



# MONLAND UPDATE

Monthly E-Publication by  
Information & Research, Mon Unity League  
May, 2007

## Mon People's Movement

The Mon people over the world including some village and city communities in Mon areas southern part of Burma held 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hongsawatoi Fallen Day on May 8, with objective to increase international awareness on the rights of ethnic Mon people those even enjoyed the rights to greater autonomy rights in their history and whose country was annexed in 1757. This is a memorial day of a genocide against Mon people by a Burmese king during 250 ago. Mon organizations around the world and based in Thailand issued a Statement on this memorial day and called a solidarity among all Mon people to struggle in order to achieve the ultimate and sacred goal of national liberation, sovereignty and dignity of Mon people. *(Ref: International Statement of 250<sup>th</sup> Hongsawatoi Fallen Day)*

*Monland Update is a monthly E-publication of Mon Unity League (MUL) for a historical records of Monland and the activities of MUL in Thailand and Thailand-Burma border for the rights of self-determination to Mon people*

President of New Mon State Party, Nai Htaw Mon, also urged the participants in a celebration in Thailand-Burma border that even though all of the Mon people regret for the enormous loss of their nation, women, children and Buddhist monks during genocide committed by Burman King U Aung Ze Ya (Alungphaya) during 250 years ago, but they must keep movement with consistent endeavor until the Mons can re-establish their nation or to achieve the rights to self-determination again. *(Ref: MUL Information Sheet 1/2007)*

## SPDC's Politics in Monland

With a long term plan to grip in power, the SPDC (*State Peace and Development Council*) began moving some of military commanders from commanding posts to government departments as government officials in Mon area *(Ref: Guiding Star Mon Newspaper)*. It is an preparation of SPDC to position their strong cadres in the posts of the government servants and administrative departments, authorities in cities and towns, leaders of USDA (*Union Solidarity and Development Association*) with a plan to effectively support their 7-points road. The political analysts believed that the SPDC will complete their National Convention in this 2007 and arrange for a 'people referendum' in order to approve their draft Constitution drawn from NC. The commanders who shift into administrative departments, government servants, USDA leaders and other SPDC-supporters will manage to have a majority vote from the people in this People Referendum, which is second step of SPDC's 7-points road map.

A Mon leader from Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF) expressed a concern on the establishment of a nuclear reactor and research center with the help of North Korean government. Mon leader said the SPDC has no intention to improve the country's economics and development

programs, but increasingly strengthening their military power ([Ref: Independent Mon News Agency - IMNA](#)).

If there is a foreign invasion to Burma, the SPDC said the people also need to prevent their sovereignty of Burma along with the Burmese Army, *tatmadaw*. Because of this policy, the local battalions of Burmese Army forced the civilians especially men in both towns and villages to attend basic military training schools. Military trainers teach them how to use rifle and train them to act like soldiers. They were also formed as 'military force' after training ([Ref: IMNA](#)).

## Economics

Border check-point in Three Pagoda Pass that connects Mon State and Thailand for trading and border business have closed after a conflict between DKBA (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army) and Thai border police in March 2007. Trading and business activities in the area have relatively decreased and the SPDC authorities blinded their eyes for illegal imports of goods and gasoline from Thailand. Prices of commodities that need to import from Thailand increase gradually, and gasoline price hit the increase of other good prices.

The Burma (Myanmar) – Thai Regional Border Committee held an annual meeting in Moulmein (Mawlamyaing), the capital of Mon State, and discussed on the issues relating border security, trading, migration, drug, etc. However, the meeting could not solve the border problems, Three Pagoda Pass border point remains closing. Illegal trading or imports of goods from Thailand continues from this border point ([Ref: IMNA and Kao Wao News](#)).

Rubber plantation has been grown in Mon State and Thailand-Burma border by Mon farmers after the increase price of rubber compound sheets. Many tons of rubber compound sheets from Mon State and Tenasserim Division have exported to Thailand and China. Mon agriculture exports in Mon State create up 'many rubber seedling fields' and re-sell rubber plants to farmers who plan to grow rubber. Amid the concerns of land confiscation by the SPDC authorities, land price in Mon State have gradually increased because many Mon farmers want to plant rubber trees.

Betel-nuts farmers are worrying on long dry weather because they can not feed sufficient water for their plantations and concerning on the possible reduction of betel-nut crops production, especially in Ye Township. Betel-nut is the main imported crops from Mon State to other parts of Burma. ([Ref: Kao Wao News](#))

## Education

Mon National Education Committee (MNEC), facilitated education careers under the New Mon State Party's Education Department, plans for a new Academic Year of Mon National Education Program and starts recruitment of Mon teachers. Mon education officials said it is a difficult time for them to find sufficient number of teachers for over 250 Mon National Schools in Mon State, Karen State, Tenasserim Division and Thailand-Burma border area, because MNEC could support a very limited wages, approximately 15, 000 Kyat (~ 12 US Dollar or 400 Baht) per month for a full-time teacher. The wages are supported by a donor agency and foods or other school materials are supported by the communities. ([Ref: Consultation with an MNEC official](#))

After one-year of teaching Mon language to Mon children in Thai government school in Weng-ka Mon village in Sangkhlaburi District of Kanchanaburi Province, the Mon teachers are permitted to teach Mon language in another academic year 2007-2008 which begins in May 2007 and ends in March 2008. In this academic year, about 15 Mon teachers will have to take responsibility for teaching of Mon language in the classes of Kindergarten I and II, Elementary Classes (Grade I to Grade III) and Secondary Classes (Grade IV to Grade VI). Due to demands from school headmaster, the Mon teachers plan to find more volunteer teachers ([Ref: MUL Information Sheet 2/2007](#)).

Thai government's Ministry of Education (MOE) also did assessment on the migrant education in Thailand. The group from MOE made a visit to Samut Sakhon Province, western of Bangkok, where most Mon migrants workers are staying. MOE officials said that they are just supporting for education regardless of ethnicity belonged to migrant children. In a Thai school where the ethnic Mon, Karen and Burman students are studying, a local Thai NGO, Labour Rights Promotion Network (LRPN), provided a Burman teachers in the past and let the all different ethnic children learned Burmese language. Mon migrant community complained about that and later LRPN employed a Mon teacher in that school. [\(Ref: Talking with a Thai-Mon academic\)](#)

## Health

At the beginning of rainy season, the children under 15 years old suffered from dangué, a type of dianosis because of mosquito bikes. There was an outbreak of dangué in Mon State and many hundreds suffered from dianosis and about 40 children died due to lack of medical treatment or late treatment in Ye, Thanbyuzayat and Moulmein hospitals. About 600 children were brought to Moulmein Hospital to receive treatment since the end of April until 2<sup>nd</sup> week of May, while many children in rural areas did not receive well treatments. [\(Ref: IMNA\)](#)

Malaria problem in the Thailand-Burma border among the displaced communities occurred against as the rainy season started. Number of patients those suffer from malaria have increased accordingly to the Mon medics who work in a border hospital. Some patients who live in Three Pagoda Pass town said that they could not rely on the town hospital because there is no available medicines for malaria treatment and some severe patients were to bring to clinics and hospitals in a Thai border district. [\(Ref: Talking with a community leader\)](#)

## Human Rights

**Forced Labour:** Gross human rights violations against civilians in Mon State continuously committed by SPDC (*State*) authorities and members of Burmese Army, *tatmadaw*. In southern part of Ye Township especially in the area close to Khaw-za Sub-town, the *tatmadaw* Infantry Battalion No. 31 ordered the villagers to construct roads and bridges. The villagers from every village in the area have been daily forced to work. In building concrete bridge that replaced to wooden one, the SPDC provided a very limited fund, the villagers have also need to provide fund. The Burmese Army ordered to re-build about 46 bridges in the area. [\(Ref: Human Rights Foundation of Monland – HURFOM\)](#)

**Land and Properties Confiscation:** In order to provide lands for housing to newly Karen surrender group, the KNU/KNLA Peace Council, led by Gen.Htay Maung, the SPDC authorities confiscated some lands in Kawkareik Township, Karen State. Then, the Mon and Karen villagers in the area also have to support money for the house construction project for this group [\(Ref: IMNA\)](#). Many Mon villages are locating along Gyaing River in Kawkareik Township.

With a plan to use cars in their army battalions and government departments, the authorities in Mon State also confiscated unlicensed cars and motor-bikes imported from Thailand. In previous years, the authorities allowed to import these automobiles to Mon State from Thailand, but later they planned to confiscate them [\(Ref: HURFOM\)](#).

**Population Displacement:** The troops of Burmese Army suspected the Mon villagers in southern part of Ye Township (*in Mon State*) and Yebyu Township (*in Tenasserim Division*) as supporters to a Mon rebel group and the villagers have been humanely mis-treated. Additionally, the villagers' movement are restricted to work at their farms and orchard plantations. Some villagers fled into NMSP area while many of them fled to Thailand [\(Ref: HURFOM\)](#).

**Extortion and Taxation:** The families in Mon State are forced to purchase physic nut (caster oil) seedlings or seeds to grow them in the SPDC project to produce 'bio-diesel' to replace for gasoline. The police in Paung Township of Mon State collected tax from families which their family members are working abroad, Thailand or Malaysia, as tax from migrant workers (*Ref: IMNA*).

## Literature & Culture

16 Township of Mon communities in Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division conducted "Mon Literacy and Buddhist Culture" Trainings from mid-April to mid-May under the leadership of Mon Literature and Buddhist Culture Association or Mon Buddhist monks organizations. About 60, 000 students in the age range between 5 and 15 years old attended the training. The training took 4 weeks to 5 weeks session and the location of training are in various Mon monasteries. At the end of May, almost Townships completed their training.

Training organizers expressed there are have less boys if compared with girls in training classes. But there is no information research on the issue why less number of boys in the classes (*Ref: IMNA*). There could be some reasons, some boys need to help their parents at home and work places, and some boys about 12-15 years old already left to Thailand for works.

Some religious heritages, old Mon Buddhist scripture and Buhhda statues, in the Kaw-gung cave in Pa-an Township, Karen State have been gradually destroyed by a ground vibration because of the hits of digging lime-stones nearby, to provide Myaingkalay's cement factory. According to witnesses, the Mon Buddhist scriptures which was written on the walls of the cave over 1000 years ago, have been dropped down to the grounds piece by piece. Buddha statues similarly are similarly destroyed (*Ref: Guiding Star Mon Newspaper and consulting with a local cultural expert*).

## Migration

After Songkaran new year festival, hundreds of Mon migrant workers from Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division have poured into Thailand in order to seek works illegally. On May 24, about 160 migrant workers were arrested by Thai authorities in Three Pagoda Pass border area. It is a difficult way to get into Thailand by crossing the border and sneaked in jungle route until the destination work place. Migrant workers are suffered from various diseases in the jungles. Some migrant workers those traveled by cars faced car accident and killed on the way. Female migrant worker in Samut Prakan (Mahachai) District faced sexual assaults by unknown gang (*Ref: IMNA*).

Mon migrant workers in Malaysia faced arrests by the Malaysia policemen and the authorities. 19 Mon ethnic migrants were arrested on May 7 and an UNHCR card holder was in the group. The UNHCR card holder is a Mon Refugee Organization (MRO) executive committee member working as a volunteer for health care program of Mon migrant workers in Malaysia (*Ref: IMNA*).

For more detail information, please visit the following Web-sites:

- Independent Mon News Agency (IMNA) – [www.monnews.com](http://www.monnews.com), [www.monnews-imna.com](http://www.monnews-imna.com)
- Kao Wao News Group – [www.kaowao.org](http://www.kaowao.org)
- Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) – [www.rehmonnya.org](http://www.rehmonnya.org)

# MUL Role & Activities in Mon Community (May 2007)

## 1. Hongsawatoi Fallen Day

MUL leadership with the coordination of other organizations including New Mon State Party held 250 Anniversary of Hongsawatoi Fallen Day in Sangkhlaburi, a border town bordering with Burma's Three Pagoda Pass area. Similarly, MUL leadership in Bangkok by coordination with Mon monastery, Wat Pom Wichien and Mon migrant workers communities in Samut Sakhon District in Thailand held the similar Memorial Day. Over a hundred people attended in the Sangkhlaburi ceremony and over 200 people attended the ceremony in Wat Pom Wichien monastery.

## 2. Mon Language Teaching in Thailand

### A. Education Program in Mon Migrant Community

MUL President, Nai Sunthorn Siripanngern, accompanied the officials and Education Experts from Royal Thai Government's Ministry of Education (MOE) to Samut Sakhon Province in order to access the situation of Mon language teaching classes and meeting with local education officials.

Brief report is as below:

- The group was led by Dr. Wisnee Singhtakul, director of Non-Formal Education Department, Education Ministry, Miss Anong, Mrs Bussaba and officials from Samut Sakhon office Director Mr Anek Panthip and Mrs Sangwan. First we went to "Thai Mon Development Center" where have about 400 migrant workers and teaching basic education in Thai, Mon and English. Each student paid 50 Baht/month for rent of the office and traveling cost for the teachers. Although most of the students have labor cards, their children have none, so some times the police arrested these children while attending the class. The visiting officials have no authority over the police, but said to call a meeting in the near future by inviting local authorities concerned for better cooperation.
- The second place was Wat Bangyaphrek, which has about 150 children. This place is no need to rent office because the abbot provides a building for teaching and a truck for school bus. Since it was opened two years ago, it never had problem with local authorities and neighbors although all the children was of migrant workers as well as the teachers. They use Mon text books which are widely using in Mon State from primary up to secondary school. The school has some local Thai volunteers to teach basic Thai language. The visiting group has suggested applying for official recognition.
- The last place to visit was Wat Siri Mongkhul School where Mon migrant workers held Mon National Day Celebration in February. This school has about 260 students of which about 60 are Thai, about 120 are Mon and the other 80 are Karen, Thavoy, Shan and Burmese. The school teaches all in Thai, but since the children of migrant workers are not fluent in Thai, it provides a pre-Thai class with Burmese speaking teacher. However it found a problem for most of the children are Mon speaking and not fluent in Burmese. The visiting group asked the school master to make the list of ethnicity of the children of migrant workers for better solution.

### B. Mon Language Teaching in Thai School in Sangkhlaburi

MUL General Secretary, Nai Kasauh Mon, collaborated with community leaders and teachers from Wengka Mon village and helped in planning in the recruitment of Mon teachers and curriculum development for the children.

There are some needs accordingly to the report as below:

- Full-time teachers in Kindergarten classes constantly need about 5000 Baht per month wage in order to carry on their teaching to the small kids for a whole day.

- Mon textbooks need to print out for the children and therefore, they can learn Mon language at their homes. Currently Mon teachers are developing textbooks for Kindergarten Level and Elementary Level. Donations for printing of the textbooks are needed.
- About 2 sets of computers and a printer will be needed to print for draft Textbooks, lesson plans of the teachers, meeting minutes, and other administrative purposes.
- The Mon teachers suggest that they need to build up an office and school classes in the school compounds. If they have office, they can operate their administrative works and teachers can take a rest during mid-day of breaks. The building cost will be around 100, 000 Baht.

### **3. Help Thai Ramen Association**

The meeting of Thai Raman Association (TRA) about the election for a new president after late president Dr. Su-Ed passed away on 28 April 2007. The election of TRA president will be held on 24 June 2007. The executive members of TRA agreed for appointing MUL President Nai Sunthorn Sripanngern to work as coordinator of TRA in order to have better networks with various Mon organizations. TRA is a core networking organization of MUL.

#### **Note:**

MUL stands for networking the Mon Civil Society Organizations in building their capacities and coordinate with them for all activities benefit to the Mon people and reach ultimate goal of restoring Monland.