

## Declaration of Independence

Today, after more than fifty years of British occupation, Burma resumes her rightful place among the free and sovereign nations of the world. She proudly occupied that place throughout a very long stretch of unbroken history, during which her glory shone like the sun and the moon in the heavens. Her empire once extended far beyond the hills and seas in the north, south, east, and west; many among her people were famous and mighty; the strength of her arms also was acknowledged to be great; and she contributed in her time worthily to the progress of mankind. Throughout all their long history before British aggression, the Burmese people maintained their independence unbrokenly after subduing every enemy sooner or later in numerous wars...

Fifty years or so ago Burma lost her independence for the first time as a result of three Anglo-Burmese wars. Britain waged these wars... at a time when Asia was divided and unprepared, and the whole weight of sea power, superior war equipment, and the vast newly discovered resources of the industrial revolution were on the British side.... The result of this unequal contest was that most of the small Asian nations were destroyed by British cunning and material superiority. It was Burma's tragedy to be among those small nations....

The years of British occupation were indeed sorrowful for Burma. She entered into a long bondage.... The Burmese were slowly expropriated, losing as time went on most of their national substance, their vast material resources and opportunities, their culture, their language, and even their own way of living....

However, the Burmese national spirit remained uncorrupted by the darkness of those years. The struggle against the aggressor continued in one form or another as opportunity allowed or weapons were available, while British greed and tyranny kept the fire in every Burmese heart raging. Periodically the people broke loose in their desperation, there were mass risings, slaughter, destruction, and then the most violent British reprisals followed.... But still the struggle went on, gaps were slowly filled, new patriots came forward to suffer, in a spirit of utter dedication, the same repressions, imprisonment, exile, torture, and often death itself....

With the outbreak of the present war for the liberation of East Asia the Burmese struggle came at last to a turning point.... Today, the Burmese people will at last reap the harvest from seeds which were sown for many years with ceaseless struggle and sacrifice....

The Burmese, therefore, by this solemn declaration now made in their name and in accordance with their national will by a constituent assembly representing them, publicly proclaim that from this day forever Burma is a fully independent and sovereign state.... Burma also declares herself to be a member of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. She enters into this free and equal partnership so that by the united resources, will, and work of East Asia as a whole a new Asiatic order and economy may be established as a part of a world order which will ensure justice, peace, and prosperity to all peoples.

Signed xxx

Ba Maw

Chairman of The Independence Preparatory Commission

Rangoon Nay-Pyi-Daw  
1943, August 1