CHAPTER IV

INDO — BURMA RELATIONS

The relations between India and Burma have all along been friendly. Mrs. Indra Gandhi has rightly observed that, "we are neighbours who have had close relations for a very long time and who have been friends for a long time." Really, Burma is the next door neighbour of India in Southeast Asia. Burma is the first country among Southeast Asian countries which has cultural and geo-political ties with India. Indian civilization has influenced the Burmese life totally and has also received the impact of Indian ideals. Burma was under the British Indian Empire till 1937. The role of India in the controversies in Burma was determined firstly by geography and secondly by the element of timing.

Burma has close ties with India since ancient times extending to a period of 2000 years. Burma is often called "Brahmadesha" in India and often referred to as the "Swarna chumi" or "Sona Pranta" in ancient times. Indian influence may be seen in Burmese religion, philosophy, literature and

language. But in spite of this, it stands as a separate and distinct political entity.

Nature decreed that the peoples of India and Burma should be neighbours by providing them with a common frontier. But this 800 miles frontier, of which more will be said shortly, is virtually a wall of Jungle-clad mountains still limiting contacts by land between the two countries. As in centuries past, the sea routes across the Bay of Bengal serve as the chief links between India and Burma, notwithstanding the importance of air transport in furthering these and other Inter-Asian contacts in recent years.

Both India and Burma lie north of the equator and the tropic of Cancer passes through them but each is regarded as essentially a tropical country. They have and similar general climate are basically agricultural countries.

The Burmese relations with India during this important overseas movement can only be dated accurately from the 6th century A.D. Based on fragments found at Prome containing inscriptions in Pali, the classical IN Indian language in which the sacred Buddhist Texts were often transmitted.

3. India and Southeast Asia, Delhi: The publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, January 1953, p. 9.
Burmese Buddhist legends, claim that in the 3rd century B.C. the famous Mauryan Emperor Asoka sent the Buddhist missionaries Sona and Uttara to 'Suvarabhumi' (Burma).

The medieval history of the fragmentary relations between the peoples of India and Burma as well as the early interrelations between other Southeast Asian peoples, ended with the close of the 16th century and the appearance of the Europeans in the waters of the Indian ocean. India and Burma were naturally involved in the early years of European expansion, India more than Burma.

The Britishers expanded their Indian empire through conquest in the Anglo-Burmese wars of 1824-1825 and 1852. Burma remained a province of British Indian empire until 1937. By a proclamation of 1st January 1886, Lord Dufferin, the then Governor General of India incorporated Burma into the rest of British India. The Indian National Congress was formed in India in 1885 which registered the birth of modern Indian colonial nationalism. The first branch of Congress

5. Ibid., p. 10
was formed in Burma under the name of "the Burma Provincial Congress Committee," in 1908. So we see that Congress brought about a political link of Burma with India. The Congress Committee, in her first session, passed a resolution protesting against the annexation of Upper Burma in the first place and its incorporation into India in the second. The Indian National Congress had started the national movement in India, which was carried across into Burma through the Burmese Provincial Congress Committee, although, the Indian public know very little about Burma and cared even less. "The Indians were accustomed to visualize Burma, not as a separate nation but as a province of India and a part and parcel of her entity. The Indian Government introduced the Municipal Institutions into Burma. The rural areas district councils were established at the instance of the government of India. The British parliament accepted the principles of responsible self-government as the ultimate aim for India in 1917."

The Government of India Act of 1919 which came into force in 1920 had provided that the 'dyarchy' which was

granted to India by the British-Indian government, should be extended to Burma. "The Government of Burma Act of 1921 was passed to bring it into line with the other province of India." On account of the nationalist pressure in India, the parliament appointed a Satutory Commission instead of 1927 in 1930 under the supervision of Sir John Simon. The Satutory Commission visited Burma during 1929-30 and received a memorandum from the government of Burma asking for the separation of Burma from India but not a dominion status. The anti-Indian feeling began to mounting in the demand for separation in representation. All the Indians representing different interests, such as political, social and economic, felt the need to exert pressure for safeguarding their interests. A labour member of the Legislative Council, E.P.Pillai, demanded a separate Indian delegation to represent Indians living in Burma at the 'Indian Round Table Conference'in London.

At its 1927 Madras Session, the Congress disapproved of "all attempts to separate Burma from India", and condemned the idea of creating the North-Eastern Frontier Province.

9. Ibid., p. 149.
11. Ibid., p. 57.
The Congress also appealed to the Indians and Burmans in their mutual interests to promote Indo-Burmese entente in all possible ways. In his speech Maung Maung charged that the British Government wanted to separate Burma so that it would be a "solitary province in the hands of the British capitalists." He concluded that India and Burma, "hand in hand will be more powerful than as separate units and in course of time we may be in a position to effectively fight our own battles, realise our own aspirations and declare our own independence." Vottama said that, "the separation of Burma from India was completely against the will of the Burmans. If Burma is separated from India, India will lose nothing, but in that situation the protection of Burma will be rendered more difficult. India is our father, mother, brother and sister. We entreat you to try to keep Burma with India."

When the Simon Commission came to India and Burma, it enjoyed a significantly contrasting reception in the two countries. In India, the proposed commission was boycotted, "at every stage and in every form; and the congress started

13. Ibid., pp. 88-89.
a non-cooperating movement. In Burma, on the other side, a large section of nationalist opinion actively cooperated with the Simon Commission. The Burmese Legislative Council set up a committee of seven non-official members to confer with Simon Commission.

The recommendation was given by the Simon Commission in its report that Burma be separated from India, "immediately and that a decision to that effect be made as soon as possible." Nehru observed that attempts were being made to separate Burma from India politically, "so that in the event of India gaining freedom, Burma might continue to be exploited by British imperialism." There are some reasons which the Commission gave for this recommendation:

1. "Burma was not in India."
2. "A purposed decision for separations between the Government of Burma and the Burmese nationals."
3. "Burma could hardly enjoy satisfactory separation in any centralized Indian Government."
4. "The agenda of the Indian Central Legislature was of remote interest to Burma."

15. Ibid., p. 94.
5. "There was a real divergence in economic interests as seen in India's protection tariffs."

6. "Burma derived questionable benefits from her contribution to Indian central revenues."

7. "Burmese sentiment favoured separation."

British governed Burma as a part of India till 1937, so as an Indian province, it participated in all the reforms that were enjoyed by India. Although the Burmese political movement was influenced by 'Indian National Movement', but there was a great difference of technique. The methods of non-violence which were adopted by Mahatma Gandhi for the liberation movement, were not to be followed by Burma.

After the separation of Burma from India in 1937, the government of India stationed an agent in Burma to look after the interests of Indians in that country, because Burma was not governed from Delhi. Under the constitution of 1937, the first Prime Minister of Burma was Dr. Ba Maw, the leader of the "Sinyetha Party", who was forced to resign

16. Ibid., pp. 94-95.
In 1939 due to the student strikes and labour troubles. The relations between Dr Ba Maw and Subhash Chandra Bose were cordial and amicable. Mr Bose has stated that, "Indians and Burmans were like two children of the same parents and formed a happy family under Japan as the guardian." When the second world war broke out, Netaji Bose arrived in Rangoon on 29th July 1943, and was welcomed at the airport by high Japanese officials.

The Japanese occupation of Burma opened a new chapter in the history of Indian residents in Burma. The attitude of Japanese towards Indians was very friendly, because Japanese wanted India's help in the war so the Indian friendship was very necessary for them.

It is remarkable to note the character of Indo-Burma relations during the years of war. On the one side, India and Indian army as connected with the allies, desired not only to liberate Burma from Japanese control but also wanted to protect India from the imperialism of British rule. On the other side, the government of independent Burma under Adipati

19. Ibid., p. 81.
20. Ibid., p. 81.
Ba Maw had taken oath to help Japan and Bose's government in order to destroy the British control over India and liberate the Indians. As a result of this, there was great cordiality between Burmans and Indians during the war. "At the same time, in India there were friendly relations between Indians and the evacuee Burmans, as well as between Indian government and the refugees government of Burma with its head quarters in Simla.

For a long time, the frontier relations between India and Burma have been uneventful. The frontier between the two countries, has been demarcated, except for the occasional disturbances by the troublesome tribesmen of the upper frontier, the peace has not been disturbed. India proved herself as Burma's best customer of rice and the true interest of both the countries requires that racial, commercial and cultural harmony is established and maintained.

Indo-Burmese Boundary Commission had been set-up in terms of boundary agreement which India and Burma reached in March 1967. It has been busy in demarcating the international boundary.

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22. Ibid., p. 74.
border since over the past four years. The Minister of States in the Ministry of External Affairs, Sri B. R. Bhagat said in the Lok Sabha Debate, "A Joint boundary commission has been set up. The Commission is charged with the responsibility for planning and carrying out the demarcation of the boundary between the two countries, with the preparation of boundary maps and with the drafting of the boundary treaty." Shrimati Indira Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha, "The Burmese delegation to the Joint Indo-Burma Boundary Commission held talks with the Indian delegation from the 6th to the 10th April 1968. A preliminary agreement on the cartographic delineation and eventual physical demarcation of the Indo-Burmese boundary was arrived at."

A Joint Indo-Burma Boundary Commission met in New Delhi to review the peaceful means of boundary demarcation between the two countries. The Burmese team, headed by Col. Kyi Maung and the Indian team led by Mr. Baleshwar Prasad (Former Indian Ambassador in Rangoon) expressed their general satisfaction with the progress made so far.

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27. The Statesman, (Delhi: 8th June 1971).
To insure that the talks continued, in recent years also, both delegations agreed that the progress reports submitted by the Directors General of Survey of the two countries were satisfactory. The Commission also agreed to demarcate 105 miles of the Indo-Burma border which had not been demarcated.

The Indo-Burma border demarcation was started on March 10, 1967, and 245.52 miles of the border were demarcated in 1968-69, 254.48 miles in the following year and 225 miles in 1970-1971.

The Indian immigration into Burma started in 1852. But the political consequences of Indian immigration did not appear till about 1920, when the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were introduced in India under the Government of India Act of 1919. On the 1st April 1937, Burma ceased to be part of the Indian Empire. In actuality Indian immigration was not of such a volume as to swamp the country, "immigration had consistently adapted itself to the conomic condition of Burma, and that the number of Indians in Burma was even tending to decline in the 1930's."

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The Bxxtex Commission had given report on the volume and character of Indian immigration into Burma, the occupational distribution of Indians there, to what extent, they had displaced Burmans, and "whether in the light of the statistics obtained and other relevant factors any system of equating the supply of Indian unskilled labour to Burman requirements is needed."

The Bxxtex Commission concluded that there was "no evidence of any kind to suggest that Indians have displaced Burmans from employment. The Commission recommended that a system of registration be introduced for Indian Nationals entering Burma, whether for purpose of travel, residence and employment, would be required to obtain visa, in the form of work or employment permit valid under the Government of Burma, on condition that the holders of the permits undertake to leave Burma on their expiration." The Bxxtex Commission also recommended the registration of Indians already in Burma and Burma also entered into negotiations with India for the conclusion of an immigration agreement.

32. Ibid., pp. 133-134.
In a policy statement in September 1940, the Burmese Premier, U Saw called the important question of Indian immigration, which he said, "his government was attempting to solve adequately and fairly with the least possible delay." He continued that, "the Baxter Commission Report was in the Press and his government would not shirk its responsibility in the matter and would pursue such measures of control and restriction, as may be found necessary on the facts reported by the Commission and both the Governments had agreed to discuss this problem without linking it to their trade talks and that after the results of those talks were known, his Government intended to invite the Government of India to send a delegation to Rangoon for a discussion of the immigration question with a view to securing a mutually satisfactory agreement."

Negotiations were begun in 1941, when Sir Girja Shanker Bajpai, Member of the Governor General's Council for Overseas Indian Affairs, was summoned to Rangoon for the purpose. The agreement which was passed by them, became known as the 1941 Draft Indo-Burma Immigration Agreement and Saw-Bajpai Agreement. The principal provisions of the agreement so made were as

follows:-

(1) "In future Indians other than casual visitors and students should secure immigration permits from the Government of Burma. These permits were to be of two kinds:

(A) permits intended apparently for the clerical and professional classes, would allow the holder to remain in Burma indefinitely and acquire Burma domicile if desired, and

(B) permits intended presumably for unskilled and semi-skilled labourers, would specify a period of residence which in no cases should be extended beyond nine years."

(2) "The number of 'B' permits would be determined by the advice of an Immigration Board."

(3) "A literacy test might be imposed on applicants for 'A' permits, provided such test should not be made in Burman or any other indigenous language of Burma."

(4) "Marriage or cohabitation with a Burmese woman would be grounds for cancellation of an 'A' permit, but marriage might be permitted by Government if adequate provisions for the maintenance of the women were made."

(5) "Indians born and brought up in Burma would be regarded as of Burma domicile, an Indian who had lived for a total of seven years in Burma between 1932 and 1941 would be
entitled to unlimited further residence in Burma provided that he had at no time spent more than one year out of the country; any other Indian resident in Burma in 1941 could remain, but if he were to leave Burma his return would be regulated by the conditions laid-down for new entrants, except that he would be regarded as having a preferential claim to 'A' 'B' permit over other new entrants."

When this agreement was passed by the two Governments, and was published, it provoked a storm of anger in India. The Indian Legislative Assembly resolved. "That this Assembly being of the opinion that the provisions of the Indo-Burma Immigration Agreement are violation of the assurances given in Parliament with regard to the status of Indians in Burma and their right of entry into Burma after its separation from India in as much as they render nugatory to the protection which parliament undoubtedly undertook to give in these matters in part Vth of the Government of Burma Act and the Instruments of Instructions to the Governor of Burma, recommends to the Governor General in Council to request the Secretary of State not to implement the Agreement by order in Council unless and until satisfactory modifications are

34. Ibid., pp. 136-137. (See also) W.S. Desai, op. cit., pp. 67-68. (See Also) Jolie, F. Emrys, op. cit., pp. 29-30.
secured which will carry out, to the full, the parliamentary assurances and remove such provisions as are discriminatory and humiliating to the people of India."

The immigration agreement, which was negotiated only after the trade pact was signed, was a corollary to it and affected an even wider range of Indian interests in Burma. When his agreement came into power in September 1940, Premier U Saw announced that his government intended to end unrestricted immigration into Burma from India and China. Generally, this agreement rested on two main principles the right of Burma to determine the composition of her own population, and that of Indians who had identified themselves with the interests of Burma to enjoy the same privileges as the permanent population. The Government of Burma declared that it would soon institute a system for registering Indians domiciled in the country. Gandhiji himself strongly discarded the agreement, "as an undeserved slur on both Burma and India, and could not believe that it had been made in response to a vital cry from the great Burmese nation."

35. Ibid., p. 30.

Mahatma Gandhi proclaimed a strong statement of protest from his headquarters of Wardha. In his statement he described the Indo-Burma Immigration Agreement as an "unhappy agreement...panicky and penal.... sprung upon an unsuspecting public. The whole thing appears still more hideous when we recall that only a few years ago, Burma was an integral part of India. We can never be in Burma, or the Burmans in India, foreigners in the same sense as people from the West....... I must meet that Indians have been partners with the Westerners in the Exploitation of Burma, but with this fundamental difference that the Westerner went to Burma with his gun while the Indian went on suffer­ance....... I would plead with the Burmese ministers and the Burmese people that they should wait for the regulation of immigration till both of us are free and independent for such regulation....... This Agreement must be undone in as much as it breaks every canon of the international propriety. It becomes less defensible in that an Indian, instead of an English man, was sent to negotiate.......the Agreement is an insult to the whole nation, not merely to the particular individuals whose material interests lie in Burma."

Seeing the opposition to this agreement, the Indian Government prepared to make some effort towards persuading the Government of Burma to accept some changes in the agreement.

At the time of Second World War, the Indian in Burma was thus already made to regard himself as an alien. The Indians in Burma were treated badly by the disorderly elements who followed the Japanese Flag under the name of the "Burma Independence Army." But when Japanese came to power, these disorders were at once stopped. During the Japanese occupation in Burma, the Indians in Burma enjoyed a better status and they also joined the "Indian Independence League" the civil counterpart of Netaji Bose's "Indian National Army."

In 1943 the President of the Burma-Indian chamber of Commerce and the member of the Governor General's Council for communication relations Dr. N.B. Khare said in regard to immigration, "The Indo-Burmese Agreement of 1941 is as dead as a doormat. No labour would be allowed to go to Burma before a satisfactory agreement securing the rights of Indians had been arrived at. I am second to none in my anxiety for restoring all that belongs to Indians in Burma such as citizenship rights, rights of property, commerce and
trade and every other interest. I give you a categorical assurance that no evacuee who wants to go back to Burma will be restrained, none what so ever."

The general opinion in India to take this question that any Indian who lived in Burma before the evacuation in 1942, should be permitted to return, whether he wishes to make Burma his permanent home or not, that whatever may be decided about unskilled and semi-skilled labour, other Indians should not be denied from entering and working in Burma, and that there should be no discriminatory legislation of administrative action against Indians in Burma. 30

But Burma did not give any attention to this, under the immigration policy of Burma, "thousands of Indians have been forced out of business and so out of the country. At the time of departure to India, they have been denied the right to take some of their most personal possessions with them even their children's toys."

The Burmese Government passed an Emergency Immigration Act in June 1947, according to this agreement all persons who


39. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

wanted to enter in Burma, possess a properly visa passport or permit issued by the controller of immigration. The Government firmly claiming that the new law was not discriminatory in that it applied equally to all foreigners and that it was only designed to meet an emergency. Really, neither Burma nor India wanted a resumption of the prewar flow of Indians into Burma.

The Burmese Indians who had enjoyed a privilege status in Burma under the British rule, the Burman government imposed the nationalization laws. These Indians were the successful businessmen and dominated a large sector of Burmese business and agriculture. But these Indians were responsible for it because they allegedly charged the interest rates on loans to Burmese. This increased enmity between the Indians and Burmese. On account of this, Indian businessmen in Burma have been ruined by the nationalization of private owned wholesale and retail shops, import-export trade, ware houses and stores.

On January 3, 1948, the day before Burma became independent, the transfer of Immovable Property Restriction

Act was promulgated. The Land Alienation Act of 1948, aimed to prevent the sale of land to persons other than Burmese nations. Burma government also declared that these laws were not discriminatory in that they applied equally to all foreigners.

In June 1950, a conference was held at Rangoon to take the question of compensation for nationalized land, representatives from India attending as observers. They wanted to know if the Burma government would pay cash for a portion of their holdings, compensating them for the remainder in interest bearing non-transferable bonds.

A small unofficial delegation came to Rangoon for the purpose of persuading the Burma government to pay more compensation for Indian landholdings in Burma than was provided under the terms of the Land Nationalization Act in December 1953. But the Burmese Government would not agree. Early in March 1954, a deputation of Indian Landowners in Burma explained to the Deputy Minister of External Affairs, of India that the Land Nationalization Bill of 1954, soon to be discussed in the Burmese parliament, was actually if

42. Virginia, Thompson and Richard, Adivooff, op.cit., p.84.
not legally, discriminatory. The Burmese landowners were usually small holders in comparison to Indian landowners. Under the land's provisions, they claimed 12000 Indian landowners would receive compensation amounting to only one crore of rupees for their properties covering 3 million acres which they valued at between 90 and 100 crores of rupees.

When in 1947, the Burmese declared their intention of reducing the number of non-nationals employed in the civil service, Indians holding such posts numbered nearly 4000, faced with the alternative of losing their jobs or of assuming Burman citizenship and learning the Burmese language, about 1000 Indians had returned to India by February 1949.

A large number of Indians returned to India, when the civil war broke-out in Burma, the Burmese Government also discharging Indian nationals from public service on ground of nationality. Under the Burmization programme of the Revolutionary Council, "an effort has been made to place all private enterprises in the hands of Burmese citizens

43. Ibid., p. 86.
44. Ibid., p. 88.
and to eliminate foreign economic control." Even foreign physicians, mostly Indians, cannot practice in Burma. Aliens started to evacuate Burma. According to the reports, after a year 25000 foreigners evacuated, but all were Indians. Special Indian ships began to arrive at Rangoon to aid in the repatriation of Indian nationals. Many Indians on Burmese borders were fed and clothed by Indian Government. Those Indians who remained in Burma, had been the primary target of the government's Burmization programme. The nationalization programme was imposed on Indians both in terms of international and domestic life.

Thousands of Indians left Burma, on the daily flights from Rangoon to Calcutta. For instance, in July 1964, to save the 2500 Indians, who had been displaced by the nationalization of various trades in Burma, the government of India sent the three ships. After returning from Burma, several traders and businessmen told that, "They had been once prosperous businessmen but had been put out of work by the

nationalization of their trades and shops. They were also forced to leave the bank-accounts, family jewellery and even their wives' saris and cooking utensils. By September 1964 about 100,000 destitute Indians nationals, had left Burma forever."

During the shifting of those Indian nationals from Burma to India permanently, there arose the problem of custody of the property because the Burmese government did not cooperate with these Indians and also the Indian government. But the Indian leaders welcomed the Burman decision, for returning the Indian nationals far from Burma, because neither Burma nor India stands to gain from loss of mutual friendship, but it is certainly the loss of minority community of the Indians who live there, who become the victims of unfavourable circumstances. "The representatives of both the countries kept cool heads, exercised good sense and showed a spirit of negotiation to settle this problem."

Sardar Swaran Singh, then India's foreign minister, arrived at Rangoon to solve this problem on September 1, 1964.

1964. After talks with Burman chairman of Revolutionary Council. General Newin, a joint Communique was issued in which, "it was agreed to exchange views and coordinate their efforts in the cause of peace and to adhere to the,"
"five principles of peaceful co-existence." General Newin explained that his government was pursuing "domestic goals based on a socialism that was not only against Indians but also applied equally to all foreigners." On the question of Burmese nationalization measures, thecommunique stated, "The various measures ....... towards achieving a socialist society are not discriminatory against foreigners as such and equally apply to Burmese nationals and foreigners alike. On the Burman side it was affirmed that these measures were not intended to force resident foreigners belonging to the working class out of Burma and that it is the intention of the government. ..... of Burma to give sympathetic consideration to the case of these persons of foreign extraction ....... who sincerely desire to continue to stay in Burma in accordance with the policies initiated by the government of Burma and to merge themselves with the common people, participating in the building up of a socialist society. The minister of External Affairs of India and

the Burmese leaders also studied the various problems which have arisen in connection with the departure of a large number of persons of India origin from Burma and exchanged views on ways of settling these problems."

It is clear from the above that the visit of Swaran Singh did not, however, halt the exodus of Indian nationals from Burma; indeed, the quantity of the exodus were greater in the month after his visit there than in any previous month. But Mr. Singh stated that, "there was no discrimination against Indians, the Burman nationalization measures being applicable to all Burman Indians, Pakistanis and Chinese alike who had such types of establishment there, the nationalization policy no doubt affected the position of the seven lakh belonging to Indians community but the government of Burma has been very sympathetic towards Indians."

General Newin and his colleagues explained to Mr. Shastri, then Prime Minister of India, that the Burmese nationalization policy was not discriminatory against Indians but it applied to all foreigners, when Foreign Minister of India,

52. Ibid., p. 392.
Mr. Singh was asked during a parliamentary debate, "why the exodus of Chinese had not reached to the same proportion as that of Indians if Burmese policy was non-discriminatory?" He answered that, "this was because most of the Chinese in Burma refused to be repatriated to communist China but were prepared to go to Nationalist China, so the Burman government was unable to arrange this, because it had no diplomatic relations with the Nationalist Chinese regime, and General Chang Kai Shek, the President of Nationalist China, refused to take these Chinese traders."

Although, the Indian government made many protests and representations, these were without effect, yet it did not press the matter too strongly. Mr. Raja Gopalachari, former Governor General of India, said, "Although the attitude of the government of Burma had given rise to dissatisfaction among Indians holding property in Burma, we must recognise that the government of Burma is facing a difficult situation in their country. They are committed to certain policies and they can not weaken their position with the general public, by not pursuing them."

Thus we conclude that the Burmization programme had been one sided and has adversely affected only Indian and Western interests. This has not been the case for communist countries like China.

Buddhism, which is declining in the land of its birth India, but growing into a living force in modern Burma is the first ancient contact between India and Burma. So Indians are proud of recalling this peaceful regard to the land of Buddha's birth and teachings. Dr. Rajendra Prasad once wrote about Burma, "India established a moral, spiritual and religious domination, there and elsewhere, not by the sword but through affection and general brotherly dealings," adding further that this, "domination of the spirit still continues, and the people of Burma even today look upon those places in India, which are associated with the life of Buddha, as places of pilgrimage."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, then President of Indian constituent Assembly, was India's representative at Burma's independence celebration on January 4, 1948 and also carried with

him as a gift of the Government of India, several sacred
sapiings from the tree at Gaya, where Buddha attained
enlightenment.

Various unsolved problems between the two countries
were nearer solution than before when they had not finally
achieved independence. After Independence of the two coun-
tries, the official relations between India and Burma have
been most cordial. It is the definite policy of both the
countries to maintain mutual friendship and render mutual
help. After independence both the countries followed the
policy of neutrality particularly among the new nations.
Both the leaders, UNU and Nehru realised from the beginning
that, "the kind of foreign policy they wished their govern-
ment to pursue was non-alignment with power blocs antago-
nistic to each other, friendly relations with all nations,
and acceptance of economic aid from any nation as long as
it did not infringe their sovereignty."

It is quite familiar that Mr. Nehru and Mr. UNU were
principal architects of non-alignment policies for new

57. Ibid., p. 243.
58. W.S. Desai, op.cit., p. 103.
nations. Both the leaders always desired their governments to pursue an "independent foreign policy" taking action as they believed right in each case for a nation, that can decide to make whatever alignments seem desirable in its national interests and it is not required to justify them by proving that it is not leaning to one side. A nation pursuing an 'independent foreign policy can take sides on international issues or can refuse to take sides without having to show that its action in either case is bringing it nearer to the communist bloc or western bloc.

Premier NU said that, "India and Burma were indeed conferred as two sovereign independent states, to regulate our future relations by agreement in the manner best suited to our mutual interests." He also said that Burma sought the friendship of India in the, "new era that will be Burma's in a few weeks. We know that we shall not be disappointed and we offer our friendship in return. May the future bind our two countries in closer bonds of friendship." A Burmese editor also wrote that, "there is better understanding of

60. Ibid., p. 299.

Burma, her strength and weakness, in India than in any other country. Mr. Nehru's sympathy towards Burma was unconcealed."

Mr. Nehru had the great understanding to bring about the happy and close relations between India and Burma. The idea of policy of non-alignment was adopted by Burma from India because Nehru was the propagator of this policy and the hero of the young intellectuals. The former Prime Minister of Burma UNU gave a radio broadcast celebrating Prime Minister Nehru's birthday and wished him well. He expressed nice sentiments for him and his country. He sincerely hoped that "His wise policy of non-alignment with any of the two power blocs has also come in for a good deal of misunderstanding and criticism, we have heard of the fantastic allegation from one side that Sri Nehru is gradually becoming Anglo-Americans, and there is an equally fantastic allegation from the other side that he is becoming pro-Communist. Neither of these allegations of course, is true." Nehru also started the idea of positive neutralism, which

62. Ibid., p. 261.
inspired the Burman leaders in formulating foreign policy even though they did not always follow India on particular occasions and issues. There are so many occasions between 1950 and 1953, when Mr. Nehru said that India's foreign policy had linked principles similar to those of the Burma government to the idea of positive neutrality.

The Indian delegate Mr. P. Pillai greeted Burma in the U.N.O. and said to quote his Premier's remark that, "the people of India would stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Burma and whether we have to share good fortune or ill fortune we shall share it together."

In an editorial marking the event, the New Times of Burma took special note of the Indian delegate's speech of welcome, "which will find a warm response in Burman hearts," and added; "India's line in international politics under the guidance of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been to stand somewhat outside international blocs and groups and to champion the cause of nations striving to free Burma as a small nation would do well, while cooperating with all other nations in the task of maintaining world peace, to

65. Ibid., p. 96.
steer clear of international entanglements which might at some time or other compel her to take part in a war which is not her particular concern. Likewise, it is the duty of newly emancipated Burma to champion the cause of less fortunate countries which are still under imperialists domination."

Burmese leaders always admire Indian leadership and India as the hope of present day Asia. Speaking on the second anniversary of Indian independence UNU declared, "though I have met the Mahatma (Gandhi) only once, I have always regarded him as my 'Guru', I can not adequately described the great personal qualities of Pandit Nehru. He has adversely earned the respect and admiration of the whole world." So we see that Burman has been strongly impressed by the influence of India. Nothing this, a student of Burman affairs concluded that, "Burma's foreign policy is a carbon copy of India's foreign policy." But this is not wholly correct, because Burma does not follow India in all respect such as the membership of the Commonwealth etc.

After praising Premier UNU's leadership Nehru stated, "ultimately it is the task of the Burmese themselves to solve

67. Ibid., p. 280.
their problem and it is always a delicate matter for any country, however, friendly, to intervene. India's interest in Burma was that country's freedom, the general peace and order in Southeast Asia."

In 1961, the struggle between fear and need reached at its highest peak, at that time Burma followed India's lead in failing to participate in the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference held at San Francisco in September of that year. Premier UNU consulted with Indian Prime Minister Mr. Nehru and told the reporters that the question of Japanese Treaty, (neither Burma nor India signed the treaty) would be among those discussed, so neither Burma nor India signed the Treaty at San Francisco. Burma also refused to renew an agreement for economic aid from the U.S. until the strings providing military assistance were detached. The Burmese people and opposition parties strongly opposed Premier to take these issues.

In May 1950, while in route to London Premier UNU said that the internal situation in Burma was firmly in hand.

70. Ibid., p. 303.
and also said that Premier Nehru would pay a visit to
Burma in June. A few days later Premier Nehru confirmed
his planned visit to Burma and said, "Burma is India's sister
nation in the deepest sense of the world." The Burman
Foreign Minister has visited India from time to time for
strong friendly consultations. In June 1950, Premier
Nehru had spent four days in Burma for the purpose of develop­
ing strong friendly ties. He was accorded a civic
reception at city Hall. He was entertained by the Government
as well as the citizens of Rangoon. The Burman Premier
also spent few days in New Delhi in October 1951 and was
honourably entertained.

An Indian Trade Delegation went to Rangoon and held
correspondence with the Burman Minister of Commerce and
supply in October 1950. In May 1951, this delegation
again went to Rangoon, headed by Mr. K.M. Munshi, the then
Indian Minister for food. After discussion, an Indo-Burmese
Trade Agreement was signed between the two governments on
29th September 1951. Burma agreed to supply 240,000 tons
of rice to India by 31st December while India prepared to
supply Burma by the same date 25000 tons of gunny bags.

10,000 tons of ground-nut oil, 800,000 lbs of cotton yarn and 3,000 tons of galvanised sheets of iron. During the next four years from 1st January 1952 to 31st December 1955, Burma agreed to export to India 350,000 tons of rice each year, of which 230,000 tons is to be on a government to government basis, which India is to export each year to Burma, during the same period, 15,000 tons of gunny bags, 8,000 tons of ground nut oil 800,000 lbs of cotton yarn and 400 tons of iron and steel products.

To maintain friendly relations between the two countries, a five year treaty of Indo-Burman Friendship was signed on 7th July 1961. Burma Treaty of Friendship consists of a preamble and eight articles:

Article I, "is a mutual recognition of the independence and rights of each other."

Article II, "states that there shall be everlasting peace and unalterable friendship between the two states."

Article III, "deals with diplomatic privileges and immunities."

Article IV, provides that, "their representatives shall meet from time to time and as often as occasion requires to


discuss matters of common interest and to consider ways of mutual cooperation. The complexities of Indo-Burma relations as well as the still pending solution of the several matters involved are indicated by Article VII."

Articles VI, VII and VIII deal "with the interpretation, ratification and continuation of the treaty respectively."

The Foreign Minister of Burma said, "The treaty is a manifestation of the ever increasing goodwill and understanding between our two countries." The Burmese Press welcomed the treaty. The New Times of Burma wrote that, "another brilliant chapter has been added to the annals of Burmese history" and that the treaty, "reflects the long cherished sentiments and ambitions of both Indian and Burman peoples." The Burman observed that the signing of the treaty marked the commencement of a "new chapter in the history of Indo-Burmese friendship and goodwill and that it was the symbol and logical outcome of a process that has endured the passage of time." Press reaction in

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76. Foreign Policy of India texts of documents 1947-64, op.cit., p. 9.
India was more restrained. For example, 'The Hindu' discussed the treaty in the context of similar friendship treaties with other countries recently emerged from colonial status, particularly Indonesia and wrote that it was, "perhaps mutual that India, Burma and Indonesia, all of whom hold key positions in Southeast Asia, should strengthen friendship with each other rather than with European states, thousands of miles away."

After signing of the treaty, the Indian Ambassador made an appeal that after the Second World War "which caused so much missing and lost, to see that Burma and India achieved independence is an epoch of the greatest significance for us. There was a genuine feeling of sympathy and affection between the peoples of India and Burma. We both inspire to the maintenance of peace, not only for our own country but also for the whole world and we both have to better our economic conditions."

The Burmese Foreign Minister said in reply, "I agree with you that even without this treaty, the friendship between our two countries, born of long standing cordial

relations, has been growing from strength to strength. The treaty of friendship which we have just signed, is a manifestation of the ever increasing goodwill and understanding between our two peoples."

It is concluded that this treaty was a firm and lasting foundation for brotherly friendship between India and Burma which was already laid down nearly twenty-five centuries ago when Buddhism began to spread.

At the diplomatic and political level, the Indian Government maintained informal relations. The Burmese Government is always with India, whenever needed. India occasionally gives advice to the Burman leaders whenever they want it. The formal diplomatic relations between India and Burma were established in June 1947. Mr. Nehru laid down emphasis on the informal and intimate character of Indo-Burmese relations. He said, at a Press Conference in Delhi, "we are in frequent touch with the government of Burma on many matters. We are not only friendly in the normal sense but if I may so, something more friendly." India in the

80. Ibid., p. 108.
81. Ibid., p. 108.
82. Thein, That, Ton, op. cit., p. 174.
sphere of diplomacy, offers possibilities of consultations and discussions and discussions with Burma and gives India a sever touch in her diplomatic moves. India's visit by Burmese leaders are common place so they frequently visited 83 India in comparison to most of the leading countries. In protesting to the U.N. against the Formosa regime's refusal to evacuate its troops from the Shan States, Burma strongly supported India's delegation and received the whole-hearted sympathy of the Indian Press. India was not directly entangled in the KMT issue, but Indian public and official opinion fully supported Burma. Mr. Nehru said that, "the KMT Troops had absolutely no business to be on Burmese soil." At the U.N. meeting, India's V.K. Krishna Menon expressed his delegation's, "deep concern in the matter, because it felt that any violation of the honour of Burma or any wrong done to that country was as insignificant to 85 it as a wrong done to India."

In December 1949, India and Burma were the first non-communist countries, which recognised the Communist Chinese Regime headed by Mao Tse Tung.

On November 1950, a month after communist Chinese forces entered Tibet; Communist Chinese volunteers entered the Korean War and Tibet practically became a forgotten issue. Both India and Burma had supported in June 1950, at the U.N., the charge of aggression against North Korea. When the American sponsored resolution branding Communist China as an aggressor in Korea was approved by the U.N. General Assembly on February 1, 1951, India and Burma were the only two non-communist countries to vote against it.

India and Burma both supported the May 18 resolution, calling U.N. members to embargo strategic items to communist China and North Korea. Both always urge that the admission of Communist China into the United Nations, should be truly open to universal membership. Burma and India were among the 75 member majority in the General Assembly that on October 25, 1971 voted the Peoples Republic China in and

87. Ibid., pp. 414-415.
Taiwan out of the U.N. and both expressed the desire that China's presence will "lead to the strengthening and betterment of the organization."

Both the countries have the opinion, not to support collective defence arrangements such as SEATO, which only increased tension in Asia and destroyed the global peace in the world. Prime Minister Nehru made, special note to Burma's adherence to the five principles of peaceful co-existence and described that country as "our nearest neighbour."

In late December, sandwiched between the two visits of Tito to India and Burma, Premiers Nehru and NU joined the Premiers of the other three "Colombo powers" Ceylon, Indonesia and Pakistan, at Bogor, Indonesia. At this time, it was agreed to hold in Indonesia, the Asian African Conference which met at Bandung in late April 1, 1955.

After Bandung Conference, both premiers Nehru and NU went on separate overseas tours, including visits to the Soviet Union in June and November 1955, where the Five


Principles were propogated by the two leaders. As has been observed elsewhere, the greatest single support to the policy of "Panch Sheel" came from Russia. It can be said, "Burma is the key to India's neutrality just as Pearl Harbor was the key to America's intervention in World War II....... Burma unlike Tibet, is on the Indian side of the Himalayas."

To take the problem of Hungary, where India and Burma have disagreed at the U.N.O. Burma stood most closely with India in voting on a variety of issues at the world organization. India and Burma both regard the U.N. as offering potentially the best security against aggression.

The foundation of the state of Israel, has been regarded differently by India and Burma for some years. Although both countries de jure recognised Israel by the fall of 1950 (Burma in December 1949 and India in September 1950). Still, India has not sent a diplomatic representative to Israel. The present relations of India and Israel remain conspicuous by their absence. India has age old sympathy with the Arabs. There are a number of factors responsible for this sympathy. Principles of India's foreign policy, its

91. Ibid., p. 429.
92. Ibid., p. 421.
national self interest, the Kashmir issue, sentiments of Indian Muslims Pakistan-phobia etc. have influenced the continuation of India's aloof somewhat unneutral attitude towards Israel. Burma, on the other side, since mid 1952 has developed most cordial relations with Israel. In March 1956, Burma-Israel signed an economic cooperation agreement and in December 1957, the two countries raised their diplomatic missions to the ambassadorial level.

Like other civilized countries, India and Burma sincerely desire to avoid war, a desire is emphasized by a pressure to complete the economic progress as well as the dreadful experiences of the Third World War. Speaking about the foreign policies of Burma and India, one can conclude that they are closely identified with the notion of neutralism or non-alignment.

In 1962, there were no strained relations between India and Burma, when the news of military coup in Burma came as a great shock and complete surprise to India. The Government of India has greeted the proclamation by the

93. Ibid., p. 432.
Revolutionary Council and the new government of Burma that they would follow the policy of positive neutrality and wished to continue the existing cordial relationship with all countries.

India acquired a minor diplomatic gain by being the first country to recognise Burma's Newin regime. India has also greeted the policy of neutrality which was adopted by the new army regime. Non-alignment, however, has many shades to the world of today and a favourite of diplomatic circles in Rangoon is to speculate on how left the Newin government's neutrality is likely to be. There are no personal relations between the two countries after U.N. and Nehru.

India has also welcomed the declaration of the policy of 'Positive neutrality' and their desire to maintain and strengthen friendly relations with all countries. Because Burma is between two great powers, India and China, so it is quite natural that Burma is afraid of the possibility that British imperialism may be substituted either by an Indian or by a Chinese imperialism.

96. The Statesman, (Delhi, March 7, 1962).
97. The Statesman, (Delhi, April 4, 1962).
The danger from China is now hovering over this country's northern frontier which has become a threat to India and Burma. Because China has refused to recognise Macmohan line, Chinese attack in NEFA specially Longu area, makes the threat more obvious. Chinese forces remained in Burmese territory until talks between Mr. Chou En Lai and UNU led to a "fairly satisfactory settlement." Burma has a common border with China twice as that of India. It is naturally keen to adopt an isolated policy with India. The exchange of views between General Newin and Mr. Shastri would enable the government to assess chinese policies in a new perspective.

China's aggressive acts are unfortunate happenings. At the end of the "Hindi-Chini and Burmese Chini Bhai Bhai era", the public opinion in Asia has awakened to the "creeping yellow peril". But Burma followed successfully the policy of non-alignment to pacify the problem concerning China.

Burma has remained neutral in the dispute started by Pakistan and China with India. Because Burma has a keen

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100. "India and Burma", Thought, New Delhi: (30 October, 1969), p.3.
desire to establish peace in Asia it cannot want that Asia is affected by conflicts and disorder. Burma and India follow the same ideals and also achieve a new understanding of the need for peace which could help to discourage aggressive tendencies in neighbouring nations.

Burma has adopted the non-committal attitude towards the Sino-Indian border disputes and has little sympathy with India. General Newin has agreed to take part in a conference of "Heads of Six non-aligned countries to consider joint action on the Sino-Indian border dispute proposed by Ceylon's Prime Minister Mrs. S. Bandarnaiak." In the discussion with the Burmese leaders "the subject of Sino-Indian border dispute came up that Burma was sympathetic to the Indian point of view." And Revolutionary Council appealed to "the Indian and Chinese in Burma to stop from any action in the present fighting between India and China likely to cause public disorder."

Indo-Burmese relations are taking a new shape gradually. There was no particular dispute to be settled. But the

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103. The Patriot, (Delhi: December 21, 1965).
'Nagas' have been a source of trouble to the Indian and Burman Government, because they create trouble in the North-Eastern part of India, the border areas of India and Burma. "For the suppression of Naga rebels, the cooperation or at least the neutrality of the government of Burma; is necessary. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs said in the Lok Sabha, "the presence of the Naga-hostiles on Burmese territory was brought to the notice of the government of Burma on the 16th May 1961, the Burmese Government issued a communique stating that they were taking immediate steps to confirm this information, that they took the most serious view of any part of the Burmese territory being used as a base for carrying out operations against friendly neighbouring country and that they would take every measure open to them to deal with bands of armed men in their territory."

The Burmese Government has done its best to check these Naga rebels. The Government has given instructions to the commissioners to make necessary enquiry and condemned

that Nagas received assistance. The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs Shri Surendra Pal Singh said in Lok Sabha. "According to the information available to the Government of India the underground Nagas have received some assistance from the Tangra Nagas and Kachins residing in Burma. Suitable measures have been taken to prevent illegal crossing of our border, Government of Burma are aware of these contacts." From the help of Kachins, some extremist elements among underground Nagas have established contact with China and they have gone to China through Burmese territory. They are also helped by the underground Nagas of India because they have a common desire of having a greater independent Nagaland.

The emergence of Bangla Desh as a free, democratic and secular republic which was a part of Pakistan and was known as East Pakistan and became independent in December 1971, with the efforts of India, is friendly both to India and Burma. Mr. Singh said, "Burma was one of the countries which recognised Bangla Desh soon after its emergence as an

111. Ibid., Col. 986.
independent country. Any step taken for neutralisation of Southeast Asia area would have the support of both Burma and India." In protest, the Pakistan Government has withdrawn its ambassador from Rangoon. To take the problems which arise with the emergence of Bangla Desh, a meeting was held in Simla between the top leaders of India and Pakistan. According to Burma, "the recent Simla Agreement has contributed considerably to peace in Asia as a whole." And Burmese leaders appreciated this agreement.

The Special Correspondent of Press trust of India (PTI) in Rangoon who was the only Indian correspondent in Rangoon, had to leave that country at nine hours notice. It is guessed that the order may have some connection with Bangla Desh stories and reports of activities of the recently formed All Burma Pakistan Association to mobilise opinion in support of the struggle in Bangladesh sent by Mr. Roy, a special correspondent of PTI.

Arakan Hills in Burma touching the Bay of Bengal and the borders of India and Bangla Desh have become the hot-bed

113. The Times of India, (Delhi : 10 April 1973).
115. The Times of India, (Delhi : 25 May, 1971).
of international conspiracy against India, Bangladesh and Burma according to highly reliable sources. It is quite clear that China, U.S.A. and Pakistan have ganged-up against India and Bangla desh and can not forgive India for helping in the emergence of independent Bangla Desh.

When the Pakistan army surrendered in Bangladesh, huge quantities of sophisticated arms and ammunition were given to Mizo, Naga hostiles and some Pakistan troops who fled to Arakan Hills with Chinese instructions in Chittagaong Hill tracts. These ammunitions were taken away to Arakan Hills. The Burman Muslim population is also creating troubles for the Burman Government. Recently, a gang of Burmese Muslims calling themselves as men of so-called Arakan Independent Army passed through India-Burma border from Kachi area after receiving military training. China and Pakistan would continue to increase their assistance in the shape of military hardwares and training facilities and rebels of India and Burma and other elements which could work against India, Bangladesh and Burma.

General Newin and Mrs. Gandhi scanned the world scene from the Asian-angle. Both emphasised that the political

settlement of the Vietnam question was necessary. They also 117 greateed the settlement of Vietnam war and agreement. Mrs. Gandhi said, "it is easy to throw-up the old and take to something new ..... we are trying to find this third path which is the most different but which in the long run, will 118 be the most satisfying."

Recently, the Union of Burma Airways stopped operation of all its flights to India and cancelled its three flights a week from Rangoon to Calcutta. The U.B.A. action was understood to be a follow-up of Burma's unilateral withdrawal on landing rights to Indian Airlines flights over Burma territory. The suspension of their own flights was to probably meant emphasis their point of view. But this action was withdrawn soon and Burma Government allowed the Indian Airlines Calcutta - Port Blair flight after discussion between the two 120 countries.

After three days goodwill visit by the External Affair Minister Sardar Swaran Singh and on his return to India he said, "Burma agrees with India that the problems in the

117. The National Herald, (Delhi : 1 April 1969).
118. Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi, op. cit., p.392.
Indian sub-continent should be resolved by mutual discussions and agreements among the countries of the sub-continent themselves. Both sides agreed that every effort should be made to maintain the Indian ocean as an area of peace and tranquility. He further said, "The good neighbourliness and traditional friendly relations between the two countries provided scope for fruitful cooperation in the economic, technical and cultural fields." Mr. Singh also discussed bilateral relations between the two countries with General Newin and others leaders.

We can say therefore that India plays the role of elder brother to Burma. Taking mutual goodwill and trust for granted India and Burma have been peaceful neighbours. There are no serious differences or contradictory interests between the two countries. The minor sources of conflict will be resolved by amicable negotiations as the proper atmosphere for that solution exists in both the countries.

121. The Times of India, (Delhi : 10 April 1973).
122. The Patriot, (Delhi : 21 December 1965).