



# Freedom from Fear and Other Writings

*Aung San Suu Kyi , Michael Aris (Editor)*

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A new collection of writings by the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner includes her acceptance speech as delivered by her son during her six-year incarceration and numerous reminiscences on her role in politics and her fear for her people.

## Freedom from Fear and Other Writings Details

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# From Reader Review *Freedom from Fear and Other Writings* for online ebook

## Estelle Champlain says

Aung San Suu Kyi. *Freedom From Fear and Other Writings*, 2nd ed. Edited by Michael Aris. Penguin Books Ltd, London & New York: 1995.

Review by Estelle Champlain

This book is a compilation of essays describing the ongoing Burmese struggle for national sovereignty. The lives of modern Burma's two most prominent revolutionary leaders, Aung San and his daughter Aung San Suu Kyi (hereafter Suu), are the vehicles by which Burma's revolutionary story is told. Suu wrote most of the essays contained in the book, but a few were contributed by other distinguished experts. The most stirring essay by a contributor is the introduction written by Michael Aris, the husband of Suu; the man from whom she was taken as a requirement for her serving a leader of her people.

The book is comprised of three sections. The first gives readers requisite background information on Burma, including its society, religion, ethnic groups, and colonial experience. The culmination of this first section is an understanding of Aung San's motives for leading Burma to resist all foreign governments. Suu is the exclusive author of these essays. Her presentation of the facts is clear. In her essay entitled "My Father", she gives a detailed account of Burma's history as a British Colony beginning at the turn of the 20th century, after the third Anglo-Burmese war, all the way up to the time of her father's assassination in 1948, after World War II. The strength of this essay is her penetrating exploration of sociopolitical undercurrents which motivated Aung San and his followers. For readers who prefer a more succinct version, see her essay "My Country and People", subsection "Building an Independent Nation."

After completing the first third of the book, readers will likely find themselves ethically allied with the Burmese as they sought recognition of their right to self-rule. Moreover, readers will come to understand why Aung San is so highly venerated by his people. He was a simple man with a deep sense of duty to his people; he selflessly devoted his life to their service. Suu's description of her father as a hero is convincing, yet some readers may find one particular point of praise difficult to reconcile with evidence. Suu repeatedly asserts that honesty was among her father's most endearing virtues. Incidentally, she also chronicles his intention to use first the Japanese military against the British, then the British might against the Japanese, all in an effort to reach Burmese goals.<sup>(1)</sup> While this behavior certainly demonstrates Aung San's clever mind and courage against formidable adversaries, and is behavior praiseworthy of a patriot, it does remain inconsistent with her declaration that Aung San was impeccably "honest." Regardless of the question of honesty, Aung San is convincingly represented to be a hero; readers who might be troubled by the complications of his character will likely put the matter to rest when they encounter the following words of wisdom later in the book, "Saints, it has been said, are the sinners who go on trying."<sup>(2)</sup>

Section two explores what democracy is and how it is compatible with the Buddhist beliefs held dear by Burmese people.<sup>(3)</sup> The opening essay for this section is also the title of the book itself, "Freedom from Fear." The crux of the essay is that fear is the most dangerous threat to good government and peaceful society. Suu attributes the corruption and inhumanity of the Burmese one-party military government to their use of fear as a weapon against the people. She references the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations<sup>(4)</sup> while calling for a "revolution of the spirit" that will lift the Burmese people from oppression by a government run on coercion and fear.<sup>(5)</sup> This moving essay is suitable for readers interested not only in Burmese history, but for those who wish to explore the ethics in any form of government as it

applies to any group of people. The book's title is well chosen.

Remaining insights to be gained from section two include Suu's call for the Burmese crowds to remain united, resiting factions, as they peacefully demonstrate for their rights.(6) Also, Suu articulated the goal of the revolution to be the institution of multi-party democracy with free and fair elections.(7) She directly appeals to the crowds to maintain peace. While she did not have the means to arm the people, she certainly held the upper hand against the government in terms of numbers of supporters. She had it within her power to incite the masses to violently oppose their rulers, but through it all she held to peace and discourse. It is for this as much as for her personal sacrifice(8) that she has become a world wide icon for human rights.(9)

The first section of the book detailed Aung San's life and set the stage for Burma's struggle for independence. The second section examined Suu's leadership of the Burmese while explaining how multi-party democracy is the appropriate expression of human rights. The third and final section of the book is a collection of writing that delves further into Suu's personal character.(10) It is intended for those readers who are interested in what sort of woman she is, those readers who wish to understand what sort of person is capable of such dignity, self-sacrifice, and wisdom.

In sum, *Freedom From Fear* is an excellent read for a variety of audiences. Historians of Southeast Asia will find valuable insights into the culture of the region and how it was affected by colonialism. Religious scholars will find examples of how Buddhism was applied with practicality to upheavals in peoples' lives. Biographers will gain personal insights into the lives of both Aung San and Suu. Students of revolution will receive a detailed account of many facets of the Burmese struggle. Above all though, every reader will come away from *Freedom from Fear* with a deeper understanding and respect for the basic human right to self-determination and will be inspired by the dignity of Suu as she served her nation and her father in leading Burma toward peaceful independence.

#### Footnotes:

(1) When some Burmese revolutionaries were "divided over whether or not they should accept Japanese help...Aung San, however, took the pragmatic view that they should accept help from any quarter that offered it and see how the situation developed.", pg. 14. "Burmese found certain Japanese attitudes highly objectionable, and friction began to develop between the two races even before the invasion of Burma at the end of 1941.", pg. 15. Then, in 1945 after the Allies gained an upper hand in World War II and factions within Burma had been united behind Aung San, "it only remained to see what kind of terms could be arranged with Allied forces before finalizing plans for the resistance (against Japan).", pg. 21. "By 15 June a victory parade was held in Rangoon, at which the Burmese army participated alongside the units representing British Empire and Allied forces.", pg. 22. "...he would allow no ideology to come before the cause of Burmese freedom and unity.", pg. 31.

(2)pg. 183.

(3)Buddhist's strive to "make traditional knowledge relevant to contemporary need", pg. 168. Suu affirms that the Ten Duties of Kings, described on pgs 170-173 are "just as well suited to modern government as to the first monarch of the world." pg. 170. The successful harmony of Buddhism with modern democracy is of crucial importance in Burma since "Theravada Buddhism...was to be a major factor in forming the character of Burmese society." pg. 47. The importance of Buddhism in relation to politics is further seen in that the first nationalists body formed to address political aspirations had the coequal goal of preserving Burmese Buddhist culture, Young Men's Buddhist Association, est. 1906, pg. 6.

(4)pg. 182.

(5)pg. 183.

(6)She urges unity and restraint among all groups. Her appeals to students, the army, and different generations of citizens displays her understanding of the Burmese people, proving that she is not another outsider attempting to impose control. See essay entitled "Speech at the Shwedagon Pagoda", pgs, 194-198.

(7)pg. 197, 198, or for more complete details, read "The Objective" pgs. 199-202.

(8)Suu was separated from her husband and sons for nearly two decades while she endured house arrest in Burma. During this time her sons came of age and her husband passed away. See the introduction for more details as related by her husband; for her point of view see pgs. 205-207.

(9)She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 while still detained under house arrest. See 228-238 for speeches regarding her Nobel Prize.

(10)Suu's teenage appearance, early education, and activities are described pgs 280-282. For her young adult life including marriage, motherhood, and higher education, see pgs 287-289. Personal vignette of Suu the mother pgs. 296, 297.

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## Andrew says

I suppose this is what your high school guidance counselor called "inspirational writing." Ignore him/her and his/her fuzzy cardigans. He/she probably has a way of ruining things you like, ranging from hot cocoa to Cinema Paradiso.

Aung San Suu Kyi manages to pair an astonishingly courageous democratic strategy with graceful political writing. These aren't dense, theoretical cogitations, but commonsense illustrations of the present conditions in Burma and how they can be rectified.

This collection though, was best when she was speaking with her own voice. The commentaries on her were at points charming, but I don't especially care what Aung San Suu Kyi was like in her Oxford days. We all know she's a remarkable person-- we don't need the adulations of her acquaintances to reinforce this.

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## Aubrey says

*Short-term objectives — such as mass demonstrations, the formation of political parties and elections — are worthless if human rights are not consistently observed.*

Upon finishing this book, I completed my set goal for the Year of Reading Woman of Color 2016 challenge sponsored by the 500 Great Books By Women group. While I will not do what I did a number of times in the past year and extend the finish line by another ten books or so, I will continue the balanced diet of reading I've apportioned for my four books at once reading policy, thus ensuring that I will extend my YoRWoC2016

count by 2-3 books, if not more. In terms of this being a learning experience, my drop in the top reviewer rankings more than attests to that. I've also become aware of what it really means when I find it easier to confine my reading to 20% of the world's population than to 40%, give or take a few percentage points. Part of it is availability, part of it is marketing, and a huge chunk is the brainwashing the concept of "universal" has done to anyone who's come close to standardized education. I was able to access a great number of the severely underread works in my goal count through UCLA libraries, but the difference between those and what I'll be studying for my upcoming GRE and English subject tests is vast indeed.

*There is nothing new in Third World governments seeking to justify and perpetuate authoritarian rule by denouncing liberal democratic principles as alien. By implication they claim for themselves the official and sole right to decide what does or does not conform to indigenous cultural norms.*

Aung San Suu Kyi was confined to house arrest before I was born and was released during my second year of college. I first got a notion of her existence when I watched 'Beyond Rangoon' in freshman year of high school, a movie whose quality of being out of touch with the actual issues at hand only increases with every passing year, the change in the city name only being one of the more ironic death knells. The times being what they are, I don't see the point in reading books at the moment that aren't in some way politically motivated, whether they are records of nonviolent resistance, memoirs of genocides, and seemingly innocuous works that, for all their incorporation into the mainstream, would not survive on the premise of white patriarchal supremacy. Even I will need a break from that from time to time, but seeing as how for years I've preferred to devote my reading to realms beyond my comfort zone and save the indulgences for movies and video games, I don't see any reason to change that now.

*[Nehru] denounces as a 'kind of art for art's sake' the study of the past which is not linked to the present and which does not derive from it the urge to action. For him the ideal was action which was not divorced from thought but which flowed from it in a continuous sequence.*

It's interesting how my haphazard autodidacticism prepared me rather well for tackling this work, as the title 'Freedom from Fear and Other Writings' is both technically true and wildly misleading. Contrary to what the summary states, around half to three quarters of the writing is by Aung San Suu Kyi, if that. Of what she herself authored, 'Freedom From Fear' is one of perhaps two or three essays that touch directly upon events initiated by Aung San Suu Kyi returning to Myanmar (Burma) to nurse her sick mother. To get more of a glimpse of the place in history the author is most famous for, one must turn to the pieces in the last portion of the book written by others ranging from professors to scholars to a retired UN employee whom Aung San Suu Kyi referred to as her 'emergency aunt'. The situation here is that, during the time of this book's creation, Aung San Suu Kyi was far out of reach, and the efforts to combine her scholarship with contemporary concerns means including a sizable portion of writing requires drawing on what pieces she has done on her father as national hero, her country, and highly academic articles such as 'Intellectual Life in Burma and India under Colonialism' and 'Literature and Nationalism in Burma'. If you've read anything along the lines The Discovery of India and are already inclined towards thinking concretely about the relationship between literature and life, you won't have that much trouble connecting the dots. If you're thinking of picking up this book as your first introduction to Myanmar in the late 1980's, I highly suggest you look at Letters from Burma instead. Saying that you'll be lost and likely frustrated by the mounds of new and highly contextualized information that manages through many viewpoints to border on repetitive is putting it lightly.

*A revolution which aims merely at changing official policies and institutions with a view to an improvement in material conditions has little chance of genuine success. Without a revolution of the spirit, the forces which produced the iniquities of the old order would continue to be*

*operative, posing a constant threat to the process of reform and regeneration.*

The last essay had some reservations on Aung San Suu Kyi's leadership based on a prioritizing of a Bamar (Burmese) construction of parliament over incorporation of all minorities prior to making any decisions of the larger government. In light of the situation nearly two decades later with the Rohingya people and other Muslim populations living in Myanmar, the author was right to be concerned over something as deceptively simple as the semantics of a proposed constitution. My situation is removed from this one, but when considering the US has had some kind of hand in every military dictatorship even before Neo-Nazis started calling themselves in the alt-right in 2016, what escalating Islamophobia there is over here will most definitely carry over there. For all that, I can't say what the future holds. However, if someone was willing to spend two decades under house arrest for said future, I can only try to match that in my own way.

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### **Lucas says**

I gave it a one star simply because politics is not my favorite. However, I did enjoy the parts of history included in there as well as learning about the character of Aung San Suu Kyi. She has a formidable character and acted as a moral compass for all those whom she associated with, as well as for the developing nation of Burma. It's horrible some of the things she had to go through.

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### **Ponanya says**

Thank you for the inspiration she provide all of us (our country) who share the values of democracy, human rights, and justice. We stand by "mother suu" now and always.

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### **Nicholas Whyte says**

<http://nhw.livejournal.com/1008238.html>[return][return]The first half of Freedom From Fear begins with two lengthy pieces by Aung San Suu Kyi on her father and on the country as a whole, and also includes two of her essays on Burmese literature. The next quarter of the book is taken up with her political statements from the brief period when she was free to make them at the end of the 1980s, and then the last section has some personal reminiscences by her friends, including to my surprise and to the editor's credit a mildly critical piece by Josef Silverstein. It falls however to a fellow student from her days at St Hugh's in Oxford to make a point in writing that is obvious when you look at the cover of the book: Aung San Suu Kyi is beautiful.[return][return]And also very brave. The editor of the book, published in 1990, was her late husband, Michael Aris, who writes with love and gratitude of the sixteen or so years they had together before she answered the call of destiny that they had both always known might some day come. She will be 63 this year; her father was 32 when he was killed (and she was only two). Her harassment and imprisonment by the Burmese state has lasted almost twenty years; her sons are now in their thirties. Politics is not an especially easy life anywhere; but this is something else. Freedom From Fear ends with Suu Kyi being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. It is an international disgrace that we seem no closer to resolving the situation in 2008.

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## Raj says

This is a collection of essays by and about the Burmese pro-democracy activist. It's split into three sections, the first being essays that she wrote before becoming politically active. This contains a biography of her father, the man regarded as the father of the modern Burma; a history of the country written for a younger audience; a comparison of colonialism in Burma and India; and a review of Burmese literature and nationalism. This section shows that she's an intelligent and intelligible writer with a wide range, but it's the second section where she comes into her own. This is a collection of speeches and essays after her political activism began. Apart from one very dry and difficult piece about economics, peace and development, they're all very clearly written and her passion and drive come through clearly. The final section is a series of appreciations of Aung San Suu Kyi written by other people.

The most heartbreaking thing about this book is that it was published in the mid 90s, and more than a decade later nothing has changed. Aung San Suu Kyi is still under house arrest, the military are still in control and it doesn't look like they're going to give up any time soon. Reading her words, her optimism and hope shine through: she really believed that the military would talk to her and accept the mandate of the people where her party won over 80% of the seats contested.

This book shows that Aung San Suu Kyi is an intelligent, strong and incredibly capable woman. She's been called Burma's Gandhi and I hope that she lives to see her dream of Burma's transition to a democratic state.

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## Neil says

Having just come back from a visit to Burma I was really interested to pick up this book. I had tried to find it before I left and was unsuccessful but read up a reasonable amount on the country before I arrived.

Frankly, my feelings were mixed. Part 1, which actually takes up about half the book, is a series of essays on Burma published by Suu Kyi before she became politically active. Although there was some interesting information on the history of Burma and her father I felt as if these were a little out of place for an average reader and tended to all discuss similar issues repeatedly (background on her father and the Thakin's) or provide large amounts of information that was hard to digest (going through all the provinces of the country and talking about their key characteristics). They didn't really convey any sense of who the author was to me or give me much understanding of her.

I understand that due to her lengthy incarceration there are not a huge volume of speeches and other materials to draw on but reading through part 1 I rapidly found myself losing interest. I feel bad saying that but it is just my honest feelings - it was almost as if they were put in as fluff to add some length to the text (not saying that was the reason but how I felt). In particular I felt the essay titled "Intellectual Life in Burma and India Under Colonialism" was a gruelling read and just not relevant enough or set at a reasonable level for someone who does not have an indepth knowledge of Burmese or Indian history to understand. It seemed to be a very indepth, analytical dissertation style piece that is very hard for a casual reader such as myself to take much from.

Once Part 2 begins we move onto her political works and this is where I really found myself enjoying the



book. Some of her speeches and writings really are truly inspiring. There is no question she is an incredible person but for the first 167 pages of the book I found it hard to connect with her. The background on her father (who is clearly a vital influence on her politics) was appreciated at first but became tired as I felt after essay number 1 no new ground was really covered. It's a real shame for me that I felt Part 1 was such a struggle as it really restricted my overall enjoyment of the book. They could easily have cut out 2/3 or even 3/4 of this section, left enough to provide some background history on her father and Burma, suggested some other readings for those interested, and moved on.

I don't want my overall review to seem harsh but after struggling through over 1/2 the book I feel like it would be just as productive to do a little background reading on Burma before picking up this book, read the introduction and then skip straight to Part 2.

Hopefully in the next few years we will see another piece of literature from Suu Kyi where she can speak freely on her experiences these last 20+ years. That is something I can't wait to read.

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### **Sai Kishore says**

Re-rating this.

Who deserves the Nobel peace prize?

A spectator who sees 123,000 people fled across the border with horrific stories to carry with them?

Is this not a textbook example of ethnic cleansing?

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### **Chris Hall says**

Good, but as you'd expect from a collection of previously written essays, there's a certain amount of repetition.

The first half of the book might not be of interest to everyone (containing a biography of Aung San and histories of Burmese culture and literature) but they are useful as background to the second half.

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### **Melody says**

I loved this book, Aung San Suu Kyi has captured my heart as well as Burma.

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### **Marie says**

Myanmar (Burma)

"The shade of a tree is cool indeed. The shade of parents is cooler.  
The shade of teachers is cooler still. The shade of a ruler is yet more cool.  
But coolest of all is the shade of the Buddha's teachings."

"The quest for democracy in Burma is the struggle of a people to live whole, meaningful lives as free and equal members of the world community. It is part of the unceasing human endeavor to prove that the spirit of man can transcend the flaws of his own nature."

"Fearlessness may be a gift but perhaps more precious is the courage acquired through endeavor, courage that comes from cultivating the habit of refusing to let fear dictate one's actions."

"History is important. You chose who you are by choosing which tradition you belong to."

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## **Jamie says**

Aung San Suu Kyi appears to have stumbled upon her calling and purpose in life by following the strong currents of fate. As the youngest daughter of Aung San, who was cruelly assassinated just before Burma's declared independence in 1948, she lived a large part of her life outside of Burma. However, she maintained a strong connection with her country through her visits and writings. In 1988, she was to assume the leadership role of Burma's second independence movement, demonstrating bold leadership and fortitude. In the process giving up her husband, career and children for the people of Burma.

Aung San Suu Kyi is articulate in her depictions of Burmese history and the Buddhist culture. The Buddhist version of government by social contract is called the Mahasammata, a monarchy chosen by popular consent to govern in accordance with just laws. The ten duties of the king consist of: liberality, morality, self-sacrifice, integrity, kindness, austerity, non-anger, non-violence, forbearance and non-opposition (to the will of the people). Buddhism places strong value in the sanctity of human life, "easier is it for a needle dropped from the abode of Brahma to meet a needle struck in the earth than to be born as a human being."

Aung San Suu Kyi is articulate and passionate in her pleas for democracy in Burma. "...democracy, like liberty, justice and other social and political rights, is not 'given', it is earned through courage, resolution and sacrifice." "The true measure of the justice of a system is the amount of protection it guarantees to the weakest." "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it." Burma not only needs a revolution of institutions and governance, but also of spirit. Captured in this quoted poem is the idea that people need to be stronger to impose their will and not be crushed by the hands of government:

Emerald cool we may be  
As water in cupped hands  
But oh that we might be  
As splinters of glass  
In cupped hands

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## Heather says

Freedom from Fear by Aung San Suu Kyi Oh, she feels. There's just too much here and during this time. I'm trying to keep this to a review and will post the book inspired rant later. Please bear with me, there will be crossover. This book is amazing and really showcases the struggle and strength of a founder of democracy for her country. This is one of my Reading Nobel Women books. Aung San Suu Kyi was the recipient of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize.

My feelings about what I was reading alternated based on the current US political scene. I was reading it during the last presidential debate and while I was watching the states turn red on election day. I'd rather not get into American politics, but there were some serious concerns on both sides of the aisle and here and some outrage in the aftermath that made reading about student protests in another country and almost 20 years ago that much more relevant.

The book begins with a foreword by Aung San Suu Kyi's husband, Michael Aris. He explains a little of their history together and what had been happening since her struggle for democracy began, it's the personal side that includes that her children had not been able to see her for years on account of it. As someone who works in a "masculine" field and has been married to an at-home dad for six years, I cannot adequately explain how much I adore Aris's support of his wife and the way he never alludes to feelings of emasculation. A woman's struggle and strength does not inherently emasculate her husband. It just doesn't. I love how compiling this work and editing it must have allowed him to feel close to her despite all the things that were keeping them apart at the time of its writing.

He then explains the format for the book. It is broken in three parts. The first are the works about Burma that she wrote before her political involvement. They give the reader a good sense of Burma and how much she loves and appreciates her country. They also get cited quite a bit later, so it helps to have read these works. The next part is her political writings that are mostly by her as well, but some are about her and written by others, such as the acceptance speech given for the Nobel Peace Prize that was given by her son.

It was this part that first made me think about the democracy that we have here and what we want here and what our ideals about democracy really are. It's easy to look at the long history of US democracy and lose the ideas of a founder. This book helped me out with that a little. At worse, it just changed my thoughts about what was going through their minds. There's the bits on the military and how it should (and in the US does) stay out of politics. Aung San Suu Kyi's party was consistently harassed by the military and denied the authorization to assemble but the demonstrations stayed peaceful. It was interesting to see the way she used the presence of the military at her demonstrations as an opportunity to reach out to rather than criticize them. The last part are the writings in appreciation of Aung San See Kyi's movement and her character. One is written by a personal friend, which was an interesting touch. Another seems a bit more objective but still focuses on the way her involvement changed the movement that had already been there, the way she led them into unity and how she maintained a platform of peaceful protest for democracy over crowds that could have easily gotten violent.

The whole book is a beautiful testament to her strong leadership and character is a proponent of peace and democracy in her country. It recognizes that her position was merely advantageous in the beginning but acknowledges that it was her personal strength and ability that got the country to where it needed to go. It is not a memoir, which was what I had read about previous laureates. I love memoirs, but it was interesting to change it up in that this is part of the body of work that she was given the award for rather than her personal experience through it.

It was also a timely read, as mentioned before. It gives good insight into the mind of a revolutionary striving for democracy in a country that has never had it. The inspirational nature of her writing works to make me

want to work on improving upon our own democracy and how it works, to get more involved.

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### **Jessie Schultz says**

For someone who doesn't have much background on the situation it was a good starting point. She's incredible.

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### **Josie Crimp says**

I have very mixed feelings about this book. I finished it (it was a long slog) full of admiration for Suu Kyi, but feeling that its publisher made some poor decisions. I don't think the average reader needed the amount of in-depth Burmese history that is presented here, and that you ostensibly have to wade through before you get to hearing about Suu Kyi herself. I know she was the author of these essays but I think it's a mistake to see the purpose of a book like this as presenting the history of Burma, when the reader is wanting to find out about Suu Kyi herself and her approaches to non-violent resistance. If it hadn't been that I was determined to have less books on my Kindle that I still hadn't read, I doubt I would have got through the first 50%. Once I was there, I got onto the more personal section, and found it a much more interesting read henceforth.

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### **Shira says**

p. 178 from her essay "In Quest of Democracy" she says

"In a revolutionary movement there is always the danger that political exigencies might obscure, or even nullify, essential spiritual aims. A firm insistence on the inviolability and primacy of such aims is not mere idealism but a necessary safeguard against an Animal Farm syndrome where the new order ... takes on the murky colours of the very system it has replaced."

interesting juxtaposition to Nelson Mandela's reasoning that non-violence was not to be the absolute from a tactical perspective, in his autobiography Long Walk to Freedom. I'm glad to see that Gandhi (and of course Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) was not the only person to understand the vital importance of non-violence in bringing about change.

This also shows the fundamental importance of non-violent ideology, across Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism .

Read, Write, Dream, Teach !

ShiraDest

19 February, 12016 HE

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## **Alfonso D'agostino says**

Me ne rendo conto: per noi italiani, e per gli occidentali in generale, un nome come quello di Aung San Suu Kyi non è semplicissimo da ricordare. Sono altrettanto sicuro di un fatto, però: nella nostra vita, in un momento o in un altro tutti abbiamo avuto l'occasione di sentir parlare di questa donna dall'aspetto minuto e di coraggio gigantesco.

Figlia di un eroe dell'indipendenza birmana, Aung San Suu Kyi ha avvertito il grido di dolore di una patria ferita da una feroce dittatura militare dopo un viaggio a casa per assistere la madre morente. Rapidamente divenuta simbolo dell'opposizione non violenza al regime, ha subito sulla sua pelle le prove più terribili: dal totale isolamento alla lontananza dai figli e dal marito, fino all'orribile insensibilità di chi non le garantì che sarebbe potuta rientrare in Birmania quando si ebbe notizia della malattia terminale del coniuge.

Per superare momenti del genere ci vuole, non è in dubbio, un enorme ideale. E ci vuole dell'Amore, scritto con la A maiuscola, verso un popolo e una terra da cui ci si sente ricoperti di responsabilità. Ecco, "Liberi dalla paura", raccolta di saggi di Aung San Suu Kyi, è un enorme lettera d'Amore.

In "Mio padre", che apre la raccolta, l'autrice affronta da un punto di vista assolutamente storiografico la figura del genitore. E' letterariamente intenso ed emotivamente coinvolgente: sorprende la capacità di mantenere distinte la storia familiare (quasi del tutto assente) ed il percorso politico di un uomo che prese anche delle decisioni sbagliate, che non vengono risparmiare. Tra le righe, un affetto e una riconoscenza profonda, lo stesso Amore che ne "Il mio paese e il mio popolo" porta Aung San Suu Kyi a raccontare la Birmania a un pubblico di giovani e adolescenti: le bellezze naturali e il carattere di un'intera popolazione vengono come sussurrati, senza nascondere, ancora una volta, tutte le difficoltà.

Se avete amato "The Lady", film tratto dalla biografia di Aung San Suu Kyi che abbiamo raccontato qui, rimarrete incantati dalla voce cristallina e ferma di questa eroina dei nostri giorni. Se non lo avete visto, procuratevi entrambi: ne vale la pena.

--- link: <http://www.masedomani.com/2015/08/18/...> ---

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## **Greg Collver says**

A collection of her essays, speeches and other works. I enjoyed the speeches most, especially "Freedom from Fear" and "Empowerment for a Culture of Peace and Development". "Suu Burmese", a biography of Suu by her friend Ann Slater was also enjoyable.

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## **Monique says**

This book contains a couple of essays of Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Birma's national heroes Aung San, one of the important people behind independence Birma. In 1988 she travels to Birma to be with her ill mother. She supports the struggle of Birma to become a democracy, but the military junta SLORC is seeing her as a threat and are trying everything to stop her. In 1989 they place her under house arrest. The SLORC says she's free to leave to country, but then she can never come back again. Aung San Suu Kyi refuses to go.

The 2nd and 3th part of the book are essays about the history and about Aung San Suu Kyi herself.

It was a very interesting book, specially the essays written by Aung San Suu Kyi self. While reading the book I felt often very sad, because it's such a tragic situation she's in. I think she's a very brave and inspiring woman. She absolutely deserved the Nobel Peace Prize she received in 1991, while she was under house arrest.

I was shocked to read that she hasn't seen her sons for so long and that she couldn't go to the funeral of her beloved husband who died in 1999. With her whole (pilgrim)soul, heart she supports altruistic Birma's struggle for freedom and democracy, giving up her own live for it. A friend of her reminds her with a poem by Yeats:

How many loved your moments of glad grace  
And loved your beauty with love false and true  
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you.

I think we all love that pilgrim soul in Aung San Suu Kyi.

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