

Zudem zeigen sich in der Darstellung einige faktische Ungenauigkeiten. Zum Beispiel wird gesagt, die Tamilen würden nicht aufgrund ihrer ethnischen Zugehörigkeit unterdrückt oder diskriminiert, es bestünden keine Bestrebungen der Singhalesen, die Tamilen als ethnische Gruppe anzugreifen oder zu vernichten, und der Regierung könnten aktive Menschenrechtsverletzungen nicht zur Last gelegt werden. Berichte hierüber liegen von neutraler Seite vor und sind gut dokumentiert. Weiter wird gesagt, Religion sei kein zentrales Thema des Konfliktes. Während dies für die Tamilen zutrifft, so ist dies auf singhalesischer Seite keineswegs der Fall. Auch die Behauptung, die LTTE habe keine aussagekräftigen Konzepte für einen unabhängigen Staat und die Behandlung der Minderheiten vorgelegt, stimmt so nicht. Ein solches Programm liegt seit 1992 vor.

Zwei Fälle ungenauer Zitierung sind zu erwähnen: Der Verfasser bezeichnet Südasien seinem Geschichtsverständnis entsprechend als erklärungsbedürftigen Sonderfall und verweist dabei auf eine Publikation der Rezensentin zur Historiographie. Hier liegt ein Mißverständnis vor: Die Argumentation zielt gerade darauf, daß Südasien *nicht* lediglich wegen seiner unterschiedlichen Historiographie als ‚erklärungsbedürftiger Sonderfall‘ interpretiert werden kann, da dies eine zu eurozentrische Sicht wäre, die von einer angenommenen ‚Norm‘ ausgeht, an der andere Kulturen zu messen wären. Die Aussagen beziehen sich zudem auf das indische bzw. tamilische, nicht auf ein angenommenes ‚asiatisches‘ Geschichtsverständnis. Ob ein solches existiert, darf bezweifelt werden.

Der Verfasser zitiert das ‚Cleghorn Minute‘, das zur Legitimierung der *homelands*-Behauptung von den Tamilen mehrfach herangezogen wird. Die Zitierweise ist ungenau, da das französische Original Burnand Cleghorn zugeschrieben wird. Cleghorn benutzte im Gegenteil die französische Vorlage für seine Übersetzung ins Englische.

Trotz einiger angesprochener Kritikpunkte stellt diese Studie eine sehr gründliche Untersuchung dar, die einen bedeutenden Beitrag zur Weiterführung der Forschung zu Sri Lanka und zum Völkerrecht in seiner Anwendung auf Asien liefern kann. Sie sollte für alle, die sich mit dem Problem in Sri Lanka beschäftigen, zur Pflichtlektüre gemacht werden.

Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam

ANGELENE NAW, *Aung San and the Struggle for Burmese Independence*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2001. XXIV, 284 pages, 3 maps, 14 photos, 6 appendices, £ 14.99 (pb.). ISBN 87-87062-96-8

Among the few undisputed views of modern Burmese history is that Aung San's role as leader of Burma's struggle for independence was paramount, that his early death dramatically affected the course of Burmese post-war history and that his legacy has influenced Burmese politics to this day. In sharp contrast to these unanimously and constantly repeated affirmations is the lack of literature in any Western language about the tragic hero of modern Burma's recent history. Until now, no book was available that deserved to be called a biogra-

phy of Aung San. Angelene Naw's book is the first book of this kind and, consequently, very welcome.

It is a conventional biography, narrating the story of Aung San's life from birth to death, divided into seven chronologically arranged chapters. Here and there, some background information on general themes is inserted, e.g. the emergence of Burmese nationalism and British policy towards the many ethnic nationalities of Burma. The narration is based mostly on the already available sources in Western languages. It adds a few Burmese accounts of Aung San's life that provide some new and lively details, but no really new information. Regarding the unpublished primary sources, the Indian Office Records have been extensively used, whereas the not easily accessible material on Aung San archived in Myanmar was not examined. Something similar applies to the interviews conducted in the course of investigation into Aung San's life and achievements. The author recalls the "wonderful experiences" of some people who were close to Aung San – both Burmese and British, which helps without doubt to convey some of the hero's personal charisma to the reader. But a person like former Brigadier Maung Maung was not interviewed. Maung Maung, who is still alive, served as Aung San's aide from the time of the Burmese Independence Army that fought the British to the resistance against the Japanese. He later wrote two very informative accounts of the Burmese independence struggle (neither of which is mentioned in the bibliography), claiming that he and other members of a "young officers' group" wanted to start the resistance much earlier than Aung San and the other leaders of the army. His assessment of Aung San's role is at least partly critical. This more sophisticated judgment of a former comrade could have helped give some more insight into the struggles and disputes within the struggle for Burmese independence.

The book seems to be based on the author's dissertation accepted in 1988 by the University of Hawaii. As the bibliography shows, it has not been updated since. Therefore, recent relevant studies like Mary Callahan's dissertation on the armed forces of Burma have not been taken into consideration. Moreover, the book reflects the political state of affairs before the crucial and critical events of 1988 – the popular uprising, the resignation of U Ne Win and the military coup, after which the military's claim to preserve the legacy of Aung San was contested by his daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi and her allies. The reader may wonder why all this is not mentioned at least in the foreword to the book. This can partly be explained by the fact that the author later (1992 to 1998) worked as the Director of Tourism Planning and Promotion in Myanmar's Ministry of Hotels and Tourism under the supervision of the military. This fact could well cast some doubt on the objectivity of her views. Dr. Naw should not be blamed for accepting the post – presently, she works as Associate Professor of History at the Baptist Judson College in Illinois – but given the very delicate and disputed state of Myanmar's recent history, the publishers should have informed the reader about the author's biography and the genesis of the work.

Nevertheless, the merit of the book lies in its solid and well researched assemblage of what is known about Aung San into a readable picture of his life. In addition, Angelene Naw's biography will probably be acceptable for almost



all those participating in the current efforts to solve the numerous problems of the country. This is a strength as well as a weakness of the book. It is an asset because it brings together the very nationalistic veneration of Aung San obviously shared by the author and the more pragmatic view of the ethnic minorities' leaders and foreign observers that Aung San was the only person then capable of unifying Burma to a certain extent and negotiating the terms of Burma's independence. On the other hand, this also conceals the many ambiguities in Aung San's political career that became obvious almost immediately after his death and the events of 1988.

One example of the book's weak points is the description of the Panglong agreement and its background (pp. 193–204). Naw correctly stresses Aung San's great interest in letting the non-Burman national minorities join the Union of Burma and informs us about some of his efforts to achieve this goal. The account of the second conference in Panglong that was later celebrated as the fulfilment of the difficult task is very incomplete. The main source is the version of the conference proceedings as found in the memoirs of the Chin leader Vum Ko Hau which are very sympathetic towards Aung San. The significant non-participation of the Karen in the negotiations is mentioned only in a footnote, the absence of the Karenni is totally ignored. The proceedings of the Frontier Area Inquiry Committee that contained many contradictory statements especially on the part of the Karen representatives invited by the commission, are also omitted. Finally, the book portrays the ethnic groups' leaders as having trust in Aung San, but does not reflect on the fact that this trust vanished with Aung San's death and that the agreement signed at Panglong did not contain any legally binding provisions. This missing information makes it difficult to measure the effect of Aung San's death on the delicate ethnic balance of Burma/Myanmar and limits Aung San's legacy in this point to one of moral sincerity, thus paving the way for the many black-and-white dichotomies so characteristic of the various judgments on Burmese politics.

Angelene Naw's book can be recommended as a summary of the basic facts of Aung San's life. Critical assessments of the role of Burma's national hero will have to differentiate and correct the overall picture presented here.

Hans-Bernd Zöllner

HANS-BERND ZÖLLNER, *Birma zwischen „Unabhängigkeit zuerst – Unabhängigkeit zuletzt“*. Die birmanischen Unabhängigkeitsbewegungen und ihre Sicht der zeitgenössischen Welt am Beispiel der birmanisch-deutschen Beziehungen zwischen 1920 und 1948. (Demokratie und Entwicklung, 38). Münster/Hamburg: LIT, 2000. XVII, 582 pages, DM 79,80. ISBN 3-8258-4360-2

The somewhat cryptic title of the book is not much illuminated by its clumsy sub-title which, at a closer look, appears to combine the three main themes of the book. The main title catches the first topic, the development of a national movement in Burma and its choice between the two options of "independence