



LOGOS

- the journal of CAPSR, the Community Association
of Pacific School of Religion

October 2007

Free Burma Now!

by Audrey deCoursey,
Foreign Affairs Analyst for LOGOS

You have probably noticed in the news recently that there has been unrest in the Southeast Asian nation of Burma (renamed by its military government Myanmar). Since mid-August, Buddhist monks and others have been mobilizing against a government-imposed rise in fuel prices. In September, the monks took to the streets in protest, and were soon joined by laity. An unknown number of demonstrators were killed in the army's reaction to the marches. The monks' protests do not come out of nowhere, but are part of a much longer struggle for democracy. To remind us of that struggle, I offer the following analysis and historical summary.

History

Burma was colonized by the British as a province of India. The British were ousted by Japan in World War II, with Burmese aid. Japan was then itself ousted by a Burmese liberation army led by acclaimed general Aung San and Ne Win, the general who came to run the junta in the 1960s. Gen. Aung San and his anti-fascist party won the country's first elections in 1947, but he was assassinated later that year along with several other party members. In 1948, Burma gained independence, and was run as a democracy until 1962 when the military consolidated power under Gen. Ne Win. His junta seized control, and the country spiraled into the cycles of suffering and dissent that continue today.

Since 1962, the Burmese economy has soured, wealth
(continues on page 10)

NOVEMBER ISSUE SPOTLIGHT:
PETS AT PSR
MORE INFORMATION ON PAGE TWO



Learning and Teaching at the Frontiers of Faith Communities by Michael Sepidoza Campos

During the early summer, I had the opportunity to return to Hawai'i and minister with various church communities. The visit was prompted in part by an invitation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu to teach at the O'ahu Catechetical and Pastoral Enrichment Conference. The gathering brought together 60+ religious workers for fellowship and theological enrichment. Configured after the Pastoral Plan
(continues on page 8)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FRONTIERS OF FAITH COMMUNITIES...PAGES 1,
8-9
FREE BURMA.... PAGES 1, 10-11
EDITORIAL AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES....
PAGE 2
POOH'S PEARLS OF WISDOM..... PAGE 3
CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENTS..... PAGE 3
EMILY INTERVIEWS TAI-AMRI... PAGES 4-5
THE ASPHALT GOSPEL.... PAGE 6
JESUS OF IRAQ... PAGE 7
MEET THE PERSON ON THE QUAD.....PAGE 12

From the Editor

Having already written a rather long piece about Burma for this issue, I will try to keep my words here concise. I generally try to limit the amount of my content I print in LOGOS, because I figure you all have enough great contributions to fill this lil' rag, and you don't want to read 12 pages of Audrey's Thoughts on Life. You can always check out my blog (Brethren Priestess Online!) for that.

One great opportunity to get some more of YOUR content onto these pages will be coming at you next month in November. We have settled on a theme for the issue, one that nearly everyone here might have a (strong) opinion on: Pets at PSR.

Think about those dogs on the quad: Love it? Hate it? Does the sight of puppies scampering across green lawn inspire you to see the beauty of God's creation? Does it make you take the long way to get to class? Or are you peeved that dogs get all the attention, when we should be showering affection on the **ultimate** pet: the boa constrictor?

Conversations about our all animal companions, not just dogs, and how they participate in our PSR community, have been happening around campus for months. We hope that an issue spotlighting these conversations will invite more parties into the discussion and deepen the conversations we can have. LOGOS and CAPSR Council have no official position on this subject; we hope to simply facilitate the sharing of valuable perspectives that you all bring.

We know that there are many facets of the topic of PSR pets, and we're hoping to get voices that describe as many of those facets as possible. Your perspective matters to this discussion! Please consider writing anywhere from 1 to 1000 words on how you feel about pets and what you suggest for making animal-human relations at PSR as harmonious as possible.

So begin writing your reflections now, and send them on in. And if pets don't stoke your imagination, then you can start working on submissions for the December issue on "Seminarrians and the System." We've got a nice long fall break, which I'm sure you'll want to spend writing for your dear school newsletter!

I can't wait to hear from you.

- Audrey deCoursey

Logos Submission Guidelines

Who can submit

All members of the Pacific School of Religion community are invited to submit to Logos: students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, family members, and supporters of PSR.

What to submit

Original work of interest to the PSR community:

- Opinion pieces, news, feature stories
- Reviews: books, movies, concerts, albums, lectures
- Poetry, Prayers
- Event and group announcements
- Drawings
- Photography: artistic, news-related, social events

How to submit

Email: adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu

When to submit

Upcoming Priority Deadlines:

**November 4 (Sunday)
spotlight on Pets at PSR**

December 2 (Sunday)

spotlight on Seminarrians and the System:
Student Representation at PSR
and the Theology of Working with/in Institutions

More guidelines

- Please limit submissions to 1,000 words.
- Publication is subject to the needs of the newsletter and the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief and Logos Editorial Board. The Editor-in Chief and Editorial Board reserve the right to edit submissions for publication.

-If you have any questions about submissions, feel free to talk with the Editor-in-Chief or email her at adecoursey@psr.gtulink.edu.

Thanks. We look forward to hearing from you.



POOH'S PEARLS OF WISDOM

Frankenstein Peek-A-Pooh's Halloween Haiku:
Advice for choosing a costume

“Wear something lacey
And you will be a shoe-in
To be my sole mate”

(written by Guy BenMoshe)

All are invited to view the
first DVD from
The Alpha Course,
sponsored by GTU's
**evangelical
Round
Table**
(eRT)

Join us on **Tuesday, November 6, 5 - 6:30 pm** in the **Dinner Board Room of the GTU library** to view a DVD presentation by Rev. Nicky Gumbel, vicar of HTB, London and teacher for the Alpha Course. Over 10 million people have taken the course world-wide.

We will look at the uniqueness of Christianity, followed by discussion. Bring your supper if you wish. Snacks will be available.

*For more information,
email ert@ses.gtu.edu,
call Bonnie at 510-786-7453,
or Blake at 510-845-0945.*

You are invited to participate in
V-Day 2008 @ PSR...

This year, we will be producing **the Vagina Monologues**, as well doing some other organizing on campus during the week of **Valentine's Day** in the spring. We are looking for actresses (actresses are limited to female identified persons in respect of the V-Day Campaign rules) and all kinds of support help.

Students, spouses, partners, faculty, staff and whoever else is interested are warmly invited to participate in this event. Please encourage any vagina warriors (this is not a gender-specific attitude by the way...) you know to participate.

Actresses can audition on **October 16 from 5:30-7 pm or October 17 from 11:30 am- 1 pm.** Please meet Corey H. in the lobby of the Mudd Building. If you cannot make either of these dates, contact us ASAP. You will need to audition prior to the 17th.

This a community building performance, and consistent with the values of V-Day, everyone who auditions will be cast in the show. Auditions/first readings will be a process for seeing who is appropriate for what roles, as well as the introduction to the commitment of the show. You will be asked to read something, from selections that will be available at the reception desk on Thursday, Oct. 11.

There are plenty of supporting roles to be filled if the stage is not for you... contact Kelly Williams at kellyjotexas@gmail.com or Abby King Kaiser agkkaiser@gmail.com for a list of positions and to apply. Visit www.vday.org for more information about the Vagina Monologues, and contact Abby or Kelly with any questions!

Support V-Day... until the violence stops.

EMILY'S INTERVIEW: TAI-AMRI SPANN-WILSON

Hey you! Yeah, you! Get to know your fellow PSR community members a little bit better. Below is an interview I, Emily Joye McGaughy, conducted with PSR student Tai-Amri Spann-Wilson. There will be more to come, with other PSR students, staff and faculty in the future. Readers enjoy!

EJ: What's your full name?

TASW: Tai Amri Spann-Wilson

EJ: Tell me about the first time you stepped foot on the PSR campus.

TASW: It was almost a year ago. I moved to the East Bay for a girl, which is a bad idea. I actually wanted to go to Starr King, and then I got an email from PSR for a prospective student of color reception. I was just pretty shocked that they had anything for students of color. I was impressed by that. When I got here, we met in the Bade. It was nighttime. I was struck by how profound our conversation was. I felt that the prospective students were seeking deeply.

EJ: What does "seeking" look, sound, and feel like to you?

TASW: I was raised Quaker and seeking was a big part of our language. When meeting for our Sunday worship, we would sit in silence. That silence was described to me as "seeking for the divine will." So silence is one part of it. The other part has been listening to my ancestors. My ancestors are often with me as I am seeking, helping to guide me.

EJ: What do your ancestors tell you?

TASW: My ancestors tell me that I need to heal a lot of the splits that I was raised in. I grew up in communities of a lot of privilege where I was the only person of color. From those experiences I've been able to see a lot of the destructive divisiveness that needs healing if we're going to move forward. I've also felt that I have different parts of myself that feel irreconcilable and yet my ancestors tell me ARE capable of being reconciled.



EJ: I have often felt that parts of me were irreconcilable too. I once had a

Jewish woman tell me that there's something beautiful about imagining our inner parts as the nations in Isaiah that shall not take up sword on each other, nor make war anymore. What do you think about that?

TASW: I was just reflecting on how the word "war" sat in me. It's true: when I was in college I wrote my thesis on the rise of hip-hop and I focused on Eminem because he has an interesting mixture of profundity and misogyny. I thought he was fairly representative of the people I grew up with. Writing about him was a practice of compassion and empathy. When I told my friends about this, they couldn't understand why I would write about him. And I've noticed that since that time, it's been much more difficult for me to have empathy and compassion for the misogyny in hip-hop. I'm also struggling to have compassion for myself in those some ways. That's basically what I'm looking at: how to dismantle it while also having that compassion.

EJ: Dismantle is an interesting word. We throw that phrase around quite a bit at PSR and it's been placed, quite intentionally I think, in our Strategic Plan around issues of race and cultural competency. Do you think there's spiritual significance in "dismantling?"

TASW: I definitely think it's problematic terminology, but I haven't ever found terminology that's not problematic. I've almost gotten to this place where I'm going to embrace it instead of try and figure out the "right" word. Part of my personal practice is keeping that dialogue open, but not trying to become too attached to doing it perfectly because I'm not perfect yet, but I will be.

EJ: Say more about perfection.

TASW: Perfection for me is feeling okay with myself and where I'm at. I think it's a state of being, but I have an image of it and I'm trying to let go of that image. I'm trying to be open to the possibility that I can feel okay about myself right now.

EJ: Tell me about where you've been living.

TASW: I have been living in the New Dharma Center for Urban Peace in South Berkeley. The teacher is the Rev. angel Kyodo Williams. She is an African American woman from New York ordained in Soto Zen. New Dharma is a spiritual community for the liberation of all peoples and Urban Peace is a non-profit that provides support for social activists. So while I have an intense Zen practice I also have many job responsibilities, like a public film series and media publications.

EJ: Why did you come to seminary?

TASW: When I was 14 my parents got divorced and I realized that I needed something a little more dynamic than Quakerism. A friend intro-

duced me to the Jesus of Pentecostal Church. I was born again and felt a calling to be a missionary almost immediately. I had my parents pull me out of Quaker school and enroll me in an Assemblies of God high school, where I became a model born-again Christian. After high school I went to college where I learned about many of the oppressions of the world that were not taught in my church or high school. I was so devastated that I began to seek in Buddhism. I got really involved in social activism, especially around ally work. But I always felt like there was an aspect of unconditional love missing in that work and began to realize that the calling I had when I was 14 was still there; it just had matured. So after college I took an internship at Pendle Hill: Quaker Study Center where I was what they called a Social Action Social Witness intern. I co-lead an after school program for inner-city youth outside Philadelphia. I began to look at seminaries while I was there.



EJ: Tell me anything else you want our community to know about you.

TASW: I am really interested in privilege and oppression, particularly how oppression affects the "oppressors." This is why my work right now is understanding how I have as a black man, been oppressed by patriarchy and how I can aid other men in their liberation from patriarchal roles.

EJ: One last question. Top 5 songs of all time.

TASW: 5) Ghetto Bastard by Naughty by Nature

4) Concrete Jungle by Bob Marley

3) Work Your Way Out by Ani DiFranco

2) Slippin' Into Darkness by WAR

1) Wild as the Wind by Nina Simone.

Walking the Asphalt Gospel by Meighan Pritchard

Why did ten progressive Christians walk across the country in 2006? Come see the movie to find out!

Last year I walked from Phoenix, Arizona to Washington, D.C. with a progressive Christian group called Cross-Walk America (www.crosswalkamerica.org). We were promoting a



document called the Phoenix Affirmations, which lists 12 statements about love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self - all very inclusive, progressive, and accepting. Along the way, we were hosted by churches of a variety of denominations: UCC, UMC, DOC, MCC, Presbyterian, Quaker, Catholic, American Baptist, and independent.

Traveling in our group of ten people were two filmmakers, who have now produced a film about this walk called *Asphalt Gospel*. Students, faculty, staff, and friends are all invited to see the film on Friday, November 2 at 7pm in PSR room 6. This event is eligible for Contextual Education credit. Suggested donations are \$5 for students, \$15 or more for non-students (no one turned away).

*You are invited
to the PSR screening of
Asphalt Gospel*
directed by Scott Griessel

**November 2, 2007
7:00 pm**

**PSR Room 6
(under the Chapel)**

**Suggested donation:
\$5 students, \$15 or
more for non-students
(no one turned away)**

**Contextual Education
Credit - Approved!**

Some churches disagreed with our stances, usually regarding our openness to multiple paths to God and our assertion that all people, no matter what race, gender, sexual orientation, age,



physical or mental ability, nationality, or economic class, are beloved by God and should be treated authentically, as Jesus did. Groups who disagreed with us on these issues often refused to host us; sometimes that became a story in itself.

We gave sermons, made presentations at countless church pot-lucks, and interacted with the media whenever we had the chance. In 20 weeks we covered 2,500 miles and made contact with over 11,000 people.

Photos courtesy of Scott Griessel



JESUS OF IRAQ

JESUS OF IRAQ,
TELL US THAT YOU DID NOT
DIE IN VAIN.
JESUS OF IRAQ,
TELL US THAT YOU WERE NOT
TORTURED, MAIMED, AND
MUTILATED IN VAIN.
TELL US THAT OUT OF THE
CARNAGE, THE WRECKAGE,
THE LIES, YOU RISE AGAIN,
AND YOU FORGIVE.

FORGIVE THOSE WHO
WAGE WAR IN YOUR NAME,
WHO PROFIT OFF THE
BLOOD OF INNOCENTS.
FORGIVE THE SOLDIERS
WHO MASSACRE,
MURDER, AND KILL
ALLIES BY MISTAKE.
FORGIVE THOSE OF US
WHO STOOD BY, AND
DID NOTHING.

-DAVID MADGALENE

(Frontiers of Faith Communities, continued from page 1)

for Adult Formation of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the conference addressed six dimensions of adult catechesis, according to the conference brochure: “knowledge of faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, communal life and missionary spirit.”

**CAPSR
SCHOLARSHIP
ARTICLE!**

Given the catechetical thrust of the conference, I offered a course that fostered a “conversational pedagogy” on Christology, incorporating issues of diversity, economic justice and political self-determination that were pertinent to the life of the local church. The purpose of the class was simple: to discover the roots of our Christological assumptions and so locate the specificity of local voices within these broader faith narratives. Image and music incarnated Jesus through shifting historical, political and theological paradigms. The interactions helped us consider and critique the relevance of theological language; we affirmed contemporary efforts to discern the Christian narrative within prevailing economic, gender, and ecological inequities. My encounter with fellow ministers gently encouraged fellowship, reinvigorating our vocation, hope and vision for the islands’ Catholic community.

Beyond the conference, my trip opened conversations with church leaders who comprise the PANA Institute’s broader Network on Religion and Justice (PANA is the acronym for the Institute for Leadership Development and Study of Pacific, Asian and North American Religions). Through the hospitality of Rev. Jonipher Kwong of the Ohana Metropolitan Community Church, we premiered and hosted a discussion of “In God’s House,” a documentary highlighting the lives of Asian/Pacific Island people of faith who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. The event drew nearly 20 people from various Honolulu churches.

Mrs. Susan Roth of the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries offered an articulate observation of the tenuous spaces occupied by LGBT faithful within churches that struggle to affirm their inclusion. Several attendees further remarked how tensions surrounding gender, faith and ethnicity among API faithful in the Bay Area stood in contrast with their experience in Hawai’i. While API-LGBT people of faith have had to assert spaces of inclusion in church, these spaces were not implicitly tied to questions of ethnicity. As an attendee maintained, the mixed—or hapa—cultures of the islands saw difference not as a stumbling block but as a necessary ingredient to ecclesial integration. Indeed, the evening’s gathering brought together faithful people from a diversity of perspectives and religious traditions - truly an encounter of difference that allowed for abundance and learning.

Political concerns bled into our faith conversations toward the end of the week as I learned that efforts were under way in the U.S. Senate to pressure Philippines president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to account for the extra-judicial killings of church and labor leaders in the Philippines. The PANA Institute has spent much of the past school year forming coalitions among Filipino and U.S. church leaders of various denominations precisely to urge civic society members to protest the unwarranted violence directed against church workers in the Philippines. Having worked closely with local Filipino activists on the issue, PANA’s Deborah Lee encouraged us to seek Senator Daniel K. Inouye’s support of the initiative. With the deft leadership of PSR alumnus Rev. Wally Fukunaga, we brought these concerns before Ms. Barbara Sakamoto, staff representative of the senator. Ms. Sakamoto affirmed the tenuous involvement of U.S. aid in the extra-judicial killings of faith workers in the Philippines and so promised to personally express our concerns to Sen. Inouye, who served in the Senate Appropriations Committee. The encounter intensified our resolve to pressure for accountability and transparency.



Though inundated with work, my brief return to Hawai'i opened forth opportunities to engage old and new friends in ministry. I traveled to teach, realizing later that learning assumed a committed engagement with denominational, gender, ethnic and political considerations. Teaching assumed a mutually transformative dynamic as I took stock of the various relationships that grounded my life. This not only broadened my understanding of "religious education," but reconfigured the frontiers of my ministerial commitment.

Rev. Fukunaga wisely observed that faith formation is never limited within the contours of church structures alone. The exigencies of the "real world" constitute the fiber of our faith. Relationships ground the loftiness of one's ideals and so move one to action. Ministry thus enlivens a baptismal imperative to the broader faith community with whom we claim accountability. As a student, it is easy for me to forget the simplicity—and privilege—of this commitment. For thus having renewed these life-giving encounters, I am deeply grateful to the PSR community for having shared its financial resources to open such spaces of conversation. *Mahalo* for your generosity.

Michael Sepidoza Campos is a Ph.D. student in Interdisciplinary Studies. His attendance at the 12-20 June 2007 conference in Honolulu, Hawai'i was subsidized in part by a scholarship from CAPSR, the Community Association of Pacific School of Religion.

For more information on the CAPSR Scholarship program, please contact CAPSR Treasurer Cathy Lauber at treasurer@capsr.org.

(Free Burma, from page 1)

concentrated in the hands of the ruling party. The junta has used a host of oppressive means to secure its control, from exploitation of the land's rich natural resources (especially timber, oil, gas, and minerals) to violence against the people of Burma (rape, displacement, forced labor, murder). High taxes on agricultural commodities like rice and fuel have extracted a heavy toll on rural laborers. Burma has the third highest number of refugees internationally, after Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 1988, on the auspicious date of August 8, mass student uprisings swept the country, calling for democracy. Rising leader Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of the national hero Aung San, returned to Burma from England to give a face and a voice to the movement. The military responded by arresting thousands and murdering at least 3,000 protestors. Many of the arrested protestors remained in prison for years. Gen. Ne Win was deposed by another general, Saw Maung, and his State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

In 1990, the SLORC agreed to hold national elections. They arrested Suu Kyi and members of her National League for Democracy (NLD) party to prevent campaigning, but the NLD still won 392 out of 485 seats in parliament, many of the others going to local ethnic group candidates. The junta refused to recognize the election results. In 1991, Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, though she could not attend the award ceremony in person because she was still detained under house arrest. She has spent over half of the years since 1988 under house arrest.

The SLORC renamed itself the State Peace and Development Council in 1997, and has undergone various leadership changes over the past two decades. The post-1988 government shifted its economic approach from supposed socialism to supposed capitalism, offering outside investors the happy notion that they could change the junta's ways through positive engagement. Yet, life for the Burmese people has not greatly improved.

The Junta

The Burmese military government has been called a *junta*, a government seized by a group of military members. Its Burmese name is the Tatmadaw, simply meaning 'armed forces.'

The Burmese junta acts as if from an Orwellian playbook. It reinforces its brutal tactics with repeated statements blaming dissidents for every ill the people experience, as if they can speak their way out of their guilt. It not only renamed itself

from the vicious-sounding SLORC, in attempts to improve its image. The junta also sought to distract international attention from its past violence by changing names of cities (changing *Rangoon* to *Yangon*) and the country itself, from *Burma* to *Myanmar*.

It justified these changes as returns to the local names from before British colonization (and concomitant butchering of local dialects in the transliteration into the English alphabet). Similar changes have been made elsewhere, such as the revived city names *Mumbai* and *Beijing*. Name-reclaiming is indeed an empowering post-colonial step.

In Burma, however, the democratic opposition parties have rejected the name change, and continue to call the country *Burma*. Using the name *Burma* instead of *Myanmar* is often taken as a show of solidarity with the people of the country until true democracy is restored.

The Diversity of Burma – Under Attack

Language is an important issue, as in any Westerner's discussion about a Two-Thirds World nation. For example, many of the citizens of Burma identify primarily with their ethnic identities, and are not Burman. They are Karen and Karenni, Chin and Arakan, Mon and Shan, Rohingya and Wa and Kachin. There is, thus, a distinction between 'the people of Burma,' and 'Burman people,' who are of a specific ethnicity.

Members of ethnic minorities in Burma have long struggled to maintain distinctive communities and cultures in the face of pressure from the junta and the Burman majority ethnic group. Burmans live in the flat, central area of the country, around Rangoon. Minority groups inhabit the hillier borders of the country. The border areas' wealth of natural resources has long incited tension with the Rangoon-based government.

The diversity of ethnic groups attest not only to cultural differences but religious and political ones, as well. Rohingya are Muslim, and live in the western part of the country, near Bangladesh. Living in the north, Chin are mostly Christian. Karen and Karenni people live along the Thai border in the east. Most Karen are Christian, but a significant Buddhist Karen faction broke off from the dominant Christian leadership of the Karen National Union, to form the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, which allied with the Rangoon junta.

Christian and Muslim people have been targeted for harassment by the Buddhist junta. The military's project of 'Burmanization' includes not only banning local languages in education, but also forced conversion to Buddhism.

***Timeline of Recent Burmese History
By World War II, Britain and Japan
ousted from Burma
1948-1962 relative stability, democracy
1962 junta, led by General Ne Win,
seizes power
1988 (August 8) major student demonstrations against junta; military responds with brutal violence, thousands murdered and jailed
1990 junta holds national election; National League for Democracy (Suu Kyi's party) and ethnic parties win by a landslide; junta then refuses to recognize the election results
1991 Suu Kyi wins Nobel Peace Prize
1996 junta changes country's name from Burma to Myanmar
2006 junta moves national capital from Rangoon/Yangon to Naypyidaw in interior
2007 major demonstrations led by monks flood Rangoon***

Why I am Writing About Burma

I am no expert on Burma (even though I have proclaimed myself a "Foreign Affairs Analyst for LOGOS"). My acquaintance with the country and its struggles were spawned in my high school activism for divestment from Burma. My relationship with Burma deepened when I spent a summer volunteering in Thailand with Burma Issues, an organization working for democracy and accountability. Burma Issues is also known as The Peace Way Foundation, and it can be found online with great archival resources at www.burmaissues.org.

treat from their lay life. Ordination is not a life-long identity, but a temporary role, allowing them to stay in touch with lay life.

Buddhist monks are leading the protests, because they are the most respected members of Burmese society. They are most respected because Buddhism is the dominant religion of the country. And because Buddhism is the dominant religion, the junta also claims its actions in the name of Buddhism. Burma's military regime overturns paternalistic Western idealizations by showing that Buddhists can be militant and intolerant as much as anybody else.

Not What You (i.e. I) Might Expect

The junta in Burma overturns many simplistic assumptions US Americans (like I) may have about injustice abroad.

Junta leadership borrow rhetoric from diverse international sources. Since 9/11, Bush's tough talk about terrorists has been a model for the Tatmadaw. Now, junta spokespeople can tap into that handy, inflammatory rhetoric of rooting out "terrorists" (be they students in Rangoon or ethnic minorities' militias) who are targeting the government.

Yet, the Tatmadaw is extremely fearful of Western military action. To this end, they talk up their anti-Western stance, meeting with anti-US leaders like Hugo Chavez. Part of the reason they moved the capital from to Naypyidaw (eight hours deeper into the interior) was to buffer themselves from invasion from the easily-accessible bay city of Rangoon. And while I do not support the US's unilateral invasions of countries anywhere, Burma's junta reminds me how false the saying is that "my enemy's enemy is my friend." The Tatmadaw are not the post-colonial freedom fighters they may cast themselves as.

This leads into another way the Burmese junta upsets my usual lens for viewing international injustices. When something violent happens, I usually look first at how my own nation, or the European nations of my ancestors, are causing or perpetuating the problem. But it's very hard for me blame the US for Burma's problems (as much as I might want to!). In fact, the Bush Administration has often impressed me in its resolve against the junta.

Largely, the international community has condemned the junta's strategy of deforestation, unfettered dams and min-

On Religion

It is Burma's clergy who are taking the lead in political protests. Buddhist clergy have a different role in Burmese society than clergy in the US. Most monks there spend just a few years in the clergy, as a stage of young adulthood or even as a re-

ing, slavery, rape, and political imprisonment. There are a few Western companies (like Total and Chevron) that continue to exploit the regime's violent control of national resources, but most have divested. Yet, other, neighboring nations have filled the gap by capitalizing on the junta's control of the country: China, India, Thailand, and the rest of ASEAN, to some extent. The US and EU are pushing for sanctions against Burma; it is Russia and China who are blocking UN Security Council action, claiming that the protests and government violence are simply "internal affairs."

Solutions?

What will it take for change in Burma? The demonstrators alone will not bring down the government, but they are not trying to. The people protest to express their belief in new visions for the country's future. The protests are nonviolent, not trying to topple the government directly as a military coup would, because the whole point is that they don't want a military government.

One thing the protests can accomplish are to get media attention about the extent of dissent across the country. The "living silence" (as author Christina Fink called it) encouraged and enforced by the junta is part of what keeps the Burmese people from mobilizing; they don't know what others are doing to protest.

A facet of the current protests, new since the 1988 demonstrations, is the relative ease of communication with the outside world, made possible by the spread of new technology. Cell phones and internet enable word of the protests to reach us, rapidly. The government has already slowed down internet connections, and they could shut down the internet entirely, but that would impede their own communication.

A second thing the protests can do is signal the extent of desperation to the international community, in hopes that they can put pressure on the junta to peacefully cede power. The main parties who need to pressure Burma are Thailand and China. China is nearly impervious to outside pressure itself. Its key pressure points are economic ones, and possibly the upcoming Olympic Games to be held in Beijing in 2008.

Burma Issues, the NGO in Burma I know best, joins other groups in calling for international pressure on the junta. The junta must stop violent repression throughout the country, release prisoners, and engage in tripartite talks with NLD representatives and ethnic leaders, to end the 45 years of oppression Burma has suffered. The violence there may seem intractable, but the recent protests reveal that the spirit of democracy is still alive in Burma, with a new generation rising up to voice their hopes for a better future.

**** For more education and discussion about Burma, come to a screening of the 1995 film *Beyond Rangoon*, held in Mudd Student Lounge, Thursday October 17 at 7:30 pm. Event approved for Contextual Education Credit. (Call 510-845-4715 to be let into the lounge room if you don't know the code.) ****

Meet the Man Person on the Street Quad

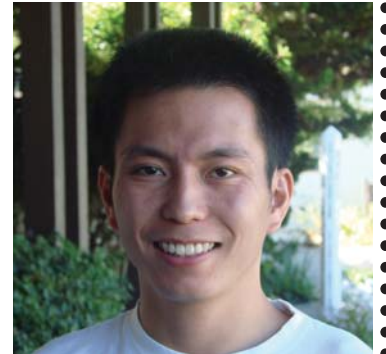
Reporter: Michael Mallory; Photographer: Laumanu Ika

QUESTION(S) OF THE MONTH: What is your name? How did you get it?



Dorothea, MDiv, PSR: "I was named after my grandmother, Dorothy. I took on the name, Dorothea, when I self-initiated myself as an 'out-of-the-broom-closet witch.' Later, I found out that my grandmother was actually born with the name, Dorothea. And so, my life has gone full circle."

Masato, MA, PSR: "My mom said that my dad gave me my name. The character for Masa is not common, but I think it means right, or righteous. And To means person."



Amelie, MDiv, PSR: "It's really Amy. I named myself because half my family called me Amily in a southern accent. It didn't sound grown up and then I saw the movie and decided to 'French' it up a bit."

Sonsiris, MDiv, PSR: "My grandmother gave me the name. She heard it at the hospital. People have said it is a strong name, very beautiful and that it comes from the words sun and rainbow. Also, strong like the ruler Osiris."



Gary, Adjunct faculty for CARE: "My mother wanted a girl and to name me Mary. While under anaesthesia my father asked, 'Mary or Gary?'"

Adam, MA, PSR: "My mother chose about three names, the two most popular were Cameron and Adam, and asked my sisters to choose a name. Both my sisters, age 6 and 3, named me Adam."

