

# Aung San Suu Kyi and Non-Violence

Aung San Suu Kyi's father, General Aung San, was a national hero in Burma. He helped secure Burma's independence from British colonial rule in 1947. Unfortunately, he was killed when Aung San Suu Kyi was only two years old.

She studied at Oxford University in England, was married and had two sons. In 1988, she had to return to Burma to look after her mother who was sick. Burma was in turmoil as a government run by the army was refusing to allow elections to take place so that people could choose who would run the country. Suu Kyi became involved in the movement for democracy in Burma.

She was inspired by the examples of both Gandhi and Dr Martin Luther King. She linked these ideas with her own Buddhist beliefs that one should avoid killing or harming any living thing. Thus she led peaceful mass demonstrations calling for democracy and founded the National League for Democracy.



In 1990, elections did take place and Suu Kyi's party won them with 59% of the vote but the army refused to give up power and said that the results were not true. This meant that those elected were refused the right to represent those who had elected them.

Suu Kyi was put under house arrest for 15 years over a period of 21 years. House arrest is when a person has their freedom restricted, they cannot leave their home without permission, cannot travel and this can also involve not being allowed visitors or being allowed to communicate with others. This meant she was apart from her husband and sons, who were not permitted to visit her.

In 2010, Suu Kyi was released from house arrest and elections were held, although she was not allowed to stand. Since then, she has been allowed and has won a seat in parliament. Her party won the vast majority of seats in 2011. While full democracy has not been achieved yet, Suu Kyi and her party are gradually working with the military powers to bring about greater civil rights and full democracy in Burma. She has maintained her support for non-violent actions to bring about change throughout all of this.