from his tomb and see his daughter, what would he do. I thought of the things I would do if I was in his place. Would he slap his daughter's face left and right like the Japanese

do or would he take out the automatic from its holster and empty the bullets into her. These were the thoughts which flashed into my mind. Then at once I came to remember that although Bogyoke Aung San apparently looked rough in speech and manner, he was a true gentleman and had a kind and gentle heart. He would not indulge in any acts like those which came into my mind. I then realized that he would simply admonish her like true Myanmar people do and spit on her face and make her be come shameful. Whenever, these thoughts flash into my mind I come to remember 19 July.

- [L8] As she had forgotten the honour of her parents and relatives and was enjoying herself in the West as much as she liked and had forgotten everything, it would have been better for her and it would have nothing to do with us. But now, it is nothing like this, my grandchildren. She was incited and instigated and forced to climb the Myanmar stage and she was made to dance according to their tune and according to the strings they pulled. While made to dance according to their tune, they change their play into another pattern and began the story of direct confrontations. I think it was on 19 July 1989. She pulled out a confrontation trump card and used it in the political arena on that day and is creating problems in succession up to the present day, my grandchildren. Even on the day on which the British colonialists had brutally shot and killed her own father, she wants to make political gain.

M. Samadhi (concentration, one-pointed mind)

- [M1] [young men trying out an 'executive stress tester' at Christmas] Of all those who tried it out to see who had nerves of steel we discovered that two young men who came from a part of Rangoon known for its strong political traditions did best. Such are obviously the qualities necessary for those who wish to pursue politics in Burma. (ASSK 1997a:33)

- [M2] He impressed me deeply as a man possessed of great powers of concentration; I thought that nothing could distract him from what he was thinking or doing. (U Thein on Aung San in Maung Maung 1962:115)

See also C. *Bhavana* (in particular [C4])

See also D. *Brahma-vihara* (in particular [D13])

See also R. *Sati* (in particular [R2-R3])

See also X. *Kilesa*

N. Communism

- [N1] There have been speculations that some politicians might be influencing my actions. Those who wish to discredit me and a few who entertain genuine fears have also implied that I am surrounded by communists. While it is true that a number of veteran politicians of varying political colour are giving me practical assistance, I have only accepted their help on the clear understanding that they are working for the democratic cause without expectation of future political advantage of personal gain. (ASSK 1995:206)

O. Fear

- [O1] AC: Why is diversity so disgusting to SLORC?

ASSK: Fear. Fear of losing their power. Fear of facing the truth. Fear of finding out that if they face the truth they will have to admit that they've been doing all sorts of things they should not have been doing. (ASSK 1997b:137-38)

- [O2] The great majority of the people in Burma live in a constant state of fear and insecurity. Forced labour is only one of the fears with which we have to cope. (ASSK in Marceaux 1996)

- [O3] This [portering] is a term which refers to people who

are taken by the armed forces to work for them to carry their arms, their rations, and in many cases it has been clear they are used as human mine fields [sweepers]. They go ahead of the troops so that if there are any land mines, those land mines will blow up under them and therefore they clear the way for the troops. So portering is one of the worst feared things on Burma. People lose their health and even their lives if they are taken to do a stint of portering. And then, of course, there is the other kind of forced labour which is working on local projects. There in villages and in towns people are told you turn out on such a day and you help with building bridge, road, dike, and if they don't participate in the forced labour projects they are fined. (ASSK interviewed in Marceaux 1996)

- [O4] Most totalitarian regimes fear change, but the longer they put off genuine democratic reform the more likely it is that even their positive contributions will be vitiated: the success of national policies depends on the willing participation of the people. (ASSK 1995:270)
- [O5] The great majority of the people in Burma live in a constant state of fear and insecurity. Forced labour is only one of the fears with which we have to cope. If the European Union can do something to alleviate that one fear, that will be of great help to us. We have to struggle for our own cause. We know that it is up to us to achieve democracy, but in this day and age the help of the international community means a lot, and in the name of a common humanity we look to you to help us as far as you can. (ASSK interviewed in Michelle Marceaux 1996)
- [O6] It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it. Most Burmese are familiar with the four *a-gati*, the four kinds of corruption. *Chanda-gati*, corruption induced by desire, is deviation from the right path in pursuit of bribes or for the sake of those one loves. *Dosa-gati* is taking the wrong path to spite those against whom one bears ill will, and *moha-gati* is aberration due to ignorance. But perhaps the worst of the four is *bhaya-gati*, for not only does *bhaya*, fear, stifle and slowly destroy all sense of right and wrong, it so often lies at the root of the other three kinds of corruption. Just as *chanda-gati*, when not the result of sheer avarice, can be caused by fear of want or fear of losing the goodwill of those one loves, so fear of being surpassed, humiliated or injured in some way can provide the impetus for ill will. And it would be difficult to dispel ignorance unless there is freedom to pursue the truth unfettered by fear. With so close a relationship between fear and corruption it is little wonder that in any society where fear is rife corruption in all forms becomes deeply entrenched. (ASSK 1995:180)

- [O7] If someone has a frank yet confrontational mindset in doing this [talking about their hatred and fears], how do you convince them of the importance of interdependence?

ASSK: I think that first of all, you must listen to that person. You've got to try to ask him to explain why he feels the way he feels. You have to ask, 'Why do you hate that? Why do you think a certain color is bad?' or, 'Why do you think a certain belief is bad?'

Then, I think, you would have to carry on from there, because if you want to create understanding between two people, both sides must learn to listen to each other—both sides, to a certain extent, must be frank about their fears.

Quite a lot of people do not like to admit their weaknesses to others and they hide these weaknesses. In doing so, they create a barrier. And of course people do not want to confess their weaknesses to just anybody because it might be exploited. That's understandable, too.

The first step is confidence building. If the two sides can start

having confidence in the other's good will, then you can carry on from there. Then I think they will be much more honest and not just talk about what they hate, but what they fear.

Hate and fear are the opposite sides of the same coin. It's the same thing. You don't hate unless you fear, basically. (Suvanjiéff 1996)

- [O8] JP: You've written about fear and fearlessness. Was there a point during your house-arrest when you actually had to conquer fear?

SK: No, not during my house-arrest, but when I was small. It was in this house that I conquered my fear of the dark.

JP: How did you conquer your fear of the dark?

SK: By wandering about in the dark, at night, for about two weeks running. In the end I got a bit bored with the whole idea. (ASSK interview with John Pilger. 'Icon of hope.' *The New Internationalist*, June 1996)

- [O9] ASSK: ... it's because I have lived in free countries for a large part of my life that I'm not easily frightened. Fear is very much a habit. People are conditioned to be frightened.

In free countries it is quite normal to ask 'why?' if anybody, even a security officer, asks you to do something which seems unreasonable. In an authoritarian state asking such questions can be dangerous so people simply do what they are told to do. So those in power get more oppressive and the people get more frightened. (ASSK 1997b:38)

- [O10] ASSK: ... What I've learned in life is that it's always you own wrongdoing that causes you the greatest suffering. It is never what other people do to you. Perhaps this is due to the way in which I was brought up. My mother instilled in me the principle that wrongdoing never pays, and my own experience has proved that to be true. Also, if you have positive feelings towards other people they can't do anything to you – they can't frighten you. I think that if you stop loving other people then you really suffer. (ASSK 1997b:43)

- [O11] ASSK: She [ASSK's mother] also taught me to admire and respect the values for which my father stood. She emphasized that fear was not something you should encourage. In fact, she would get very angry with me if I was frightened. She did not like cowardice at all. And she would get very angry about the fact that I used to be afraid of the dark. She would not encourage such namby-pamby feelings. She thought very highly of courage, responsibility, spiritual service, and sharing ... (ASSK 1997b:165)

- [O12] AC: And specifically, as you speak on the weekends to the crowd?

UTU: We speak about the repression and unhappiness' of the people. The fact that the people are too afraid either to speak out or to do what they want to do, is not according to the teachings of the Buddha. The fact that they are so inhibited by fear is against the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha taught us to confront our fear.

That can be done in many ways. The first way is to say no, I'm not going to be controlled by fear. Then say yes, I will do my part in bringing democracy to my country. Fearlessness must become a habit. (ASSK 1997b:230)

- [O13] Tin U directly applies this idea of kind words as a technique for SLORC to cope with their fear.

UTU: ... Fear is unpleasant, now, isn't it? No one likes to live in fear. But it's up to each person to deal with their fear. For SLORC, they can deal with their fear by listening to words that encourage them to lay down their weapons and stop their atrocities. This would make the people very happy. At once their fears would dissipate. Then we would be on the road to forgiveness ... (ASSK 1997b:232-33)

- [O14] UKM: Nor does she play the role of a saint either (*laughing*). There is nothing saintly in Suu. She would readily admit that as a child she was afraid of the dark and ghosts and that she has no exceptional courage in her, only that her sense of duty drives her. 'Even though you may be afraid,' she says, 'you have to face it, get over it, and do your work.' That's Suu's simple message and she delivers it every time. (ASSK 1997a:181)
- [O15] Those who believe in the sanctity of human rights do not reject the concept of law and order as such but they would wish to ensure that the law is not just 'the will of the dominant faction' and that order is not simply 'the reflex of an all-pervading fear'. The majority of the people in Burma desire a state which preserves *dhamma* and *abhaya* – righteousness and absence of fear. (ASSK 1995:215)
- [O16] Pointing out the human tendency of the strong to bully the weak, he Aung San) urged the fearless opposition of immoral strength and the practice of scrupulous justice towards the weak. (ASSK 1991:188)
- [O17] Always one to practise what he preached, Aung San himself constantly demonstrated courage – not just the physical sort but the kind that enabled him to speak the truth, to stand by his word, to accept criticism, to admit his faults, to correct his mistakes, to respect the opposition, to parley with the enemy and to let people be the judge to his worthiness as a leader. It is for such moral courage that he will always be loved and respected in Burma – not merely as a warrior hero but as the inspiration and conscience of the nation. The words used by Jawaharlal Nehru to describe Mahatma Gandhi could well be applied to Aung San: 'The essence of his teaching was fearlessness and truth, and action allied to these, always keeping the welfare of the masses in view.

Gandhi, that great apostle of non-violence. and Aung San, the founder of a national army, were very different personalities, but as there is an inevitable sameness about the challenges of authoritarian rule anywhere at any time, so there is a similarity in the intrinsic qualities of those who rise up to meet the challenge. Nehru, who considered the instillation of courage in the people of India one of Gandhi's greatest achievements, was a political modernist, but as he assessed the needs for a twentieth-century movement for independence, he found himself looking back to the philosophy of ancient India: 'The greatest gift for an individual or a nation ... was *abhaya*, fearlessness, not merely bodily courage but absence of fear from the mind.' (ASSK 1991:183-84)

- [O18] Q. You have written in your book 'Freedom from Fear' that it is not power that corrupts but fear of losing power. What is your own fear today?

A. Fear of letting down people who have at faith in me. I would rather go down myself than letting them down. But I do not think I will let them down though I will not be able to do everything they want. But I have never promised them anything. I simply said I would try my best. (Interview with ASSK, *The Nation*, 01.08.1995)

- [O19] You should never let your fears prevent you from doing what you know is right. Not that you shouldn't be afraid. Fear is normal. But to be inhibited from doing what you know is right is dangerous. You should be able to lead your life in the right way – despite fears. (In relation to the Danubyu incident Victor 1998:88)

See also [C22], [D6], [D9], [D10], [E1], [E4], [E5], [E18], [E19], [E26], [F2], [F3], [Q3], [R8]. [S5], [S7], [Y23]

P. Anger

See also [E19], [C25], [J2], [R8]

Q. Pañña (wisdom)

- [Q1] And of course the great majority of the world's refugees are seeking sanctuary from situations rendered untenable by a dearth of humanity and wisdom. (ASSK 1995:247)

- [Q2] AC: One of the most basic and essential questions: what does being a human mean to you?

ASSK: As a Buddhist, if you really want to consider what we, as human beings, are here for it's quite simple: we are trying to achieve enlightenment and to use the wisdom that is gained to serve others, so that they too might be free from suffering. While we can't all be Buddhas, I feel a responsibility to do as much as I can to realize enlightenment to the degree that I can, and to use it to relieve the suffering of others. (ASSK 1997b:148)

- [Q3] AC: So the overcoming of complacency is the principal focus?

ASSK: Yes, complacency is very dangerous. What we want to do is to free people from feeling complacent. Actually, with a lot of people it's not a sense of complacency either. I think that many people accept things out of either fear or inertia. This readiness to accept without question has to be removed. And it's very un-Buddhist. After all, the Buddha did not accept the status quo without questioning it.

In Buddhism, you know the four ingredients of success or victory: *chanda* – desire or will; *citta* – the right attitude; *virīya* or perseverance; and *pañña* – wisdom. We feel that you have got to cultivate these four qualities in order to succeed. And the step prior even to these four steps, is questioning. From that you discover your real desires. Then you have got to develop *chanda* ... [the 'wish to do' or 'intention'] ... to do something about the situation. From there you've got to develop the right attitude and then persevere with wisdom. Only then will there be success in your endeavour. Of course, the five basic moral precepts are essential, to keep you from straying as it were. With these we will get where we want to. We don't need anything else. (ASSK 1997b:124)

- [Q4] If there is understanding then you don't have to solve your problems through violence; you can solve them by just talking it over. If there was understanding, in fact, there would be few problems. (ASSK cited in Stewart 1997:33)

- [Q5] We will produce the form of government that the people want ... But at the same time, we must not be reckless. We will surely get to our destination if we join hands. We will not bear grudges against anybody else. We have to try to understand each other. (ASSK cited upon release from house-arrest by Stewart 1997:113)

See also [R2], [R3], [R12], [Y13]

R. Sati (awareness, mindfulness, attention)

- [R1] AC: Are you a religious man?

UKM: It is a difficult question for me to answer. I live by a few precepts taught by the Buddha ... these few precepts have enabled me to get on well with my life ... The 'I' and 'me' of the past are dead and gone. By the same token, the narrator of the present is not worried about what might happen to 'him' of the future. In fact, 'he' is not status-conscious at all. What I strive for is to live a life of complete awareness from moment to moment and to provide the best service I possibly can to all living beings without discrimination and with a detached mind. Does religion serve politics? I do not speculate. I just try to do my best ... One of the things that Buddha taught us was to step

outside ourselves and see our own stupidity – as often as we can. We regard the teachings of the Buddha as an inner compass to keep ourselves on course. Actions geared to the mood of the moment and not related to the overall strategy could prove to be disastrous. (ASSK 1997b:189)

- [R2] U Pandita's instructions are repeated in *Voice of Hope*:

AC: I know that you occasionally pay your respects to the Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita at his monastery, here in Rangoon. May I ask you to share some aspect of his teachings that you have found helpful?

ASSK: I remember everything he has taught me. The most important of which was that you can never be too mindful. He said you can have too much *pañña* – wisdom – or too much *virīya* – effort; but you cannot overdo mindfulness. I have been very mindful of that (laughing) throughout these last seven years.

Also, he advised me to concentrate on saying things that will bring about reconciliation. And that what I should say should be truthful, beneficial, and sweet to the ears of the listener. He said that according to the Buddha's teachings, there were two kinds of speech: one which was truthful, beneficial, and acceptable; and the other which was truthful, beneficial but unacceptable, that is to say that does not please the listener. (ASSK 1997b:9)

- [R3] The Hsayadaw also urged me to cultivate *sati*, mindfulness. Of the five spiritual faculties, *saddhā* (faith), *virīya* (energy), *sati*, *samādhi* (concentration) and *pañña* (wisdom), it is only *sati* that can never be in excess. Excessive faith without sufficient wisdom leads to blind faith, while excessive wisdom without sufficient energy leads to undesirable cunning. Too much energy combined with weak concentration leads to indolence. But as for *sati*, one can never have too much of it; it is [never] in excess, but always in deficiency. (ASSK 1996a:66?)

- [R4] CLEMENTS: Are you asking the SLORC to go through the same gruelling psychological process that you went through?

UTU: ... It's one thing to profess Buddhism and it's another thing altogether to practise it. Perhaps the best way to overcome any inner hindrance is to train yourself in *sati* – mindfulness or awareness – it's shining light on one's darkness.

I had to learn the hard way. I was forced to confront myself while in prison. you can't just run away in solitary, you can certainly try but there is no place to go. If members of SLORC wish to avail themselves of what I have come to see as a shortcoming in myself – blind obedience – then I think they must first want to make that change. It's always better to initiate change than to have it forced upon you. But until they show a real change in their ways, we at the NLD will continue in every way possible to point out democracy. (ASSK 1997b:227)

- [R5] AC: Everyone of us has some level of ignorance that shrouds us from reality [a propos SLORC's ignorance] ... what safeguards can be developed by even the most prominent well-respected leaders to support their ethical judgement and not be unconsciously lured into self-deceptive activities?

ASSK: ... I think people just have to go on trying. I don't think anybody can afford to sit back and say, 'That's it, I'm perfect; I don't have to try any more.' It's a simple answer. A constant self-awareness. That's very Buddhist and I don't find any great mystery in that. Which is not to say that all those who try to develop awareness succeed to the extent to which they aspire. I think even monks have to practise this all the time. Constant effort is always required.

AC: I do know as a meditator that awareness is essential. But isn't self-deception a very subtle and insidious veil? The corruption of consciousness can take place in a split second. How to be aware of what one doesn't see about oneself?

ASSK: I think self-deception is something everybody practises, not only those who have power. Some say, 'There's nothing we

can do about the situation and we just have to accept it.' That in itself is self-deception. If someone really wants to get involved there is always something to do. So I do not think self-deception is the prerogative of the powerful. It's just a human failing to which we are all prone. And the best defence against it is the awareness of what you're doing, even if you're trying to deceive yourself. If you have really developed awareness you know that you're trying to deceive yourself, or you should know it anyway. (ASSK 1997b:141-42)

- [R6] ASSK: It's a form of spiritual cultivation – a spiritual education and a purifying process. Basically, it's a learning awareness. By being aware of whatever you're doing, you learn to avoid impurities. (ASSK 1997b:65)

- [R7] AC: I wonder. A personal question. In Buddhism it's understood that it's more difficult to conquer oneself than to conquer one's enemy. What are the inner struggles that you face in conquering yourself?

ASSK: Oh ... I'm soldiering on. And it's constant. It's always a matter of developing more and more awareness, not only from day to day, but from moment to moment. It's a battle which will go on the whole of my life. (ASSK 1997b:41-42) (see also [C23])

- [R8] ASSK: The search for truth has to be accompanied by awareness. And awareness and objectivity are very closely linked. If you are aware of what you're doing, you have an objective view of yourself. And if you are aware of what other people are doing you become more objective about them too. For example, awareness means that when you are aware of the fact that somebody is shouting, you don't think to yourself: 'What a horrible man.' That's purely subjective. But if you are aware you know that he's shouting because he's angry or frightened. That's objectivity. Otherwise, without awareness, all kinds of prejudices start multiplying. (ASSK 1997b:31-32)

- [R9] ASSK: And it's awareness that leads to objectivity. The more aware you are the more objective you become. This is very Buddhist, isn't it? And I think that those who have no sense of awareness of what's going on around them and inside them cannot have these feelings which are so important for doing the right thinking in this world. If you are not aware that what you are doing is wrong, then you will not feel ashamed of it. One is living in pure fantasy – a type of madness and a total lack of objectivity. (ASSK 1997b:162)

- [R10] ASSK: I don't know if it has been a process of self-discovery as much as one of spiritual strengthening. I was always taught to be honest with myself. Since I was quite young I had been in the habit of analysing my own actions and feelings. So I haven't really discovered anything new about myself. But meditation has helped to strengthen me spiritually in order to follow the right path. Also, for me, meditation is part of a way of life because what you do when you meditate is to learn to control your mind through developing awareness. This awareness carries on into everyday life. For me, that's one of the most practical benefits of meditation – my sense of awareness has become heightened. I'm now much less inclined to do things carelessly and unconsciously. (ASSK 1997b:65)

- [R11] I suppose what you need is the courage to face yourself. I think that's the best safeguard against corruption. If you're brave enough to face yourself, I mean, to really look in the mirror and see yourself, warts and all, then I think you would not be liable to corruption. As a Buddhist, I cannot help thinking that if one really understood the meaning of *anicca* [impermanence] one wouldn't chase power and wealth at the expense of one's moral being ...

I think it's probably, in part, my Buddhist background which

makes me feel that everything will pass away, but my deeds and their effects will stay with me. So while all the trappings of wealth and power will pass, the effects of my actions will remain with me until they have been fully worked out. (ASSK 1997b:153)

- [R12] The product of a Buddhist monastery school, he would have acquired early the concept of strength as a mental and spiritual force, learning that the five *bala* (synonymous with the five *indriyani* or controlling faculties) were confidence, energy, mindfulness, mental discipline and wisdom. The five strengths which were desirable from a worldly point of view – those of conduct, body, wealth, knowledge and friendship – would be considered relatively inferior, capable of reaching honourable fruition only when regulated by a proper cultivation of the mind and spirit. (ASSK about Aung San in ASSK 1991:188-89)

- [R13] Perhaps my great aunt helped me to cultivate self-awareness ... I have always been aware of my faults, so nothing has come as a shock to me. But, house arrest has given me the opportunity to try to overcome my own weaknesses and faults, especially through meditation ... I am very short-tempered, but I think that I am far less shot-tempered now than I used to be. (ASSK in Stewart 1997:94)

See also C. *Bhavana* (in particular [C2], [C12-C13], [C17], [C24-C25], [C28], [C31])

See also [J2], [Y23], [S7].

S. Revolution of the Spirit

- [S1] Although my mother is often described as a political dissident who strives by peaceful means for democratic change, we should remember that her quest is basically spiritual. As she has said, ‘the quintessential revolution is that of the spirit’, and she has written of the ‘essential spiritual aims’ of the struggle. The realization of this depends solely on human responsibility. At the root of that responsibility lie, and I quote, ‘the concept of perfection, the urge to achieve it, the intelligence to find a path towards it and the will to follow that path if not to the end, at least the distance needed to rise above individual limitation ...’ ‘To live the full life’, she says, ‘one must have the courage to bear the responsibility of the needs of others ... one must *want* to bear this responsibility’. And she links this firmly to her faith when she writes ‘... Buddhism, the foundation of traditional Burmese culture, places the greatest value on man, who alone of all beings can achieve the supreme state of Buddhahood. Each man has in him the potential to realize the truth through his own will and endeavour and to help others to realize it.’ Finally, she says, ‘The quest for democracy in Burma is the struggle of a people to live whole, meaningful lives as free and equal members of the world community. It is part of the unceasing human endeavour to prove that the spirit of man can transcend the flaws of his nature. (Alexander Aris, Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in ASSK 1995:237-38)

- [S2] ASSK: When I speak about a spiritual revolution, I’m talking a lot about our struggle for democracy. I have always said that a true revolution has to be that of the spirit. You have to be convinced that you need to change and want to change certain things – not just material things. You want a political system which is guided by certain spiritual values – values that are different to those that you’ve lived by before.

- [S3] But still, our lives are not all politics, we have our personal concerns, our intellectual and cultural interests and our spiritual aspirations. The spiritual dimension becomes particularly important in a struggle in which deeply held convictions and strength of mind are the chief weapons against armed repression (ASSK 1997a:199)

- [S4] [As for the way in which democracy is to be attained under SLORC, Tin U replied] I firmly believe in kindness and compassion as the best ways of winning the sympathy of SLORC.

This is one of the reasons why Daw ASSK has called our movement for democracy a ‘revolution of the spirit’. We must all have a change in spirit, all of us. We must make this spirit grow. (Tin U in ASSK 1997b:223)

- [S5] AC: Clearly, your vision of a democratic Burma includes a genuine reconciliation with your oppressors – SLORC. What do you think is required of the individual to confront his adversary and possibly win his friendship and understanding – not seeking to defeat him?

ASSK: Well, it has to begin with one’s self, doesn’t it? You have to develop inner spiritual strength, and those who have it do not feel hatred or hostility because they do not easily feel fear. It’s all connected. If you can look upon someone with serenity you are able to cope with the feelings of hatred. But there cannot be serenity if there is fear. However, let me say, ordinary people like us, within the NLD, are nowhere near that level where we can look upon everybody with perfect love and serenity. But I think a lot of us within the organization have been given the opportunity to develop spiritual strength because we have been forced to spend long years by ourselves under detention and in prison. In a way, we owe it to those people who put us there. (ASSK 1997b:123)

- [S6] AC: What is the core quality at the centre of your movement?

ASSK: Inner strength. It’s the spiritual steadiness that comes from the belief that what you are doing is right, even if it doesn’t bring you immediate concrete benefits. It’s the fact that you are doing something that helps to shore up your spiritual powers. It’s very powerful. (ASSK 1997b:123)

- [S7] AC: ASSK has called the democracy struggle a revolution of the spirit, saying that ‘a people who would build a nation in which strong democratic institutions are firmly established as a guarantee against state-induced power must first learn to liberate their own minds from apathy and fear.’ I’d like to ask you as a man who has engaged in combat, who has seen death, who has killed and has been wounded on numerous occasions, and you, a man who has been treated inhumanely through imprisonment and harsh living conditions, how does one learn to ‘liberate their own mind from fear’, other than in engaging in the long-term practice of Buddhist meditation?

UTU: You might think this is an over-simplification but my belief is that to overcome fear one acts despite the fear. You just do it and face the consequences, because if you know something is right then you should just do it. Also, the more that one acts courageously, the more it becomes a habit. Like mindfulness in meditation. At first you must try to be mindful. Later on as one goes on trying the mindfulness just occurs naturally, it becomes effortless, it too becomes a habit. (ASSK 1997b:230-31).

- [S8] *The quintessential revolution is that of the spirit*, born of an intellectual conviction of the need for change in their mental attitudes and values which shape the course of a nation’s development. A revolution which aims merely at changing official policies and institutions with a view to an improvement in material conditions has little chance of genuine success. Without a *revolution of the spirit*, the forces which produced the inequities of the old order would continue to be operative, posing a constant threat to the process of reform and regeneration. It is not enough merely to call for freedom, democracy and human rights. There has to be a united determination to persevere in the struggle, to make sacrifices in the name of enduring truths, to resist the corrupting influences of desire, ill will, ignorance and fear. (ASSK 1991:185)

See also [E23], [J3], [R12], [Y16], [Y17], [Y18].

T. Enlightenment

- [T1] I believe that here are people who are capable of learning and people who are not. I have always given examples of this. Devadatta was a close cousin of Lord Buddha. Although Lord Buddha had tried very hard to preach to him, it was only when he died that he gained enlightenment. Ingulimala was a mass murderer who at his first meeting with Lord Buddha, gained enlightenment. So we cannot brand one person bad and the other good. What is important is a person who is capable of learning and a person who is not. Those who are capable of learning can become good at any time. Those who are not, well we'll only lose our breath, we can't do anything about it. This is also true for our League. This is not an institution to others. I am referring to our own members. Those who are capable of learning and those who are not should make their own self-judgement. Well, I declare that I shall change whatever attitudes that I should change, here and now. (Statement by Daw ASSK at the closing ceremony of the 9th NLD Party Congress, 29.09.1997)

See [Q2]

See also [J] Buddha

U. Parami (perfection)

- [U1] Aung San saw life as a pilgrimage in the quest of truth and perfection and he sought to carry his country with him in the quest (ASSK 1991:191)

- [U2] Even after he [Aung San] had entered the world of student politics which was to absorb him so completely, he wrote to one of his closest friends of his 'pilgrimage in quest of Truth and Perfection' and of his conscious striving after 'sincerity in thought, word and deed'. He also expressed his concern over the 'spiritual vacuum ... among our youth' and the fear that 'unless we brace ourselves to withstand the tide ... we will soon be spiritual bankrupts *par excellence*'.¹ (ASSK 1991:8)

- [U3] AC: In essence what does 'perfection' mean to you?
ASSK: My father once talked about purity in thought, word and deed. That's what I mean by perfection. Purity ... I think the greatest protection in life is absolute purity. I believe that nobody can hurt you except yourself, ultimately.

See also [C1], [J2], [Q2], [S1], [V2], [Y2]

See Buddha

V. Purity

- [V1] ASSK: My highest aspiration is very much a spiritual one: purity of mind. (ASSK 1997b:28)

- [V2] ASSK: ... when one says that he wishes to be pure, you have to first discover what he means by purity. Like truth, it's a very large concept. It's something towards which you aspire and struggle all the time. If anybody says, 'I have achieved purity,' he or she is probably not that pure. I doubt that anybody who is not an *arahant* [enlightened one] could actually say, 'There's no impurity in me.' But I think that if you are in search of purity, you've got to know what impurity means. For people brought up in Buddhism, I don't think it's so difficult, because we have our concepts of greed, hatred and ignorance which create impurity. So anything that you can trace to ill-will and greed, that is impure. And anything that you can trace to ignorance, now that's a problem. How do you know that you are ignorant, if you are

ignorant? (ASSK 1997b:31)

See also [R6], [U3]

See X. Mental defilements (impurity)

X. Kilesa (mental defilements)

See also [V2], [C25]

See [P] Anger, [R] Sati

Y. Democracy

- [Y1] ALAN CLEMENTS: Buddhist philosophy explains the transformation of an apparently negative experience into its positive opposite. For example, seeing cruelty as an opportunity to love, or deception as an invitation to honesty. In other words, everything is workable. There are no obstacles, only challenges, if spiritual attitude is well-focused. To explain this point the Buddha once chastised his monks for criticizing his arch-nemesis Devadatta, upon his death. As you know, Devadatta attempted to kill the Buddha on several occasions. But if I'm not mistaken, the Buddha said that without Devadatta's aggression he would never have been able to become fully accomplished in patience. One could see this as praise for the adversary or the opposition.

In Burma today we have a nearly identical metaphor with SLORC's politics of repression being confronted by a spiritual revolution. May I ask you for your views on the transformation of negativity into freedom as it applies to your struggle for democracy.

ASSK: In order to have a really strong, healthy democracy, we need a strong, healthy opposition. I always explain that you need a good opposition because they'll always point out your mistakes and keep you on your toes. In many ways, the opposition is your greatest benefactor. In worldly terms the opposition in a democracy plays the role of Devadatta for any legal government. It stops the ruling party from going astray by constantly pointing out its every mistake. The opposition as the potential next government keeps the current one from misusing its power. (ASSK 1997b:57)

- [Y2] AC: Or perhaps in the more immediate sense, like the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh said, 'In the grain of rice see the sun.' Do you see yourself as just a seed-sower of democracy?

ASSK: I'm thinking of a book I once read, by Rebecca West. She was talking about musicians and artists as a 'procession of saints always progressing towards an impossible goal. I see myself like that – as part of a procession, a dynamic process, doing all that we can to move towards more good and justice; a process that is not isolated from what has happened before or what will come after. And I do whatever I have to do along the path, whether it's sowing seeds or reaping the harvest or (*laughing*) tending the plants half-grown. (ASSK 1997b:61) (See also [K6])

- [Y3] Richardson: I think the key ... to democratic change in Burma is a dialogue between you and Khin Nyunt ...

ASSK: I think I would rather put it as between the SLORC and the NLD, or the democratic forces, because I'm not in favour of promoting any kind of personality cult or personality politics. This is something we've got to avoid from the very beginning. When we set up a democracy we want to see a democracy which is based on solid principles, not on any personalities. You will say, 'but this is what happens all over Asia,' but [there's] no reason why we can't change that, why we shouldn't *try* to change that ... I'm only human and of *course* I like it when people care for me. But it's also rather worrying. I would like people to think of the democracy movement as a whole, not just as me. Just releasing me tomorrow is not going to do any good if the attitude of SLORC does not change ... Whatever they do to me, that's between them and me. I can take

¹ Aung San, letters to Tin Aung c. 1935, extracts quoted in Tin Aung, 'My recollections of Bogyoke Aung San', *Guardian* (Rangoon), August 1971, p. 15.

it. What is more important is what they are doing to the country. And national reconciliation doesn't just mean reconciliation between two people – I don't accept that at all. It's a reconciliation between different ideas ... What we need is a spiritual *and* intellectual reconciliation ... I've always said that the only answer to Burma's problems is dialogue ... I'm ready at any time, but they [SLORC] seem not terribly keen. And I wonder why. (ASSK 1995:249)

- [Y4] Myriad unions and groups, all resolved upon democracy, have established links to enable them to work together with a unity of purpose amazing in a nation where freedom of association, albeit illegal, has only become possible within the last month. 12.09.1988 – (ASSK 1995:203)

- [Y5] Those working for democracy in Burma would wish to differentiate between the 'rule of law' which would mean the fair and impartial administration of legal rules – i.e. measures passed by a legally elected assembly after free and open discussion and debate – and the process of law and order which merely involves the enforcement of arbitrary edicts decreed by a regime which does not enjoy the mandate of the people. (ASSK 1995:214)

- [Y6] UKM: Clearly, Suu's years abroad were a great gift to her as well as to her country. It was her time of education. To live and learn and to absorb democracy. To get freedom into her blood so to speak, to get it flowing through her veins. She had the rare and wonderful opportunity of serving at the United Nations under one of Burma's great statesmen, Secretary-General U Thant. She's lived in so many different cultures – America, England, Nepal, Bhutan, India, Japan; she knows diversity. Suu's absence from Burma was not an absence at all. It groomed her, matured her into adulthood, into womanhood, so that she could come back and serve her people, to help them to help themselves to challenge the deadening cruelty of authoritarianism. At least that's my way of seeing things. Perhaps I'm trying to interpret her destiny. But the situation speaks for itself. (ASSK 1997b:181)

- [Y7] Instant democracy cannot be obtained just by slinging on the pasoe [trousers – a mark of western decadence] and girding of woman's apparel and uttering mystic words. The most fundamental thing is for the country to have a firm and strong economy. Then only will it be possible for the people residing in the country to meet their food, clothing and shelter needs proportionately. As long as the food, clothing and shelter needs of individual persons are fulfilled, proportionately, the moral character of individual persons will become good and proper. Once the people become morally good, they will be able to abide by the disciplines, become duty-conscious and law-abiding persons. Then only will the democratic procedures, which have been prescribed and accepted to suit the natural conditions and traditions and culture of the country become alive. (Byatti. 'Not satisfied dear love, let's begin from the start. *New Light of Myanmar*, 07.06.1996)

- [Y8] We must make democracy the popular creed. We must try to build up a free Burma in accordance with such a creed. If we should fail to do this, our people are bound to suffer. If democracy should fail the world cannot stand back and just look on, and therefore Burma would one day, like Japan and Germany, be despised. Democracy is the only ideology which is consistent with freedom. It is also an ideology that promotes and strengthens peace. It is therefore the only ideology we should aim for. (ASSK 1995:194)

- [Y9] Many people ask me how I came to be involved in this nationwide movement for democracy. As the daughter of the man regarded as the father of modern Burma it was inevitable that I should have been closely attuned to political currents in

the country ... (ASSK 1995:205)

- [Y10] If we divide ourselves ethnically, we shall not achieve democracy for a long time. (ASSK 1995:223)

- [Y11] Opponents of the movement for democracy in Burma have sought to undermine it by one the one hand casting aspersions of the people to judge what was best for the nation and on the other condemning the basic tenets of democracy as un-Burmese. There is nothing new in Third World governments seeking to justify and perpetuate authoritarian rule by denouncing liberal democratic principles as alien. By implication they claim for themselves the official and sole right to decide what does or does not conform to indigenous cultural norms. Such conventional propaganda aimed at consolidating the powers of the establishment has been studied, analysed and disproved by political scientists, jurists and sociologists. But in Burma, distanced by several decades of isolationism from political and intellectual developments in the outside world, the people have had to draw on their own resources to explode the twin myths of their unfitness for political responsibility and the unsuitability of democracy for their own society. (ASSK 1995:168)

- [Y12] Members of the Buddhist *sangha* in their customary role as mentors have led the way in articulating popular expectations by drawing on classical learning to illuminate timeless values. But the conscious effort to make traditional knowledge relevant to contemporary needs was not confined to any particular circle – it went right through Burmese society from urban intellectuals and small shopkeepers to doughty village grandmothers. (ASSK 1995:168)

- [Y13] Why has Burma with its abundant natural and human resources failed to live up to its early promise as one of the most energetic and fastest-developing nations in South-East Asia? ... The Burmese people ... got to the heart of the matter by turning to the words of the Buddha on the four causes of decline and decay: failure to recover that which had been lost, omission to repair that which had been damaged, disregard of the need for reasonable economy, and the elevation to leadership of men without morality or learning. Translated into contemporary terms, when democratic rights had been lost to military dictatorship sufficient efforts had not been made to regain them, moral and political values had been allowed to deteriorate without concerted attempts to save the situation, the economy had been badly managed, and the country had been ruled by men without integrity or wisdom. (ASSK 1995:169)

- [Y14] By invoking the Ten Duties of Kings the Burmese are not so much indulging in wishful thinking as drawing on time-honoured values to reinforce the validity of the political reforms they consider necessary. It is a strong argument for democracy that governments regulated by principles of accountability, respect for public opinion and the supremacy of just laws are more likely than an all-powerful ruler or ruling class, uninhibited by the need to honour the will of the people, to observe the traditional duties of Buddhist kingship. Traditional values serve both to justify and to decipher popular expectations of democratic government. (ASSK 1995:173)

- [Y15] It was predictable that as soon as the issue of human rights became an integral part of the movement for democracy the official media should start ridiculing and condemning the whole concept of human rights, dubbing it a western artefact alien to traditional values. It was also ironic – Buddhism, the foundation of traditional Burmese culture, places the greatest value on man, who alone of all beings can achieve the supreme state of Buddhahood. Each man has in him the potential to realize the truth through his own will and endeavour and to help

others to realize it. Human life therefore is infinitely precious. 'Easier is it for a needle dropped from the abode of Brahma to meet a needle stuck in the earth than to be born as a human being'. (ASSK 1995:174)

- [Y16] The people of Burma want not just a change of government but a change in political values ... Of the four Buddhist virtues conducive to the happiness of laymen, *saddha*, confidence in moral, spiritual and intellectual values, is the first. To instil such confidence, not by an appeal to the passions but through intellectual conviction into a society which has long been wracked by distrust and uncertainty is the essence of the Burmese revolution for democracy. It is a revolution which moves for changes endorsed by universal norms of ethics. (ASSK 1995:178)
- [Y17] The people of Burma want not just a change of government but a change in political values ... Of the four Buddhist virtues conducive to the happiness of laymen, *saddha*, confidence in moral, spiritual and intellectual values, is the first. To instil such confidence, not by an appeal to the passions but through intellectual conviction into a society which has long been wracked by distrust and uncertainty is the essence of the Burmese revolution for democracy. It is a revolution which moves for changes endorsed by universal norms of ethics. (ASSK 1995:178)
- [Y18] The quest for democracy in Burma is the struggle of a people to live whole, meaningful lives as free and equal members of the world community. It is part of the unceasing human endeavour to prove that the spirit of man can transcend the flaws of his own nature. (ASSK 1995:179)
- [Y19] A political system that denies the full enjoyment of human rights to the people militates against the ideal of full independence. That is why I say that the present demands of the people of Burma for democracy constitutes their second struggle for independence (ASSK 1995:200)
- [Y20] The Buddhist PAVARANA ceremony at the end of the rainy season retreat was instituted by the Lord Buddha, who did not want human beings to live in silence 'like dumb animals.' This ceremony, during which monks ask mutual forgiveness for any offence given during the retreat, can be said to be a council of truth and reconciliation. It might also be considered a forerunner of that most democratic of institutions, the parliament, a meeting of peoples gathered together to talk over their shared problems. All the world's great religions are dedicated to the generation of happiness and harmony. This demonstrates the fact that together with the combative instincts of man there co-exists a spiritual aspiration for mutual understanding and peace.

This forum of non-governmental organizations represents the belief in the ability of intelligent human beings to resolve conflicting interests through exchange and dialogue. It also represents the conviction that governments alone cannot resolve all the problems of their countries. The watchfulness and active cooperation of organizations outside the spheres of officialdom are necessary to ensure the four essential components of the human development paradigm as identified by the UNDP: productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment. The last is particularly relevant: it requires that 'development must be BY people, not only FOR them. People must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives.' In other words people must be allowed to play a significant role in the governance of their country. And 'people' include women who make up at least half of the world's population. ('Opening Keynote Address By ASSK', NGO Forum on Women, Beijing '95, 31 August 1995)

- [Y21] It is often in the name of cultural integrity, as well as social stability and national security, that democratic reforms based on human rights are resisted by authoritarian governments. It is insinuated that some of the worst ills of Western society are the result of democracy, which is seen as the progenitor of unbridled freedom and selfish individualism. It is claimed, usually without adequate evidence, that democratic values and human rights run counter to the national culture and therefore, to be beneficial, they need to be modified – perhaps to the extent that they are barely recognizable. The people are said to be as yet unfit for democracy; therefore and indefinite length of time has to pass before democratic reforms can be instituted. (ASSK 1995:264-65)

- [Y22] ASSK: My immediate thought [upon the award of the Nobel Peace Prize] was that people would take a greater interest in our cause for democracy ... (ASSK 1997b:67)

- [Y23] AC: What would you say are the main qualities of consciousness that you try to foster in yourself and encourage others to embrace, as the foundation of your struggle for democracy?

ASSK: first of all, what we would like is vision. We would like the people to see and understand why a political system is tied up with our daily lives. Why we cannot ignore politics and just concentrate on economics, as the authorities would like us to do. We want them to understand that our struggle for democracy is a struggle for our everyday life, that it's not removed. It's not something that you do when you have a bit of free time, or when you feel like it. You have to work at it all the time, because it affects your life all the time. You can never separate the political system of a country from the way in which you conduct your daily life. This is basically the spirit that we want – an awareness that what we are struggling for is not some distant goal or ideal. What we are struggling for is a change in our everyday lives. We want freedom from fear and want. There are people today who enjoy materially secure lives, but they can never be sure when this will be taken from them. There must be a sense of security that as long as we're not doing harm to others, as long as we are not infringing the laws which were brought about so that we should not harm each other, we should be able to rest secure in the knowledge that we ourselves will not be harmed. That the authorities cannot remove you from your job, kick you out of your house, throw you in prison, or have you executed, if you have done nothing to warrant such actions. (ASSK 1997b:81)

- [Y24] AC: What do you think would be Burma's unique expression of democracy?

ASSK: I don't know because we have not started our democracy yet. But I would like to think that it would be a democracy with a more compassionate face. A gentler sort of democracy ... gentler because it's stronger.

AC: Would it be a capitalistic form of democracy?

ASSK: We've never thought of it as a capitalist democracy as such. We do not see why democracy should be made a part of capitalism or vice versa. We think that democracy means the will of the people. It means certain basic freedoms, which will have to include basic economic freedoms that would allow for capitalism ... (ASSK 1997b:83)

- [Y25] ASSK: ... I have always said that once we get democracy, there will be people who misuse their democratic rights and use them just for their own pleasure or personal gain. Probably there will be people who use the right of associations in order to found the kind of organizations that will be used to attack democracy itself ... But I don't agree with everything that's happening in the West, which is why I say that I would like our democracy to be a better, more compassionate and more

caring one. That is not to say we have fewer freedoms. But we will use these freedoms more responsibly and with the well-being of others in mind. (ASSK 1997b:157-58)

- [Y26] ASSK: What we have to make them understand is that the struggle is about them. That is what we always explain to the people. Democracy is about your job and your children's education; it's about the house you live in and the food you eat; it's about whether or not you have to get permission from somebody before you visit your relatives in the next village ... The struggle is about their everyday life ...

When Uncle U Kyi Maung was under detention, one of the Military Intelligence officers interrogating him asked, 'Why did you decide to become a member of the National League for Democracy?' And he answered, 'For your sake' That's what our struggle is about everybody's everyday lives, including those of the MI. (ASSK 1997b:121)

- [Y27] AC: How do you work within yourself with democracy as a vision, democracy as a process, and democracy as a state of mind? The reason I ask is that I've seen how the attachment to any goal often compromises, if not prevents one from actually achieving it.

ASSK: Well, the three have to be simultaneous. First of all it has to be a state of mind. You've got to act democracy. Then you have to work out the process towards the vision that you have. You can't really separate the three. They all go together. And this is very Buddhist, isn't it? Work, action and self-reliance. Both work and action come down to *karma* – action and doing. And of course, self-reliance is very Buddhist. We say, '*atta hi attano natho*.' In the end we only have ourselves to rely on. (ASSK 1997b:134)

- [Y28] ASSK: In our movement I use very practical, simple arguments. I always say, 'I can't do it alone. If you want democracy, it is no use depending on either me or the NLD alone. What democracy means is government of the people, by the people, and for the people. If you want democracy, you'll have to work for it. You've got to join in. The more people are involved the quicker we'll reach our goal. (ASSK 1997b:125)

- [Y29] It might be asked who indeed are 'the people' working for democracy. They are the vast majority of the Burmese public who have suffered civil, political and economic privations under the rule of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). It could be said that the party by its wanton oppression and lack of sensible economic policies has become the unwitting instruments for unification. (ASSK1995:204)

- [Y30] The chief aim of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and other organizations working for the establishment of a democratic government in Burma is to bring about social and political changes which will guarantee a peaceful, stable and progressive society where human rights, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are protected by the rule of law. (ASSK 1995:214)

- [Y31] After establishing democracy, we may have new responsibilities in the economic sphere, but at this time work towards democracy. (ASSK 1995:222-223)

- [Y32] Q: You have put political reform before economic development. But material well-being is one of the SLORC's preconditions for holding elections.

A. What I am saying is that people shouldn't be sidetracked by all these so-called economic reforms from the fight for democracy. If we don't change the political system, we're not going to progress economically either. A government that cannot guarantee basic human rights certainly won't be able to guarantee any economic rights. (ASSK 1995:226)

- [Y33] When asked if I intend to form a political party my

reply is that it is not a prospect which I find at all attractive. However, I am prepared to engage in the very kind of party politics I wish to avoid if I am convinced that it would be necessary to uphold the democratic system for which we are all striving at this moment. (ASSK 1995:207)

- [Y34] Another question I am frequently asked is how long I intend to stay in Burma ... It has always been my intention to come back and live in my country some day in order to set up a chain of public libraries and to organize scholarship schemes for students. Whether or not I continue to engage in political activities after a transition to a democratic system of government I would hope to fulfil these aims. (ASSK 1995:201)

- [Y35] A third question that is often put to me is whether I believe that the people's movement for democracy will succeed. The answer is an unequivocal YES. Contrary to the predictions of those who are totally out of touch with the mood of Burma today, I believe that not only will the people achieve democracy but that once it is achieved they will be able to make it work for the greater good of the nation. (ASSK1995:207)

- [Y36] We have all entered this struggle for democracy because we believe that we can win. For example, a person enters a race or buys a lottery ticket because he believes it's possible to win. So also if someone were to ask me whether I believe we can win in our fight for democracy, I should reply honestly, 'Yes, we can', and because I believe we can, I have chosen to take part. (ASSK 1995:212)

- [Y37] Even if there are elections and the forces of democracy win, the movement is not yet finished with its work; we still have to continue. Today the students are around twenty years old. Life expectancy in Burma is about sixty, and maybe under democracy and improved living conditions it will become seventy. That means that the youth will have possibly fifty years of struggle ahead of them. Democracy is something one must nourish all one's life, if it is to remain alive and strong. Like the health of a person: even if his parents have raised him to healthy adulthood, if he fails to take care of himself, his health will deteriorate. If each of you keeps in mind all your life that you have a responsibility for the welfare of your country, then we shall have no reason to worry that our country's health will deteriorate. (ASSK 1995:213)

- [Y38] Actually, it was to bring together the army and the people that the movement towards democracy was initiated. (ASSK 1995:223)

- [Y39] Richardson: I think the key ... to democratic change in Burma is a dialogue between you and Khin Nyunt ...

ASSK: I think I would rather put it as between the SLORC and the NLD, or the democratic forces, because I'm not in favour of promoting any kind of personality cult or personality politics. This is something we've got to avoid from the very beginning. When we set up a democracy we want to see a democracy which is based on solid principles, not on any personalities. You will say, 'but this is what happens all over Asia,' but [there's] no reason why we can't change that, why we shouldn't *try* to change that ... I'm only human and of *course* I like it when people care for me. But it's also rather worrying. I would like people to think of the democracy movement as a whole, not just as me. Just releasing me tomorrow is not going to do any good if the attitude of SLORC does not change ... Whatever they do to me, that's between them and me. I can take it. What is more important is what they are doing to the country. And national reconciliation doesn't just mean reconciliation between two people – I don't accept that at all. It's a reconciliation between different ideas ... What we need is a spiritual *and* intellectual reconciliation ... I've always said that

the only answer to Burma's problems is dialogue ... I'm ready at any time, but they [SLORC] seem not terribly keen. And I wonder why. (ASSK 1995:249)

- [Y40] Revolutions generally reflect the irresistible impulse for necessary changes which have been held back by official policies or retarded by social apathy. The institutions and practices of democracy provide ways and means by which such changes could be effected without recourse to violence. But change is anathema to authoritarianism, which will tolerate no deviation from rigid policies. Democracy acknowledges the right to differ as well as the duty to settle differences peacefully. Authoritarian governments see criticism of their actions and doctrines as a challenge to combat. Opposition is equalled with 'confrontation', which is interpreted as violent conflict. Regimented minds cannot grasp the concept of confrontation as an open exchange of major differences with a view to settlement through genuine dialogue. The insecurity of power based on coercion translates into a need to crush all dissent. Within the framework of liberal democracy, protest and dissent can exist in healthy counterpart with orthodoxy and conservatism, contained by a general recognition of the need to balance respect for individual rights with respect for law and order. (ASSK 1991:176)

- [Y41] In their quest for democracy the people of Burma explore not only the political theories and practices of the world outside their country but also the spiritual and intellectual values that have given shape to their own environment. (ASSK 1995:179)

- [Y42] ASSK: There is nothing on the side of the NLD that prevents this. It's the SLORC which is not taking this up. The NLD has always been prepared to talk to them ...

Shenon: Well, assuming the dialogue begins [and] some confidence is developed in each other's words, do you see the possibility that there could be a democratically oriented government in Burma that could include a substantial component of the army? A political prospect?

ASSK: I'm not prepared to discuss it, because that's not for me to say. What I do want to make clear is that it's got to be a serious democracy, not a sham. That I would insist on. But of course, everybody in Burma has a role to play in the country and we've never ruled it out ... We've just got to agree on who plays what role and how. But one group should not impose that on the country. (ASSK 1995:256)

- [Y43] I am one of a large majority of people in Burma struggling for democracy. It is my aim to help the people attain democracy without further violence or loss of life. (ASSK 1991:205-6)

- [Y44] The future of course is democracy for Burma ... It is going to happen, and I'm going to be here when it happens. (ASSK cited in Stewart 1997:122)

See [D18], [E25], [E32], [I2], [I3], [I4], [I5]

See S. Revolution of the Spirit

ZA. Non-violence

- [ZA1] ASSK: I do not believe in an armed struggle because it will perpetrate the tradition that he who is best at wielding arms, wields power. Even if the democracy movement were to succeed through force of arms, it would leave in the minds of the people the idea that whoever has greater armed might wins in the end ... I don't have any doubts about it. I know that it is often the slower way and I understand why our young people feel that non-violence will not work. Especially when the authorities in Burma are prepared to talk to insurgent groups but not to an organization like the NLD which carries no arms. That makes a

lot of people feel that the only way you can get anywhere is by bearing arms. But I cannot encourage that kind of attitude. Because if we do, we will be perpetuating a cycle of violence that will never come to an end. (ASSK 1997b:6-7)

ZB. Evil

See [C25], [D8]

ZC. Myanmar/Burma

- [ZC1] How do you feel about Burma being renamed Myanmar?'

ASSK: No one should be allowed to change the name of country without referring to the will of the people. They say that Myanmar refers to all the Burmese ethnic groups, whereas Burma only refers to the Burmese ethnic group, but that is not true. Myanmar is a literary word for Burma and it refers only to the Burmese ethnic group. Of course, I prefer the word Burma. (Michele Manceaux. *Marie Claire Magazine*, May 1996, Singapore Edition)

ZD. Dhamma, tayà, úbadei (law, justice)

- [ZD1] ASSK: ... SLORC does not abide by the existing laws and what they are doing is contrary to the existing laws. They keep saying when they want to attack us that they won't tolerate any action contrary to the existing laws. But they are the ones to constantly flout the law. (ASSK 1997b:145)

- [ZD2] UKM: ... The Karen elder proceeded to tell us his story of incarceration. During his trial for his non-offence the judge called him up close to his desk and said, 'Brother, you have done nothing. You are absolutely innocent. But my superiors have ordered me to give you a seven-year sentence.. However, I will reduce your sentence to only three years' Now the Karen elder told us how pleased he was to hear that, especially after having already waited well over a year for his non-trial. He thought to himself, well, I only have to serve less than two years more. After the sentencing was over and he was on his way back to his cell the judge came over to him and said, 'I'm sorry about what I just did. They just sacked me and sentenced me too.' 'Why?', the elder asked. The gentleman replied, 'Because I gave you three years instead of seven which the higher authorities had ordered.' (ASSK 1997a:178)

- [ZD3] ASSK: Whenever they [SLORC] think they need a particular piece of land for a building project, then off these people go ...

AC: These people have no rights whatsoever?

ASSK: No. People have no rights.

AC: So they are simply told by the authorities to get out of their homes on such and such a date and that's it?

ASSK: That's right.

AC: Where do they go?

ASSK: Most of them are just dumped in fields and told to put up their huts.

AC: How widespread is this today?

ASSK: It happens all over Burma

AC: And the reason?

ASSK: Forced relocations are mostly carried out with a view to make a place more attractive for tourists. (ASSK 1997b:82)

- [ZD4] The words 'law and order' have so frequently been misused as an excuse for oppression that the very phrase has become suspect in countries which have known authoritarian rule. Some years ago a prominent Burmese author wrote an article on the notion of law and order as expressed by the official term *nyein-wut-pi-pyar*. One by one he analysed the words, which literally mean 'quiet-crouched-crushed-flattened', and concluded that the whole made for an undesirable state of

affairs, one which militated against the emergence of an alert, energetic, progressive citizenry. There is no intrinsic virtue to law an order unless 'law' is equate with justice and 'order' with the discipline of a people satisfied that justice has been done. Law as an instrument of state oppression is a familiar feature of totalitarianism. Without a popularly elected legislature and an independent judiciary to ensure due process, the authorities can enforce as 'law' arbitrary decrees that are in fact flagrant negations of all acceptable norms of justice. There can be no security for citizens in a state where new 'laws' can be made and old ones changed to suit the convenience of the powers that be. The iniquity of such practices is traditionally recognized by the precept that existing laws should not be set aside at will. The Buddhist concept of law is based on *dhmma*, righteousness or virtue, not on the power to impose harsh and inflexible rules on a defenceless people. The true measure of the justice of a system is the amount of protection it guarantees to the weakest. (ASSK 1991:177)

- [ZD5] Where there is no justice there can be no secure peace. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that 'if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression', human rights should be protected by the rule of law ... The Burmese associate peace and security with the coolness and shade ... The shade of the ruler is yet more cool. But coolest of all is the shade of the Buddha's teachings. (ASSK 1991:177) (See *loka niti* for Four Shades – trees, parents, teachers, and Buddha in Sankyaung Sayadaw 1957:116-19, who relates in particular parents and teachers to the quality of *metta*.)
- [ZD6] There was no ... real rule of law when laws in shape of ordinances and the [laws] appeared suddenly, like rabbit[s] out of a conjuring hat at the will o[f the in]dividual or a dictating group. Jawaharlal Nehru [directed against the British colonial regime]. (Example of a saying ASSK posted from Jawaharlal Nehru and her father to communicate with SLORC guards who came and went as included in Stewart 1997:94)

ZE. Culture

See [C16], [D7], [E8], [S1], [S3], [Y6], [Y7], [Y11], [Y15], [Y21].

ZF. Economics

- [CF1] Q: In November, the SLORC launched its tourism campaign called 'Visit Myanmar Year.' Are you still calling for tourists to boycott Burma?
ASSK: Yes, my mind has not changed in any way. I still oppose 'Visit Myanmar Year,' and I would ask tourists to stay away. Burma is not going to run away. They should come back to Burma at a time when it is a democratic society where people are secure where there is justice, where there is rule of law. They'll have a much better time. And they can travel around Burma with a clear conscience. (The Progressive Interview, March 1997, ASSK, By Leslie Kean and Dennis Bernstein)
- [CF2] Part of our struggle is to make the international community understand that we are a poor country not because there is an insufficiency of resources and investment, but because we are deprived of the basic institutions and practices that make for good government. There are multinational business concerns which have no inhibitions about dealing with repressive regimes. Their justification for economic involvement in Burma is that their presence will actually assist the process of democratization. Investment that only goes to enrich an already wealthy elite bent on monopolizing both economic and political power cannot contribute towards equality and justice, the foundation stones for a sound democracy. I would therefore like

to call upon those who have an interest in expanding their capacity for promoting intellectual freedom and humanitarian ideals to take a principled stand against companies which are doing business with the military regime of Burma. Please use your liberty to promote ours. (ASSK. Commencement address on receiving Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree in absentia at American University, 26.01.1997)

- [CF3] We want Burma to be free and prosperous. We are not anti-business, but we oppose investment in Burma today because our real malady is not economic but political. What we are really suffering from is not lack of investment or infrastructure, but misgovernance. Until we have a system that guarantees rule of law and basic democratic institutions, no amount of aid or investment will benefit our people. Profits from business enterprises will merely go towards enriching a small, already very privileged elite. Companies such as Unocal and Pepsi, ARCO, and Texaco only serve to prolong the agony of my country by encouraging the present military regime to persevere in its intransigence. (ASSK. Speech in support of the 7-9 October 1996 Free Burma Fast, Rangoon, September, 1996)

ZG. Elections

- [ZG1] ASSK: They're [SLORC] like a blinkered horse. Why do they not see the picture as a whole? Let's take the case of the elections in Burma. The authorities obviously thought that the NLD would not win such an overwhelming majority. As I understand it, there were a lot of people – including foreign observers and journalists – who had come to the conclusion that the NLD would probably win the greatest number of seats, but it would not get an absolute majority. What made them come to this conclusion? I can understand the foreign journalists getting the wrong impression of what was going on in the country. They were only allowed to come for a short time and were never allowed to talk freely to the people who would know. But it's amazing that the authorities with the whole machinery of government at their disposal, and all their people in the intelligence services running around spying on people in the intelligence services, didn't realise that the results were going to turn out to be overwhelmingly in favour of the NLD.

... I think it is perhaps more about ignorance than stupidity. Because people are always afraid to tell a truth that would bring the anger of the dictators down upon them. And it is quite likely that their men at the grass-roots probably knew which way the elections would go but did not dare to tell the truth to their superiors ...

ASSK: It does seem to me that they really don't know how to handle the situation. They're not the only ones – I think few dictators really know how to handle a country in the long run. Because of the very nature of authoritarian governments and dictatorships they effectively prevent themselves from learning the truth, because people living under such regimes get into the habit of hiding it from them and from each other. Even those whose job is to find out what's happening in the country for the dictators acquire the habit of not telling the truth to their superiors. So everybody gets out of the habit of telling the truth, while some even get out of the habit of seeing the truth. They see what they want to see, or only what they think their superiors want them to see. Now, if you get into that habit, later you develop the habit of not daring to hear what you don't want to hear. So you end up not seeing, hearing, or saying the truth. And in the long run this blunts their intelligence. (ASSK 1997b:136-37)

- [ZG2] AC: Sir, a simple question: why did SLORC hold their free and fair multi-party elections for the establishing of a democratic nation when in fact as the results came in they

imprisoned the majority of elected MPs, tortured to death a few, forced others into silence ...

UKM: They thought they were going to win ... SLORC thought we as a party were broken. They went as far as to say, 'Now that the head is chopped off, the limbs are useless.' Now you can deduce for yourself the kind of people we are dealing with ... they were shocked and angry when they realized they had lost in their own places – in all the military areas. They were utterly sure that their own people at least would vote for them. You see, we were told that SLORC's Military Intelligence made a rough secret survey to determine how the voting pattern might turn out, and they didn't realize until it was too late that the majority of people would be voting for the NLD. They were really shocked when the result turned out to be so contrary to their own expectations. (ASSK 1997:176-77)

ZH. Aung San

• [ZH1] Q. Did you feel at any stage that some harm might come to you?

A. No. Let me put it this way, It didn't worry me. I was objectively aware of the fact that I was in a very vulnerable position. They could do anything they liked to me at any time. My greatest protection was the affection and the support of the people of Burma. The international community too, of course. But in the end it was really the support and affection of the people of Burma and respect they had for my late my father which they extended to me which gave the best protection

• [ZH2] 'I always felt close to my father,' she said. 'It never left my mind that he would wish me to do something for my country. When I returned to Burma in 1988 to nurse my sick mother, I was planning on starting a chain of libraries in my father's name. A life of politics held no attraction for me. But the people of my country were demanding for democracy, and as my father's daughter, I felt I had a duty to get involved. (Edward Klein, *Vanity Fair* October 1995, p. 120-144)

• [ZH3] TIME: Did you fear that the military might place conditions on your release?

Suu Kyi: I was sure they would not impose any restrictions, because they knew I would not accept them. But I must admit that I like people in the Burmese army because I tend to associate them with my father. That's why I don't feel any ill will against them, whatever they do. Some people might criticize this attitude and call it a weakness, but that is the truth, and I am very frank. (Interview with ASSK, *Time Magazine*, 23.07.1995)

• [ZH4] ANNCR: Of course you know quite a lot about military mind. Your father, considered the father of modern Burma, was himself general; that he saw the risk of military gaining too much power.

ASSK: I am not sure that I know that much about military mind. But I do know a lot of military people. Of course my father and many of my colleagues in the NLD, the Chairman U Aung Shwe, the Deputy Chairman U Tin Oo and U Kyi Maung and the Secretary U Lwin. They are all ex-military officers, but, they are all the kind of people that you would call the officer and gentleman. So let us say that I know one kind of military mind, that of those are both officers and gentleman. (*Time Magazine*, 23.07.1995)

• [ZH5] ANNCR: Now, I'm told that your name, which is beautiful to say, but even more beautiful in translation that it to mean a bright collection of strange victories. Are your parents obviously prescient ?

ASSK: Well, I think, I don't know whether they were thinking of the meaning of name I suppose. Aung San is my father's name, but it just is not my surname. In Burma we don't have family names. My name is pretty unusual. Because it is man's

name, Aung San is a much muscular name at the beginning; and Kyi at the end is part of my mother's name; Suu in between represent my grandmother's name, and also represent the day of week on which I was born. (ABC Radio National, Interview with ASSK, 06.06.1996)

• [ZH6] It is most appropriate that this International Convention for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma should take place anniversary of Burmese Independence, forty-eight years ago to this day Burma became a sovereign independent nation as result of the combined effort of all her peoples. The greatest lesson that the struggle for independence taught us was that nothing of national significance could be achieved without the wholehearted participation of all those whose fates are linked to the dignity of the nation.

Burma took her place in the family of independent nation as a democratic state, aware of its obligations to its own people as well as to the rest of the world. The founding fathers of independent Burma understood that self-government alone was not enough: there was a clear perception of the people and accepts the duties due to a member of the international community.

A resolution proposed by my father U Aung San on 16 June 1947 in the Constituent Assembly encapsulated the hope of the people of the Burma for a state sustained by democratic values that would enable them to live in freedom and dignity. The salient points of the resolution, as relevant today as they were then, are as follows:

all powers and authority of the sovereign independent Republic of Burma, its constituent parts and organs of government shall be derived from the people ... the constitution shall guarantee and secure to all the peoples of Union justice, social, economic and political; equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law freedom of thought, expression, belief, worship, subject to law and public morality ...

(a) this historic land of Burma shall attain its rightful and honored place in the world, make its full and willing contribution to the advancement and welfare of mankind and affirm its devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly cooperation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality.

The aspiration of those who dedicated their lives to building an independent Burma are at one with the hopes of all of us now striving to establish in Burma a genuine democratic system that will guarantee to the people all basic human rights as recognized by the United Nations. While it cannot be doubted that our principle strength lies in the resolve of our own people, we are fully aware that in the world today all nations are indissolubly linked by myriad ties. We welcome warmly the support and ethical values. (Message to international convention for the restoration of democracy in Burma, 04.01.1996)

• [ZH7] I ask how far the thought of her father had stiffened her resolve. She looks to where Aung San's picture hangs, as it hangs on so many walls in Burma. 'There were times when I would look at his photograph and say to him: 'Well, it's just you and me – but we'll make it.' I felt that I always had his spiritual support.'

The people's regard of her father is, she believes, 'perhaps even stronger than ever'. But like him she has become the focus of a personality cult. Does that worry her?

'A little, but I think the Burmese people are canny enough and if I do the wrong thing they will boot me out. Good for them, and good for me, too. They are not fools, they are very shrewd and very loving.

'If they love somebody like my father or myself they really take that person to their hearts and they will forgive a lot as long

as they are convinced that we are sincere and we have their good in mind. But there is a limit to their forgiveness and that's a good thing.' (Steve Weinman. 'Patience pragmatism pays off for "The Lady."' *Nation*, 01.11.1995)

- [ZH8] I don't pretend that I don't owe my position in Burmese politics to my father ... I'm doing this for my father. I'm quite happy that they see me as my father's daughter. My only concern is that I prove worthy of him. (ASSK in *New York Times*, 11.01.1989)

- [ZH9] Q: Are you committed to a life of politics and if you are how would you analyse your talents and gifts as a politician?

A: A life in politics holds no attraction for me. At the moment I serve as a kind of unifying force because of my father's name and because I am not interested in jostling for any kind of position. ('Heroine spells out objectives.' *The Times*, 29.08.1988; ASSK 1995:201)

The more I learn about modern Burmese politics the more I realize how essential is my father's role in keeping alive the spirit of truth and justice during all these years under a corrupt regime. When I honour my father I honour all those who stand for political integrity in Burma. (ASSK 19915:187)

- [ZH10] Another thing which some people have been saying is that I know nothing of Burmese politics. The trouble is that I know too much. My family knows best how complicated and tricky Burmese politics can be and how much my father had to suffer on this account. He expended much mental and physical effort in the cause of Burma's politics without personal gain. That is why my father said that once Burma's independence was gained he would not want to take part in the kind of power politics that would follow.

Since my father had no such desire I too have always wanted to place myself at a distance from this kind of politics. Because of that I have kept away from politics. Some might then ask why, if I wished to stay out of politics, should I now be involved in this movement. The answer is that the present crisis is the concern of the entire nation. I could not as my father's daughter remain indifferent to all that was going on. This national crisis could in fact be called the second struggle for national independence [ဒီ အရေးအခင်းဟာ တကယ်တော့ဒုတိယ လွတ်လပ်ရေးတိုက်ပွဲကြီးလို့ခေါ်ရင်လည်းဖြစ်ပါသည်] (Speech at the Shwedagon Pagoda, 26.08.1988 in ASSK 1995:193; ASSK 1993:174)

- [ZH11] This great struggle has arisen from the intense and deep desire of the people for a fully democratic parliamentary system of government. I would like to read to you something my father said about democracy:

We must make democracy the popular creed. We must try to build up a free Burma in accordance with such a creed. If we should fail to do this, our people are bound to suffer. If democracy should fail the world cannot stand back and just look on, and therefore Burma would one day, like Japan and Germany, be despised. Democracy is the only ideology which is consistent with freedom. It is also an ideology that promotes and strengthens peace. It is therefore the only ideology we should aim for.

That is what my father said. It is the reason why I am participating in this struggle for freedom and democracy in the footsteps and traditions of my father ... (Speech at the Shwedagon Pagoda, 26.08.1988 in ASSK 1995:194)

- [ZH12] ... at this time there is a certain amount of dissension between the people and the army. This rift can lead to future dangers. The present armed forces of Burma were created and nurtured by my father. It is not simply a matter of words to say that my father built up the armed forces. It is a fact.

There are papers written in my father's own hand where he lays out in detail how the army should be organized and built up. So what objectives did my father have for the armed forces? Let me read to you one of them:

The armed forces are meant for this nation and this people and it should be such a force having the honour and respect of the people. If instead the armed forces should come to be hated by the people, then the aims with which this army has been built up would have been in vain.

Let me speak frankly. I feel strong attachment for the armed forces. Not only were they built up by my father, as a child I was cared for by his soldiers. At the same time I am also aware of the great love and affection which the people have for my father. I am grateful for this love and affection. I would therefore not wish to see any splits and struggles between the army which my father built up and the people who love my father so much ... May I appeal to the armed forces to become a force in which the people can place their trust and reliance. May the armed forces become one which will uphold the honour and dignity of our country. (ASSK speech at the Shwedagon Pagoda, 26.08.1988; ASSK 1995:194)

- [ZH13] 19 July was Martyrs' Day, in recognition of the 1947 assassination of Daw ASSK's father. Previously, that occasion was quite an open affair. The immediate families were invited and they attended the ceremony. Following that, the general public joined Martyrs' Day to pay homage by putting flowers onto the tombs of the leaders. But this year [1989] the SLORC restricted each family to only two persons. It was a provocation and we knew it. Daw ASSK announced that she would attend the ceremony anyway with her own family as well as with NLD leaders. Because of that, she was detained the next day. I was also taken from this residence the same day. (Interview by Leslie Kean with U Win Htein, 09.01.1996. *Burma Debate*, May/June 1996)

I was under house arrest because of my politics, ... so politics became my whole life. Most of the time, I spent thinking about politics ... Once you're alone as a political prisoner, then politics is your whole existence. (ASSK cited in Stewart 1997:107)

For prison, see also [C29], [E19], [E26], [H6], [L5], [O11], [O16], [O17], [U1-U3], [Y9]

For arrest, see also [C4], [C6], [C10], [C11], [C17], [C31], [D15], [E9], [E24], [L5], [O8]

ZI. Gandhi

- [ZI1] Commentary question: Does she ever get discouraged?

ASSK: 'What is there to be discouraged about? Gandhi said the victory is in the struggle itself. The struggle itself is the most important thing. I tell our followers that when we achieve democracy, we will look back with nostalgia on the struggle and how pure we were.

'We will prevail because our cause is right, because our cause is just ... History is on our side. Time is on our side.' (*The Vancouver Sun*, 01.03.1997)

See also: [E4], [O17]

ZJ. Imprisonment (house arrest, car arrest, guest house arrest, forced labour, forced portering, samsara)

- [ZJ1] Had detention changed her? 'I would like to think I have changed. Otherwise, it would be a waste of six years. There are some who pride themselves on never changing but I am not sure that's anything to be proud of.

'I hope I've matured. I feel spiritually stronger; in a sense I've been tested and that has strengthened me. And I think that I

have learned to put a much greater value on compassion. I think compassion is very important in this world.’ (Steve Weinman. ‘Patience pragmatism pays off for “The Lady”.’ *Nation*, 01.11.1995)

- [ZJ2] AC: ... back in 1989, days before you were placed under house arrest, you made the statement: ‘Let the world know that we are prisoners in our own country.’ It has been a few months since the time of your release. Has anything really changed?

ASSK: The world knows better that we are still prisoners in our own country. (ASSK 1997b:16)

- [ZJ3] UTU: ... Please do understand this, Burma today under SLORC is lawless. There are no human rights. We are under siege! ... This is why Daw ASSK repeatedly says, ‘Let the world know that we are prisoners in our own country,’ She’s not exaggerating, it’s a prison within a prison. (ASSK 1997b:236)

- [ZJ4] ASSK: ... I suppose one seeks greatness through taming one’s passions. And isn’t there a saying that ‘it is far more difficult to conquer yourself than to conquer the rest of the world’? So, I think the taming of one’s own passions, in the Buddhist way of thinking, is the chief way to greatness, no matter what the circumstances may be. For example, a lot of our people [political prisoners] meditate when they’re in prison, partly because they have the time, and partly because it’s a very sensible thing to do. That is to say that if you have no contact with the outside world, and you can’t do anything for it, then you do what you can with the world inside you in order to bring it under proper control. (ASSK 1997b:162)

- [ZJ5] Q: You were arrested and harassed. You spent 12 years behind bars – seven during the Ne Win regime and another five under Slorc. Do you think you and your colleagues have the stamina to go on? Have you ever been tortured?

U Kyi Maung: No, no, not an old person like me. But by the same question, you can ask Abel [Brig Gen David Oliver Abel, minister for National Planning and Economic Development] whether he could stand the stress? How long can he survive under the strain and the peace pressure? [giggling] Thailand is different. It could find someone who would come up with US\$15 billion. Burma has great difficult getting US\$100 million. (Interview with U Kyi Maung. *The Nation*, 25.08.1997)

- [ZJ6] ... happiness takes on many forms. Political prisoners have known the most sublime moments of perfect communion with their highest ideals during periods when they were incarcerated in isolation, cut off from contact with all that was familiar and dear to them. From where do those resources spring, if not from an innate strength at our core, a spiritual strength that transcends material bounds? My colleagues who spent years in harsh conditions of Burmese prisons, and I myself, have had to draw on such inner resources on many occasions.

Nobody can take away from us the essential and ultimate freedom of choosing our priorities in life. We may not be able to control the external factors that affect our existence but we can decide how we wish to conduct our inner lives. We may live in a society that does not grant freedom of expression but we can decide how much value we wish to put on the duty to speak out for our rights. We may not be able to pursue our beliefs without bringing down on us the full vengeance of a cruel state mechanism but we can decide how much we are prepared to sacrifice for our beliefs. Those of us who decided to work for democracy in Burma made our choice in the conviction that the danger of standing up for basic human rights in a respective society was preferable to the safety of a quiescent life in servitude. (Commencement Address by Daw ASSK upon Receiving Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree in absentia at

American University, 26.01.1997)

- [ZJ7] Q: How much personal danger do you feel? Have you been threatened that if you leave your compound or try and speak to the people, you will be in trouble or you might be imprisoned?

ASSK: I haven’t been told anything like that, but of course the official papers are always talking about ‘annihilating’ our forces (she laughs again). But we don’t think about that too much. There is no time to be thinking about such things. (The Progressive Interview with ASSK by Leslie Kean and Dennis Bernstein. Free Burma Coalition, March 1997)

- [ZJ8] Those who have to tread the long and weary path of a life that sometimes seems to promise little beyond suffering and yet more suffering need to develop the capacity to draw strength from the very hardships that trouble their existence. It is from hardship rather than from ease that we gather wisdom. During my years under house arrest I learnt my most precious lesson from a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, many of whose verses, even in unsatisfactory translation, reach out to that innermost, elusive land of the spirit that we are not always capable of exploring by ourselves. The title of the poem, Walk Alone, is bleak and its message is equally bleak:

If they answer not your call, walk alone;
If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall,
O thou of evil luck,
Open the mind and speak out alone.
If they turn away and desert you when crossing the wilderness,
O thou of evil luck,
Trample the thorns under the tread,
And along the blood-lined track travel alone.
If they do not hold up the light when the night is troubled with storm,
O thou of evil luck,
With the thunder- flame of pain ignite thine own heart,
And let it burn alone.

There are no words of comfort in the poem, no assurance of joy and peace at the end of the harsh journey. There is no pretence that it is anything but evil luck to receive no answer to your call, to be deserted in the middle of the wilderness, to have no one who would hold up a light to aid you through a stormy night. It is not a poem that offer’s heart’s ease, but it teaches that you can draw strength from your harshest experiences, that a citadel of endurance can be built on a foundation of anguish. How can anybody who has learnt to ignite his heart with the thunder-flame of his own pain ever know defeat? Victory is ensured to those who are capable of learning the hardest lessons that life has to offer. (ASSK. Address in absentia for the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, from The University of Natal, Durban, 23.04.1997)

- [ZJ19] Q. Did the six years of house arrest have any effect on you physically and mentally?

A. Physically, I have had problems with my neck even though it had nothing to do with my house arrest. I spent a lot of time reading. Mentally and emotionally, I think it has strengthen me. This is what all of us who were in prisons during the last six years have found out. Very few have been weakened but the majority of us have become stronger. We have had to in order to survive. So perhaps we should be thankful to them(the authority).

Q. Did your separation from your family any point weaken you resolve?

A. No, it did not weaken my resolve. I have to admit that I had to train myself not to think about them too much. There was nothing I could do to help. It was a matter of discipline that

I did not let my mind dwell on matters of which I could do nothing.

Q. Did you have any idea at all as to how long the house arrest would last?

A. No. They started out saying it was going to be one year and then three years. Then the interpretation of the law said it was to be six years. By that time I did not set any time limit and told myself to take it as long as it was necessary.

Q. What was your normal day like?

A. Later by the time I got used to it I would I get up at 4.30 am, meditated for an hour and listened to the radio for a couple of hours. There were different stations I listened to, like the BBC World Service, the VOA Burmese Service, the Democratic Voice of Burma. So I started the day with a full grasp of what was going on in the world outside. Then I divided up the rest of the day between reading and doing house work.

Q. What was the worst part of life under house arrest?

A. I worried most about my colleagues how they were and how their families were.

Q. The good part?

A. The good part was that I had a lot of time to read.

Q. Were you allowed to get mail during the six years?

A. In the beginning I was allowed to get letters from my family but later after the 20th July 1990 when they extended the period of detention it was obvious that they weren't going to respect the results of 1990 election I no longer accepted letters and parcels from my family.

Q. Did you feel at any stage that some harm might come to you?

A. No. Let me put it this way, It didn't worry me. I was objectively aware of the fact that I was in a very vulnerable position. They could do anything they liked to me at any time. My greatest protection was the affection and the support of the people of Burma. The international community too, of course. But in the end it was really the support and affection of the people of Burma and respect they had for my late my father which they extended to me which gave the best protection (Interview with ASSK in *The Nation*, 01.08.1995)

• [ZJ20] I read a lot of biographies. They taught me how other people faced problems in life. Mandela, Sakharov, Mother esra. People felt they had to send me books about people who were in prison. (ASSK cited in Stewart 1997:95)

• [ZJ21] I would like a bit more security for the people. I don't want the people to worry about where their next meal is coming from. I want them to have, at least, a basic sense of security – that they have enough to eat, a roof to live under, and that they're not going to be pulled away and put in jail just because the authorities are angry with them. (ASSK cited in Stewart 1997:122)

See also [C8-C9], [C12-C13], [C15], [C23], [D6], [E9], [E11], [K5], [L4], [S5], [S7], [Y23], [ZG1]

ZK. Dalai Lama

See [D17]

ZL. Army

• [ZL1] Suu Kyi: I was sure they would not impose any restrictions, because they knew I would not accept them. But I must admit that I like people in the Burmese army because I tend to associate them with my father. That's why I don't feel any ill will against them, whatever they do. Some people might criticize this attitude and call it a weakness, but that is the truth, and I am very frank. (ASSK interview with Edward Klein *The Lady Triumphs, Vanity Fair*, October 1995, p. 120-144)

• [ZL2] TIME: What made you believe you could work with the

junta?

Suu Kyi: I have always felt I could work with the army. It was they who felt they could not work with me. I have not changed in any way at all about this matter. I always thought we could talk things over and work together for the good of the nation.

• [ZL3] DC: What do you think of the army recruiting boys as young as fourteen?

ASSK: It's disgraceful. I hear that some of them are not even fourteen. I heard recently that some as young as twelve were recruited. (Interview with ASSK by Dean Chapman, 7 May 1996)

See also [E31], [I2], [J3], [O17], [Y38], [Y42], [ZH3], [ZH12]

ZM. Regime Slogans

• [ZM1] Our Three Main National Causes [ဒို့တာဝန်အရေးသုံးပါး]

1) Non – Disintegration of The Union [ပြည်ထောင်စုမပြိုကွဲရေး];

2) Non – Disintegration of Solidarity

[တိုင်းရင်းသားစည်းလုံးညီညွတ်မှု မပြိုကွဲရေး]

3) Perpetuation of National Sovereignty (SLORC) []¹

• [ZM2] Emergence of the state constitution is the prime task of all Union Nationals.

1) Anyone who tries to break up the Tatmadaw is our enemy.

2) We reject any scheme to break up the Tatmadaw.

3) No matter who tries to divide us, we will always remain united. (SLORC)

• [ZM3a]

I. Four political objectives [နိုင်ငံရေးဦးတည်ချက် (၄) ရပ်]

1) Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order [နိုင်ငံတော် တည်ငြိမ်ရေး၊ ရပ်ရွာအေးချမ်းသာယာရေးနှင့် တရားဥပဒေ စိုးမိုးရေး]

2) National reconsolidation [အမျိုးသား ပြန်လည် စည်းလုံးညီညွတ်ရေး]

3) Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution [နိုင်ငံသစ်ဖွဲ့စည်းပုံ အခြေခံဥပဒေသစ်ဖြစ်ပေါ်လာရေး]

4) Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution [ဖြစ်ပေါ်လာသည့်ဖွဲ့စည်းပုံ အခြေခံဥပဒေသစ်နှင့်အညီ ခေတ်မှီ ဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်သောနိုင်ငံတော်သစ်တစ်ရပ် တည်ဆောက်ရေး]

II. Four Economic objectives [စီးပွားရေး ဦးတည်ချက် (၄) ရပ်]

1) Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well

2) Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system

3) Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources in side the country and abroad

4) The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples.

III. Four Social Objectives [လူမှုရေးဦးတည်ချက် (၃) ချက်]:

1) Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation [တစ်မျိုးသားလုံး၏ စိတ်ဓာတ်နှင့် အကျင့်စာရိတ်မြှင့်မားရေး]

2) Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character [အမျိုးဂုဏ်၊ ဇာတိဂုဏ်မြှင့်မားရေးနှင့် ယဉ်ကျေးမှု အမွေအနှစ်များ၊ အမျိုးသားရေးလက္ခဏာများ မပျောက်ပျက်အောင် ထိန်းသိမ်းစောင့်ရှောက်ရေး]

3) Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit [မျိုးချစ်စိတ်ဓာတ် ရှင်သန်ထက်မြက်ရေး]

4) Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation [တစ်မျိုးသားလုံး ကျန်းမာကြံ့ခိုင်ရေးနှင့် ပညာရည်မြှင့်မားရေး] (SLORC/SPDC *The New Light of Myanmar*, 19.06.1998 – placed on every front page of dailies)

• [ZM3b] People's desire [ပြည်သူ့သဘောထား။]

¹ Formerly 'Consolidation of National Sovereignty' [အချုပ်အချာ အာဏာ တည်တံ့ခိုင်မြဲရေး]

1) Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views

[ပြည်ပအားကိုးပုံဆီနီရိုးအဆိုးမြင်ဝါဒီများအားဆန့်ကျင်ကြ။]

2) Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation

[နိုင်ငံတော်တည်ငြိမ်အေးချမ်းရေးနှင့် နိုင်ငံတော် တိုးတက်ရေးကိုနှောင့်ဖျက်ဆီးသူများအား ဆန့်ကျင်ကြ။]

3) Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the state

[နိုင်ငံတော်၏ ပြည်တွင်းရေးကို ဝင်ရောက်စွက်ဖက် နှောင့်ယှက်သော ပြည်ပနိုင်ငံများအားဆန့်ကျင်ကြ။]

4) Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

[ပြည်တွင်းပြည်ပ အဖျက်သမားများအားဘုံရန်သူအဖြစ် သတ်မှတ်ချေမှုန်းကြ။]
(SLORC/SPDC *The New Light of Myanmar*, 19.06.1998 – placed on every back page of dailies)

• [ZM4] The Armed Forces, since its formation as an organized and disciplined force has never evaded its responsibilities even in the face of great odds and great sacrifice. This spirit is at the very core of its foundation and both officers and other ranks carry out their duties with dedication. Moreover, it should be noted that the leaders, at every level, are always personally involved in all tasks in the interest of the nation and the people – no task is ever too small for care and attention. There is always this personal and comradely touch that uplifts morale and ensures that a job is well done ...

The leaders of the State law and Order Restoration Council, in spite of other pressing matters of State, make time in their busy schedules to visit the remote areas in the country to inspect various projects being undertaken for the development of the country and the well-being of the people. They unfailingly keep in close touch with the people in order to have first-hand knowledge of their difficulties and needs so that they can try to resolve their difficulties and ease their life. (Development projects and the uplift of morale, *Myanmar Perspectives*, September 1997 – Vol. 3, No.9)

ZN. Religion

• [ZN1] I'm all for a broadminded attitude. People of all different religions should be given the opportunity to pursue good in their own way. I assume that is what religion is all about. Religion is about increasing peace and harmony in the world. Everyone should be given a chance to create peace and harmony in their own way. (ASSK cited in Stewart 1997:31)

ZO. Influence

• [ZO1] 'National governments must find new ways of enabling their people to participate more in government and to allow them much greater *influence* on the decisions that affect their lives. Unless this is done, and done in time, the irresistible tide of peoples rising aspirations will inevitably clash with inflexible systems, leading to anarchy and chaos. A rapid democratic transition and a strengthening of the institutions of civil society are the only appropriate responses'. (*Human Development Report*, p 5 cited in ASSK 1995:272)

• [ZO2] Hence, the public wish to live in peace and desire the development of Myanmar Naing-Ngan. They want to make effective use of genuine democracy which would assure the public the right to make efforts for the development of the country. Therefore, it is time Ma Suu came to understand the attitude and the real desire of the Myanmar public. If so she should abandon the existing ways of her being under *foreign influence* to cause disintegration of the State and to return peacefully to her family in London. As for us, we wish to continue with our peaceful teaching work. Ma Suu please go

back. Democracy does not mean power. (Kaythari. 'Democracy is not power.' *NLM*, 12.06.1996)

• [ZO3] It became more vivid that Ma Suu stayed abroad for a long time and got married to a foreigner and even came under a *foreign influence*. At the end of the four-eights disturbances, Ma Suu, who said should return to England for the sake of education of her two sons, after meeting with US Congressman Stephen Solarz in September 1988, made efforts to form an interim government. It looked as though she had calculated on becoming leader of the interim government. (Kaythari. 'Democracy is not power.' *NLM*, 12.06.1996)

• [ZO4] I think, though, that it is very remote that this road-side anyeint [theatre] troupe [NLD] would come to see light and become good, firstly because it is very hard-headed and dogmatic, and also because it has been possessed by *external influence*. I fear it would be like quails futilely waiting for their tails to grow. ('Feeling prickly heat, instead of pleasant cool'. *NLM*, 30.05.1996)

• [ZO5] Due to these facts, it is obvious that what was written and broadcast about, with a loud cry, how she had read literature and bout Myanmar to save the suppressed Myanmar people and how she was preparing to qualify herself and serve the well being of the nation were not true.

If she had been actually preparing for the country with foresight, patriotic spirit should have surged up on thinking of her marriage. The daughter of an Arzani should have contemplated the affair of racial denigration. She had not pondered so. Due to the *influence* of her environment, she had not taken into account how her marriage would become involved in the future of Myanmar and how it would affect the prestige of her father. (Myo Chit. 'Let's tell the truth'. *NLM*, 30.05–05.06.1996)

• [ZO6] This person whom the Puppet Princess thinks is very good to her as a spouse is no ordinary person. He is a good acquaintance of people of high society and aristocracy of England and moves in and out of the Oxford circle of scholars and keeps company of famous reporters and is capable of influencing and is capable of influencing them to write whatever he would like them to. He is a great director and puppeteer who can pull the strings. (Myo Chit. 'Let's tell the truth'. *NLM*, 30.05–05.06.1996)

• [ZO7] Most Myanmar women are 'no-nonsense' types. They see what needs to be done and they do it either individually or together in a group. But they do not hanker for power or position – there is no need to. They already have the power, authority and *influence* to do good for the people and the country. So they spout no slogans, mouth no cliché's nor do they advertise and publicize their aspirations for the country. (Kyi Kyi Hla. 'The All Myanmar Women's Affairs Committee.' *MP*, June 1997.)

• [ZO8] 'The hand that rocks the cradle' is a well known adage the world over. It implies that it is the woman of the household who keeps gentle and unobtrusive control of the family. She is responsible for its general well-being, keeps order and discipline, provides love and sympathy, controls the family's finances and makes sure that each member of the family is healthy, happy and if possible, wise. But there is a deeper implication. It maintains that *behind every great man, there is a woman who influences and guides him*, that she is the power behind him. (*MP*, June 1998)

• [ZO9] Currently, crimes threatening community peace and breaking the laws have occurred due to instigations by internal and external axe-handles [sic] and *influences* by local and alien political interferences. Internal destructive elements are attempting to hamper the nation politically, economically and

socially ...¹

• [ZO10] CONGRESSMAN RICHARDSON: What do you want the SLORC to do at this point?

ASSK: We must start with dialogue. Only then can we know what steps are really needed. The SLORC can sort out their fears in the process of holding such a dialogue. Look, for example, at the issue they are making of my marriage to Michael. It is the British who should be complaining. The SLORC doesn't seem to have a very clear understanding of Burmese women. [Far from worrying about my coming under foreign influence from my husband] they should be feeling sorry for Michael!²

• [ZO11] The poor are powerless and have no voice. Power is the responsibility of expressing and imposing one's will in a given social relationship, in the face of any resistance. The poor are incapable of either imposing, coercing or, in many cases, having any influence at all.³

It is not enough merely to provide the poor with material assistance. They have to be sufficiently empowered to change their perception of themselves as helpless and ineffectual in an uncaring world. (ASSK 1995:263)

• [ZO12] Shenon: But you can see a situation in which authority/influence could be shared?

ASSK: I don't think I'm going to talk about shared influence. I want the government of Burma, the political system of Burma, to be based on confidence, and any arrangement that can win the confidence of the people will be acceptable. You could have a nominal and token democratic government, but if the practical fact is such that the people have no confidence in it as a democracy it's no use at all. You can have a country where there's no constitution at all, such as Britain, but nevertheless it is a democracy and nobody doubts that it's a democracy, least of all its own people. They have confidence in the fact that the government's a democracy. But in fact there is no document which says 'these groups have this sort of influence. You must accept that it is very difficult for me to make pronouncements on important matters on my own. It's not what I want to do. Whatever is agreed on must be agreed on through discussion and through consensus among ourselves and perhaps eventual compromise with other groups ...

I do know that a lot of us in the NLD were very anxious about giving the opposition a proper role, honoring it, respecting it, giving it an effective role ... I don't know what's happened to the National Unity Party (NUP) now, but certainly if the NLD had been allowed to form a government at that time [after the election] I'm sure that we would have heard a lot more of the NUP's voice than we do. We would have allowed them a very loud voice in government. This is a sort of pseudo-Golkar party, the USDA (Union Solidarity and Development Association). (ASSK 1995:256-57)

• [ZO13] Would you consider it an interference if an Asean country starts commenting about the pace of democratic change in Burma?

ASSK: I don't think so because the world is getting smaller all the time. We have to accept that no country is really free from external influence. We are all subject to some degree to international opinions and external influence. There is, of course, a limit as to how far people can be allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of a nation. One does not expect them to come marching in or to introduce measures that would interfere

with our sovereignty. But if we care about our regional peace and stability we should care about the kind of governments that are in place in those countries. ('People are more important.' *The Nation*, 01.08.1995)

• [ZO14] The West-influenced puppet actress Mrs Race Destructionist and her cohorts connived with the neocolonialists by going to the embassy, holding talks, writing letters and holding discussions. The final result was to commemorate the founding of that autocratic league and to hold a general meeting from Friday 27th September through 29th September. (Pauk Sa. 'What do you think? The ugly American.' *Kyemon*, 14.10.1996, pp 6, 7)

• [ZO15] For her own good and for the good of the country she had to be restrained in order to prevent her from promoting the cause of these unsavory political elements who found their way and got themselves into positions of influence around her to create disunity among the only unified establishment left in the country, the *tatmadaw* (military). (Ohn Gyaw. 'SLORC tells reason for Suu Kyi's detention.' *The Nation*, 21.12.994)

• [ZO16] Adopted sons and daughters of the colonialists, under external influence, are attempting to cause the disintegration of the union and the loss of independence ... Without seeing to national well-being they are moving to cause disruption to the national convention only for their party's interest ... It is necessary to be aware of all attempts of internal and external subversive elements to cause change in the nation's path towards political, economic and social objectives. (Gen. Khin Nyunt cited in 'Suu Kyi accused of trying to break Burma.' *Bangkok Post*, 26.12.1995.)

• [ZO17] ... in the fight to repulse the Leik, and to regain the lost independence, beginning with Bo Min Yaung, Saya San counted in the middle, and Bogyoke Aung San and his comrades in the end, patriotic heroes had emerged, that beginning with 1905, the GCBA, the Group of 21, Fabian, Myo Chit, AFPFL, Communists (Red & White Flag) political parties had also emerged but that the one and only institution that involves the different nationals, purely nationalistic, with no party influence, uninterruptedly working for the weal of the nation and still continuing in that direction has been the *Tatmadaw* founded with the leadership of Bogyoke Aung San, and that this organization and its members must get to play a participatory leadership role in the discussions and endeavours for the wellbeing of the future State ... (Myo Chit. 'Let's tell the truth - 8'. *NLM*, 29.06.1996)

See also [D8], [E1], [E13], [S8].

¹ *NLM*, 17.10.1996 (BBC SWB, 13.12.1996.)

² (BurmaNet News, 15.02.1994 version of interview of Michael Richardson with ASSK not in ASSK 1995:253).

³ Henry (ed.), 'Poverty, Progress and Development'. p. 34

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