

# A life of sacrifice history essay



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November 13, 2010 wasn't a special day to many people. But to about fifty million Burmese, it might be the turning point of their lives. On that day, a lady called Aung San Suu Kyi was released from detention. In front of her house, a crowd of her supporters gathered together to celebrate the release. The lady is the pro-democracy leader of Burma and has been detained for 15 of the past 21 years, most of it under house arrest. Define Moral courage & Thesis statement.

Aung San Suu Kyi was the only daughter of Aung San, the man considered to be the founder of modern Burma. Unfortunately, Suu Kyi was only two years old when her father was assassinated in 1948. She hardly remembered anything about this great man. "But even though I never really knew him," she said, 'I was always told how much the Burmese people loved and revered him.'" (The Lady) Aung San Suu Kyi spent a lot of time learning about her father's philosophy and commitment to the cause of independence. This desire to understand her father's feelings eventually translated into the belief that she had to finish the job that her father had begun.

When Aung San Suu Kyi was fifteen years old, her mother Khin Kyi was appointed Burmese ambassador to India. As a result, Suu Kyi moved to India to accompany her mother. Upon arriving in India, Suu Kyi spent one year in a strict convent school. The following year she attended Delhi University, where she learned about political science. During the first few years when Suu Kyi lived in India, she explored the lessons of passive resistance of Mahatma Ghandi and Jawaharlal Nehru. When Suu Kyi was accepted at St. Hugh's College at Oxford, she left Delhi University. " As an undergraduate at

St. Hugh's in Oxford, Suu Kyi was remembered as very demure and genuinely innocent, yet with a strong sense of belonging to the Burmese elite." (The Lady 48). Two years after Suu Kyi received her degree, she left for New York. When Suu Kyi arrived in New York to stay with Ma Than E, the older woman had just started working at United Nations headquarters. At Ma Than E's suggestion, Suu Kyi decided to resume her studies at a later date and instead apply for a job at the United Nations.

In March 1988, Suu Kyi received a call from a close family friend in Burma, informing Suu Kyi that her mother had suffered a severe stroke. Almost immediately, Suu Kyi began packing. " I had a premonition," Michael wrote in the introduction to a collection of essays about his wife, " that our lives would change forever." (Burma's Iron 'Aunty') The next morning Suu Kyi was on a plane heading to Burma.

When Aung San Suu Ki arrived in Rangoon to care for her mother, General Ne Win's military socialist government had been in power for twenty-six years. During that time, Burma had gone from being one of the richest nations in Southeast Asia to one of the poorest, most isolated, and most corrupt countries in the world. Thousands of monks, students, and ordinary civilians took to the streets in protest against the government. " For weeks, as Suu Kyi nursed her mother in the hospital, the violence intensified, with groups of young people marauding through the streets of Rangoon."(The lady 56) By June, the doctors announced that there was no hope that Suu Kyi's mother would recover. Suu Kyi made the decision to take her mother home to University Avenue, where she could die peacefully in her own room.

Aung San Suu Kyi has never claimed that when she came to Burma in 1988, it was to lead a pro-democracy movement. " It wasn't as if the students were organized in definite political groups in 1988," Suu Kyi once explained. " The democracy movement evolved out of general chaos that was everywhere in Burma. It was this climate of rebellion that caused many political groups to emerge, which eventually coalesced into a democracy movement." On August 8, 1988, a day known as the " Four 8s," a nationwide strike was called and that included students, civilians, lawyers, doctors, monks and civil servants. Crowds surged into the streets for a pro-democracy demonstration. Sein Lwin responded by ordering troops to open fire. However, the demonstrations continued and the death toll mounted. As Suu Kyi nursed her dying mother, she was kept informed daily of the news and mourned those who lost their lives on the streets of Burmese cities. By then, rumors that Aung San Suu Kyi was in the country had already spread.

Many people believed that the presence of General Aung San's daughter in Burma meant that more than fifty years of repression, civil unrest, and violence would finally end. All of a sudden, pictures of General Aung San became a prominent symbol of the pro-democracy movement. In response to the hundreds of thousands of people who continued to demonstrate throughout the countries, Aung San Suu Kyi wrote an open letter to the government proposing that a committee be formed for the sole purpose of leading the country toward multiparty elections. Within days, Suu Kyi became a public figure, speaking out for human-rights and liberal free-market economic system.

On August 26, surrounded by her supporters, she spoke to a crowd estimated at half a million people. Her message was simple: nonviolence, human-rights, and democracy. For Burmese, Suu Kyi "not only was a poignant reminder of the past, but a living symbol of hope for the future."

(Body paragraphs continued, influence of Buddhism,

In 1991, this once obscure Burmese woman, when she had been living in exile for more than two decades and had been under house arrest for three years, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. There was no better way for the pro-democracy movement in Burma to make the world aware of the political repression throughout the country than for Aung San Suu Kyi and to have won the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet, there were many people, especially within Daw Suu Kyi's inner circle, who feared that winning the prize would make it even more difficult for Daw Suu Kyi and the SLORC to come to any compromise.

As the eighth woman in history to win the peace prize, and the first to receive it while in captivity, Daw Suu Kyi became the focus of a variety of human-rights groups throughout the world, as well as the United States Department of State under the Clinton administration-which suddenly put the pro-democracy movement in Burma high on its international agenda.

(The lady)

Prior to the summer protests, there had been growing unease in the population regarding the economic distress of the country which has stagnant economic growth and is ranked among the 20 poorest countries in the world according to the United Nations.[9] Many, including the United

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Nations have blamed the economic problems on the leadership of the military junta and the proportion of national income spent on the armed forces. In late 2006, the cost of basic commodities began rising sharply in Burma with rice, eggs, and cooking oil increasing by 30-40%. According to the BBC, on 22 February 2007, a small group of individuals protested the current state of consumer prices in the country. While the protest was small and careful not to be seen as directed at the military junta, officials jailed nine of the protesters. The military junta detained eight people on Sunday, 22 April 2007 who took part in a rare demonstration in a Yangon suburb amid a growing military crackdown on protesters. A group of about ten protesters carrying placards and chanting slogans staged the protest Sunday morning in Yangon's Thingangyun township, calling for lower prices and improved health, education and better utility services. The protest ended peacefully after about 70 minutes, but plainclothes police took away eight demonstrators as some 100 onlookers watched.

On 15 August 2007 the government removed subsidies on fuel causing a rapid and unannounced increase in prices.[11] The government, which has a monopoly on fuel sales, raised prices from about \$1. 40 to \$2. 80 a gallon, and boosted the price of natural gas by about 500%.[9] This increase in fuel prices led to an increase in food prices. Soon afterwards, protesters took to the streets to protest the current conditions. These peaceful protests of September 2007 in Burma were not brought to any significant conclusion. The protests were not brought by opposition groups, or foreign governments. However, the Burmese lay people, and the monks were frustrated with the economic and political situation of the country. When the time came activists

monks successfully brought together the people of Burma to protest. These protests gave sight to many young people to witness first-hand the brutality of an authoritarian government, thus making them realize the sacrifices the people had to make while fighting for political changes in Burma.

Furthermore, the junta agreed to talk to the opposition because they want a win-win situation for all. The catch being that the opposition groups follow the rules of the government as of now. Despite all of the talks going on between groups, true democratic changes are still far from being obtained, making the political future of the country uncertain.

On the evening of May 3, 2009, Yettaw swam a 2-kilometer (1.25-mile) distance across Lake Inya in Rangoon to the house where Aung San Suu Kyi was held under house arrest by Myanmar authorities. He asked Suu Kyi if he could stay at the house for a few days. She refused, and her caretakers threatened to turn him in to the authorities, but Suu Kyi agreed to let him stay on the ground floor after he began to complain about leg cramps. The Myanmar government requires all non-family overnight visitors to be registered and forbids overnight stays by foreigners. As a result of the 2009 visit, the authorities declared that Suu Kyi breached the conditions of her house arrest.[25] She was charged under the country's Law Safeguarding the State from the Dangers of Subversive Elements, which carried a three-to-five-year jail term.

(legacies and influences)

One of the most difficult challenges that Aung San Suu Kyi faces is not only to bring democracy to Burma, but to achieve that goal without putting the

people at risk. (her nonviolence philosophy) It is a difficult task since the Burmese people have been shut off from the rest of the world for decades, and do not believe democracy and freedom to be their inalienable rights. As a result, Daw Suu Kyi's role lies somewhere between that of a politician who leads the people toward democracy, and a spiritual figure who encourages people to take their initiatives in riding the country of an oppressive regime.

For the majority of the Burmese people, the most important sacrifice that Aung San Suu Kyi made for them was not giving in to the SLORC's demands during the six years that the military kept her under house arrest. The SLORC insists that at any time during those years. The lady always had the choice of safe passage out of Burma in a car to the airport and a free one-way ticket back to England where she had been living for the last two decades. For Suu Kyi, that was always an unacceptable alternative. It is also her credit that she refused a sign of courage and stamina that she remained steadfast in her commitment to bring democracy to her country of birth. (The lady)

Since 1988, when Aung San Suu Kyi first became visibly involved in the struggle for democracy, the people have become even devoted and loyal to her, more committed to the cause of freedom in Burma, and more dependent on her to bring their plight to the world's attention. If that were not the case, the NLD would have never survived-and grown-despite all the obstacles the government has put in its way since 1988.

(Conclusion)

" Courage means to work for what you believe with perseverance and to be strong and to have good will. It's not courageous to use one's physical

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strength and to shout loudly," said Suu Kyi. It is undeniable that Aung San Suu Kyi demonstrated her moral courage. Her sense of responsibility helped Burmese achieve their final goal.

Her own little step was a big step to democracy progress in Burmese

Unplayed Piano.