

All the people should be well aware of the fact that national unity is of utmost importance

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan—The following is the translation of the message sent by President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Aggamaha Thayaysithu Aggamaha Thirithudhamma U Thein Sein on the occasion of the 64th Anniversary Independence Day.

Esteemed national brethren

Today is the 64th Anniversary Independence Day, which is of significance for all the Myanmar people. Another significant point is that it coincides with a time when Myanmar is marching towards a democratic nation of justice and liberty aspired by the national people born in the Union. Independence was achieved thanks to the unity of the national people who fought back with the noble spirit of sacrificing their lives, blood and sweat. This is why all the people must recognize the 64th Anniversary Independence Day as a noble, significant day. At such a time, I extend my greetings and wish all the national people of the Union both physical and mental well-being.

Myanmar people are the simple and honest ones living in the nation in peace and unity. Always respecting their faith and culture, they are helpful to each other. All the national races have been living in amity and intimacy respecting each other's tradition and culture. However, they had bitter experiences such as being under evil colonialism and under occupation by the colonialists. The British imperialists encroached upon Myanmar's sovereignty by waging three aggressive wars during the period from 1824 to 1885. Though the national people fought back the colonialists with all weapons they had after enlisting the public strength, they lost due to unequal strength. And consequently, all the national people fell under colonial rule. After annexing Myanmar, the colonialists systematically governed the people forcing them into enslavement. They exploited aboveground and underground resources in various ways. They even ruled the country in various wicked ways so that the faith, culture, tradition and language of the Myanmar people died away. What's more, the imperialists adopted a divide-and-rule policy discriminating between the hilly regions and plains and casting doubts among the national brethren with intent to disintegrate national unity.

Esteemed national brethren

Under colonial rule, the Myanmar people had to live in dire poverty. At the colonialists' instigation, a slavery education system emerged and so did those unscrupulous persons who wanted to prolong the colonial rule. Yet, the political awareness, growing public strength and strong anti-colonialism of the brilliant, patriotic youths of Myanmar could drive the imperialists out of the country.

Educated youths headed by General Aung San were able to recruit the national people to join the People's Tatmadaw risking their lives. Although the British colonialists could be driven out with the strength of the Tatmadaw, the Myanmar people suffered the severe penetration of fascism during independence struggles. The Tatmadaw side by side with the people put up a strong resistance to the fascists. After the fascists had fled, General Aung San together with Myanmar leaders had to fight for independence through political means when

the British colonialists re-entered the country. To be able to enjoy complete independence, all the national people regardless of where they came from, hilly regions or plains, took part harmoniously in the fight against the colonialists. Owing to the physical strength, mental strength and united strength of the national people sacrificing their lives, blood and sweat, Myanmar became an independent, sovereign nation on 4 January, 1948, and it has turned 64 this year. The cost of lives, blood and sweat the people sacrificed for regaining independence and sovereignty was tremendous. All the people will be well aware of the fact that today, some powerful nations are attempting to influence weaker ones resorting to various ways and means. So, the entire people of the Union need to join hands in safeguarding and maintaining independence and sovereignty. Only Myanmar people can bring peace, development and prosperity to the nation. It should be noticed that the nation would fall again under the alien subjugation if national unity broke up. Therefore, it is especially important for all the national people to try to ensure non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty.

Esteemed national brethren

Despite the concerted efforts to achieve independence risking their lives, in the post-independence period, the national people sticking to their different ideologies, sectarianism and racism clashed with each other causing bloodshed. As a consequence, the people ran into trouble. Whenever the nation was on the brink of collapse, the Tatmadaw safeguarded it. It was the Tatmadaw that directed the nation towards building a peaceful, modern and developed democratic one by reconstructing the State which had been in ruin in all aspects due to the 1988 disturbances. For emergence of such a new nation, sound political, economic and social foundations were built in earnest. From political perspective, internal peace was built and efforts were exerted to make sure that national race armed groups returned to people's hearts. Besides, the Tatmadaw government laid down seven-step road map of the State and took step-by-step measures for writing a constitution in order to practise multi-party democracy, holding referendum, approving the constitution, holding the general election, holding Pyithu Hluttaw sessions with people's representatives and forming a government with the representatives elected by the people. As a result, a new people's government has emerged today. It has been known to all that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is moving forward with multi-party democratic system alongside changes and developments.

Esteemed national brethren

The public role is fundamental to development of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and it is vital to have political and economic strengths as well as strong national defence. Political strength means national unity. Only if the nation is in peace with national unity, can democracy be practised in earnest. Socio-economy of the people will improve only through democratic practices and national development. All the people therefore should be well aware that national unity is of utmost importance.

Economic strength calls for public participation. The government is inviting foreign investments by setting up industrial zones for establishment of an industrialized nation while trying to accelerate agricultural development. Moreover, Myanmar is marching towards a

new modern, developed nation enlisting the strength of human resources like intellectuals and intelligentsia.

When it comes to the proper evolution of market economy in the economic sector, the nation needs a lot of intellectuals and technocrats who must be healthy, strong and intelligent. Therefore, efforts are being made to develop the education and health sectors in order that human resources can be best employed for the future nation.

A Tatmadaw of international standard is required for national defence. Participation of the entire national people is necessary for forming a strong, patriotic and skilful Tatmadaw.

Esteemed national brethren

Unity and cooperation of the entire national people are instrumental to building the Republic of the Union of Myanmar into a modern, developed democratic nation. If national solidarity disintegrated, the goal of democracy could not be achieved. Hence, I would like to urge all the people to safeguard the essence of independence ó non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty ó with political outlook in building the nation.