

## **Press Release**

**October 11, 2007**

### **Shans commemorate killing of monks in Burma: past and present**

Shans along the Thai-Shan border will today commemorate the recent killings of Buddhist monks in Central Burma as well as those monks killed by the Burma Army during the civil war in Shan State. Ceremonies will be held at temples in ten locations to make merit for the deceased monks and to chant for peace in Burma.

Since September 26, the Burmese military regime has cracked down violently on the peaceful protests led by tens of thousands of Buddhist monks in cities throughout Burma. Thousands have been detained and untold numbers of civilians, including monks, have been killed. Monasteries continue to be raided, monks arrested, and an official smear campaign against monks has been launched in the media.

Shan community organizations strongly condemn the ongoing violence, and pay tribute to those who have died while peacefully advocating for the rights of their people. We also pay tribute to the Buddhist monks in Shan State who have been tortured and killed by the Burma Army during the ongoing civil war away from the attention of the international media.

While the Burmese generals have been flaunting their Buddhist merit-making on the front pages of their state-controlled media, they have been systematically destroying the fabric of Buddhism in Shan State. The mass forced relocation of over 1,400 villages in central and southern Shan State since 1996, uprooted thousands of Buddhist monks and novices, and left over a thousand temples derelict.

Monks and novices suspected of supporting the Shan resistance have been tortured and killed without mercy. In the month of March 1997 alone, three Abbots were killed near Kunhing, Central Shan State; one was tied up in a sack and drowned in the Nam Paang River. In later incidents, monks were tortured by having nails driven into their skull, and having their limbs hacked off.

Shan community organizations urge the Burmese military regime:

- To immediately stop raiding monasteries, arresting monks and conducting smear campaigns against them in Burma;
- To release all the monks and civilians recently detained;
- To release all political prisoners in Burma including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Shan leader Hkun Htun Oo, so that genuine dialogue towards restoring peace and democracy can begin.

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**Remark: In Chiang Mai, the ceremony will be held at WAT KU TAO from 4:30 pm.**