

**World War II Records from Burma: A Donation from the Burmese
Government**

A Register of the Records in the Library of Congress

**Asian Division, Library of Congress
Washington, DC**

2006

**Finding Aid
Asian Division, 2006**

Collection Summary

Title: World War II Records from Burma: A Donation from the Burmese Government

Span Dates: 1938-1945

Bulk Dates: 1941-1944

ID No.:

Creator: Burma (Myanmar)

Extent: # of pgs. ?; 26 containers plus 2 oversize; 21.5 linear feet; #?? microfilm reels

Language: English and Burmese (predominantly); Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Japanese (in descending order)

Abstract: Papers from the Burmese government during the country's involvement in World War II. The records include public and private correspondence, financial/legal records and correspondences of police and military officials, newspaper clippings, and documents once held by the Burma Corporation Ltd. The collection also contains a large number of documents regarding the Indian Independence League (IIL)/ Indian National Army (INA), including a census and volunteer roles for the IIL.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms *would be useful for indexing* the description of this collection in the Library's online catalogue. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Names:

Bose, Subhas Chandra
Burma Corporation Ltd
Burmese National Army
Indian Independence League
Indian National Army
Nitimen Zityugyo Kabusiki Kaisya
Stilwell, Joseph (Gen.)

Subjects:

Burma- Census
Burma- Economic conditions
Burma- Economy
Burma- Military History
Burma- Police
Burma- Propaganda
Colonialism- British
India- Azad Hind
World War II- Burma
World War II- China
World War II- China-Burma-India Theatre
World War II- India
World War II- Japan

Administrative Information

Provenance:

Processing History:

Transfers:

Copyright Status:

Microfilm:

Electronic Format:

Preferred Citation:

Organizational/Political History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1939	Founding of All India Forward Bloc by Subhas Chandra Bose
1941	Aung San forms Burmese Independence Army (BIA)
1942	Japanese military control over Burma
1942	Burmese National Army founded; BIA terminated
1942	Initial founding of Indian National Army and Indian Independence League under Rash Behari Bose (Tokyo, Japan)
1943	Founding of Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind, the Provisional Government of Free India (Singapore) and control of IIL/INA under Shubas Chandra Bose
1943	Andaman and Nicobar Islands under INA control

1943	Burma given independent control by Japan—Ba Maw is premier. Aung San is Defense Minister
1943	Burmese Declaration of Independence written and declaration of war against Great Britain and United States coordinated with a Treaty of Alliance with Japan
1944	Battle of Imphal (Manipur, India)
1944	Founding of Burmese Executive Administration
1945	Trial of Indian National Army Officers (Red Fort, Delhi)
1945	British regain control over Burma; Premier Ba Maw flees to Japan

Biographical Notes

Subhas Chandra Bose

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1897, Jan. 23	Born, Cuttack, Orissa
1920	Placed 4 th in Indian Civil Service Exam
1921	Organized boycott in Calcutta of Prince of Wales (jailed as result)
1924	CEO of Calcutta Corporation
1930	Elected mayor of Calcutta
1941	Bose's "great escape" from India to Germany via Afghanistan
1943	Took control of IIL/INA
1945, Aug., 18	Died, airplane crash over Taiwan *disputed*

Scope and Content Note

The records of World War II Burma, given by the Burmese government, cover the period of 1938 to 1945. A substantial portion of the records is documents pertaining to the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army and their activities in the affairs of Indians in Burma and the political, military expansion of the League throughout Southern Asia. The records contain correspondence between officials in the military and the army (Burmese, Japanese, and INA), letters from the public to police/military

officials, economic documents of the Burma Corp. Ltd., notes by British officials, Annual Reports, field notes by US Army personnel, census records, newspaper propaganda, good-will message, and minimal personal records. The collection is arranged into seven groups.

Group I: *Indian Independence League/ Indian National Army*

These contain various records on the operations- formal and informal- of the IIL/INA. The amount of documents in this section is the largest in the collection. Predominantly correspondence between officers of the IIL on perfunctory matters such as meeting announcements and administrative requests, this section also contains some of the most significant documents of the entire collection. The three most significant areas within this section are: volunteer/ INA recruitment records, census logs, and civil matters. It is within these sub-sections that a glimpse of how and to what extent the IIL operated and the amount of political power it wielded. Moreover, these sub-sections address broader issues of identity and class in WWII Burma among Indians.

Examples of identity are to be found both in a census of Indians conducted by the IIL and the IIL's volunteer registry which when combined record data such as occupation, languages known, sympathy towards the IIL, age, dependants, education level, religion, and race. Some of these categories are vague to be sure- what constitutes religious identity fluctuates between examples such as Sikh, Mohammedan, Buddhist, Bengali and Oriya. This group also contains a tactical manual for INA army personnel.

The sub-section on civil matters provides information on certain concerns such as worries over commodity prices, especially rice. These documents provide a glimpse into the worries not by officials but by the public via signatory pleas to IIL officials to control food prices sometimes with as many as 30 signatures. This provides a possibility- albeit limited- of conducting research on peoples rather than institutions or political organizations.

Group II: *Police correspondences among the cities of Burma: Namtu, Katha, Lashio, Mandalay, Lonkhin, Momeit and within Shan States*

These documents form a large part of the collection as well-- especially those documents from the city of Namtu. These police records from various areas of Burma contain mostly quotidian addresses to other members, forwards from governmental/ military agencies, and short notes of operations needed. These operations can include attending IIL meetings and reporting on what was discussed and debated at these events. These meeting notes are contained within this collection (usually about Euro-American imperialism). These correspondences also include crime reports and court proceedings which detail the types of crimes committed and what the punishments have been given. Occasionally a partial transcript is given and/or translations of witness statements in English from Burmese. This group also includes an oversize container that contains financial and travel allowance records for the Katha police.

Group III

This group contains records of civil matters of Namtu, Lonkhin Township,

Shan States, and Momeit which are not necessarily related to official police business. Included are some financial papers and letters among community members. The Shan States file contains discussions between tribal Chiefs regarding self-determination. Also included is the Annual Report of Namtu for the year ending June 30th 1944 (approx. 20 pgs.) documents, *inter alia*, local population numbers, officials in charge of the report, Special Events such as wartime attacks, numbers of Burma government police, criminal justice, opium, wages and labor, and sanitation. This document appears complete and includes a cover page.

Group IV: *Correspondence of the Burma Corporation Ltd.*

This group contains financial logs, receipts, delivery notices, business correspondences, works-in-progress reports, and lists of property holdings. Though this group is of a slightly limited volume compared to the rest of the collection, it nevertheless gives a fair picture of the functioning of the Corporation between the years 1941- 1944.

Group V: *Newspaper Clippings/ Newsletters*

These are composed of clippings exclusively from the *Rangoon Times*. The copies of the newsletter are from the "Burmese Newsletter" regarding Burma's desire for independence.

Group VI: *Foreign and Domestic Armies- British, American, Burmese, Japanese*

This group consists of papers on the Burma-Thai Road, a personal notebook listing names and behavior of people –noting their nationality- and actions made by Nippon army such as arrests and killings. Also included are materials intended for General Stilwell and a short typed written letter by him regarding seized documents in the field. Also contained are a large number of arrest documents written by British officers during early 1945. These documents also contain op-ed pieces and broadcasted news on the war from Burma as well as official arrest-warrant notices. This group also includes an oversize box containing a soldier's diary from Kyaukme, Burma.

Group VII: *Miscellaneous*

This group contains blank documents that were within the collection as well as arbitrary receipts for clothes and personal items bought in Rangoon, Burma. This group also contains one personal letter written in Calcutta and sent to an address in Calcutta in the Burmese language from Saw Sein Mya to Ohn Khin dated March 1945.

Organization of the Papers

Group I:

- IIL Youth Movement/Volunteer
- IIL Namtu Correspondence
- IIL Lashio, Maymyo, Panghai Correspondence
- IIL Census
- IIL Property Register/Receipt Logs (2 containers)
- IIL Proceedings and Civil Matters

Group II

Katha Police Correspondence and Deputy Commission
Katha Police Correspondence (2 containers)
Katha police financial logs, travel allowances
Mandalay Police Correspondence
Lashio Police Correspondence
Namtu Police Correspondence (2 containers)

Group III

Namtu Annual Report, Civil Concerns
Lonkhin Township Report Books
Shan States Correspondence
Momeit Civil Records

Group IV

Burma Corporation (2 containers)

Group V

Burmese Newsletters
Rangoon Times news clippings

Group VI

Arrests by British Officials
US army field notes
Burmese/Japanese military police
Soldier's Diary, Japanese Propaganda, Burmese Manuscripts (oversized)

Group VII

Miscellaneous