Aung San Suu Kyi Biography

Aung San Suu Kyi AC born 19 June 1945 in Rangoon, is a pro-democracy activist and leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma. She is a noted prisoner of conscience and advocate of nonviolent resistance. Recently she was released by the Burmese military and now campaigns for the National League for Democracy in Burma.

“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.”

– Aung San Suu Kyi

Aung San Suu Kyi was the third child in her family. Her name is derived from three relatives; “Aung San” from her father, “Kyi” from her mother and “Suu” from her grandmother. Suu Kyi won the Rafto Prize and the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1990 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. In 1992 she was awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru peace prize by the Government of India for her peaceful and non-violent struggle under a military dictatorship. She is currently under detention, with the Burmese junta repeatedly extending her detention.

According to the results of the 1990 general election, Suu Kyi earned the right to be Prime Minister, as leader of the winning National League for Democracy party, but her detention by the military junta prevented her from assuming that role.

“We have faith in the power to change what needs to be changed but we are under no illusion that the transition from dictatorship to liberal democracy will be easy, or that democratic government will mean the end of all our problems.”
She is frequently called Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; Daw is not part of her name, but an honorific similar to madam for older, revered women, literally meaning “aunt”. Strictly speaking, her given name is equivalent to her full name, but it is acceptable to refer to her as “Ms. Suu Kyi” or Dr. Suu Kyi, since those syllables serve to distinguish her from her father, General Aung San, who is considered to be the father of modern-day Burma. The U2 album All That You Can’t Leave Behind was banned in Burma because one of the songs (Walk On) was written about her struggle and how, even when the government threatened her, she “walked on” the other way.

In 2012, she was released from house arrest and has travelled around the world speaking up for democracy in Burma. In the summer of 2012, she received an honorary doctorate from Oxford University. (Aung San Suu Kyi studied PPE at St Hugh’s College, Oxford University)