

No.19 - 1/2008  
23 January 2008  
Politics

## **Shans gather for brighter future of all different Shan nationalities**

By: Mu Byan Binn

A Shan conference was held at an undisclosed location on Thai-Burma border and 60 representatives from different parts of Shan State participated in the conference from 19-21 of January 2008.

‘I think first of all, everybody agrees on some basic principles and also agrees on what the objective is of the Shan groups..... and then the conference was able to form a coordinating committee,’ Harn Yawngwe, a well-known participant expressed some of the achievements from the 3 day conference.



**Harn Yawngwe**

The aim of the Shan conference was to try to get different Shan groups to coordinate and work together, said Harn, a son of the late first president of Burma, Sao Shwe Thaik of Yawngwe, close to Lake Inle in Southern Shan State. And there is going to be a conference between different Shan nationalities, he added. But it is not yet known when and where the conference will be held.

Some of the main objectives that the group agreed on were: to work for the benefit of Shan people, to bring peace to Shan State and to work together with other ethnic groups in Shan State.

Shan also agreed on ‘protection of minority rights, to strive for a state-based alliance, democracy, equality and political settlement to political issues’, reported Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN) on January 22 2008.

“I think it was a very good conference because all the different groups were able to express their own views. They were able to clarify things they didn’t understand before and also to come to agreement in the end. Everybody was quite open on talking about how they feel,” Harn told (SHAN) at the post-conference dinner party.

Shans are one of the largest non-Burman nationalities in Burma and a co-signatory of the Panglong Agreement (1947) that created the Union of Burma. The population is estimated to be about 6 million people since a reliable census has never been done since 1941.