

Abstract

This thesis tries to reflect the situation of Burmese democracy activist students who fled from Burma to Thailand. They are facing oppression and aggressions in Burma as they are in an ideological conflict with the Burmese dictatorship. To show the situation and the conflicts of these students we interviewed five representative Burmese democracy activist students who live in Thailand in order to write down their biographies.

The results we found during these interviews are as following:

Burmese democracy activist students in Thailand are facing two main problems:

- 1). In Burma these students, as they are democrats, are in conflict with the military regime which leads to confrontations with their government and makes it impossible for them to continue their studies in Burma.
- 2). In Thailand they are confronted with another kind of conflict concerning their relationship to the Thai people. This conflict has its roots in the historical relationship between Burma and Thailand. Ayudhaya has been colonized twice by Burma, in 1569 and 1767. Especially in 1767 Burmese troops tortured Thai people, burned palaces and melted down the gold from the Pagodas. This caused a lot of hatred in the Thai people and so they regarded the Burmese as enemies. This feeling for the Burmese still affects the acting of today's Thai people towards Burmese. So negative prejudices against Burmese are still supported especially by the media. For example in school lessons and books or in the news the stereotype of the *bad and evil* Burmese is still taught. Also the stories the Thais tell each other from generation to generation about the Burmese wars hold up only the negative picture of the Burmese coming to Thailand and burning Ayudhaya but does not tell about positive aspects of Burmese culture and people. The image of today's Burmese people is still bad which and by reports about criminality amongst Burmese or dangerous diseases such as Malaria brought to Thailand from

Burma support this as well. These kind of reports usually only show negative aspects of Burmese people and culture but rarely show the positive sides as well. So Thai people still have the image of the Burmese as enemies.

Burmese student must look for a way to survive in Thai Society. They came to Thailand because of political conflicts in their country so in Thailand they are still politically active and they have to find ways and means to find support, for example financial support by funding agencies. Their political activities include demonstrations in front of the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok, holding meetings and selling products which promote their political campaigns.

This thesis tries to understand the special way of life of Burmese student who fled to Thailand with all its problems and conflicts.