

ABSTRACT

Thesis Title : An Economic Interest , Humanity : A Crossroad of the Thai
Government to the Burmese Displaced Students

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This thesis is to study relations between Thailand and Burma that mainly focus on the Burmese students in Thailand. It is about how humanity and an economic interest are related that are able to affect the Burmese students movement in Thailand. Explanation both factors, I have been trying to study the origin of policy making to Burma. Then, I found that the economic interest and military relations between Thai and Burmese army are the main factor for the Thai Government to launch its policies to Burma. Close relations between the two countries affects humanitarian treatment to the Burmese students in Thailand directly.

Each year, the economic interest between Thai and Burma is enormous. The investment cost is more than 100,000 million baht. Thai investments are ranked into high position in Burma's foreign investor chart which is considered by investment cost and number of project. Most of foreign currencies pour into Burma, SLORC

always spends them to buy armed supplies in order to suppress ethnic minorities and pro-democracy movements.

Related to military relations, army officers from both sides often exchange visits as the governmental representative and army representative. Engagement of the Thai army to the Burma affairs stems from security problems along Thai-Burma border. The Thai army and Burmese army has a very close tie. This can cause difficulty for the Thai Government to make policies especially concerning on the Burmese students problem.

The Burmese students in Thailand are given the displaced person status and stay here as illegal immigrants. Thai Ministry of Interior set a refugee center for these people to live in. The purpose of this center is to control and look after them closely. The Burmese students who stay in the camp will be exempted from prosecution as illegal immigrants. But many of them do not want to live in that camp. The Thai Government always treats to these Burmese students in many inappropriate ways such as pushing them back to Thai-Burma border in 1988 and sending them back to Burma in the repatriation project in 1989. A reason behind these treatments is that the Thai Government do not want to let these people stay in Thailand because it is able to harm relations between the two countries both in economic and political affairs. Moreover, Thailand becomes reluctant to accept these people to stay here as refugees caused by the refugee experience a decade ago i.e., the Indo-China refugee problem in the mid 70's.

From the economic interest and close ties between the two armies, they are considered as the main factor that are able to affect humanitarian treatment of the Thai government to the Burmese students in Thailand inevitably.