

# Long March and Hunger Strike for Freedom and Democracy in

# BURMA

## Day 15

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September 15, 2004 (Fifteenth Day)

Dear Friends of Freedom and Democracy in Burma,

- Freedom fighting forces, who are on Burma Freedom Long March, will be marching into New York City on September 17, 2004.
- The marchers' courage, fueled by love of the country and people, has brought them from the Grafton Peace Pagoda near Albany to an area just outside New York City. During the past two weeks, the marchers have covered 161 miles without any incidents. Their determination and self-discipline have reached our heart.
- From September 18 to 20, the marchers will proceed to New York City's landmarks to let the world know how the Burma military regime is oppressing and brutalizing its own people. The group also will stage an indefinite hunger strike outside the United Nations building starting September 21. The aim is to stage a hunger strike until UN Security Council takes serious action on Burma's military regime.
- September 21 to October 1 is the best time to pressure the Burma regime on freedom and democracy issues because heads of states and foreign ministers will be attending the General Assembly.
- Now is the time for people of Burma to show their love for the motherland by taking action. The military regime in Burma has devastated the country's economy, health, education, religion and freedom.
- *Think about those young students who have lost their life under the gun barrels of regime soldiers instead of learning in school and staying safely under the loving wings of parents.*
- *Think about fellow countrymen who lost their freedom in prison for speaking out against the injustices of the military regime.*
- *Remember those who lost their minds from being tortured at the hands of the regime.*
- *Think of the hero monks who lost their lives so that all of the people of might be free.*
- *Think of our innocent ethnic nationals who are displaced by the military regime. They live in neighboring countries, but their hearts and minds are in the motherland.*

- *Think of those young victims who were raped by the regime's soldiers, soldiers that use rape as a weapon of war.*
- *Please take their place for a moment and understand their pain!*
- Consider the price that the people of Burma have paid at the hands of the military's regime.
- Instead of protecting and serving the people of Burma, the military regime is shamelessly turning itself to major obstacle to the establishment of freedom, justice, and democracy in Burma. The military shamelessly holds on to power and has no regard for the rights, freedoms and justice demanded by the people of Burma. We need to support the marchers who are peacefully bringing down the power-craved military regime.
- Democratic forces of New York has formed finance, media, and transportation committees in order to support the freedom fighters who disregard their own life for their country.
- For this reason, we, the news and media committee urge you to join and support the freedom fighters in any way you can.
  
- *Summary of September 15 March*
- At the invitation of missionary nuns of Maryknoll Church (Maryknoll), the marchers attended breakfast with nuns from all over the world at 7:00 AM. The day's march began at 8:30 AM and ended at 5:10 PM, covering a total of 12 miles during the course of the day.
- Marchers for day fifteen include U Han Lin (All Burma Students' Democratic Front), Ko Maung Maung Tate (Music League for Democracy), Ko Win Shwe (Action Group for Human Rights in Burma), Ko Tin Ngwe (National League for Democracy – Liberated Area), Ko Wai Tun (AARP) and Jun Yasuda (Japanese-born nun from Peace Pagoda).
- At 5:10 PM, the marchers reached Dobbs Ferry Presbyterian Church to rest and to stay overnight. Ignoring their aches and pains, the marchers remained full of energy and courage. They gained strength knowing that New York City, and the beginning of the hunger strike campaign, was so near.
- They continued to discuss in detail about tomorrow's marching route with a missionary priest from New York.
- At the advice of Japanese nun Jun Yasuda, they decided to try to go to bed early. They also decided to practice the hunger strike by drinking water only. Tomorrow they will walk 10 miles.
- After answering questions from the news and media committee and discussing the day's march, the marchers concluded their work for the day. By the time they looked up at the clock to go to sleep, it was already 2:30 am in the morning.