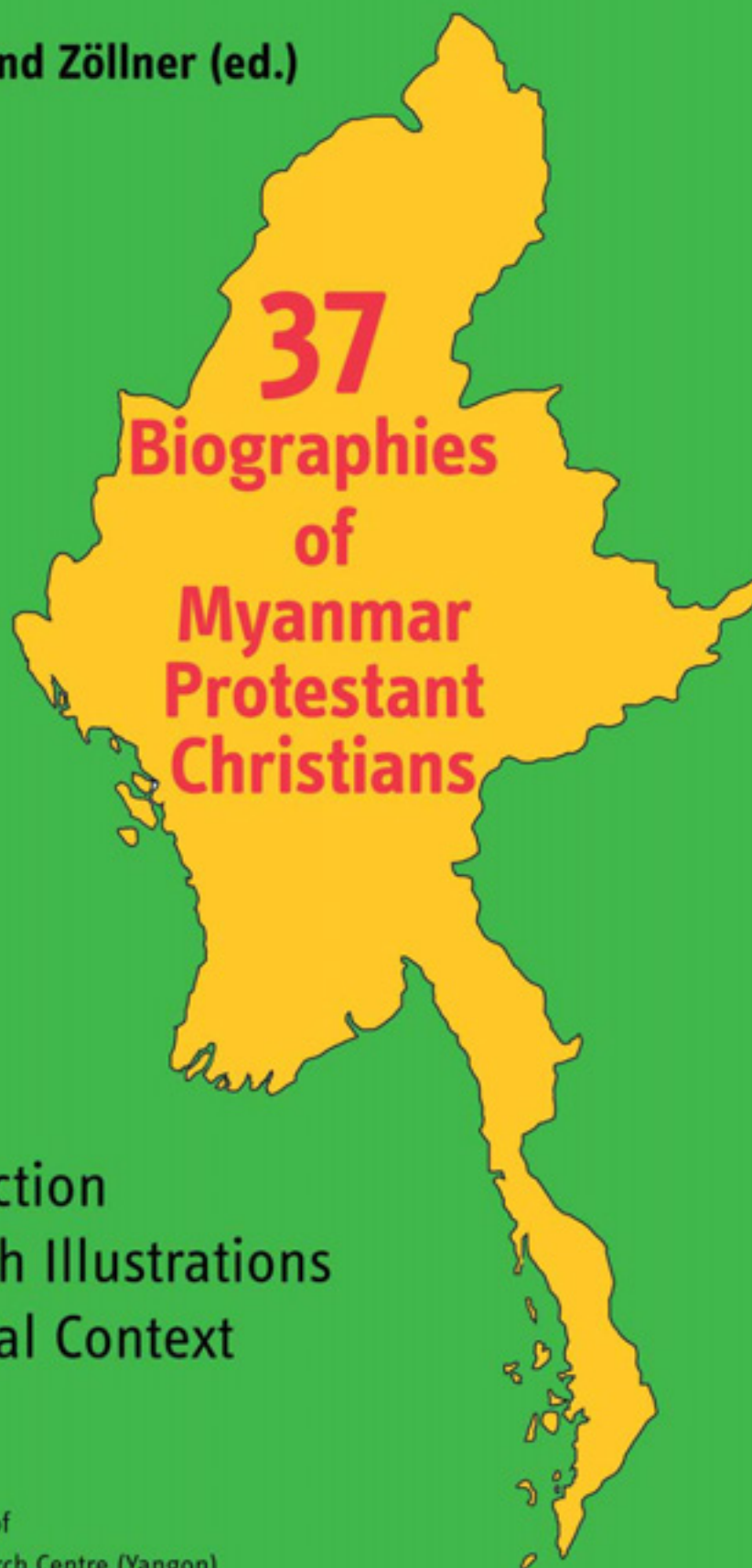


Hans-Bernd Zöllner (ed.)



Introduction  
Text with Illustrations  
Historical Context

A Joint Venture of

- Judson Research Centre (Yangon)
- EMW Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany
- Christian Friends of Myanmar in Germany

**Hans-Bernd Zöllner (ed.)**  
in Co-operation with Gerhard Köberlin

# *37 Biographies*

*of*

# *Myanmar*

# *Protestant*

# *Christians*

A Joint Venture of  
the Judson Research Centre (Yangon),  
the EMW (Hamburg) and the  
Christian Friends of Myanmar in Germany

**Hamburg 2016**

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## A Introduction

*Dear Reader,*

*You will find here a rare treasure: a collection of 37 – amazingly as well as coincidentally the same number as the canonised Great Nats<sup>1</sup> - short biographies about the lives of Burmese Christians. They were written by Burmese Christians from various Protestant denominations. They have a background story to it. This story is a joint venture that spans the continents from Myanmar to Germany.*



*Group photo of the 2009 seminar*

*A group of friends in Germany had connections to Burma and a concern for the land. They closely followed the troubled political developments in the country, with a particular eye for the minority Christian communities. Some of the group had contact with Burma stretching back years, while the interest of others had grown from being concerned tourists. In 2007, meeting in Hamburg, the group decided to call itself ‘Christian Friends of Myanmar in Germany’. On the Burmese side, there were also women and men at theological institutes in Yangon who were interested in meeting these little known Germans.*

*In 2009, there was an encounter in Yangon. For a period of a week, the ‘Myanmar Institute of*

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<sup>1</sup> About all of the Great Nats were human beings who met violent deaths . Besides whose spirits can be called upon in times of need. Besides, there exist many „small“ nats of treesm waters and mountains etc.

*Theology' (MIT) hosted a series of seminars with the German group. A great number of themes were explored: women's work in the German churches, German fascism, the role of the military in Asia, the New Testament as the foundation of faith, inter-religious dialogue, religion and evolution, etc. An undercurrent throughout our meetings was questions related to the nature of democracy and the role of religion in public life.*

*Since 2009, there have been numerous visits to and fro. Our relationship has been sustained through bridge-people, those who have learned to live in more than one culture. There is, for example, the theology professor, Saw Hlaing Bwa, who studied in Regensburg, Germany. On the German side, there are a few who have spent several years working in Southeast Asia, mostly in matters related to religion and church.*

*An idea came to the Germans. We felt the need for stories that would help us gain a greater understanding of the Burmese churches and could be a useful resource for others too. We proposed collecting biographies of Christians in Myanmar. Prof Bwa, with his students, colleagues and friends in Myanmar responded with their willingness to research and write up the life histories. It was agreed that the stories had to be short and introduce Christians who had made a contribution to country and church in the last two hundred years. We told our Burmese partners that we were eager to get some information about church leaders and people recognized for their achievements but also about ordinary Christians.*

*A group at MIT chose the 50 men and women whose brief biographies would be told. Some members of the group of biographers travelled far and wide, including in the mountainous border regions, to undertake interviews with the chosen or with those who had known them. The collection of stories was then translated into English in Myanmar and the first translated texts arrived 2013 in Germany. Some of these stories have also been translated into German, and have been augmented with brief commentaries and a general introduction to the land and its history for publication. A translation of the historical overview can be found at the end of the collection of biographies.*

*The aim here is to present all the English translated stories as they stand. The collection reflects the rich variety of religious adherence, ethnic background, and social setting that characterise the Protestant churches of Myanmar. In these, it is clear that circumstances of birth and the names of family members play an important role in telling the story of individuals.*

*The stories are without commentary in the English. They are of varied length and written in various styles. A few appear hagiographic in nature. It is also possible to see some inaccuracies of expression and, here and there, the meaning of a sentence is unclear. The stories require patience,*

*especially since they are translated materials. We have decided to leave them as they are, however, because a further editing process would have been too much for us to take on. Ideally, the English texts should be read in conjunction with a good, critical introduction to Burma and its religious makeup.*

*It is exciting to see these stories being published online and in book form. Often the impression is given that Christians in Myanmar are living in great isolation and under threat from the dominant Buddhist culture and unsympathetic military. The stories show us women and men, young and old, from different denominations and parts of the land, who have played an important role in their local communities and churches, often undergoing great hardship and sacrifice. We hope that this collection will be a valuable historical archive for scholars, academics, and others concerned about the peoples and religions of Myanmar. And we hope that it will provide a platform for a greater understanding of the rich heritage of Myanmar Christianity.*

*This collection contains 37 biographies. Some more are still in the pipeline at the end of 2015 and will be added in a second edition. The order of the texts follows the dates of birth of the people portrayed. Accidentally, the birthdates span exactly one century - from 1888 to 1988. The biographies can therefore be regarded as a special commentary to the troubled history of Burma/Myanmar from the end of the 19th century until today, and as a church history in the making.*



*Title page of the German edition*

*What is presented here, are the texts submitted by the Judson Research Centre to the German editors. Some but most likely not all typos were corrected. Through this "raw material", the reader thus gets insights not just into the lives of the persons portrayed but into the assessment of these life stories of the biographers as well. In the booklet containing 15 selected biographies published in German, some editing was done to bridge the gap between the liveworlds of the two countries. In this edition, the commentaries of the respective editors are added. For the biographies not included in the German version the editors of this collection chose captions to highlight a characteristic feature of the respective person portrayed. These subtitles are*

*located under the name of the author of the respective biography.*

*It is hoped that this way of presentation will help to view Myanmar`s Protestant Christianity in a multi-perspective way.*

### ***Some people involved in the project***

*In Myanmar, Prof Saw Hlaing Bwa is director of the ‘Judson Research Centre’, which is linked to MIT in Yangon. He has overseen the implementation of the project at the research centre, with the support of his assistant Mr Nathanayla, who has also contributed some biographies.*

*In the dialogue office of ‘Bread for the World’, Ms Lai Ya has worked with the project and kept in contact with the many authors involved. The German group who started the dialogue consisted of four theologians: from Hamburg, Gerhard Köberlin, Peter Tachau, and Hans-Bernd Zöllner, and from Freiburg, now Edinburgh, Kenneth Fleming; the ethnologist Ulrike Bey, former director of the Burma Initiative of the Asia Foundation (now called the Stiftung Asienhaus in Cologne); Kathrin Jaschinsky, designer, Berlin; Sylvia Jaschinsky, teacher, Hamburg; Gertrud Wellmann-Hofmeier, librarian and synod member in Hamburg. For the financing of the project and publication costs, thanks go to ‘The Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany’ (EMW) and to a donation by the German group. The translation work of some texts from German into English was done by Kenneth Flemming (this introduction) and Beverly Olson-Dopffel (the German introductions and commentaries, the historical context and the timeline).*

*February 2016*

Commentaries and questions on this volume are appreciated. Please contact Hans-Bernd Zöllner ([habezett@t-online.de](mailto:habezett@t-online.de)) or/and Gerhard Köberlin ([gerhard.kob@gmx.de](mailto:gerhard.kob@gmx.de)).



## A The Biographies

### 1

#### U Pe Maung Tin (Reverend) (1888 – 1973)

by Prof. Khin Htwe Yi

*Editor of the German version: Hans-Bernd Zöllner*

##### *Introduction*

*Pe Maung Tin belonged to the few Burmese scholars who became known beyond the borders of their home country. Numerous times he and his work were recognized, also in English. The following biography is based on a description of his life from Madame Professor Khin Htwe Yi which she wrote for this project. Some further information has been added to it. The second section, headed "Reflections", contains her appraisal of this man. Finally, excerpts from a lecture by the scholar follows, in which he comments on the role of the Burmese language in the spread of Christianity in Burma.*

*Pe Maung Tin's greatest influence on Burmese society was in the 20's and 30's of the twentieth century, that is, in the late colonial period. Together with some others, Burmese and English, he tried to bring together Burmese traditions and the demands of contemporary international modernity. He was an intellectual reformer. Burma's politics, however, would be essentially determined by a series of young revolutionaries, who led the country into independence.*

Professor U Pe Maung Tin was born on 24, April 1888, at Pauk Taw Quarter, Insein at about 5:30 PM. His father, U Pe was superintendent of Insein Veterinary Department and his mother was Daw Myaing. He was the fifth among the six children of his parents. His childhood name was Maung Ba Tin. Later, on his name was changed to Pe Maung Tin, the first name "Pe" having derived from his father's name U Pe. The well-known translator and compiler of the first English–Myanmar Dictionary, U Tun Nyein, was his uncle from his father's side. His maternal grandfather was the Taungkhwin Tharthanarpaing Ah Shin Withoddha Thila Saya.



*Rangoon College in the early 1900s*

In 1893, he was sent to Koyingyi Private School where he learned the Buddhist primary canonical literature such as Paritta, Lokaniti, etc. He passed third standard within three years. In 1896, he was transferred to Yangon Government High School and admitted to Standard I. In 1902, he won the 7<sup>th</sup> Standard Scholarship. When 1903 he was in the 8<sup>th</sup> Standard, the Director of Public Instructions passed an order that all pupils had to join hands in prayer when addressing their foreign teachers. Maung Tin led a boycott to do it and the order was revoked.

At the 9<sup>th</sup> Standard, 1905, he won the Governor of Ranong's Prize which is an award of Rs 40 and some books. In 1906, he was matriculated and joined the Rangoon College. He stood first in an English essay competition (University Level) sponsored by the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and was awarded Rs.75.

In 1907, he won the Jardine Prize for standing first in Senior Intermediate of Arts Examination. The prize money was Rs 16 per month. He was also awarded the Dutt Scholarship from Calcutta University for Christian Students and got Rs 15 per month. In 1909, he passed the B.A (Honours) Pali with 8 others which included Maung Ba Han (Dr. Ba Han) and L. Htin Si (former Principal of having to go to Calcutta University. Meanwhile on the request of St. Paul's High School, he taught Pali for the eighth and ninth standards.

In March 1911, he got M.A. Pali degree. His first article entitled "Missionary Burmese" appeared in the Journal of Burma Research Society. He became Professor of Pali and Burmese at the University of Rangoon, Burma at the surprisingly young age of twenty-four. He was also the only Burmese professor when the Rangoon University was opened in 1920. The books, essays, translations, reviews, commentary works and educational texts and research works and paper were scholarly in many respects.

The life of Professor U Pe Maung Tin and his achievements in religion (both Christianity and Buddhism), society, cultural and literature was so many and varied that a detailed and complete account cannot be given here but can be referred to in Maung Zeyar's Chronology of Professor U Pe Maung Tin's life. In the field of education, literature of Christianity, Buddhism and Pali-professor U Pe Maung Tin was a man in the million and the rarest of the rare species. He was a man of knowledge and talent whom no one could surpass in his century.

Professor U Pe Maung Tin's works on Buddhism, Burmese Language, Burmese History, Burmese Literature and Burmese Culture were well documented and enormously published. There is no doubt that as an Anglican professor, he might have written much on Christianity, Christian faith, Christian Mission to the Buddhist and Christian mission to the Buddhist and Christian ministry in Burmese Society. But to our disappointment they were not fully recorded and less published. So, all are requested to do extensive research on his works in Christianity.

It is true that Professor U Pe Maung Tin was born of Christian parents but he was also a practicing Christian. He was a devoted and dutiful Anglican. He took great care in striving for the unity of Christian of all denomination in the province. Since the pre-war days, he was as a founding member of Burma Christian Council he took charge of the Christian Literature Society and saw to the welfare of Christianity with zest and to the best of his ability.

When asked about the most talented Professor, U Ba Ohn (the retired Archbishop of the Methodist Church, Upper Burma) who was once a colleague of Professor U Pe Maung Tin expressed his opinion of the latter as:

Sayagyi U Pe Maung Tin was the most learned professor, talented scholar, a true genius who actively and untiringly had served the progress and development of the Christian Literature Society.

Professor U Pe Maung Tin had written three books especially for this society. He also served for many years as Chairman of the Study Commission on Buddhism of Burma Council of Churches. When he was a student at the Oxford University, United Kingdom, he translated the Buddhist treatises of Ahhtatharlini and Visuddhi magga into Burmese at the request of the Pali Text Society of London.

Professor U Pe Maung Tin was also a true and faithful Christian who labored hard for the welfare and betterment of all Christian regardless of sect and denomination. Not all the relatives of

Professor U Pe Maung Tin were Anglicans. It is very interesting how he became an Anglican. Before World War II, all the Professors of Yangon University used to go to Holy Cross Church., Inya Road.

When 1928 Professor U Pe Maung Tin was married to Daw Kyi Kyi, the daughter of Barrister U Bo Dan and Daw Mya Gyi at the Anglican Church in Tharawaddy, the Holy Matrimony was conducted according to the rules and regulation of the Anglican Church. He had given high regards to the teaching of Jesus Christ in all circumstance. Although he was an Anglican, he did not ignore the Burmese Culture and Buddhist studies.

He even translated *Visuddhi magga* into English making Buddhism well known by all the countries of the world. Furthermore, at many conferences, and seminars he gave talks and presentations about the teachings Buddha (in order to compare with Christianity) for the foreign as well as Burmese missionaries. In 1952, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate (LL.D.) by the University of Rangoon. And in 1958, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Chicago, United States of America. During his retirement he served as a part – time teacher and also professor in the Holy Cross College. He was called to the Heavenly Home on 22 March 1973.



### Reflections:

Sayagyi U Pe Maung Tin was such a unique and one of the most outstanding and distinguished persons of his time. He was also a genuine in the fields of academic, social and religion environment and surroundings. As a student or as a mentor or a researcher Sayagyi U Pe Maung Tin was industrious, diligent, energetic, hardworking, keen, persistent, conscientious, in timing and zealous person that no one could surpass his qualifications and accomplishments. He was also a person of dignity being worthy of respect and honor from his students as well from his counterparts. Above all, he was well noted for his humble and meek life style and spiritual maturity and perfection. He was also a “true Anglican” at his heart who had followed the best example of Jesus Christ in all his undertakings in all his life. So everyone who is living in the Union of Myanmar including the Christian clergy – the priests and ministers, deacons and religious persons should follow his footsteps. Although he was a Christian (a

member of the Church of England Anglican) he greatly and fervently respected Buddhism. He was not only a devout admirer of the principles and ethics of Buddhist but also the teaching of Buddha that many research works on Buddhist studies had been researched and written, in papers as well as in books. One example of noteworthy was his translation of a very difficult book *Visuddhi magga*. The book consisted of three parts and the Pali Text Society published them in three installments, the first in 1932, the second in 1929, and the third in 1931. The three parts were published in one volume later by Luzac & Company, Ltd., in 1971.

In his epilogue to the third installment of the translator Mrs. C. A. Rhys Davids wrote:

I am not more concerned to make use of the opportunity by expressing, on behalf of the *Pali Text Society* and, indeed, of all readers, present and to come, one high appreciations of the way in which the translator has with patients, “consistent” and indomitable persistence carried to a finished – an adorns, often tedious, after difficult task, to do which we had sought and found no man. Request for a translation and material means were not lacking... It was a competent translator who had yet to be found.

Now that we, at last successful, have found him and have exploited his generous gifts of times, energy, and talents – now that we reach the very readable flow of this rendering of this highly scholastic, very monastic work – we tend to graze over ... the many difficulties in it.

U Pe Maung Tin also made strenuous efforts for the higher qualification of Myanmar language and literature in his life time. He also realized the importance of Myanmar for the cultural development of Myanmar as a nation. But if it was not an easy work for him to accomplish yet because of his untiring zeal with perseverance and persistent efforts, he was successful in his life time.

Among his fellow Christian followers he was able to create an unflinching effort of reciprocal respect, understanding, trustfulness and reconciliation out of his noble and humble character of his redeemer Jesus Christ Himself.

Obsession of pride, self-esteem, self-centredness, self-importance, self-interest, selfishness, self-love, self-regard, conceitedness and arrogance those had barred the establishment of peace and development building of a state. The universal law, canon law, ecclesiastical law, law of existence and natural law – all these are not the sole monopoly of any one or any particular religion but it is meant for all humankind. The Christian (of all denominations) therefore, of Union of Myanmar are to follow the footsteps of U Pe Maung Tin and be like him as to be a man of extraordinary dignity, a man of genuine and a man of respect and honor in humanity socially, culturally, academically and last but not the least spiritually. The patriotic spirit of U Pe Maung Tin urged him to work hard for the betterment of education of Myanmar that in later days all schools whether government or missionary were required to teach compulsory Myanmar in their studies. U Pe Maung Tin was a true model for all Christian who follow the humble and example life style of Jesus Christ. We the Christian are greatly honored to have a person like U Pe Maung Tin who had appeared “one” in a century. He is still “our Pride” up to this day.

#### *Commentary*

*Pe Maung Tin was one of many enlightened Burmese who tried to bridge the fissures within the country's society with scholarship and suggestions for reform. As also many others, he unfortunately did not achieve any broad success in this. This is true of his attempt to raise Burmese literature to a new level as well as for his efforts to move the Christian clergy of the land to study Buddhist thought. In both cases he had a series of pupils, but founded no school. Thus he remained in the end an often-admired loner whose life's work had no lasting effect on Burmese society.*

*In the German version of the Biographies, there follows the German translation of an extract of a lecture held by Pe Maung Tin in 1961 on the occasion of the first consultation on “Buddhist-Christian Encounter”, convened by the East Asia Christian Conference and the World Council of Churches in Rangoon, entitled “Certain Factors of Buddhist-Christian Encounter”.*

*The English text of Pe Maung Tin's remarks read:*

A few years ago on the centenary of Adoniram Judson, I had occasion to make a careful comparison of Judson's Bible and the Burmese Bible of the British and Foreign Bible Society. I discovered to my surprise that while the Society Bible was a correct translation according to Anglo-Burmese syntax, the Judson Bible approached nearer the style of the Burmese Buddhist writings, so that it was found more readable by the Buddhist monks unacquainted with English.

One example will show that Judson consulted learned Buddhist monks in preparing his translation. He must have found the Holy Spirit very difficult to put into Burmese. The usual Burmese word for spirit would not be appropriate as it would suggest animistic ideas or a deity or divine inhabitant of the heavenly worlds. To translate the Holy Spirit literally as Holy Ghost would be ludicrous in Burmese.

Judson ultimately chose *vinyana*, a Pali word meaning "consciousness". Objection against it might be made on the ground that consciousness as one of the 12 factors of 'conditioned genesis'—which teaches that everything is conditioned, relative, and interdependent—leads to decay and death, and as such is not a suitable rendering for the Holy Spirit.

But *vinyana* is the very word used by some sections of Buddhist thought in Burma to denote supermundane consciousness, which, they say, transcends the law of 'conditioned genesis' and persists in Nirvana after a man's death. That Judson chose this word for the Holy Spirit shows that he was well acquainted with the finer shades of Buddhist philosophy. . . .

The successors of Judson have neglected scholarship. They have not followed up the lead that Judson gave in Burmese scholarship. Most of the tracts that they have written in Burmese are not so readable as the Judson Bible. They have not produced a standard grammar and dictionaries based on Judson's Work. And they have not studied Buddhism. They evidently came to teach not to learn.

In their eagerness to serve the lay people, they have neglected the Buddhist monks, not realizing that the monks are the custodians of the Buddhist faith. They have not even produced a life of the Buddha as the Catholic Bishop Bigandet did. . . .

And Judson College imported Pali lecturers from India instead of from the USA. How a Christian mission could hope to succeed in making Burma Christian without studying Buddhism and converting the monks passes my understanding. . . .

To preach the gospel of Christ without any knowledge of the life of the Buddha, presenting Christ to the peoples of Burma as though he were a westerner, is to ignore the historical background of the three wise men from the east and all the Buddhist-Christian parallels. One would have thought that the first thing to do in approaching Buddhists was to arouse their interest by drawing attention to these parallels.

These Buddhist-Christian parallels in the lives of Buddha and Christ should lead to research into the possibility of parallels in the doctrines of Buddhism and Christianity. The following subjects for comparative study suggest themselves:

- Christian and Buddhist ideas of selflessness
- The idea of God in Buddhism
- Faith and grace in Buddhism
- Christian prayer and Buddhist meditation
- Nirvana and the Kingdom of Heaven
- Buddhist *metta* and Christian charity
- Man in Buddhism and Christianity

It should be mentioned, however, that it is not enough merely to state the parallels legendary or doctrinal between the two religions or to stress the historical precedence of the Buddhist versions. What is important is for the Christian to study the Buddhist way of presenting and solving the various problems, and to adjust his own approach to Buddhism in the light of such studies.

## U Poe Toke (Pu Thu Kho Taut Meh Par) (1890 – 1962)

by Naw Gay Moh Moh Htoo Saw

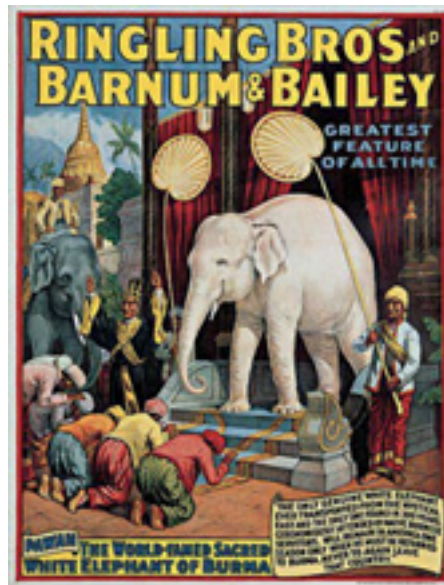
*A Man with a vision both global and local*

Of the two siblings, U Poe Toke, the youngest son of Saw Bu Nyo and Naw Tee Lu, was born in Myit Kyoe village in Bago Region in 1890. In the beginning, he was not just a Christian, but a minister. Eventually, he converted to Thar Oo Kayin Myit Tar Byeh Ma So moral association and remained as a priest until he died in 1962. His optimism about other religions reflected from his doctrines.

As his parents were just menial laborers, they could not support his education. However, he happened to complete the ninth standard by the aegis of a school teacher, U Toe Aung. Then he attended a theological school and graduated in 1921.

When he was young, he was so eager to help improve his people's lives. Besides, his earnest curiosity towards discovering the beliefs and teaching of the ancestors made him unrest to find out the way. As a student, he served as a pastor of youth endeavor itinerary association. As a result, he was expected to become a secretary of youth endeavor itinerary association for the whole country.

At first, he had been chosen to be in charge of teaching at the current school after graduating by his teachers. However, due to the urgent need by the head master, Thomas from Toungoo Bible School, he was sent there. In that particular year, only he was selected out of 52 students. He would teach at city church and at high school in Bago during the weekdays and help missionaries in teaching scriptures and other mission work during 1921. Then in 1922, Dr. D. Poe Min, the owner of white elephant, was about to start his itinerant journey to America and England to exhibit his white elephant.



*Dr. Po Min (Saw Durmay), the White Elephant and a circus poster<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> The text under the left picture taken from a London newspaper reads: „This photograph shows Dr. Rev. D. Po Min, President of the Loyal Karen Assoc. of Burma-India and his white elephant which he had the good fortune to capture at the end of the great war in Nov. 1919. The elephant was then under four feet high and about one and a half years old. This is a real white elephant, it has pink eyes. This is the only one alive so far as is known. The Karen forefathers have the tradition that the white elephant would come back as a sign of peace and prosperity under their white brothers. They

On searching for an observant student from the Karen ethnic groups such as Sgaw, Pwo, Bwe or Paku so as to learn about the development of the western societies, he eventually saw Thra Poe Toke. Despite some disapproval of elder missionaries there, they finally gave up on him. The purpose of partaking in this trip was to observe the development of education, economy, trading, culture, mission and governing system so that he could apply all those knowledge for his country when he returned. He weekly got two dollars for his tuition fees. Studying there for two years and six months, he came back to Burma.

Then he served in the British military until he reached two ranks and lived in Mandalay. After three years of British military service, he resigned and returned to his native town, Taungoo, where he resided and actively cooperated with Pu Bu Bwe Mu's children in their ministry. The prime purpose of joining them was to record all about the Karen customs and traditions and to collect the doctrines and Biographies of Karen prophets Maw Lay and Ta Po Mu in Pan Pon area. After the death of Dr. D Po Min, he established his private school attended by only seven students initially and later amounted to over one hundred numbers within ten years. Within the decade, over ten school branches could be extended. Following are the lists of schools and teachers' names:

- Shar Say Bo – Teacher Pu Por Len
- Mwee Lo – Teacher Pu Thut Pa Le
- Ka Mu Lo – Teacher Pu Thut Ka Le @ Pu Taw Lo
- Saw Tay Den – Teacher Pu Kwar Soe
- Saw Mu Det – Teacher Pu Saw Tor
- Tee Law Saw Kee – Teacher Pu Eh Mwee
- Sor Kwee Day – Teacher Pu Ka Na Ha
- C Khe Den – Teacher Pu Kwut Say
- Sor Lay Den – Teacher Pu Shaw Ray
- Na Kar Tu – Teacher Naw To Paw

Each school was attended by a fair number of students between 25 and 40. He named the school he built "Li Htoo Li Say" means Silver and Golden Book. He then set up a new congregation which he called it 'the Church of the Living God'. Within four years, his church members had increased to 5000. In 1931, he started a new organization which he named 'The World Unity Organization'. In one year, he got more than 15,000 members but this organization had nothing concerning with religion. By the time Thomason Darmin, the second son of Dr. D Po Min, arrived in Myanmar from England, he had to take care of the members of another World Unity Organization on behalf of Pu Mu Bwe Mu. At first, the two World Unity Organizations had been operated separately but after some consultation about combining the two organizations between Thomason Darmin and U Poe Toke, they finally reached the agreement and acknowledged the merger of these two organizations on 3 May 1934. Since 1938, this combination stood as a multi churches ministry. Later, he was well known to be a selfless dedicator for his people and religion and followed closely the doctrine of Pu Mu Bwe Mu called 'Byae Ma So'. In fact, his generosity towards his people was regarded as sermons. He set five important points for the consideration of God's graces granted on us.

1. We clearly understand God's management of the earth and we are able to decide the mission we want to carry out.
2. We need to critically consider why God has chosen nations and His intentions towards them.

---

never expected the fulfillment of their tradition. But today it is fulfilled. Dr. Durmay who is the Karen leader, and is the descendant of a Karen Chief Priest, captured the white elephant thus fulfilling the Karen tradition of old. "The elephant called Pawah was in London between 1926 and 1928. John Ringling leased the rare animal for exhibition on the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey show during the 1927 season from his owner, Dr. Po Min escorted the elephant along with half a dozen Burmese attendants.

Since we also have been to this world as a nation among others, there will be a time when God's choice falls on us.

3. Since each every one of us is the representatives of God to be witnesses to others as our ancestors, we have to hope for the opportunity to testify God.
4. We have to value the scriptures that lead us to prosperity, guide us to noble people and provide us with priceless wisdom that can fulfill our quench of everlasting life.
5. As all the nations in the past had known what life would be after death without anyone - returning to life and acknowledging the incident, we have to contemplate this temporary life seriously.

For those who want to learn about the doctrines and sermons of God, they have to bear in the mind the five points mentioned above to possess the fullness of spiritual wisdom and be the witnesses of God. These are some of the extraction from Thra Poe Toke's doctrines, together with his doctrines in his school of Nyaung Lay Bin, laying a long life noble teaching of Byae Ma So which was comprised of six religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Christian, Muslim, Confucianism and Shintoism. He retained the sources from each religion such as the vegetarian from Hinduism, the generous donor, Win Thar Dayar Gon Dama Buddha in Buddhism, with great compassionate love; Jesus died for the sinners, Mohamed's humble offering, the worship of God and parents from Confucius, and the worship of King and natural goods from Shintoism. According to him, only when we combine these six, we will have unity, love, truth, holiness, purity, toleration, and humility.

Despite being brought up by poor parents, Thra Poe Toke met with many grateful people who would support and educate him. Furthermore, his innate curiosity to improve his life helped him to overcome all the obstacles he has to confront. Some of the bitterness he had during the Second World War after the invasion of Japanese by the jealous persons was to be prompted as a British spy that later resulted in severely tortured by the Japanese. Likewise when Japanese had withdrawn, he was again accused of being a Japanese spy that made him to serve the time in prison by the British government. Owing to the displacement during the Second World War, he lost touch with his members of Byae Ma So and could not also run the school he set up. However, the association had become alive soon the war was over. His faithful and selfless dedication to preserving the cultural heritage and the teaching of the ancestors has been much helpful for those who want to study about the history of Karen people. Besides, many unfortunate children from the rural areas got access to education because of his schools.

The reasons why he had worked so hard for the development of his people was his innate inspiration and the reminder of Dr. D Poe Min to be a responsible person for his community after having the privilege of leaning western knowledge and skills in different fields. All the responsibilities to help develop the Karen community lay upon him. Because of these two forces, he started his mission as soon as he reached his native land. From his teaching to the congregations in chapter six, whatever activity a leader started, the whole crowd may not support. However, if his mission was acceptable, the crowd would get involved with it. If only we were cautious about our actions, we could convert some deities to a religion that still maintained the beliefs of our ancestors. Therefore, we should have been optimistic about all the religions that promote the culture and human dignity. However, not every activity would go smoothly always. Whatever we did, there was a tendency that we would have to undergone a number of obstacles. In his own experience, he was criticized bitterly when most of his missions were not accomplished just after the Second World War. However, with the help of four practices of Myit Ta Byar Ma So, he could overcome all those troubles.

His hope for the congregation of Myit Ta Byae Ma So was to maintain his school, Lee Too Lee Say,



and to promote it to university level by the new generation when he passed away. His latest vision was:

To create a celestial place, keep in mind the noble teaching  
Love, Mercy, Faith and ..... These four are the Byar Ma So  
Obey God and follow it, towards the fullness of life  
Be a country shines the earth, set an example we will  
Saving earth is true to do, ...  
With four laws of Byar Ma So, ...  
Never let it out of mind, practice these noble doctrines.

There is no perfect man in this universe. He could not fulfill all what he had expected to be but he set a good example. Wherever he had been, he proved to be one of the great comforters. One thing we should not fail to learn from him is to respect other religions despite the uncompromising beliefs.

## Rev. Vial Nang (1893 - 1960)

by Nathanayla

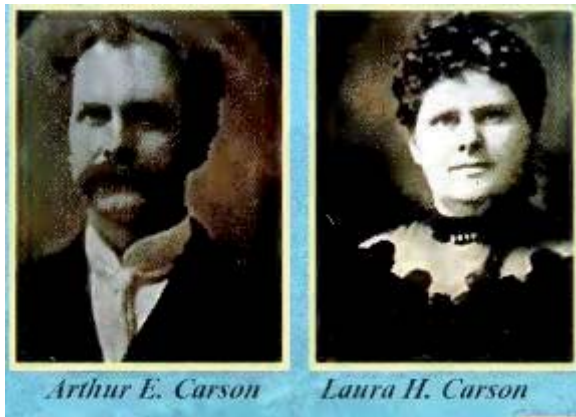
*The hardships and tribulations of the first Chin minister*

### ***His Birth and Growth in Tonzang Capital***

Rev. Vial Nang was born in 1893 at Tozang, the Royal city of Pu Kam Hau the Inpipa. He was the fifth son of Pu Thual Neng and Pi Zel Ngem. He also was the Hau Tual branch of the Ngaite family (Tribe). His parents were cultivators and lived comfortably. They were animists. The inhabitants of capital Tonzang were cultivators. Some were traders with the Meiteis (Manipurans) and the Gal Leng (Nagas) in the Manipur Province and some were with the Burmans who lived in Kale valley. They sold tiger skin, bear skin, and bought knife, spear, bow, etc. they practiced good hospitality they helped eagerly each others. They bore altogether the burdens of others wept with the mourners and laughed with the merits. They were under the British Government and were administered according to the British Rules and laws. They also had their special tribal (providential) laws which were known as the Kamhau codes. The code is still used till today in Tedim and Tozang townships. The code gives religious freedom. Traditional religious rites and ceremony offerings were freely practiced.

### ***Education***

The first missionary sent by American Baptist missionary, Rev. Arthur E. Carson and Dr. E. N. East arrived at Hakha and were stationed there to enlighten Chin Hills and they preached. Thra Po Ku who graduated from Insein Bible School and was sent by Karen Christian Brethren arrived at Tedim who the native of Thabaung (Delta area). Thra Shwe Zan sent also at Kuasak Siyin area. Thra Po Ku arrived at Tedim in 1904. He not only preached the gospel but also taught Burmese how to speak and how to write. In 1906, the chief of Kam Hau province, Pu Hai Cin Khup invited Thra Po Ku at Tonzang to teach how to speak and how to write Burmese and he gave residence and a building for the school. The school was a night class one and had one hundred pupils. Rev. Vial Nang also attended the school and he learned Burmese, the school was the first place for the learning of Burmese for Tonzang.



*Rev. Carson (1860-1908) and wife*

In 1912, by the help of Rev. J. H. Cope, he attended the government school at Tedim and learned Burmese. He passed the primary school (Fourth Standard) in 1914. In 1915 he attended American Baptist Mission School at Mandalay and learned English.

### ***Conversion and Seminary Life***

While he was attending Thra Po Ku's Burmese School at Tozang in 1906, he was evangelized by Thra Po Ku and was converted to Christ. In 1908 at Kongpi Lui (the name meaning "living stream") near the Tozang town, he was baptized by Thra Po Ku. He was then only Christian in his family.

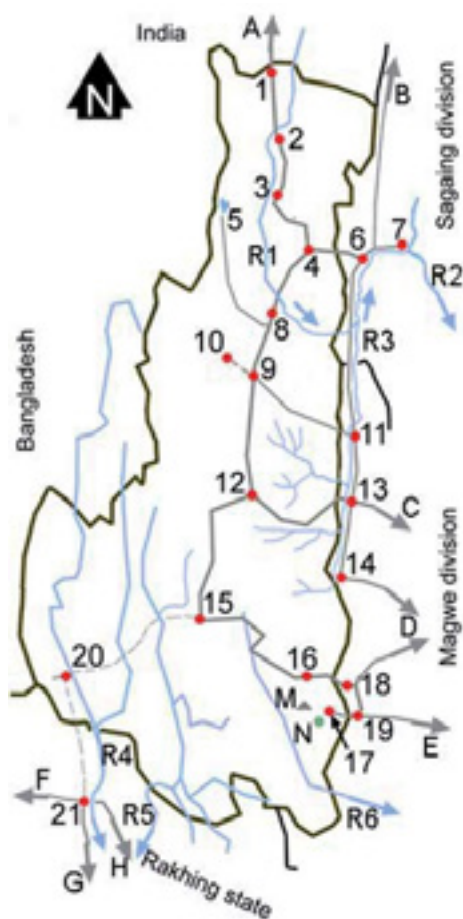
From 1916–1918 he attended Insein Burmese Bible School (now Myanmar Institute of Christian

Theology) for three years. During the First World War, due to the meager number of serving soldier, he served as a driver in Mesopotamia from 1919 to 1921. He went to Mesopotamia directly from Insein Burmese Bible School. In one of the records described that

Last year some of the students from Burmese Bible School sent to India for porters and some for drivers. Among those young students Vial Nang was one of them.  
*Mesopotamia, Expeditionary Forced D. , 9 June, 1919*

In 1924, he studied again in Insein Burmese Bible School and graduated in the same year.

Map of Chin State



- 1 = Chikha (Border town with India)
- 2 = Ton Zang
- 3 = Tiddim (Teddin)
- 4 = Thaine-Ngin
- 5 = Yeh Lake (heart shape lake)
- 6 = Kale (Sagaing division)
- 7 = Kalewa (Sagaing division)
- 8 = Falam
- 9 = Hakha (Capital of Chin state)
- 10 = Htan-ta-Lang
- 11 = Kan (Magwe division)
- 12 = Aika
- 13 = Gan Gaw (Magwe division)
- 14 = Hti Lin (Magwe division)
- 15 = Matupi (Madupi)
- 16 = Mindut
- 17 = Kanpetlet
- 18 = Yaw (Magwe division)
- 19 = Saw (Magwe division)
- 20 = Paletwa
- 21 = Kyauk Taw (Rakhine state)
- M = Nat Ma Taung (Mt. Victoria at 3100 meters)
- N = Nat Ma Taung national park
- R1 = Manipu river; R2 = Chindwin river; R3 = Myit Tha river;
- R4 = Kaladan or Kitsapanadi river (flows into Bay of Bengal); R5 = Laymyo river (flows into Bay of Bengal); R6 = Mone stream

### ***His Ordination and Ministry***

He married Pi Dah Za Cing in 1921 at Tonzang after he return home from Mesopotamia, at the Lum Bang Convention, the convention prepared to ordain Vial Nang. He gave his testimony before the convention, how he becomes a Christian, how he was called by his personal LORD for his ministry. The committee asked him some questions and when they appreciated his answers, they confirmed to give him ordination. He was ordained there. He was the first ordained pastor among the Chins.

During his vacations not only during his studies in Tedim government school but also during his studies in Insein Burmese Bible School, he went with Dr. Cope (see photo in biography 6) and Rev. Po Ku and preached the Gospel together with them. In 1924, Rev. Po Ku was granted a leave and went home. Rev. Po Ku did not come again. It fell on Rev. Vial Nang to take all the responsibilities of Rev. Po Ku. Dr. Cope died on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1938; Rev. Vial Nang bore the burden of missionary

work from 1938 – 1939. He worked hard earnestly Dr. Cope death, chiefly for fear that there might be down – heartedness among the believers because there was no longer a missionary. He served the LORD not as a hired laborer but as an owner and he strengthened the Christians as much as he could.



*The Tiddim Road 1944*

During World War II, a car road was constructed from Tiddim to Phaipi (Imphal) in India. The government ordered all able men to work on it. Rev. Vial Nang, like the prophet Nehemiah, held his Bible in his right hand and with the other hand (his left hand) he served as a constructor. During the absent of foreign missionaries, Rev. Vial Nang and native leaders took deep concern for the works of foreign missionaries did. Among their works they believed that promoting education is the very essential need for their people. To increase more educated persons, they set up schools and night schools for those who could not attend day schools as Rev. Po Ku did.

They could give very little amount to the teachers who worked at the schools.

### ***His Christian Testimony and Hardship***

The Tonzang villagers were bigoted animists and therefore conversion to Christianity was extremely hard for them to decide. A Christian was expected to be avoiding any strong drink, even the Chin beer. When there was no offering to the *NATS (demons)* there were no drink, no money, and no share of the offering meat. Therefore, the income of the chief decreased. Hatred of Christians became more intense.

The chief and the villagers signed an agreement like this: “On October 1, 1920, we who sign below on this document, agree that the chief of the village, the members of the village authority, poor and followers and their relatives and families will never be converted into Christianity. For this covenant we kill one mithun (Chin Buffalo) worth Rs. 44/ and one buffalo worth Ks. 55 those who breaks this covenant and become a Christian will pay the money Ks. 996 – Zu (alcohol). That is signed agreement to forbid conversion.

Another record is that there was an announcement in 1917 that “if one wants to become a Christian he or she will firstly report to the chief in Tonzang. If the village is a far distance from the capital Tonzang, he or she will report to his village chief. One of the Tunzang villagers did not report to his village chief and the chief fined him one mithun. At Nual Kawi village they fined Rs. 10/ per house if they converted into Christianity.

Rev. Vial Nang was a literate gentle man, who could speak and write English and Burmese and the chief himself depended on Rev. Vial Nang in many state affairs (junctures). There were also Pu Suan Pum and Pu Khawl Cin who were the right-hand men of the chief and therefore, the chief did not drive them away from Tonzang. He admitted to make a new settlement at the Kadang Swamp (Kadang Spring). During that time he started to build a house for Rev. Vial Nang behind the chief did not want to heat the gospel and he wanted to banish the believers. They believed that at Kadang Swamp there were so many *Nats* (demons) and if one took a place for privy, the devil would surely kill him or her. Therefore, the chief gave Rev. Vial Nang Kadnag spring for his dwelling place

because he believed Rev. Vial Nang would surely be killed by the *Nats*.

### ***His Family, Characteristics and Last Day***

As previous mentioned, he married Pi Dah Za Cing who was animist in 1921 and they were blessed two sons but dies in their childhood. In 1955, Pi DAh ZA Cing was called by Heavenly Father to rest in peacefully. In 1957, he remarried to Pi Don Khaw Nan who was cultivator from Tui Tun village. But they got no children.

He was a long suffering person and having a patience spirit and a good temper, he was loved by all. He served his master with all his heart and soul. He indelible words “the pastors are those who serve their LORD with emptiness”. He gave thanks to his LORD who gave him divine providence. He lived out what his LORD provided. While he was traveling he ate potatoes and other fruits. He also served the government as a driver, as a constructor and as a helper of the village chief because of his patriotic mentality. His desire was to serve his master until death.

The Baptist Church of Gam Ngai, the main church called on Rev. Vial Nang as their shepherd until they got another pastor. He looked after the church from 1957 to 1958. The Zomi Baptist Convention and Tedim Baptist Association celebrated Cope Golden Jubilee and Cope Memorial Baptist Church was established in April 7–10, 1960. His prayer was fulfilled and he participated in the Jubilee as the eldest pastor in that area and gave benediction at the convention ceremony. He offered the last dinner meal with his best comrades and family at Po Kam Khan Thang’s residence as April 13, 1960. On April 28, 1960 he rested in the arm of his beloved Heavenly Father who he faithfully served through severe persecutions and was buried at Tonzang village on April 30, 1960.



Photo: TTB4 State Thangha post.

REV. VIAL NANG'S BAPTIZED DIAMOND JUBILEE (1908-1983)

Feb.2-6,1983 Tonzang

"ZEISU IN TOPA HI" PHIL. 2:11

After he died, the Tonzang Baptist Church was called Rev. Vial Nang Memorial Baptist Church and posted the name on December 25, 1982. Tonzang Township Baptist Association also celebrated its VIII convention on February 2 – 6, 1983 Tonzang. Rev. Vial Nang Diamond Jubilee Stone and bell were executed at the church compound.

### ***Paradox in Life***

- a. *The Oppressed become the Ruler* – In 1948, Burma declared her independence and the government was founded on democracy . From 1949 to 1954, by the election of the public, he became the Headman of Tonzang village. He received this post because he loved his land and his people. It was impossible for him to reject the request of the government. Rev. Dr. Frankinson Owen Nelson himself could not reject the request of the government and the American Administrators therefore proposed that the headman, he got no salary. He faced many difficulties for his daily life. He discussed it with Rev. Dr. Nelson. He got Ks. 38/ per month for his pension. It was given by the church. He served his LORD faithfully as much as he could ever as a headman.
- b. *The Undesired Land became the Source of Much Production* – He was exiled to Kadang Swamp to be killed by the evil demons. By the grace of God he did not die. He could build a grand house and planted a garden. He became healthier. He was a headman there from 1949 – 1954. That place was a very good place. Now there are the buildings of High School, Hospital

and other government buildings.

Before he died, he told his wife “Don’t worry for curry. But try to get the seed because our garden will produce enough for you after I die”.

Kadang Swamp is a very good place for cultivation. Tonzang Baptist Association started to plant grapes. Rev. Vial Nang’s residence and garden were dedicated to the Tonzang Baptist Association. The widow Pi Don Khaw Man gained 150 Kyat per month from the Church till her death.

### *Conclusion*

The Rev. Vial Nang was the first ordained Chin native minister in whose person the ideal of the Gospel was embodied. His soul was fired with the spiritual fervor that he received through the American Baptist Mission Program. He was commissioned by the American Baptist Missionaries to foster and to stand for Christianity in his native land.

To the American Baptist Missionaries, evangelism in the sense of mission was meant for the emancipation of the Chin People who were in bondage under the age-old belief in numerous deities and to replace it with the one deity the living God. And again salvation was meant to them cultivating human intellect to attain abundant life. These were the spiritual light to Rev. Vial Nang that manifested in the form of his self-dedication to the Christian ministry and to his own tribes.

As Rev. Vial Nang lived with his own tribal chief he often looked like Joseph at the palace of Pharaoh and at times he was like Daniel at the Babylonian Court; but he resembled Job most of all. The pain of his grief for the misfortunes that attended his family, the hatred that he earned for his unyielding faith, and the persecution that he endured were the indelible hallmarks of his Christian witnesses which well pleased the One whom he served.

Rev. Vial Nang had borne the emblem of suffering in adoration of his LORD. He has become thus the father of Christian faith in the Zomi land who had exemplified himself as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. As long as Baptist Churches in the Zomi land endure, his living faith will be remembered as a spiritual source in times of hardship and distress.

## Dr. Hla Bu (1897 – 1970)

by Hlan May Oo

*A leader in the worlds of academia, students, ecumenics, and youth*

Dr. Hla Bu, son of Rev. Dr. U Tha Htin and Daw Khin Lay, was born on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1897 in Laut Gyi Village, Tha Bya Paing Gyi Township. His father was a convert from Buddhism. He was the eldest of the four siblings. He got married to Sayama Daw Aye Tin in Mawlamyine by Rev. Ahr Soe on the first day of Nayone 1299 year of the Myanmar Calendar.

Dr. Hla Bu is said to be a self supported student. He did not take his educational support from his parents. He planned and had his own financial support from the products of his own garden and poultry farm.

He had his primary education from Mrs. Evan's School in Insein, his High School education from the Baptist High School of Yangon. In 1919, he received his Bachelor Degree (Honours) from the Judson College. In 1922, he was conferred the Master Degree by the Calcutta University and stood first in the class. In 1934, he attended the King's College of London and earned his Ph. D there. He was the first Burman Ph. D holder. In 1960 he again received the LHD (Doctor of Human Letters) from the Tidelands University.

Dr. Hla Bu was an outstanding and talented student and was given the Government Collegiate Scholarship. Tha Din's Silver and Gold was awarded him for his eloquence in English and Literature. The Judson College awarded him the first prize in Poem Recitation and thus he received the Broadbent Prize. Moreover, from 1931 to 1943 he received the Bama Educational title.

Dr. Hla Bu served in many capacities.

From 1919-1920 – he served as a teacher in the Cushing High School



*Drill at Cushing High School. (For a picture of the building see biography 9.)*

From 1922-1926 – he served as a tutor in the Judson College and at the same period he started to serve as a full time minister.

From 1926-1942 – he became a lecturer in the Rangoon University

From 1934-35 and 1939-42 – he taught in the Rangoon University. He was the Head of the National University Department from 1936-1939.

U Hla Bu has now been at work in King's College, London, as a State Scholar for two years, improving his qualification to carry on his work in the philosophy department. According to the arrangement he is now due to return next June. Plans have been made with this in view, Mr. Jury being now in Canada and expecting to return only in June 1934. Personally I feel very strongly the importance of Hla Bu remaining six or possibly twelve months longer to get a doctor's degree.

*Form the proceedings of a Baptist missionary conference held in Maymyo (Pyin-U-Lwin) in April 1933*

From 1939-1943 – he became the first Burman Principal of the Judson College. It was when Dr. Jury was going back to America that Dr. Hla Bu was appointed the first national Principal by the American Missionary Association in line with the slogan – Burmans for Burma. This was heartily welcome by the Burman Nationals which raised the national spirit of the people and was a great and lasting honour for the whole country.

After the Japanese Regime, from 1944 to 1945 he was appointed the Dean of Arts and Professor of Philosophy. He served as the Head of Philosophy Department for the Emergency University Classes from 1945-46.

From 1946-1958, the Rangoon University appointed Dr. Hla Bu as the Professor of Philosophy and Psychology. In 1947 he acted as the Associate Administrator during the period of re-instituting the Rangoon University after the War. He had also served as an Associate Consultant for the UTC (University Training Corps). He was also an honorary lecturer in Psychology at the Medical Faculty. In 1958, he was honored with Sithu Title by the Myanmar government.

From 1958 – 59 – he served as an Honorary Pastor of the Judson Church. In 1959 he was invited by the Union Theological Seminary (USA) as a visiting Professor.

From 1959 – 1964 – he was the Executive Officer of Fullbright Education Foundation in Myanmar.

As a student, Dr. Hla Bu had actively and enthusiastically participated in the Students Christian Association. In 1921, he had served as the President of the Student Christian Fellowship in Calcutta. From 1932 – 1934, he was a member of the British Student Christian Movement (London). In 1958, he was elected the President of the Student Christian Movement and was involved in the activities of the SCM such as Evangelistic, Health and Education Campaigns. He had many Buddhist friends who took part in these Activities and later became leaders in the social and welfare work in the departments of the Government of Burma.

In 1965 he was one of the leaders who started the Burma Bible Society and was the first Chairman of the Society. He was also the President of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) from 1946-47. Moreover, from 1957-1970 he was the Chairman of the Myanmar Christian Council (MCC). Thus he actively took part in the Ecumenical Movement as a Lay leader and was revered and honoured by many.

Dr. Hla Bu is recommended as a simple person who had lived simply as a good citizen and a good Christian. Although a Baptist he was enthusiastic and interested in unity of the denominational churches. He was an honorable leader who listened intently to his students and was always cautious



his communication with whoever needed him to gain self respect. He was humble and was always willing to learn and study. He was well loved and respected by his students as he was a good compassionate and sincere teacher with a clear perspective who could make himself clear. He was very popular with his students.



In teaching Psychology and Philosophy, he didn't teach in a domineering manner. But he helped the students think and formulate questions and draw their own conclusions. His students talk about him as a sincere Christian, who lived out Christianity, a good example, a devout person, friendly and of good moral, a loving life partner and father, a loyal and loving person to all human.

Dr. Hla Bu had traveled widely.

In 1922 – he went to China.

In 1932 – to the University of Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh

1933 – to Paris, Berlin, Rome, Vienna and Budapest and visited some European Colleges and Universities.

In January 1934 – he visited the well-known universities such as Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Pennsylvania.

In 1938 – he visited Bombay and Madras Universities

In 1948 – he went to Mysore

He had taught and written many forums of literary work on Psychology, education and religion and was invited to give lectures in Myanmar, Asia and International meetings.

Dr. Hla Bu had also exhorted the Christians of Myanmar especially the young people to love their country and be true citizens and try their very best for the peace and justice of their country. He had also encouraged the contextualization of religious songs to be sung in Burmese tune and music. He also said that in working for the welfare of the country Christians should join hands and work together with their Buddhist friends. Moreover, Christian young people should understand that resisting the British rule is not resisting the Christians, because as Christian citizen of Myanmar, we have tried our best to gain Independence and self-rule for our country. As a lay man, Dr. Hla Bu is a

model for us Christians. He had participated in the promotion of Education and religion. He served as the Chairperson and Moderator of the Judson Church, up to the day he was called to his heavenly home on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, 1970.

## Mahn Saw Bu (1900 - 1952)

by Nathanayla

*Editor of the German version: Gertrud Wellmann-Hofmeier*

### *Introduction*

*The author Nathanayla introduces here the biography of a person who was of special significance for the Karen people during the Second World War. Both during the war and repeatedly afterwards Mahn Saw Bu advocated peace and reconciliation. He had independence for the Karen in mind. Nonetheless he avoided being hostile toward other ethnic groups in Burma. He came from the Ayeyarwady Delta.*

Mahn Saw Bu was born on Friday 15 March 1900 in Ta Kun Daing village, Myaung Mya Township, Ayeyarwaddy Division. His parents were U Saw @ Pu Thu Tae and Dae Kong. Out of the five siblings, he was the fourth. The meaning of Mahn Saw Bu is that he was admired and loved by both Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen.

Mahn Saw Bu started schooling at No.1, Saw Yin Gone High School and continued it until he graduated. Completing his study at Cushing High School (American Baptist Mission High School – see photo in biography 4), he attended the Judson College. Just completing the first year of I. Sc at Judson College, he went to study in India at India Calcutta University majoring in B. Com. Returning to Burma in 1929, he married Sayama Ju Sein (Naw Jone) in Inn Ye Kyone village. No sooner had Sayama Ju Sein (Naw Jone) given birth to four off – springs, she passed away. By the arrangement of his parents, Mahn Saw Bu remarried Ma Naw Khin from Ta Kun Daing village who gave him another daughter.

As Mahn Saw Bu's father was rich enough, he set up a paddy mill in Tor Ka Lote village on the bank of Myaung Mya River. As the factory had been in need of management, he shifted his career from a school teacher to paddy mill manager.



*Keijo Suzuki (1894-1967) alias Moe Gyoe  
(thunderbolt)*

He had been still a manager while Fascist Japanese invading Burma. Meanwhile there was a fatal conflict broke out between Karen and Burmese ignited by some pessimists. In the mean time, Japanese Major Kee Mar Tar was killed. Indeed, he was killed near Saw Ba U Gyi's village called Beh Ga Yet in Pathein area. However, due to the wrong information that Major Kee Mar Tar's decease took place in Myaung Mya area, the Japanese General, Bo Moe Gyoe and other colleagues were furious with the residents there. As a result, Mahn Saw Bu was questioned by Bo Moe Gyoe investigating Kee Mar Tar's murder and the situation of Kanazoe Gone and Thar Yar Gone villages in War Ken Ma township and Myaung Mya.

Mahn Saw Bu response to Bo Moe Gyoe was that, "This incident has nothing to do with any Karen and Burmese people. It is all about the conflict between the Karen and Burmese armed groups. The civilians, women and children are ignorant about the tensions between armed groups. If my statements cannot convince you and you still want to revenge this by killing innocent civilians,

women and children and burn down the houses, just take my life first.” As he said that he bent down his head to the general.

Mahn Saw Bu was admired by Japanese for his patriotism and courage. After receiving peace and reconciliation between Karen and Burmese from Bo Moe Joe, he employed many Karen male and female workers in his mill. Many young people were hiding for the fear of atrocity. The majority of the people brought by Japanese were old, women and children. Under the Japanese control, Burma was in great poverty and some young ladies could not afford to wear securely.

After the consult between Bo Moe Gyo and some armed groups at Mahn Saw Bu’s factory completed, he reached out to several villages informing the village leaders to meet up with Bo Moe Joe. On 2 June 1942 at 10 am, the village leaders went to fetch Bo Moe Joe coming with two ships at Mahn Saw Bu’s mill in Tor Ka Lote village. After the meeting, the two parties ended up with signing peace agreement. After the peace process on 3 June 1942, a declaration of everyone in Myaung Mya area should have no more concern about security.

After forcing the British allies out of Burma, the Japanese government had drawn some new laws which brought back Burma to a peaceful state.

Again, in the mid of June 1942, the government authority in Myaung Mya sent out six local leaders to acquire information about Einme. Later, they had never been heard of. Owing to the political conflict and chaotic condition, there was no courageous man enough to look for them. Finally, only Mahn Saw Bu took the trouble to go down along the Einme River on foot to inquire about the lost. It took him three days and he was overjoyed when he met the thrilling local people. He tried every way to find out about the lost, but it was in vain. Eventually, he discovered that the six leaders and an oarsman were killed by their enemies whom were later killed by Japanese soldiers.

The condition had not been peaceful even then. At that time, Mahn Saw Bu and Saya To Kute were selected by the Japanese authority to travel to villages and educate the villagers about the Japanese rules and regulations. For that, the Japanese authority provided them with some financial support of 150 kyats per month and food and traveling expenses. The generous Mahn Saw Bu would always share some money from what he earned to the poor. As he had been away traveling most of the time despite unbearable weather conditions, his family moved to live in Toe Len village where they had decided to farm for their living.

Despite monthly pay from the Japanese government during 1942, his salary was cut out when the country had been peaceful. Whatever situation he would confront, he would never give up working for his people. Lives under Japanese control had been peaceful for some people when some had to undergo several troubles. From 1942 to 1945, Mahn Saw Bu put forward all his energy, money and time for the welfare of his people.

During the Japanese fascists, there was a great food deprivation in the country. Goods were high priced, clothing were scarce and robbers took chance to mess around. The ethics of some citizenries deteriorated. For that, Mahn Saw Bu would travel to village by village and mentor those who had seen the pleasure of misconduct. He also set an example by showing his love and patience to those who misbehaved. His patients and stony personality had changed the mind of Japanese Doctor, Kimura. In fact, it dissolved all the suspicion and misunderstanding he had on Karen people.

The Japanese troops had been decreasing during the Second World War in 1945. In those days, the



Japanese government used Fascist system to govern the country that caused such a great anathema to the Myanmar public. However, due to the conflict that broke out in Myaung Mya, Mahn Saw Bu had to organize some youth to serve as security guard so as to prevent Myaung Mya from being destroyed by enemy. After some time, the Burma Defense Army (BDA) had been organized with the purpose to fight against Japanese and the majority of them were Karen.

In 1945, there was a revolutionary campaign held in Sa Khan Gyi village in Myaung Mya overseen by Major Saw Tun Sein. Learning about the incident, the Japanese and Burmese troops marched towards Sa Khan Gyi village to dissolve the BDA. Unfortunately, the plot was discovered by Saw Aung Din who without delay sent the news to Mahn Saw Bu in time. Knowing about the upcoming danger, he made a trek to Sa Khan Gyi village at night guiding by a torch.

When Japanese troops reached Sa Khan Gyi village, they were aware that the DBA troops sheltering at state school and then the battle broke out. The villagers rushed to the ditch and the DBA troops led by Major Tun Sein were set free under the supervision of Mahn Saw Bu. Three Japanese soldiers were killed in this battle.

The furious Japanese leaders ordered every villager to be investigated. Fearing for their lives, all the youth and older people who could walk fled to secure places. The rest of the villagers were forced to assemble in the football field in order to burn up the whole village. When Mahn Saw Bu had learned the Japanese plan, he went to plead with Dr. Kimyra so as to sooth the anger of Japanese leaders. Later, the villagers were free from fatal danger.

By the time the Japanese lost in the Second World War, some of the Japanese troops were withdrawn and General Egama took over the responsibility to lead the remaining Japanese troops. An order came out to withdraw the troops in Myaung Mya and burned down all the fortifications and offices there. This news reached Mahn Saw Bu's ear, then he went to meet with Lawyer Aye Khin for help. Finally, the Japanese left without burning down any of their buildings.

During the Second World War in 1945, the villagers respectfully honored Mahn Saw Bu for his commitment in helping 14 villages from May to April. Additional to helping the Karen people, he was willingly to also extend his helping hands all the other nations such as Chinese, Burmese and Indians whenever there were in need. In showing their great respect to Mahn Saw Bu, the multitude of villagers was parading.

As the anathema towards Fascist Japanese had been increasing among the public, the local people held a meeting at Shwe Thar Lyaung, Myaung Mya by the end of May in 1945. The convention resulted in an organization called "Pa Ta Pa La" means destroying the Fascist, the freedom of the people. Chairperson of this organization was Tha Khin Ba Hla when Mahn Saw Bu was elected as a secretary.

Mahn Saw Bu had already served as a whole Karen leader from 1939 to 1941. Even before the Second World War, during the colonial period, many organizations had already been formed according to different ethnicities. The motto of the Karen organization led by Mahn Saw Bu was "Promoting Education and Development for the Whole Karen Nation".

By the time the British allies reinvaded Burma, the Fascist Japanese were forced out. Since then, the situation in the country had been more peaceful. However, the tireless Mahn Saw Bu wasted no time in aiding his people. However, he was so disappointed when he had learned that there had been no matriculation graduates among Karen youth. In 1946, he happened to meet a Pwo Karen called U Mun Net and consulted about the necessity of establishing a state high school and a space for it. U Mun Net was so kind enough to sell 52 acres of his land with only 2000 kyats. Furthermore, he did not use the money on his own, but donated to the school to be about constructed. In 1947, the high school was built in Yedwinyegan, Myaung Mya.

When the establishment completed, Mahn Saw Bu and his family moved to stay there along with some other villagers expecting educational prosperity of their children. Gradually, the number of

Christians had increased and the idea of forming a congregation came into everyone's attention. Finally, after consulting with some religious leaders, Yedwinyegan Church had been formed in 1949 and the pastor was Saya Poe Mai.

Additional to social and political affairs, Mahn Saw Bu actively worked for his people spiritually. He did not only pray for his people alone, but he lived it. He also built a house for missionary teachers.

In 1949, the starvation had stroke people widely. Besides, the conflicts between ethnicities broke out in some villages and some villagers had to flee their lives. In 1950, Mahn Saw Bu established a hospital and another one was which he named Saw San C Po's hospital in Pathein. Due to the political situation, those two hospitals had been transferred and reopened in Yedwinyegan, Myaung Mya. Again, it was only him to run those two hospitals. Because of him, the public had more access to better health care. Similarly, the spiritual growth had also been promoted.

Mahn Saw Bu selflessly dedicated himself to serving his people and the country faithfully since 1942 till 1945. Again, when the political situation was stable, he continued getting involved in solving problems such as food deprivation, economy, and education by cooperating with other leaders. He also ardently worked for the independence of the country.

Gaining independence in 1948, Pa Sa Pa La came into power. In the mean time, there were opposition political parties such as red flag party and white flag party reveling against the Pa Sa Pa La. Fearing for the danger of vandalism, Pa Sa Pa La leaders requested Mahn Saw Bu to cooperate with local authorities in keeping the city safe.

His compassionate and kind personality helped him solve problems easily even with his enemy.

Mahn Saw Bu was such a powerful person. Politically, he would even sacrifice his life in the name of his people and the country. With spiritual affairs, he was serving the congregations as a leader. He spent all his time for his people and the country since 1942 until 1952. He was such a courageous and selfless person with high dignity. He had all capability granted by God. He had proved himself to be honest and good moral by living his life. His humble and patient personality proved to be an outstanding leader. He was a holy person enjoying the toil of God.

After serving his people days and nights, his health condition had gotten worse. Despite some illnesses, he had never given up but carried out the responsibilities of his people till 1951 when his potential turned to be very weak. Just as he had been sick, he was elected to be a member of parliament. He did not get this position by vote but by numerous numbers of appreciated and admired people. In fact, he had come to be a member of parliament without any opponent. When his health conditions deteriorated, he committed to Yedwinyegan hospital in Myaung Mya and was transferred to Yangon public hospital when his health condition was getting worse. He had been operated on three times and soon after the last time, on 20 September 1952, he was pronounced dead.

His remain was transported back to his native town Myaung Mya by vessels under the leadership of general Mahn Win Maung and his colleagues. They arrived Myaung Mya at two o'clock on Monday, 22 September 1952. Hearing the news about the arrival of Mahn Saw Bu's corpse, all the nationalities: Sgaw Karen, Pwo Karen, Burmese, Chinese and Indians resided in that area came to pay their last tribute to him.

On 27 September 1952, the multitude of people attended to his funeral service and paid their respect and honor to him. Even though his funeral service was so long, everyone stayed there patiently until the end. On his tomb, there are scripts chiseled in different languages that say, "An Honorable and Devoted Son of God", "In Memory of Mahn Saw Bu", "Born on 16 March 1900", "Died 20 September 1952". His tomb still exists today right in front of Yedwinyegan church in Myaung Mya. So long as the earth exists, he will still be recognized as a noble man in the future.

Mahn Saw Bu was a courageous, forthright and patriotic man who had struggle his utmost for the

reconciliation between Karen and Burmese. He worked very hard to have his people to get access to education. In addition to education, he also opened up livelihood training centre for the unfortunate young people. He was the only person who could calm down all the civil conflicts and turmoil during the Japanese invasion. It was only him who helped to keep Myaung Mya town from being burned down during the peak of civil war.

When he became the vice chairperson of the Karen Association, he used only the loving method, the way of Jesus. Without any rival, he outstandingly became a member of parliament. His flesh may not exist today, but all what he had done will remain in everyone's heart. "Man may die, but his name still survives" is the historical event that we want to record today.

#### *Commentary*

*In this biography the strength, energy, courage and fearlessness of Mahn Saw Bu, who died relatively young at 52, are described. He risked his life for reconciliation between the Karen people and the Burmese. He himself was Karen and he always strove towards the independence of his people, without thereby allowing a hostile atmosphere to arise vis-à-vis other ethnic groups. He worked with the Japanese during the Japanese occupation in order to prevent the worst. Clearly he worked for peace through his cooperation with the Japanese. All around him the conflicts between the different ethnic groups were always violent. He took people seriously and with his work he risked his own health. The people honor him up to the present day.*

**Rev. Thang Lian (1901 – 1971)**

by Nathanayla

*The first native Chin missionary****His Birth and Religious Background***

Rev. Thang Lian was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1901, at Voklak village, in Tiddim sub-division. He was the eldest son of Pu Zong Kim and Pi Kai Dim's seventh children. At that time there was no literature or sound culture in Chin Hills. There was no good communication. There was no trade or merchants. Trading is one of the extra-profession or business. There was no strong belief in God. There was no religion at that time. The fear of the Nats (Devils/ devil) was spread in all Chins and it influenced the whole Chin Hills.

*Voklak****Education***

In 1914 his elder brother Pu Khan Kim studies Basic Burmese lessons and he passed the course. In 1915 he went to Buam Man to attend school at Khuasak but his uncle Pu Tuang Thuamm the elder brother of his father who was at Buam Man did not allow him to attend the school and he sent Kham Kim back by force to his parents to help them. He spent his time there in helping his parents.

In April 1916, he started his school to learn Burmese and Chin dialect from Buam Man to Khua Sak, at the American Baptist Mission School. It was his mother's promise in 1920, that they would become Christians and his parents would also send him to school. He was at the house of Pu Hang Do. From 1922 he joined the school at Lim Khai till 1924. When Burmese schools were closed in 1925, he also stopped his education.

In 1928, Rev. Dr. C. U. Strait founded of theological school at Hakha. As he was a person waiting for training to become a pastor he attended the school. The training course lasted for six months. After six month of training, he preached and witnessed the good news of God from one village to another. He visited Falam township, Tiddim Township, Hualgo Area and Thang Kai Area. In 1931, he graduated from the Theological School of Hakha, under the supervision of the then principal Dr. C U. Strait.



### ***His Conversion and Seminary Life***

After three years of his insidious dealing with Christian of his villages, he and his father become seriously ill that they nearly died. Prayers were made on their behalf of enunciating the words in earthen jars according to their custom. But these sick men did not get any better; in fact they became worse day by day in 1920. So they foresook Pau Cin Hau's religion and became Christian.



*Rev. Cope came to the Chin Hills in 1908 and stayed there for 30 years*

In January 1920, his parents asked him to become a Christian family. His parents had forbidden to attend school. He said to his parents that if they did not allow him to attend school, he would attend school and they would also become Christian family because of their physical sickness. They invited Saya Thuam Hang and Saya Ne Win from Khuasak and they were converted to Christian religion in the last week of January 1920. In March 1921, his parents were baptized by the missionary Rev. J. H. Cope in Khua Zang stream near Khuasak village.

After their conversion, his father and himself were helped through the prayer of the pastors. After he experienced the goodness and healing power of God, he thought in his mind "How good the great God is, how long do I stay away from Him!" After his experiences, he preached and witnessed to those who were still chained in darkness, suffering sickness and so on. He decided to become a minister to serve his good LORD for all his life and waited for the good chance to come.

### ***His call to be a Missionary and Ordination***

Rev. Cope sent Mr. Thang Lian to Theizang village to be a missionary on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1931 after finishing his four years Biblical studies at Hakha under Dr. Strait. He was appointed not only for Theizang village, but also for the Thang Kai area all eastern part of the range of Thang Mual. He worked hard without rest because his area was very large. In 1938, the church appointed Saya Thang Lian to look after the area of Saya Thuam Hang and Saya Lian Zam. On 26 of June, 1938 he was ordained as a full time pastor and was given the responsibility to feed the lambs from Lei Taw Tan to Kalemyo, the eastern region of Thang Mual, Siyin region and Kale area and to perform the ordinance of the church. In the course of his pastorate he had founded sixteen separate churches and baptized 1774 regenerated folks, and conducted 238 nuptial and marriage ceremonies.

### ***Persecution and Hardship***

- a. ***Difficulties Encountered by Believers:*** After the three months of Pu Hang Do, (the first convert man from Buanman) conversion, Pu Zong Kim, the father of Rev. Thang Lian, with his family at Voklak become Christians. After they converted, the animist relatives made an agreement to persecute the new converts. If one who converted to Christian from Voklak after eating the flesh of the *miton* (buffalo), he or she should pay *miton* and Chin-beer (*Zo Zu*). There were many strong anti-Christian animists and people were afraid to become Christians because it was beyond their means to pay *miton* or buffalo as fines. In this and many other ways the spreading of the gospel was obstructed in the Siyin area in olden day.
- b. **The Eradication of Their Custom:** The villages of Tui San and Du Mang are from Buan tribes. They believed that tradition and customs are more important than religion. If there is a marriage, they ask mostly how much they give for their bride. The parents of bridegroom give the price for their brides as many as the parents of the bride ask for. If they cannot give the price they ask for, they cannot marry. They take it for granted that if they have a daughter, they have a box of money. They ask the price according to the beauty, the wisdom

and attractiveness of the bride or their daughter.

Saya Thang Lian believed that this custom was like selling someone and God did not like it. He preached about this as follows: “our children are the blessing from God; God does not give us our children to be sold. If we do not follow the will of God He will not bless us.” He always preached about the issue of the marriage price and after two years they accepted his teaching. Then there was no longer any bride price.

Another custom was that if there was a dead person, they killed pig, cattle, buffaloes and mituns for the persons who sat for mourning. The richer killed bigger animals and more. He told them that this custom was a very good one but God did not bless us through that. We were not saved through these practices. These were only the pride of life. It was very good for the rich but very difficult for the poor. There was no reference in the Bible for this custom. The customs which were not in the Bible no longer deserved to be continued.

When they heard this preaching, they liked it very much but it was not easy to put aside their customs. Some wanted to take him to the court. Truly they had strong hearts for their customs. The Good News Saya Thang Lian had preached was blessed by God. God helped Saya Thang Lian in his faithful witnessing, the bride price and the killing of the animals at the death's house was condemned by the church. It became the by-law of the church at Tui San and Duh Mang to avoid these practice. Rev. Law Mung, who migrated from Tui San to Nan Chuang, told his church members that the by-laws of the Nan Chuang Baptist Church were the principle which were laid by Rev. Thang Lian. They would never forget Rev. Thang Lian's goodness, guidance and types of his belief.

c. ***His Composition of By-Laws for Voklak in July 1950:*** At Voklak village Hang Cin Thang, the son of Lia Dim Khaw Cingm and the daughter of Pu Kam Ngo Khan were married according to the Christian tradition, Rev. Thang Lian composed some by-laws at the marriage ceremony.

1. If the couple were divorced, it is not necessary to pay four buffaloes according to the law of the Chin Hills.
2. Since they become one flesh, they could divorce only by death. There would be a wage for brides.
3. Except on the ground of adultery no couple should divorce.
4. If a woman committed adultery, he husband could divorce her.
5. The adulterer could not get the heritage if they divorce.
6. If a husband committed adultery, his wife could get the heritage.
7. Even if one committed adultery but agreed not to divorce, they both could live together.
8. If the couple divorced for other reasons they would divide their children equally. The women could stay wherever she likes.
9. If a person or his parents or his brothers or sisters divorce his wife and then wanted to be unite again, the husband would give Kyats 100/- to his in-laws according to Deuteronomy 22: 13 – 21.

D. ***The Churches dedicated by Rev. Thang Lian:*** Rev. Thang Lian dedicated three Baptist Churches in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit 1) Paak Zang Baptist Church on 5 March 1939, 2) Vangteh Baptist Church on 17 December, 1939, and 3) Tamdeang Baptist Church on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1941.

E. ***His Services during the World War for the Government as well as for His Savior:*** In 1943, the government ordered all the men to enroll into the army because the Japanese

arrived in Chin Hills. Rev. Thang Lian also served as a “Levy” in the government and also served his savior as the ordained minister, His payment in the Chin levy was 20 Kyats. In 15 June, 1943 he was a member in the first groups to safeguard the trial of Gullu Vum. Rev. Thang Lian and Pu Duh Mang waited from their camp and the others went to the motor-road construction camp. They carried many goods and eatables from the British camp. When they arrived at the Levy camp they sold their goods to the two. Rev. Thang Lian read verses from the Bible and said that the two and the others who carried the goods were the same. They would get the same share according to the Bible but he did not take anything from them.

From June to November, 1943 he served both as a Levy and as a pastor. From 1<sup>st</sup> December 1943 to August 1944, he served as a pastor and got his salary in Japanese money because all his areas fell into the hands of the Japanese. From September, 1944, he became a soldier of Sizang Independence Army and he served in that army. He gained the “the Levy Medal” for his good service.

- F. ***His Participation in Sizang Region Development Union:*** On 28<sup>th</sup> December 1946, the leaders from Sizang region (there are seven villages) met together and formed a construction committee to construct a car road from Forth White to Thuklai. Rev. Thang Lian was a most intelligent advisor to this construction committee. This road was very important and essential for Sizang region. It was before independence and British government did not give any monetary sanction. It was to be constructed with the villagers’ effort. The construction started from 1947 and finished in 1948. Because of his efforts and commits all the construction was blessed by God that no man can refuse it. He gave the best model for the Christian in the Sizang region.

The witness of Rev. Thang Lian, his suffering and endurance moved the Buan Man villagers to become Christians. In 1964 all the villagers were converted to Christianity. Even though he was not rich, having no good trainings or scholarly training, he was very polite and gentle. He was a spirit – filled pastor, having patriotic spirit, performing the best for the believers, and he was respected by all.

### ***His Last Time***

He breathed his last, went to his heavenly home on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 1971, leaving 1940 Baptist Christians including 848 baptized folks in his pastorate. His funeral ceremony was performed on the 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1971, buried in a special tomb with full Christian’s sites.

### ***Conclusion***

Rev. Thang Lian was a pioneer missionary and a pastor who served His Lord in a very wide and large area, he was not only a servant in mission but also a great leader of the development for Chin Hills, especially for Falam, Tidim, and mostly for Sizang Region. He was so patient in his love for his people. He was a person who never told about his suffering or persecution but told about the goodness of His dear LORD. He was a man who was never tired of his master’s work. He was a very great and famous leader who served Jesus during the darkness period of Chin’s history.

He was blessed with four sons and three daughters. He always praised his good LORD instead of cursing or saying anything bad-fortune while he was very poor in early means. His children were also richly blessed by our good LORD, having God – giving sons and daughters, living fair standards of life. His descendants also always praise the grace of God, the love of Jesus Christ and the blessing from God.

Finally we can say a conclusion that he was a very good leader, having not only the love of God but sharing the fullness of God’s mercy. He was not only a man of God but also filled with patriotic spirit. He served Jesus as much he could; on the other hand he never neglected the welfare of his people. He was one of the leaders of the development for his region. He opened the eyes of his

people to promote better living standard and life. He was one of very good models for Chin future life. He also was the fore–runner for modern missionaries and pastors. His loving kindness and full–surrendered life is sure to be an extremely enriching model to anyone who comes to know about him through this research paper.

## A Selfless Life of Rev. Yaw Han (1902-1989)

by Nathanayla

*A multi-lingual grass-roots worker in Shan State*

### **Place of Birth**

Yaw Han was born in Eastern Shan State, Kyaing Tong (Kengtung), Loimwe group, Nam Lom area, Mine Yun village in 1902. His parents were Saya U Nyi Htai and Sayama Daw Na Yaw. His father was “Wa” and his mother was “Lahu”. He was the son of the four siblings.

### **Education**

He started his schooling when he was quite grown up. His father U Nyi Htai taught him in the kindergarten and first standard at Mine Yun village school. Then at the age of 12 he went to Pangwai village at Loimwe group to continue his schooling in the second standard. Due to the fact that he had to begin his studies as a grownup he had has good understanding and awareness and so he studied only for 5 years and passed his sixth standard. He was baptized in the hand of Rev. U Lin Can at the age of 15 at Pangwai village. Being a grown up youth, after passing his sixth standard, he went back to his village Mine Yun and stayed with his parents to help in his household work and taught the village children in school. At the same time he was actively involved in church work in as much as he was able, together with his father who was the pastor.



*Pangwai is situated near the Chinese border and belongs to the semi-autonomous Wa region*

In 1946, he went to Eastern Shan State, Kyaing Tong Township, Pangwai village to attend the first ever opened Lahu Bible School. The founder of the Bible School was Rev. Paul Lewis<sup>2</sup>, a missionary to the Lahu People in the Eastern Shan State. When Rev. and Mrs. Paul Lewis arrived to Pangwai 1947 they tried to learn Lahu language and literature and after mastering the language, they begin to set up the Lahu Bible School in 1949. When the school was first opened, theoretical studies were given during the first six months and practical field work was done during the remaining six months. Yaw Han attended the yearly six months course for 2 years. He tried hard and committed himself in his studies while he was in school and when they completed the course and were conferred certificates. He received the first prize in the first batch (1949 -1950). After passing from the Bible School in 1950 he got married to Sayama Elon who finished Bible School together with him. They were blessed with 4 children and ten grand children.

### **Services**

1. 1949 – 1950, He was among the first batch who passed the biblical training from the very first Lahu Bible School.
2. 1951, he was sent to Tachilek township, Panchihet village by committee elders to the pastor

2 Paul Lewis and his wife Elaine started their missionary work in the Shan State in 1946. They later authored the book *Peoples of the Golden Triangle* published in 1984 by Thames and Hudson in London. The book gives an overview about the ethnic groups living in the Golden Triangle in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and China.

of Akha church and school master for the Akha children.

3. 1952, he went back to his native village as a pastor and a schoolmaster.
4. 1954, he taught one year at Pangwai Mission school to fulfill the need of a teacher.
5. 1955 -57, he went back to the village and while serving the LORD received ordination.
6. 1962 – 64, he assisted Rev. and Mrs. Paul Lewis in translation hymns and the New Testament.
7. 1964, Rev. and Mr. Lewis moved to Kyaing Tong. By them, Rev. Yaw Han took over the responsibilities from Rev. Paul Lewis and was in charge of all matters concerning Pangwai Association. He began his ministry in Pangwai Association.
8. 1970 – 82, he took up the responsibility of Pangwai Association secretary. During the time when he was the secretary of Pangwai association, Kachin, Akha, Lahu, Shan ethnic group were all included in the association and they work together for the LORD. While working together, their main objectives and concerned was to evangelize among their own ethnic groups and organized especially to bring out good and able leaders who would be able to lead their own ethnic group.
9. 1977, he was given the responsibility of Pangwai Association treasurer.
10. 1977 – 83, he helped the translating the Old Testament works in Lahu Language.
11. 1985 – 89, he served as pastor at Pangwai Baptist Church.

### ***Characteristic of Rev. Yaw Han***

In his life and ministry he had set a very good example not only for Lahu people but for all other ethnic groups (Kachin, Akha, Lahu, Shan, etc.). He was a Christian minister who was full of patience. He had never once been seen emotional or losing temper and never once did he shout at anyone in anger. He would always keep his mind calm and collected and would solve any matter with patience. He was never biased towards anyone but has the ability to settle and give the best and right decision for both sides.

He was known to be an honorable minister, a man of high caliber and integrity who deserved reverence from every one. Moreover, he was fluent in Akha, Shan, Lahu, Kachin, and Myanmar language. He was also efficient and had skill in typing, printing, translating the Bible and hymnals, coining words and publishing a book for Basic Lahu lessons, publishing a book on Christian beliefs, training people, teaching Bible in Bible school, doing pastoral works, secretarial works and treasurer's work, management organization and etc. He gave his sacrificial labor for the development and the growth of the LORD ministry. If we look back on and evaluate his life and work we realized that he was one who loved God with all his heart, mind and faithful till the end of his life in serving the LORD and the people. During his ministry he encountered many kinds of poverty. He was a minister who faced and overcome many kinds of difficulties, problems and poverty but with the power and strength given to him by God, he sacrificed himself for the service of the LORD. Accepting many difficulties for the hard necessities of life on his meager pay he served the LORD for 42 years.

He was also kind, loving and gentle in nurturing and caring for his family and also all the people who were dealing with him. According to his family members and colleagues he was never seen fighting with anyone. He was a good father for family and a good leader for his colleagues. Even though he was physically frail but was spiritually rich. He was one who always worked for the good of others. During his ministry, he never sought his own benefits but sacrificed himself only for the benefit of others. Eventually when he got old and retired from his work, he did not have a house of his own so he had to stay in the mission house and worked enthusiastically for the church in as much as he could, as an advisor or as a president. Even though he had no house to live or no income

when he retired, he did not despair. Christian families together, out of their love and generosity supported him.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, 1989, while he was in hospital, he was called to his heavenly home. When he left for his home, his funeral was thronged with many of his friends, those who were converted by his teaching and witnessing. Akha, Lahu, Kachin, Wa, Shan all came together to pay their last respect and to send off his remains.

Through his life and works, many questions come out in people's mind and to be considered.

He had passed only sixth standard but he now deserves recognition, respect and honor for being able to shoulder great and honorable responsibilities, a person deserves to be put into record. Today, we who have passed our matriculation or have obtained secular or theological degrees should reexamine ourselves how much we have done for God and the people.

With his strong faith, sacrificed and served the LORD faithfully till the end of his life. Today, we who are in the ministry should reconsider our faith, commitment and royalty.

During his ministry, we have seen that he had proved in his life and work that he loved the LORD with all his heart, all his mind and mind. Today, are we serving the LORD, loving him with all our heart?

In his ministry, he was never selfish nor self seeking but worked for the good for others. Are today minister selfish and self – seeking? We need to remember and consider about this.

He had served the LORD faithfully till the end of his life. Many ministers of today had left the ministry and had switched over to other jobs when they met with many kinds of poverty, problems and difficulties. He stood firm for the LORD and persevered and strength from his life and example.

When preaching, he was able to preach in such a way that his congregation could understand well and would appeal to them. Because of his preaching and witnessing, many had some to believe Christ and had been covered. How many have today come to believe Christ or have been converted because of our work?

His talents were used at the best for God. How are we using our talent today?

He always drew near to God, prayed for strength and carried out his ministry. As ministers of today are work in prayer life, they also become weak spiritually, and thus the work in the ministry is not successful as it should be.

He had relationship with everyone. There was no discrimination in his dealing with others. As a minister it is very important to be organizer and to have good relationship with everyone.

In his lifetime he lived and worked for the good of others. He had been to leave behind the good qualified that he possessed as heritage for others. What heritage are we going to leave behind for our future generation.

## Mrs. Claribel Ba Maung Chain (Claribel Irene Po) (1905 – 1994)

by Nathanayla

*A president of the YWCA and Burma's first woman cabinet minister*

Mrs. Ba Maung Chain was the first woman minister in Myanmar. She was born on June 1, 1905 in Patheingyi into a renowned family of five brothers and a sister. She was the youngest in the family. Her father, Dr. Sir San C. Po (1870-1946)<sup>3</sup> was a devoted physician as well as a lay missionary and a well-loved and much respected Karen leader. He received his M.D degree from Albany Medical School, New York State, U.S.A in 1893. He was the only Karen ever to be knighted by the British in 1924. He was awarded the title of 'Commander British Empire' (CBE). Dr. Sir San C. Po's book 'Burma and the Karens' was first published in 1928. Her mother Lady Amy Loo-Nee was the first woman graduate from overseas. She did not survive her last child birth. Claribel was but six years old then. She was taken care of by relatives and spent most of her school days in a boarding school.



*Dr. San C. Po*

Claribel was well educated at the Rangoon University and attended the Judson College. She had aspired to be like her father. But she had to drop the idea of pursuing medical studies due to recurrent typhoid fever. She instead studied English Literature. She was known as a 'true blue Judsonian'. She worked as Senior Mistress at the American Baptist Mission School in Patheingyi (1928-1935). She

was greatly loved by her students and fellow teachers for her caring, sharing and understanding nature.

In 1935, she married Ba Maung Chain, an Engineering graduate from the University of London, United Kingdom. His father was U Chain of the Burma Civil Service and his mother, Daw Shwe Lon of Bassein (Patheingyi). After graduation in 1923, he joined the firm of Henry Adams and Son Consulting engineers Imperial Service Engineer. He served in various capacities with the Public Works Department of Highways.

After marriage, Claribel did not stay at home to be solely a homemaker but was actively involved as a volunteer in social work. When the Rangoon YMCA was established in 1951, she was elected the first local President as previous ones were expatriates. She also became President of the National YWCA. In 1951, she was elected the Asian Vice President of the World YMCA, and re-elected for a second 4-year term in 1959. She travelled extensively to the YMCA in various parts of the world and also attended the yearly Executive Committee meeting at the world YMCA, Geneva. During these travels her husband kept the home fires burning. The YMCA was her second love.



The richness of the experiences gained at the 'Y' served a wonderful basis for her to be elected President of the Burma Council of Churches in 1961. She also served as

<sup>3</sup> San C. Po received a medical education in the United States and acquired the American citizenship there. After his return to Burma he became an influential leader of the Karen community. In 1928, he published the book „Burma and the Karens“ in which he advocated a separate administration for the Karen because of the cultural differences between the two ethnic groups. He was knighted in 1933.



chairperson of the United Nations Association in Burma.

Apart from her involvement in social works, she was concerned for the welfare of her people and this played on her mind. Somehow or the other she became involved in politics. She mentioned to the family the “politics is a dirty job-but can be made clean”. In 1952, she was elected the Member of Parliament from the Hanthawaddy District. Out of the 16 Karen MPs, she was elected Minister for the Karen State. She was the first woman Cabinet Minister in Burma. She was one of the members and spokeswoman in the Parliamentary delegation to United Kingdom. Her political life was short lived as she resigned after a year in the office. She felt she could serve her people better as ordinary citizen. Both she and her husband were honored with the title ‘Sithu’. After resigning she was offered the post of Ambassador to the United Kingdom but she declined as her husband did not approve of it.



*The Burmese Cabinet with its first female member*

grandchildren until she entered glory on February 24, 1994.

Having majored in English Literature, Drama and Arts, she was an outstanding speaker in the English language and blessed with the talent to be an excellent, interesting and confident speaker in front of a large audience. She was also noted for her witty impromptu speeches whenever requested of her.

Mrs. Claribel Ba Maung Chain led a full, fruitful and interesting life. In later years with failing eyesight she was wonderfully blessed with abundant life and true enjoyed quality time with her family especially with her

**Mrs. Ba Maung Chain (nee) Claribel Loo-Nee; educationist; social worker. Born June 1, 1905 in Bassein; fifth daughter of Dr. Sir San C. Po, ex-Senator and Lady Amy Loo-Nee; educated Judson College, Rangoon, B.A., 1928; Teacher's Certificate 1930; Senior Teacher, 1928-35; Member of Parliament for Hanthawaddy, 1952; appointed Minister for Karen State March 16, 1952; resigned March 4, 1953; Member, Burmese Parliamentary Delegation to London, 1952; awarded the Order of *Sithu*, 1951. Vice-President, World YWCA, 1952. Served as National President YWCA. Married U Ba Maung Chain, Chief Engineer, Public Works (retired). Two daughters.**

*Biographical note in the 'Who's Who in Burma 1961'*

## Rev. Dr. Chit Maung (1905 - 2001)

by Nathanayla

*A gifted educationalist and a Burmese voice in the early Ecumenical Movement*

### ***The Early Years***

Saw Chit Maung was born in the year 1905 on April the first, at Thettha village, in the sub-division of Insein, Oakkan, of Rangoon Division. The father of Saw Chit Maung, U Po Kyaing, was a good lawyer. The mother, Naw Kyi Ma gave birth to Saw Chit Maung at Thettha village, and then went back to Taikkyi Town, where the father lived. When he was 11 months old, his mother died. Before the burial there was a great fire in Taikkyi. They had to carry the body of the mother onto the road as it was the only safe place. He, being only 11 months old, was hungry. He cried and tried to suckle at his dead mother's breast. The grandparents looking on were really bereaved at this sight.

They took this infant child back to Thettha village and nurtured him there. As he had no mother, he was fed on the breast of milk of the mothers of the village. Since he was fed by numerous mothers' milk, he contracted diarrhea. He nearly died and the grandparents and father thought that they would lose their motherless child. But he was cured and his father then hired a wet nurse to feed his son, this wet nurse also had a son whose name was Maung Nyo.

Saw Chit Maung spent his childhood days at Thetha village. As was the custom of village life, he went about with his friends to search fish in the streams, frogs in the fields and crabs on the river banks. It was quite a happy time for him. On Sunday he attended church with his grandparents. Although there was no Sunday School he learnt about God's love through church worship.

### ***Education***

When he was five, his father who was at Taikkyi came to fetch him for schooling. But the grandparents, owing to their love for their motherless grandson, told their son in law that their grandson did not need to go to school to earn a living. They had set aside a plot of paddy field for their grandson and when he grew up, he could work it for his livelihood. But his father being an educated man who had foresight for his son tenaciously requested that the son be taken back to town for schooling. At least, the grandparents relented with great sadness, for they could not bear to part with their beloved grandson.

At Taikkyi, his father sent him to school. But in those days, there were only monasteries (Burmese: Pongyi Kyaungs). He still remembers his first and foremost Principal. He was loved by all the Burmese Buddhists among whom he studied. He was the only Christian among them. Having to study in a Buddhist School, he learned a lot of Buddhist scriptures in a year's time. In that first year of his schooling, Saw Chit Maung did not study hard and his spelling was the worst. On day at a dictation, he made 15 mistakes, and the teacher marked it so. He ran back home with joy to show his father thinking that he had scored 15 marks. His father did not know whether to be angry or sad for his poor son. At another time his dictation was full of spelling mistakes, so his teacher had to cross out the whole page. Since he moved about among the Burman Buddhists, he forgot him to a Burmese.

The next year his father sent him to a Burmese school which was situated two streets away from their home and near the market place. In the first standard, he improved a bit in his spelling. At the age of 7, his father transferred him to the American Baptist Mission Karen High School at Tharrawaddy, where he had to repeat the first standard for at Taikkyi, the school being Burmese school, taught only in Burmese. At Tharrawaddy he made his first contact with the English language. That year, he began to understand what education was, so he tried his best and the result

was he stood first in the class. His father was really surprised at his achievement and he himself could not believe it. From the second standard to the seventh standard, he always stood among the first three positions in the class.

After passing the eighth standard and during the school holiday his father asked him whether he would like to go and study in Rangoon, to which he joyously replied that he would very much like to do so. Then his father made agreement for him to go and study at Cushing High School in



*The former Cushing High School, now Basic Education High School No 4 Ahlone. The building is listed on the Yangon Heritage List. (For another picture of the school see biography 4.)*

Rangoon. He was an excellent student in spite of his poor health due to contracting malaria in Taikkyi. He passed the ninth standard and the tenth standard known as High School Final Examination without any difficulties.

He continued his university studies at Judson College and Rangoon University from 1922 to 1927. He passed his Junior Bachelor and the Senior Bachelor class with flying colors. He was the top student for the subject of Philosophy. The graduation ceremony was held at the Jubilee Hall in Shwedagon Pagoda Road, in 1927. After his graduation (1927 – 1929), he continued his post graduate study in the law class for the degree of Bachelor of law. Here

too he had no difficulty his interest in law and familiarity with legal matters through daily contact with his father enabled him to pass the examination and obtain a degree, in the year 1929. The fulfillment of his aim and object to be a practicing lawyer was only a few steps away. After the brilliant success in studies the father expected his son to obtain a good salaried post, and one day to be a member of the Parliament even. His own ambitions were to be the best lawyer and advocate for his people, the Karen, serving them to his utmost ability.

In 1929, he became a lecturer in Philosophy at the Karen Theological Seminary at a salary of 150 Kyats. At the same time he became a student at the Baptist Divinity School (now Myanmar Institute of Theology).

After one year of 1932 at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, at the advice of Dr. Earle V. Pierce, he transferred to Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois and graduated with the Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1934. That same year he returned to Burma.

### ***Marriage***

On March 12, 1932 he married Naw Win Byu of Thamingone village, Bassein (now Pathein) District whom he had met in college. Naw Win Byu was good in sports and they had many common interests. After a happy but too brief honeymoon, he left for America on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1932. On arrival he encountered many difficulties. So, he was very angry with himself and also very depressed. This was a period of the great Depression in America and the missionaries in Burma had been informed not to send scholars for further studies. They were blessed with two children Naw Eh Wah (Principal of Myanmar Institute of Theology and Saw Eh Dah (Director of Forest Ministry).

## THE SEMINARIES, INSEIN—COLLEGIATE DEPARTMENT

This has been a year of adjustments, stretching and co-operation. Adjustment to the absence of Dr. and Mrs. Wiatt, Mr. and Mrs. Dyer and Thra Chit Maung; of the stretching of the resident members of the staff in an effort to fill the gap and in the co-operation of four men from Judson College (Messrs. Andrus, Campbell, Kangyi, and Rickard), who have kindly helped us in teaching the class, which consists of the combined 1st and 2nd year students, and also of Dr. Eden, who has given us monthly lectures.

**Enrolment.** There were twelve new entrants this year, one of whom was a woman. There are seven in the second year class (there being no third or fourth year classes) and there are eight part-time students, making a total of twenty-seven of whom nineteen are full-time students.

*Form the proceedings of a Baptist missionary conference held in Maymyo (Pyin-U-Lwin) in April 1933*

### ***His Contributions***

**a) Principal of Pegu Karen High School (1935 -1942)** – On his return from America Thra Chit Maung became the principal of the Pegu Karen High School in Ahlone, Rangoon. The school was going through a troublesome period. Earlier, Mr. Sydney Loo Nee and Thra Hla Kyaw had served as principal and they had resigned because of opposition from a group with a pro-western sentiment. Thra Chit Maung faced similar opposition as this group gave him notice to resign in three days' time.

He reviewed the situation and convened a meeting, inviting people from about the 260 churches in Rangoon. There was opposition not to hold the meeting on the appointed day, for it was not a regular meeting. The opposition group even went to the Western Magistrate of Rangoon to stop the meeting. But not only was permission granted, but for the security purposes, an Inspector was even sent to that meeting. The inspector on meeting with Thra Chit Maung said that he had been sent to see that meeting held in orderly manner. As Thra Chit Maung here, he was confident that there would be order. So he went away before the meeting. That meeting ended successfully and the resolution of the meeting was to appoint Thra Chit Maung as principal of the school. The pupils who loved him were overjoyed and resumed their studies happily.

Because of the rift the school that had 500 students had dwindled down to 326. So Thra Chit Maung first of all, revived the educational system and he encouraged Athletics. In four years times the number of the students rose to over 700. Thra Chit Maung was the principal of the school from 1935 to before the beginning of the Second World War that is 1942.

**b) In the War Years (1942 -1945)** – With the Japanese advance and occupation of Burma in 1942 Pegu Karen High School had to close down Thra Chit Maung and family moved to his wife's village, Thamingone, Delta area of Burma. Those years were not easy years. He did a lot of travelling, preaching and keeping up the moral of the Christian and his Karen people.

**c) At Karen Theological Seminary (1945 – 49)** – In September of 1945 after the War ended only three missionaries returned at first. They were David W. Graham, the principal of the Karen Theological Seminary before the war, G. S. Jury the principal of Judson College and Gordon E. Gates, a Professor of Judson College. But when they returned after the war, Mr. Graham came back as the United State Information officer Mr. Jury as an army officer and Mr. Gates as field Secretary of Baptist mission, the Army wished hand back Seminary Hill to its owner, so these three persons

were contacted. The three of them sent to Taikkyi and requested Thra Chit Maung to take over by taking the post of the principal of the Karen Theological Seminary. But he told them that he felt responsible for Pegu Karen High School which at that time was still in the hands of Army. So, the three delegates told him to see to the High School later and at present to give priority to the Theological school. On 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1946, the Karen Theological School was re-opened. Also the Karen Women's Bible School which was separate school at that time re-opened. In 1947, he was still at that seminary as principal. In 1947, the Burma Divinity school was re-opened with 12 students. Thra Chit Maung looked after both schools.

**d) *The Karen Insurrection (January – May 1949)*** – The Karen Insurrection began in January 1949, Thra Chit Maung was one of the group of Karen Leaders who attended the Karen Baptist Convention in Thaton. In his absence fighting and broken out in Insein between the Karen insurgents and the Burmese Army. He was therefore unable to return to Insein and had to put up at the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Clarence C. Po on the Rangoon University campus. There was an amnesty or truce in February during which he returned to Insein to get his family to safety. Unfortunately, as he was a prominent Karen Leader he was suspected of taking a part in the rebellion and was put in Insein jail. Together with him were Saw Sein Ba, Saw Maung Min, and Thra Arthur. They were detained in Mogyo Building, where condemned criminals were kept. Dr. G. Latt, a dentist and Bonny Nyo Maung were also with them. They were later moved to the Barr Street lock up and held there from March 1<sup>st</sup> and finally transferred to the Rangoon Central Jail on March 12. On 7<sup>th</sup> April 1949, his release order came at 2 pm and he was actually released at 4:00 pm on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1949, the insurgents retreated from Insein. The occupation of the Karen Insurgent lasted for 122 days.

Upon his release he returned to Insein to get his family who along with many Karens had been kept in Insein Jail. He and his family together with Thra Mooler's family were sent to the camp at Benton Hall and later to the camp at Pwo Karen school compound. There he found the leaders and students of Karen Theological School. Plans were made to carry on the work of the Seminary there when permission was given to return to Insein.

**e) *Karen Theological Seminary and Burma Divinity (1950 – 1952) (1952 – 1977)*** – On June 1950, the Karen Theological Seminary and Burma Divinity School were reopened. Thra Chit Maung served as Principal of Karen Theological Seminary and as chairman of the Curriculum committee of the Divinity School. In 1952 he became President of the Burma Divinity School, although his salary was paid by the Karen Theological School where he still served as principal. He was also was the first national President of the Burma Divinity School. Dr. and Mrs. Paul Clasper were welcomed as new faculty members in September 1952. That came year Dr. Clasper became the vice president of the school. They worked well together, Thra Chit Maung take care of administrative matters and local affairs where Dr. Clasper tackled oversees relationship. In 1954 Thra Chit Maung was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by his Almamater, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Chit Maung became a Fellow in the Program of Advances Religious studies (F. A. R. S.) from the Union Theological Seminary in New York. The high point of Dr. Chit Maung's years as President of Burma Divinity School was the Golden Jubilee Celebration in 1977.

**f) *The Golden Years*** – Although he had retired as President he continued teaching at Karen Theological School and Burma Divinity School (Myanmar Institute of Theology). He is called on to preach and lead worship services all over the Myanmar. His life has been crowned with honor. The Burma Bible Society gave him the certificate of honor. He also received a letter of commendation from the Director of the Training Institute, Southern Military Commend dated on February 28, 1958 for his lecture on Christianity. At the 175 Jubilee celebration of the beginning of Baptist Mission work and 125 anniversary celebration of the forming the Myanmar Baptist Convention on December 16, 1990, he preached sermon at the Main Service later in the afternoon he was conferred the Fellow of distinguished Christian Service by the Myanmar Baptist Convention

and Trustees of Myanmar Institute of Theology. His joy made complete when on that occasion His daughter Thramu Eh Wah was finally conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by Judson College, Elgar, Illinois.

### ***His Role in the Church and Community and Country***

Dr. Chit Maung's influence extended to the Church, the community and even the world. He had a pastoral ministry, preaching and counseling many people. He was offered ordination but refused. However, as this Karen Baptist Convention passed a resolution that the principal of the Seminary must be ordained pastor, he at last conceded to the wishes of the majority. So, in October 1948 he was ordained. He had baptized many people who have accepted Christ as their Savior.

While he was at the seminary, Dr. Chit Maung had contact with the people who were sentenced for various crimes. He visited them either once a week or a fortnight and on all Christmas seasons to pray and worship together and fellowship with them. Every Christmas celebration which Dr. Chit Maung organized were unforgettable events for all the prisoners (Christian and non – Christian). Dr. Chit Maung was not only a leader in the religious field but was also regarded a leader in the Karen community, so he was very interested at the prospect of the signing of the Pinlon agreement. This agreement was to be sign on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1947 between the various races agreeing to independence from the British. The Karen delegation included Thra Weregaw, Saw Sankey, U Hla Pe and U Chit Tee from Papun. He attended as an observer. During that Pinlon agreement he also made good use of his time by observing the work of the Kayah mission in Loikaw, Loilen, Balakai, Malamalaing, Prusoe, Mawchi and Raytho. He got to know the way Kayah and Kayans lived and understood the difficulties of evangelistic work there.

He not only tried his utmost best in promoting religious education but also secular education. He saw the need for a school for the children of the seminary school teachers and from the neighborhood. So he opened a primary school for them. His wife Naw Win Phyu became the Head Mistress of the Primary School that was opened on Seminary Hill. It provided much needed primary education for the children scripture was also taught there. In 1964 all mission and private schools were nationalized. So the Primary school became a government school. In 1991 the school which he established was moved to a new site and named was No. 8 Primary School, Gyogone, Insein.

For many years Dr. Chit Maung was active in the Young Men's Christian Association in the local and national level. He was very much concerned about young people and supported the work of the Association in many ways. In 1936 he was selected to attend the worlds Young Men's Christian conference in Temberal, India.

Dr. Chit Maung also visited India for the sixth time in 1938, to attend the International Mission Conference (Later known as the World Council of Churches). At the time, there was only, Faith and Order Unit at the International Mission Conference. When he visited again in 1959, attending the same meeting he found that another unit that of Mission and Evangelism had been formed. Those of the Faith and Order Unit feared that by forming the new unit, it might lessen the strength of ecumenical venture. By attending the World Council of Churches Conference, Dr. Chit Maung received experiences of ecumenical sharing. He came to know that Theology and Evangelism were equally important in the Mission work for Christianity.

In Burma (Myanmar) as well he contributed his considerable talents to the work of the Burma Christian Churches (now Myanmar Council of Churches) Dr. Chit Maung is a man if many talents. He is a good pastor ministering to the churches though his inspiring sermons and leading worship services. Even at the time he is often called upon to lead thanksgiving services and preach in the churches. He seldom refuses. He knows the importance of the church for ordinary people.



*The library named after Dr. Chit Maung, built with the assistance of Burmese students studying in the United States. Dr. Chit Maung donated the compound and is seen at the opening ceremony in 1996.*



He is also a community leader. He saw the needs of the people around him and he responded like the Samaritan. He is still regarded as a leader in the community around him. His contributions to the ecumenical world is also many. By his lectures and advice he continues to teach the wider world. His main achievements were in the field of theological education. It will not be wrong to say he influences the growth of theological education in Myanmar in the post war years as President of Karen Theological Seminary (now Kayin Baptist Theological Institute) and Burma Divinity School (now Myanmar Institute of Theology). He set the two schools on the path they were to follow and the phenomenal success of these two schools are due to his wise planning and vision. Dr. Chit Maung has touched many lives through his teaching and pastoral ministry.

### ***Dr. Chit Maung in the Eyes of Former Students and Colleagues***

He has influenced the lives of his family, students, and colleagues. Here are the words with which former friends and colleagues knew him:

Dr. Chit Maung never forced the students of the Bible School to do anything. In his opinion those who came to study in the Bible School should not be those who understand only when spoken to but must be those who have their own intelligence of knowing what is needed of him. He, himself practised it too. When the students did not do their duties, he would do it himself. *(by Thramu Naw Paw, teacher, Karen Women Bible School, Insein, Yangon)*

Thara Pa Doh (Great teacher) Dr. Chit Maung is one of with whom we can work together amicably. For he has regarded for every body. Although he is the Principal, he never asserts his authority over his colleagues. He discussed everything with the staff regarding matters about the school or the students with understanding. He never blamed them. He was very diplomatic in his dealing with the staff as well as the students. In his administration he treated the students as mature persons and gave recognition to whatever they did. His motto was "Work with Intelligence". He was broadminded Principal. *(Thramu Paw Say, Teacher, Women's Bible School)*

He disliked students raising questions that are unrelated to the topic under discussion in

the class. He would always reply. "I will entertain your question next time when we come to that topic." Love was his law. He did not want to make many rules and regulations, knowing full well that having too many laws only cause more problems. He was kind and considerate to all his students. He did not show any sign of favoritism to any sign of favoritism to any particular racial group. In fact, he was the father and teacher of all. (*Rev. Dr. Edmund Za Bik, Prof. of Systematic Theology, MIT, Insein, Myanmar*).

Thra Chit Maung did not control his students with rules and regulations, but by love. He always said that he was not controlling the students. They were all under God's control. He recognised all his students not superficially, but each one individually by name. To the present day, because of his failing sight, he may not recognize the student at once but if he tells him the name, he remembers and knows him. This is because he has committed and given his best to the Lord and the Lord has given him many blessing. (*Rev. Thar Din, former, President, Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology, Insein, Yangon*).

His students not only those in this country, but those who are now abroad, always think and speak highly of him and love, respect and revere him to this day. (*Rev. Andrew Mya Han, Archbishop of the Province of Myanmar, Yangon*).

I discovered his parental care without being paternalistic, his compassionate concern without being compulsive, his wise counsel without being witty, his deep reflection without being deploring, his firm spirituality without being humiliating others, and most of all. I discovered his love for the truth that sets humankind free without being lost in the test in the test of life. I discovered through him also that "Theology" is (to be) "Doxology". (*Rev. Smith Ngul Za Thawng, Former General Secretary, Myanmar Council of Churches, Yangon, Myanmar*).

### ***His Last Time***

In his age of 96 years old on August 2001, he slept in his LORD peacefully. He served the LORD for 50 years fulltime commitment and the remaining 24 years after retired from the seminaries he was a good loyal servant of the LORD till the end of his life.

### ***Conclusion***

We strongly say that Dr. Chit Maung is an influential religious leader. His achievements in the field of theological education, evangelism, pastoral ministry and community development have been recorded. He was active in the church, seminary and society. Yet always remained close to his family. He loved his wife Thramu Win Byu deeply and they have had a happy, wedded life. She always stood behind him through thick and thin.

He was a good father to his daughter, Naw Eh Wah (former Principal of MIT), and Saw Eh Dah (Director, Ministry of Forest). He loved them but if necessary would discipline them sternly. To his grandchildren he never raised his hand. To his daughter's question "Why don't you beat your grand children? He replied "Those days the arms were strong, but now the heart is much stronger than the arm. He spent time with his children. He also was a good provider. He did not believe that a servant of God should starve. Rather he should plan his life in such a way that his family would be well - provider for. His interests in the village life led him to fish breeding and other concerns. All in all, we can see that Dr. Chit Maung has a rounded personality. He is a religious person, an athletic person, an outward looking person. His life is a beacon to all of us who follow



**Daw Khin Khin (Pyi) (Mai Kha Khway) (a) Daw Catherine Khin Khin  
(1909 – 1995)**

by Prof. Khin Htwe Yi

*A lady of many talents – educationalist, writer, church worker, and MP*

Daw Catherine Khin Khin was born in Pyi on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1909 and her parents were U Hla Bu and Daw Daw Nyunt, merchants who sold prescribed articles for use by Buddhist monks. They were also the donors of Kan Twin (Hsu Taung Pyay Kyaung Taik Thit) of Pyi Township, Magwe Division. In her early years, she attended ABM (American Baptist Mission) School. Then she was transferred to Yangon when she passed her matriculation class from St. Mary's Girls High School. She obtained her B.A degree from Judson College, Yangon University.

Then she also obtained 1. *Payeikkhaya* Merchant; 2. A sort of church or chapel where wishful prayer was fulfilled when fervently prayed; 3. Junior Assistant Teachership from Norman School, ABM Mission Street, Mawlamyine Township. She was graduated as B. Ed (Bachelor of Education) from Yangon, Teachers' Training College. She was also good in short hand and typing (obtained certificate of short hand and typing from Aye Commercial College both in Myanmar and English).

As she was very fond of reading and writing, she chose her career as "education" as her own goal and dream. So, she was able to accept as teaching the professional work in her career life. First and foremost she started his career in education as JAT (Junior Assistant Teacher) in ABM school in Sagaing Township, Sagaing District. Then she was transferred to Myanmar Methodist Boys' School in Cripp Street, Yangon. She became Vice Principal in St. Mary's Girls' School in Lathar Street, Lanmadaw Township, Yangon. She was the first woman principal that was appointed at that time. She took responsibility of that post up to 1941. Besides during World War II, she served as education of officer (a researcher and compiler) in the Department of Education. During the war also she gave a helping hand to the people as well as to the state. Later she was appointed Deputy Director General in Government Information Service. After the war that was from 1946 to 1966, she became the first national woman principal in St. Mary Diocesan Girls' High School. It showed truly a highly honoured status of Myanmar woman to obtain such a prestigious position.

Daw Khin Khin was not only a prominent person in the circle of education but also a distinguished lady in religion, social and humanitarian works of all kinds. She was deeply concerned in promoting human welfare in her society. That was why she used to volunteer in the humanitarian works, religion fields and educational environment. She took active part in Myanmar Women Council and become President of this council.

### **Religious Activities**

- Myanmar Christian Council, Association for promoting Myanmar Language and Literature.
- Trust Committee Member – Myanmar Anglican Church.
- President of Christian Literature Association.
- Myanmar Christian Council, President of Non alcoholic and beverage Association of Myanmar Woman.
- President of Young Woman Christian Association (YWCA), Yangon.
- Member of Renovation of Judson Church Christian Youth Building Sub – Committee, Yangon.

- President of National Young Woman Christian Association, Yangon.
- Editor of Church Bulletin (News Letter), Printing and Publishing Department, Yangon (1972-1975).
- Head, Religious Education, Church of the Province of Myanmar, Yangon.

### **Achievements in Education**

1. Senior Assistant Teacher in Myanmar Methodist Girls' High School (East Yangon).
2. SAT in Myanmar Methodist Boys' High School (East Yangon).
3. Vice Principal, St. Mary Girls' High School, Lathar Street, Yangon.
4. Department of Culture chaired by Dr. Ba Han, Kungyangone Myo (During World War II), Assistant Compiler of Encyclopedia headed by Thugyi Gazette U Khin Maung Gyi.
5. Assistant Information Officer, State Information Department (Past War – World War II).
6. Principal St. Mary Diocesan Girls' High School, Shwedagon Pagoda Road, Yangon.
7. Pabedan State High School No. (1), Shwedagon Pagoda Road, Yangon.
8. Vice President of all Burma (Myanmar) Private School Association.
9. President of All Myanmar Christian Association, Yangon.

Daw Khin Khin in serving the activities of the Church Work by cooperating with the Ministry of Bishop Wast (1935-1954), Bishop Francis Ah Mya (1966 – 1973), Bishop John Aung Hla (1973 – 1979), Bishop Saw Gregory Hla Gyaw (1979 – 1987), Bishop Andrew Mya Han (1988 – 2001).



She was very clever, industrious and extraordinary lady who put her strenuous efforts in literary as well as spiritual works that no woman could surpass her high standard of thinking and education. She was very simple, kind, pure in heart and helped to those who were poor and needy that she was loved by all her colleagues as well as her pupils and students. She was selfless, and had

no pride and pomp in matured things. She was also persevere and peace loving and woman who looked only for the betterment and benefit of them who are in need. She was always a friend to all people in all her life.

### **Her Character and Career**

Daw Khin Khin was also a member of Parliament (MP) of Thaketa Township of Pyithu Hluttaw from 1981 – 1985. She was cool, calm and noted for her serenity in nature. She was also graceful and gentle in all her movements. She had been greatly loved, cherished and honored up to the last days of her simple and noble life. She treasured and cherished the value of education, an instrument

of knowledge to train and instruct mentally and morally. That was why she spent most of her time in educational fields rendering good and active services to the government and to the church alike.



*Map of Thayetka Township*

Many outstanding and eminent students and pupils had been well taught and well trained by her. Her unique and untiring zeal in striving good in educating her students brought many learned persons, well noted writers and famous politicians in the fields of intellectual surrounding. She was noted for her distinguished manner of friendliness and outstanding nature for her disciplined attitude and manner. She was well loved and cherished by her colleagues and pupils alike. This was because she was a well disciplinarian and smart lady and greatly – honoured woman of her times it was also known that when Women Writers Association was that founded 1947. She participated actively as a writer also. Her pen name was Mai Kha Khway (Pyi) and had written some articles in Yuwatti Magazine which had a famous dignified name of that period. She had written many articles and novels. She also took this pen name of Khin Khin (Pyi) B.A, B.Ed. One of the novel she wrote by pen name of Khin Khin (Pyi) B.A, B.Ed was untitled Pyaing Wunt Thu (Who Dare to Compete) printed at Handicraft Training Department, Lanmadaw 115, Kyonegyi Street, Yangon.

Her father, U Hla Bu was also keen in the study of Myanmar Language and literature and took great interests in Myanmar studies. His one noted novel was “Thein Hnit” which was published in three volumes I, II and III under his pen name Pho La Min Gyi (Mr. Moon). Indeed, she was a chip off the old block i. e. she inherited this gene of administration of Myanmar Literature (Myanmar Sarpay) from her father.

She also served voluntarily and actively in the Women’s Department of the Myanmar Christian Council. As a representative of the Christian Women Association, she had been to many foreign countries to attend women Leadership Trainings and Conferences. She went and attended such meetings to London (UK) in 1949, to New Delhi in 1954 and Mexico in 1959. She also attended religious meetings and conferences in New Delhi in 1949, she also went to Sri Lanka (at that it was called Ceylon) in 1953 to attend religious conference. Many trips for religious meetings were also made to India in the successive years of 1955, 1958, 1961 and 1964.

Daw Khin Khin fell asleep in Jesus in September 1995 at the age of 87. She passed away peacefully but not with pomp and honor as she was already deserved for her simplicity and purity in mind.

Daw Kathleen Khin Khin; educationist. Born July 7, 1909 in Prome; daughter of U Hla Bu and Daw Nyun, traders, Prome. A.B.M. Girls' High School, Prome; St. Mary's S.P.G. High School, Rangoon; Judson College B.A.; Teachers Training College, Rangoon, B.Ed.; served as Senior Mistress; Assistant Principal, St. Mary's Girls' High School, Rangoon, 1940. During the war, served in the Education Ministry; on reoccupation, appointed Deputy Assistant Director, Public Relations. Later became Principal, St. Mary's Diocesan Girl's High School, Rangoon, 1946 to date. Represented Burma YMCA in Mexico; Vice-President, Women's Pen Club; member of the executive committee, United Christian Youth of Burma and Christian Literature Society of Burma; member, Board of Trustees, Anglican Church of Burma; Board of Directors, S.P.C.K. Bookshop, Rangoon; Member, Executive Board, All Burma Teachers' Association, Union of Burma, Text Book Committee; publications: *Ma Mya Tin's Challenge* (a novel in Burmese) and articles and short stories. 14, Pagoda Road, Rangoon.

*Information on Daw Kathleen Khin Khin in the "Who's Who in Burma 1961"*

## Daw Khin Kyi (1912 – 1988)

by Nathanayla

*Editors of the German version: Peter Tachau and Hans-Bernd Zöllner*

### *Introduction*

*Khin Kyi is without a doubt the most prominent person included in this collection of Biographies. She is the wife of the national hero Aung San and the mother of Aung San Suu Kyi, bearer of the Nobel Peace Prize and leader for many years of the opposition to the military government. It is a result of this prominence that for her in Myanmar only few official facts are known, which the author has collected in this biography. He describes the life of a woman who spent her whole life, up to her retirement at the age of 55, in various functions in service to her country and then afterwards lived relatively withdrawn.*

Ma Khin Kyi was born to U Bo Nyin and Daw Pwa Su on April 16, 1912 in Myaungmya where her father was an official in the Road and Transportation Department. She was the fifth of ten siblings. She studied up to seventh standard in Myaungmya and then continued her education till her Matriculation at the American Baptist Mission Girls' High School, Kyemyindine, Yangon. She then received a Middle School teacher's certificate from the Morton Lane American Baptist Mission School's Teachers' Training program and taught at the National High School in Myaungmya.

However, Ma Khin Kyi was more interested in nursing and enrolled in the Midwife and Nurse Training program at Dufferin Hospital, Yangon. After graduation, Ma Khin Kyi began working as a nurse at Yangon General Hospital. On December 23, 1941, the bombing of Yangon wounded many civilians and Daw Khin Kyi accompanied the wounded for medical treatment in Kolkata, India. She was later promoted to sister.

During the Japanese Occupation of Myanmar, she worked with Dr. Ba Than, Dr. Myint Swe and her sister, Ma Khin Gyi, at the Burma Independence Army Hospital. During this period she nursed all the patients under her care unstintingly, with no discrimination due to rank or authority. These were trying times with bombs exploding and limited medical resources. Yet, Ma Khin Kyi proved her mettle as a nurse for Dr. Ba Than to say, "She is a paragon of a nurse."



*Wedding photo*

One of the patients that she nursed to health was Bogyoke (Thakin) Aung San, who led the struggle for Myanmar's independence against the British colonial power, first as a student leader and later as General of the Burma Independence Army. The two fell in love and married on 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1942.

Their first-born son, Aung San Oo, was born on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1943, second son, Aung San Lin on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1944 and youngest child and only daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi, on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1945. Ma Khin Kyi became a busy full-time wife and mother and had to give up her nursing career. (She did volunteer work with the Women Soldiers' Department as co-ordinator). Bogyoke Aung San was very busy in politics as a national leader but the family enjoyed the time they spent together. Tragically, on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 1947 Bogyoke Aung San and six Ministers of his Cabinet, a secretary and a body guard were assassinated by Galon U Saw, a political rival, on the eve of Independence. Khin Kyi would have to struggle on as a widow taking care of three young children. To add to the family's sorrow, Aung San Lin drowned in the pond in their Tower Lane compound in 1952.

Daw Khin Kyi later entered public life. She stood for election for Member of Parliament in her husband's seat and was elected to Parliament from 1947 – 1952. She was much involved in social work, acting as Director, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, President of the following organizations, Myanmar Social Welfare Council, Myanmar Girl Guides Association, Myanmar Women's Council, and National Women's Federation among others.

In 1949, she attended the World Health Organization's regional conference in New Delhi and in 1950 she led the Myanmar delegation to that organization's meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka and acted as the Chairperson of the conference. In 1950, 1951 and 1952, she was also the leader of the Myanmar delegation to WHO's conferences in Geneva. She made study tours to West Europe, America, Japan, China, India, Thailand, and Vietnam.



*Photos of Aung San Suu Kyi and her mother taken end of the 1950s*

In 1960, Daw Khin Kyi was appointed as Ambassador to India and Nepal, the only Myanmar woman to be given this office. She retired from office in 1967.

For her services to Myanmar and the world, in 1950 she was honored with *Mother of Myanmar* title by America, in 1951 with the *Maha Thiri Thudama* title by the Myanmar government, in 1955 with *Marshall Tito Yugoslavian Star* (Second Class), and Thailand's medal of honor.

Daw Khin Kyi fell ill in 1988. Her ill health became the reason for Aung San Suu Kyi's return to Myanmar and her leadership of the democracy movement. Daw Khin Kyi died on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1988.

#### *Commentary*

*The biography presumes that the wife of the national hero was a Christian, but in contrast to the other lives described here leaves open how her being a Christian was concretely*

*demonstrated in the course of her life. This question is difficult to answer because all information that directly or indirectly relates to the national hero Aung San is handled in Myanmar virtually as classified information, about which nothing is officially published. The same is true for the ethnic identity of Khin Kyi. Both questions are especially interesting against the background of the tense relationship between the majority ethnic group of the Burmese and other ethnic-religious groups. Precisely this has led to a range of diverse conjectures about the prominent mother of the present leader of the opposition.*

*Research about the ethnic origin and religious position of Khin Kyi has yielded the following: Khin Kyi comes from a region in which the Karen and the Burmese live side by side. The latter are almost exclusively Buddhists, while there are Christian and Buddhist Karen, who generally live in communities where one of the religions dominates.*

*Khin Kyi had in all likelihood ancestors from both ethnic groups. It is certain that her father was a baptized Christian; whether the children were also baptized is unsure. Speaking for it is that a brother received a Christian burial. There is, however, no entry in a church registry that could prove the baptism of Khin Kyi. After the murder of Aung San, her father lived until his death in the house of the family of Khin Kyi and was the central male relation for Aung San Suu Kyi and her brothers.*

*It is further certain that after her marriage and during her public life Khin Kyi appeared as a good Buddhist. In her house there was a Buddhist house altar and the sons of her daughters underwent the shin-byu ceremony, which is customary for all young Burmese between 9 and 12 years old. At the end of her life, though, she turned back to her Christian roots. When she became ill in 1988 she received at her own request Holy Communion several times from the leading minister of the Judson Church. After her death at the beginning of 1989, her daughter invited the pastor to a Christian farewell service at her house. Later, too, Christian memorial services were held for Khin Kyi. Khin Kyi's burial, on the other hand, was a state funeral. Her remains were placed below the Shwedagon Pagoda on a plaza where already mausoleums for three other famous Burmese stood: the tombs of Supalayay, last queen of Burma, of Thakin Kodaw Hmine, national poet and furtherer of Aung San, as well as of U Thant, second General Secretary of the United Nations.*

**Daw Khin Kyi; diplomatist (widow of Bogyoke Aung San)**  
Born 1912 in Myaungmya; daughter of U Po Hnyn, Public Works Department, and Daw Pwa Su. Educated A.B.M. Girl's High School, Kemmendine, Rangoon; midwifery and nurse training, Dufferin and General Hospital, Rangoon; promoted Sister when war broke out; married Bogyoke Aung San, September 6, 1942; three children, two sons and a daughter; (lost second son); after Bogyoke Aung San was assassinated, elected to Constituent Assembly from Rangoon; devoted her life to social welfare; appointed Director of Maternity and Child Welfare, October 1947-52; Chairman, Social Planning Commission, 1952; elected President, Union of Burma Council of Social Services, 1953-58; Chief Commissioner of the Girl Guides; President of the Burma Council of Women's Associations; joined Clean AFPFL, May 1958; elected President, Union Women's League, May 1958; appointed Burmese Ambassador, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to India, May 19, 1960; currently Burmese Ambassador to Nepal, June 1960; awarded the "Mother of Burma" title from America, 1950; awarded the Order *Maha Thiri Thudhamma*, 1951; awarded Yugoslav Star (Second Class) by Marshal Tito, 1955; the Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand, 1955.

Embassy of the Union of Burma, Curzon Road, New Delhi 1

*Information about Khin Kyi in the "Who's Who in Burma 1961"*

## Daw Mya Kyi (1913 – 2008)

by Lwan May Oo

### *A long life for YWCA and women's theology*

Daw Mya Kyi was born of Rev. U Tun Pe and Daw Shwe Nu on December 28, 1913. Her father was a native of Gway Bin Gyi village, Butalin Township, Monywa, Sagaing Division. Her father studied Buddhist scriptures under Bargayar Monastery abbot Sayadaw U Ah Law Ka. At that school he lived as a novice for four years. One day while collecting alms he happened to visit a Christian family and he heard about Jesus Christ for the first time. From then on, he got interested in Christianity and started to study the Bible and other Christian literature. In 1907, he was baptized at Lanmadaw Church by Rev. U Bo Min. In the same year, U Tun Pe joined Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology to study theology. He graduated from MICT in 1911. Sayagyi U Tun Pe was a man of great faith and commitment. He always gave God first priority over anything else in his life.

Daw Mya Kyi is the eldest among nine children. In 1947, she married U T. O. Brown. Three children were born into their family. Daw Mya Kyi studied at Kyimyindaing Women School from primary until 10<sup>th</sup> standard. In 1931, she passed matriculation and she scored the highest marks for Myanmar subject in the whole Myanmar. After that, she went to Judson College and she graduated from Judson College in 1934 majoring in History.

In June, 1934, she joined Young Women Christian Association (Yangon) as a secretary under training and undertook many women development activities. YWCA is an organization that effectively carries out women development work in all sectors irrespective of race, religion and social background.

Daw Mya Kyi served at Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) as a secretary until 1956 (she worked as Assistant Activities Secretary, Activities Secretary, Junior Work Secretary, Hostel Secretary). In addition, she served as General Secretary of Young Men Christian Association (Yangon) and Associate General Secretary of National YWCA. Starting from 1959 until she was called back to her heavenly home on April 24, 2008, she served at YWCA in various positions – president, executive committee member, chairperson. To be able to carry out her duties at YWCA, she attended much training. In addition, she visited YWCA associations in India (1935 – 1936, 1939 – 1940) to study how they were operating. However she had to cut short of her stay in India and came back to Myanmar because of the Second World War. She also attended some International meetings as a representative of Myanmar.

In 1940, Myanmar Women Seminary requested YWCA to let Daw Mya Kyi teach at their school as a staff on loan because their seminary was in urgent need of teachers. The subjects she taught there

(from 1940 – 1942) were New Testament, Life of Jesus Christ, Christian Religious Education, Sunday School Ministry and Myanmar language. She studied theology at Myanmar Institute of Theology for one year (1940 – 1941). She also completed a three-year theology program offered by



*YWCA building in Yangon (119 Bogalayzay Street, Botahtaung township), built 1906*



Kyimyindaing Baptist Church (1972 – 1975).

Sayama Daw Mya Kyi took an active part when Myanmar Women Seminary was moved to Hinthada before the Second World War. As YWCA was temporarily attached to Myanmar Women Seminary, she worked for both organizations. Because of the Second World War, she could not come back to Yangon.

When the war was over in 1945, she had to take war victims to Ma-U-Bin. In Ma-U-Bin, she continued her ministry by doing church work, implementing women development projects and giving Bible study. In addition, she was active in other social work also. In 1945, YWCA called her back urgently so she came back to Yangon by a boat carrying tomatoes. In 1945, she served at Service Club of YWCA helping the women who were displaced by the war to reunite with their family members. From 1947 till 1950, she worked as Activities Secretary of YWCA forming "School Girls: Clubs" to develop skills of female students. She conducted many programs on different subjects such as social dealings, leadership, domestic skills, etc. Later she joined Kyimyindaing Women High School to teach the Bible, Myanmar language and other subjects.



As a person who was interested in writing plays, Daw Mya Kyi wrote many Christian plays and dramas for Sunday schools and churches. She also wrote extensively on Christian home. She always participated in Inter-denominational women activities. In fact, she was one of the founders of Myanmar Burmese Church Council, Church Women Fellowship, Women Department of Myanmar Council of Churches. Sayama Daw Mya Kyi also served as a committee member of Religious Education Department of Myanmar Baptist Convention and implemented Christian home programs. Sayama Daw Mya Kyi was President of Women Fellowship at U Naw Baptist Church (1961 – 1963, 1974 – 1981), and Treasurer (1975 – 2001), President of Bago District Women Fellowship and Treasurer (1976 – 1998), Chairperson as well as Secretary of Women Fellowship of Myanmar Council of Churches, Secretary of Myanmar Baptist Women Association, Vice –

President of Myanmar Baptist Convention and Myanmar Baptist Churches Union.

Daw Mya Kyi worked very hard for the reestablishment of Young Women Christian Association and Women Seminary. She was polite, soft – spoken, patient and tolerant. She devoted her whole life to the development of women. To achieve this goal, she had to go to various places to meet with many Church leaders, pastors and deacons. In addition, she was active in the work of eliminating discrimination against women and promoting unity among women. She nurtured new generations as much as she could also. Daw Mya Kyi was a respectful, broad – minded and spiritual leader from whose life many Christian can draw much inspiration.

## A Stern and Courageous Portrait of Paul (1914 - 1990)

by Nathanayla

*A Lahu missionary working on Burma's periphery*

### ***Place of Birth***

He was born on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1914 in Eastern Shan State, Tachilek Township, Tarlay Yatsu, Naing Pa Sho, at Nan Van village. His father was U Kya Na and his mother was Daw Na Va. His race was Lahu. His parents' occupation was farming. He was born of a Christian family and among three siblings Paul was the second son.

### ***Education***

His parents were poor peasants who had to struggle for a living by farming. They lived in a village. But they wished to educate their children and in 1925, they sent Paul and his brother to attend school at the missionary school in Pangwai village. He arrived in Pangwai at the age of eleven and he started attending K. G. When passed the second standard U Maung Sein from Karen Missionary from lower Burma brought him to Rangoon to send him to school. From Rangoon (now Yangon) he was taken to Bassein (now Patheingyi) Yoegyik village. Sayagyi U Sein Maung placed him at the house of his relatives and sent him to school. In his schooling period, he had hard experience in his studies.

As he was attending school in a far-off place from his parents, there were moments when he missed his parents and longed for his native place. But, because he wished to be educated, because of his desire for learning, he struggled in the face of his all these difficulties and received education. By dint of all these perseverance he passed the seventh standard.

In 1933 after successfully passing the seventh standard, he attended the Karen Bible School, Insein –Rangoon and earned about his theological education. As he attended Karen Bible School, first of all he had to learn reading and writing Karen language. He was also gifted in studying language. By the grace, he graduated from the Bible school in 1937. In 1938 after his theological studies, he returned to Pangwai village. When he arrived there both of his parents had already passed away. He had been absent for fully 13 years for searching his education. While he had been learning he had industriously pursued his objectives, had suffered hardship, had shown patience and humility and had gone through many difficulties and had finally succeeded in his goal. The knowledge and education he had gained was effectively put to use for the good of mankind, for his people and for the kingdom of God by dedicating himself in God's ministry.

### ***Hobbies***

He was fond of sports ever since he was a child. He was also interested in reading, in composing and singing songs, especially composing hymns for choir. He was also fond of planting trees and plants, breeding animals, healing by medicinal herbs, preaching evangelism and he had the disposition of giving aid and helping others by providing for their needs with whatever he had.

### ***Services***

- Teaching children in Pangwai Mission School in 1938.
- Serving as a pastor in Ah Yaw Day village, Nant Lun group from 1943-1946.
- Serving as pastor for Naung Taung village of Tawng village of Taung Baw Five groups and teaching young children from 1946 – 1953.

- Serving as school teacher in Pangwai Mission School from 1953–1960.
- 1963 - 1966, he served as in charge of mission and evangelism in Naing Kaung Shin region for three years.
- 1979 – 1981, he served as teacher in Pangwai Lahu Bible School.
- 1982 - 1983, he served as teacher in Kyaingtung Lahu Bible School.
- 1982 – 1984, he serves as chair of Lahu Convention.
- 1983 – 1986, he served as pastor for Naungpar Lahu Baptist Church.
- 1987 - 1990, he served as evangelist at Naung Yar Saing village.



*Lahu village in Shan State*

He himself had faced many difficulties and hardship during his schooling years and ministry, he was aware that without education, they would be backward in all round development, and had giving special attention to giving education for his people (children and young people). He had taught not only in secular education but also in mental, moral and spiritual development. He also guided for the students' livelihood by teaching them planting and growing trees and vegetable as

well as breeding poultry and livestock. Today there are many of his students residing in China, Thailand and Myanmar.

In his service, he never said that he would not like to do this or that; instead he faithfully carried out whatever duty, wherever assigned to him. He had been always ready to serve and help the people. While he was serving in his mission field Maing Kaung Shen Maing region, he educated the peasants therein matter of long – term prospects by teaching them to work in field and farm instead of customary slash and burn method of cultivation, he taught them to grow long lasting fruit trees, search for fertile land near the village and grow vegetable there. Moreover he bought seeds of plant that would be suitable for the region and gave them to the village (e. g. rice seeds, tea seeds, transplanting of pears, etc.). In all these matters he himself provided the necessary training method. Mostly he served his people by teaching, preaching, healing and fellowship with the people and gave advice on how to pursue knowledge, how to plant and plough, how to grow and breed, and how to make a living. He always encouraged the children to attend school in order to have education.

Through his whole life, his students, fellow, and people under the supervision of Rev. Paul had been observed that he loved Christ and dedicated himself with all his heart and soul and loved those around himself as he loved himself with willingly in his whole life till he was getting old. At his age of 74, he fell seriously illness and sleep in Jesus peacefully on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1990.

### ***An Unforgettable Incident in His Life Time***

When the Second World War was over and he returned to serve as teacher in Pangwai Mission School, he suffered from epilepsy severely, which was an unexpected experience. Sometime while doing morning work with students, the disease suddenly attacked him and he fell down on the spot where he was working. He consulted learned doctors, took herbal medicine uses but the disease worsened instead of being cured.

He therefore to the LORD with steadfast faith saying, “LORD you can do everything. You know the illness I am suffering from. If I have to suffer to proclaim your glory, LORD grants me strength and endurance. Show your wondrous work by curing me of this illness. If I am blessed with recovery from this illness, I shall dedicate myself by serving you more than I am doing now for as long as I live.” Thus he prayed to the LORD.

In answer to his faith and prayer, he gradually recovered from the dreaded disease, till he finally was cured. He gave thanks to the LORD for this blessing. He dedicated himself and gave more of himself in serving the LORD. His faith became greater. Just as he had made a covenant with the LORD, he gave himself, body, heart, and soul fully in the service of the LORD till the day that he died. He witnessed that he had encountered unforgettable and wondrous glory of the LORD.

### ***Some Marvelous and Strengthening Facts from His Life***

- He kept the LORD first and foremost in his life and first of all searched for the kingdom and righteousness.
- He loved God with all his power, his sense, and dedicated himself, body, heart and soul.
- He was meek, humble and always felt compassion for others and had ever ready to help the people in any way that he could.
- He was very powerful in prayer. He always took strength by reading the Bible and praying in his kneels not less than three times daily before he commencing his service.
- He dealt with all people, races without any discrimination.
- He spoke bravely without fear of consequently about anything that he considered right and good.
- He was able to converse fluently in five languages.
- He was fond on singing and composing songs. He himself composed many choral hymns.
- He was ever joyful and carried out all his tasks dutifully and faithfully.
- He served the LORD and people with patience and humility and always gave an example to his students, fellows and people how to live in their daily lives.

**Rev. Aung Din (1914 – 2005)**

by Nathanayla

*An Evangelist across cultural frontiers****His Birth***

Rev. Aung Din was born in February 10, 1914 at Kyungone village, Nattalinn Township, Bago Division. He was the only one son of U Saw Po Kway and Naw Aye Mya. His parents believed Nat (Spirit) worshippers.

***Education***

He passes his vernacular fourth standard from his Kyungone primary school in 1925. He went to Anglo–Vernacular Middle School at Nattalin, and was asked to be in the first standard because he was not taught English before. Anyhow, within five years he passed through that school.

In the school year of 1930 – 1931 young Aung Din was in the Pegu Karen High School now known as Basic Education High School No. 1, Ahlone – Yangon. In the year of 1931 – 32, he was out of school, due to lack of support. He had passed the eighth standard already from that Pegu Karen High School.

The local elders knew that young Aung Din was reliable morally and hard–working in his studies. They thought that something must be done for him. They took him to Rev. U San Baw and to U Saw James Tapa of Tharyawaddy. Rev. U San Baw saw that young Aung Din went to the American Baptist Mission Karen School Thayarwaddy, for two years to gain the High School final education.

The school year of 1934 – 35 saw young Aung Din living with the James Tapes of Tharyawaddy. James Tapa was the son – in law of rev. U San Baw. He lived with them as a general helper in the family.

Young Aung Din was thinking that he must get higher education in a college or at a seminary. He wrote to Rev. San Baw requesting him to do for his one of the two ... either to contact for him with

the Judson College principal or to him go out as a lone dog in the desert. If he let Aung Din go out. Aung Din thought of going to a seminary in Insein. Rev. Aung Baw wrote to Dr. G. S. Jury, Principal of Judson College. Dr. Jury accepted Aung Din. Young Aung Din was to attend the Judson College. He was to work to get his boarding fees. His tuition fees would be looked after by the Harris Fund. This fund was to be used for young people going to the seminaries. Young Aung Din was in the junior and senior intermediate closer 1935 to 1937 in the Judson College.



*Judson College at the end of World War II. - The college buidings are today integretated into the campus of Yangon University.*

## *Conversion and Seminary Life*

Young Aung Din studied in Pegu Karen High School there he came across Christian teachers and Christian schoolmates. Aung Din had a religious mind. He had studied a lot of Buddhism. He had read a number of books of Buddhism but during his schooling he studies Christianity and like the ideas of creation, creator, sin, salvation, savior, new life, life after death of Christian doctrines, etc. when he was in the Tharyarwaddy American Baptist Mission School, he decided to accept Jesus Christ as his savior, Headmaster Saw Thar Hto asked “Aung Din, when will you be baptized?” Aung Din’s reply was “any day, not now, Sir.” He was baptized by Rev. Po Khaing, pastor of Tharyarwaddy Karen Baptist Church, in the mission compound, on Sunday August 28, 1932. He was the only baptismal candidates at that time. He was studying in the 9<sup>th</sup> standard.

While he was in the 10<sup>th</sup> standard he was thinking about choosing a life-work. There came to his mind three occupations the teaching, healing, and preaching. He preferred to be a preacher. He also believed that he could teach and heal people also with the help of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Almighty God. He realized that the world at large needs dedicated Christian workers and that God called him (young Aung Din) to be one.

In 1934, young Aung Din met Rev. Dr. Chit Maung (see biography 9) with whom he went to the Maymyo (now Pyin Oo Lwin) Bible Assembly. Dr. Chit Maung was then the principal of the Karen Theological Seminary (now Karen Baptist Theological Seminary). Dr. Chit Maung asked “Po Aung Din, Don't you want to attend a Seminary?”

Young Aung Din replied “Oh! I like to attend a Seminary very much.” Dr. Chit Maung said, “Then you’d better go to Judson College first.”

From that day on, young Aung Din prayed and worked so that he could go to Judson College and then to the then called “Baptist Divinity School” (now Myanmar Institute of Theology), in Insein, Rangoon (now Yangon).



*Ai Pun (1897-1980)*

It was in the year of 1937 that Aung Din entered the Baptist Divinity School of Insein. The first two years, the principal was Dr. H. W. Wiatt. During that years he spent very little of his money. He worked in the school library to earn for some money. When Dr. Wiatt performed and he used that money for Aung Din’s school fees and other expenses ... so Aung Din knew later.

In those days, the Baptist Divinity School was affiliated to the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary of Chicago, USA. The marks gained were sent there and the diplomas were received from there. The bachelor degree was signed by Dr. Charles W. Koller. Young Aung Din was a B.Th. Student. While in Judson College, young Aung Din was noticed by one missionary professor the name of Dr. J. R. Andrus. While Aung Din was in the Burma Divinity School, this Dr. Andrus supported him with five kyats a month. Aung Din was to keep a small book of accounts to mark down how the five kyats were used. At the end of the month Aung Din presented the small book to his and he gave Aung Din another five kyats. Aung Din got through

the BDS in March 1941. On April 1, 1941 Aung Din went up to Kengtung to serve Christ there.

At the end of the Divinity School years, 1939, Aung Din got a chance to visit the Shan Churches in and around Namkham. There he got chance too to visit Kachin Churches as well. He met Rev. Salalong U Ai Pun, the famous Shan evangelist and pastor. While in the last year at the BDS, Rev. Raymond B. Bucker wrote to Aung Din inviting him to come up to Kengtung after the graduation from the Burma Divinity School Aung Din replied that he would go up, he went up as he replied on April 1, 1941.

As Rev. Raymond B. Bucker called up young Aung Din, he went up to Kengtung on April 1941. In those days there were no flights flying to and from Kengtung the road was rough and long. They had to sleep one night on the way from Taunggyi to Kengtung. They had to use cars, no proper buses in those days. Travelers had to take open trucks which carried as well goods. During the rainy season the roads were bad and sometimes it took more than two days to get to Kengtung. Sometimes it was not easy to get trucks because there were only a few trucks using that road, there were many curves and ups and downs and very high mountains to overcome.

### *Marriage*

In his school days he was very shy and timid. He dare not talk with young ladies of his age. Of course his heart beat when he saw them, one thought he had in his young mind been that one seldom marries his or her first love. Yet he was brave enough to say, "To show that I am a dragon, I must show up my crest."

He had criteria while he proposed the young girl for choosing his life partner. Here are the qualities young Aung Din's life partner out to have:

She must be a Kayin because Aung Din is a Kayin. She must be a Christian as Aung Din is. She must be of the same age as Aung Din or a little bit younger. She must have some education with ability to read and write some English. She must be pleasing enough to look at. She must be well and fit. She must be of good moral character. She must have a clean past. She must come from a respectable family. She must show love for Jesus and love for church. She must not be too much taller or too much taller than him (Aung Din). She must bear most of the time a smiling face.

When young Aung Din got his life partner (wife) in Naw Aye May, he found the following qualities in addition to the above mentioned. She loved. She loves her husband and her children. She can swim and hunt for fishes easily. She can make clothes, bags, etc. using a sewing machine, clearly. She can sing bass, alto, tenor, and soprano. She can easily adjust her voice in any situation. She can cook food to his liking. Hallelujah, Praise the LORD.

As he had criteria for his life partner, he prepared himself too to be a good husband for whom he loves. He work hard to get a good education and prepared himself to be a good servant of God. He kept a good moral living.

The wedding took place on June 26, 1942 during the Second World War at Kutki village by Rev. U Po Thaut. The young couple had to stay in the old Lahu house provided by the Lahu village. By the Grace of God, they got eight children in all, four boys who came first and four girls who followed suit. They were named, Saw Gay (Mr. Good), Saw Wah (Mr. White), Saw Saw (Mr. Holy) and Saw Sree (Mr. Clean). The names of the daughters that follow suit were. They are Naw Taw (Ms. Truth), Naw Loh (Ms. Honesty), Naw Eh (Ms. Love) and Naw Kwee (Ms. Charity). They wanted their children as their names indicts, to be good and kind, to be true and honest, to be loving and charitable.

## *His Ministry*

As an evangelist, he went out to villages Christian and not, caring a few clothes and some books. Sometime he went out alone. Sometimes he had companions. In those days travelling was safe enough. There was a leper asylum too. One preacher was looking after in. All went well until December, 1941 when the Second World War broke out. He would not stay only in noel pace at all. The compound was the center and the retreating Chinese soldiers took away rice, pots, pans, and other things that they could use.

During those years the Japanese Government sent up the Thai soldiers to Kengtung area. Only a few Japanese personnel, top administrators only were stationed in the very city of Kengtung. The British administrators left the city.

During those days, young Aung Din and friends stayed on in the Lahu villages and stands for the people there. The Thai soldiers were Buddhists. The Shan natives in the main were Buddhists, where as the Lahus were Christians. Lahu took that the Shans brought in the Thais. So they stole the buffaloes and oxen of the Shans and sole away to the people of China. Most of the time, they exchanged with salt. The Shans reported to the Thai soldiers. Thai soldiers came up to the Lahus at night. Some Lahu thieves were short dead. The Thais ordered that the loyal Lahus come down closer to Shan villages and build villages. The troublous Lahus may stay behind. They would be visited by Thai soldiers who would wipe them out. The Lahus fled the land and the workers fled too.

Thra U Po Han and Aung Din and their families moved up to Yunan to the Christian Center, named Bana. Rev. Marcus Vincent Young was there as a Liason officer with the Allies. He looked after the fleeing families well. In that part of Yunan, Aung Din with a travelling companion Lahu preacher visited several Christian villages, preaching and teaching. Thra U Po Han and Aung Din were out of contact with the mission headquarters, but the work went on well smoothly, the good LORD blessing.

In 1943, the allies needed irregular soldiers to help take back the Kengtung part of the Union of Myanmar from the Japanese Government. Thra U Po Han and Aung Din were asked to recruit the irregular soldiers from among the local young people of Lahu and Was. In 1946 August, the Second World War ended, the Baptist Primary School was started in the Kanna Christian village. Aung Din was required again to help the occupying authorities as an interpreter. In June 1946, Thra U Po Han and family went down back to Pathein where he took up a teaching job. Aung Din continued running the Baptist School of Kanna village.

On March 21, 1948, he was ordained in Lahu Association Annual Meeting at Pangwai, Kengtung Township.

Aung Din headed the primary school and raised its standard to the middle one in 1956. One weekdays and holidays he went out visiting Shan, Lahu and Wa villages to teach and preach. He had to take charge of leper colony as well.

In 1956, after Rev. Marcus Vincent Young went back to USA, Thra U San Htwe was appointed to the active missionary in place of Rev. M. V. Young. Thra U San Htwe served for three months and left his job. Aung Din was given the responsibility to look after the ABM field for Rev. M. V. Young was not allowed to come back to Burma.

In 1956, the Burma Baptist Convention (now Myanmar Baptist Convention) also took over the ABM field of the Lahus and Aung Din was given the charge of the field.

In 1971, Aung Din handed over the charge of the conference into the hands of U Khan Kya, a retired officer of the Wa State Administrator and secretary of the conference, but the Burma Baptist



Convention kept Aung Din to help see the conference grew in all respects smoothly. The conference had to take after a group of Wa War refugee children as well. These children later were supported by the compassion through the Myanmar Council of Churches.

He was loved by his co-workers and by his people in the field. Even when he was out of the field work, he was invited for many things – like teaching at conferences, preaching at special occasion like opening churches, ordaining ministers, etc. He has been wanted especially to lecture on evangelism and Christian home life. During summer, he was usually invited by leaders of his previous mission field, Kengtung proper and Lashio.

On December 20, 1947, he left Lashio having finished his mission work up in the northern Shan State. For one year he was attached to Rev. U Khant Gyi, the then Director of Evangelism and Mission Department of the Myanmar Baptist Convention. The next three years, he was appointed to be the secretary for the Myanmar Baptist Minister's Council. He discharged his duties to the satisfaction of all concerned.

On June 11, 1978, he was selected to be the pastor of the Kayin Baptist City Church, Rangoon down town, he was installed. From the day on until he passed away he served the church faithfully. He has been looked upon as a respected pastor of a church. People want advice and spiritual help from him. He prepared very nice and spirited Sunday school lessons for churches. He always has been invited by fellow pastors, and churches far and near to preach, teach and lecture at conference.

#### ***What Aung Din did as a Missionary***

- Aung Din had registered of churches, pastors, teachers, according to area. He had to hunt for pastor and teachers for those villages which had none. He had to find funds to support these pastors and teachers.
- He had to train those workers yearly so that they may be always up to the day. Sometimes he had to go to two training center in one summer only.
- He had to send down promising young men or women to seminaries in Rangoon (now Yangon) and Insein, seminary Hill. Some had to be sent to Taunggyi Bible School which has been meant to train the willing young people of the hills. Shans, Lahus, Was, Kachins, Chins, Chinese, etc.
- He had to travel far and wide, up and down, to encourage the churches and their pastors. Sometimes he was called upon for conference's associations in the conference.
- Sometimes he had to bring down sick people whom he sent to the hospitals and Chinese in Lashio and in Rangoon.
- Sometimes he had to come down to Yangon to attend committee meetings and for conferences. He had to send in report to the BBC office.
- He had to see that some school children got proper sponsors in Rangoon and other places for their way to lower Myanmar or as they come back to their villages in the conference.
- He had to keep a proper account of all the money that he was entrusted with.

#### ***Receiving Award***

Rev. Aung Din served his God and God's children as best as he could. He did not expect any reward from any source. Anyhow upon the recommendation of the Jubilee Celebration Central Committee, the Executive Committee of the Myanmar Baptist Convention and the Board of Trustees of the Myanmar Institute of Theology jointly confer upon Rev. Aung Din the honorific title, the Fellow of Distinguished Christian Service (FDCS) on the 16 December, 1990. On the March 10, 2001, he was

conferred Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) by Myanmar Institute of Theology, Insein, Yangon. May God be praised forever!

### ***Aung Din, A Book Lover***

Rev. Aung Din loved wisdom, love education and knowledge. He tried to gather books on all subjects and have a sea of books in his house. He has no proper shelves and book cases for his books. Sometimes he likes to read a certain book and he would take hours and hours to find it. Sometimes he wants to write a letter. He needs a book to refer to. He knows the book but he could not find. It takes one whole day for Aung Din to finish that letter. He needs to learn how to keep a library of books. When walking in the streets he would stop at street bookshops and look for books he may like to own. He likes to learn science and arts. He likes to learn about people in other lands. He likes to read books on spiritual matters and books on spiritual matters and books on religious. He used to say, "I must read so that I can give better lectures and I can preach better sermons."

### ***His Last Day***

In his ministerial life, he used to recite the verse, (Psalm 118: 17) "I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the LORD." Rev. Aung Din knows that one day he must sleep in Jesus and is quite prepared to sleep in His Savior and LORD. He had written a Sunday School Lesson in which he said that when he would sleep in Jesus, that his near and dear ones and friends do not feel sorry and weep for he is not dying but that he is just leaving the old tent of his body for his proper home in Heaven.

He requested that people sleep soundly and not play cards and drink wine in the nights before his body was moved to the cemetery. He said that he has no belief in the goodness of the tombs which would be ruined and destroyed in the long course of time. He has a firm belief that right after death, his soul will go directly to heaven.

On March 31, 2005, he slept in the LORD peacefully. He served the LORD for 63 years and was a good loyal servant of the LORD.

### ***Some of the Important Lessons Produced by Rev. Aung Din***

The Pastor and the Families within the Church

- First of all the pastor himself must be a person who loved God.
- He must love the members of the church, the families within the church and everyone who came in contact with him.
- He must know that God had appointed him to love and care for everyone; help and protect, teach and lead all those who are in his charge.
- Within his church he must be a loving grandfather to young children; an elder brother to those who are of the age level of his younger sisters and brothers; a young brother to those of his older brothers and sister age. To those of the age of his parents and grandparents age he must be a son and a grandson and he must be part of every family within his church.
- The wife of the pastor must also be to the members of the church, a mother, an elder sister and a younger sister and son.
- He must know and accept whole heartedly the fact that God had given him the duty to look after the health, education, economic development, happiness, peace of mind family life, social relationship, and the general

welfare of all the families and individual members of his church.

- The pastor must be visit every member of his flock, whether they are rich or poor, good or bad, friendly or unfriendly and have fellowship, pray for them and give them encouragement.
- It is essential for the pastor to be always present at the home of the bereaved. However if the pastor cannot be present due to very important and urgent business, he must inform the family, and they will readily excuse him.
- The pastor should always ready to give advice, and to receive advice, to help and to receive help according to the needs of the time.
- He must preach about Christian family life and give lectures and course on the subject.
- Do not blame a church member who had married a non – Christian. Make every attempt to establish fellowship with them and try your best to bring the non – Christian into the church, otherwise you will lose your church member as well as his or her life partner.
- Pray constantly for disciples and the families within the church, and pray specially for the sick and for all those who need help and strength.
- Always call on the disciples and their families to take part in the work of the kingdom. Do not hesitate to organize, train and consecrate them for Christ service. The work will strengthen them and they will grow in body and in spirit. A disciple who does not take part in God’s work will weaker gradually and will soon be lost.
- Use the disciples and their families singly or in group to take part in worship service either through singing, reading and reciting scriptures, exhorting or through ways of worship.
- Do not hate or be unfriendly with anyone. Do not allow anybody to open a crack that will separate you from them.
- Do not allow any cracks to develop in the united fellowship of the disciples.
- Do not forget young children, on their birthdays visits them, pray for them, and given them presents. When their parents invite you always go.
- Train and organize young people effect wily and well. They are the strength of the church. They are in fact the future church. They can be relied on.
- Do not forget the old people, the grandfather, and mother. Constantly honor them by presenting gifts to them. Have fellowship with them. Seek from them blessings for yourself and your friend. Always remind yourself that they are your benefactors.
- Always celebrate “Fathers’ Day”, Mothers’ Day” and “Children Day”, regularly.
- Write regularly to disciples who are away from the church. Keep an up to date record of their address.
- Teach them only what they should know about giving to other and donation for church work.

- Do not tell them much about your own needs. Tell them only when really necessary.
- If they need your help give them. Do not rely too much on them help. Do not expect help for them.
- In other words do not be disheartened if you find weaknesses in them. Do not let your love for them grows cold. They may change in time.
- If you have wrong anyone immediately admit. Your fault and give an apology. Do not delay in making peace.
- Watch your people closely and observe their coming and going. Warm them before they have done wrong.
- Never tell the weaknesses of one family to another family unless there is a very good reason for it. Otherwise it will amount to taking part in malicious gossip. Tell only when you expect something good to come out of it.
- Always consult with the leaders and elders of the church.
- Help others by giving capital where necessary. Find work for those who need work. If necessary introduce to suitable persons those who need help.
- Consider carefully before performing the marriage ceremony for couple who do not receive their parents consent. In such cases carry out the ceremony only when really necessary.
- Establish church school and Sunday school classes for children, youth, adults and elders.
- Honor all those who deserve honour.
- Always relate with people with a smiling countenance.
- Be honored in your relationship with others only when necessary. Be careful in your choice of words when speaking humorously.
- Only when the members of the churches and the families within the church are enjoying peace, prosperity and progress will the church also enjoys peace, prosperity and progress.

May the pastors be good pastors of the flock and faithful servants of Christ the Master! May all the members of the church and all the families within the church be blessed with peace, prosperity and progress!

Within constant prayer for all - Your Loving Aung Din

**Rev. Charles Paul (1914-1978)**

by Nathanayla

*A Karen teacher for all*

Rev. Charles Paul was born on first January 1914 at Shwe Kyin town, Bago Division.<sup>4</sup> His parents are U Paul Lu who lived in Walkyee village and Naw Bwal who is villager of Myat Ni Kwin. He is the second out of four children. The siblings' are 1. Buu Lar, 2. Charles Paul, 3. Charming, 4. Charles Lae.



*Performance of group dance on the boat in the Shwekyin River in October 2015 on the Full Moon Day of the Thadingyut marking the end of the Buddhist Rains Retreat.*

He had tried hard in Education since he was young with the discipline of his father who is the lecture at school and also his parents are Christians who love and respect to Jesus Christ. His quotation is “The Christ is essential, the others are second and the last is me”. Most of the people were really impressed him who flourished and adapted with this concept. As he had

loved education since he was young, he has studied with so many difficulties because he lived in the countryside. In 1933, he had gotten the high school graduation at Taunggoo and attended the Judson College. Even though he passed the first year exam greatly, he left the school at second year because of his parents' business declined but he was never depressed and he did the best as much as he can in working of Church and community affairs. His ambition was to become a teacher but according to the bible “Your idea is not same with my idea”, he did the best in community affair. Meanwhile he had met Reekle and attended the B.Th. course at the MIT by her urge. However, he had business problems, he got a degree with the help of Reekle who Christ sent to me. After graduating, he evangelized around the Shwe Kyin to spread the the Good News but it did not work out as much as he think because it was the colonial period in Myanmar that Japanese army come to here and after recently the World War II. So, he came back to his own village and worked for his village and Church. While he was doing, he got married with Ma Yoe Din (Karen Women Bible School, Insein) who is the daughter of Reverend and they gave birth four children. In 1948, he worked as an ordained minister after his wife had passed away.

In 1949, he lived at Kanyut Kwin and he looked after the poor people who were worried for this situation and suffered the food and shelter at the civil war. He has gotten the love and respect from those people because of his kindness.

<sup>4</sup> The area around the town was a battlefield in the civil war between the government and the Karen National Union. Recently, it has become prominent because of disputes about a dam project of the Shwegyin river and efforts to bring peace to the region after 2012 (<http://www.myanmar.norway.info/NorwayMayanmar/MPSI/The-Kyauk-Kyi-Pilot-Project-in-Bago-Region/#.VnqVL0bYGgw>).

In 1950, all the Myat Ni Kwin villagers left the church and village and then moved to the Sittaung River and they had lived Wel Gyi Village for seven years from 1950 to 1957. Whatever problems they faced, he obligated where he lived, established the school and taught the children. As he loved the education, he urged the children to love education and to learn carefully. He sat up the school and he taught on his own at Wel Gyi. There were many educated people and leaders came out from that school. The children who could learn at that school were not only the Kayin villager who believed in Christianity but also the Myanmar who believed in Buddhism. However, Burmese – Karen issue grew that time, he taught all the students as his children not classified diversities. That's why, he faced discrimination for his activities.

He has good qualifications, he taught his students with full attention and all the people could easily to understand what he wanted to teach them. All the people respect him because he always urged them with love and kindness and he urged and taught them whenever and whatever.

By the time, he was chosen to ordain, most of the people for that but he received ordination in 1964 caused of the God. After getting ordination, he was elected as the secretary for Kyauk Kyi association. He did his duty with great responsibilities till December thirty first 1978 before he passed away.

In 1957, he came back to the church at Nayyin village and established the new small village called out your lay. When he established, it had just the ten houses but it was gradually developed. He cooperated with other villagers and set up the middle – school.



*The building of the Women's Bible School which was converted into a Pwo Karen Theological Seminary in 1935*

He loved strongly his own ethnic but not extreme. Although he loved his ethnic, he never neglected other ethnics. He taught other people with love and kindness and he believed that all the people were created by God. He loved his ethnic and worked for them but he never neglected other ethnics and religion and he helped them as much as he could.

Once a time, he was arrested and taken by the rebels and they wanted to change money with him from his villagers. At that time, he told that if you wanted to kill me, you could because all of my villagers are poor and it is impossible to give you money. So, they were wrong for arresting him because they made fault on noble person and took him back to his village with bounded his eyes with cloth.

When he grew old, he let other personal affairs and he completely emphasized on religion. He had worked for Christ every time and everywhere still he was unhealthy. He was alive not only as the Christian but also the executive of God. When he did the work for the church and community, he did sometimes as a leader, as a cooperator and supporter.

According to his concept of “Work greatly what you give any duty”, he worked his duty definitely. When he possessed the authority, he never misused and just used with the right way. He had been silent since he was young and the older he became, the more silent he was. All the conversations that he told came from his heart. Although he did not go abroad, he went so many trips in the local.

He built the new house to pray God as a church and to teach the children during the civil war because it was really difficult to go one place to another at that time. His house, the place where he taught was made up with reed and he taught the children when he was free. He was not sure how many students came to his school but he could produce the students who gave the advantages for the country and great executives for Christ.

As a saying of Sir Datsaman who is the son of Charles, he talked with the old person when he was on the trip. By the time, that person knew he was the Ka' nyout Kwin villager he asked him that he has known Charles. But he did say him back that Charles is his father and just replied in his mind. And then, this old man kept on his conversations that Charles was his savior and if Charles did not save him, he could not live anymore at the civil war. It is the significantly approve that his father could save more than hundred people like this old man.

When the people asked Charles to help them, he never replied that he was old, he could do, he could go and he helped them as much as he can. On Sunday 31 December 1978, he was sick but he took medicine and went to the Church to thank God and sharing the gospel. When he had come back from the Church after the service, he heard the calling from heavenly Father in peacefully.

Nevertheless, he passed away; all the people memorized him, his life and his saving on them. He loved God and always wished before he did something. It is really impressed and pleased his activities with sympathy and empathy. His quotation we shall never forget is "The Christ is essential, the others are second and the last is me in my life."

## Dr. Morris Jamaldin (1915 – 1991)

by Moe Moe Nyunt

*Editor of the German version: Sylvia Jaschinsky*

### *Introduction:*

*This is the story of a doctor with great social responsibility. He was a specialist for leprosy, and he had the well-being of his patients in view throughout his life. He built a clinic, set up mobile home care and a rehabilitation center for patients without family. The war and the nationalisation of his clinic did not discourage him in his efforts.*

Being recognized as ‘The Hero’ by the retired principle of Rohemptom College, England, Dr. Morris Jamaldin, like his master Jesus, had served the disgusted and deserted lepers regardless of their races, religions and sexes with kind and warm-heart. Born on 17 July 1915, Dr. Jamaldin was brought up by his beloved father, Pakistan Muslim and mother, Chin ethnicity from Hahka. As a young boy, he was so inspired by a doctor being in charge in Hahka enough to study hard and go to become a doctor himself after high school. In those days, there was only a middle school in Hahka town. Therefore, he had to transfer to Mon Ywar town in Sagai Division where he could continue his high school at Wesley Mission School.

His activeness, intelligence, obedience and respectful personality made him to be an apple of his teachers’ eyes. In those days, the principal of Wesley Mission School was a foreigner. Jamaldin had some difficulties with financial restrictions and school affairs. During his school years, he was very keen on studying religious teachings. It was just a single song that made Jamaldin to accept and be a promising follower of God. That song was “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”. Since he had learned that Jesus had died for the sake of sinners, he regarded himself as a friend of Jesus, surrendered himself and followed Him faithfully.

With a great expectation to attend the medical college, he worked very studiously. As a result, he passed the matrix exam with flying colors and went directly to the medical college. Studying for three years in Yangon, he graduated with a degree of LMP (License of Medical Practice) majoring in Leprosy. When Methodist Leprosy Mission was founded in 1940, he joined



*Commemorative plaque remember the foundation of th Methodist Leprosy Mission in Mandalay in 1890*

Dr. Roi to serve together there. Due to the invasion of Japanese troops, the foreigners had to flee to India when he had to take up the responsibility to lead the mission at a temporary medication center in Ben Lyar village, Moe Nyay Town. Just then, he married a Poe Karen Nurse, Anglican denomination, called Daw Henna Yone Sein who later gave him two daughters and two sons. During the war, he worked restlessly in curing wounded persons no matter they were British soldiers, Burmese soldiers or Japanese soldiers. When the war was over, he returned to Mandalay and resumed running ‘The Home for Lepers’ in 1946.

After one year, Dr. Roi had retired and he had to take his place on treating the leprosy patients and



feeding them. After 1960, his leprosy care center stood firmly as 'Leprosy home and Hospital'. Since being affected by Leprosy supposed to be embarrassing, some people committed suicide. For that reason, he had to make sure not to damage the reputations the patients from upper class such as educated persons, successful business persons, chief captains, and rich man Moe Gote during his treatment. He even had to provide home service for some patients. His patients included Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and Hindus even Buddhist monks. Therefore, a leprosy monastery (now monastery village) had been established. His punctuality was highly respected by the patients. As there was no distinction in relationship between his children and the patients, his children would often visit and socialize with the patients. With his sense of humor, he would always treat his patients in a friendly way. The happiest moment for his children and the patients was Christmas time. Annually, he would



distribute his presents to his patients and entertain them *Dr. Jamaldin and Family (around 1955)* with delicious meal on Christmas Day. Besides, he

usually hired a famous Myanmar Anyei (Myanmar Comedy Performance) for the near villagers. When our country was independent and was governed by parliamentary system presided by Prime Minister U Nu, U Nu visited the hospital and presented Dr. Jamaldin a cross he brought from Holy Land. U Nu's comment on him was, "Only Christians can do this" and "Your faith is a Hero".

It must have been the most tragic and unforgettable day for the two couples of Dr. Jamaldin was when his "Leprosy Home and Hospital" on 35(A) road, Mandalay, was nationalized on 22 July 1966. That morning, the two couples had breakfast, read the Bible and cried in great desperation. In his diary, he recorded that day as "the day to remember with tears". Since then, he continued to serve his beloved patients under the government as an assistant doctor till 1977. Even though the leprosy hospital had been under the government control, it was impossible to recruit new staffs to serve the lepers. As a result, the government had to return it to the Christian leprosy staffs. After retiring in 1977, he still ran a clinic at home and took care of the patients.

Even though being a retired doctor since 1977, he had to keep on healing the patients after setting up clinic next to Wesley due to his expertise in leprosy, the request from the patients and the disgusting attitude towards the lepers by the majority of doctors posted by government. In addition to curing the patients, he had also got involved with social work such as Rotary Club and Municipal. He also served as a good treasurer and leader of the Methodist Church of Upper Burma. Furthermore, he actively participated in the Myanmar Christian Council movement.

Curing the leprosy patients and participating actively in social work, Dr. Jamaldin was a great leader at home as well. He taught his children Daw Babara, Dr. Freddy Khin Maung, Daw Krene Khin San Myit and U Richard Bo Bo by living it. He had never hit his them but every offspring respected and admired him for his discipline, religious and silent personality. However, in July 1991, he left behind all his family, his patients, his social work and church activities for good and rested in peace. He suffered from the heart attack and heard God's call while contemplating the scripture in bed read to him by his daughter, Daw Irene. During the funeral, many Buddhists, Buddhist monks, different nationalities, poor, rich, leprosy patients, recovered patients, attended it when some who could not make it in person sent their condolences.

Dr. Jamaldin became a Christian was not by the force of anybody. Since he got Christ, he set Him as

a role model and followed Him by serving others faithfully and humbly. His second son, Dr. Freddy Khin Maung Than, the current supervisor of Myanmar Doctor Team claimed that his father was a tough act to follow when it came to serving others despite trying his utmost in social, health and emergency response. Owing to setting a role model like Jesus Christ, many patients accepted Christ as their savior. One of them had eventually become a Methodist minister. Under the lists of historical living name, he was one of them and still live in the memory of his many patients till today.

*Commentary:*

*An exciting life story of a committed Christian. For him religion, ethnic identity and the gender of his patients played no role at all. Until his death, only the well-being of the sick and the resocialisation of those in recovery were, along with his own family, important to him.*

## Mahn Mya Than (1921 – 2006)

by Aung Linn Than

*Editor of the German version:: Sylvia Jaschinsky*

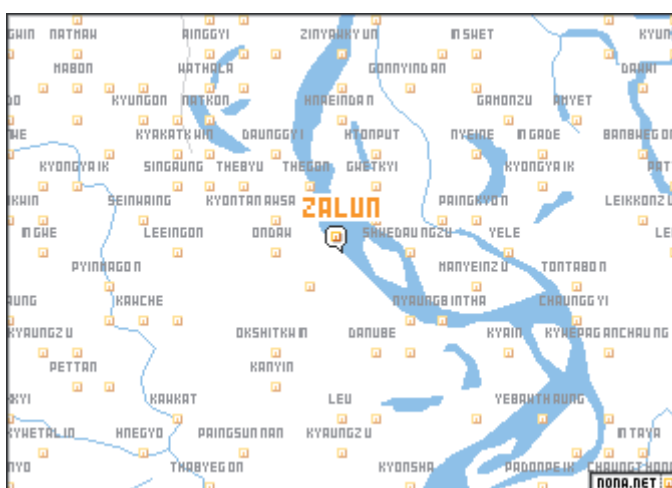
### *Introduction*

*Mahn Mya Than, a Christian merchant, discovered that in poor villages jobs could be created with the fish trade. Through his tireless efforts he succeeded in having the profits from this benefit the Christian community as well.*

Born on 21 July 1921 in Kyon Sha Sar Phyu Su village, Zalun Township, Ayeyarwaddy Division, Mahn Mya Than, son of U Poe Linn and Daw Hmun, had seven siblings. They are Daw Tin Aye, U Mya Thar, Daw Pan May, Daw Than Nyut, U Thay Yin, U Mya Thaung and U Win Maung. He was the second born among the seven and the eldest of the sons. He was such a devout Christian and enjoyed following the teaching of the Bible. He deeply depended on God and would always commit everything to God whatever work he started. He would happily serve his church with all that talent he had and was strong in prayer. In doing business, he had to deal with different kinds of people. In that case, he would always put forward faithfulness, love and mercy. He treated all the non – believers respectfully. Without any form of discrimination, he would treat everyone equally and fairly. As a result, he was respected and loved by many people. In dealing with others, he would always set a good example through his behavior and his value of time. Therefore, he was admired by pagans or non – Christians and would often talk about his good deeds and fabulous reputation. He kept saying a phrase, “When someone criticizes you, just pay heed to him. If you are wrong, change yourself. If you are right, forgive him”.

In terms of education, he started schooling in Kyon Sha Sar Phyu Su village in his elementary level and continued his middle and high school education at Phelp's Karen High School in Hin Thada. When he turned to 19, he had to help his father in his business strenuously so as to support their family. On 23 February 1952, he married to Nant Ohn Thin, daughter of Mahn Lar Man and Gha May Nin, who gave him five children. There are Nant San Hpaw, S' Win Naing Lin, S' Win Than Lin, S' Than Toe Linn and Nant Thi Thi Aye.

I have written this in order to acknowledge the new generation that Mahn Mya Than would always consider about people in his surroundings, villages and churches when he was doing business. Out of his several different businesses, fishery was the major. It has been evident that his fishery did not only promote the lives of the villagers, but made the church work easier. The purpose of this church fishery business is to develop and support the church needs through fishery. In those days, the church had been in great social turmoil and in desperate poverty condition. The poverty of church members resulted in church work undone and delaying the development and evangelical work. Realizing the needs of the church, he came up with a vision of setting up a business for the church. With the profits



*Map of Zalun and surroundings. On this map, Mahn Mya Than's birth place is named Kyontanawsabyu (near to Zalun in northwest direction)*

from the business, he believed that a lot of church activities would be done. Therefore, he started the church fishery and oversaw it by himself.

In order to accomplish his vision, he had confronted with ample difficulties such as financial restrictions, the disintegration between individuals, the differentiation of opinions, the lack of manpower, etc. However, despite several difficulties lay ahead of him, he persisted to accomplish his goal without giving up. Owing to Mahn Mya Than's outstanding leadership ability and the cooperation of both young and old of the villagers, the fishery business had taken off. In fact, Mahn Mya Than had such a great supporter, his wife Gha Ohn Thin, who took all the troubles for her husband to fulfill his expectation and tried to be of great benefits with all the ability she could. The success of church fishery business helped improve not only the development of the church but its activities as well. By looking at his action, we could vividly understand how concerned person about the church he was. He would always remind his fellow church members "never try to be a destroyer of the church, but a constructor".

Further fish farm that I want to mention is Ten-share fishery. The purpose of running this fishery is to help develop the lives of the villagers. They believe that if only the lives of the villagers were prosperous, their villages would develop, and the country would be prosperous if their villagers develop. For these reasons, the Ten-share had been started. To carry out this project, Mahn Mya Than started collecting some money from the ten villagers and borrowed some from the rural development department under the Myanmar Council of Churches. The success of this project resulted in more job opportunities for the villagers. Since their livelihood had been more secure, their village was also developed.



Other than that, Mahn Mya Than ran a fish-farm by cooperating with the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC). The occurrence of this project started with the offer from the MCC leaders and his innate willingness to participate in the development of the mission. The purpose of this project was to carry out the mission of the rural development department of MCC and to elevate the living standard of the villagers. With the support from MCC, he began to run a fish farm and selected the four reliable villagers to take care of it. As usual, he had undergone several obstacles in the work. However, all what he did succeed not only for the rural development of MCC but for the welfare of the villagers as well. Cooperating with

Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC), he could also open up another fish farm. The investments were shared half by MBC and half by himself with the purpose to bring extra income in the ministry of MBC.

For the Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology (MICT), he had also run a fishery. This has been one of the main financial sources to have MICT run successfully. As the profits from this fish farm have been used for the sustaining of MICT, it turns out to be one of the pillars that make MICT have many advantages to equip students from different backgrounds with theological and secular knowledge.

Looking back what Mahn Mya Than had done, it did not only benefit the ministry but for the rural development as well. His courageous personality, wise vision, decisiveness and faithfulness made him to cultivate the success despite the different kinds of difficulties. What he did may not be known widely but it has been unforgettable under the title of ministry and rural development. Some of the business he had started still exist today and have been taken care by his relatives and some villagers when some have been extinct. With his business acumen, he faithfully served the ministry and tried his utmost to bring the welfare to the people in the rural areas. Furthermore, he was always ready to support the ministry of God and ministers. In fact, he bore a virtuous personality to help

develop people around him, his environment and villages around him lived. One of his most gracious visions was to offer his eldest offspring to God for His ministry no matter that person had been male or female. Indeed, his dream came true. Mahn Mya Than passed away in Kyoun Shat Sar Phyu village on 10 May 2006. He might have disappeared in this world, but all what he had done will be remembered by churches, villagers and labours from God's ministries.

#### *Commentary*

*Beginning and end of this biography are gilded. The portrait is meant as a legacy for the present generation. The Christian figure shown here is described as fearless and unrelenting in the service of God. He is concerned with the poor in rural areas, without wishing to make a difference between Christians and non-Christians. He motivates them to raise fish, to catch and sell them. Thus jobs are generated. A side effect is then also that the congregations can finance their work this way.*

*It is also noteworthy that the person portrayed hands over the responsibility to the people in the village and trusts in their abilities. He connects the mission of the church with a policy of modernising society: "When the village inhabitants are doing well, then their village also develops, and when the village is doing well, then the whole country also does well."*

*In the success story of his business model one cannot recognize specifics of the economic context of his time. However, his idea of establishing cooperatives is brilliant, and up to the present time the people and the church equally profit from it. This story also becomes a model for Christianity: the aim should be the well-being and the sharing of life together of all people, even when of very different origins.*

**Rev. Dr. U Aung Khin (1929-2015)**

by Chan Myae Kyi Phyu and U Aung Khin

*Editor of the German version.: Gerhard Köberlin**Introduction*

*We read here what the former General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Myanmar writes autobiographically about his life. At the age of 84 he looks back to a time in which the Christians focussed without compromise only on their own lives as Christians. In anger he enumerates how the Christians instead should get involved in the social problems of their land.*

I was born on April 14, 1929 in Moe Nyin, Kachin State. My parents are U Mye and Daw Kha. Among the siblings, I am second and I have three sisters and one brother. My sisters are Daw Tin Mi, Daw Tin Ei, Daw Tin Yi and my brother is U Aung Than. I believe in Christianity. I married twice, and my first was in 1947 to an Senior Assistant Teacher who was a teacher at a Baptist High School, Mandalay. From this marriage were born to us seven children- Khin Maung Win, Tin Maung Win, Aung Cho Win, Tin Aung Win, Aye Cho Win, Lwin Lwin Aung and Lin Saung. My first wife died in 1980, and while I was still serving as the General Secretary of Christian Council of Churches, Myanmar, I married to Daw Hla Yi, a Deputy Director at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. I married her on May 26, 1986. My parents were farmers and remained Buddhists, so by heritage I was a Buddhist. After World War II and while studying at American Baptist High School, I had become to believe in Christianity, and through marital relation with my wife. I was baptized in 1947- some time after our marriage. My second wife still professes Buddhism, but connection in the family still continues peacefully. We have no children from this marriage.

**My Idea and Opinion regarding Other Religions**

As a young Christian convert, I kept hearing that salvation could be obtained by Christians from my Christian surrounding. Those who do not believe in Christ could never enjoy the grace of salvation. Graduating from the seminary, people continue to hold on such attitude in their preaching. However, for me overture to Christian, from the very start, does not depend on the fact that salvation cannot be received in Buddhism and God of Buddhism is not a true God; neither does it depend on the fact that I had accepted Christian God as a true God. In my heart I have not forsaken Buddhist faith which I have much regard and I have professed Christianity, all all along, for a harmonious family relationship in my family. As a Christian I have all along respected everything. I have felt it is not fitting to hear Evangelists saying things about other religion. Such thing as only Christian will receive salvation. Some even say that unbelievers will get to hell. Such should not be spoken. I think it is not appropriate to say that. It does not look courteous; either Christians have acquired westernized mentality which is rather impolite. Being alone I would like to tell them that but I did not have the courage to do so. Serving at Christian Council and while at the university, I have heard about giving mutual respect for other religion. We have been told that God does not hate communists and He only hates communism. Then God hates sins but He loves sinners. Accepting such theology, it is not in me or in my head or mind to condemn other religions. Hearing such things said is acceptable to me either. Only when had been with MCC later, for many years that Interfaith Dialogue was organized in 1980. Heads or leaders or learned people or scholars of different religions came up with the idea or belief that there is salvation in every religion. There is an escape or escapism from undesirability. They presented papers and supported their ideas using references. In every religion, there are instructions or precepts of ethics, and good concepts.

Religions do not teach bad things. They teach only right things. Religions teach us to be rid of the cycle of earthly life and hell. I have gained much confidence and courage to speak. There must be respect or regard among religions. I'll wind towards other religion should not be used. Contradiction of other beliefs might show our impoliteness and illiteracy. I have now come to the courage to speak out thus. As a convert from Buddhism to a very responsible Christian worker, I feel that there must be mutual respects among religions. I have come to feel all must join hands to achieve peace in the world.

### **Qualification**

I started primary education until I passed 7<sup>th</sup> standard in Moe Nyin, Kachin state. In 1946 I joined ABM, Mandalay. Every subject was taught using English. The only subject taught in Myanmar was Burmese. I matriculated there and joined the University of Mandalay. After passing the 2<sup>nd</sup> year (pure science) and ISC examinations and intending to join seminary, I took up B.A course (American Science History Course). When I graduated I joined Burma Divinity School (now Myanmar Institute of Theology, Insein). I received B. Th degree in 1958. I am still a member of MIT Alumni.



*Mandalay University, founded 1925 as an affiliated institution to the university of Rangoon in June 1925. In 1947, it was upgraded to a degree college and named Mandalay University College. Since 1958, it is a university.*

### **Education**

Since after my graduation I have not taken up a government job nor gone into any business. All along I have embarked on religions services. I served as General Secretary at the main Burma Baptist Convention Endeavor Union (BBCEU) for one year. Then moving to Mandalay I served for



Mandalay Baptist Churches Association for eight years. After that I was a secretary for the association while serving as a headmaster for Burma Baptist Mission (BBM) middle and high school for four years. After the school was nationalized, I entered religious service again from 1962-66. After that I became the general secretary of Burma Baptist Churches Union (now MBCU) and served for three years. In 1972 I joined Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) and served as general secretary for eleven years. I retired from MCC in 1983. Later I became involved in voluntary religious activities. I became a teaching member at

the Myanmar Ecumenical Institute. Until now I get involve in teaching any subjects available. All along I have been a religious worker.

### **Struggle in the Midst of Difficulties and Successes**

As a religious worker salary was rather low and with a big family, I had to struggle for sustenance

of life socially. Cost of living was not as high as it is now. Cost of educating my children was not as high as it is now. All my children had been able to pass high school and some had graduated. There are also Government Technology Institute (GTI) diploma holders. To cover up for the expenses insufficiency and other social affairs and for church fund I started agriculture and animal rearing programmes. I planted mangoes, rear chickens and pigs. Even then expectation had not been met and supporting the family and Aung Pin Leh church had been quite hard. Arriving at the head quarters had not been hard that easy either. Salary had not been regular. Some months I had not even been paid. However, later on we had been offered project by foreign resources. We had been able to expand our project. In the struggle we have to be very economic or thirsty in laying down our plans in spite of great expectations. Coming in contact and working with responsible leaders had brought me great pleasure. We need not worry about difficult issues. I enjoyed being a religious worker. I had been quite satisfied and happy with six staff members to begin with. Then expansion of the department, I had about 50 staff members. We have Women Department, Youth Department, Students Department, and Evangelical Department and so on with the help of foreign countries.

### **Aims**

Religious workers' priority is to forsake worldly work and serve the heavenly purpose. Foreign missionaries had gone away. Nationalities that are educated have been regarded to dedicate themselves to the mission. This is a challenge of all time and when we have decided to commit ourselves in preaching Social Gospel social salvation – the so-called Development programme. In later part of 1972 the word 'development' had taken over. Development programmes have been laid down and plans have been drawn up, and educative and information are being addressed. Agriculture and farming planning have been embarked upon. Projects have been laid. Departments have expanded and upgraded. There is involved spiritual as well as social responsibility. Social responsibility cannot be left out. Churches have been aware of the importance of Social Missionary from the very beginning. However, people have not been interested. Now their eyes have been opened. NGOs have joined in. Natural disasters or catastrophe have stoked up awareness. People have joined in to undertake rehabilitation work because God has demanded and there is a need to do so. Seeing the need of circumstances religious workers have embarked upon both worldly and social activities.

### **Circumstantial Conditions**

Churches preach salvation which they are keen, focused and strong. Even their donation is for the purpose of salvation. Churches are rather reluctant and as a matter of fact are hesitant to contribute the welfare of people and agricultural enterprises. They would not come up with donating. It is the country's allocation of finance that MBCU can work churches donate for evangelism. Concepts differ slightly. Personally I would like to be to indulge in every aspect, what people now call Holistic Mission, the term unheard of before. I have this idea from the very beginning. I have started it without any encouragement from my surrounding as I have expected. There have been limitations.

### **Changes**

On recalling what has taken place, it has been observed that churches have become involved in social activities. Churches are involved in aid programmes such as aids to flood, storms and fire victims by contributing in cash and kinds. Youth have become more organized – no longer unconcerned. I have worked for Gender for a decade with much difficulty. I met with difficulties. People do not accept the fact that men and women have equal values. In the sight of God they are equal in aspects of values. A woman can achieve as much as man can. They have the same potential. They cannot outclass one another. They cannot say that are better than the other. Men would not accept such idea when spoken ten years ago. They would not concede to such idea. Men



excel women was the idea. Only after ten years of orientation and observation that condition has taken a turn and it has been seen men have come to accept this idea. Later women have gained higher positions. In many countries there are ladies who have become Presidents and Prime Minister. In Christian missions we have general secretaries who are women. Success has been observed after ten years of promotion activities. After that when we have come up with the idea of having Ministry for the elderly in Myanmar has been necessary to me but the rest had thought it unnecessary as if unconcerned. The elderly parents have been looked after by their children and taken seriously on a broad community scale. In fact it was just because they had not done any research and so they had an idea. Gerontology is a branch of science that deals that older person and their effects. This subject has been studied by American and European communities for a long time. As their countries are industrial countries there have been trouble and problems for old-aged people. Their children have not been able to look after them. They have been left out in very miserable conditions and so those have not been desirable. The government have taken the responsibility to make arrangements for them. There have been established Aging Center and Social Function. We had not had such Function and Gerontology had never been heard of either. 1982 the Assembly on aging was held on the international level. It looked into the issues occurring among the aged. It was held in Vietnam and Austria. I appeared that the number of people over 60 years of age increase at a rate more than those under 15. Birth rate has declined. The increase is not at a slow but fast pace. This is called demographic revolution. It has shown that people over 60s have increased and those under 15s decreased significantly in societies. The mode of living has changed. It is in a situation where people who can work are dwindling. There is a possibility of unbalance and from Internal Planned Action published by the United Nations had not distributed in Myanmar for Myanmar people to read. Care had not been given. That was why MCC distributed them and organized training and addressed the matter. Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) took the initiative and later being pressured by ASEAN, our government joined in. Now the government is undertaking the plan extensively. They have what is called 'house care' where teams are being sent to help the aged. There are five million and eight hundred thousand people who are over sixty years of age. One tenth is facing much difficulty. They are in destitute. Some do not have relatives to support them. Some are being looked after by wards. There people who pull up financial assistance and send old aged people to be lodged at aged homes. In the whole of Myanmar there are only two thousand being accommodated. People in trouble numbered five and a half million or five-fifty thousand when collecting data have been carried out from house to house. They are living in shed roofed annex under leaking roof. They have to rely on others for accommodation. YMCA has been able to recount for over 70 people but has not been able to manage for all. They selected the most needy. There are over 70 being taken care of at Insein. Altogether over 140 are being taken to the government, the government care of as a pilot program. When the project came to the knowledge of the government, the government laid down project to take care of the program. Maternal and child care society, Women welfare society, Fire Brigade, Red Cross society to work concertedly. A constitution was drawn up for the purpose. The pilot plan that had been started by YMCA since 1990, after consistent addressing, but the government response had been to little to begin with. MCC conducted the project with both social and spiritual conscience. It had been difficult and people had not appreciated it enough to cooperate. They became indifferent and so they did not care much. Fund had not been sufficient. Churches did not contribute. BC had to be approached. About \$ 9,000 had been received and so programs had been started to open the eyes. When awareness building program was launched people began to understand. Success had been in part. It was felt that the government needed to lay down some policy toward success. The other mean was, with the little money, to start addressing and training sessions. We tried to gather 50 people gave educative talk about the program at one place. We had to go to every place in the country. We had to be thrifty in spending money. We used buses as the expense is less. However, we had to endure. Some NGOs

have money to use a more convenient or comfortable means of transport. And staff members could spend lavishly on provisions. We would like to bring this for people to understand what is called 'church base' campaign. We went to churches and words to propagate the plan. We did not have any idea as to how to approach wards. Now we have joined fine with the government and social welfare societies have started it with the assistance of ward authority. Gradually women society and Maternal and child care society have joined in. They have become so involved as to bring about social mobilization. To tell the truth there has been lack of social workers who have been well-trained. Every activity has been on a voluntary basis. Workers do not have the technical know-how. We needed social workers. Now social studies are being undertaken and perhaps in ten years' time the number of social workers might increase.

### Visions for the Future

I am 84 year old now. I may not live much longer. Infirmary has crept in. I cannot go about giving talks. I could do that last year. I will only sit in my office and work. I will just write and publish books on resources especially journals for awareness of elder person and gender. Had I there been money I wish to establish a literacy society to mobilize and recruit volunteers. There is much to do to save elderly people, children, and women. There is lack of knowledge about women trafficking. Women have been lured with a promise in getting better paid, how much their daily wages will be. There have not been enough guarantees and when they have got into trouble they did not know where to go or whom to inform. They do not go to the embassy when told. They have been sold due to the fact that their parents are educated. The children are not sensible. Many are in Bangkok and Chinese cities. The government has been undertaking rehabilitation programs. The government cared very little from the beginning. I would like undertaking training volunteer, if I have had money, for all round services – gender, violence against women, rehabilitation, and protection from human trafficking. It is to organize interfaith studies paper reading sessions three times a year and interfaith dialogue seminar not discussion.

### Commentary

*The respected church leader makes a confession. As a Buddhist farmer's son he allowed himself to be baptized at the age of 18, but remained true to his roots. He wants people of all religions and social differences to belong together. It is exciting to read how then the ideas of the "social gospel" made it possible for him to transfer the 'decade of development' of the 1970's to his country and his Christianity. This was the period of Burma's 'own way to socialism' and at the same time in Europe the flowering of the churches' development aid. "Foreign money was offered us for projects." The reader experiences how such thinking contradicted the dominant Christianity in Burma, yet was supported by government policies. Aung Khin does not hide the fact that the government was pushed to social action, for example by Christians, yet at the same time he deplors that the future of social activity in his country - if the government has no plan - "makes no progress".*

*The later social issues of gender, violence against women, and poverty of the aged are still today – twenty years after Aung Khin left his leadership position in the church – very present in his lively conscience. He sees, though, how his strength decreases.*

*This autobiography is an angry testament. How can it be that a 'believing Christian' is not aware of the plight of fellow inhabitants of Myanmar? How can it be that so little social work takes place in the country? Aung Khin would feel himself understood in Europe by social and political activists, and they in turn by Aung Khin. This way of thinking appears to be a bridge between the cultures.*

*In the meantime we learned that Aung Khin died on May 6, 2015.*

## Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu U Zahre Lian (1929 – 1997)<sup>5</sup>

by Nathanayla

*Editor of the German version: Gerhard Köberlin.*

### *Introduction*

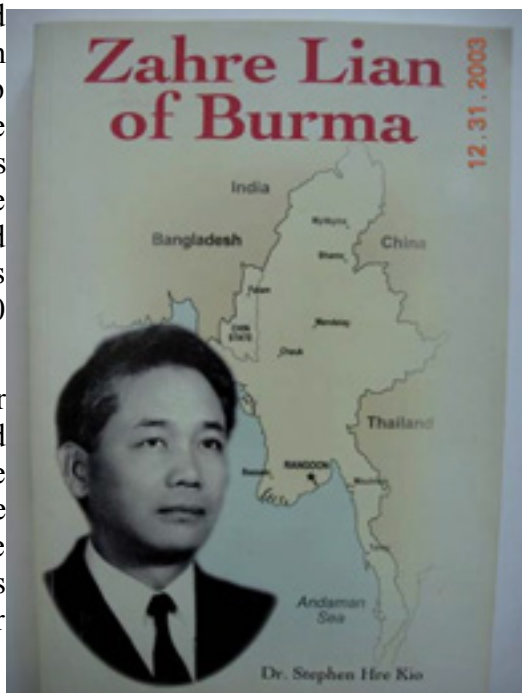
*Here we get an exciting look at the military history of the Second World War; at the liberation of Burma and the emergence of the new independent country. The brave son of a chief of the Chin people identifies himself with his former English colonial masters when warring against the Japanese. He then becomes the only Christian among the Ministers in the U Nu government when Burma becomes independent, and is lavished with honors. He becomes a model for performing one's duty in his country – as a Christian from the Chin ethnic groups.*

U Zahre Lian was a Chin. His parents were village chief U Tan Ting Lian and Daw Man Zein. He was born on January 22, 1929 at Tlau village, Falam Township, Chin state. He studied at Tlau village primary school when he was young. Then he completed middle school education in Falam. In 1938, he studied at Maymyo State High School. After that he continued his studies at Intermediate College in Mandalay in 1940. It is from his college that he received Intermediate of Science Certificate. He was married to Dr. Sui Men Thluai. They have four children.

In the beginning of 1942, Japanese troops bombed Yangon. Because of the Second World War, U Zahre Lian decided to leave for India to join the British army. He set out on a long walk from Falam and reached Tedim on the fourth day. Then he proceeded to Tumzan and then to Kaphi Lui, from where he took a lift in a jeep to India. Lucknow is the main place where entrance examination for admission to army was conducted. It was also a battle ground. Those who were qualified were appointed as Cadet Officers by British-India army and were given 380 rupees per month and other privileges (Burmese army cadet officers were provided only 60 rupees per month and no other privileges).

More than 400 young university graduates applied for three positions: Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel and Commission Representative. The candidates had to take entrance examination for three days. A total of 40 were selected and U Zahre Lian was one of them. The chairman of the selection board informed him that he was qualified to join any military force he wanted – army or navy or air force.

U Zahre Lian had promised his mother that he would not join air force. He was not interested in joining the navy either. So he decided to join the army. But those who



*Title of a publication on Zahre Lian published in 2008*

<sup>5</sup> Since he was rewarded a state order in 1962, he carries the honorific title Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu for his special merits in regard to the Union of Burma, therefore his full name Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu U Zahre Lian

wanted to join the army were required to pass a medical test. His friends asked him to bribe the doctors so that he would pass the medical test. He rejected that idea because he was against bribery and corruption. As he did not bribe the doctors, he failed the medical test on the account of having swollen eyelids.

The decision of the medical board could be changed or reversed only by the adjutant officer, who was based in New Delhi. So U Zahre Lian travelled to New Delhi to see him. When he met the adjutant officer, he explained to him that he had to travel a very long journey from Chin State to India on foot and his eyes were swollen because of the heavy dust on the road and he failed the medical test because of his swollen eyes. He also told him that he had refused to bribe the doctors.

The officer felt sorry for him and allowed him to attend Cadet Training. His eyes were treated by military medical officers there. U Zahre Lian stayed in Hoshurpur (where there were Burmese brigades) for three months. After passing the medical test, he attended full-time Cadet Training in Bangalore, Southern India. The Cadet Training was supposed to be two-year training. However the training period was reduced to one year because of the war. After completing the Cadet Training, he joined the British Army as a Lieutenant Captain. Among the commission officers, he was the youngest. Among Chin military officers, there was only one person who got promotion three months earlier than the stipulated time -- Captain Mang Tung Nang.

After resigning from the army, he joined the civilian government led by U Nu. First he worked as Sub-divisional officer. Then he became Deputy Commissioner in Kan Pet Lett in Chin State. He later served as Minister for Public Work Ministry, Minister for Housing Ministry, Minister for Resettlement Ministry and Minister for Chin Affairs Ministry until 1962 coup.

At the invitation of Egypt and Morocco governments, Prime Minister U Nu visited these two countries and U Nu made U Zahre Lian accompany him. They were warmly welcomed by Egypt President Nasir and Morocco King Hassan. In January 1962, the title "Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu" was conferred upon U Zahre Lian by U Nu government. This title was the second highest honor. (Those titles were conferred on Independence Day).

In 1964, Revolutionary Council appointed U Zahre Lian as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France. He arrived in Paris in December 1964 and presented his letter of credentials to France President Charles de Gaulle. As an ambassador, he represented his country. From 1964 to 1969, he was appointed Ambassador to Netherlands. Due to limited funding of the Burmese government, U Zahre Lian had to work as Ambassador to Spain in the same year. From 1970 till 1975, he worked as Ambassador to Egypt and then as Ambassador to Nepal in 1976.

However due to poor health, he resigned from ambassador post in 1977. Later he moved to the United States because of his poor health.

U Zahre Lian was the founder of Chin Congress Party. He was elected as a member of parliament in 1955. In the same year, he attended Non-Aligned Nations meeting held in Indonesia as a parliamentarian. He also attended the General Assembly of the United Nations held in New York twice.

He loved his culture very much and tried his best to preserve and promote it. While he was in government service, he made sure that the movie "Ten Commandants" were shown in various towns of Chin state not only for entertainment but also for spiritual development. During his 16 year service as government service personnel, he did not have any bad reputation. He carried out his duties well and honestly. He served the government honestly and faithfully in various positions. It is because of his honesty and integrity that U Zahre Lian became a trusted cabinet minister of U Nu government. In fact, let alone his friends, even his opponents admired his character.

U Zahre Lian was very loyal to his government. In 1945, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League

(AFPFL) formed by general Aung San was split into two groups: Thant Shin (Clean) and Ti Myae (Stable). U Nu did not get enough votes at the parliament so it was not sure whether he would be elected as prime minister again or not. Some of his (U Nu) ministers no longer supported U Nu. They joined the opposition. In such difficult situation, U Zahre Lian remained faithful to U Nu.

U Zahre Lian abhorred favoritism and corruption. In 1956 his sister Daw Hlawn Kip Thluai came to Yangon to attend college. She was the first Chin woman to join college. Some members of Chin Students Union (Yangon) requested U Zahre Lian, minister for Chin Affairs Ministry, to arrange some scholarship for Daw Hlawn Kip Thluai. U Zahre Lian did not accept that request although Daw Hlawn Kip Thluai was his own sister. He said that he could not favor his relatives and that his father had left some properties for his children so Daw Hlawn Kip Thluai did not need any scholarship. Such righteous living won the love and respect of the leaders of Chin Students Union (Yangon). U Zahre Lian belonged to Za Hau tribe and once Za Hau people asked him why he did not favor them. He replied that he was a minister for all tribes of Chin, not a minister for any particular tribe.



*Members of the cabinet of 1960 are sworn in*

During 1960 election campaign Clean AFPFL led by U Nu and Thakin Tin claimed that Buddhism should be made state religion. U Nu won the election and his government made arrangements to make Buddhism state religion. U Nu government also said that any cabinet minister who opposed this decision would be fired from his position. Among the cabinet ministers, U Raschid was a Muslim and U Zahre Lian was a Christian. Although there were some objections to this decision at the parliament, the decision was favored and approved. However, U Nu told U Zahre Lian not to quit his job although he was not a Buddhist.

U Zahre Lian was called back to heavenly home on April 14, 1997 in Seattle, Washington in the United States. He was 74 when he died. In memory of U Zahre Lian, his wife Dr. Dr. Sui Men Thluai established David Zahre Lian Memorial Fund for Chin students who are studying theology in order to become Christian ministers. Many students are now studying at different seminaries in Chin state with the financial support of this Fund.

By leading a simple, honest, dutiful and productive life to the end, U Zahre Lian set a good example for all of us.

#### *Commentary*

*What is the ideal for seminary students in the Chin groups' training of today for their vocation as ministers? It is the role model of Zahre Lian. He is one of them, a chief's son. In times of foreign rule over Burma he stands on the right side – against the Japanese. Even as Chin and Christian he becomes a Minister in the first government of the newly independent Burma. And is one who as a young man marches on foot from the Chin Hills to India. What an exciting time for heroes!*

*As a European one may stand at a great distance to that time, even though it was "our" Second World War. We do not know about the war situation in his land precisely, nor the various political parties on the way to the independence of Burma nor the conflicts accompanying the introduction of Buddhism as state religion.*

*However, the high morals of this role model are described for us: the loyalty as Minister toward his government leader and then also after the 1962 coup towards the governments*

*until 1977, his bond with his folk, his incorruptibility, the fidelity to his religion. This faithfulness is first apparent at the end, from the mouth of U Nu: U Zahre Lian, you are indeed no Buddhist, but please remain in my government.*

*The story told here stops already twenty years before his death. It takes us along into the turbulent history of the foundation of Burma. This role model points to an upright way: away from minority thinking as Chin, as Christian, toward patriotic engagement for all citizens of the country and, indeed, in the name of the respective government of the country. This straight way is open for each person who is not corrupt, not unfaithful, but loyal and trustworthy. This way points to an ideal: The ideal of harmony in diversity. What an challenging patriotic way in today's Myanmar!*

## Rev. U Pe Thwin (1929 – 1996)

by Nathanayla

*A winding life story from the Navy to the Christian Literature Society*

### Family Life

Rev. U Pe Thwin was born on June 10, 1929 in Thanlyin. He was the fourth, out of the five sons of Rev. U Ba Thwin and Daw Thein Nyunt. The other four sons were Dr. Nyunt Thwin, Dr. Hla Thwin, U Thein Thwin and Lt. Col Aung Thwin. His father U Ba Thwin was not only a pastor of Thanlyin Methodist Church but also an associate Bishop of Methodist Church. His mother Daw Thein Nyunt was the Head mistress of the Methodist High School, Thanlyin. Both the parents were of high caliber and thus the five brothers who were brought up and nurtured by such parents achieved their highest goals academically as well as morally. Having received good guidance and training from respectable and understanding parents, they themselves became kind, loving, gentle and helpful. They were given good guidance and training since their childhood. They were taught to love the church more than the world and to give more time for Christ and the church.

### Education

He was born in the Methodist High School. He started his education at the age of (4). He attended the Methodist High School from Kindergarten, till he passed his matriculation. He was once given double promotion while in his primary years, and was capable enough to cope with the level he was promoted to. The World War II broke out while he was still a high school student. Though still a youth in the high school, he was ambitious and had a vision to be a man of wisdom. He read many books, which enabled him to gain much knowledge. After the WWII, he continued his studies, and passed the matriculation in 1946. After passing the matriculation, he joined Rangoon University. In order to please his parents, he studied Economics in spite of his eagerness to learn Law. While doing so, the civil war broke out and he had to quit the University. That same year, he joined the Burma Navy as an ordinary soldier. He was (20) then. He attended the Naval Training School from 1949 to 1950. He had reasons for doing this. He was very ambitious and hard working. At that time, sailors were not as popular as it is now. He was also keen to explore the sea. That was one of the reasons why he joined the navy.

By nature, U Pe Thwin was gentle and polite. He felt so uneasy to use harsh words when he gave commands in the navy. Because he worked with zeal and zest, he was sent to England and Singapore to study navigation. By observing these evidences, one can imagine how brilliant U Pe Thwin was.

### Characteristics

U Pe Thwin was fondly in love in with literature, so he started writing since he was very young. He had to live a disciplined life under his parent's control and he regarded it as being very strict.

I would like to quote what once he had said,

“I was offered to work as a teacher abroad but I declined the offer. I am not a person who seeks money. There are lots of educated people abroad, while in our country we have very few qualified people. Books are ever more scarce and writers are very few in the field of Christian literature. So, I am determined to stay here in my country, to write for my people, and die here”.

His words expressed that he was a man, who loved his country and his fellow men. He was a man

of determination. He had served the Lord with heart and soul. With all-out effort he had labored in the ministry of the Lord. He deserved honor and tribute for his faithful service to the Lord. He disliked injustice and unrighteousness. He admitted, "Having been a soldier once, I still have the sense of Justice, which was stilled in me as a soldier.

U Pe Thwin was a man of literature. Such kinds of persons are emotional. He also had the sense of responsibility. He was also fond of teaching. While he was in the Burma Navy, he taught the soldiers. He served as a lecturer of theology for more than twenty years at the Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology. He gave bible study in Thanlyin for three years and for six consecutive terms. Thus, he brought up (30) lay preachers. He always had time to discuss Bible and religious affairs, but no time for vain talk.

Rev. U Pe Thwin and Miss Josephine Unger (Daw Khin Aye Mu) got married on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1952. They are blessed with a son U Htay Thwin and a daughter Cherry Marlar Thwin. U Htay Thwin was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1953. He is an Engineer who married Marang Gyi Lu and they have three daughters. Cherry Marlar Thwin was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1957. She is at present working in Japan.

The first part of their married life was a happy and pleasant one. Later, however, when U Pe Thwin became an alcoholic, it was no longer a happy one. There were arguments and quarrellings between husband and wife.

At first, Daw Khin Aye Mu did pray but when she did not get immediate answer, she felt that God had forsaken her and turned to rely on many other faiths, thinking her problems would be solved. Being a family of an alcoholic, they were shunned by friends and were left alone.

Daw Khin Aye Mu spent her days as a wife and a mother with full of misery and doubts the existence in God. Then when she recalled the scripture text, "Come to me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest" she knelt down and cried and prayed. She poured out her heart to God and prayed from her inner most heart. She felt the presence of Jesus and from that time on she received peace of mind and was convinced that her prayers were answered. U Pe Thwin gave up drinking and their miserable family life once again became a happy Christian home. He served the Lord faithfully till he was called to his Heavenly Home.

In the late 1994, his health condition had become worse. Even then, he tried to prepare sermons for Sunday worship services. He preached almost every Sunday, until the day he became too weak to stand at the pulpit.

Moreover, he became disgusted with himself and found means and ways to get away from this dungeon. There, the Alcoholic Anonymous Association came into his mind. This (Alumni Association) association made the drunkards to recite this, and made them confess that they solely trust the Lord and His power to transform them, to be worthy son of God.

While his health condition is fatal, Rev. U Ba Hmyin, Rev. U Tha Htun Shwe and Saya Wilson Thein came to his bed side, to pray for him, to discuss scriptures and convinced him of God's healing power.

According to U Pe Thwin, he felt that God was offering him a challenge. He said, he made a bargain with God. If he could pass away his cup, he would go to Seminary and would serve the Lord till the day he died.

By the Grace the Almighty God he had turned into a new chapter of his life. U Pe Thwin is a literary man. He wrote novels and poems since he was 14. He retired from Burma Navy as a Major in 1968.

When he retired, Rev. U Tha Htun Shwe, pastor of Thanlyin Baptist church, encouraged him to write



Christian Literature. As U Tha Htun Shwe had sincere affection for him, he urged U Pe Thwin to make use of his time and talent in this field. In fact, U Tha Thun Shwe had made him move a step forward. The upper room (Daily Devotional booklet), at that time, translated into Myanmar was only very few in number. Only a few Christian literatures were written then. He served as editor in Christian Literature Society. He had made use of his energy and talent to the fullest measure.

He translated “The Upper Room” for 28 years since 1969. Life was not so easy for him, because he had to attend Bible class in the evening after work, Monday through Friday. He attended the Bachelor of Religious Education (B.R.E) at the Myanmar Institute of Theology in Insein. Because of his zeal and zest, he passed with first grade. He got his (B.R.E) degree in 1970 and his thesis was on “History of Methodist Churches”. He got Master of Theology (M.Th) and his thesis was on “Churches in South East Asia”.

He started writing poems when he was in the ninth standard in 1942. In 1943 – 1945, he wrote novels, poems and short stories in Myawaddy, Thwe Thauk, Naval Magazines and military Journal.

U Pe Thwin was a kind of man who enjoyed studying anything if it is worth doing so. Although he was a “bookworm”, he had never neglected his duties as a naval officer. He wrote not only long and short stories and novels, but many articles on Christian ethics. He had written three types of writing, namely, reference, translation and own version.

He had written forty – eight novels, including reprints, two hundred and fifty short stories, poems and articles. He had also written for Myawaddy, Lon-Ma-Lay and Ngwe – Tar – Yi Magazines, out of his forty eight books which were published. He had written “Bible Commentary”. He arranged Bible class every Wednesday. He used to give lectures about Christian marriage and Christian Home on Christian Home Week Programs, which usually fell in November. Every now and then he gave encouragement and advice to Christian youth endeavors. While working at the Christian Literature society, he served also as assistant pastor in Thanlyin Myanmar Baptist Church. When Rev. U Tha Htun Shwe fell ill in October 1993, U Pe Thwin was ordained to do the works of a pastor. He took the responsibility of a pastor since then. He preformed the communion once a month on every first week of the month. He performed the Baptism every year in May. He took care of Kyauk Ye Dwin Baptist Church, the mother Church of Thanlyin Baptist Church, which is about 5 miles from Thanlyin. He was faithful to his job till the day he died.

As he had dedicated his life and service for Christ and church, what he had written were mostly for Christ, church and younger generations. Though he had opportunities and demands to write worldly affairs, he paid less attention to them, because his emphasis was only on Christian ethics.

He was awarded “a Gold Pen” at the graduation of Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology in 1995. He said, “I am a writer. I am Pe Thwin, who will never drop the pen, till the day I die”. Physically, U Pe Thwin was thin and slender, however, the spirit within was as hard as diamond.

U Pe Thwin suffered lungs trouble in his late fifties, because of too much alcohol and smoking. He contracted tuberculosis in 1988. However, he recovered from that illness within one year. He continued his work in Christian Literature Society and also served as pastor in Thanlyin Baptist Church.

Six years later in 1994, he was diagnosed with lung cancer.



In spite of his illness, in June 1995, he went to Japan, accompanied by his wife, Daw Khin Aye Mu, to visit his one and only beloved daughter, Daw Cherry Marlar Thwin. He also had a medical check-up. After staying for some times with his daughter, he came back to his homeland in July. As soon as the aircraft touched the airport ground, he said, "If I have to die, I shall die in my country." He was a patriot, who loved his motherland more than anything else. In May and June 1996, his health condition got worse. He received special care by two specialists. He was on bed since May. His illness reached its climax in July. On July 12, 1996 at 8:27 pm, Rev. U Pe Thwin was called to his Heavenly home peacefully at his residence, No. 1, Thein Gyang Road, Thanlyin. At the very last moment he had praised the Lord, God Almighty, whom he had adored and served.

Studying and evaluating the life history of U Pe Thwin, we Christians today have a lot to learn and to follow his examples. No man is perfect, so was U Pe Thwin. However, no one would deny that the work of U Pe Thwin in Christ's ministry and his all – out commitment were amazing. If we study the books of U Pe Thwin, we will find them written on various subjects: novels, religion and theology, commentaries and philosophy. It is therefore obvious that he had had a wide reading and ample amount of knowledge. By looking at his books on Bible interpretation, we can understand how much interest he had in God. When he wrote those books, he did not just write them randomly or merely translating them. With the aim in mind for Myanmar accedes to understand well, he had done his work effectively in the Myanmar Context.

If we Christian wish to fill the needs of our mission, we need to include literature in our consideration. The present day churches and believer should encourage, help and guide those who have skills in writings and should also give honor to those who really deserve. By doing Christian literature the future mission will be more promising and satisfying. And this was what Sayagyi U Pe Thwin believed, wished and prayed for.

## Archbishop Dr. Andrew U Mya Han (1932 – 2001)

by Prof . Khin Htwe Yi<sup>6</sup>

*Editor of the German version: Hans-Bernd Zöllner*

### *Introduction*

*Andrew Mya Han belongs to the few Protestant Christians in Burma for whom the word "head" of a church fits. This is connected with the office of Archbishop of the Anglican Church's Province of Burma (now: Province of Myanmar). For thirteen years Andrew Mya Han stood at the top of a church hierarchy that had bishops and parishes in all parts of the ethnically fissured country. Additionally the church had a different background, in contrast to the Baptist congregations. It played a special role during colonial rule because the majority of the British were Anglicans. Hence they had a significant, when also a definitely ambivalent image, for they possessed property and buildings and cultivated the connection with the worldwide Anglican Church.*

*As a result of this role, Andrew Mya Han as Archbishop especially stood in wider public view. He was General Secretary of the burmese Council of Churches before being invested with this office. Also, his position as archbishop fell in the first years after the end of the "Burmese way to socialism", in which the military junta tried to lead the country out of its isolation.*

U Mya Han was born on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1932 at Myittha, Mandalay district. His Christian name was Andrew (Andrei) and his pen name was Maung Pauk Si (Mann Tekkatho). He was also a poet as a writer. His father was Archdeacon Rev. Luke Po Kai and his mother was Elizabeth Daw Lay Khin, a teacher. They had five children, two sons and three daughters. U Mya Han was the third son. The eldest brother was U Johny Thaug Tin (Rtd Senior Assistant Teacher), Academy for Nation Races, Sagaing Township, Sagaing District. The eldest sister is Prisca Daw Thaug (Rtd. Lady Health Visitor), Mandalay. The younger sister is Cecilia Po Kai (Rtd), Chief Executive Officer, Amay Myitta Yeik Mon (Home for the Elderly) Yeiktha Quarter, Hlegu Township. The youngest sister is Daw Anne Po Kai @ Rtd. Professor Daw Khin Htwe Yi, Department of International Relations, Yangon University.

### **Childhood Days and Education**

In his childhood days, he was educated at the schools where his father (who as a government servant) was stationed in any town of lower and upper Myanmar while his father as a Principal/ Headmaster of School for the Blind, he attended St. Mary's Girls' School, Kyeemyindaing (Previously called Old St. Mary School, now on Kyundaw Street) and then at St. John's Diocese Boys' School for primary and higher education.

U Mya Han's father, U Po Kai was the Principal of the school for the Blind, Kyeemyindine. As it was the duty of this school authority to go along with the blind students and to call go back to their places then back after this holiday with their supervision. As war broke out and as this transportation was nearly stopped that the blind student could not go back to their places. There was no place to live in Yangon. So, U Po Kai, out of humanitarian spirit and sympathy took all this blind students with his family to his village. This was a noble task of humanitarian spirit of U Po Kai and family to look after the blind. The wife of U Po Kai, Daw Lay Khin also was simple and kind hearted that she agreed and accepted this merciful and good heart of her husband to take care of the blind students' joining hand in hand like father like sons like mother like daughters they are all well

<sup>6</sup> The author is a retired Professor of History and a sister of Andrew Mya Han.

brought up and nurtured by the good and kindhearted parents that all the sons and daughter of U Po Kai and Daw Lay Khin came out to be the good Christians in the future.

When the second World War broke out in 1943, his family look refuge in his father's village at Damange Village where was about seven miles away from east of Nattalu township U Po Kai's family and a group of blind students of thirteen in number stayed in that village up to till 1946.

### **At Damange Village**

When U Mya Han reached Damange village, he was barely 10 years of age up till 1946, he had shown the true character of his childhood days. He always helped his parents and the blind students all throughout these difficult days.

During that period, he used to go along with his father's relations by driving the bullock-cart himself to go and fetch the firewood in the nearby forest yard to have fire wood for the family. After reaching back to that village, he helped the blind students to cut the log into fuel wood.

He also went with his grand aunt and relation to the river side to catch fish, made *ngapi* (fish paste) and *nga chaut* dried fish and then came back with his personal bullock-cart carrying all the *ngapi* and *nga chaut* (dried fish) for his family and the blind students.

During Rainy Season, he used to catch eels by eels-traps in the evening. The next day, he collected eels from the traps and it was ready for the family dinner. It was his duty to catch fish, prawn and eels for the family's food and he was also expert in doing all these activities. He also helped in family's small poultry farming. He took care of especially ducks to drive the ducks to the ponds to the water and also tending the ducks the whole day and came back in the evening. Duck's eggs were to sell then to back to get money and to eat at family's meals.

Like his father U Po Kai, U Mya Han showed his humanitarian spirit at this early stage of his boyhood years. Once there was an epidemic of dysentery that broke out in the village causing two blind students to death as theirs was no proper treatment and medicine at that time. There was no villager to care for the funeral of these two poor blind students. The father, U Po Kai and the older brother had to carry these corpses of two blind students in a wrapped blanket and mat to the cemetery. There was no coffin or litter at that time. U Johny Thaug Tin who was the eldest son in this family had to carry this corpse on their shoulder in front and U Po Kai had to carry at the back. U Mya Han had to carry a hoe and a prick-axe to dig the ground themselves to be enfolded in the grave yard. This pathetic sight of the poor blind students' funeral scene had shown this sympathetic and kind spirit of U Po Kai and his sons of which U Mya Han proved to be a good and kind shepherd who was always helpful to his sheep in the future days of his services to the Lord.

After this was, U Po Kai's family came back to Yangon. In 1953, U Mya Han's father who had just finished studying training at Holy Cross Theological School was thus transferred to Mandalay as a priest while his father was transferred as a priest in change of Christ Church Cathedral in Mandalay. He attended Mandalay University, he was graduated and attained B.A degree later while he was attending University of Mandalay, he wrote many articles and poems by his pen name "Maung Paunk Si, Mantekkatho". Pauk Si was his childhood name. He was given his name by his parents because as a toddler he was very fair, healthy and fat and so sweet that he was referred to as a Myanmar Snack (small bunk of wheat flour sandwiched with bean or meat (pork or chicken meat) inside). Thus he was nicknamed Pauk Si and was called with great appreciation by his family members and by his very close and intimate friends of young and old.



*Christ Church Mandalay,  
built 1869*

In his intermediate days (i. e. B. Sc Combination – Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English and Burmese), he gained distinction in Burmese his second year. He was one percent of the student who got distinction which was rare and cherished dream that every student was aiming at that was why he was a genius in writing such a good flow of Burmese language.

He was also interested and took active part in students' movements (politics). He was one of the outstanding top leaders of students' political parties of his times. He was the President of the "Vanguard" (foremost part of advancing army) which was one of the leading and popular political parties in the University of Mandalay at that time. He was also the President of students Union of Mandalay University which was also the most crucial and honored post in his college days.

### **As a Principal in Missionary Schools**

He became a Principal or Headmaster of St. Peter's Diocesan High School, in Hpa-an between 1950–60. This school was sponsored by Archbishop Francis Ah Mya. It is one the forerunner of Mission schemes that envisioned Archbishop Francis Ah Mya is his early missionary career.

Then U Mya Han came back again to Mandalay and stayed there serving actively as one of the EC (Executive Committee) members in Anglican Young Peoples' Association (AYPA) of Christ Church Cathedral. He regularly volunteered as server in the Communion services conducted by his father, Rev. Luke Po Kai who was then the presiding minister/priest of this church.

He was not fully satisfied and contented to serve as a lay person in the church activities with the inspiration and encouragement of his father the late archdeacon of Mandalay diocese and family member, he attended Holy Cross Theological College in Yangon from 1964 – 65 for two years. At that time two years training of the Theology was given to degree holders of (M.A or M. Sc). He was later ordained priesthood by archbishop Francis Ah Mya on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1966 at St. Mary church, Mandalay on the feast day of St. Mary (the mother of Lord Jesus Christ) the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. After he had finished his theological training at Holy Cross Theological College, Bishop V.G. Sheart ordained him as a deacon on June 5, 1965 at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Yangon.

### **Missionary Work at Wun Tho (Upper Myanmar)**

After he had become deacon he was assigned as personal assistant priest of Archbishop Francis Ah Mya. Then after he had ordained priest in 1966 he was sent by verbal order by Archbishop to go to Wun Tho to start a missionary work there with the help of U Ni. Rev. Ah Mya Han was able to start his mission work at Wun Tho and the villagers nearby. Once upon a time, there was one man named U Aye Pe who had failed to convert a group of Burmans in Kinn Ywa, Kin Tan Chone village and Wet Tu village to become Christians. Rev. A Mya Han then made Wet Tu village a head – quarter for evangelization with earnest efforts. After catechist U Hla Maung who was the father of Rev. John Aung Thein and U Tun Hlaing, U Aung Than, U Pauk Su, U Pe Thaug and about twenty other households were converted to Christians. After six months of relentless work he was again cashed back to Yangon. Wuntho Church at that time was then looked after by Catechist U Ni from Indaw Township and caters on by authorities of three – in –one Programme/ scheme most probably by Rev. A Mya Han himself.

### **Organizing of Three – In – One Scheme**

This was the vision of Archbishop Francis Ah Mya – Three – In – One Scheme of Missionary work which was organized and carried on in St. Luke's Church, Indaw Township, Latha District. Rev. A Mya Han was given responsibility to lead this programme/plan. He was aimed to practice these principle of chastity, obedience and purity and then to propagate the gospel. Self reliance principle in all the activities of this mission field was applied and put into practices. The leader himself took part in this plantation of ground nut cultivation was activated with great rigor in Meiza beach.

About twenty people of both men and women were included in this Three-in-One Group. Later it was withdrawn with regret for many reasons. Men were transferred to Paletwa district while women were transferred to Waigyi Naungbo village. But those who had participated and worked in this Three-in-One Scheme (Group) became the leaders in this church and lay teachers in religion affairs. Some of the notable leaders were Archbishop Saw Gregory Hla Gyaw, Archbishop Samuel Sam Si Htay, Archbishop Andrei Mya Han himself, Bishop Barnabas Htaung Hwei, assistant Bishop J. Tin Maung, Rev Canon U A Phar Mu, Rev. Tin Hla Aung, Rev. U Ko Ko Maung, Rev. U Peter Htun Sein, Rev. U Myint Swe, Rev. U Sein Shwe Po, Rev. U Aung Khun, and many others faithful men and women Catechists.

### **As a Principal of Emmanuel Theological School of Mohnyin (Kachin State)**

In 1968, Rev. A Mya Han transferred his responsibility of the leadership of Three-in-One Scheme to Rev. U Phar Mu and became the Principal of Emmanuel Theological School in Mohnyin (Kachin State).

In 1972, Archbishop Francis Ah Mya recalled Rev. A Mya Han and gave three assignments at the same times. He was given the posts of General Secretary of Yangon Diocese Provinces, the archdeacon of Yangon Diocese and secretary of Yangon Diocese. Later three other persons were substituted in his posts. Rev. Canon J. M. Matthew as archdeacon, Mr. T. C McDonald as General Secretary and Rev. Than Pe as secretary of Yangon Diocese.

As Rev. A Mya Han was interested in social and religious affairs so much so that, he had a late marriage life on May 1, 1974, he was married to Sayama Naw Dolly who was the daughter of Dr. Kanagoe and Sister Naw Gayra of Taungoo. The marriage ceremony was conducted at St. Michael's Church, Kyeemyintaing by the late Archbishop John Aung Hle. They have only one son Michael Zin Min Oo who was married to Naw Moe Thient having the only daughter Andrea Mya Han. At present, Michael Zin Min Oo and his family are staying at Sydney, Australia. Michael is doing the part time lay minister there.

### **Ministry at Abroad**

Rev. A. Mya Han also took great concern in the oversea Ministry between Canada and Province of Myanmar. As a priest, he went to the Diocese of British Columbia studied the ecumenical works and religion affairs. While he was in British Columbia, he attended three trainings. They were

- (a) How to preach? (The Method)
- (b) How to meditate?
- (c) The Church and Community – Social Services.

While he was in Canada, he had the chances of attending the Famers World Wide Christian Council which was held at Toronto, Canada as Myanmar Churches' Representative and as a General Secretary of Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC).

He was elected unanimously as Honorary Secretary General of MCC at the 96<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of MCC which was hold in May 1982 at Falam, Chin State.

This Honorary General Secretary posts who first given to Rev. U John Thet Gyi and then to Rev. U Aung Khin, Rev. A Mya Han, Rev. U Win Tin, Professor U William Paw(temporary), Bishop. Man San Si Htay, Rev. U Smith Ngul Lahtaung etc.

While Rev. A Mya Han was acting as General Secretary in MCC the Constitution was rewritten and renamed and five units were formulated and put into practices: increment was given to the salaries of the office workers. Christian denominations were invited more and there were at least twelve denominations participated in this organization. The two new comers were Myanmar Episcopal

Church (MEC) and Episcopal Free Church (EPC).

Before MCC, Headmaster was stationed at YMCA (Young Men Christian Association) office building but later it was shifted to 601, Pyi Road of 5<sup>th</sup> floor building. The office workers of one dozen were later increased to over 50 workers.

### **Consecration of Archbishop of the Church of the Province of Myanmar**

When Archbishop Saw Gregory Hla Gyaw fell asleep in Jesus on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1987, New Archbishop was elected Rev. A Mya Han was elected by majority vote on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1988. He was then consecrated officially with pomp and honor on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1988 in the Holy Trinity Cathedral. He was worthily promoted to Archbishop by the grace of God (Jump promotion from the priest to Archbishop – not becoming a Bishop). He was blessed by Bishop George Kyaw Mya who was then the Pater Bishop of the Church of the Province of Myanmar along with other Bishop – Archbishop Barnabas Htaung Hwai (Sithwe Diocese) Bishop Timothy U Mya Wal (Mandalay Diocese) Bishop A. U Hla Aung (Myitkyinar Diocese) and retired Archbishop Francis Ah Mya (his old mentor) and retired Bishop Peter Ba Maw (Mandalay Diocese). The Enthronement Ceremony was solemnly conducted by Patron Bishop, Bishop George Kyaw Mya with splendid display and splendors. Rev. A. Mya Han not east became the fourth Archbishop of the Church of the Province of Myanmar and the Eleventh Bishop of Yangon.



*The Holy Triniy Cathedal Yangon*



*The concecration service, April 1988 (lleft besides Andrew Mya Han stands the German ambassador)*

The very first sermon he gave as Archbishop was quoted from Philippians 2: 1 – 2. The message was Joy in serving the Lord. In serving God and serving others he stressed to imitate Christ's Humility. Just as Paul urged the Philippians, he also stresses a spiritual unity and told earnestly to the people to lose one another and to be one in spirit and purpose. In short his sermon emphasized solely on Humility, spirituality and unity.

### **Archbishop Dr. A. Mya Han's Character and Mentality**

As a boy he was a good-natured kid who had been cherished by his parents as well as by his relatives. He was kind, helpful and gave no troubles to his loved ones. He showed his hospitality and humanitarian nature during his teenager days during the war time period (Secondly World War). This humane attitude was discarded from his father who looked after the helpless blind students (of thirteen in numbers) during war time days. When war broke out his family fled to a village called Damange in Nattalinn Township (in Pyi District). U Po Ke and family took care of the blind

students with compassionate love and tender mercy. Young boy A Mya Han helped his father along with his elder brother in any capacity to give a helping hand in all their daily works.

He was also an affectionate brother to his brothers and sisters. He was friendly and a jolly good type of person to all his friends both boys and girls. He had been a favorite among his female friends. In his fields of works also he was dutiful and faithful. Above all, he was such a far sighted and shrewd leader that he had made many contributions materially and spiritually for the welfare and well being of his fellow Christians. His achievements in promoting the progress and prosperity of the Church of the Province of Myanmar were of note worthy in general and the Diocese of Yangon in particular. His endeavors in supporting and supplementing the cause of ecumenical and the unity of the Church were of praise worthy. His motto given to the Anglicans was to GO, GET, and GATHER in evangelizing the people far and near. During his terms of office it started to be successful to some extent but after him the project was discarded and this faded away as they forgot the motto and mentor slowly.

### **His Accomplishment and Achievements**

In order to have a good and proper administration in this affair of the Church he consulted with advisors and experts of efficient persons, he reformed some of the sectors and departmental administrations. Salaries of the priests and lay workers in this Bishops Court were increased. Gratuity and bonus money given to retired person were also adjusted. Provident funds were amended with the advice of some efficient finance audit, etc.

Some of the old buildings and some which were of not fit for use were sold out and new buildings were erected for this useful purpose of these provinces. Some old buildings were renovated, some of the new and modern buildings erected during his tenure of bishopric were the house for Archbishop (two – storied building), four-storied building for offices, departments and conference rooms, etc. Another three storied building was also built for dining room, workshop rooms, and retreat center and for other religious purposes. A small one – strayed building was also built near Archbishopric house for the office and seminar rooms, etc. New buildings in the Holy Cross Theological College were also founded. The new Bishop's court compound and Premise was one of the unique achievements of Dr. A Mya Han's vision of the Church of the Province of Myanmar to surpass the buildings of other denominations. He was indeed the most dignified and most honored gift he had given to one Church of the Province of Myanmar.

During his lifetime, the people misunderstood and misjudged all the works of Archbishop A Mya Han. They thought that he was extravagant in constructing such buildings for good – for – nothing purposes. But after his death, the people slowly and gradually realized the true attitude and intention of his concern for the Anglicans. Only after his death, he was regarded as a well wisher and benefactor of Anglican world – the buildings for which they took a pride and honor and dignity. He was also a thrifty person who had the financial money of the province in stockpile hoarded up of money. Archbishop was that had left the accumulated amount of financial assurance after his death. He was



*The Archbishop and his siblings in 1999.  
Second from left: The biography's author*



the one and the only Religious Councils of the Priests conducted every two years. He took good care and had great concern for the welfare and well being of the priests and ministers in many respects and in many ways Archbishop Andrew Mya Han made many tours and travels of missionary works and evangelical experiments even to these hilly regions like Chin and Naga religions. Development programs of mission works were also carried out with some success. The priests and clergymen were also sent abroad to study religious affairs in turn. Help and support from other Christian Countries were also invited and exchange of priests and lay men were also in progress. Partnership in mission was also put into practices.

Printing and Publication Department was also improved as the Head of this department was sent to United Kingdom to study and learn the experiences in this field. History of the Church, the Holy Communion, The Prayer Book of New Publications (1999) and some of the laws of the constitutions were also reformed and published.

During his time, two Assistant Bishop Archdeacons and General Secretary of Bishop Court were also elected. Many new clerks and volunteers were also selected systematically in order to upgrade the standard and efficiency in the administration of Bishop Court.

### **Studying at Abroad and Attending Rewards**

Archbishop A Mya Han was one of the 38 primates of the Anglican world. During his ministry, he made religious and ecumenical tours and missions to England, Canada, USA, Australia, Israel, Germany, Jamaica, Nigeria, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, and Rome (Italy). When he was in Rome, he went to Vatican City to have a holy fellowship with the Pope. He was the one and only Bishop who had a very rare chance of attending an honourable Lambeth Conference which was held once in ten years.

From 1982 – 83, he was sent to Vancouver School of Theology in Canada to study the church work and ministry of the clergy. In this year 2000, Archbishop A Mya Han had been conferred Honorary Doctorate of Sacred Lecture (DSL) from Millen University, USA. He was also given with honor Doctor of Divinity (DD) from Holy Cross Theological College, Yangon in 2001. Again he attained Ph. D (Poetry) - Doctor of Philosophy from Dublin Metropolitan University in 2004. He was given this degree as he had written many quality poems all throughout his life and he had been one of many famous Burmese poets of his time.

### **His Retirement and His Death**

Archbishop A Mya Han retired after serving nearly thirteen years as Archbishop (1988 – 2001) and thirty five years of religious services in the church. He fell asleep in Jesus on 3, May 2006 (Wednesday at 11 am) at Bishops Court Home peacefully.

“ I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the race,  
I have kept this faith.  
Now there is laid up for me  
The crown of righteousness ...”

2 Timothy 4:7 – 8

The last but not the least was his great vision in order to carry out fervently.

His sincere vision for evangelization mission he had given a prayer to put into practice: GO, GIVE and GATHER.

### **A Special Prayer for the Decade of Evangelism**

Lord of lords, King of kings, O God,  
The Governor of all the rulers,

Pardon us our laxity  
 Pity our weaknesses  
 Kind towards our confusion Today  
 As we initiate and implement the decade of Evangelism  
 Enable us to dedicate ourselves  
 Fill me with Thy blessings  
 So that, O Lord, we would go, where you want us to GO  
 We would give what you want us to GIVE  
 And we would gather what you want us to GATHER  
 Grant perfect peaces and tranquility to the whole world for we entreat you through the only Son our  
 LORD JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

*Commentary*

*I personally met Andrew Mya Han over several years. In the middle of 1980s I got to know him during his work as General Secretary of the Burma Council of Churches. At the time I was pastor of the German-speaking overseas congregation in Bangkok and had the task, among other things, to keep in contact with the Council in Burma. Since I travelled twice a year to the country I saw him frequently and we developed a personal relationship. Andrew made a highly cosmopolitan and liberal impression on me from the beginning, as one who enjoyed showing a foreign colleague various facets of his home country. I remember that one day he showed me several galleries in Rangoon and introduced me to artists. In April 1988 I was at the ceremonies in connection with his ordination as new Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Burma. At the end of the day I then experienced how the celebration continued in a small circle and it was very merry.*

*As suggested in the biography of the later bishop written by his sister, he was not uncontroversial as bishop. His building plans were met with criticism on the part of priests of his church and there were financial questions about some diaconal-social projects that he led. After the end of his career in the church we also met each other. Our conversations revolved around God and the world, and I learned how he worked to end the conflict between the rebellious Karen and the government. I was impressed by his personality, with its broad spectrum of interests and abilities.*

Two Poems<sup>7</sup> of Andrew U Mya Han // Maung Pauk Siy

**Let's sail in a ga<sup>8</sup>**

A star in the sky,  
 Cloud-covered, the moon can't shine;  
 When it shines, it will shine,  
 This creature of God,  
 The golden moon.

Singing  
 I don't want it to be a sad song.  
 Worries, agitation at

**You, Me and Them**

Brown and dark  
 these highlands  
 will be ever ready to receive you.

With mist floating high above  
 these highlands  
 will be waiting for one they can rely on.

Looming up in splendour,

<sup>7</sup> *The Sound of Breakers*. Published by Myanmar Christian Literature Society 143, Minye Kyawsa Road Lanmadaw 11131, Yangon, Myanmar (1997), p.7; 38. ranslated from Burmese into English by Maung Tha Noe.

<sup>8</sup> 'ga is a kind of sea going boat. First stanza is a folk song.

joy's door.

With a stout mast of intelligence,  
To reach ports of ecstasy,  
Let's sail the boat ga.

these highlands  
will be calling out to welcome you.

To the misty Maw mountains  
stretch out your hands,  
offer your energies,  
direct your feet,  
give out your intelligence,  
let the lappings of the waves  
Echo in you.

You, me and them,  
let's grow cherries.

## Major Nhkum Tang (born 1932)

by Hkawn Seng Bu

*Editor of the German version: Hans-Bernd Zöllner*

### *Introduction*

*In the following the story of a Christian soldier from the Kachin people is told. His life story provides a picture of the civil war which broke out in Burma shortly after independence was achieved in 1948. This biography is remarkable because there were relatively few soldiers from the ethnic minorities who fought in the Burmese army against the rebels.*

*In this account of the life of Nhkum Tang the German editor has omitted several details that are very difficult for foreign readers to understand. At other points explanations have been added. The aim has been, however, to render accurately the biography written by Hkawn Seng Bu.*

There are many people who sacrificed their lives for their countries, nations and people. In real sense, this world is decorated by those who brave, they are who dare to die and give their lives for community. In history of Burma, the Burma gained independence from British rule because of brave sons and daughters of their country. Therefore, we can see that fate and future of a country lies in the people those who have sacrificed their lives for their country and for their people. Here I would like to express the life of Major Nhkum Tang who had served and given his life for his country.

### **Childhood life**

Nhkum Tang was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December of 1932, and is the fifth son of Nhkum La Ja and Pausa Shayi Kaw at Pang-Nang Village. The village is a remote hill village nearly 27 miles away from Namtu, Northern Shan State. It is situated 5,000 feet above sea level. Nhkum La Ja, his father was very quiet and led family very well. But he died in 1976. As the rearing of his mother, Pausa Shayi Kaw who was very sharp and bright, Nhkum Tang was more influenced by the doctrines and teachings of his mother. His mother was very work hard. She is a pious Christian and became the very first convert among the villagers of Pang-Nang. She was an ideal woman for the people because of her compassion and kindness.

Since his early childhood, Nhkum Tang was very active and intelligent like his mother. He was very obedience to his parents and love his family very much. Until the age of sixteen, he lived his parents at Pang-Nang. He helped the family by slashing and burning fields over the hills. He had faced a lot of hardship and difficulties. But God granted him strength to overcome all those hardship and difficulties.



*Major Lutken presents medals to Kachin Rangers*

In 1941, he went to Mong-Hawm, Mong\_Maw (half – day's walk from Namtu) to attend the primary school under the principleship of Sara Myi Tung Naw. At that time, he was about nine. He had a vision while he was in Mong – Hawm. And he told his friend Kawn Tu, “My friend, when I grow up, I will try to be a Military

General and then I will buy a car and drive over to my village, Pang-Nang. His vision came true after about twenty years.

When the Japanese invaded Burma in 1942, he went back to his village. In 1945, when the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 055101 USA Kachin Rangers was landed by parachute on the top of Marit-Bum hill, he went to join the Army. However, Major Peter Lutken did not allow him to be a soldier because he was too young but he became a batman of Major Peter Lutken for a year. After that he went to Namtu to attend school in 1946. He stayed in the house of Deacon Maran Tu, the Kachin pioneer of Namtu. Because of his attempted and being intelligent, he was graded from primary class to the second standard within a year. In 1977, he lived in Namtu at the house of Forest Officer and in that year he passed third standard. During the years of schooling, he never asked for money from his parents. He used to earn money for himself weekend weekends. A year later, he worked as a Forest Ranger in Namtu in 1948.

### **Life in Military**

And thereafter in 1949, December he went to enlist in the Burma Army 1<sup>st</sup> Kachin Rifles at the age of sixteen. Then he was transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Kachin Rifles from Namtu to Nam-Sang, Palaung hill village. At Nam-Sang hill, he passed the military training for three months through many difficulties. And then, Ah Di, the 1<sup>st</sup> Kachin commander took him to Lashio. Nhkum Tang had to go for military training again for a year. There he taught the Jinghpaw (Kachin) and English languages to his friends. In order to improve his English, he himself attended the English speaking classes.

During 1950s – 1960s, the Burma Army was fighting with many rebels such as the White Chinese (Tayoke – Phyu), White – Comrades (Yebaw – Phyu), Burma Communist Party (BCPD), Kayin National Defense Organization (KNDO), the Red – Flag (Alan Ni), the White – Flag (Alan – Phyu), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Kachin Naw Seng Insurgent Battalion who desert the First Kachin Rifles to fight against the Government. So, in those years, the political situation was unstable and became the worst in Burma. Most of the people of Burma were frightened by the different kinds of insurrections.

The threat of Kachin Naw Seng Insurgent had become serious day by day. Nhkum Tang participated in the battles against the Kachin Naw Seng Insurgent during 1949 – 1950, around Lashio. In 1952, they defeated the White-Comrades (Yebaw – Phyu) who stayed and camped at Momeik, Mabeing, Kun – Chaung, Hla – Wa, Khaw – Taw and Yan – Bo. Through the years of 1953 to 1955, Nhkum Tang took part in the victory over the Burma Communist Party led by Thakhin Than Tun and Thakhin Soe around the districts of Pakhokhu.

The column, which led by the second Battalion Commander Major Ja Naw, was assigned to fight the Te – Poo camp, the main Fort of the White-Chinese Insurgents. It was camped in the others side of the Maing-Pan Ferry. They crossed the Maing-Pan Ferry by night and marched through the jungles. They reached the Te-Poo camp at 6:00 a.m. And they fought till 10:00 a.m. They all tried hard as much as they could. But they could not lay siege to the enemy, many soldiers were killed. Though the Battalions decided to withdraw from the Battle, Nhkum Tand did not. While his companies were withdrawing, he ran into the enemy's camp. He took eight grenades and thirty rifles-cartridges and approached the inner camp of the enemy easily. Then, he threw two hand grenades into their real bunker. Suddenly, many White-Chinese soldiers came out. At once, he turned to around and shot down the Chinese Major with other four soldiers. Some run away to Ming – Pu Long camp with many wounded. Then, Nhkum Tang cried proudly to his companies, "Victory! Victory!" So the Battalion came back and they captured a lot of weapons, clothes, uniforms and food. The second Battalion Commander Major Ja Naw was given "Thura Award" for that act of bravery. Even though Nhkum Tand was not given any award, he was very proud of himself till today that he had done the best for the country.

In 1954, while he was still a Rifle man, he captured Colonel Kyi Maung the Commander of the Red – Flag (Alan-Ni) Insurgent along with his friend Rileman Dau Lum at Yaw-Chaung. While he was

in Kyaing – Tong in 1954, he was called to take the 4<sup>th</sup> standard examination in Pyin Oo Lwin. Between 1956 – 1957, he attended the Burma Army Education Centre (BAEC) at Mandalay. And he passed the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> standards. Thereafter, he was elected and sent to attend the Military Officer Cadet Training, also called the Officers Training School (OTS), while he was preparing to attend the 10<sup>th</sup> standard. He was trained for six months in Pyin Oo Lwin and other six months in Ba-Htoo. He completed the Officers Training School (OTS) in 1959. Nhkum Tang then was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Burma Army.

Lt. Nhkum Tang, then was to join the 28<sup>th</sup> Burma Regiment at Than Phyu Zayat. In 1962, an unexpected event came to Lt. Nhkum Tang. He got a serious injury. It happened in the battles of Magyi – Si, Jai – Le; Baw – mi battle with the Rakhaing – Burma Communist party led by Naga Naing Tun Aye, Moe Nek and Kyaw Moe around the Sat – Thwa-Chaung, Kala – Peing Chaung and Wah-Chaung. Lt. Nhkum Tang was hit twelve times on his chest and four times at his head. He was seriously wounded in those battles. In 1963, their Battalion was ordered to move from Than – Toi to Hlaing Bwe (Kayin State). After they arrived there they built new fort. They continued to advance to fight the Kayin insurgents who had taken position at the east-west from Hlaing – Bwe and Daw – Na hill. Lt. Nhkum Tang was promoted from Lieutenant to rank of Captain in October 13, 1967. Captain Nhkum Tang then continued to fight in the battle of Tau – Ngue at Pan – Daw – Mi near Hlaing Bwe in 1968. The Battle lasted four hours, again Captain Nhkum Tang lost his left eye and his belly was punctured. Then he was sent to Mingaladone Hospital, Yangon for six months.

As soon as he left the hospital, he was dispatched to another field at battle. He sacrificed so much for their victories and given his best for their fame and reputation. A year later, Captain Nhkum Tang was transferred to Lashio to an Animal Transport Unit in January 1970. Throughout the year of 1970 to 1971 (one years and 12 days), he fought against Burma Communist Party. The battle of Kung-Long (40) days made his highest act of gallantry in that Captain Nhkum Tang was promoted to the rank of Major.

Misfortune came again to Major Nhkum Tang on March 14, 1984. At the battle of Mu Tee fighting the Kayin insurgents, Major Nhkum Tang faced the greatest loss of his life. He was wounded on his right thigh and his left leg was broken by the enemy's bomb. He was sent to Yangon Mingaladon Hospital for ten months. While he was in the hospital, his mother died on December 26, 1984 in Lashio. In 1985, he moved to Lashio to the 41<sup>st</sup> Burma Regiment. There, Major Nhkum Tang was given honorary awards, citations, meritorious awards and certificates from the Government for his selfless service for the Burma Army. He received the Best Citizen Award, the Act of Gallantry Award, Fighting the Foreign Enemy Award, Being Honest Soldier of the Country Award and the Old Soldier Award. He was given those awards at the Aung San Hall of the 41<sup>st</sup> Burma Regiment, in February 1985 at Lashio. Major Nhkum Tang then served as the Chief Judge in Kutkai from 1986 to 1987. There he performed as an ideal judge and he was honored as a "Judge of Justice". Thereafter, he retired from the Army in 1989 at the age of 57. He had been realized that Major Nhkum Tang had given all the best he had. He sacrificed his left eye; left leg, his belly; chest; forehead and all his body as well as his brave heart for the country of Myanmar. He faced for dying in many times and he was closed to death several times but was always delivered from every kind of death-traps. God had led him safely from all impossible situations to gate of life and success.

### **Marriage Life**

Family is a small globe which God has given as a blessing. It is the mission center where God has been working. Major Nhkum Tang married to whom God had chosen as the best half of his life. He married Sayama Hpau Wung Kaw Ja who professional as a nurse in Lashio Hospital, on October 13, 1965. Major Nhkum Tang was just a lieutenant while they got married. They got four daughters and only one son. Though Major Nhkum Tang could not stay together with his family at all the

times through many years, he served his family as much as he could. He gave all his salary to his wife in every month. After retiring from the Army, he lived together with the family and gave all his time and energy for the family. He is a good husband for his wife and a good father for children. He never gives upon himself as a strong man though he becomes a disable man. He works morning till late at night. He emphasizes on the wealth of family seriously, whereas he is a prayerful person. And God blesses him richly and God bestows upon him uncountable blessings. Except his only son who died in 1997 for using drug, the rest of his children became educated persons.

Major Nhkum Tang could build his marriage life as a happy and healthy family according to the will of God. Throughout his life, he is living and serving as a good father. He is standing as the safer – rock of the family. He led the family to free from all kinds of hardships and crisis. He is the spring life for the family. His eldest daughter always claimed that “Our father is our hero; he is our ideal”.

### **Attitudes and Characters**

A remarkable thing about Major Nhkum Tang is his spiritual. As he is a religious and devout man; he is a faithful servant of God. He lives as an ideal Christian life. He has a strong Spiritual Foundation. He exactly believes that the only prayer can be able to help us to solve all the problems and difficulties. He was given and answered many results through praying. He never did anything without praying. He used to free from every kind of death-traps by praying faithfully to God. He accepted and always insisted that *Faith without action is meaningless*. He serves in the Ministry of God as much as he could and give much concern to those who are in need. He lives as a practical-spiritual life. He also affirms that giving offering for the ministry and mission of God is the noblest and highest thing of all. Rev. Hpaula Tu, pastor of Namtu Kachin Baptist Church confirms “Major Nhkum Tang is the most faithful and devout Christian and has rooted in the prayerful life”.

Being a very good in nature, Major Nhkum Tang became a noted person. He is kind and humble and capable of showing great self – confidence. He does not regard himself as superior to his fellow workers and friends. He is practical man. He works every job systematically. The word “laziness” could not be found in his life and he never says a word “tired”. He believes “to live be to work”. He is also a good business man and always thinks of how to make money emphatically. Therefore he is manager, boss and treasure of his family. He leads his family with love and disciplines. As his wife claimed that he is very sensitive in disciplines like the Army even in family. But the statement is attached his lips is that “Be patient, if you want to be successful in your life”. He is non-smoker and never drinks and hates gambling. He is very proud of his honesty and simple – minded. Major Aung Myo once claimed that Major Nhkum Tang is very simple man who stands on his honesty and is a very good in Morality. We rarely see him lying sick in bed. He valued the time and usually woke up early and a bath is every morning. He builds his life on his own philosophy. He always realizes and examines himself with his life experiences and with a lot of questions the way to have successful in life and maturity. He is very sociable and can make friend easily and sincerely. He enjoys talking and discussing with people. once his wife said, “He may be in good health when he could talk a lot but unless he talk, he became unhappy and may get sick and while he is talking, he forgot everything even meal”.

At the present, he is extending his work in some towns and some villages such as Lashio, Kutkai and Namtu are the main emphasis fields. Pang Nang and E – Nai are the main fields. As he loves his nations, he collects some youths from different situations and different locations such Namtu, Mandung, Nampaka, E – Nai, Kutkai, MungKu, Myitkyina, Inn Daw Gyi, Moe Myek, Lashio, Kunglong etc and trained them to drive and work with mechanic. He sets up mechanic workshops for them. Moreover, having been an Army Officer, he understands Las and Constitutions so he is very helpful and has ability and experiences to deal with government police. Therefore, he can do a

lot for his church in certain fields such as constructions church buildings. He also has a wide knowledge of agriculture, herbal medicine and handicraft. Now he is writing about the herbal medicine and does the herbal medicine. He cures many people with his medicine.

He always thinks of trying to be a good ideal person for the coming generations. He stands and speaks for justice and peace and cries out for the oppressed, exploited and marginalized. Therefore, he gives speech to the young at Christian Endeavor Service in Lashio Church and also in University Christian Fellowship whenever he is invited. The writer does not dare to hope to meet again this kind of person in new generations. Indeed, this kind of person like Major Nhkum Tang is urgent need to build a sound community.

#### References:

Nhkum Ja Bu, *Research Paper on Understanding on the Sacrificial Life*. March, 2003.

Nhkum Tang, *Autography of Major Nhkum Tang*. 2006.

#### *Commentary*

*The life story of the Major is especially impressive because of the matter-of-fact depiction of the different stages of the Burmese civil war into which Nhkum Tang was sent by his superior officers. He was a 'brave soldier' who never questioned the sense of his actions. In this he is a typical representative of the Tatmadaw, the army of Burma, that in its self-understanding is the guarantee of the unity and sovereignty of Burma/Myanmar.*

*This sober approach is also characteristic for the description of the private and Christian virtues of the 'hero' of this biography, who is very clearly highly admired by the author. The reader of this biography would very much like to know how the private person Nhkum Tang coped with the death of his only son, which is remarkably drily reported. Presumably he accepted this blow with his own soldierly and spiritual discipline as a painful but not-to-be-questioned event and continued to do his duty in service to the community.*



## Bhikkhu Seveka @ Ko Ko Naing (born 1938)

by Nathanayla

*Editor of the German version: Peter Tachau*

### *Introduction*

*Bhikkhu Seveka, or Ko Ko Kaing, has two names because he is at home in both religions, in Buddhism and in Christianity. In this he belongs to the few scholars of the country who can name the differences and commonalities of the religions. For Christians he is a crown witness for inter-religious dialogue. In this biography his double career is described, which is rounded out with a poetic perspective on his double life, that he wrote himself for this interview.*

### **Early Age**

Ko Ko Naing, a third son of U Paw Naing and Daw Aye Nyein, was born at Wet Khae village, Ayardaw Township, Moneywa District, Sagain Division, at 12:00 noon on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1938. He began learning monastic education by reading *Pali*<sup>9</sup> scripts at the monastery in his native village. He unfortunately had never learned secular education in his early age.

In 1952, he became a *Bhikkhu*<sup>10</sup>, and he went on studying of *Pali* at the Letha *Pariyati*<sup>11</sup> Seminary Propagation Center, Kyauk Sae Township, Mandalay Division. He became a *Buddhist* monk in this Seminary in 1957. He finished his *Pitakka*<sup>12</sup> examination from the famous *Pali* Universities in Monywa, Mandalay, Yangon, Mawlamyaing, Yay, Davoy during the year 1952 to 1962. Since that time, he gave lectures as a visiting lecturer throughout the country and also accumulating general knowledge of regions, until 1969. In 1965, he was conferred “*Sasana Dhammacariya*”<sup>13</sup> from Mandalay Examination Center. He had the chance to study higher Buddhist Philosophy in detail as he passed Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Learner Class examination in *Pali* scripts.

He mostly read the *Buddhist* literatures which were written by Buddhist lay scholars. However, he was interested and concentrated in concepts and definitions especially Myanmar translation books from western perspective which are given by the western scholars regarding the *Buddhist* literature and studies them emphatically. By this way, he came to understand more on the *Buddha*'s teachings philosophically and historically. He could understand the teachings of *Buddha* from *Buddhists*' scholars who received the *Buddha*'s teaching in the period of *Buddha* as they described as followed.

- A.** Just as one should turn up that which is upside down.
- B.** Just as one should lay bare that which is concealed.
- C.** Just as one should tell the way who has lost his way.

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<sup>9</sup>*Pali* is the Magadha language in which the words of the Buddha are record.

<sup>10</sup> *Bhikkhu* is the term applied to fully ordained member of the *Buddha*'s Order and also who lives by accepting food offered.

<sup>11</sup> *Pariyati*, is education in the Buddhist Scriptures or ‘learning the doctrine’, the ‘wording of the doctrine’. In the ‘progress of the disciple’, 3 stages may be distinguished: theory, practice, realization, i.e. (1) learning the wording of the doctrine (*pariyatti*), (2) practicing it (*papipatti*), (3) penetrating it (*papivedha*) and realizing its goal. *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (1980), s. v. “pariyatti”.

<sup>12</sup> *Pitakka*- n, repository of the *Buddha*'s teachings originated as the *Sutta* – discourses, *Vinaya*- monastic code of conduct and *Abhidhamma* – higher doctrines.

<sup>13</sup> Teacher of *Pali* scriptural text.

**D.** Just as one should hold a lamp into the dark so that he might see things.

At the same time, whenever he saw the books of *Buddha's Desana*<sup>14</sup> written in English, made him to have a strong desire to read those books and also to learn English. As he had experiences for learning and lecturing the *Buddha's Desana* written in *Pali* most in the monasteries compound in his age from 6 to 35, he tried to study general knowledge and literatures by himself. By this way, he got a new idea and more knowledge about the *Buddha* teaching from English to Myanmar translation books. After that he realized that he really needed to read and learn original idea, thinking and philosophy of *Buddhist Dhamma*<sup>15</sup> in English and to be able to read in English. He therefore tried to learn from any teachers and any books available in the most effective way to study English.

After securing the title *Bhikkhu Sevaka*<sup>16</sup> who has the attributes of Abbot, he was offered to minister as an abbot in Wetkha village, Ayardaw township. But he refused this to be settled as an abbot and left away for those who needed him because he was very willing to learn English systematically from the experts in English. Fortunately without having any intention he reached as a guest in Min Kyaung Monastery, Taunggyi, city of Southern Shan State where he has never been to.

When he was there, he was offered to do teaching and preaching works by the abbot, and he was willing to do these responsibilities. Soon he got an opportunity to be friend to the one poor old couple who were Mon, former monk and also Christian minister living nearby Min Kyaung monastery. He had fellowship, helping and sharing with them as they needed. From his knowledge and experience of monkhood, he could not classify to make *sahajata*<sup>17</sup> the word "Christian", "English", and "*Micchaditthi*"<sup>18</sup>. Later, the old man helped him when he asked to learn English.

In 1970, he was introduced to a Baptist pastor Rev. U Than Pe, who had lived abroad and specialized in English. In order to learn English quickly and effectively Pastor U Than Pe and *Bhikkhu Sevaka* agreed to learn from 8:00 to 9:00 am 5 days per week, selecting the Four Gospels from the New Testament of King James Version as their text. Because of his faithfulness and attentiveness, within six months he could manage over many vocabularies and Christian ideology. As a teacher, Pastor U Than Pe first corrected his accent, but never discussed Christianity in support. He just tried to fulfill his strong desire of priest *Bhikkhu Seveka* in his teaching of English. Priest *Bhikkhu Seveka* accepted and respected his teaching more and more as he come to realize how pure the heart of his teacher was.

During seven months from June to December 1970, he could memorize and read by heart the four gospels both English and Burmese version as he had experiences of the Buddhist monk. By the goodwill of Rev. U Than Pe and together with his efforts, he could do the research works of

(a) *Ekodhammo* (Letter to Father – about A4 3 pages)

(b) Who is Jesus? (Essay – about A4 2 pages)

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14 *Desana*, n. Lord *Buddha's* expositions (these are termed as a) *anadesana* – the *vinnaya pitaka* in which exposition embody the form of laying down commandments; b) *voharadesana* – the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* in which expositions are in the form of abstract terms pertaining to ultimate realities; or in another way a) *pan}n}atti desana* - (*sammuti desana*) – expositions employing conventionally recognizable objects such as human beings, deities, monks, parents, mentors and likes; b) *paramatha desana* – expositions on abstract realities such as consciousness, mind, material phenomena, abstract properties etc.

15 *Dhamma* means the Law or Doctrine, containing the essential and immutable principles of Justice and truth, and the path that leads to the realization of perfect peace, the complete cessation of all sorrow. Ashin Thittila, *Essential Themes of Buddhist lectures* (Yangon: Department of Religious Affairs, 2000), 203 – 204.

16 *Seveka* which literally means "Suffering Servant".

17 *Sahajata* means co- existence.

18 *Micchaditthi* – n, perverted outlook; wrong belief.

- (c) An Epic about the life of Jesus Christ and his ministry (in Burmese), which is the longest epic among the Myanmar epics, made of 2830 lines, 1872 stanzas 7488 words in three sections out of the Gospels.

### His Conversion

While he was studying English words and sentences structure, he considered one verse of the Bible. He concentrated that verse and read again and again. Is *Dhamma* the thing that can be put as object of the sentence? Is the person who practices *Dhamma*, put as subject of the sentence? The first thing he saw and understood is “I’m the way, the truth, and the life”.

There are so many ‘I’, ‘*Atta*’, and who is he? Who is the Father? English is not difficult to learn. His perseverance and effort of studying made him satisfied his learning desire during short time to an extent. He could read the books he had wanted. But he discussed the four questions marks with the pastor. The pastor had never talked about the *Dhamma*, explained him well about the confusing things or facts. He remembered one verse of *Lawka Nitti* learned from monastery. This verse is

A Wise man, unless he be asked is silent like an unbeaten drum. However, if he be asked, speak out like a thunderous stormy rain.

The pastor broadly discussed about God, commandments, and ethics in details. The Pastor also keep for a long time and explained about incarnation, God’s compassion and love by the life of Jesus (in his teaching, preaching and healing), the existence the seeds of sin in humankind, everybody can turn to do evil by it, the impossibility of man to approach God by having the seed of sin in their mind, Jesus reveal himself as the way (*magga*) that can send people to God, reveal himself as Truth or righteousness that can change their latent defilement by the great mercy, and revealing himself as life since he can give lives to people who are selfish, follow the worldly things and died in their spiritual lives.

After he had discussed with pastor, his attention was changed. He more emphasized theology (study about God) than terminology (studying language). He considered and meditated the four words which are seeds of sin, God’s mercy, latent defilement and faith upon grace again by again. It can be understood that the seed of sin is the very similar to *Karma Vipaka*<sup>19</sup>. Christ described as a person who can break the consequence of *Karma Vipaka*. Fate is the law that anyone can not break. It can be understood that the effect of action, good or bad, can be forbidden or happened by God’s grace and mercy not by action.

At the same time, he also considered that the message he meditated since his childhood and monkhood with all his effort and time was ‘to be free from the whirlpool of *Samsara*<sup>20</sup>. To enjoy *Nirvāṇa* is here and now.

There are 227 ways for the monks to keep their dignity and ethics in their monkhood. If it is counted in details, there can be more than 90 000 000 000. It is really difficult to keep 227 ways. The more culture civilize the more difficult to keep the dignity in priest life. The seed of sin became growth if the dignity is not kept. The wise monks always think of themselves about their real situation.

For three months later, he was very tempted by Jesus who is waiting for him to remove the danger

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19 *Karma Vipaka* is the result or effect of desire or pleasure. *A Pali – Myanmar Dictionary of the Noble Words of the Lord Buddha* (2007), s. v. “Karma Vipaka”.

20 *Samsara* is the unbroken chain of the five – fold *khandha* combinations, which, constantly changing from moment to moment follow continuously one upon the other through inconceivable periods of time. Of this *samsara*, a single lifetime constitutes only a tiny and fleeting fraction; hence to be able to comprehend the first noble truth of universal suffering, one must let one’s gaze rest upon the *samsara*, upon this frightful chain of rebirths, and not merely upon one single life-time, which, of course, may be sometimes less painful.

to the way *Nirvāṇa*. He left his monkhood from Shwe Man monastery, Satkhu, Mandalay Division at 4:00 pm in the evening on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1971. Then he was baptized by Rev. U Than Pe, his English teacher on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1971. He became a full member of Taunggyi Christian Baptist Church (now Myoma Union Baptist Church).



### **His Seminary Life**

U Ko Ko Naing who had been *Bhikkhu Seveka* and got the opportunity to study new religion from studying English language, he started his theological knowledge both from the perspectives of Arts and Science at Burma Divinity School (Now Myanmar Institute of Theology) in Yangon by the support of his pastor and mother church. From 1971 – 1976, he could understand the Bible and related subject such as Old and New Testament, its theology, Missiology, Psychology, Philosophy, etc. in English version not by parrot and pietistic learning. He took 27 main subjects to fulfill his theological course within four years. He earned his B Th. Degree in March 1976.

### **His Works**

After the completion of the studies at the Burma Divinity School in 1976 he served his Lord by working as a lecturer for 10 years from 1976 to 1986 at the Southern Shan State Union Baptist Theological Seminary in Taunggyi. In 1979, he got married to a nurse Naw Ka Paw Say who is from Shwe Toe village, Kyar Inn Seikkyi, Kayin State. They had three sons: Maung Myo Aung Naing, Maung Myo Thein Naing, and Maung Myo Than Naing.



*The Baptist Southern Shan State Theological Seminary*

From 1987 to 1990, he was appointed as the General Secretary of Southern Shan State Baptist Convention. Due to his poor health and his family concerns he resigned from full time service in 1990. In the meantime, the question which came in his mind was, ‘have you finished your work?’

He served as a fulltime lecturer for Buddhism studies at Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology and at the same time also a part time lecturer at Myanmar Institute of Theology from 1994 – 1997. In 1998 he started his research work for Christian- Buddhist studies at his Grace Home in Taunggyi. By the studies

of traditional Theravada Buddhism or systematically study about theology from Myanmar Institute of Theology in various perspectives made him more clearly like ‘an elephant going in the field’ for doing research on Christian – Buddhist studies.

He therefore could prepare a first book on Buddhism which can be used for the seminaries in Myanmar. This book is based from the philosophy and theology which he got from the teaching experience on Buddhism at two theological institutes and their urgent needs. He also could implement the predict of his teacher Rev. U Than Pe, which says:

“*Bhikkhu!* One day you will make mutual understanding between Buddhism and Christianity or the world religions by your knowledge of religious education which you received from *Pitaka* and Bible.”

### **Dharma Research Center**

In 2000, he began a discussion with Dr. Myint Maung who is living in Canada. By the Grace of God and encouragements of Dr. Myint Maung, he could establish the *Dharma Research Center* at His Grace Home, No. 42/43, Nay Chi Street, Yay Aye Kwin Quarter in Taunggyi on September 9, 2002 for the main purpose of Buddhist- Christian research. Even though nobody has done before and without enough financial support he runs, the *Dharma Research Center* by himself.

During seven years (2002 – 2009), he could publish his research works on many philosophical books and on Buddhist – Christian studies. Among his research works, the book on “*Nat Shing Naung Diary*” is the significant one on which he was conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity (Honorific Causal) from Reading the World Bible College in affiliation of International College of Bible Theology (USA).

### **A Person in Two Life and Two Religions**

The self – portrait poem by Dr. Ko Ko Naing.

<b>HE</b>	<b>HE</b>
<i>Bhikkhu Seveka</i>	Dr. Ko Ko Naing
• Thirty years been spent To learn by heart ABC Once worn yellow Born he in a Corner	The church saw him bent to master terminology but changed a fellow brought up by a farmer
• <i>Okasa Okasa</i> <i>Arahan Arahan</i> Never been to school Even a blunt sword be sharp Though he aware of Ph. D.	God forgive him alas! beads counted golly gram, but BDS urged him to do, when the Lord whet to cut, Lo! He invents theology:
• Container or contents Law of Lord – Lord of Law Piety is our shell Concord is religion Common is God	which is more important? all His holly call but purity is inner cell, conflict is superstition, confined is “God”

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Hair to hairless                  | it is not a net,                  |
| Mercy, Charity and Love           | all is holy word.                 |
| • Dialogue partners prosper       | That is glorious Burma,           |
| Gospel is love story              | but is told in prejudice,         |
| Yellow turn the author,           | who tries vice versa,             |
| Sons of Lord – sons of God        | should love mutual lots,          |
| Reader of this “ <i>dassana</i> ” | may try to be “ <i>sahajata</i> ” |

*Commentary*

*Participants in inter-religious dialogue report that such dialogue takes place on four levels, which should not be mixed with each other. These are the levels of 1) common life together, 2) the shared social and political activity, 3) the spiritual, and 4) doctrine or teachings. The story of Bhikkhu Seveka's life plays out on the level of teachings, where in Myanmar not much takes place. Two observations appear important.*

*Two observations appear important: Being familiar with local Buddhist views, his interest in English texts brings him into contact with Western perceptions of the religion that come out from a Christian or even atheist context. On the level of religious dialogue on doctrinal matters, he has however no contact with Buddhists from neighbouring countries like the famous Thai scholar-monk Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. Furthermore, there is no contact with Mahayana traditions mentioned or with Burmese Buddhists who taught Westerners Vipassana meditation like his fellow countryman U Ba Khin. Finally, he had no opportunity to learn about the rich experiences from interreligious dialogues within the ecumenical movement. His contributions to Buddhist-Christian dialogue in Myanmar thus reflects the lifel on a dialogue island, so to speak.*

*A second observation: He finds points of contact in both religions. He senses that the core concepts, such as 'God' and 'dhamma' have something to do with each other. This leads him to a double identity, which he expresses in the poem at the end.*

*The author of this biography explains in the original many Buddhist technical terms and adds a broad list of mostly Burmese writings by Bhikkhu Seveka. Both are omitted here. (One of the English works of Sevekas is *Sahajatadhamma Dassana/ Co-Nascence Theology* from 1998-2000).*

**Melvin Eway (born 1941)**  
**A Glimpse at the Life and Work of the Iron Man**

by Saw Hto Lwi Htoo

*Editor of the German version: Peter Tachau*

*Introduction*

*The Student Christian Movement (SCM) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) are important institutions in Myanmar, as they have been for a longer time already. One of the authoritative personalities in this movement is Melvin Eway, born in 1941. He enjoys highest respect, not only within the circles of this youth movement but also far beyond that. The following biography, so sweeping it may sound in some places, tries to show the reasons that have led to the YMCA's reputation.*

Whoever has been to Yezin, east of Pyinmana, in Naypyidaw today, Rev. Dr. Melvin Eway (the Melvin) would be the person one will never forget for his hospitality, social work and outlook for the ministry in the area. One would be amazed with the fact that a beautiful white church is standing firm in the middle of the Buddhists village for over 30 years. Even after the existence of the Christian community church in the village with the very few number of church members, most are the guest church goers who have their business in the area and those work in the nearby universities and research institutes. University students also have their home away church where their spiritual nourishment is fulfilled. As a whole, the whole figure is ecumenism and oneness which bind all together with the cord of love. God wonderful plan and the yielding life of Melvin to that plan make Yezin a wonderful place of harmony and Christian love.

Born to Saw Eway and Naw Ruby in October 24, 1941, Thra Melvin Eway is the second last son out of 10 children in the Bwe Karen family of Thandaungyi in Taungoo district. Rather than having particular aim to become and achieve something, his determination since childhood has been to work for the Karen people and the community. That determination is so strong and could never be made unsteady or rocked but make him moving lifelong. His view on life is unique and clearly identified. "One must be engaged to a work at any time" is his awareness. It seems like life is full of work for him which he is much aware of to do at his every moment. No wonder whoever encounter him would join him in his that moment task. When asking about what he does at his spare time, his reply was "thinking about another work". "Changing the task is a kind of rest" absolutely fits him.



*Melvin is the man on the right*

He is a person of fewer words but of more in action. The evidence of the determination was seen when he quitted his medical study in 1962 in his second year and switched his discipline to History with no regret but just go forward in his endeavor for his people and community. He graduated from Rangoon University in 1966. He again joined the divinity school in 1972 for his B. RE. Degree.

He got married to Naw Marina Paul, his love at first sight and ever after in 1971 to him 3 sons were given. She has been his

perfect life partner in every way and every day. It would be hard to see the couple going singly in most occasions. They are meant for each other for better or for worse.

On the question of the persons who had influence in his life, he replied “Jesus is after all”. It is very interesting that one who once got influenced by the revolutionaries and politicians such as, V. Lenin, J. Stalin and F. Castro yielded himself to Christ and the ministry at last. He heard the voice calling him from above and serves him loyally. He made himself a useful tool for the mighty service through which many great things have been achieved. Good friends mean a lot to him in his life and work and among them, Dr. Wah Htoo, Thra Gideon Shwe, Thra Say Heh are the prominent. But the one who has much impact is Thra Gideon with whom he worked together as university students. He said Thra Gideon was the best friend he’s ever had and he was there always to be encouraging, helping and guiding for him. Working in the students’ Christian Movement, they have common mission and interest which make them the pillars of Myanmar Student Christian Movement (SCM) till now.

As the Institute of Agriculture was moved from Mandalay to Yezin in 1973, there was as urgent need for care taking of the new compound of SCM to which Thra Melvin was sent by Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC). He started the journey and never looked back yet introduced the humanity work of Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and made it settled till present in the area. With the nursing care given to the Malaria prone community by Thramu Marina, his social work for the community was highly appreciated by the locals making YMCA flourishing in and around Yezin.



*Main Gate of Yezin Agricultural University*

For his endeavor and hard work, he was awarded a honorary doctorate degree for his humanity work in 2010.

#### *Commentary*

*Only briefly mentioned are the various sources that have moulded the spiritual armory of Melvin Eway. It is amazing that beside the Christian tradition ('Jesus') also the classics of the international political Left (Castro, Lenin, Stalin) find mention. At any rate, Melvin Eway finds his home in the YMCA and the Student Christian Movement, which are also in Myanmar quite influential. Similar mixtures of sources are found as well in many American and West European countries. We can be curious about the discussions in Myanmar of the present about how the different influences belong together or remain distinguishable.*



## Dr. Anna May Chain (born 1942)

by Chan Myae Kyi Phyu and Anna May Chain

*Theological education in a growing academic context*

1 Chan Myae Kyi Phyu

She was born on March 29, 1942 in Ywa Plaw village, near Pathein. Her parents were Dr. Ba Than Chain and Naw Lucy Htoo, and she is the youngest among eight siblings. Three siblings passed away so now there are only five – namely Dr. Clifford Chain, U Tun Aung Chain, Dr. Cynthia Chain, U Richard Aung Mya Chain and Dr. Anna May Chain. She is a Baptist Christian. She believes that God is the savior who leads us, guides us, loves us and shows us the way through Jesus Christ. Everyone is a child of God equally loved by God. God is both the father and mother of everyone. Christ gave his life for all human beings. In response to the love of Christ, human beings are to help, guide and save others as the Master has done. We know God in our own ways. Our ancestors knew God through creations such as sky, earth, sun, moon, mountains and trees, and they rely on them, and pray to them for help. All religions seek their own ways and try to approach God. Therefore, every religion is a means of seeking God and having relationship with God. As human beings seek God to gain the value of life, every religion should understand and have mutual respect for each other and work together.

### Family Life

In 1966, she got married to Saw Say Pa, an officer in Trade and Commerce Ministry, and became Anna May Say Pa. They were blessed with a son – Danar Tu Saw and a daughter Chalarah Paw Pa. Danar got married to Aye Myat Thu @ Naw Sharlu and are expecting a baby soon, whereas Chalarah got married to Mr. Peter Leen and they have received two daughters: Ariane and Aedra.

### Education and Work Experience

She attended Kindergarten at St. Joseph Convent. Due to Karen Insurrection, her family moved to Yangon and she continued to study until her matriculation in the Methodist English High School (No. 1, State High School, Dagon Township), which was a mission school.<sup>21</sup> After that she joined the Rangoon Arts and Science University in 1958. When she got her Bachelor Degree in 1962, she joined Burma Divinity School (now Myanmar Institute of Theology) from 1962 to 1964. At that time Burma Divinity offered only the Bachelor of Theology Degree and there was no program for post graduates. Therefore, she and her friend Marcheta Thaw made an appeal through Ms. Alice Mae Simmons to the school to offer a post-graduate program. It was then decided that the Bachelor of Religious Education program will be offered provided there be at least 6 students. They were able to find 5 more friends and the program was started. The first batch of graduates were Rev. Victor San Lone, Grace Hla, and the two of them. Immediately after her graduation, she was appointed to be a teacher at BDS with the coming up of the military regime, the missionary sensed that they would have to leave soon and that national leaders would have to take over, so she was



*Methodist High School in the 1950s*

<sup>21</sup> The most famous student of the school is Aung San Suu Kyi.

given the opportunity to co-teach with Rev. William Win, the Old Testament subject in which she was most interested. When the missionaries left, she became a full-time teacher in Old Testament subject.

In 1974, a correspondence program was offered by South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, a member of the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, where she and some friends were enrolled. It was a time when the nationals could not leave Myanmar, so the courses were taught and supervised by teachers who came in once or twice a year, and each visit lasted only two weeks. She specialized in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies. She was one of the first batches of Master of Theology graduates in 1977 together with Sayama Esther Byu, Rev. Victor San Lone, Saya Pe Thwin and Saya Johny Maung Latt. In 1979, she joined Princeton Theological Seminary University in New Jersey for her Master of Theology Degree accompanied by her whole family. From 1980-89, she did her Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Old Testament. As soon as she arrived back in Myanmar in 1989, she resumed her work at MIT as a Vice-Principal as well as a lecturer. She served as the Principal of MIT from 1998–2006. In 2000, she founded Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies (Liberal Arts Program), Summer Language School and Doing Theology under the Bo Tree (International Seminar). Moreover, between 2000 and 2008, she got the opportunity to establish Judson Research Center and Peace Studies Center.

### **Life Struggle**

She was only 7 years old at the Karen Insurrection and she had experienced the life of a captive in prison and in refugee camp. Those were difficult time however, being the daughter of a medical daughter, she enjoyed a good and pleasant life without any economic problems. When she studied in America, she experienced all types of problems and struggles. There were financial problems, study problems, adjustment problems. Specializing in Old Testament studies, she was required to study Hebrew, Greek, German and French. There were times when she would like to give up and return to Myanmar. She was in, despair because she could not give enough time to her family. However, her husband encouraged and supported her, and her children caused no problem in the midst of permissive and open – sex community. This was an encouragement that had helped her to earn her Ph.D. degree.



### **Beneficial Impact of the Circumstances**

Ever since we were at the age of twelve, Mercheta and I read the Holy Bible, vowing God that we would serve Him as missionaries. Until now, with her we have been training together promising God to serve Him in whichever way possible to ... and in spite of going my own way at time, I have committed myself to do undertaking the service entrusted upon me by God. It so happened that while at the seminary, the first president (principal) was Dr. Chit Maung a(see biography 9) nd working with him were few teachers. There were only five staff members. Two were from abroad. At the seminary there were Dr. Chit Maung, Thra Thar Loo and myself. I enjoyed working there. Dr. Chit Maung was first mostly in his administration and management of the seminary. There were altogether only two students. I was twenty-two when I joined the seminary school as a teaching staff-member. I have to teach students aged varying from twenty to twenty-five. There were very few under twenty. In spite of that teacher – students relationship developed in a healthy atmosphere. They had been co-operative and supportive all the time. There were times when I had not been able to answer promptly what student asked. Frankly, I told them I would search for the answers and gave them the next day. I even requested them to help me if they had the answers with them. All along and until now I have never encountered students who have confronted me with contempt. I have found it easy the conduct myself as a teacher properly and I have to admit through the cooperation of the student and the support. I have received from the staff member. I have to try hard and the student had been considerate and patient. Of course, I had to struggle, when I became the principal of the Institute. I had never been reluctant to go to work when I woke up. There were times when I was so tired and I have wished to stay home. However, every day going to school had been exciting. Work has never been boring. I became the principal not because I had talent. I did not have the ability either. Nobody had taught me the administration. I can only teach. However, as I started working I had to look for funds for myself. I had found it difficult to ask for it from my parents. I felt rather full of compunction to utter a word. However, when it came to seek funding for my students I made great effort in accomplishing our targeted mission. I knew that people were struggling hard to make ends meet. In spite of that, we, staff members of the institute, had to struggle for the sake of our students. There were times, when we found it very hard and heavy hearted to asked for donation. However, experience had taught me how to make approaches or learn how to get contributions from the public. I acknowledge the understanding and cooperation of Saya Sang Awr, U Aye Min and other staff members. We work together as a unit harmoniously I have learned that we can learn to achieve ant task that we have never been familiar with. As such we have found that work can be enjoyable. My first affinity has always been teaching. As a principal I have devote much of time administration and have very little time in teaching which that was rather frustrating.

There has been times when I had to visit remote areas of a district. I found that due to the effort of pastors, churches concerned had made much progress. When I witnessed such spiritual unity and pleasantness, it made me very happy. They were my students who had dedicated their lives at remote villages. They have been able to achieve spiritual growth. That has made me very happy. As an example, there has been a pastor/ teacher. She has been handicapped because her legs have not been very strong. She began a programme for differently-able women like her and that programme has brought about to the society. Beside there has been some income for those women. They have come to possess some money of their own. I have also learned of the success of old students working for *Alin Ain* magazine. There are those who were once my students engaged in NGOs. I have heard of my students who have devoted their lives to mission work in border areas.

There have also been distinguished Alumni without degrees who have immersed themselves in rural area and villages' afar undertaking changes in churches and communities. No news about them and

their where about remain unheard of. They might not be remembered in the MIT circle. However, they have accomplished much. That has brought joy and satisfaction to me even though I have been, in a way, indirectly involved through their endeavors. For every work there has been difficulty. At first there were only 100 intakes and there had been unity. There were Karens, Burmese, Chin, Kachin and a few Lahus. Now the number has grown to 1000. They are multi racial from all denominations from all walks of life. Formally there were only five or six teaching staff members. The number has increased to forty, fifty. With changes there have arising many problems.

As a Karen and the principal I cannot be partial to only the Karen anymore. They must be the most suitable equity on my part, especially in making decisions. It is my responsibility to maintain the Academic Excellence of the institute. It is the only institute that offers theology (M. Div.) and Liberal arts (BARS) program. To uphold the quantity and quality of studentship is not as easy. It is hard to maintain Academic Excellence. It involved financial problems. Post graduates who had Master and Ph.D. degrees abroad have been paid less than what a Nurse Aid has been paid. It has been found while a Nurse Aid has been getting one lakh and above, we have to try hard to pay our staff member 50,000 kyats to 60,000 kyats for teaching our students. We have not been able to pay them for what they deserve. Sufficient accommodation could not be offered to our students. In spite of such hardships and inability to meet the requirements, it has been found that there has been some success. There have been people who appreciate but more who don't when new programmes have been introduced. When BARS programme, a liberal arts programme has been introduced approaches has to be made to Myanmar Baptist Convention Executive Committee members individually. They had to be convinced and the issued had to be put to vote, there were even alumni who protest. Whenever some new programme has been introduced majority would not accept it. We had to try hard to have it through. The issue had to be put through open discussions to make thing clear and acceptable. Doubts about any new programme still exist and questions have to be answered. Various explanations had to be made to put financial problems through.

There has never been MIT Sunday before. Various methods have to solve financial issues. Students of MIT were sent out to convince the importance of the institution to have MIT Sunday Fund Raising Programme. In order to finance the institution various methods have to be employed. We have networking service with foreign organizations. We send out numerous emails and by doing many people have come appreciate our requirement. There have been problems that cannot be solved. We have not been able to get the permission to introduce political education. The library we have does not possess international standard teaching. When compared with South East Asia universities, is still below standard. For that, there still much to strive for.

#### The Future Visions

Since BARS programme is still under the theology department, we hope to raise it to the status of a university. Although Thailand does not have one percent of Christians, a Christian university has been instituted/established due to the fact that there has been strong financial backing and proper administration management. There are various Departments, Liberal Arts Department, Theological Department, Engineering Department, and many other faculties. For us, we have a vision that one day Myanmar Institute of Theology will become a place of learning with respective departments. It is hoped that a Feminist Theology school would come into existence. It is also hoped that Myanmar's Theology Institute would be able to establish Feminist Theology. Beside it is hoped that later on Liberal Arts students might come to be well established with Computer Labs to get involves in scientific activities that might bring about benefits to the nation. There is also a vision that computer science students will be in the position of soft – ware production leading to inventive and competitive in students undertaking computer science course.

## Naw Ruth (born 1946)

by Thuzar Thein

*Editor of the German version: Peter Tachau*

### *Introduction*

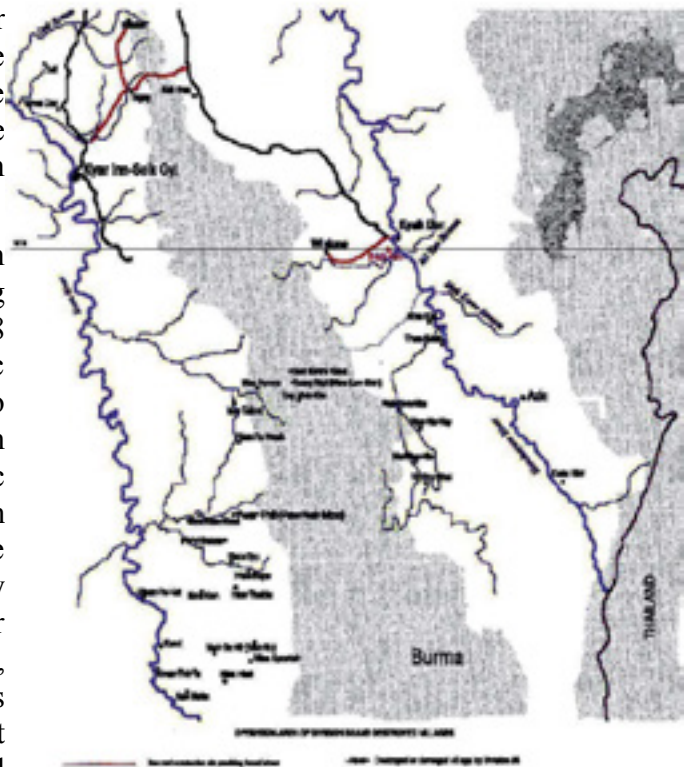
*The importance of education and training in a country that will not or cannot provide for them is shown by the example of the woman described here: a gifted pedagogue and educational manager, who passes on her abilities and her commitment to subsequent generations of teachers and thereby develops unusual methods. She builds on her own responsibility schools where development requires it, and they are hard-fought, almost in a literal sense, since she must first grapple with the Army about them. The author of the English biography is enthusiastic and does not hide his admiration. Can he pass this on to his western readers?*

Naw Ruth was born to U Saw K'lay Htoo and Daw Moo Khin who are both Karen Christians, on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1946 in Kyar Inn Seikkyi village located in Kyar Inn Seikkyi Township, Karen State. She is the sixth daughter amongst her seven siblings. The name of her husband is U Tin Myint and they have got four children.

She was baptized by Rev. U Chit Tun at the age of 15 in 1961. Her mother church was Kyar Inn Karen Baptist Church where she served her youth through singing praise and worship songs, participating in Church choir and working as a Religious Education teacher. She is currently working for the Kyar Inn Karen Baptist Church as one of the leading roles.

She finished her middle school in Kyar Inn Seikkyi village where she had also attended her first elementary school. And starting from the academic year of 1963, she studied at the Sagaing Development College and she graduated from there with the round one in 1966 – 1967.

She worked as an elementary school teacher in the middle school of Kyar Inn Seikkyi starting from the academic year of 1967–68 to 1977–78 and then she shifted to the No. 2 Basic Education Elementary School where she also worked as an elementary school teacher from 1978 to 1980. And she applied to No.3 Basic Education Elementary School and worked there for two academic years until 1982. By the time she had already moved to three elementary schools, and got a posting for another elementary school in Kyakhetchaung village, Kyar Inn Seikkyi Township in 1983, she was assigned to be the headmistress of that elementary school and she worked there until the academic year of 1988 – 1989. Moreover,



*Map of Kyaw Inn Seik Gyi township located at the Myanmar-Thai border*

she repositioned and worked as the headmistress of Mingalakone village Basic Elementary school until the academic year of 1997. She retired in 1997.

Throughout her career as a teacher for 30 years, she made tremendous efforts to boost the education standard of the surrounding area where almost every villager was illiterate. And her endeavors can be seen especially when she was working for the Kyakhetchaung village school and tried to cooperate with the Principal Monk of the village named U Wee Dak on the project of establishing a new building for the elementary school. And their project was successful as it was the focal necessity for the villagers. Kyakhetchaung village is in a diagonal shape through which a rivulet named Kyakhet flows that gets wild and turbulent in the rainy season, making it difficult for the kids to cross from one side to another.

Given the fact there were increasing number of kids each year, Naw Ruth sensed a need to build a new elementary school at the upper side of the village. She submitted a proposal to the governor and she was granted 10,000 kyats which was barely enough for purchasing some poles and roof. So she had to finish the rest of the building process by collaborating with U Wee Dak with the help of the villagers. And the school was termed No. 2 Basic Education Elementary school Kyakhetchaung. Since then, the students had little obstacles on their path to education.

Back then, there were some villages with no formal education system nor schools according to the four “cuts” instructed by the Karen Armed Forces and they shut down a great number of schools. Naw Ruth pleaded to the Karen Armed Forces that the closed schools be allowed to open again. Through her attempts at negotiating with the authorities, she managed to reopen some schools in Mee Laung Chaung, Nat Chaung Phya, Kyong Sein, Ong tabin, Tulekong, and Paw Daw Mu. And the kids regained access to education.

It was not easy for the students who had finished the elementary school to join to Middle School and High School in Kyar Inn Seikkyi. Transportation in the rainy season was hardly possible. Naw Ruth therefore thought of a way to found a middle school in her village and the authorities agreed with her idea and they planned to upgrade the formerly elementary school Kyakhetchaung to No.1 Basic Education Middle School Kyakhetchaung, thus leaving the kids in the area with little difficulty in their learning process.

Since her position as a headmistress of an elementary school did not go well with that of a middle school, she repositioned to Mingalakon Basic Education Elementary school as the new headmistress in 1991. She spent the rest of her career life at the Mingalakon Elementary school and took pension in 1997.



After resigning from work, she did some business on wood for one year. And she realized the nature of transportation, and the general geographic location of the area. She had the chance of working together and becoming acquaintances with the authority figures from both side: Burmese army and the Karen army. She even served as a guide to the gospel team made up of youth leaders from 17 Karen Baptist Constituencies in 1999. Surely her experiences from doing business on timber and wood did pay off that time. Since then, Naw Ruth ended her timber business and has been working as a gospel preacher up to now. One of the main features and goals of the gospel team in which she is currently involved is to do missionary to one of the Karen tribes namely the Talakhon.

This missionary is a joint mission between Taungthukon Church and the Kyar Inn Regional Church. The Talakhu worship flowers.

The main purpose of this joint mission is to establish schools in the region where the Talakhu reside and make the gospel known to them. Volunteer teachers who are willing to participate are provided with full transportation- they get picked up by Taungthugone church members in the last week of May and safely sent back home accompanied by the same people in February next year. Naw Ruth was so keen on encouraging these teachers seeing that she helped them as possible as she could. Her own house is always open to the needy people and welcomes the teachers whenever they need a place to live. She even nursed them when they were sick. She herself reached out to the outskirts of the region and physically helped people out there. The joint mission has come to the anniversary of 7<sup>th</sup> year in 2012. And the path of the education for the kids in the village has been made easy and smoothed. The lights are shining towards a better life with better education.

Another venture that Naw Ruth did heroically was sending the severely wounded patients and the hopeless patients that even local doctors gave up on to the hospitals in Mawlamyein and in Yangon. The majority of the patients were those who were suffering from mental illness and they got sent to the Yangon Mental Health Institution. And amazingly, four of the mentally ill patients got fully recovered. Even now, Naw Ruth is vigorously serving her best for her community.

Her attitudes towards Buddhism and the Buddhists are indicating that she is a mature and faithful Christian because she had to work mostly with the Buddhists throughout her 30-year long career life as a teacher. Wherever she may be assigned to work at a particular school, she made her school free from religious and ethnic discrimination and gave everybody freedom of faith. She would organize Christmas celebrations for the Christian teachers and the students as she would impartially let the Buddhist teachers and the students have their own Buddhist religious rituals. The middle school that she devoted so much of her effort and time for upgrading from the elementary school level in Kyakhetchaung village was a good example that shows her indiscriminate mindset upon religions. Indeed, she was just looking forward to seeing a bright future for the kids there, despite their religious backgrounds. According to her perception, everyone is God's children and that we were created and made equal before God. And she introduced her very idea to the villagers in the hope of enlightening them. Thus, everyone in Kyakhetchaung village including the Buddhist monks love and respect Naw Ruth.

She is a very kind woman and she committed her life to teaching the children with all her soul, body and mind. She deserves to be praised and acknowledged for what she had done with uplifting the lives of the villagers. She is such a good example for us in terms of possessing a very human mind that seeks no difference in ethnicity and religions. Thanks to her, now there are a lot of graduates in Kyakhetchaung village. The formerly mentally ill patients are now enjoying their lives with their family members, thanks to Naw Ruth again. They are even participating actively at their respective Churches.

With the help of joint mission, kids in the Talakhon village have been introduced to the very concept of education and the villagers were able to go on excursions to Yangon, a couple of times for some of those. In this way, the villagers have been enlightened to the sophistication of the modern life and gained insights and knowledge.

Even though, Naw Ruth was a widow who lives all by herself, the door to her house is always open. She did not finish Seminary School but she can be regarded to be a good disciple of Christ. She enthusiastically answered all the questions when we met during the interview. She said that she would be absolutely glad merely if anyone who gets to read her biography gains something worth to remember for life and strength to carry on. Therefore, we do appreciate her charitable personality. Without doubt, she has enhanced in spiritual life and she definitely has given enough strength to keep walking on the journey for Christ.

### *Commentary*

*This example no doubt wants to say that Naw Ruth does not know fear -- neither anxiety about the economy and its laws, as often characterises Christians, nor fear of Buddhists and their differing view of the world. And also the military doesn't frighten her. One would gladly know more about how Naw Ruth actually spoke with them. The life of this pedagogue makes clear that there is no chance to send children to school in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar without religious tolerance. Clear-sighted, Naw Ruth realized that Christianity in Myanmar means reading and learning, that is, education, and also hearing and understanding and openness toward other religions and world views.*



**Rev. Smith Ngulh Zgulh Za Thawng (born 1947)**by Saw Hsar Say<sup>22</sup>*A master of relation building - internationally and ecumenically*

Rev. Smith hails from a small village called Ciingikot, Tedim Township, Chin State in Myanmar. When he was 5, his mum passed away. He was brought up by his grandparents with his uncle's family. Though he faced many life challenges since his very childhood, his deep influence to his village folk is a young active boy with humility, caring others with sincerity and thoughtful living with God- given skill: singing has been an ever echoing inspiration especially to his contemporaries. The Almighty God heightens his horizon from the dust to a national figure in the Christian ministry, particularly in the ecumenical movement.

**CHRONOLOGY ABOUT HIM**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1947 July 1       | Born at Ciingpikot village, Tedium Township, northern Chin State, Myanmar Father, Pa Sian Za Vungh (exp.1990), Mother, Nu Thang Neem (exp.1952)   |
| 1962 March        | Passed 7 <sup>th</sup> Standard from private Middle School, Ciingpikot  |
| 1965 March        | Passed Matriculation from State High School, Tedim  |
| 1969 October      | Finished B.Sc. (Zoology) from Mandalay Arts and Science University (MASU)   |
| 1971 October      | Finish B.R.E. from Burma Divinity School (now Myanmar Institute of Theology)  |
| 1971 Nov.         | Appointed as Students' Pastor, University Christian Fellowship (UCF), Mandalay  |
| 1979 January      | Executive Secretary, University Christian Work (UCW?), Burma Council of Churches, Rangoon.  |
| 1983 October      | Attended graduate School of Ecumenical Studies, the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, World Council of Churches (WCC), near Geneva, Switzerland (1 <sup>st</sup> student from Burma).  |
| 1984 October      | Post Graduate Studies at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK.   |
| 1986 Sept.        | Completed M Th. (Ecumenical Theology), University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK (First M. Th. Graduate from abroad in Burma).  |
| 1986 January      | Coordinator, Comprehensive Leadership Promotion Program, (CLPP) cum scholarship programmed Secretary, Burma Council of Churches, Rangoon.   |
| 1992 November, 22 | Ordained at Judson Church, Yangon. Two Episcopal Bishops (Anglican and Methodist) laid hands together with four Baptist Ministers.  |
| 1996 May          | Appointed Associate General Secretary of Myanmar Churches.  |
| 2001 May          | Appointed General Secretary of MCC (Service ended 31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2001).   |
| 2002 – 2005       | Board Member, Mary Chapman Deaf School, Yangon.   |
| 2005 – Now        | Still with his family at Kamayut, Yangon.   |
| 2002 – 2005       | advisory ten member, World Vision Myanmar.  |
| 2000 – 2005       | Chair, Leadership Development Program, Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC), (Advanced Leadership Seminary, a new initiative was launched for leadership promotion of language and regional group and association, held annually) |
| 2000 -2005        | Chair, Board of Trustee of the Myanmar Institute of Theology, Insein Yangon.  |

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<sup>22</sup>Assistant Pastor, Judson Baptist Church, Yangon.

### **Some Significant Initiative during His Tenure at MCC**

- Work Camp two of University Christian Work Department
- Road and Bridge construction at Yezin – Pinyinana.
- Fish Pond? digging at Gyochaung, Pantanaw for Blind School ( Myanmar Christian Fellowship of the Blind??? MCFB).
- Frontiers Mission Recruitment Course 2 of UCW Department.
- An entirely new initiative for graduating students for incarnational mission and social action:
- SENIOUR FRIENDS' DESK opened at UCW office in Yangon
- Saya Gideon Shwe served as first full-time Secretary of Senior Friends' programme.
- ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP COURSE (ELC)

An entirely new venture of intensive one month training for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> line leaders of churches started in February 1992 under the Comprehensive Leadership promotion programme (CLPP). Courses No.1 – 5 were conducted at Prof. Dr. Hla Bu Memorial Building.

Course No. 6 and the followings were held at the MECS (Myanmar Ecumenical Sharing Center). CLPP become MEI (Myanmar Ecumenical).

### **SOME IMPORTANT/ SIGNIFICANT ECUMENICAL CONFERENCES ATTENDED**

- INTERNATIONAL

1979 July - WCC World Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, MIT, Boston MA, USA

1981 August - World Student Christian Federation/ WSCF 28<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA

1985 June - 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 1910 World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

1993 Sept. - WCC World Convention on lay Centers and Movements, Montreal, N.C., USA

1995 June - WSCF 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Senior Friends' Gathering, Berlin, Germany

1996 August - World Convocation on Viable Ecumenical Theological Education, Oslo, Norway

1997 Sep. - WCC and National Councils Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland

2001 June - EED Diakonia Partners' Meeting, Bonn, Germany

2001 Sept - EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians) 5<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Quito, Ecuador

2002 August - WCC- National Council of Churches' (NCC) Meeting and Faith and Order 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lausanne, Switzerland

2004 May - General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

- ASIA/REGIONAL

1979 December - WSCF Asia- Pacific Regional Standing Committee, Hong Kong

1981 July/ Aug - WSCF Asia- Pacific Regional Committee, Tokyo, Japan

1995 March - Christian Conference of Asia/ CCA General Committee and 112<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Chiang Mai, Thailand

1995 January - German ÖSW/ Ecumenical Study Programme Ecumenical partners' Consultation, Yog Jakarta, Indonesia

1995 June - CCA 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Colombo, Sri Lanka

1997 June - Congress of Asia Theologians (CATS), Founding Conference, Seoul, Korea

1998 January - CCA- (Roman-Catholic) Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences / FABC Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU-II), Bali, Indonesia

1999 July - ÖSW Asia Partners' Consultation, Chiang Mai, Thailand

2000 - December South- East Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute/ SEARSOLIN 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

2001 July - WCC Asia Regional Group Meeting, Colombo, Sri Lanka

2002 May - CCA General Committee Meeting, Taipei, Taiwan

2002 June - CCA NCC General Secretaries' Meeting, Tao Fong Shan Centre, Hong Kong

2002 June - CES ?? -NCC of the USA Asia Partners' Consultation, Chiang Mai, Thailand

2003 August - Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS-VI), Chiang Mai, Thailand

2003 October - CCA General Committee Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand

2004 February - NCC India 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Quadrennial Assembly, Tirunelveli, South India

2004 February - Ecumenical Church Loan Fund/ ECLOF Eurasia- Pacific Regional Workshop, Trichy, South India

2004 July - Regional Christian – Buddhist Dialogue Seminar, Tao Fong Shan Center, Hong Kong

2004 Sept. - CCA-NCC General Secretaries' Meeting, Chiang Mai, Thailand

• **SOME LOCAL/ NATIONAL ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENTS**

1974- 1978 Honorary Secretary, Mandalay Council of Churches

1975- 1978 Teaching Part- time at Training Institute (Myanmar Theological College), Mandalay

1980 – 1982 Teaching Part- time at Methodist Theological Institute, Rangoon

1987- 1994 Teaching Part- time at Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT), Insein, Yangon

1990-2001 Teaching part- time at Holy Cross Theological College, Yangon

1996-1999 Teaching part- time at Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT), Insein, Yangon

1997-2005 Board Member, Yangon YMCA and National YMCA

1999-2005 Advisor, Eden Handicapped Service Centre (EHSC), Phawkanm Insein, Yangon Institute in 1999 and since then MEI continued the annual one month ELC course during August. The course module is very comprehensive, attempting to introduce all aspects of the ecumenical movement in its global and contextual perspectives and concerns. (MEL is intended to be the Myanmar version of the Ecumenical Institute Bossey)

• **BASIC MEDICAL SUPPLY PROJECT**

He initiated in 1994 with the support of EZE (now Bread for the World) from Germany and later Joined by Christian Aid from UK. The project discontinued after 2005.

• **MYANMAR ECUMENICAL SHARING CENTRE (MECS) BUILDING**

MECS building project was drafted and the building plan was designed by him as the Secretary of the MESC Building Committee. After series of intensive discussions and dialogue, EZE (BfdW) graciously agreed to support. MESC building was inaugurated on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1995, and MCC offices were operative by January 1996.

**MYANMAR (MCC) ROUND TABLE**

Since its inception in 1987 in Stuttgart and it's first meeting in London in 1990, he plays a pivotal role as the

connecting thread with the Ecumenical Partners and WCC for the process and progress of MCC Round Table until the end of 2005.

- **FURTHERING RELATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS WITH CBCM**

He played a vital role particularly in the following new initiatives of annual joint programmes together with the CBCM (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar):

6. Joint Christmas Worship Service and Fellowship Dinner since 1999
7. National Ecumenical Study Seminar since 2002
8. Week of Prayer for Reconciliation and Peace in Myanmar since 2002 (Sept. 28- Oct. 4)

- **MCC ECUMENICAL SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAMME**

Since 1987 he established cordial working relationships with WCC and German Ecumenical Scholarships Programmes and facilitated various study and training programmes in partnership with the following Ecumenical Institutions:

- c. The Ecumenical Institute Bossey, WCC, Switzerland Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, UK
- d. Irish School of Ecumenics, Dublin, Republic of Ireland
- e. Coady International Institute, Nova Scotia, Canada
- f. Oversea Ministries Study Center (OMSC), New Haven, CT., USA
- g. CORAT Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
- h. Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF), Kitwe, Zambia
- i. SEARSOLIN , Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines.
- j. Asian Social Institute (ASI). Manila, Philippine.
- k. Asian Rural Institute (ARI) and Asian Health Institute (AHI), Tokyo, Japan.
- l. Center for Integrated Rural Development (CIRD), Madras Christian College, Chennai, India.

### **VISIT OF DISTINGUISHED ECUMENICAL PERSONNEL TO MYANMAR**

He played very important part in facilitating the visits of the following distinguished ecumenical personal, such as:

- d. DIAKONIA team (13) members from Sweden led by Director Bo Forsberg (January 1997).
- e. Dr. Michael Taylor, Director of Christian Aid, London, UK (January 1997).
- f. Bishop Rolf Koppe, Chair of Ecumenical Relations, Evangelical Church in Germany/ EKD, German ( January 1997)
- g. Rev. Dr. Gunnar Stalsett, Former General Secretary of Lutheran World Federation, Bishop of Oslo and member of Nobel Peace Com. ( February 1998)
- h. The Very Rev. Dr. Finley Macdonald, Moderator of Church of Scotland, Scotland (October 2002)
- i. Rev. Dr. Konrad Raiser, WCC General Secretary ( March 2003) ( first General Secretary of the WCC to visit Myanmar)

### **L. MCC ECUMENICAL TEAM VISIT ABROAD**

He organized three visits; one to Europe and another two to Asia

#### **10. ECUMENICAL TEAM VISITS TO EUROPEAN PARTNERS (April 20- May 2, 2003)**

Team members: Rev. Saw Mar Gay Gyi (President), Archbishop Samuel San Si Htay (Vice President), Dr. Anna May Say Pa (V.P), Rev. Daw Moe Moe Ei (V.P) and Rev. Smith N.Z. Thawng (GS)

12. Christian Aid, London, UK

13. Christian Council of Sweden, Church of Sweden, Stockholm/ Uppsala, Sweden

14. Norwegian Christian Council, Norway

15. WCC Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland

#### 11. ECUMENICAL TEAM VISITS TO LAOS, CAMBODIA, THAILAND

(MAY 7-11, 2003) (Team members: same as above)

10. Laos Evangelical Church, Vientiane, Laos

11. Kampuchean Christian Council, Pnom Penh/ Siemriap, Cambodia

12. Church of Christ in Thailand, Bangkok/ Chiang Mai, Thailand

#### 12. ECUMENICAL TEAM VISIT TO SRILANKA (JULY 8-16, 2004)

(Team members: Rev. Saw Mar Gay Gyi, Archbishop Samuel San Si Htay, Dr. Anna May Say Pa and Rev. Smith N Za Thawng.)

This visit was intended as a peace study tour, to see and learn from them. Visited to Colombo, Galle, Chinco, Trincomelee, Trinco, Kandy, etc. MCC Ecumenical Team also visit to China Christian Council (Nanjing and Shanghai) was also agreed and planned. As he has a pleasant personality, I had never seen him in anger or raised his voice.

**Simplicity:** Rev. Smith is living a very simple life. His attitude is peace loving and non- violence. He is a quiet man with dignity being able to control his tongue. I have never heard him shouting to anybody throughout my days with him. He is able to control his desires too. The way he talks, acts and moves are very simple. Even the way he dresses is simple.

**Honesty:** Rev. Smith is too honest to everything he did. He is so kind to everybody. I learnt honesty and Kindness from him but unfortunately I could not come up to the level of my mentor.

**Accountability:** So far as I know he is accountable and transparent his superiors in his works and achievements. He is also a prayerful man.

**Care and Counseling:** He also made special care and effort for those who were in needs.

**Ecumenical Spirit:** The life and the service of Rev. Smith is full of ecumenical spirit. Denominational bias is not his schedule. He always prioritized church unity, peace, integrity and justice. His perspective over humanity is truly humane.

**Leadership Development:** He has been always mindful in leadership development of the Church Churches in Myanmar. I admire Rev. Smith for his honesty, humility, sincerity, personality and stability in his career. He speaks slowly and lowly but thoughtfully and thoroughly, never harming or offending neighbors. He was fair and kind. He had a deep faith that God would get him and his people through difficult times and situations. Here are the way have known and seen about Rev. Dr. Smith N.Za Thawng till today.

**He is a man of very virtues:**

- Gentleman
- Generous
- Devoted on the responsibilities
- Enthusiastic in spiritual life



- Kind and affectionate hearted
- Deep sympathetically minded to the needy ones
- Factual
- Timely
- Responsible
- Firm and stable in head and mind and
- Reliable: He usually does things systematically. He is a man who able to hand helping hand as soon as possible to the people who need help at anytime, anyplace, wherever, as long as he is informed.

He is a real leadership hearted, taking risks for other people who needed:

- To save
- To protect,
- To stand for,
- To back up or help.

He is really self- denied person for the mission of Jesus Christ. He is a true Servant and good Leader.

## U Thein Lwin (born 1949)

by Pyae Phyo Thant

*Editor of the German version: Getrud Wellmann-Hofmeier*

### *Introduction*

*Here we are introduced to a believing Christian of Buddhist background who loses his eyesight and a hand in a self-inflicted accident. He founds a Christian organisation for the blind and with all his energy becomes engaged not only for blind people but also for those with other handicaps.*

U Thein Lwin was born on February 4, 1949. His father was U Sein Nyunt, an upper division clerk at a regional audit office and his mother was Daw Mya Kyi, a good housewife. He has seven siblings. He got married to Naw Ah Mu Htoo@ Naw Than Hla in 1976 and they have five children- Mya Thida Lwin, Mya Sandar Lwin, Mya Nandar Lwin, Aung Zan Myo Lwin and Htoo Myat Hsu Lwin.

He comes from a Buddhist family and he himself used to be a Buddhist. Since his early teens, he has not been an ordinary Buddhist. His studying and learning hard has given him a wide knowledge and as a result he became an unbeliever who didn't believe in anyone or anything. He thought that religions were legends, imaginations and impossible. In 1964, as a high school student he took science subjects. As he more involved in the study the subject, he came to believe that science was practical, testable and accurate. As a practical person, he studied his lessons not only to gain knowledge but always try to find ways to implement what he learned. Once he decided to invent a rocket at a school science competition. Accidentally, there was a chemical explosion in the laboratory and he got blind and lost one of his hands. The incident was reported in the newspaper issued on February 1, 1967. After awhile, an 18 year old self confident and practical young person who was a selected football player became a totally handicapped person. He became a hopeless person with no one to depend on. Although he wanted to commit suicide, he felt that his life was so desperate so that he couldn't even have strength to end his life. He realized that God had wonderfully planned for his life in that as a child he was taught a song named 'Jesus Cares' by a blind person. The words of the song affirmed him that Jesus was the one who loved him and cared for him. In the absence of all others except for his immediate family, when he longed for others he felt that Jesus was his only help and support who could save him. The phrase 'He cares for me in time of grief' was really a comfort to me.

His conversion to Christianity has no complaint against Buddhism. The two reasons why he became a Christian were

1. He was helpless and could do nothing for himself and because of the words of Jesus 'Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'. (Matthew 11:28)
2. Because his prayer was answered according to the scripture text which says 'Ask and you shall be given' (Matthew 7:7). In response to this passage he prayed and was given, and he felt the living presence and answer of Christ. As for him, he couldn't study his lessons by himself and there was no cassette to record his lessons. Whoever came to him by chance read to him. However, he passed matriculation with the score of over 50 in all subjects. That was why he came to believe that Jesus Christ was alive.

He has no doubt or complaint against Buddhism, but he would like to question whether he practiced what he believed. Because of his witness and sharing the gospel with his siblings, they have become believers of Jesus Christ.

Because he wasn't admitted into the blind school but into the disabled school in Kyike Waing, he met with other crippled, disabled and deaf people. That was why he was encouraged to start a school for the blind people. Then he established Myanmar Christian Blind Fellowship with the



His accomplishments have not only been directly beneficial for the blind mission, but also for the society. The Holy Bible in brail has been published before 2000, and the blind walking day has been celebrated annually since 1992. Moreover, the school has educated many young people and the vocational trainings have also given employment to many and consequently they can stand on their feet.



*U Thein Lwin speaking on the occasion of the excellent examination result of blind students (2011)*

He had to go through many difficulties, challenges and oppositions. In 1975, the rules and



regulations of the Socialist Government did not allow private organizations to be established, and there was no aid or support from the social welfare department, no recommendation received from religious affairs and no acceptance by the other blind societies. Whenever he encountered with problems, he tried to overcome through his strong belief that Jesus Christ is the living God who would definitely help him and use the disabled like him in the Ministry. Consequently, he was not afraid of the opposition and destruction that will come his way because he believed that he will overcome all the difficulties as long as God is with him. After establishing MCBF in 1976, he got married to Naw Ah Mu Htoo@ Naw Than Hla. At that time the salary they got from the church was only one hundred kyats. However, he and his wife with mutual support have been serving together in the Ministry.

On his trips to foreign countries, he has learned that the rights and opportunities of the blind and the attitudes towards them in other countries are different from that of in Myanmar. He also contributes the knowledge and experience he learned from abroad which are relevant and useful to the Myanmar context.



*Thein Lwin as a musician together with a blind student in a big hotel in Yangon in 2015*

He is now 63, but he still has much more extensive accomplishment for the mission of the blind. Myanmar Christian Blind Fellowship has been affiliated to other eight blind schools and they have joined hands to work for the employment for the blind and changes in the current policies and to formulate the production and promotion laws for the disabled. He has not only participated in the government organizations, but also in the community at large. He is interested in the mission for both the blind and other disabled and has been serving in the Ministry with all his talent and ability. His motto is "Think as much as you can, but start with what you can".

He has never given up in time of trial and trouble, but with strong faith in God he has tried to break through any situation that comes in his life. He is a unique and admirable person with high visions. Being unselfish, he has outstandingly attempted for his family, society, and the disabled and for the Ministry.

## *Commentary*

*Myanmar is the Asian land with the highest number of people who are blind. It is impressive to learn how one of these, from his situation of affliction, gets involved so that the lives of blind people in Myanmar can improve. U Thein Lwin establishes a society for the blind, because of which three schools for the blind can be built. Through these schools people who were born blind or were blinded receive training so that they can stand on their own feet.*

*We read here a conversion story from the present day. U Thein Lwin is Baptist. Not in defiance or protest did he convert from Buddhism to Christianity, but because he found comfort and trust in the Christian life. "Jesus cares for you" – this promise gives him the strength and confidence that he needs to study. He follows a path with the purpose of finding opportunities to improve life for people with handicaps. They should be trained so that they have a chance to find work and be able to live independently.*

*It may appear somewhat strange that God took the roundabout way of a chemical explosion to place this young man upon his special path. Yet it is undeniable that U Thein Lwin – strengthened by his faith and the community of Christians in which he lives – has done much for the blind and people with other handicaps in Myanmar.*

*In Myanmar the blind are still stigmatised and viewed as useless and unproductive members of society. The author sees U Thein Lwin as working as an instrument of God on this point for himself and others.*

## Thang Bee Lwei (born 1951)

by Moe Moe Nyunt

*The life story of medical mission - from Tuberculosis to establishing a clinic*

Thang Bee Lwei is a medical doctor who was born on January 5, 1951 in Mizo State, Lu Shai mountain range. His parents were U Boi Dan and Daw Lian Hsone. They moved to Nat Gyi Gone Chin village in Kalaymyo in 1956 (Thang Bee was 5 at that time). His parents were devoted Christians and they brought him up in a Christian community. He went to Sunday school every Sunday. He admired Daniel and Moses of the Old Testament very much. The person he admires most in the Bible was Joseph. Although Joseph was young, he was trustworthy and truthful. In addition, Joseph always obeyed God. So, like Joseph, Thang Bee Lwei tried to live a godly life. As a result, he was awarded Good Character Prize from time to time when he was young.

At the age of eight, he went to Independent Church of Burma (located in the village) for kindergarten education. Then he studied at the village school from Grade I to Grade IV. From Grade V to Grade X, he studied at State High School, Kalay. His parents were farmers. He was the eldest among ten siblings. He could go to school only after sending breakfast to his father, who worked in the paddy field. When he became a high school student, he had to attend the classes in the afternoon. So in the morning, he had to do farming, growing and reaping paddy, preparing grounds for farming, finding firewood, feeding animals, etc.



*Main Street of Kalay in Sagaing Division*

He was very sickly when he was young. He suffered from tuberculosis at the age of two. He contracted malaria when he was six. Whenever he went to hospital to receive medical treatment, he was scolded by the doctor. Before he sat for Grade VIII examination, he went to the hospital to take an injection for his illness. What he saw on that particular day decided him to become a doctor (at first, he wanted to become an engineer very much).

In Chin state, the weather is very cold in December and people have to make fire to keep them warm. One day while warming by the fire, the head of a child caught fire and the child was brought to the hospital by the mother, a Chin lady (the mother does not know how to speak Burmese language). In Chin dialect, she begged a nurse to treat her child. The nurse said, "Your child will not survive and I am hungry." The nurse ignored the child.

On seeing this, Thang Bee Lwei thought to himself what he would do if he were a doctor at that time. In his Grade VIII examination, he wrote an essay on the topic "If I were a doctor". From that time on, he decided to study very hard so that he would pass Grade X with flying colors and he could join Institute of Medicine. He had also determined to serve among Chin people when he

became a doctor. In 1970, he passed Grade X with six distinctions and was admitted to Institute of Medicine in Mandalay. As his parents could not support him financially for his studies, he had to ask for help from his relatives. He received about 500 kyats and it was with this money that he came to Mandalay. As his father did not have any more money to give him, he just asked him (Thang Bee Lwei) to come back to the village when the money ran out. Because Dr. Thang Bee Lwei is honest and hardworking, he got some financial assistance from Methodist Church every year. In addition, he got stipends from the government also.

He tried to make some money by digging fishing ponds on school holidays. In his third year studies at Institute of Medicine (in 1974), he was selected as a representative to attend a conference conducted by Burma Christian Youth Fellowship held in Myitkyina in Kachin State. That conference was attended by youth representatives from all over the country. At that conference, he met Naw Sheila Mu Win, vice-president of BCYF, and fell in love with her (Sheila was the daughter of Rev. William Main and Daw Cho). They were married on March 26, 1975 at Yangon Methodist Church by Rev. Rozika (at that time, he had not graduated yet). They were blessed with four children. The eldest son died in his infancy.

Thang Bee Lwei graduated from Institute of Medicine in 1977. He served at Maymyo (Pyin Oo Lwin) Hospital as a house surgeon from 1978 till 1979. In 1981, he served as assistant surgeon at the Station Hospital at Tee Bwa village in Falam Township, Chin State. At that village, he worked very hard for the better living standard of the villagers. With the help of the villagers, he built roads, some new buildings for the hospital and hospital staff quarters. Together with Eye, Ear, Nose, Throat Specialist Dr. Ah Kwee, he treated the patients free regardless of race and religion.



*The English Methodist Church in Yangon*

As he was a government service personnel then, he had to spend time for government propaganda work (for People's Council and Burma Socialist People Party), which he did not like very much. However, as he had accepted some financial assistance from the government for his medical studies, he decided to work for the government only for three years.



*Opening Ceremony*



*The Clinic*

He offered to help at the clinic of Yangon Methodist Church but he could not convince the church elders, who were afraid that if a government staff was allowed to work at the church clinic, the

clinic would be under the government control later like the Leprosy hospital of Dr. Jamaldin (see biography 16). However, while he was working at Hakha Township Hospital, the church elders came to him and requested him to work at the church clinic and he promised to do so when he retired from government service. After working for the government for three years, he put up his resignation in 1985. However, his resignation was rejected by the members of Township Party Council.



*Thang Bee Lwei preaching*

On January 15, 1987, under the sponsorship with Upper Myanmar Methodist Church, Thang Bee Lwei established the Wesley Clinic in Kalay. In 1988, he was fired from government service for staying away from duties. The Wesley clinic prospered significantly and was upgraded to Wesley Hospital in 2010. The motto of the hospital was “to serve, not to be served” (Matthew: 20:28). The vision of the hospital was “to provide quality health care service at reasonable rate to all needed people regardless

of gender, social background, race and religion.” To reach that vision, the hospital conducted trainings for its staff, witnessed the love of Jesus Christ through their service and charged reasonable price.

Under the leadership of Thang Bee Lwei, all doctors, nurses and staff worked together in one spirit. At Wesley Hospital, the first priority was patients – not doctors, staff, pastors, church elders. The hospital staff do not persuade or force patients to accept Jesus. They just try to live a Christi-like life. This is their way of proclaiming the Gospel. Although they could not treat all patients, they tried their best to make sure that the patients were well taken care of. The hospital staff also did other social work such as giving scholarship to orphans, planting trees, visiting villages to offer health service and conduct trainings, etc.

At Wesley Hospital, giving presents to the hospital staff, which is common in Myanmar, is forbidden. When sales representatives of medical companies bring presents, they are distributed among the staff.



*Two pictures from the Clinic's Silver Jubilee in 2012*

Thang Bee Lwei went abroad for further studies. In 1988, he went to England for Diploma in Tropical Medicin & Hygiene. In 1990 and 2008, he completed Diploma in Gytratory & Obstetrics and Master of Science in International Health respectively.

As Thang Bee Lwei had to devote much of his life to hospital and community work, he could not spend much time with his family. However his wife looked after their three daughters well – they all become educated persons. Ms. Mary Than, one of the daughters, is now studying Medical Science in England. She is determined to serve in Myanmar for five years.

Under the leadership of Thang Bee Lwei, the silver anniversary of Wesley Hospital was successfully celebrated on January 15, 2012. In addition, a magazine was also published to commemorate the occasion. In honor of Wesley Hospital, a Buddhist monk composed two poems, which are carried in the magazine (The following are the translated versions).

### **Trustworthy Wesley**

People from all walks of life  
Depend on Wesley  
How indispensable it is!

All doctors, nurses and staff  
Are kind and patient  
How valuable it is!

Our small town becomes more developed  
Because of Wesley  
It is a jewel of the nation  
It is not only modern  
But also beautiful  
Because of the love and care of its staff  
May Wesley prosper forever!

### **Wesley for All and May it continue to eternity**

Wesley comes to exist  
In accordance with God's will  
It enjoys good reputation  
Wesley was born of a small town in Sagaing region

People with illness and burdens  
Come to Wesley

And their burdens were relieved  
Because of its love and concern

Please come to Wesley  
With love, kindness and compassion  
They treat their patients  
With God's love, they are healed

All staff are friendly  
And take good care of all patients.  
Because of Wesley  
May all people of different cultures and backgrounds live as one!

*Note: The original poems are composed in Myanmar language by Sayadaw Tayzawbatha, Min Kin Monastery, Pa Thay Taung Village, Minn Kinn Township).*

## U Lapai Zau Sam (born 1956)

by Zau Gun

*A look at Human Rights work in the making*

U Lapai Zau Sam is an attorney as well as a retired law officer. Today he is actively involved in the programs to raise people's awareness of law and legal affairs. His parents were Thiri Pyan Chi Du Wah U Zau La and Daw J P Roi. U Lapai Zau Sam was born on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1956. He is a Christian. He has five brothers and five sisters and he is the youngest. He is married to Daw Maran Bawk Ra. They have three children: Ma Nan Sam Awng, Ma Ja Dain and Maung Zau Dan Awng.

His father died when he was three years old and his mother died when he was six years old. He went to the primary school in *Lod Dan* village, his native village which is situated in Northern Myanmar. Starting from fourth standard, he studied at a school in *Sein Lone*, a town located in Eastern Myanmar. There was fierce fighting in the region during 1960s so he had to move to another school, No. 3 State High School in *Myitkyina*, the capital of Kachin State. He sat for 10<sup>th</sup> standard examination in 1974 and passed with B list. In those days, only those who passed the 10<sup>th</sup> standard examination with A list were allowed to join university. Although he wanted to study again, he could not continue his studies simply because no one would support him financially.

From 1974-1975, he stayed with his sister Daw Nan Htoi, a school teacher in *Kut Kai* and did odd jobs. While working, he studied for the 10<sup>th</sup> standard examination. However the fighting between the government troops and Burma Communist Party troops escalated and there were worries that Burma Communist Party troops would occupy the whole region. To fight against the communists, U Lapai Zau Sam joined the government army. In 1976, he attended basic military training in *May Myo (Pyin Oo Lwin)* and after the training he joined Battalion 76 in Mandalay as a rifle man. As a soldier, he went to the frontier areas for military operations and he was very upset and sad by unfair treatment of Burmese army against ethnic groups. In addition, with his own eyes, he saw all the evil things that a war can do and as a result, he wanted to quit his job.

However, when he joined the army, he had to sign a contract that required him to serve in the army at least for five years so he could not quit his job immediately. Hence, he started thinking of moving to a unit where he did not have to fight. In 1979, he got a chance to attend Sergeant Clerk training. After completing the training, he became a sergeant (clerk) in Battalion 76.

In the same year, he passed 10<sup>th</sup> standard examination with A list. In 1980, he started his first year university studies (correspondence course) majoring in law and graduated from Yangon University with LLB degree in 1985. In 2007, he went to Asia Human Rights Commission based in Hong Kong as an intern. With the scholarship granted by Hong Kong University, he completed his Master's Degree in Human Rights Studies at Hong Kong University in 2008.

### Work Experience

He joined the army in 1975. In 1979, he became a sergeant (clerk) in Battalion 76 based in Mandalay. After that, he moved to the Research Department of the Battalion 76. In 1986, he passed the interview for the position "Prosecutor" at Attorney General Office, so he retired from military



service and joined civilian service in 1986. In 1987, he served as a prosecutor in *Moe Nyin* in Kachin State. In 1992, he was transferred to Rangoon Division Law Office.

After his retirement from government service, he joined the Legal Aid Committee of Myanmar Council of Churches and worked as a full-time consultant. He also worked as a private legal advisor representing the victims of human trafficking and child abuses. In 2009, he joined Shalom Foundation and has worked there as a legal Consultant and Trainer up to the present time.

At present, U Lapai Zau Sam is involved in peace related programs conducted by the Shalom Foundation. Shalom Foundation believes that there is no peace in the country because there are many problems between the government and the people. The government issues one law after another to oppress the people. The people have little or no knowledge of the law and this lack of knowledge makes people live in fear (Ethnic people feel that their lack of knowledge of the law causes so many problems and that lack of knowledge is caused by the fact that the laws are written in Burmese language, which most of them do not understand very well). This results in conflicts between the government and the people, which leads to fighting and killings in the country.



*The Founder of Shalom Foundation, Rev. Saboi Jum, his daughter and successor Ja Nan and a picture from a seminar on peace building*

The second reason why there is no peace in the country is because the government itself neither understands nor values human rights. The people are very angry with human rights violations committed by the government. To make matters worse, instead of peacefully dealing with the problems, the government uses only force. As a result, ethnic people continue to oppose the government in many ways such as committing crimes, throwing stones at the trains, burning forests, smuggling timber, using drugs, creating community and sectarian violence among people of different race and religion. To solve all these problems, it is necessary to educate people at the grass root level, U Lapai Zau Sam claims.

Today U Lapai Zau Sam leads many awareness raising programs on human rights among the people. By teaching people about their basic human rights, U Lapai Zau Sam is trying to empower them so that they can defend themselves when injustice is done to them. In addition, he reports human rights violations to the authority concerned, prosecutes law breakers and tries to arrange compensation for the victims or the family of the victims.

U Lapai Zau Sam asks people to change their mindset as the country is moving toward a democratic society today, to behave like responsible citizens and to remember that fact that power lies only in the hands of the people in a democratic country. In addition, he teaches civic education to the people by explaining the contents of the present constitution.

He is doing all these social and humanitarian work because he is not only interested in these things

but also he cares about the people especially people at the low level, who cannot escape from all the sufferings caused by the vicious circle of poverty. He also believes that when a country transits from dictatorship to democracy, the rule of law is very important and that rule of law can be obtained only by democracy.

In addition, he, as a law officer, represents the clients whose rights are violated, gives legal advice, and writes articles regarding legal affairs in Christian magazines. He thinks that his work is 80% successful because his students and clients become more moral, confident, responsible, active, responsive and peace-loving.

Some of his achievements are as follows.

- He helped some land owners reclaim their land which was seized by force by the government.
- He helped the authority in their drug eradication work.
- He helped poor people from some townships to have access to electricity.
- He, together with some Community Based Organizations, secured the release of some people who were illegally detained for killing animals for their rituals.
- He managed to get back five people out of some people who were taken away by Burmese army during the fighting between Kachin Independence Army and government troops. (Had it not been for U Lapai Zau Sam, these five people might have been killed).

At present, he, together with some other lawyers, is helping U Ma Li Tan, administrator of Mud Gyi Gone village in Shwe Ku Township, who has been detained for no reason by the government army.

### **Difficulties he encountered**

He has faced many obstacles in his work. The main obstacle is most people still live in fear so they dare not speak out when they are exploited or abused. Some Buddhists believe that they are suffering now because of their *karma* (fate) so instead of taking legal action, they just seek comfort in the teachings of religion. There are also many victims who cannot take up their cases to the court simply because they are poor (they cannot afford transportation expenses, lawyer fee, etc.).

### **Future Plans**

- To do what he can to ensure that 2015 election is free and fair
- To establish more community based organizations
- To reduce and abolish centralized political system and to bring about federal political system
- To promote human rights awareness among the public and to bring law breakers to justice
- To ensure and promote the rule of law in the country (if there is no rule of law, there is no justice. If there is no justice, there is no peace. If there is no peace, there is no development. If there is no development, there is poverty. If there is poverty, there is no rule of law. It is a vicious circle).

*U Lapai Zau Sam plans to carry out the above visions by exchanging views, providing trainings and conducting workshops.*

## U Hta Uk (born 1959)

by Pyae Phyo Thant

*A pioneer of the work for the disabled*

U Hta Uk was born on March 14, 1959 in Kwa Pee village, Hakha Township, Chin state. His parents were Christians, but he accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and savior of his own conviction. Asked what being a Christian meant to him, Hta Uk said, “Christian life brings along a purpose for life and having a purpose and faith in life becomes a driving force.”



*Aerial view of Hakha, capital of Chin State*



*Hakha after the floods of 2015*

Hta Uk passed matriculation from State High School No. 1, Hakha. He graduated from Yangon Arts and Science University (RASU) with a bachelor degree majoring in Botany. He completed Paramedical Sciences Diploma Course (1983-1985) conducted by Yangon General Hospital. After that, he worked as a Physiotherapist at Pakkoku General Hospital and Falam General Hospital under Ministry of Health from 1987 to 1994. Then he worked in Penang for one year and in Singapore for two years as a Physiotherapist. In 1998, He came back to Myanmar. In 1999, he started working on his vision: establishing a school for disabled people. The following is what inspired him to run a school for disabled people.

When he came back to Myanmar from Singapore in August, 1999, his family members from Chin state joined him in Yangon. They looked for disabled people and helped them. After some time, the

idea of establishing a school for disabled people dawned on him. He wrote down his dream and vision so that he could use it as a proposal one day. It took him about 18 months to complete this proposal. In those days, few people supported him so he had to spend his own savings. He did not really know how to continue his work although he had already written a proposal. His attempts to ask for help did not bear any fruit.

However he considered this difficult time as the time to continue to pray to God. At the same time, he continued to help disabled



people as much as he could (at that time, he was not only looking after 14 disabled children but also volunteering at some social welfare schools and orphanages).

One year later, God answered his prayers. Not everything went smoothly; however by the grace of God, he found some donors. The Japanese Embassy in Yangon was interested in his work. To apply for the grant provided by Japanese Government, he needed to own a plot of land. So, with some donations he had received, Hta Uk bought a small room (270 Squared feet) on Daw Hla Pan Street in K' Wei Chan. He had to work very hard for this grant project and by the grace of God he managed to overcome all the difficulties he encountered.

At the same time, he wanted to make sure that helping disabled children is God's calling for him. He was worried about how to look after his family members. Currently he is staying with his family. His wife is Daw Ngun Dee. God blessed them with a son and a daughter. But their daughter passed away just before he went for further studies.

Regarding his vision for Eden Center for Disabled Children, Hta Uk said, "In the beginning, we focused on service. Gradually, we are now shifting our focus to awareness raising. In 2007, he offered "Disable Studies Course" at Myanmar Institute of Theology. From 2007 until last year, he taught theology courses also. His main objective is to provide the public with correct awareness on disability. Hta Uk said, "Now service sector is doing quite well but awareness-raising sector needs to be promoted."

In cooperation with some INGOs, Hta Uk has a plan to conduct practical trainings and awareness raising programs. He said,



*The Eden Centre*

"I am now undertaking a project called 'Yangon Disable Resources Centre'. I have another centre called 'Centre for Disability for Development' in Hmawbi Township, Yangon. Nowadays, there are a number of programs that cater to the needs of disabled people. In the past, traditional model was used, but new model, social model, is used today. I am sharing my knowledge with the public. If every citizen of Myanmar has the right attitude towards disabled people, we do not need a lot of centers like Eden in Myanmar. In fact, not only disabled people, but also able people need help. In our country, much help is needed for disabled people and we need to change people's negative attitude towards disabled people. "

Depending on the number of interested people, he conducts trainings especially for those who are helping disabled people such as project workers, community leaders and family members of disabled people.

Hta Uk does not take pride in his achievements. He does not desire worldly wealth either. However he takes great delight in being used by God like this. He said, "no matter who or what a person is, he is valuable because he is created in God's image." Hta Uk considers helping disabled children as God's assignment for him. He is against discrimination of any kind. He sets a very good example for all of us. In fact, Hta Uk is a person who is proclaiming the Gospel by committing his life to the betterment of disabled people.



Kyaing Tong from 1997- up to the present time

- Served as treasurer of Naung Par Ahka Baptist Church from 1997- 2006
- President of Naung Par Ahka Baptist Church from 2006- up to the present time

### **Community work**

Since 1979 he has served in government administration as head of village or ward administrator. At the same time, he is serving as an auxiliary fire brigade member and is involved in other general administration work.

He is also a member of 2010 General Election Committee in Kyaing Tong district.

Since 1979, he is serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of State High School No. 3 in Kyaing Tong.

U Ah Htu says that he is working hard not only for his family but also for his society because he does not want young people to suffer like him. At the age of 10, he had to run for his life from his village to Kyaing Tong. He and his family had to stay at the refugee camp for about two years. In those days, political situation in the country was not stable and the country was not peaceful, so he very much wanted his society and country to be peaceful. He attended some military training provided by the government to the local people and involved himself in the security and development of his society. In addition, he is serving as an auxiliary member of fire brigade.



*Sunday worship in a Akha/Lahu church*



*Entrance to a Baptist Akha village*



*An Akha lady*

He feels sad about not having a chance to go to school when he was young. He knows that education can make a difference. Therefore he helped children as well as adult people in his community to study how to read and write. For instance, U Ah Htu, in cooperation with the Township Education Office, opened schools in the villages where there was no school, recruited teachers and supported these teachers as much as he could. More than 100 people from the villages he helped have graduated from university and serving in various sectors now.

Throughout his life, he encountered many problems. There were people who were jealous of him and who plotted evil against him. However, being a person who is committed to serving his society, he does not give up but keep on working for the betterment of his society.

In addition, he is involved in preserving and promoting Ahka culture programs and activities. With

the objective of promoting Ahka people and their culture, he worked as an audit team leader (from 1988 until 2004) and as a Vice- President of Ahka Culture Promoting Central Committee (from 2004 until today).

**Vision**

U Ah Htu would rather be a useful person than a famous person. Being a person who is always interested in helping the community, U Ah Htu is determined to help his society and country to the best of his ability in the future also. He always makes himself available to serve other people no matter what situation he is in. He hopes to participate in the country building work in the future also.



## Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe (born 1965)

by Thuzar Thein

*An example for women's NGO and political work*

Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe, daughter of U Kyaw Soe and Daw Naw Ju, was born on 18 August 1965 in Insein, Yangon. Out of the three siblings: younger sister Naw Wah Wah Soe working at Hope International and younger brother, an Electrical Engineer in Singapore, she is the eldest daughter.

In 1999, she got married with Rev. Dr. Yaha Lay Lay La (Professor, Head of Department at Karen Baptist Theological Seminary) and in 2000, a precious baby girl called Naw Ja Mai Ma was born to them. She is currently at her Primary Six at Nelson International English Center. The family currently lives in Karen Baptist Theological Seminary Campus, East – Gyogone, in Insein.



When Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe was young, she was highly inspired by her grandfather. Before her grandfather converted into Christianity, his family was devoted to traditional deities. Becoming a Christian, he was hatefully ostracized by his family and relatives. However, he set a good example for his children and followed God's will faithfully which surprises Naw Susanna to end. That becomes strengths for her to continue her works courageously despite several obstacles.

Naw Hla Hla Soe works very hard to support mainly women and children in Myanmar. For the poor family, she has set up micro loans, educational support programs and an urgent response team for those who have to undergo natural disaster.

In 2012, Naw Hla Hla Soe received an annual award for serving the community from American Based NGO as a representative of Karen Women Action Group (KWAG). Furthermore, she was also awarded with "Women of the Year" by Hot News Media Group in 2011 and "The Reward Prize for the Outstanding of Church Member in NGO Action" in 2012 respectively.

Naw Suzana is a Baptist Christian and always accepts that helping the needy means doing the noble thing to God. She also believes that the foundation of other religion is love. Avoiding the extreme religions and practicing love is her stand point. Some of the degrees that she holds are: B. Sc, M. Sc, MBA (USA).

### Professional

She served as an elementary school teacher for six years, at World Vision for 12 years and at TERM for three years and at KWAG till today respectively. Since KWAG has been set up, she has started some special programmes for mainly women and children such as micro loans, educational opportunity, preventing trafficking, rehabilitating the trafficked victims, establishing schools for children, financial support for schooling, women reproductive health, women prevention and leadership trainings.

She has been operating these projects with 17 fulltime staffs and 50 volunteers in Yangon Division, Bago Region, Irrawaddy Region and Karen State.

### **Circumstances of the Women Today**

According to the information we have received, the oppressions of women have been increasing today. In KWAG, there are three main staffs specializing in preventing women and children from being exploited. She says, “Nowadays, we have received more reports from local people, so we also try to increase manpower to cope with those challenges. Some of the incredible women right violations we have seen here are locking up the wives in the apartment for a long time, no permission to go out and have contacts with others, behaving cruelly to home maids, kidnapping young teenage girls for sale, raping the girls and killing them. It makes me so sad to see even the soldiers from the military, I think they might have dreamed of living peacefully with their brothers and sisters instead of treating each others like enemies and committing the killing. So long as our country has not been peaceful, we would carry out campaigns one after another subsequently. Now, our parliament has passed the law of freely demonstration. We warmly welcome all men, women and children who long for peace to join us cooperatively. We do believe that the flowers will blossom fragrantly instead of bullets soon in the future our country.”<sup>23</sup>



Susanna Hla Hla Soe at a meeting in June 2015

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<sup>23</sup> Susanna Hla Hla Soe has been nominated as a candidate for the NLD for the 2015 elections and won the seat.

## Saya U Lama La Rip (born 1971)

by Karing Zau Gun

*A life at the borders of Myanmar and a refugee and development worker in Kachin State*

U Lama La rip was born of U Lama Gum Pan and Daw Lakan Lu Awng in September, 1971. He is the third son of the seven children of his parents. U Lama La Rip is married to Ma La Nawng Roi Awan and he has two children. Now they live in Liza in Kachin State. U Lama La Rip is a devout Christian, who is actively involved in social work. As his parents were Christian, he became a Christian also and, he is happy about it because he believes Christianity can give both physical and spiritual salvation.

Regarding physical salvation, U Lama La Rip believes that God created this beautiful world with a purpose and that all human beings are differently but abundantly blessed by God. He also believes that it is God's purpose that human beings are struggling in life and human beings are responsible to look after God's creation—including fellow human beings. Regarding spiritual salvation, human beings need to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ because this is what God wants human beings to do, he says.

### **His understanding of Other Faiths (Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism)**

He believes that all religions share some similarities. In his opinion, Hinduism comes out of the attempts to attain liberation from suffering or to find solutions to the problems caused by caste system. Buddhism emphasizes liberation from bondage and everything is not permanent according to Buddhist teachings. In this sense, U Lama La Rip believes Hinduism is based on Buddhism. He is also convinced that Christianity and Buddhism have different or opposite destinations. There is no concept of mission in Hinduism and Buddhism. However Hindus carry out "Rum Kissana Mission" and Buddhists "Hilly Mission" today. These mission models are based on Christian mission concept. U La Rip cannot accept Jihad, Purdah system and caste system. In addition, blind faith is unacceptable because it will only cause extremism. A person must value his faith and can share his faith with other people freely. For a peaceful co-existence in the world, there should be mutual-understanding and mutual-respect among people.

### **Education**

Saya U Lama La Rip went to a school in Liza opened by Kachin Independence Organization for primary education. Then he studied at Government Middle School in Mayan, Kachin state from 5<sup>th</sup>



*From Kachin State to Tezpur/Assam*



*Don Bosco High School, Tezpur*

standard to 8<sup>th</sup> Standard. When he was a 9<sup>th</sup> standard student at No. 2 Government High School in Myitkyina in Kachin state, 1988 demonstrations took place and schools were closed down for a long time. Therefore he came back to Liza. Then at Don Bosco High School (Catholic Mission School), Tezpur, Assam, India, he studied starting from 8<sup>th</sup> standard again. After that he went to Academic Institution School for 9<sup>th</sup> standard and 10<sup>th</sup> standard, and Assam Board of Secondary School, India for 11<sup>th</sup> standard and 12<sup>th</sup> standard. He got his B. Sc. Degree (Physics) from Guwa Hati University, Assam, India and M.A. Degree (Political Science) from Anna Malai University, New Delhi, India.

### **Work Experience**

As he descended from a farmer's family, he did some farming when he was young.

### **Difficulties encountered in Life**

U Lama La Rip encountered many difficulties throughout his life. Due to unstable political situation, he had to change from one school to another for his education. (He had to stay at other people's houses). Later he went abroad for studies. He was out of touch with his family members for about 10 years, during which he faced many problems including financial problems. He was detained in India for entering India illegally. By the grace of God and leniency of Indian government, he was released from prison after being detained for about one month. Upon his release, he continued his studies.

### **Social work**

While he was working for Shalom Foundation from 2001-2002, he gave lectures on "Conflict Resolution". Starting from 2005, he has worked for Kachin organizations such as Education and Economic Development for Youth- EEDY, Kachin Youth Organization and Kachin Development Group (KDG). Now he is leading Kachin Development Group, which is helping the people who live along Myanmar-China border. He also provided health care service on mobile clinic basis to 23 villages located in Gauri Krung in Bamaw, the second capital of Kachin State, for about six years and more than 4,000 people from far-flung areas benefitted from this health care service. In addition, Kachin Development Government conducted more than 100 health-awareness raising training on "Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health" for young people in the villages along the border, Hu Kaung valley in western Kachin state and northern Kachin State. With the aim of reducing and eradicating the use of narcotic drugs in the region, he organized some activities and programs in Liza, a border town, for about two years. During eight years of his social work, he managed to publish two books on Kachin culture. When 2010 election was held, he conducted informal election observation in 16 townships and published one book on that election experience.

At present, Saya La Ma La Rip is helping war refugees especially children, women, pregnant women and students. In 2009-2010, he established a network between NGOs and Kachin Independent Social organizations to promote the capacity of young people, mothers and farmers.

When the fighting resumed in June, 2011 in Kachin state, his organization, Kachin Development Group, in cooperation with young people from Laiza, established volunteer Resettlement Committee and helped the refugees. A total of 350 young people participated in this work. As the fighting increased, there were more and more refugees. In order to help the refugees more effectively, he united 13 social organizations from the border area and formed Relief Action Network for IDP and Refugee – RANIR where he worked as a Coordinator 1 from July 2011 from November 2013. With the help of his colleagues, U La Ma La Rip managed to help thousands of refugees along the border. In addition, he collected data and information about the refugees' situation and informed international organizations accordingly. In this way, international organizations come to know the problems being faced by Kachin people and provide international

assistance to the refugees. Moreover, as an advocacy work, RANIR has published SIMSA KASA (Peace Herald) for about three years.

### **His understanding of Social Work**

He believes that helping others especially those who are in need is a great blessing. Since his childhood, he has learned that giving is much better than taking. He likes to help people without letting them know. He says that he is able to help other people because of the help of many people so in return he must help others to the best of his ability. He just regards himself as an agent of change. He knows that he cannot do much by himself. He is also convinced that our world really needs to change for better and if every person works for the betterment of the society, the world will gradually change.

### **Difficulties encountered in Social Work**

He encountered many difficulties. Many people gossiped of him and criticized him. In some cases, his life was even threatened. When he worked as a Coordinator 1, he faced many difficulties regarding technical skills, financial sources, accessibility and legality. Because of these problems, there were some weaknesses in helping war refugees. He feels that it is not an easy job to coordinate among many organizations.

### **Future Visions**

As a member of Technical Advisory Team of Kachin Independence Organization, Saya La Ma La Rip is trying his best to stop the fighting and restore peace in the region. He also has plans for the development of Kachin people. At the same time, he is looking after his own family in accordance with the will of God. His ultimate goal is to become a productive person who can serve his society effectively.

## Naw Ler Wah (born 1972)

by Thuzar Thein

*Editor of the German version: Gertrud Wellmann-Hofmeier*

### *Introduction*

*The author introduces here a young woman who in spite of all hindrances is ready to lead a village and to mediate between rival and also fighting troops. She is innovative and always tries to be please everyone.*

She was born on November 16, 1972 in Tagay village, Kyar Inn Seikkyi Township, Karen State (see biography 26). She comes from a Karen Christian family and her parents are Saw Htoo Lwei and Naw Sarah. She was baptized by Rev. Saw Paleh Hti on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1985, and since then she has been serving for the Tagay Baptist Church until now. The name of her husband is Saw Kaleh Do Gay and they have got two sons and three daughters. She had her primary education in Tagay, and then attended Phu Keeku Bible College in Kyar Inn Seikkyi from 1990 to 1993. She got the Certificate of Theology (C. Th) in 1993, and then she started working at the Tagay Karen Baptist Church as a youth minister. At the same time, for the establishment of Sunday Schools in Kyar Inn Seikkyi district with other trainers she had to conduct trainings and workshops for the Sunday school teachers. In 2002, she was chosen to be the chief of the Tagay village, which is FIVE miles away from Kyar Inn Seikkyi and Karen Armed forces usually go in and out. It is known as the black area because the exchanges of fire between the Karen army and the military force occur quite often there. Therefore, it is exceptionally challenging and dangerous to be the Head of such village, and therefore no one was willing to take the responsibility. But finally Naw Ler Wah was unanimously chosen as the chief of the village. Whenever the military officers demanded food, carts, voluntary service, she and her fellow villagers had to try their best in order to avoid the conflicts. She was likely to be scolded and yelled if the officers were not satisfied with what they received. Both Naw Ler Wah and her villagers always had to be ready to fulfill any unexpected wants and demands by the Karen army, too. She had to be really manipulative between the two rivalries.



She works hard for the peace and development of the village. She has to please both the military forces and the Karen army so that the village won't be set on fire and forced to move out. Moreover, she founded the Tagay Youth Fellowship (TYF) and has tried as much as she could for the wellbeing of the villagers. On every Saturday, the members of TYF do the cleaning and repairing the streets in and around the village. Naw Ler Wah has made it impossible for the villagers to get to Kyar Inn Seikkyi by bicycles, motorcycles and cars. Furthermore, the villagers are proud of having a post primary school which was their dream. She is now attempting to upgrade the school and to promote the education level of the children, but the insufficiency of the teachers is the only problem. And thus she established TYF and with the fund raised by TYF activities, she hires the teachers with a proper wage and get the school on going. It is very likely that a middle school is emerging in this academic year.

Since she started working as the chief of the village, she has sent the young people to health education trainings and as a result, there is a public clinic in the village with adequate medical aids and the villagers need not worry for their health. The villagers are being treated with proper medical care except severe diseases. It is amazing that the death rate of the mothers and children during

delivery is reducing to a great extent.

If someone from the village get arrested with suspicion by the Government authorities, with her own life at stake she tries her best for the discharge of that person sometimes by mediating and at times through appeasing. She has to intermingle with different people from different religious and background, and when dealing with them, she tries to be flexible and indiscriminating among the differences. If a resident in her terrain gets into trouble, she helps him whether he is a Christian or a Buddhist. Once she rescued a Burmese military soldier who was badly wounded. She dressed him like a villager; brought him home on her motorcycle disguised him as her husband. Thus, he was safely sent to the hospital, and thanked her. Every Christmas, TYF make an effort to reach to the outskirts of the Tagay village, donate food and clothing to the non-christian residents there and preach the gospel at Christmas celebrations. Amazingly, a Buddhist monk from a neighboring village has converted to Christianity but not yet baptized. It is obvious seen and heard that Naw Ler Wah is appreciated and counted on not only by her Christian society but also by her fellow Buddhists as she is committed to helping others with all her might, ability and talent.



*Title of a publication about the difficulties to vote in the 2015 elections in Kyaw Inn Seik Gyi township due to the impact of the silently ongoing civil war*

### **Researcher's Reflection**

Naw Ler Wah seems to be a young extraordinary housewife. I cannot help but appreciate her for what she has done as the Head of the village. Working as a Head of the village in one of the most dangerous places takes a lot of courage and commitment. It is far beyond my imagination. There are times she has to encounter ruthless fighting while traveling with the Burmese military forces. There are also times she has to manage herself as a mediator between the Burmese military forces and Karen armed forces. Despite her endeavor, she has been reproached, but she goes on being serene.

There are times she has got misunderstood by her husband with the indictment of not being responsible for her own household. Since she is bound to work outdoor almost every day, she has to take her two year old baby girl with her wherever she goes, and thus her daughter is suffering from

Asthma.

Being the chief of the village does not guarantee her either money or bribery. Most of the time, she has to spend her own money for the sake of the villagers. In 2009, the villagers began to be aware of her financial inconvenience and started supporting her family with 40,000kyats worth of money and some rice. At times, her husband involuntarily fails to accomplish his tasks in the village due to his full time childcare and house chores. He even persuades his wife to resign from her post.

When she was interviewed, she told us that being assigned as the Head of the village was actually an endorsement by God that she just had to carry out. In spite of all the difficulties and hardship, even at the cost of her life, she would continue serving for the Lord. God has used her to make this Kya Inn Seikkyi region become peaceful and enriched.

After the interview, I was personally overwhelmed by her life story and I felt that I have seen Deborah, the prophet and the Judge who saved the Israelites. Naw Ler Wah is a heroine who has been working for the betterment of her community although he is a busy housewife and mother. She ought to be regarded as the ideal figure for women because she could successfully lead the whole village and make it a better place. Therefore, Naw Ler Wah, the Head of the Tagay village, is a lifetime leading lady who is definitely praiseworthy.

#### *Commentary*

*A young woman grows up in a Christian family and is influenced from her background to be ready to take on a difficult duty which no one else feels called to do. Her education and training give her strength, sensitivity and stamina, which she needs to hold the balance between rival and armed forces. Still today there are conflicts between the "Burmese Army" and the freedom fighters of the Karen, and she serves as a buffer.*

*Naw Ler Wah sees as her task to stabilise her village, build up education and health services, and to strengthen the people in their faith. Her husband is unhappy about his role at home, but she also does not let him turn from her way. She is an example for others. She is ready to risk her life for the duty that God has set before her. Naw Ler Wah is an independent woman with leadership qualities. She searches for a peaceful dealings with antagonistic forces. She is no spiritual high-flyer; she sees the daily and practical necessities and acts accordingly. Naw Ler Wah lets herself be insulted, but she knows that she must follow the way that God entrusts to her.*



**Hnin Su Htwe (born 1987)**

by M Naw San

*A young woman's way into volunteer and development work*

Hnin Su Htwe was born on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1987 in Loikaw, Kayah State. She comes from a big family in which there are seven family members and she is the youngest daughter. Her father, belongs to Kayah and Kayin ethnic groups, a retired English lecturer from the University of Loikaw, Kayah State and her mother is a Shan, a high school Chemistry teacher at B.E.H.S (2), Loikaw. Her elder brother is a doctor at Pin Pint, southern Shan State, and her elder sister is one of the UNDP staffs, Loikaw. Her other sisters are twins who do not look a like- the elder one is a nurse at Singapore and the younger one is trying to survive in America. As for Hnin Su Htwe, she is attending an intensive university preparation program at Kantkaw Education Centre, Yangon.

Although they live separately for many reasons, her family is a happy family because they love each other very much and God blesses them. All of the siblings have been brought up to love the Lord in the fellowship of the Church. They all were baptized at Taunggyi Karen Baptist Church and have participated in the church activities since they were young. Her early childhood life was spent at Law-da-lay village, Lawpita and then she continued and finished her basic education study at Loikaw. Every summer and Christmas, their family visited Taunggyi where her grandmother, aunts and uncle lived. Her grandmother was a Church School teacher at that time and they went to church together. They could also attend summer camps and Upper Burma Karen Baptist churches conferences together.

After being baptized, she started reading the Bible. When she was young, she found her mother reading an old Bible in which verses were underlined and pages were torn. She used to watch her reading by sitting quietly beside her. She knew that it (the Bible) was a valuable thing by looking her mother's behavior and she decided to do the same when she was grown up although she couldn't understand the words in the Bible then. When she possessed her own bible, she read it regularly at first without understanding much. But she believed that the bible was real and meaningful. She could understand more when she matched what she had read with the sermons she heard. And then she became more aware of its essence through bible studies and fellowships with some strong Christians. What she wants to point out is that it takes steps to be a Christian with strong faith who knows and walks in His particular way for each of us. Now, she believes that being a Christian reflects not only a blessing but also a duty. Most of us enjoy being blessed but don't take the responsibility to preach about the Creator, the almighty God, with our words and in our life. This can only be done by the grace of God and through obedience to His Word. She tries to walk in the Word to be able to testify in her daily life and to confront the invisible. (Psalms 119:105)

There are many unquestionable and unanswerable exceptions in religions. She simply believes in God. As she is a human being, she is not perfect. She sometimes reacts with her inborn characteristics on something unpleasant to her like complaining, worrying, neglecting others and doing as she wishes. And then, she regrets for what she has done, prays for His forgiveness and guidance. By discussing with other people about their religions, they focus on one's etiquette and merit. Although they know that they can't be perfect, they continue following those etiquettes and doing merits as much as they can, not knowing well for their life after death. They see things practically and don't accept the existence of the Creator.

Hnin Su Htwe believes that she is nothing without Jesus Christ. She was born a normal infant even though her mother took oral contraceptives for one month without knowing that she was pregnant. She passed basic education examinations as an outstanding student because of God's grace. She

passed the matriculation exam with 3 distinctions even though she didn't try her best. She graduated from the University of Pharmacy in 2007, and worked as a medical representative in Loikaw for three months. Then, she quit her job because it was not suitable to her. Though God has blessed her a lot, she reacted with worries and anxieties, not keeping hope and faith in God. However, God didn't neglect her for her disobedience and poor faith, He continued guiding her, she believes.

She feels that she is the most blessed person among others. When she was young, she was nearly drowned in Balu Chaung, a stream that is about six feet deep. She was found breathless, but she did not die. When she was attending training in Mandalay, a building near her hostel was on fire. She had nowhere to go because there were no relatives in Mandalay and it was also the first time she had been to Mandalay. The fire moved backward not towards her hostel. Another miraculous event happened when she knocked down a child with her motorcycle and was sent to the police station. Although she saw the blood running down from the child's head, she was fine and could go back home safely.

After quitting her job, she joined Community Management Course (CMC), and in 2010 she attended Basic Environmental Awareness Training led by Green Memo and supervised by Yangon Case Management (CM). It took about four days and after that training, the trainees could apply for what they had learned in Pa-O Ta Baung festival by holding environmental booths. Her volunteer spirit was born after that training and continued volunteering after attending anti-trafficking, CM Training of Trainers (TOT) and home based aged care trainings. Our CM Alumni Group held booths in festivals and planted trees. The main purpose of their group is to apply what they have for the benefit of the community.

At first, they conducted those activities by their monthly member fees. Later, they found the community's needs and got a small grant from Yangon (CM). They ran the project with the name of Geha Rakkhita (Eco Care). They did environmental booths and talks, tree plantations, anti-plastic campaigns, organic farming trainings, vocational trainings such as sewing, cooking and bakery, CM TOT training in villages near Taunggyi, Inle Lake and Loikaw in 2011. The project was run by volunteers who gave a lot of their time and effort. They had to make negotiation between group members, with other groups and the community. Because of those activities, their group has been known. The community was aware of their roles and responsibilities for development.



*Loikaw, Kayah State*

While volunteering for the whole year, she met many difficulties among social activities and household chores. At home, she had to help in teaching her aunt's tuition and cooking. Sometimes, she had to sleep and keep watch of another aunt's house when her aunt was on trips. At noon, she occasionally visited a lonely old woman who had been suffering from stroke for a long time and helped her in doing physical exercise. Her relatives were worried for her because she was spending so much time by volunteering, without earning for her living. As a project coordinator, she was busy by attending meetings, coordinating trainings in villages and resource persons, preparing things for trainings and doing paperwork. Sometimes, they did things in hast and there were misunderstandings among group members. There were requirements in budgeting because the project for the first time with so many activities in so many places. However, because of God's grace, their project was accomplished with achievements.

In the evaluation program, the villagers from Inle came and participated with them. They were very pleased as they got vocational trainings such as cooking and sewing. Networking between villages

has also improved because of their activities. For example, they conducted sewing training for three villages with seven participants from each village. They could hold sewing trainings for three times because of their interests. At a sewing training in Inle, with one of her friends she participated as a training coordinator. The participants had different levels of skills and there were problems between the participants during the training. As a coordinator, she had to find the effective ways to maintain mutual respect and unity of the participants. Finally, the training was successfully done and the participants came to realize how valuable the training is and learned many lessons from the program. They were equipped for their future career, attitude, living standard, and vision so that they would fully and effectively take part in the development of their village.

As she participated in the project-oriented activities, she found out that there were needs they missed to do for the community. She has always wanted to work for community development with right-based approach until the sustainable development is created. However, she doesn't know how to do and where to start. She is in the working age and also needs a suitable job. As she got her degree in pharmacy, she has also wanted to earn her living with her professional skills. In drawing a common line between her wants and needs, she has found out that she could do not only what she needs but also what she wants if she works as a medical worker for an INGO. She hopes to learn from other co-workers as well as share what she has learned from her experiences and do voluntary work for the development of the communities. As a result, she decided to continue her further study in public health as she still needs much knowledge, experience and skills to reach her goal.



*Graduation ceremony after the one year course. The centre is situated beside the headquarters of the Myanmar Council of Churches on Pyay Rd.*

She then joined Kantkaw Education Centre in 2012. It was a great opportunity for her to get full scholarship because the tuition fee was very expensive. Her great interest was critical thinking skills, effective communication skills, and community needs assessment. Living in the hostel with students from different parts of Myanmar gave her a chance to learn about them such as their ambition, past experience, talents, interests and contribution to their societies. She has encountered many social organizations working for education, peace and development. At present she is trying her best to upgrade her knowledge and skills to be able to implement her plans. She hopes to cooperate with the organizations that have common interests with her in trying for the community development. She is sure she will be a valuable person for the development building.

## Naw Ah Loh Wah Paw (geb. 1988)

by Thuzar Thein

*Editor of the German version: Gerhard Köberlin*

### *Introduction*

*The only Christian on the national women's soccer team! The background and career of the young athlete are described here. It is an amazing development for the 25-year-old, and not only that from village to big city. Her horizon widens and she develops from a village girl of an ethnic minority to a national striker who in the Southeast Asian competition shoots the deciding goal. Myanmar's ahead! – with prayer and the help of God.*

Naw Ah Loh Wah Paw was born on August 1, 1988 at Padanko village, Demawhsoe Township, Kayah state. Her parents are U Saw Moody and Daw Naw Yuti. Her siblings are Saw Lay Hser Moo, Naw Paw Tah Shu, Saw Hackket, Naw Shally Paw, Naw Bushi Paw, Saw Titus and Naw Eh Tamwee Paw.

### **Christian Family Background**

Ah Lo Wah Paw is a Kayah lady. She comes from a Christian family. She accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior and received Baptism at Padanko Baptist Church in 2005 (she was 17 at that time). When she was young, she attended Sunday school regularly. In her youth, she sang in the Church Choir and played guitar in the Christian Endeavour programs of the church. She did not stay long in the village (later she moved to Yangon).

In Yangon, she went to many churches and took part in the church activities as a visiting member of the church. Now she has to live among many non – believers, but she never forgets God. She always reads the Bible and prays to God.

### **Educational Background**

- (1) She studied at State Primary School of Padanko village from 1993 to 1998 (from kindergarten to Grade IV).
- (2) After that she studied at State Middle School of Loi Nanpa Township, Kayah State from 1998 to 2002 (Grade V to Grade VIII).
- (3) Then she continued her high school education at Sports and Physical Education School, Kyaikkasan, Yangon from 2003 to 2005. Today she is studying at Thuwanna Training Center for Myanmar selected women soccer players.

While studying in Grade IX at Sports and Physical Education School, Ah Lo Wah Paw had to do soccer training every afternoon (3:30- 5:30 PM). She studied in the morning (8:00 – 12:00 noon). Lunch and break time was between 12:00 and 3:30 PM. In the evening (from 7:00 – 9:00 PM), she had to study. She sat for matriculation examination in 2006-2007 academic year for the first time, but she failed. In the same year, she was selected as a Myanmar selected soccer player. She sat for matriculation examination for the second time in 2007-2008 academic year and she failed again. So, she had decided to devote her life to sports.

### **Working Experience**

The following is how she entered into sports and became a footballer of national level. When she was young, she could play volleyball well. Therefore, she was selected as a volleyball player of her

school. Her teachers were impressed with her volleyball skills so they sent her to Sports and Physical Education School at Kyaikkasan in Yangon.

At Sports and Physical Education School, she not only did football training but also studied lessons. Her parents did not need to spend any money for that. The government provided her with 15,000 kyats every month. When she became a Myanmar selected soccer player, she played for some government ministries. At first, she played for Ministry of Industry No. 1 for four years (she was paid 45,000 kyats per month) and later she joined Ministry of Transportation (she was paid 100,000 kyats per month). Her brief player records were as follows.

- (1) She played in Inter – Ministry football tournaments.
- (2) She played in Under 19 football tournaments.
- (3) She played in Inter- State and Division tournaments.
- (4) She went to Asian countries and took part in the football tournaments as a Myanmar Selected soccer player.

**Her training schedule was as follow.**

<b>Days</b>	<b>Mornings</b>	<b>Evenings</b>
Monday	Running Practice (800 meter x 8 times)	Football training on the pitch
Tuesday	Running Practice (800 meter x 8 times)	Weightlifting (with machines)
Wednesday	Running Practice (800 meter x 8 times)	Friendly football matches with Ministry teams
Thursday	Running Practice (800 meter x 8 times)	Weightlifting (with machines)
Friday	Running Practice (800 meter x 8 times)	Football training on the pitch
Saturday	Running Practice (800 meter x 8 times)	Friendly football matches

At first, she and her playmates trained with local trainers. However, since the beginning of 2011, they have been training with a Japanese coach and she believes that she becomes a better footballer by training with a foreigner. She is a striker in her team.

**International matches She Played**

- (1) In Malaysia, 2007, Myanmar team was qualified for 2007 SEA Games.
- (2) In China, 2008, ASEAN football tournament
- (3) In Vietnam, 2009, Myanmar team won the third prize in ASEAN football tournament
- (4) Laos, 2009, Myanmar team won the third prize in South East Asia football tournament
- (5) In China, 2010, Myanmar team played with teams from China, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand
- (6) In Laos, 2011, Myanmar team won the second prize in ASEAN football tournament

Myanmar will host the next SEA games in 2013. Myanmar football team is training very hard to win the championship in this tournament. She believes that this goal will be achieved because God is with her. She feels very tired to undergo training like this; however she is determined to do her best for her country.

She arrived at Sports and Physical Education School in Yangon in 2003 and she is the only Christian there. She used to get discouraged because there was some discrimination against her because of her religion. By the grace of God, she got a chance to go to church on Sunday. She participated in South Okkalapa Myanmar Baptist Church. Although she has to live among non-believers, she never forgets God. She managed to overcome all difficulties she faced with the courage and strength given by God. Now she no longer has problems dealing with non-believers. Since the time of her baptism, she has learned how to forgive. In addition the team spirit they learn together on the pitch has established unity and harmony among the players. Now she knows how to live peacefully and amicably with other people.



*The football player 2013 in Taunggyi, Shan State*

There is mutual respect and mutual understanding between her and her non – Christian friends. They help each other when one is in need. In this way, she proclaims the love of God. Before playing a game, she always prays and God always answers her prayers. She also shares her faith with her non-Christian friends especially when they want to know about Christianity. Sometimes she brings them to church also. Her friends are also loving, compassionate and helpful although they are not Christians. So, Ah Lo Wah Paw strongly believes that love is the most important thing in human relationship.

When she left her village and her family to live in Yangon, she was quite young. She did not have any relatives in Yangon. In addition

she did not have any Christian friends. Sometimes she missed her family and village very much. But with the conviction that she is working not only for herself but also for her people and her country, she tried her best to overcome all the hardships. She never forgets God. She also acknowledges that she is what she is today simply because of God's love and mercy. Although she was born and bred in a small village in Kayah state, she has managed to bring glory to her country. It is really praiseworthy. By scoring the only goal against Laos team, Ah Lo Wah Paw helped Myanmar team win the second prize in ASEAN football tournament in 2011.<sup>24</sup>

Currently she and her teammates are training in Japan with Japanese coaches. She said, "No matter where I am, I will always put my faith in God and live a godly life. In addition, I will never forget Kayah State and Kayah people that I love very much." She is determined to help Kayah young people become good sport men and women when she retires from sports. Her simple and sincere mind – set, loyalty to her people and country and strong faith in God are the things we all should emulate.

#### *Commentary*

*The author describes 25-year-old Ah Loh Wah Paw as she achieves two decisive changes of her perspective. She loves her Christian origins, in which she lives in the security of a village among those of the same faith. But then in the city Yangon and in the national team "she must live among unbelievers", as sole Christian, and there "she often loses her courage" and is afraid of discrimination, although in Myanmar very much value is officially placed on strict adherence to religious freedom. The biography describes that she is overwhelmed by the experience that harmony, respect and love is possible between people who are so very different and who believe completely differently.*

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24 In 2013, the team won the bronze medal at the SEA Games held in Myanmar.

*The second change of perspective takes place in her feelings of patriotism. When playing football she becomes proud of her country, although, she says, her loyalty is always to her home Kayah State and the Kayah people whom she loves so much.*

*In both these changes, however, one loyalty remains the most important anchor in her life: the God of her prayers.*

*As Europeans we can be impressed by the depiction of a path of development. One could possibly be startled by differences drawn sharply in black and white between 'believers' and 'unbelievers', the Kayah and the large land Myanmar. Yet we are moved by her experience that something so British as "team spirit on the football pitch" can change her black-and-white world view. It is possible as a Christian "to live in peace and friendship with other people" who are actually Buddhists and Burmese.*

## B Historical Context of the Biographies

### 1 Narration

Hans-Bernd Zöllner

These Biographies not only give a many-faceted look into the life of Christians in Burma/Myanmar. They allow the reader to share in the suspenseful history of the country. This history is for external observers naturally foreign, even strange. This, the largest non-insular country in Southeast Asia, is one of many that gains global publicity only when something extraordinary takes place there. In Myanmar such events most recently were the demonstrations of the monks in 2007, cyclone *Nargis* a year later, which took the lives of over 100,000 people, and the opening of the land following the March 2011 transfer of governmental power to a civil government by the military junta that had ruled since 1988. Also likely to be recognized by most observers of world events is the name *Aung San Suu Kyi*, who since the unrest of 1988 represents the face of the opposition to the military rule.

The following information sketches the historical framework in which the Biographies of those portrayed here are embedded. The individual Biographies are indicated at the appropriate points. The portraits are presented in order of date of birth, and in the individual introductions or commentaries there is sometimes a cross-reference to the appropriate section of this overview.

#### 1

#### The Colonial Period up to the End of the First World War

The region in which the contemporary state Myanmar lies was incorporated into the British empire in three stages. This integration changed the relationships between the Buddhist-Burmese majority population, which lived in the plain drained by the Irrawaddy and other rivers, and the people who lived in the mountainous margins, from whom the majority of the present-day Christians in the country come. The upsurge in the activity of Protestant missionaries played here an important role, but was not the only cause.

Already in 1813, eleven years before the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826), the US-American Baptist *Adoniram Judson* (1788-1850) landed on Burmese soil. He learned the local language, began the translation of the Bible into Burmese, and sought to spread the Gospel among Burmese Buddhists, though with scarcely any success. First after a mission doctor was sent was note taken of the foreign mission. The Burmese king invited the missionaries to his capital *Ava (Innwa)*, and *Judson* was able to prove his competence as interpreter.

After war broke out in 1824 he was thrown in prison, in spite of all assertions that as an American citizen he had nothing to do with the war. He spent one and a half years in prison. After the end of the war he translated the Anglo-Burmese peace treaty of *Yandabo* which, however, brought no peace. The differing interpretations of the treaty opened the way for further British campaigns (1852 and 1885) which brought to an end the Burmese kingdom. At the end of November 1885 the last Burmese king with his family and court was brought into exile in western India.

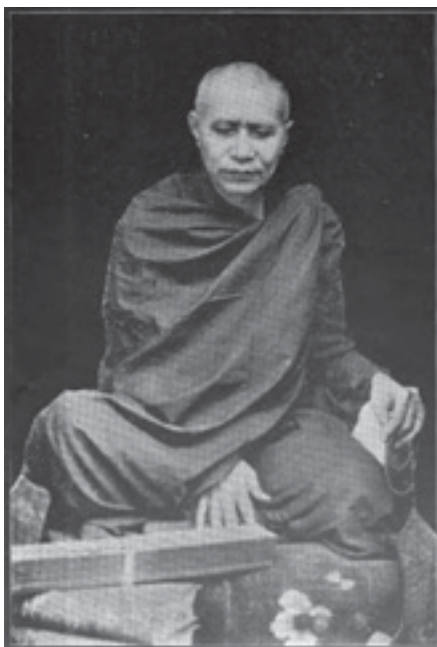
At this time there were already a number of Christian congregations in Burma, admittedly not among the ethnic Burmese but among the ethnic group of the Karen (Kayin), who had previously been predominately animistic. Members of this ethnic group, which encompassed various groups differing in culture and language, lived in one of the first provinces that the kingdom of Burma relinquished to the British empire, in *Tennasserim (Tanintharyi)*, on the border to *Siam (Thailand)*.

*Pe Maung Tin* (Biography 1), the earliest born of those portrayed here, came into the world in 1888,



three years after the end of the Burmese kingdom, in *Insein*. Here near *Rangoon*, the British capital of Burma, was a Christian center where many Karen lived. Here on "Seminary Hill" was established already in 1845 a theological training institution, where today the *Myanmar Institute of Theology* (MIT) and the *Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology* are to be found.

*Pe Maung Tin* was born as the son of a colonial civil servant. His paternal grandfather was a Baptist minister. On his mother's side his relatives also included, according to his biographer, the last *Patriarch* of the order of Buddhist monks. Before the young man started upon a successful career in the British educational system, he attended a Buddhist private school.



*Photo of the last Buddhist Patriarch (thatanabaing) of Burma*

This enlightened stance toward the religious institutions of Burma is typical for the liberal inter religious climate following British example which was cultivated up to the First World War among educated Burmese Christians and also by many anglophile Buddhists, as the life of U Pie Tokes (Biography 2) shows especially impressively. Religion was considered a private matter and was also made a subject for academic consideration, for which the *Burma Research Society*, co-founded in 1920 by *Pe Maung Tin* as a young man, is a good example. It aimed to investigate with an exchange of ideas of native and foreign experts the circumstances of the country and to initiate a new development.

At the same time a completely different, nationalistic movement developed among Buddhist laity. It carried the name *Young Men Buddhist Association (YMBA)*, following the example of the *YMCA*. At the beginning a society for the improvement of the morals of Buddhists – supporting abstinence from alcohol and gambling, for example – it became increasingly political and targeted the foreign Britons, who were not Buddhist. It started a large and aggressive campaign against the habit of foreigners not to remove their shoes when visiting a pagoda. However, this campaign led to a split in the *YMBA*.

The British gave in, but had overlooked the political implications of the campaign. These were linked to the fact that the third Anglo-Burmese War had in part been triggered by rejection of the British demand that ambassadors should be permitted to leave on their shoes during royal

audiences.

The question of who is allowed to set the rules for association with one another is also a source of conflicts in Burma/Myanmar because it has fundamental dimension. The question is that of who has the right to define basic concepts such as 'civilisation', 'human rights', and 'democracy'. Burmese Buddhists were – and are – very conscious that they come from a culture that is 500 years older than the Christian one. They are therefore of the opinion that they do not have to let people from western cultures dictate anything to them



Caricature from 1916: Burmese pagoda trustee helps Britons avoid the ban on shoes in pagodas

.This anti-western stance becomes visible, for example, in the decision taken at the yearly conference of the *YMBA* in 1917 that marriages between Buddhist-Burmese women and foreigners would be seen very reluctantly. This decision from 1917 can be understood as a parallel to the widespread rejection of marriages between Moslems and Buddhist women found still today in Myanmar. Such a position also carries racist overtones.

With this development a barrier was raised between Christians and Buddhists in Burma. It had a religious as well as an ethnic aspect. The majority of the Christians were not ethnic Burmese, but were Karen – *Pe Maung Tin*, for example, and later members of other ethnic groups like the Kachin and the Chin, who lived on the outskirts of the core Burmese lands. An exception to the originally geographically marginally located christianized ethnic groups are the Karen living in the *Irrawaddy* Delta, speaking a language that differs from that of their brothers and sisters on the border to Thailand. Here Christian and Buddhist Karen and Buddhist Burmese live beside each other, which has not prevented fierce disputes between the Christian Karen and the Burmese (Biography 5, *Mahn Saw Bu*). In *Pe Maung Tin's* family this looming nationalistic-based hostility toward strangers had a long-term consequence. In 1915 his younger sister married the British scholar. During the Second World War the couple fled to India and returned after the war to Burma. In 1964 in the course of the nationalisation of the educational system that was commanded by the military junta, they again had to leave the country (cf. Biography 4, *Morris Jamaldin*).

*Pe Maung Tin*, as also U Poe Toke (Biography 2) and Dr. Hla Bu (Biography 4), are Protestant Christians portrayed here who did not have to suffer from the emerging gulf between the Burmese-Buddhist majority and the other ethnic-religious groups. This is partly because many Christian

Burmese, for example, *Mahn Saw Bu* (Biography 5), also a Karen and born twelve years after the future scholar of literature, were educated in institutions which were organised and funded by Christians. Besides Pe Maung Tin, Dr. Hla Bu (Biography 4) also had an academic career but in Judson College, which until World War II was headed by Baptists and attached to the University.

However, many Buddhists also attended these schools. This may have helped *Mahn Saw Bu* to mediate between Karen and Burmese in the Second World War.

2

From after the First World War until 1948

Shortly after the end of the First World War, in which, along with many Burmese, the later Pastor Vial Nang (Biography 3) participated as a member of a Burmese pioneer unit, there began in Burma a struggle about the political future of the country. The British started political reforms, as already shortly before this in India, with the aim of introducing democratic institutions.

The Burmese nationalists on the other hand protested against colonial rule. Religion for them, as for *Gandhi* in their large western neighbor India, played a central role, but in a different way. *Gandhi's* non-violent resistance rested upon a comprehensive, ecumenical religiosity which mirrored the diversity of his country and his own encounter with Christianity.

In Burma the first major protest against the British began with a strike in December 1920 against the establishment of a university according to the British model. It started with a holy oath of twelve students at the *Shwedagon* Pagoda. Students of the Baptist Judson College also participated in this strike, though without *Pe Maung Tin*, who was not in the country at this time but in London to continue his studies.



Memorial stone on the Shwedagon Pagoda in remembrance of the start of the student strike of 1920, still today marked as a national holiday

With absolute clarity the dissociation from the Britons (and their Burmese helpers) was seen in the run-up to the first elections for a legislative assembly. In 1920 the Buddhist-Burmese nationalists founded a political association and boycotted their countrymen who were in British service. Monks denied, for example, their religious services for marriages, funerals and other ceremonies. For those affected this was equivalent to being shut out of the Buddhist community. For the British, however, it was a violation against the ideals of freedom. They reacted by passing an anti-boycott law. For the Burmese opposition those convicted were 'political prisoners'.

Yet the student strike did not prevent the establishment of the university. The first elections also took place at the end of 1922, but due to the boycott fewer than seven percent of those entitled to vote cast their ballots. Represented in the legislative body besides Burmese were Karen, Indians,

Anglo-Burmese and Britons, but no members of the 'mountain tribes', the Shan, Kachin and Chin. The inhabitants of these areas were considered by the British to be not yet mature enough to practice any kind of self-administration. The British allowed these 'border regions' to India and China to continue to be governed by their traditional rulers, who were pledged to loyalty to the British.

In this way a double demarcation line was strengthened. The inhabitants who participated in the attempt of the colonial power to modernise Burma were considered by the nationalists to be collaborators. At the same time the members of the 'mountain tribes' were politically excluded by the colonial government. As soldiers, though, members of these tribes were definitely valued, in contrast to the Burmese.

Politically, though, the split had as a consequence that a number of Karen organisations formed which carried in their names the word 'loyal', manifesting in this way their bond with the British.

One of those involved was *Dr. Po Min* alias *Dr. Saw Durmay*. He found a white elephant, an animal that was viewed during the time of the Burmese kings as bringing luck for the kingdom under its leader, the 'Lord of the White Elephant'. *Po Min* exhibited the animal in Burma and took it then out of the country. Also along on this trip was *Poe Toke*, born in 1890 (Biography 2), who learned during the more than two-year trip through England and the USA a great deal, which he shared later with his students.

In 1928 *Dr. San Crombie Po* (1878 – 1946), who had trained as a doctor in the USA and prior to the elections in 1922 had been appointed to the legislative council of the Governor, wrote a book in which he called for the Karen regions to have their own administration. He justified this idea with the insurmountable cultural differences to the Burmese. One of his daughters was Claribel Irene Po (Biography 8), who after the war was for a short time a member of the parliament and became the first female Minister in Burma.

San C. Po reported on a visit of a British commission in the *Irrawaddy* Delta that was to gather opinions on the planned political reforms. The Burmese nationalists tried to boycott the activity of the commission. The author characterises this attempt so: 'They seriously believed that they could impede the work of the committee, but as they found out that their steps to do this were effectively countered, they tried to dismiss their action as a joke. This characteristic of the Burmese one will scarcely find in another nation or race.'

Members of other ethnic groups were at first not touched by such problems because, unlike the Karen, they had not had much contact with ethnic Burmese. This is shown, for example, in the life of Vial Nang (Biography 3), the first native Pastor of the Chin, who after the first World War had problems with the animists of his country because they resisted proselytisation. Today the majority of the Chin are members of a Christian denomination. Something similar happened later with his colleague Thang Lian (Biography 6) in a different part of the craggy Chin country.

The foreign missionary efforts were also concentrated in worldly areas, as in many other lands, such as hospitals and schools. The emphasis on good school results in many Biographies and work in Christian educational institutions, as for example by Dr. Chit Maung (Biography 9), Catherine Khin Khin (Biography 10) und Mya Kyi (Biography 12) are to be viewed against this background. Dr. Chit Maung even studied for a short time in the USA at a Baptist college, but was not very happy there.

The alienation between the Buddhist-Burmese inhabitants and the ethnic minorities had especially a military effect during the Second World War. This was the great opportunity for the Burmese nationalists to bring closer their wish for independence. For this purpose young Burmese underwent military training that was carried out by the Japanese. The army of independence under the

leadership of *Aung San*, later a national hero and father of *Aung San Suu Kyi*, which developed out of this drove the British troops out of Burma at the side of the Japanese. On the side of the British colonial power Karen, Kachin and Chin strengthened the armies against the Japanese invaders. Thus two Burmese armies fought against each other until *Aung San* made an about-face shortly before the end of the war and fought against the Japanese at the side of the Allies.

The biography of the later Minister *Zahre Lian* (Biography 18), a Chin born in 1929 who grew up on the Indian border, provides insight into the efforts a young Chin made in order to fight on the British side against the Japanese. This life story, however, also shows that this service was later no obstacle to a political career. For that matter the first Minister President of independent Burma, *U Nu*, was Foreign Minister in the formally independent (since 1943) Burma under Japanese dominion.

The life of *Major Nkhum Tang, a Kachin born in 1932* (Biography 22), is proof of the terrible consequences of the civil war which developed after independence out of the split in Burma. However, it also shows that this division could be overcome in individual cases. Later a professional soldier in the army of independent Burma under General *Ne Win*, he began his military career as the servant of an American officer who led a guerilla unit of Kachin. Later he fought against numerous rebel groups which had formed after independence, including at the end the Karen, who wanted to realize the dream of an independent state about which *San C. Po* had written.

Finally the life of *Mahn Saw Bu* (Biography 5) during the Second World War also belongs in this context. The manager of a rice mill in the *Irrawaddy* Delta experienced the tension between the Karen and the Burmese which then after the invasion of the Japanese and the their Burmese allies led to violent conflict. The background was on the one side efforts of members of the Burmese army under Aung San's leadership to build up a Burmese administration in the country. On the other side there were militant Karen who felt oppressed by the Burmese and likewise aspired to independence. This conflict was only ended by the intervention of the Japanese army and was one reason that the numerically greatly strengthened Burmese army of independence was drastically reduced by the occupiers. The violent tensions that at that time broke out in the Delta as well as the battles with the rebels on the northern border strain the relationship of the various ethnic groups up to the present.

The events of the war are mirrored finally in a different way in other lives. From Than Lians biography (Nr. 6) we learn something of the consequences of the war in the Chin mountains. In the life of *Morris Jamaldin* (Biography 16) the flight of Indians from Burma is mentioned. Aung Din (Biography 14) helped native soldiers to organise for the liberation of part of the Japanese-occupied Shan states. From the childhood of *Andrew Mya Han* (Biography 21) we find out something about the living conditions in a village to which the pupils of a school for the blind were evacuated.

The war left in every sense massive scars in the county. It was largely destroyed after the Allies in 1945 – now with Burmese support – had recaptured it from the Japanese. The attempt to unite both armies that had fought against one another in the war failed. Aung San, who had taken off the general's uniform with which he is pictured still today, won at the head of a united political front, the *AFPFL* (*Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League*, shortened in Burmese to *pa sa la pa*), the elections for a legislative assembly in April 1947 with a resounding majority. However, shortly thereafter in July 1947 he was murdered at the order of a political rival.

After that – shortly after independence on 4 January 1948 – a civil war began with the insurgency of communist rebels who had gone underground because they were excluded from the AFPFL. Then in 1949 the Karen also started an insurrection.

The multiple divisions with which Burma entered independence also determine the picture offered

by the Biographies before us here. The people introduced here all stood on the side of 'official Burma'. Christian rebels against the Burmese central government, of which there were a great number, do not appear in this selection.

3

### First Steps in Independence 1948-1962

The fourteen years between the independence ceremonies on 4 January 1948 and the military putsch under General *Ne Win* on 2 March 1962 are customarily referred to as the 'democratic period' in the modern history of the country. This is justified insofar as the constitution designed by *Aung San* and accepted on 2 March 1962 contained elements that were borrowed from the models of western democracies. However, the word 'democracy' does not appear in the constitution itself. Until 1956 the heterogeneous movement *AFPFL* (Burmese: *pa-sa-la-pa*) ruled the country under the leadership of *U Nu*, an older comrade of *Aung San*, who was an equally staunch Buddhist as Socialist. In the elections held in 1956 the movement won once again the majority of the seats in Parliament, but not this time the majority of the votes. With this its claim to represent the whole people was damaged. There was a state crisis with the consequence that the *AFPFL* split in 1958. *U Nu* led the 'Clean' *AFPGL* and two rivals the 'Stable' *AFPFL*.

After this division the government no longer saw itself in a position to conduct new elections. *U Nu* then resigned and handed over governing power to the highest commander of the army, General *Ne Win*. He was then elected by Parliament as new Prime Minister, leading a cabinet of experts. In the meantime the army had emerged as the only stable institution of the land during the period of civil war and political confusion. The 'Caretaker Government' under *Ne Win* then organised the next elections in April 1961, which ended with a fulminant victory of the "Clean *AFPFL*" led by *U Nu*. In this the promise of the party leader that in the case of an election victory Buddhism would be made the state religion played an important role. The promise was kept in 1961, yet then began the rebellion of the Kachin against the central government that continues still today.

A look at the Biographies presented here shows that the first period of independence with its widespread chaos for the individual offered opportunities for individual development. *Pe Maung Tin* (born 1888, Biography 1) could enjoy an active retirement and accept honours for his merits. *Mahn Saw Bu* (born 1900, Biography 5) continued his activity for the common good after the war. He was a candidate in the first parliamentary election after the war, which because of the civil war in the years 1951 and 1952 had been held in several stages. He won a parliamentary seat as a candidate of the *AFPFL* with no opposing candidates. He never, however, took his seat because he died in 1952. *Morris Jamaldin* (born 1915, Biography 16) and *Mahn Mya Than* (born 1921, Biography 17) developed further their skills as doctor and fishery expert respectively and used these in their Christian and community contexts. Both 'child soldiers' in World War II, *Zahre Liang* (born 1929, Biography 18) and *Nkhum Tang* (born 1932, Biography 22) had successful careers respectively in the civil service and in the military. *Aung Khin* (born 1929, Biography 19), later church administrator, and *Andrew Mya Han* (born 1932, Biography 21) began their church careers. *Pe Thwin* (born 1929, Biography 20) had to interrupt his studies because civil war broke out and became a soldier in the navy of the independent country. At the same time he had literary inclinations, as did Prime Minister *U Nu* and many of his fellow countrymen. Several of his works were published in the country's magazines.

A special place is held by *Khin Kyi* (born 1922, see Biography 11), the wife of the national hero *Aung San*, murdered in 1947, and the mother of the Nobel Peace Prize winner and leader of the Burmese opposition to the military *Aung San Suu Kyi*. She is the daughter of a Christian and is

therefore reckoned by the Christians of the country as one of them. However, in her private as well as public life as a civil servant and later ambassador of her country she always followed Buddhist traditions.

The first period of Burma's independence after the time of the Buddhist kings can be characterised by several contradictory tendencies.

On the one hand the many breaklines that in the colonial period had developed through the conflict between native and western traditions became open fractures. The two Burmese armies could not unite with each other; a civil war broke out. This showed that the unity of the state of Burma had only been superficially created by the force of the British colonial power. The question of how the state's monopoly of force should be organised is to the present day still not solved. It was the Burmese army under General Ne Win that saved the state of Burma that was proclaimed in 1948 from quick collapse, though without ending the civil war. It was then also the army that was called to help in the first serious internal political crisis of the country. This army claims since its formation until the present the right to have its say in political matters and understands itself as the protector of the unity of the country. As several of the Biographies collected here show, it was also the members of ethnic minorities who fought in this army, but always under Burmese-Buddhist leadership.

On the other hand the dominant political figure of this epoch, *U Nu*, was a traditional Buddhist. This tradition envisages that the leader of the state is to rule like a king according to the rules of the Buddha. These rules stipulate that the ruler is to endeavor to achieve a balance between all ethnic and religious groups of the land. The reverence that he showed to *Dr. Jamaldin*, for example, but also other prominent Christian individuals, is a sign of this. And that *Zahre Lian* remained on *Nu's* side at the split in the *AFPFL* witnesses conversely that individual non-Buddhist members of the ethnic minority honored these efforts with their loyalty to the political leader. The non-Burmese Christians, who largely came from the mountainous margins of the new country, were also not primarily defined by the ideological differences of the post-war period.

There were also in the turbulent first era of independent Burma an abundance of opportunities for individual Christians to be active in society. This took place in a political system that was continually fighting for its own survival. At this time it was represented by 'clean' politicians like *U Nu*, though he lacked assertiveness. The breakup of the *AFPFL* into its two factions allows us to see that as the beginning of the end of the 'democratic' period of Burmese history. The victory of the 'clean' *AFPFL* over its 'stable' competitors was then the trigger for the putsch with which a new period of Burmese history began.

4

#### The Burmese Way to Socialism 1962-1988

The military coup of 1962 was approved by Buddhist powers also because it was raised to the state religion and with this the unity of the country could be secured. Further, the army saw itself not only as the military, but also as the political protector of this unity. Militarily it was still the civil war that required the use of the army and that strongly handicapped civilian life, as the Biographies of *Lapai Zau San* (30) and *Ah Htu* (32) show, for example.

This striving for unity proved itself in the years following, however, to be fragile and ambivalent, as it had also already been during the previous period. The military built up a cadre party, the *Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)*, which under its chairman *Ne Win* was the central political instrument in the country from 1974 on with a new constitution.

In only one of the Biographies presented here is membership in the BSPP indirectly mentioned. From 1981-1985 Catherine Khin Khin (Biography 10) was for one legislative period a Member of Parliament and must therefore also have been a party member. One can, though, assume that she was invited to become a candidate in her function as a teacher and did not do this from conviction. It is reported that Thang Bee Lwei (Biography 29) as a medical doctor, whose training was funded by the state, also had to participate in 'propaganda actions' of the government.

The abstinence practiced in this period on the part of Christians in regard to participation in political life is likely connected with the fact that the army created the new party. Yet the aversion to the whole system of the Burmese Way to socialism is even more to be attributed to the fact that nearly all areas of life came under state control. In the wake of this program all hospitals and schools that had until now been run by churches were placed under state supervision.

This 'nationalisation' can certainly be understood as the wish to belatedly reverse an element of British rule. Belonging to the British period was not least the activity of Christian missionaries. Already since the days of *Adoniram Judson* they had also built schools and medical institutions, as mentioned in the Biographies. The measures under *Ne Win* were certainly an attempt to reduce the influence of the religions on political life and to force the religions groups to limit themselves to the core of their religious activities. Buddhist monks were also affected by this intention, which developed from an idea of *Aung San*. The special status of Buddhism as state religion was immediately ended in 1962. At the beginning of the 1980s laws were passed after long preparation which ordered anew the *Sangha*, the community of the monks, and – as in the time of the kings – brought it under state control.

At the same time nationalisation was a radical renunciation of capitalist practices of the colonial period, which were still accepted under *U Nu*. Colonial times should finally be over! The reason for this can be gleaned from commentaries on the introduction of right-hand traffic at the end of the 60s. With renunciation of left-hand traffic, as used in Great Britain, the colonial period is finally past.

How dramatically the measures for nationalisation of church institutions were felt by the Christians is seen most clearly in the biography of *Morris Jamaldin*. In July 1966 his leprosy hospital was nationalised. This day was for him a 'day of tears' (Biography 16). Also affected was *Aung Khin* (Biography 19), who lost his position as head of a Baptist school. He moved over into purely church work, while the Christian doctor had to continue his work in a state-run institution under different direction. With the missing Christian orientation of the institution the number of motivated Christian employees also decreased, which then led to the institution being later returned again to the church.

A story such as this makes clear a tendency that can be seen continuing throughout Burma's socialist era: the of the churches from society and with that at the same time a concentration of Burmese Christianity on its 'core competence', the preaching of the gospel. This had to take place now without direct help from foreign missionaries. These had been expelled from the country.

This concentration on the 'essentials' was mirrored in various forms in the Biographies presented here. *Zahre Lian* lost in the coup of 1962 his post as Minister. His function as representative of the Christians in the government was taken over after the putsch of 1988 by a Catholic military man, ex-Brigadier General David Abel. *Zahre Lian* received a post as Ambassador and numerous state honours.

*Aung Khin* and *Andrew Mya Han* continued in church careers. The future Archbishop of the Anglican church participated in a missionary project that can be understood as an answer by the church to the new situation. The 'Three-in-One' project was a church version of state efforts to make



Burma self-sufficient and independent. In this social work was understood as an important element of mission. *Andrew Mya Han* was also active in agriculture..

Two of those introduced here experienced conversion during this time. *Thein Lwin* (born 1949) became a Christian in 1964, when he was blinded as the result of a chemical experiment (Biography 28). He completed his studies and established his own work with blind people. *Bhikkhu Seveka* (born 1938) changed from monk into a student of theology in 1971 (Biography 23).

At about the same time *Melvin Eway* (born 1941), who was already a Christian, began his theological studies (Biography 24). *Naw Ruth* (born 1946) completed state teacher training and worked as a teacher under the special conditions of the continuing civil war in her home region in the Karen (Kayin) State (Biography 26). *Mahn Mya Than* continued his fishery work to support church work (Biography 17).

In spite of the policy of isolation under Ne Win's regime, the churches were not entirely cut off from churches in other lands. Anna May (Biography 25) studied for many years in the USA and gained her doctoral degree before she became the first woman to head the Myanmar Institute of Theology. The future General Secretary of the MCC, Smith Ngulh Za Thawng (Biography 27), continued his theological education between 1983 and 1986 in Bochum, Bossey und Glasgow. Here as in many other non-documented cases the studies abroad were followed by the assumption of a leading position at home, for which – as Anna May describes – the incumbents in the offices were not prepared.<sup>25</sup>

5

After 1988 and on the Way in the Present

For many foreign observers Myanmar's modern Burmese history begins with the year 1988, while before scarcely any notice was taken of the country. This new attention arose essentially because in this year *Suu Kyi*, daughter of *Aung San*, the national hero murdered in 1947, appeared on the political stage. She did so at the end of August, at the high point of country-wide unrest which had begun in March of that year and increased after *Ne Win*'s surprising resignation from his last political office in July.

Shortly after her first major public appearance, prepared by students at the foot of the *Shwedagon* Pagoda in front of about a half million people, the military stopped the demonstrations and with this also the period of the Burmese Way to socialism. Now began decades of a struggle between the military and *Suu Kyi* as well as her followers at home and abroad. This conflict was perceived by those outside the country mostly as one between the powers of darkness, personified by the military leadership, and the figure of light *Suu Kyi*.

There is not a word about this dispute in the Biographies presented here. The names of *Aung San* *Suu Kyi* and her opponents in the military are not mentioned. This is because open and direct positions on political questions are frowned upon as ever in the churches in Myanmar. Clearest are positive aspects of the transition from the socialist bureaucracy to a kind of democracy in the biography of *Andrew Mya Han* (Biography 21). Several months before the coup in September 1988 he was elected Archbishop of all Anglicans in Burma and could then later modernise his church, also through numerous new buildings. This succeeded only because the opening of the land made it possible to obtain the necessary building materials from outside the country.

*Aung Khin*, one of Andrew's predecessors in the Council of Churches describes the new space to

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25 The biography of Smith Nghulh Za Thawng does not mention that he was forced to give up his office as General Secretary after a financial scandal.

manoeuvre in the society which opened up after Myanmar joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (*ASEAN*) in 1997. This took place against the resistance of the European Union and the *USA*, which had decided the year before upon a boycott policy vis-à-vis Myanmar. Now the churches pressed the government to address the question of care of the elderly. The churches, with the background of their ecumenical contacts, had an eye on this problem for awhile.

After the isolation of Burma in the years after 1988 slowly came to an end, international contacts also were more easily possible. With this background, in 2002 *Bikkhu Seveka* (Biography 23) could open a Christian-Buddhist center of studies in the Shan-State with the help of a countryman living in Canada. *Thein Lwin*, the blind fighter for equal chances for people with handicaps (Biography 28), could also now make numerous trips abroad and bring back experiences and money to Myanmar.

Many other Christians also profited from the opening. Thang Bee Lwei (Biography 29) could quit working as a doctor in state service and devote himself to his private Wesley Clinic. Hta Uk (Biography 31) worked in Singapore and Penang before he began with his work with the handicapped in Myanmar. Especially noteworthy is the story of Lapai Zan Sam (Biography 30), who as a soldier in the army fought against the communist rebels and then after 1988 became a lawyer for human rights in the Shalom Foundation, founded by a Kachin pastor. Here he used the knowledge he had received in his civilian training in the military. Lama La Rip (Biography 34), also a Kachin, worked for this same organisation in the framework of the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO). It had its own administration center in Laiza and its army was again since 2011 at war with the regular army of the country.

Susanna Hla Hla Soe (Biography 33) and Ler Wah (Biography 35) are ethnic Karen. The first leads a women's organisation and is of late also politically active. This last also applies for Ler Wah, who as major of a village in an area in Karen State still affected by the civil war is an advocate for compensation and good educational opportunities for children. Another social activist is Hnin Su Htwe (Biography 36), who plans to continue to lobby for improvement of the living conditions for her compatriots.

Finally, from the biography of the national women's football player *Naw Ah Loh Wah Paw*, born in 1988, shortly after *Ne Win's* resignation, in the smallest state of the union, Kayah State (Biography 37), several conclusions about the charged relationship of the Christians to the politically dominant Burmese majority can be drawn.

She is the only Christian in Myanmar's national women's team and that has not been easy for her. In the meantime, however, she gets along well with her fellow players. It remains to be seen whether this personal closeness in the sport will have broader consequences. As the attacks since 2012 of Buddhists on the Muslim minority in the land show, it is still a long way to an integration of all ethnic and religious groups in Myanmar.

## 2 Timeline

by Gerhard Köberlin

Note: This contains references only to Biographies published in the German version.

- 1813 *Adoniram Judson*, Baptist Missionary from *Massachusetts*, lands in Burma.
- 1824-1826 First Anglo-Burmese War; *Judson* is imprisoned for one and a half years in a Burmese jail
- 1845 Christian Karen open a center also offering theological training in *Insein* near *Yangon* (now *Karen Baptist Theological Seminary*).
- 1852 Second Anglo-Burmese War
- 1885 Third Anglo-Burmese War; Burmese King *Thibaw* exiled to India.
- 1888 *U Pe Maung Tin* (Bio. 1)
- 1900 *U Saw Mahn Saw Bu* (Bio. 5)
- 1910 *U Pe Maung Tin* becomes one of the founders of *The Burma Research Society*.
- 1912 *Daw Khin Kyi* (Bio. 11), wife of national hero *Aung San*, murdered in 1947, and mother of *Aung San Suu Kyi*.
- 1915 *Dr. Morris Jamaldin* (Bio. 16) After 1942 he was drawn into the events of the war.
- 1915 *U Pe Maung Tin's* (Bio. 1) sister marries the British scientist *G. Luce*. They leave the country in the 1960's because of the hostility to foreigners in the politics of the Burmese Way to Socialism.
- 1916 *Young Men Buddhist Association/ YMBA* succeeds in having foreigners also be required to take off their shoes when entering pagodas.
- 1917 *YMBA* combats marriages between Buddhist-Burmese women and foreigners.
- 5.12.1920 Student strike against the British, in which also Christian students of *Judson College* participate. Today a national holiday.
- 1920 Buddhist-Burmese Nationalists found an association and boycott their countrymen who are in British service. Monks support the boycott.
- 1921 *Mahn Mya Than* (Bio. 17)
- 1922 Only seven percent of the population participate in the first elections, including also Karen and other minorities like Indians and Anglo-Burmans. Shan, Kachin and Chin are not permitted to vote; the British exclude them, yet use them, other than the Burmese, gladly as soldiers. The Burmese nationalists see these as collaborators with

the colonial rulers. Karen form organisations that are loyal to the British. One example can be seen in the biography of *U Poe Toke (Bio. )*, who accompanied the white elephant that became well-known in England and the USA.

- 1928 In a book the Karen *San Crombie Po* calls for the Karen regions to have their own administration.
- 1929 *Rev. Dr. U Aung Khin (Bio. 19)*
- 1929 *Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu U Zahre Lian (Bio. 18)*
- 1932 *Major Nhkum Tang (Bio. 8)*, who later becomes a member of a Kachin guerilla group and then, after Burma's independence in 1948, a professional soldier under *Ne Win* and fights against rebel groups, including the Karen who want to implement the 1928 plan for independence of *San C. Po*.
- 1932 *Andrew Mya Han (Bio. 21)*, whose childhood is affected by the events of the war after 1942.
- 1938 *Bhikkhu Seveka* alias *Ko Ko Naing (Bio. 23)*
- 1941 *Melvin Eway (Bio. 24)*
- 1942 Second World War: Japan marches into Burma, supported by a Burmese national army under the leadership of *Aung San*. Young Burmese had accepted training from the Japanese and formed the army of independence under *Aung San*, the father of *Aung San Suu Kyi*. Alongside the Japanese they force out the British colonial rulers. The war destroys the entire land and leads to conflicts between the ethnic groups that still continue at the present day. On the British side, Karen, Kachin and Chin fight against the Japanese invaders, so two Burmese armies are fighting against one another. *Aung San* switches sides shortly before the end of the war and fights then with the Allies against the Japanese.  
*Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu U Zahre Lian (Bio. 23)*, as a Chin, goes abroad for military training by the British in order to fight on the British side against the Japanese.  
*Mahn Saw Bu (Bio. 5)*, as a Karen of the *Irrawaddy-Delta*, is involved after the invasion of the Japanese in the conflict between the Karen and the Burmese allies of the Japanese under *Aung San*, who want to establish a Burmese administration in the region while the Karen aim for independence. Japanese military must step in.
- 1945 The Allies reconquer the land from the Japanese, now with Burmese support. The two Burmese armies, the one on the side of the British, the other on that of the Japanese, cannot be unified.
- 1946 *Naw Ruth (Bio. 26)*
- 1947 In April the election for the constitutional assembly with an overwhelming victory for the United Front *AFPFL (pa sa la pa)* under *Aung San*

- 19.7.1947 *Aung San* is murdered.
- 4.1.1948 Independence for Burma; insurrection of communist rebels that have been expelled from the United Front; start of the civil war, also with revolt of the Karen, also with Christian rebels against the Burmese central government. (No Biographies on this in this collection.) The Burmese army under General *Ne Win* rescues the state from a sudden collapse, but cannot end the civil war.
- 1948 - 1962 Peak period for activities for the common good on the part of Christians in the society: *Pe Maung Tin* (Bio. 1), *Mahn Saw Bu* (Bio. 5), *Morris Jamaldin* (Bio. 16), *Mahn Mya Than* (Bio. 17), *Zahre Lian* (Bio. 18), *Nhkum Tang* (Bio. 22), *Aung Khin* (Bio. 19), *Andrew Mya Han* (Bio. 21)
- 1949 *U Thein Lwin* (Bio. 28)
- 1951/52 *Mahn Saw Bu* (Bio. 5) wins a parliamentary seat on the *AFPFL* list without an opposing candidate.
- 1952 *Pe Maung Tin* (Bio. 1) awarded an honorary doctorate by the *University of Rangoon*.
- 1956 The *AFPFL* government under *U Nu* does not win a majority of the votes in the election, creating a crisis.
- 1958 *AFPFL* splits into the Clean and the Stable *AFPFL*. *U Nu* resigns, handing power over to the highest general of the army, *Ne Win*, as Prime Minister in a "Caretaker"-Government.
- 1960 Overwhelming election victory of *U Nu* with the *Clean AFPFL*, supported by his campaign promise as a traditional Buddhist to establish Buddhism as the state religion.
- 1961 Introduction of Buddhism as the state religion, thereupon revolt of the Kachin against the central government.
- 2.3.1962 Military putsch under General *Ne Win*.
- 1962 Declaration of Buddhism as state religion rescinded; Buddhist monks are brought under state control in the years following. Nearly all areas of life come under state control; beginning of the "Burmese Way to Socialism". Elements of the colonial period revoked; foreigners (also missionaries) are to leave; nationalisation as renunciation of capitalism. Religions should have no political influence; "privatisation" of religion. All changes will be documented in the new constitution of 1974.
- 1962 *Zahre Lian* (Bio. 18) loses his position as Minister due to the replacement of *U Nu*, but is ambassador and is decorated. Only in 1990 is a representative of the Christians again a member of the government.
- After 1962 Beginning of the policy of nationlisation and the systematic discrimination of

foreigners, especially those from India.

- 1964 *Thein Lwin* (Bio. 28) becomes a Christian; later he begins his work for the blind.
- 1965 Church schools and hospitals are nationalised.
- 1966 *Jamaldin's* Leprosy hospital is nationalised (Bio. 16), his "Day of Tears". *Aung Khin* (Bio. 16) loses his position as head of a Baptist school, so moves into more specifically church work.
- 1971 *Bhikkhu Seveka* (Bio. 23) becomes a Christian theologian. *Melvin Eway* (Bio. 24) begins his theological studies. *Naw Ruth* (Bio. 26) becomes a teacher during the civil war in Karen/ Kayin State. *Mahn Mya Than* (Bio. 17) expands his fishing business to support the work of the church.
- 1972 *Naw Ler Wah* (Bio. 35)
- 1974 After earlier development of the *Burma Socialist Programme Party* by the military, the new constitution cements the central role of the Party under the leadership of *Ne Win*. The "socialist period" leads to disconnection of the churches from the rest of society. The Biographies in this collection also show no example of a Party member. The churches must limit themselves to "Preaching the Gospel", but social work is understood as a part of "Mission". With this the churches also support the new situation and help to make Burma "self-sustaining and independent". *Aung Khin* (Bio. 19) and *Mya Han* (Bio. 21) organise social and economic support programs, also summer camps of the SCM/ *Student Christian Movement*, to help in the villages.
- 1988 March to September: country-wide unrest; July: resignation of *Ne Win*; August 3<sup>rd</sup>: martial law is declared. After the first public appearance of *Aung San Suu Kyi* in August at the base of the *Shwedagon* Pagoda the military steps in. From September 18<sup>th</sup> the military junta takes over power, followed by decades of conflict between the junta and *Suu Kyi*, who is supported by many Burmese living abroad. No mention of this period or of *Suu Kyi* is found in the Biographies collected here. Boycott measures by the USA and the European Union against Burma.
- 1988 *Naw Ah Loh Wah Paw* (Bio. 37)
- 1988 End of the "Burmese Way to Socialism". Isolation of Burma comes slowly to an end. Some opening of the country also for the churches: Erzbischof *Mya Han* (Bio. 21) can finance new buildings; General Secretary of the Church Council *Aung Khin* (Bio. 19) can develop social work and push the government to undertake more for social welfare.
- 1990 A Christian representative is in the government for the first time since 1962
- 1997 Burma joins *ASEAN* (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), against the opposition of the EU and the ESA. International contacts are more easily possible. *Thein Lwin* (Bio. 28) can support his work for the blind through numerous trips to other countries.

- 2002 *Bhikkhu Seveka* (Bio. 23) opens his Christian-Buddhist Study Center in Shan State with Canadian help.
- 2010 Parliamentary elections follow a new constitution; *Aung San Suu Kyi* released from house arrest.
- 2011 Civilian government under *Thein Sein*.
- 2011 As *Ah Lo Wah Paw* (Bio. 37) in Laos shoots the decisive second goal against Vietnam in the semi-final of the ASEAN football tournament, she helped the team of Myanmar reach the final. Her team became Vice-champion in the end, losing the final 0:3 against the Thai team