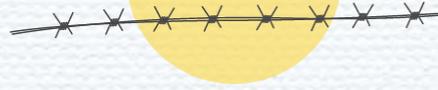


# VOICES OF Women



# Preface



**To all of you who have read these stories**

The stories of women in this booklet were compiled through Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) 2020-2022: **“Amplifying Marginalised Women’s Voices and Strengthening Movements for Women’s Rights to Peace and Democratic Participation”** by APWLD - Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (Thailand). The aim is to amplify the voices of women in Burma louder than they are. We want their voices to represent women and the events of country.

We would like to thank you for the courage and stories of all the women in this booklet. We strongly believe that the fight for democracy and justice in Myanmar will continue. We will always stand with them until we achieve Just and Lasting Peace.

We will stand with women in Burma ...

## **Weaving Bonds Across Borders**



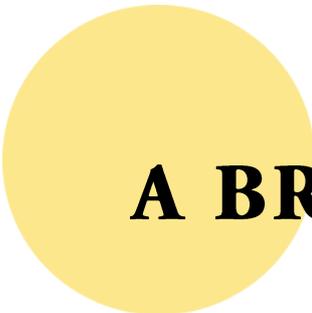
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Tejiendo Lazos Entre Fronteras  
Weaving Bonds Across Borders

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# A BRIGHT FULL-MOON DAY

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**“On a bright full-moon day of the twelfth lunar month at five in the morning of Tuesday, I first saw the face of my youngest daughter.” That was what my father recorded in his diary. My name is Hseng Luen which means "Last Light" in Shan language. My father thought I would be the youngest child, so he gave me this name. However, he was wrong because a few years later I had another younger brother crawling out after me. I was born in a jungle of Shan State while there were wars everywhere and the Shan State was on fire. The wars happened because the only group of people who called themselves "Tatmadaw" (Burma Army) wanted to rule the country with their brutal ways of governance.**

As we were the family of the Revolutionary Soldier, we mostly lived our lives in the jungle. Let's say, our family was not so different from the life of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) because my father was a Shan soldier. My mother and her kids like us had to follow him everywhere he was assigned to go. Apart from our family, there were also the troops under my father's command and their families traveling along with us. It was like a caravan of revolutionary soldiers with their most reliable vehicles which were horses at that time. Horses would carry us everywhere we went, even through the jungle where there was no road.

Even living in the deep jungle far away from town, our troops must keep their voices as low as possible to not be heard by the enemy. Sometimes, we did not dare to light a fire. When I was a baby, I was a troublemaker for everyone because every night I always cried out loud, my mother could not stop me. Sometimes, my father got angry because of the cries, he almost buried me in the ground alive. Finally, my mother decided to give me a sleeping pill to make me quiet. I understand that my parents did this to save the lives of our soldiers and other people in the village. Night after night, I was doused with sleeping pills. Living in the jungle and standing in opposition to

## **Night after night, I was doused with sleeping pills. Living in the jungle and standing in position to the Burmese Army, we could be killed at any moment if one of our legs made a wrong step.**

the Burmese Army, we could be killed at any moment if one of our legs made a wrong step. Moreover, we had to sacrifice something in life, such as avoid living comfortably in the city, because we could be arrested anytime. My mother told me that sometimes the Burma Army attacked them while they were still cooking rice, and they had to run and bring the rice pot (even if it was uncooked) along with them. We also had to build a house in the forest or in the control area of the Shan soldiers, but the Burmese soldiers set it on fire if they saw it. My life had been going on like this for many years; until one day, my father decided to join another group of Shan army which was located on the border of Thailand under the leadership of Khun Sa.

We moved to the border of Thai/Myanmar. There was a school that was built by the Shan Army. It gave us the opportunity to learn our own language which we did not have the opportunity to study in the big cities of

Shan State. Actually, at that time, not only studying our own language, but also listening to political music was considered illegal. Even though I did not have to live in the forest like when I was a baby, my life at the border was still messing with wars and conflicts. Some days, the Burma Army attacked the camp with warplanes over the houses in the community which was in the control area of the Shan military. As a result, every house in the camp must build a bunker for the safety of their family. The children in the camp were used to hiding in the bunker and they had the exploded bombs as school bells.

My parents decided to build a small house next to a small river. I did not know how many houses we had built since all the other houses were burned by the Burmese Army. The daily routine with my eldest sister was to collect edible ferns and wild vegetables at the riverbanks. We also caught fish and cicadas. On a hot day, if we wanted to jump into the river, we could do so immediately. For me, life in Shan State at the border was a happy time. However, happy moments always pass by quickly.

One day my father decided to do something we never knew. He decided to join another army in the north of Shan State. He left his family behind to face their destiny alone. In fact, within the Shan Army at that time, there were quite a few problems. Some of the officers under Khun Sa's command began to dislike Khun Sa's leadership. Moreover, the reputation of the Shan

Revolutionary Army was related to drugs which caused divisions in the army. There were many incidents from their domination that I still remember and disliked. For example, when someone committed a legal offense such as adultery or theft, those who committed crimes would be shaved bald, tied up, and brought to our school and forced to walk around our village to be humiliated. That made it difficult for those people to start a new life again.

time, the water level in the canal was very high compared to now. At a young age, my elder brother and I almost died because we went swimming in the rainy season. Moreover, what bothered me all the time was that all of us did not have ID cards. When we were in Shan State, we were outlawed by the Burma Army. When moving to Thailand, we are still outlawed by the Thai government, plus illegal migrants. Sometimes, when Thai police patrolled

## **When we were in Shan State, we were outlawed by the Burma Army. When moving to Thailand, we are still outlawed by the Thai government, plus illegal migrants.**

After my father fled to join another group of Shan Army, he was considered a traitor to the army and my mother was considered guilty too. If we still stayed at the border, my mother might be punished in some ways. Therefore, my mother decided to bring four of us to Chiang Mai and find a job. We were probably the first migrant workers to come and find work in Chiang Mai. Life at that time was very difficult because we had to live in a small square room made of galvanized iron roofing sheets. We had to huddle together to sleep. Let's not talk about access to medical care, because here we did not even have clean toilets and clean water to use. Every evening, we had to shower around the canal near Phu Kham intersection (in Chiang Mai). At that

the construction sites, we had to flee and sleep on the rooftop of the building. Every night before I went to sleep, I was always thinking about what would happen to me and my siblings' life if my mother was arrested. That was the first time I started asking myself why our lives must be like this. Why do we have to live in hiding? There is no freedom in life. If I could, I would not choose to be in this status.

When I grew up, my mother sent me to study at the border again. I lived on the Thai side, but I had to cross the border to study in the Shan State, which at the time was still in the control of the Shan Army under Khun Sa. Every morning, while walking to school, I could see the Shan soldiers jogging and singing along.

I was very proud of them, and I strongly believed that the Shan State would one day become independent from Burma.

There was one incident that I would never forget in my life. One day I went to school as usual, I did not know there had been fighting in the Shan State side. When I arrived at school, wounded and dead people were strewn on the ground in front of the school's flagpole. Some people were crying and moaning all over the place. It happened because the Burma Army launched an airstrike into the village near our school. After that fighting incident, our school had been closed and we had to move to study at a temple in Thailand instead. Due to the situation getting worse, my mother wondered that this Shan school was not safe for me anymore, so she transferred me to a government school in Thailand.

In 1996, Khun Sa surrendered and laid down his weapons to the Burma Army causing the collapse of the army he had founded with several other leaders. The fall of the Shan army at that time broke the hearts of many Shan people like me. It shattered dreams of a Shan State separating from Burma. Many Shan soldiers shed tears while giving up their weapons to the Burma Army. However, some Shan soldiers refused to surrender, so they set up their own forces and continued to fight under the name of the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA). The leader of the RCSS/SSA is Sao Yawd Serk, later the Burma Army waged war with this group instead. The Burma Army moved in and occupied

**When I arrived at school, wounded and dead people were strewn on the ground in front of the school's flagpole. Some people were crying and moaning all over the place.**

the border area with Thailand which used to be the control area of the Shan military. The brutality of the Burma Army had caused several villages in Shan State to be abandoned because the villagers did not dare to live there anymore. Similarly, the school I used to attend when I was a child was also abandoned and dilapidated. The war between the RCSS/SSA and the Burma Army sometimes resulted in shells hitting villages on the Thai side. I still remember sleeping and listening to the sound of gunfire until the war was over.

Although growing up in the border village gave me an opportunity to study in a Thai school, being marginalized and having no ID card has caused me to lose many opportunities in life. For example, when I was still studying, there were some scholarships available, but were only reserved for Thai nationals. There were also travel restrictions for us which stateless persons like us cannot travel without government permission, and it is also difficult for us to find jobs. I always tell myself that the reason I have to live as a stateless person like so

many other people is because of the Burmese military dictatorship. Without the Burma Army, I would probably grow up in a good society and live peacefully in Shan State.

The Burma Army is the root of many problems in Burma. In the 75 years since independence from Britain, the Burma Army has been unwilling to resolve the conflict. That resulted in everything escalating till nowadays. After taking power from the civilian government last year, the situation of

human rights violations in the country has worsened. There was a massacre and villager's houses were burned. There are hundreds of thousands of villagers who are refugees and most of the victims are women and children. Therefore, in my opinion, if you want to solve the problem at the root cause, it is necessary to overthrow the Burmese military dictatorship. **Together with the people in Myanmar, I will be a small part of the changes to work forward the better changes by making their voice heard.**





# LIFE AS A SHAN SOLDIER'S WIFE

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**I was born in Mong Kung, a small township which has not changed much although 20 - 30 years has passed. Mong Kung is located in the southern part of Shan State. It was surrounded by fertile forest. My father was a goldsmith working in the city of Mong Kung. When I was a child, people traveled by using ox carts. The children in the township, especially women, were cultivated to work hard from an early age. Our daily routine was waking up early, filling the jar with water, and cooking food for the elders in the house. In my free time, I had to do farming, pound rice, plant sesame and peanuts, extract sesame oil for cooking. The villagers in those days were almost self-reliant in food, only MSG and salt may need to be purchased outside.**

Women had to work so hard whether daily routine or extra work, so there was hardly a chance to go to school. There were only men who could study with monks in the village's temple. However, I was lucky that my parents understood and sent me to school. Therefore, I can write and read Old Shan scripts which do not have many vowels as it does today.

Then, my life had been changed after my mother passed away. Not long after, my father remarried, and I had a step-sister. Nevertheless, life is always uncertain because my father and stepmother passed away later. My step-sister and I had to live with our aunt in a village far away from the city of Mong Kung. My step-sister and I moved to Wan Long Nawng Laew, a small village located in the control area of the Shan Army. My aunt's house was often a place for the Shan patrolling soldiers who came from different places to stay overnight. Until one day, my aunt met a young soldier who came from the northern township of Hsi Paw. She wanted me to marry him. Even though I tried to refuse because I had the one I loved, it did not work.

**Therefore, I was forced to get married when I was only 16 years old. It was because I could not offend my real aunt who raised me. At that time, there were many people in my generation who faced the same problem, especially choosing our own mate.**

Therefore, I was forced to get married when I was only 16 years old. It was because I could not offend my real aunt who raised me. At that time, there were many people in my generation who faced the same problem, especially choosing our own mate. We were often forced to hold an arranged marriage by our parents. If you did not want to have an arranged marriage, you had to run away together.

Even my married life did not start with love; however, my husband and I tried to build our own small family and raised our children as best as we could. Our first son was secretly sent to study in the town of Hsi Paw with our relatives because my husband did not want him to be suffer in the forest like us. My husband was a Shan soldier who fight against the Burma Army in the forest. Therefore, I as a wife needed to follow him everywhere. Sometimes the wives of the other Shan soldiers including me had to run from bullets during the fighting between the Shan and Burma Army. Our house was in the forest, but many times when the Burmese soldiers found us, our house would be burned by them. I had lost at least 6-7 houses, the house that I regretted the most was a house which was entirely built of teak.

*Life as a Shan soldier's wife was not stable because we had to be stationed in different places according to our husband, even when we were pregnant or giving birth. Moreover, as the wife of opponents of the Burma Army, we were also branded as savages or illegal people. When I was about to give birth to my second daughter, I planned to go to the city of Panglong. However, because the Burma Army's spies were everywhere, I was arrested by the Burmese soldiers because they suspected that I was a member of the resistance army. They tortured me so hard, like tickling cigarette butts and beating my body. Fortunately, I did not reveal anything. I survived and gave birth safely. After that, during the pregnancy of the next child, I never dared going into the city to give birth again. What I did was summon a midwife to deliver the baby in the forest instead. However, some women were not that lucky because they had to give birth on their own. If they could not do it, both mother and child would die. The lack of access to medical care, I inevitably lost my third child, an 8-month-old son. He was ill with an unknown disease, and we were unable to get him into town for treatment.*

When our fourth child was about 4 years old, my husband and I decided to join the Shan Army which was located on the Chiang Mai border. Here, all soldier's wives were entrusted with helping the army in one way or another. Some women were conscripted to help in cultural work or to become female soldiers. For me, I chose to be trained as

## **Life as a Shan soldier's wife was not stable because we had to be stationed in different places according to our husband, even when we were pregnant or giving birth.**

a doctor's assistant because I felt guilty for my son who died. I was trained to diagnose patients and practice injections. Until many years have passed, even though I was not as good as a doctor, if someone was sick, they would come to me. In my spare time, I turned myself into trading goods from the inner cities of Shan State to sell at the border. Life at that time seemed peaceful without the Burmese Army bombing, but life takes a different turn when my husband fled to join another army. The crime of my husband forced me and my children to flee to Thailand.

I brought my children to look for work in Chiang Mai city. The first job I did was as a construction worker at a construction site in Huay Kaew Road. At that time, I did not have a work permit, my life had to be in hiding. Sometimes, I had to run from the police. In those days, my wage was only 60 baht a day and I had to take care of 4 children. Thus, we had to stay as thrifty as possible. My life as a laborer had to revolve around various construction sites in the city of Chiang Mai. Even at the Kad Suan Kaew Department Store, I was part of the brick and mortar construction. I lived in Chiang Mai for many years and then moved to work in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. Here, I earned enough wages to send my children to school. When the children grew up, I came back to the village on the border.

In my opinion, I am not so sure that I will see peace in my lifetime or not. After 75 years since Burma gained independence from the British, there have been many stories that happened to people in Burma. Some have lost their families from the war, starvation, and inaccessibility to medical care. Day by day, it has been getting worse. Now, every direction I looked; I saw only war refugees.

***I always hoped that the Shan State would be liberated from the Burma Army. I want to see that everyone has the right to choose their own life and live in peace. However, I do not know when my wish will happen if the Burma Army remains in power.***





# MEMORIES OF MY HOMETOWN

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**My name is Yu. I was born and raised in Sanen village, in the southern part of Shan State. I grew up in a large family of Chinese descent. This village, there were people of different nationalities living together. When we speak in Shan, other Shan people from different areas would immediately know that we were from Sanen because we have our unique accent. Even there were many nationalities in our village; however, there was no racial discrimination at all.**

Shan State has been annexed as part of Burma since I was old enough to remember things. The nightmares for Shan State have arisen since the Burmese Army had power and run the country. Some Shan people, who wanted to protect this motherland and did not want to see injustice happen went into the forest and took guns to fight with the Burmese Army just like my family and relatives.

After the Burma Army had authority, we were separated by calling those who fought with them “the Shan soldiers” and the children and wives of those soldiers “the barbarians”. I was one of the barbarians because my relatives and my husband were the Shan soldiers. The life of the Sanen people at that time, despite living a simple life in the absence of war, were constantly paranoid because we did not know when the war would come upon us.

Our village at that time was in the territory of the Shan soldiers. There were clashes between the Burmese and Shan soldiers that took place everywhere in Shan State. It was because the Burma Army wanted to occupy our land and natural resources as much as possible. Including to get rid of the thorns like the Shan soldiers and people who oppose them by all means, directly or indirectly. I had a bad memory with the Burma Army when my youngest daughter was 3-4 years old. Every time I think about it, I still feel devastated. At that time, my relatives and I came to Thailand to make merit. When I arrived in Thailand, I heard that the Burmese Army invaded Sanen village and arrested the villagers

including my youngest daughter and mother. It made my heart almost break. I did not know what to do because I was concerned for everyone's safety. I was afraid they might not survive.

the employer. However, the wages received were not enough for the family. Therefore, my children had to work to help me since they were little. My children grew up having a hard time

## Every house was looted, they took our valuables, food, and vegetables. What they left was only traces of Violence.

What everyone in the village said was that the Burma Army heavily attacked our camp. There were a heck of bullets coming from every direction. The women who stayed at home were subjected to severe human rights violations. Some were physically abused. Every house was looted, they took our valuables, food, and vegetables. *What they left was only traces of violence.* My daughter and relatives were arrested and taken to the police in Loi Laem township. They spent three months in prison until eventually they were released.

After the family members were arrested, the rest of the family were paranoid. We could not trust anyone and had to constantly flee from village to village. Until finally, the last way that should be safe for everyone was immigration to Thailand. Our family was probably like everyone else who travels to Thailand without anything and started from zero. During our first arrival, we had a very difficult time. I started my career as a contract worker working in the garden, depending on

because we lived from hand to mouth. So far, I have been in Thailand for 40 years, but everything in Burma has been frozen to a standstill. The brutality of the Burma Army had done to the citizens seems not to change much from the past. Their violence and savagery have been passed down from generation to generation and getting worse and worse.

Now I do not want to go back to my hometown anymore. I had the opportunity to go back one time. There was nothing left. My former village was abandoned because no one dared to live. What I aspire to happen in Burma is I wish for peace as soon as possible because everyone was traumatized by war. The controversy lasted for many generations. *I do not want to see the younger generation living with the same paranoia as our generation.* **The wars and injustices that have taken place in Shan State and in Burma must come to an end soon.**





# AN UNFORGETTABLE NIGHT

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I am 60 years old. I was born and raised in Sanen, a small village in the southern part of Shan State. Sanen has a high mountain terrain and cool weather all year round. Just like other families in the village, my family is engaged in tea and tobacco farming. I remember that there were many ethnic groups living together peacefully in the village, including the Pa-O, the Shan, and the Chinese people. Because my village is far away from other villages, when I was a young girl, our village did not have a hospital. Moreover, girls here are not given the same educational opportunities as men. The same as me, I did not have the opportunity to go to school, my parents did not allow it because the school was far from the village. My main duty was to help my parents with the housework, farming, and gardening.

I married a Shan soldier when I was 15-16 years old. Shortly thereafter, I gave birth to my first child. Even when I was pregnant or giving birth, I never went to the doctor. I gave birth on my own with neighbors nearby helping me during the delivery. A midwife came to deliver the baby for any lucky one. It was not just me, most of the women in the village in those days gave birth on their own. It may be because we live in a rural area or are not educated enough. This caused me and many women in the village to have little knowledge of reproductive health. Even when we were sick, we were treated as best as

we could. Life for me and my family was simple until I was pregnant with my second child. At that moment, fighting between the Shan and Burmese soldiers was creeping into my village.

In the next moment, a heavy fighting broke out in Sanen Village. The Shan people know the incident as “Sanen wreck”. The Burma Army increased in large numbers to attack the Shan soldiers and villagers. The Burma Army both fired artillery and used warplanes. We were attacked in all directions of the village. Villagers had to flee their lives and their families were separated.

The women in the village were left behind because the men went to war. After the Burmese soldiers entered the village, they committed human rights violations, assaults, and robberies. I fled the Burma Army to another village nearby and safely gave birth to my second daughter while still fleeing the Burma Army. I still remember the night I was holding my baby in my arms all night and bullets from the Shan and Burmese sides splashed through my head. It was an unforgettable night in my life.

**I still remember the night I was holding my baby in my arms all night and bullets from the Shan and Burmese sides splashed through my head. It was an unforgettable night in my life.**

This prolonged war sometimes caused me and my family and others to flee the village. Some nights we have to escape hiding in the forest. It was a difficult period of life. My family was sure that if we continued, life would be unsafe. Therefore, we decided to come to the Thai border. I and nearly a dozen others walked from the inner city of Shan State with horses to help carry our belongings. The children were placed in wicker baskets carried on horseback. We traveled from the inner city in Shan State to Mong Pan township and stopped in various cities until we reached the banks of the Salween River. We spent a quiet night on the banks of the Salween River. It took us a month to arrive at a village near the border. Later, the Burmese soldiers attacked us again with the airstrikes until there was nowhere to escape to, so we decided to move to the Thai side.

For my family, starting a new life in Thailand was difficult because we were empty-handed and not a wealthy family. My husband and I rented a small house and started from zero. My husband and I worked together to take care of our three children. We were therefore a family living from hand to mouth. The first obstacles were language and lack of ID. These things prevent us from getting around. The immigration and statelessness of my children has been a constant concern for me and my husband over the decades. Even though we lack some rights, I have never forgotten the kindness of Thailand for giving me a place to live. At least our family didn't have to escape the bombs or flee the

**Even though we lack some rights, I have never forgotten the kindness of Thailand for giving me a place to live. At least our family didn't have to escape the bombs or flee the Burma Army.**

Burma Army. We raise all children. My life and my family are much better compared to the past because we have our own home. My children now have ID cards issued by the Thai government. Even if we do not have citizenship, at least now we can travel around and make life easier.

Now, the only thing that worries me is the current political situation in Burma. The situation looks worse. Whenever I

watch or listen to the news of the war in Shan State, as well as the news of refugees leaving their homes to flee the Burma Army and the war, I feel really bad. It reminded me of the events I had faced in the past. *I wish once in my lifetime to see better changes in Shan State, no persecution and everyone lives together in peace. I do not want to see anyone else suffer the same wars we've experienced in the past.*





# HUMAN SHIELDS

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**I was born and raised in a village that is not far away from Mong Kung township, in the southern part of Shan State. My village is small with a population of only about 30 households. Teng river, one of the Salween branches, is the main river in Mong Kung. Most of the people here are engaged in agriculture, primarily farming peanuts and sesame.**

I am the youngest of four siblings. Even though I am the only daughter in my family, I did not have a chance to study because of my financial status. At that time, our economic standing was extremely poor; for example, we often did not have enough money for rice, and frequently had to eat taro and yam.

My village was routinely visited by groups of armed soldiers who collected taxes from the villagers. Often, Burmese soldiers patrolled our village and searched for Shan soldiers. I saw Wa ethnic soldiers pillage our chickens. Village headmen were killed by these groups of soldiers. These instances have occurred since I could remember.

When I was 15 years old, my two female friends and I decided to run away from home. We wanted to be like the female soldiers in the Shan Army under the leadership of General Sao Kanjet whose headquarters were not far from Pang Long township. There were two reasons

I wanted to serve in the Shan Army: to save my nation (Shan) and to flee my poor financial status.

After joining the Shan Army, I received the same difficult training as a men soldier or perhaps heavier duty because when we returned home, the female soldiers still had to take care of their houses and families. Although I did not directly fight the Burmese soldiers, I was on the battlefield serving as a military nurse helping wounded soldiers where I worked for two years. After that our station headquarters was attacked and captured by the Burmese Army. So, I quit being a soldier and decided to marry a Shan soldier.

My husband, being a Shan soldier, made us Burmese army targets. Therefore, we could not stay in the town. We had to be nomadic in the jungle and pretend that it was our home to not be caught. Unfortunately, I was first captured by the Burmese

**They did not harm us, but they used us as human shields. At the time, my eldest son was three years old, and my second son was a three-month-old baby...I tied my older child behind me and held the younger child in front.**

Army while I was alone in Panglong township with my first son, who was just one year old at the time. The army knew I was there because there was a spy who sent news. I was severely abused physically. They used knives to tickle my neck and bruised my calves and body with wooden sticks to make me confess where the Shan soldiers were. The Burmese soldiers held my son and me in a cowshed that stained us with cow dung. Sometimes, I was separated from my son and detained for several days. At that time, I thought I would not survive long enough to go back to my husband. However, luck was on my side, and we managed to escape with the help from local villagers.

The second time that I was captured was when my two sons and I were arrested by the Burmese Army. They did not harm us, but they used us as

human shields. At the time, my eldest son was three years old, and my second son was a three-month-old baby. The Burmese soldiers took us together when they patrolled other villages. I tied my older child behind me and held the younger child in front. I held an umbrella while walking so the three of us would not get wet, because it was the rainy season. Some days I hardly ate. I had to find medicinal plants to sustain hunger along the way. That was a difficult time in my life. During the capture, we followed the Burmese soldiers to various locations. I have seen them torture villagers and sometimes the soldiers even killed villagers' cows to eat. I was held captive for several days until they agreed to release me since I had younger children.

My life in Shan State was hanging by a thread and I could not see the future. My oldest son was seven years old, when my husband and I decided to move to Thailand for work. I had to leave my three children behind in Shan State. My two sons were ordained as novices and my daughter was cared for by my relatives.

We had a daily job at a chopstick factory. However, the wages were not enough to support the whole family, so my husband and I decided to do construction work in downtown Chiang Mai and in Bangkok. The hardest thing I had to deal with during that time was that my husband and I did not have a legal work permit. This caused us to feel very paranoid while working. I was arrested once by the Thai police for

**During the capture, we followed the Burmese soldiers to various locations. I have seen them torture villagers and sometimes the soldiers even killed villagers' cows to eat.**

illegal immigration. Additionally, life at the construction site was difficult. For example, restrooms were unsanitary and there was a lack of safety equipment. After living in Bangkok for seven years, my husband and I decided to return to a village on the Thai/Myanmar border for the rest of our lives.

Looking back on the past, it was a nightmare, but that nightmare still the

coup, people in Burma seem to face more suffering than before. The war spread widely. Even in my hometown, Mong Kung, there has been a heavy fighting recently. **Min Aung Hlaing needs to see the suffering of the people and stop using violence against them. I implore all armed groups to stop using military force to resolve conflict since the people of the country are most affected.**





# THE PLACE WHERE WE LEFT

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**I was born in Mong Nai township. Due to the war in Myanmar around 1957, my family had to move to Huai Yao village; which is located on the Thai/Myanmar border. In those days, the Mong Tai Army (MTA), was the military unit of the Tai Revolutionary Council formed by the merger of the United Shan Revolutionary Army, Southern Shan State Army and the United States Army. During that period, the MTA flourished and occupied this area including several villages, stretching all the way to the Thai border. Later, the MTA became an important headquarters of the Shan Army.**

Moreover, this particular Shan State border was bustling with trade between Thailand and the tiers of Shan State. The area was controlled by the Shan Army. It was also a place visited by people who wanted to join the Shan Army, this included villagers from various areas in Shan State who were expelled from the Burmese Army. My village and other villages were unstable and unsafe because of the threat of Burmese Army fighter jets at any time. Many children, like my friends and I, had been taught about bunkers since they could remember.

Actually, if the war did not happen, Huai Yao would be one of the most pleasant villages in Shan State. There is a small river passing through the whole village. During my childhood, my sister and I were very happy. We often picked wild

vegetables that grew in the forest. A famous vegetable here is Phuk Kud (small edible ferns). Also, we had a stream behind our house so when the weather was hot, children could jump right into the water to cool off. It seemed like a happy life before the war and invasion by the Burmese Army.

In my opinion, at that time, the Burmese Army was not able to bring their army into this area. That was the reason they had to use fighter jets to attack the Shan soldiers instead. Whenever an air strike occurred, the villagers of each house rushed into their own easily made bunkers.

I grew up in the midst of an ongoing war in Shan State and borders. That made many families gradually decide to migrate to Thailand for a more stable

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and safer life. We were one of several families who did not move until the MTA deployed its weapons. In 2002, there was a situation that made a big change in my life. When I was 11-12 years old, the Burmese Army and the Shan soldiers fought because the Burmese Army thought that the civilians in the border areas supported the Shan soldiers under the leadership of Chao Yordsuek who formed a new army against the Burmese Army. That incident forced the residents of Huai Yao village and several other villages such as Pang Mai Sung, Pang Hok and Pang Kam Kaw to escape to Thailand. However, many of my acquaintances were not so lucky because they were killed by the enemy's shells and eventually the border post was closed. That caused many villages to become abandoned. This meant I did not have a chance to go home anymore.

Several families and I, from villages on the Shan State side, became refugees by coercion. If we could choose, we would not want to be in this position. In the beginning of migration, we had to live in a temporary shelter in a temple's community. We also had to rely on food and donated items because we arrived without anything. Living as a refugee was not easy. It was different from living at home because we had to live with a lot of people. When we first entered Thailand, we had no job which meant no income because the villagers in the community still did not dare to hire us. It took years for the community to trust and employ us. The work that people in the community hired us to do was work such as gardening shallots and garlic, etc.

In addition, as refugees we were sometimes faced with negative attitudes from certain groups in the community. I saw multiple incidents where people living in the community were repulsed. That made me want to go home. I missed Huai Yao a lot. When it became clear that the war refugees were unable to return home, Thai authorities set up an evacuation center for refugees. My family and I lived at this refugee camp for nine years. During my time in the camp, there were many international organizations that rotated to help us. My sister and I had the opportunity to learn new knowledge here. My family and I started to adjust to being refugees. We had access to medical care and educational opportunities. More importantly, our lives are much safer in Thailand than in

## Several families and I, from villages on the Shan State side, became refugees by coercion. If we could choose, we would not want to be in this position.

Shan State where there were wars between ethnic groups all the time.

My parents worked to support my sister and I until we graduated from middle school. I tried to learn as much as I could in order to change my destiny. I always hoped that one day I would live independently in different places.

After finishing middle school, I went to Chiang Mai city to study and work. I worked to pay for my school fees until the end of high school. At the age of 20, I worked for a women's organization. This organization taught me that we all have equal rights, and we have the right to demand justice if our rights are violated. I also learned about women's rights. All of that encouraged me to have more self-confidence. I worked for a women's organization for many years before quitting and starting my own business. I am now a mother with two

children who live in a border village, but not as a refugee anymore.

The current situation in Burma, in my view, has greatly worsened because people are not only facing COVID-19, but are fleeing wars and human rights violations by the Burma Army. This political situation does not happen only in rural areas, but also spreads in large cities. The leaders of political parties, of whom we wish to see political change from, also have to flee and face human rights abuse by the Burma Army under Min Aung Hlaing. Therefore, the lives of people in Burma are not safe. In my opinion, the first thing that needs to be changed immediately, is the current junta government because they are making the people suffer a lot. ***A good government must not make people feel like going to hell like the people in Burma are now experiencing.***





# LIFE ON THE BORDER

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**I am 44 years old. My birthplace is Sanen village, Pang Long township in the southern part of Shan State. When I was three or four years old, my mother traveled to visit her relatives in Thailand. She put me into the care of my great-grandmother. During that time, an unexpected event happened. Burmese soldiers invaded my village and enslaved the villagers. Burmese soldiers arrested my great-grandmother, other relatives, and myself. We were held in prison for over three months. Although at that time I could not remember anything, it was probably a nightmare for great-grandmothers and other adults.**

After being released, we could not stay in the village anymore. We fled to a mountain called "Loi Khe". My family and I had to stay hidden. Actually, since I was born, my family always had to hide when we stayed in Shan State. That was because we were a Shan Army family which the Burmese Army wanted. My father was a Shan soldier and had to go into the forest to fight with the Burmese Army ever since I can remember. After hiding in Loi Khe for three to four months, we saw that the

situation in Myanmar was not safe. Our whole family traveled to Thailand and came to look for my mother.

I moved to Thailand when I was four years old. Finally, my family was back together again, but my father still traveled between Shan State and Thailand because he had to be stationed in various places. After we moved to Thailand, although we did not have to escape from war and Burmese soldiers, our life was still difficult. The first obstacle which we had to face was finding a job to earn one's livelihood. A small village at the Thai/Myanmar border where I am staying now does not have many jobs to choose from. Therefore, my mother had to do general daily work and earn only 20 - 30 THB per day for our family. Sometimes, my older sister had to help our mother for her job too. We lived frugally. I still remember when I was young, I always had to eat bean curry again and again because my mother did not have money to buy other ingredients. Even staying in the new country was difficult, but my family had to be patient because we did not have other choices.

When I was eight years old, my mother sent my sister and me to Shan National School which was located on the Shan State side, where I studied for five years. This school was named Kam Kaw

**I still remember when I was young, I always had to eat bean curry again and again because my mother did not have money to buy other ingredients. Even staying in the new country was difficult, but my family had to be patient because we did not have other choices.**

and it was established by the Shan Army. Here, the teachers taught Shan language to their students so that they would not forget their origins and where they came from. After that, my father and mother broke up. My mother took my brother back to Shan State. I had to stay with one of my relatives in Chai Prakan district, Chiang Mai for three years before I went back to my original village near the border.

When I got older, I was hired to do laundry and earn 300 THB per month. I saved the money that I earned for my education in a Chinese language tutoring school in the village till I could speak fluently in Chinese. I studied there for several years till I had an accident on the stairs at school and I had to stop studying. I married my first husband when I was 20 years old, but

our married life was not so great because my husband was an alcoholic and he did not care about our family so we divorced.

For me, I do not think being a woman is an obstacle in my life because despite being a single mother, I was able to raise two sons alone. After being divorced for seven years, I married my current husband. I now have three children, two from my ex-husband and one with my present. Since 2004 till now, I have been a teacher in a pre-kindergarten school, not too far from the Thai/Myanmar border.

I have been living in Thailand for 40 years, but I still feel connected to the people of Shan State. It is the same for Shan people who stay in other places in Thailand. We are still monitoring the situation in our homeland because many of them have relatives in Myanmar. In my opinion, after the coup in Myanmar in 2021, people in Myanmar are suffering more. Moreover, the presence of COVID-19 is making it more difficult for people to make a living. Even my husband, who is in Thailand, has lost income because of COVID-19. However, people in Burma are facing more difficulties than us. Sometimes, I feel bad that I could not help at all, except for helping make a small donation to refugees in Shan State. I think I want to be a small voice calling for an end to war and stop human rights violations in Burma. **I would like to see the elders, women, and children there have a chance to live a good life like the people in other countries.**





*"Badge sewing for comrade"*



*"A long trip somewhere in the forest"*

# WE'RE TRYING TO BE OK

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I am from Southern Shan State and studying English Major at Taunggyi University. I used to join many other empowerment trainings. Then, I did Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) after the coup to protest against military coup. I don't know about the politics, but I did civil disobedience movement because I want to oppose the coup and protest against military coup. Although we tried hard and endured all struggles with hope before the coup, we are hopeless and don't know what to do after all situation(coup). I know that no matter how hard I try, nothing will be changed under the military government. I focused on the armed revolution and let go of everything for my desire to get back the freedom and the future of our country. Therefore, I decided to join the ethnic armed force from black zone. We had to struggle a lot when we arrived for the first time.

In the rainy season, carrying food is so difficult in the deep forest and only carried by manpower. Approximately hundreds of young people arrived at the training camp each day from different places in Myanmar. I have never thought that there would be so many people. We only ate twice per day and drank the water from the streams and rivers due to the problem of food shortage. Sometimes, there is no salt, but we can eat no matter how bad the taste of food was.

When we swore our promise to appreciate the food before we have a meal, the revolutionary was awake.

**“We, eat food and curry provided by the country and people”**

**“We will serve the country and follow the people's interests”.**

Many people shouted loud, so it echoed throughout the entire forest and the mountain. The military always used jet fighter and bomb dropped from the sky although it is not allowed to use during the civil war. At that time, we run to the bunker and sometimes we lived in the bunker the whole day. We were always in the military training no matter how the weather was, rainy or hot. We carried the equipment, gun, clothes ,

## The hopeless of our country and the loss of next generations' education opportunity is encouraging to me to keep going on.

and hammock with us, and walked to another place. If we had a duty, it might take about over 7 hours. Each of every comrade was suffering this struggle and challenges. All comrades are equal and there must not be discriminations between genders. Women were also assigned to guard with full equipment and uniform at night to avoid being caught by the enemy. Days and nights, I sew and fixed the old clothes and backpack due to the lack of new clothes. Then, I cooked for my comrades. Sometimes, we went patrolling to get familiar with the forest and had to be cautious because of the enemy. Around 30 percent of our comrades got malaria and it was not easy to get medicine immediately. I feel proud when I could help them who were in trouble. I had to live with struggle and faced with many challenges for about 1 year. I did as much as I could in all the ways I could.

I gradually realized that armed revolution is the key answer to destroy

the grass root of militarisms that grow up for over 70 years. The economy of our country began to decline, and the inflation is raising day by day due to the covid pandemic and military coup. The students and government employees in many sectors are also involving in Civil Disobedience Movement. Therefore, the education of our country is also moving down to the bottom.

I think that the ways to solve the current situation of Myanmar is armed revolution; on the other hand, we need to keep ourselves updated from news and enhance our human resources. That is the best way to develop the country in a long term. The hopeless of our country and the loss of next generations' education opportunity is encouraging to me to keep going on.

**Now, I am involving in community research and storytelling activities organized by Weaving Bonds Across Borders. I am going slowly and steadily without giving up on the goal.**





# IF THERE IS A FIGHT, THERE IS A VICTORY

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**I'm 48 years old. This military coup is the second time in my whole life. The first time happened when I was 13 years old in 1988, and this time in 2021. I am currently working to stop sexual harassment and gender base violence on women, child's rights, and human rights violation cases and many others more. I also work on access to justice, peace building, youth and women empowerment training, environmental conversation awareness training, and doing campaign.**

Many of Myanmar people around the country are against military junta after the coup. I am one of them who participated in the public demonstration to against the military coup (Spring Revolution) because I already experienced and knew the feeling of hopeless for the young people and the loss of human rights which could happen soon.

The political activists and demonstrators are being killed, torture, arrested and raped during the crackdown by the military junta. As the defenses increased in speed, the People Defense Force (PDF) has been formed. Due to the involvement of Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), people would be fired, and would be evicted from their Home. Continuously, I had to run away, and my family is worried about me.

The innocent people were accused by the military junta that the people who support food, money, and weapons to (PDF) are criminal. On the other hand, the rate of Covid infection is rising and cannot be manage and control under the poor management of the Minister of Health under the military junta. Millions of people are not allowed to access to medical treatment, and many people died due to the oxygen deficiency and the arrestment of the professional health workers and doctors. My sister and my aunt were also victims of this case. My aunt passed away because she couldn't call for a hand in time.

Before the coup, we could work freely and together with friends we helped

**I have a dream that one day everyone in our community and our new country will be able to access to the rights to live, the rights to be equal, the rights to freedom of expression.**

supporting internal displaced persons (IDPs). There were freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

Now, the people who write CRPH, NUG, PDF would be arrested, and the people who are using the name 'Military Junta' on any social media platforms will be arrested and killed as a criminal. Besides, they are also robbing, killing, and burning people's houses and villages. The economic is declining because the foreign investor are leaving the country.

I am still fighting for the justice and the support for IDPs, PDF, and CDMers. Even I am in trouble and tried, I still take turns to help the IDPs and the people who are infected by the Covid-19. People are more sufferings because the Covid-19 pandemic and the military coup occur at the same time.

Currently, our country (Myanmar) is heading to the failure state. I hope it will be a beautiful and developed Federal Union Country with a new constitution in the future.

As a founder of our organization, I am very proud that we can help the

survivor to be healthy physically and mentally. Since 2017, we started forming our organization until now, we could solve about over 10 cases related to Women's Rights, Child's Rights and Law abuses. The successful case that we assisted was a person who committed crime on child rape has been sentenced up to 20 years in prison. I also organized the activities to support women and children who suffer from harassment and abuse and help to impose the suitable punishment for criminal.

I have a dream that one day everyone in our community and our new country will be able to access to the rights to live, the rights to be equal, the rights to freedom of expression. Also, we will have freedom to make our own destiny and have a dignity in line with human rights, and there is job opportunity without discriminations.

I have learned that in order to make good decisions, we should appreciate and take suggestions from others. Working together with alliances and networks, we should have public trust and participation of women and youth. This is the advantage of our organization. We hope that the people

of our country will return to peaceful, safe, and fear-free life as soon as possible, and that the economy in our country will be improve very soon.

I love justice so that everyone gets the same rights and justice, and free from being torture. This sympathizes and inspires me to work for the better changes for our community. My teammates and the communities learn from me related to these issues. As a result, our decisions can be made boldly by understanding the laws that can be applied in practical ways and they will have more self-confidence.

**To escape from the current situation, our people need to have revolution sense, revolution awareness and unity. Don't forget that "If there is a fight, there is a victory".**

To escape from the current situation, our people need to have revolution sense, revolution awareness and unity. Don't forget that **"If there is a fight, there is a victory"**.

Don't be sad about the things that we cannot do, just do everything we can to help. **I think everyone should do whatever they can to help and restore justice as soon as possible.**





# COME BACK TO THE MOUNTAIN

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**One morning, the wind blowing in the BALU creek was fresh, the clouds were clean, and the sun was clear in my mind. Those days were pleasant but not beautiful. Many people held each other's sign and shouted "Strike! Strike! Overturned! Protest! Protest! Revolution must WIN!"**

Right after the military coup, the people were protesting on 22-02-2021 Revolution Day (22222). I cannot forget that day. Because of the military coup, many people lost their houses, rights, happiness, and many children also lost their education, etc. Consequently, youths chose to run into hiding in the forest and fight against the military dictator. Among the youths who are hiding in the forest, I was one of them.

That day, after my nursing aid training exam, I went to my friend's house and stayed overnight in Taunggyi. At 3 o'clock in the morning, when people fell asleep, the dogs were barking on the empty road; we were waiting for a car at the bus station with a backpack. We ordered only one portion of rice because we worried that the travel expenses would not be enough. The

owner of the restaurant looked at me incredulously and asked, "**Where are you going?**". "**Yangon**" I answered, and we quickly left the restaurant immediately.

First day of May, I was thinking worriedly in the car, "*What would they check on the way? If they ask something, what should I answer?*" Then, I noticed I had arrived in Mandalay when I saw a palm tree. I stopped by one of the offices in Mandalay. Then, I traveled to the Kachin State by the Shwe Kachin car in the evening. I was very excited that what I wanted to do almost became true.

In the morning of the 6th of May, brothers were waiting to see who would be sent to the PDF training. After having our breakfast, we started to travel by motorcycles. The roads were rough, and the forest was deep, so we were very tired. However, it was no longer in the city; there was a beautiful green forest, the birds were singing, and the natural beauty of the mountains and streams was so relaxed and fresh. We were riding on the motorcycle until we arrived at the

gathering place at 4 o'clock in the evening. Each person who arrived earlier than me was busy. There were over one hundred people. Some of them were cooking and the others cut and carried the bamboo to build huts. When we arrived, they said **"We have more cooks now!"**, kidding happily. In the evening, we had our dinner under the bamboo grove with soft rice, the curries were ShuuShare tea dip and chickpea soup. Because we came from different places, we were happy and warmly welcomed. While waiting for the training, we were working and cooking together. We were waiting for the time to attend the military training.

The 13th of May, on the first day of training, **"Phee.. Phee.."** there was a sound of whistle; the trainees woke up sleepily and washed their face, brushed teeth and picked up the uniform. Over four hundred trainees actively attended the opening ceremony. Concerned gentlemen spoke and the trainer read

**Although the training was very difficult and tiring, "The military dictatorship must be revolutionized, and we must win." We kept this in mind and whether it was raining or hot, we tried so hard.**

the rules. After the ceremony, the trainees were waiting for the meal to arrive. They held each plate and said evenly, **"We will eat this rice and curry, served by the country and people, and we will carry the people's interest."**

The sun was hot but we enjoyed our meals and then **"Phee...Phee.."**, there was the sound of a whistle again. Then, we went to the training ground and waited in the queue.

**"Everyone, look at the front!"**, the command of the trainer's voice echoed in the sun. The trainees said **"Yes!"** with full vigor. **"Right.... Left... Right..."**

**"What are you doing?"** the trainer asked,

**"We are practicing."**, the trainees replied.

**"What is it for?"**, the trainer shouted again,

**"To enter the battle."**, the trainees replied.

**"Whose soldiers?.."** the trainer asked,

**"People's soldiers..."**, the trainees replied again.

The military scene was so consistent. Although the training was very difficult and tiring, **"The military dictatorship must be revolutionized, and we must win."** We kept this in mind and whether it was raining or hot, we tried so hard. Then, our training has finished. The trainees are ready to go to their city and ready to serve their responsibility. We

**One evening, I was taking a bath in the stream “Whii... Whiii...” I heard the sound loudly. Beside me, the two friends were startled and shouted “Warplane! Warplane! Run! Run..!” We run into the thorns without shoes and clothes. After one minute, there was a sound “Ommm..” in the stream, which even caused the earth tremble.**

said goodbye happily to each other and I prayed **“All of you are responsible for your duty so please stay safe.”** After this prayer, I was left alone.

One evening, I was taking a bath in the stream **“Whii... Whiii...”** I heard the sound loudly. Beside me, the two friends were startled and shouted **“Warplane! Warplane! Run! Run..!”** We run into the thorns without shoes and clothes. After one minute, there was a sound **“Ommm..”** in the stream, which even caused the earth tremble. Upon the stream, those who took a bath in the stream were blown up to 300 meters but were not injured. We were hiding under the fallen tree root and bomb pieces are falling like a raining. About half an hour later, the sound of warplane was quiet. Normally, the depth of the stream was only about the knee, but the place where the bomb was dropped is as deep as a person’s height. Because this was my first experience, I was so scared so I never took a bath in the stream again after this incident.

While helping with recording the trainees’ personal record on a computer, the sun rose and set. It said goodbye to me day after day, then another training came. In my mind, feeling alone seems to have disappeared. The sound of the training was clearer than the sound of thunder. I couldn’t hear the rain, but **“Counting Number.. (One.. Two.. Three.. Four..), People’s Soldiers. People’s Soldiers. Left.. Right.. Left. Right..”** The voices from the rain were ready for the truth.

During the training, the trainer shouted **“Warplane! Warplane!”**. Just before the sound ended, **“Ohmm..Ohmm...”**, the bomb fell to the ground trembling. The trainees were also shouted **“Runn.....Runnn...!!!”** This time not only one, but more than ten were scattered. While running, I could only pray **“All of God Save Us”**.

During the military training, the warplanes were coming and hiding in the trench and did that again and again. Then, the military training was finished. After the training, I wanted to go to the front line with a comrade and I asked

**The comrades prepared snow trees and lights for Christmas and New Year. On a New Year Day, I wished for “Peace for Myanmar”, and I hoped that day is coming very soon.**

for permission. **“General, I want to follow the front line with my comrades.”** Although it took about one month, I didn't have permission to go on the front line. Therefore, I decided to say, **“I will go back home”**, and I tried another way to go to the front line.

We started traveling by boat and brought rice and dry food for our front-line comrades. Around the stream surrounded by mountains, and heron birds were finding food. Somewhere, we saw the hut and people digging the cricket beside the stream. The wind blows and the waves hit the boat. After sitting on the boat for over 5 hours, we finally arrived at the front-line area. Because it was close to a river, we always ate fresh fish. Across the river, there is a long bridge. The nature of the forest and the view on the bridge cannot be compared with anything.

On a winter morning with fog and snow, the bridge is not seen. The comrades are busy like ants. Christmas has come back again. The comrades prepared snow trees and lights for Christmas and New Year. On a New Year Day, I wished for **“Peace for Myanmar”**, and I hoped that day is coming very soon.

In my backpack, I had dry food, one blanket and documents. We wore uniforms and carried guns. Gun and equipment weighed over 5 pounds, but I had to walk the whole day with that weight. I was really excited and active.

On the road, I heard a group of monkeys' screams, the height of trees was in the sky and the birds were also very kind. The squirrels were also playing on the tree. Their life seems very delightful. Climbing the mountains and there were so many streams flowing along the way. I felt the natural beauty of forest lands and took a rest. Then, we arrived at the front lines at night. **“Tonight, we would have good sleep”**, we said to each other, and we cooked rice. After that, we ate, and we went to sleep in the hut. **This is a story of my revolution journey that I will never forget. Now, will I get it back again?**





# DEARLY LOVED MOM

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**My name is Aye Mya who has never been in peace. The current situation is the hottest and most burnt. I cannot stop worrying for my children. My youngest son who is an unmarried person “Phoe Thwe”, and my youngest daughter “Nu Nu”, is with PDF from Hsi Hseng for a period of time. On this coming water festival (Thingyan), it will be one year. Recently, my son followed her to Moe Bye. He said, “Mom, even though we haven’t received any weapon yet, I will go and help to fight against these Army dogs” on the phone. All the time, I pray to God for the safety of my son, daughter, and all the people because those bastards (Burma Army) bombed the village with warplane for days and nights.**

I did not have much to say about me. I dated with a boyfriend and was pregnant when I was sixteen. His parent did not like me because I was poor. They made him married with a rich girl. She was elegant and young, so they got married. When my eldest daughter was two years old, I got married with Ko Hla Saung. He took care of us well. Our marriage with him did not last for long. It lasted for three years only. He left me with one child and a baby in my womb behind.

I, a widow with three kids, met with a young guy who was 6 years younger than me. Moe Kyaw was 19 and I was 25. Our marriage lasted for 30 years. He was a drunkard and I had to look after him till he was 49 and died at young age. My main job was doing laundry. I also worked on any kind of works that made money. I met him when I worked at his house for laundry service.

I have seven children. I got four kids with Moe Kyaw and three kids with my previous husbands. Therefore, the doctor did a tubal ligation for me at the hospital after I have got 7 kids to take care. Moe Kyaw died in 2010 during Thein Sein’s government time. In the past, I feel sorry for him because he did not get to see Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s era (A May Suu), but now I feel happy

and lucky for him that he did not get to see Min Aung Hlaing's coup.

The things I feel sorry for my husband about A May Suu's era in 2015 was that we did not feel scared or afraid for it was a people's government's era. *"Oh dear, I am dying to tell you."* In the past (before the civilian elected government), we had to be afraid of even low-ranking local officers. However, in the era of A May Suu, we did not have to report to local office when we sleep over at different places. If someone saw injustice, he or she took photos and posted online. Therefore, no one dared to do any injustice or terrible things.

Now, almost everyone is using an online social media platform, including me. I also have a social media account with the name "Dear MOM". My second daughter opened account for me, and my youngest daughter bought a mobile phone for me. Moe Kyaw did not get to see the great time of our family and our country. After he passed away, our children have grown up and got married with good husbands. Now they run their own businesses and they told me to stop working. Even though I did not get to work outside as usual, I still have to look after my grandchildren and cooked for the family. I spend time on social media whenever I take a rest. My children told me that "we have good jobs, and the life is easier for it is a good era".

I have 11 grandchildren. My first grandchild passed away at the age of 20. He was over drunk and felt down

and died under the hot sun. He died of stroke.

My eldest daughter also has many kids just like me. When her husband died, she was left with 4 kids and a baby in her womb. When my grandson died, I did not have to go for quarantine. I assumed there was no Covid-19 yet in Myanmar. In 2020, it was not easy to travel. There were many checkpoints and controls. I did not get enough of watching A May Suu showing on how to wash hand on TV screen. I even got into contest of sewing face masks. My children did not believe me that I could get award. That is why they did not send my face masks to contest. Who knows that I might get an award. During that year, we had to close our shop and had to take a break. My second daughter who opened a mobile shop said that it happened in the whole world, and they all faced difficult times like we do. During Covid-19, I saw people across the country were donating rice, oil, but I did not take them for myself. I am pleased to see

**In the past, I feel sorry for him because he did not get to see Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's era (A May Suu), but now I feel happy and lucky for him that he did not get to see Min Aung Hlaing's coup.**

people in need got them. I felt their situation likewise.

I believe that it was out of kindness of NLD, not about campaigning for their votes for their term of being government was close to an end. It was different from doing campaign for votes. I heard that an actress named Khin Ohn Mar who was from USDP donated rice, oil and eggs. If people went to her house for help, she gave the donation, and they were instructed to vote for USDP. I couldn't just sit at

**On that day, when I heard about the arrest of both A May Suu and our president, I felt more sad than the days my late husband passed away. Even though I cried out loud, it didn't lighten my mind.**

home; therefore, I went to made advance vote. Many of elderlies came to vote. They were happy about that. I washed my hand carefully and wore face mask to vote because I really wanted my government to be re-elected. Even though I was not feeling well, I did go to vote with my children on the actual voting day.

My youngest daughter who is currently in the jungle for revolution was 18 years old when she voted for the first time. She said to me, "Oh Mommy, I am so excited", I joked "My dear, you are sounding just like newlywed couple". Then we laughed out loud. She went to vote without asking for leave from her work and let some of her salary to be deducted. Now, she can no longer live an easy life. She told me on the phone that she turned into strong and resilient girl after taking some mass training, works and cooking.

I do not know what to say much about election. As for my family, we were fighting peacock (Khut Daung). The next doors were also Khut Daung, the whole area was Khut Daung. We are all red and we won landslide. We had no idea about stealing votes and frauds. We voted and our party won. There were many people like us nationwide. My eldest daughter informed me that only the red won. It was obvious the people those who did not win accused the winners as frauds. There was a party who only got 5 votes. We heard that Nga Pu (Min Aung Hlaing) got encouraged by those kinds of parties to make a coup at the end. It did not matter whoever encouraged, he, himself was dying to become a king, thus he arrested A May Suu and our president. On that day, when I heard about the arrest of both A May Suu and our president, I felt more sad than the days my late husband passed away. Even though I cried out loud, it didn't lighten my mind. What a cured day. The whole Nation was under the bad omen.

**I was told to look after grandchildren when they went out to protest. The next day, I told them to take turn to look after the kids so that I could go out to protest as well. I went outside and shouted out loud as I wanted. I saw many people coming to the streets and filled up the streets.**

I could not eat and sleep for two, three days.

Not long after Min Aung Hlaing took a coup, people got outside and protested. All of my children went to protest. I was told to look after grandchildren when they went out to protest. The next day, I told them to take turn to look after the kids so that I could go out to protest as well. I went outside and shouted out loud as I wanted. I saw many people coming to the streets and filled up the streets. There were people with donation. My youngest daughter was fruits vendor; thus, we gave away oranges and many pieces of watermelon to the protesters. In one day, 50 watermelons weren't enough. We even gave away strawberry milkshakes to the protesters. We finished breakfast at 8 am. Then, we boiled 500 eggs. After that, some of us wrote protest slogans, encouraging words and drew some pictures on the eggs and packed them together with salt in the bags. We have never felt such feeling for the collective works for donations. We are donating to the people struggling for our nation.

At the end of next month, the protesters were shot by tear gas and rubber bullets and chased down by the police and soldiers. While they were running for their lives, some even lost their shoes. Hence, my eldest son piled up all the shoes that he had from his shop so that the protesters those who lost their shoes could take them as they wished. I felt happy seeing all the young protesters got donations.

One Chinese woman who did not allow her sons joined the protest and none of their family members joined the protest came to take two pairs of shoes for her two sons. I could not be generous to those kinds of people. When I was about to tell her how I felt, my daughter-in-law stopped me from doing so. I don't know why I even met those kinds of people. When we went to the streets for chanting, my daughters and even my granddaughters joined with us. There were various kinds of donors on the streets. They donated things such as books, different kinds of food and even Buddhist ritual stuffs. I was amazed to see people's generosity.

I also joined “Ta Nat Kha” protest for they assumed the gun was bitter. There were protests with different names and concepts. When there was the sagaw (threshing basket) protest, we painted all the sagaw (threshing basket) and participate in the protest. When the

**We had to delete and destroyed all the pictures that we took in every protest that we joined. Everything was left as memories in our mind.**

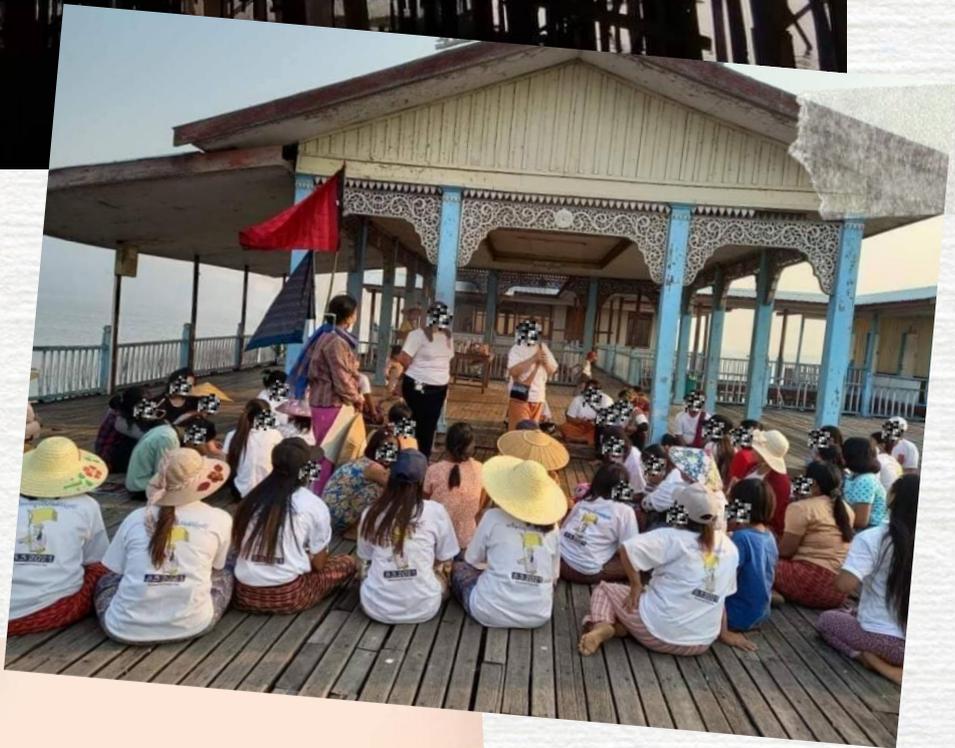
police cracked down the protest, we had to burn all the sagaws (threshing basket). It was such a waste and we cried so much for that, but we did for our own safety. Actually, we wanted to keep them as a memory. We had to delete and destroyed all the pictures that we took in every protest that we joined. Everything was left as memories in our mind.

There was an unforgettable incident happened on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2022. On the day when the thieves and robbers were released from the prisons by the authority, we hit the pots when we saw suspected people in our quarters and streets. There was once, after we heard the noises, we came out

to the streets with knives. Someone said there was a suspect ran into the drainage, so we followed him. Then, we found out that it was a crazy man called San Maung and we ended up laughing out loud. Our family took care of the people who guarded our quarters and streets at nights with fried rice, coffee, and tea as snacks. On the nights that we did not prepare anything for them, we gave them all the food that we had at home.

At night, we lighten up the streets with candles displaying the names saying we support RSP, NUG, and CRPH. We even chanted the protest slogan and sang revolutionary songs showing the solidarity. There were always evil ones. Whenever we did those movements, USDP supporter named Khin Ohn Mar informed the police. Thus, we had to erase all the things as quickly as we could before the authority arrived. That May Ohn Mar was beautiful and rich. She was a low class and disgusted by the people. Before this revolution, we used to be like a family. Now, everything seems meaningless. She was a type of person who would destroy what she could not get or take. **Hence, she put down all the people those who didn't support her USDP party and make their lives miserable.**





# THE CONFLICT BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK

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**Before the coup, I worked on gender awareness through training program to reduce the violations on women, on complaints for justice, and the corruption of government employees in the districts of southern Shan State. I also have arranged all the plans to collaborate with district level directors and officers from police stations in Nyaung Shwe. The places where the training program took place are already aware of gender issues. Numbers of violations on women are also decreased. People are getting bolder to express for the justice and make complaint. I am really pleased to see all my hardship and suffering get paid off. I am very proud of myself for this accomplishment.**

When I heard about Military coup on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2021, I felt as if all my hope were being destroyed. For three - four days, I was in my bed with deep depression. I had to stop all of my planned works. I thought of what I should do during my time in my bed. I have decided to fight against military dictatorship as much as I could.

I joined several protests to against military dictatorship. I even organized the protest in Inn Lay Lake. On International Women's Day, I led a Hta Ming Protest in the midst of Inn Lay.

Throughout my days in protesting the military dictatorship, I was being watched, recorded, informed, and threatened by informants (Military's spy). I was attacked in many ways by the ones who were not fond of gender awareness training program after I led the Hta Ming Protest in Inn Lay. After that, I had to hide for four months. After I ordained my son as a monk, I ran away with my daughter. I was in total despair not just because of having a hard time settling in new place, but I also missed my son. Only after I was informed that we were safe to return, I

## Throughout my days in protesting the military dictatorship, I was being watched, recorded, informed, and threatened by informants (Military's spy).

went back home. As soon as I arrived home, I picked up my son and we have been together since then.

All of our JMC-Inn Lay works had to stop because of military dictatorship. We were in total hardship and adversity for I have no job and income. We had to pass our daily lives with the support of friends and relatives. Even though there were no conflicts in Inn Lay, there were many IDPs from Phay Khone seeking shelters. We had to prepare shelters and foods and raise donations such as clothes and medications for IDPs. Sometimes, we were supported for travel expenses and sometimes we had to pay by ourselves for raising donations. After we paid for the travel expenses by ourselves to work on these kinds of works for many times, our lives became more difficult, and we couldn't even afford for our own medications. At the end, we had to stop supporting IDPs. When the people in charge of IDPs camps called and asked for the supports, I was in deep stress because I couldn't help them out.

Currently, I must work to earn money for my family. Almost everyone was in adversity between Covid-19 pandemic and military coup. I will console and help those who are in difficulty. On the other hand, I will also work for my family's survival. I will carry on my life by encouraging myself and by looking at the faces of my two kids when I am depressed.

It seems like good side has upper hand in current Myanmar situation. There were so many sacrifices such as lives, sweat and blood. **I believe that if we could only overcome the current situation, the dictatorship will be uprooted, and Myanmar will be the country which value democratic norms and rich in human rights and rules of law.**





# STORY OF A SHAN TEACHER

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**I am 49 years old. My former home in Shan State is in Koong Kad village, Sanen tract, Panglong township, Southern Shan State. I have 4 siblings and I am the eldest child. My family and I lived a peaceful life until 1983, when I was about 9-10 years old, the Burma Army used warplanes to attack my village because it was the Shan military base. At that time, my great-grandmother and I had to temporarily hide in the forest.**

I still remember, there was one time the Burmese soldiers ransacked our house. The Burmese soldiers looted all our new clothes and our great-grandmother's money that had been buried underground. When the great-grandmother asked for the money, the Burmese soldiers claimed they did not see it. The Burma Army ordered my great-grandmother to go somewhere else. Then, they tied up my hands and asked me where the Shan soldiers' houses and the Shan soldiers' guns were. Being childish and scared, I cried out loud. But the Burmese soldiers threatened to pour cold water on my body if I did not stop crying. After the

incident, my family decided to flee the town of Sanen, and I had to hide in the village of the Pa-O community. In the meantime, we still had to hide and flee the Burma Army all the time. Sometimes, my family and I had to flee to deep forests or high mountains. In 1986, we therefore decided to come to Thailand.

The Burma Army heavily suppressed ethnic armed groups at the time; therefore, traveling to Thailand was difficult. There were intense checks at various checkpoints. When we arrived in Thailand, there was a Shan soldier to pick us up. However, that also made us wary of the Burma Army who could always ambush us. Sometimes, we had to escape all night. We traveled by horseback riding and walking. After traveling for dozens of days, my family and I arrived at a village in Thailand. Even though I came to Thailand, I still went to school in Shan State which was located the control area of the Shan Army at that time.

Living in Thailand was quite difficult in the beginning, in terms of making a living. My mother was a daily worker. However, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to study at the Shan National School, established by the

Shan Army, until I finished high school. After that, I turned myself into an elementary school teacher for 4 years at this school. The children here were all descendants of the Shan soldiers and the children of villagers who fled the war from Shan State. After quitting my job as a teacher, I went to work as a housekeeper in Chiang Mai city for a while. Then, I decided to come back to the same village at the Thai-Burma border.

**I still remember,  
there was one time the  
Burmese soldiers  
ransacked our house.  
The Burmese soldiers  
looted all our new  
clothes and our great-  
grandmother's money  
that had been buried  
underground.**

In 1998, I had an opportunity to work with Love Children Organization. Then, I started working as a teacher since 1999 until now, at a school supported by a women organization. Most of the time, I have spent my life with the children all the time. The COVID-19 outbreak hurts my feeling a lot because I could not teach my students at school. There is a social distancing rule that we need to follow, so I could not teach and

take care of the children during this pandemic. It makes me feel unhappy, and I feel that I could not work properly and take good care of the children as I want.

Even I have been living in Thailand for many decades, when looking back at the situation in Shan State, the human rights abuse situation seemed to be worse than when I was there. I had only experienced one incident of oppression by the Burma Army. **However, people in Myanmar now go through these things every day, so I would like to see peace and democracy happens very soon. I want equality for everyone.**





# **NOT ONLY JUST CAN'T STOP, BUT ALSO, CAN'T WALK AWAY!**

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**I am from the Tai ethnic minority from southern Shan State. Since 2012 I have been working freely in youth affairs, peace affairs, helping IDPs from Kachin, Shan South and Shan North. My work was about giving support in the Southern part of Shan State where people had water shortages. On the other hand, I have started working with one of CSOs/CBOs giving public awareness and local affairs since 2016. Since Covid time in 2020, I have been working on Covid-19 prevention awareness program for the public and volunteers and have been working with local youth and volunteers on distributing Covid-19 prevention medical supplies to the public and volunteers in 21 districts of Southern Shan State.**

I worked until January 2021. On the 1st of February 2021, the internet signal and phone were cut off. I was in total shock and wondering what happened. While I was just thinking that there could be a coup, the state-owned news broadcasts about the coup. I felt that all of my hopes were destroyed, my mind was in despair and felt not safe. When I met with my colleagues, they were also angry, hopeless and unsafe. Most of the people felt the same. There were military trucks patrolling in the cities. There was also news that many government ministers were arrested.

As I was thinking what to do, I made discussions with youth groups on how to protest. All started with peaceful

protests against SAC on the streets such as stickers' campaigns and drawing on the walls. Many people got on the streets by using different ways of protest one by one. Not long after people protested on the streets, there were arrests and brutal crackdowns.

Many youths were arrested. We didn't dare to go back home and we had to hide away for 6 months. There were more and more arrests and killings day by day. Therefore, some youth have chosen armed revolution in the jungle. Many had to work secretly. Our office was forced to close. It was total chaos. We had to feel insecurity daily. My two out of three innocent nephews got killed for no reason.

Two got killed and one got arrested by SAC soldiers. It was such cruel acts done by SAC on innocent young people who were looking after their parents. We were told to collect the dead bodies of them by paying 500,000 kyats each. Their bodies were allowed to be taken only after they paid 20,000 kyats per body by the parents only after their parents informed them that they couldn't afford that and would just do merit for them at the temple.

Their bodies were not permitted to cremate even in their own village. The police made up a story about the one who got arrested by saying that they found a bag of narcotic and a grenade in the pocket of a deceased and made a case about it. He was sentenced to be imprisoned indefinitely. Their parents got mental disoriented. I also felt so much pain and resentment.

We no longer could travel freely and there was no freedom of expression. Many sectors such as education, economy, health and rules of law were gradually deteriorating. At the same time, the 3rd wave of Covid-19 was also started and many people died daily. There was no place for medical treatment. With curfew, we could not find oxygen for the ones in need of it. After the coup, I felt depressed and lost my way. There was time, thinking of going abroad or kept on working here. At last, I decided to stay here. We can't not only stop, but also can't walk away from it.

I have decided to do as much as I could for the people while my whole Nation is in dire situation. I made contacts with local organizations in order to support

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Covid-19 most affected villages. I also worked on helping IDPs in need of medicines and rations. I have been standing firmly to help out as much as I could in my community. We can't stop and give up. If we keep up and work together, we could build the Nation that we want. I, myself, can't get discouraged. We have to keep on working for the ones who are fighting in the jungle, the one who got killed and IDPs. I believe that all the people will have equality, equity and justice after we build the future federal Nation. **As long as we don't give up, we would definitely win.**





# REVOLUTIONARY GIRL FROM KANBAWZA (HILL) LAND

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**"The beautiful royal cherry girl with red cheeks, tiredly from the mountains is gathered around and will come to Kanbawza (other name for Shan land) Camp" as in the lyrics of the song, the beauty of the Shan girl on the mountain. They composed and sang the beauty of Shan State. I don't think anyone would have thought that a girl with natural beauty, a supple body, and a compassionate, well-educated young woman would take up arms and fight to uproot the tyrant for the people of Myanmar.**

People in the mountains are honest, open, and friendly. Nowadays, youths are just spending time around with their friends at school and home. They are Generation Z that was born in Information Technologies Period. Charity and social works are something that make youth happy. They are also actively participating in environmental protection activities.

She is also a person who has lived her young life freely without any worries.

When the universities were closed during the Covid-19 pandemic, her parents were also able to afford it. So, she learned about the technical subjects that she was interested in and learned them at international universities online. She worked really hard to achieve her future goals.

However, on February 1, 2021, the military junta seized the power from the newly elected civilian government. Internet lines and phone lines were cut off on that day. Those who were studying online had a hard time. As if the whole country had fallen into darkness, they were depressed. Every day, they were miserable. The old men recounted the past thirty years. Hope and imagination were very different in real life. Every citizen has lost their future, but most of the young people have had a harder time.

From the time they were born, they were only suffering from the control by their mother and father. Thinking about all the injustices they have experienced in their lives; they were so angry that they could not stand it, so they went out on the streets to protest. Those who used to live peacefully at home did not avoid the sun and the rain but went on a protest every day. They laid down

## Every day, they were miserable. The old men recounted the past thirty years. Hope and imagination were very different in real life.

the image of the military leader on the streets as a protest march from dawn to night and using sprays to write message on streets. There was brutal suppression of strike after February 27 and arrests have been made. There were seventeen youths got arrested at the Morning Sun Café. However, a girl was able to run away that day and was not arrested. Many young men and women were fighting for the prospect of the future generations. Although they got injured, they didn't complain even a bit.

The Main Street, West Ring Road, and the East Ring Road were blocked, so they (youths) only went on a guerilla strike. They had to go around the neighborhood and protest. There were various donations from all the people around that area such as drinking water, lunch boxes, snacks, cold drinks for the protesters. From the beginning, the strike lines were chased and broken down. The people who ran away due to shooting with rubber bullets were made to hide in their houses. They also closed the road to prevent vehicles from entering.

In the following days, youths were killed due to the shootings that started. As peaceful protests are being violently killed, youth discontent is growing. There was no tolerance anymore because the junta used weapons to

fight get rid of the people with no arms. Human rights violations are increasing day by day. A list of young people to be arrested came out when the guerilla strikes were being quietly carried out.

As she was one of those who lived in the city but could not return home, she had to live in one place after another. The people who were returning home, and the youth who were gathering at that time were gradually arrested at night. She had to leave the city because she was involved in those movements.

After the consecutive coup, most of the young people had to follow the armed path for the revolution. Because the dictator could not be rooted out, they (young people) have to face bad situation and difficulties like today. They suffer every day.

Many young people like her fled to the liberated area with the intention of joining the armed struggle and joined the intense and difficult training. She has been through the hardship during the training, but she overcame it. Her only goal is for the uprising to succeed.

At the liberated area, she had to change the camps very often. She also had to change her sim cards one after another. This area was also out of phone connection. If she missed her parents and wanted to call them, she

had to walk up to the mountain around 2-3 miles away from the camp.

She felt the pain of being separated from her parents, but she was determined and strong. She had no regrets for choosing a life that was as different as the sky and the earth. Her beautiful light skin had turned brown because of the sunburn during the training. She, who had never cooked even with electricity pan, has now started cooking with firewood. Concerning with the safety of her parents, who remained in the city, her parents had to write a legal document stated that she was a disinherited heir. It would have been a part of the costs for the revolution graduation ceremony.

After the training, the real battle would begin. She admitted that she was afraid because she is still a woman.

For the fallen heroes, they fought for the people and future generation. During the battle, they had rice with dry noodles cooked with military kettle pots and cold water from the river. They had to stay where they were. Their food was sent and donated with the love and kindness of the people. They got money support and the strength from the people to win the battles. They had to fight to win the uprising. Because of the love of the young people, every battle was successful. At first, they were injured from the ground fighting, but later the support was brought in by air.

The ethnic population had to leave their homes to avoid the war. I could not

**Concerning with the safety of her parents, who remained in the city, her parents had to write a legal document stated that she was a disinherited heir. It would have been a part of the costs for the revolution graduation ceremony.**

imagine of the people's suffering and turn it into words. I cannot find comfort words to write. The ancient buildings and the wealthy luxuries were destroyed. The revolutionary comrades could feel more of the people's grievances. Even though they are not skillful in using the weapons, they are still fighting. The revolution that will uproot the dictator must be successful. In order to establish a true federal democratic state that all ethnic people want, they are fighting without putting their lives first. **The Shan Mountains, Salween River, and the daughter of Kamboza's revolution, prove that they will fight until they can virtually build a federal democratic state, which was expected to be happened even before independence and many lives have been sacrificed for it. "Revolution must WIN!"**





# MY IMAGINATIVE NATION



**“Our Nation, Our Land, Free and no deviation from Justice,” just like the lyrics in our National Anthem, I would like to build a Federal Democracy Nation with freedom and justice which has been longing for diversities of ethnicities.**

We would need some period of time to rebuild a nation from the damages of a bad governing system for the past 70 years. Currently, from the time of the coup by SAC (The State Administration Council), different sectors such as social, economy, health, education, communication, electricity, and rules of law have deteriorated. They are drawing backwards. We are drawn back into the past 30 years.

In the health sector, SAC couldn't control Covid-19 outbreak and people got to take care of Covid-19 with their own expenses. Even though there were curfews, people couldn't care much for their lives to get oxygen tanks. However, people with serious symptoms died. Most health workers had to run for their safety because of Article 505 issued by SAC. Health workers and volunteers who helped on preventive measures of Covid-19 could no longer help. They had to look at the suffering of the people from afar. The only thing they could do was to call the

relatives close by to advise them for treatment and medications. Health workers are suffering too.

People from urban areas can't get treatment if they don't have money. Likewise, even though people from rural areas have money, but they don't have a chance for treatment because there is no health worker.

In the future, I hope that there will be no different living systems between urban and rural areas, lack of health awareness, lack of health workers, lack of local clinics and shortage in medications in my country. Every citizen must live for full life expectancy and have access to free medications and treatments.

In education sector, every child must have an opportunity to study from the age of 5 for basic education. Everyone must have free education at least for basic education. It must be a student-centered education system. The

children must be taught with the methods or techniques that allow them to think freely since they are young. Like neighboring countries, our children must be able to eat at school without needing to bring a lunch box. The government must be able to provide

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nutrition supplies. The education system must be different from the past. We shouldn't have a system that encourages the test by memorizing it. There must be an opportunity to learn advanced technologies. There must be an opportunity to study at associated international universities. There must not be great differences between urban and rural education systems.

People don't dare to take risk for revolution because the government employees are not local people, and even pass the position from

generations to generations through their family members. They make money from briberies than what they actually earn from their own salary paid by the government.

In the future, I would like to see a government which allows the government employees to buy houses with an installment program and provides sufficient salary for them in order to stop corruption among the government employees. There should be a system which looks after pensioners.

We must take precaution and have plans so that the people in the army will not be able to commit a coup and human rights abuses. Every grown-up citizen must take military training. In the future, there must be a law that enforces every adult to take military service. When there is a Federal Union, there must be a Federal Army. The Federal Army must protect and defend from outside invasion. Federal police must take responsibility for homeland security and rules of law. Government personnel must be free from corruption and loved by the people.

The government must be able to create markets for the agricultural products since Myanmar is an agriculture-based country. The government must take precaution in order not to cause losses for farmers just like in the past. The government must be able to grant loans for agriculture and provide necessary technology.

## Our country has been well known for lowest in education, worst in healthcare, greatest in having cancers, highest corruption and highest in human rights abuses.

We have to develop every sector in our country. Our country has been left behind because of a handful of armed groups for decades. Our Country is a country which only benefits a handful of dictators. A handful of privileged people and associated cronies became wealthy, but the people in the country are poor and in adversity.

In the future, related to the government sector, there must be a right or law to take down a government which doesn't favor the citizens. The government must favor people's desires. We can only accept a citizen centered government. The government must be accountable for anything. There must be checks and balances in the Legislative, Executive and Judicial sectors. Members of parliament must work for the people's benefits.

For the media sector, the fourth pillar of a nation, they must have freedom to express fully. They all must be representatives from the people of all ethnic minorities, and everyone must be involved and inclusive. We must preserve the culture and customs of the ethnic minorities with thousands of people.

In terms of transportation, there must not be any barriers on the roads. There must not be any tax/fee at the city gates for entries and road tax. However, everyone must pay yearly tax for the vehicles when they make a license extension. Every citizen must pay the tax accordingly and the government must provide any necessary service.

In terms of human rights, everyone must be equal. There must not be discrimination. Even though we can't do as much as developed countries do, we must proceed as much as we can.

Only if we could form a Federal Union, our country will be at peace. The people have been longing for the Federal Union before we gained independence and ever since the signing of the Panglong Agreement. Myanmar became one of the world's poorest countries because of the poor, unfair and unjust governing system. Our country has been well known for lowest in education, worst in healthcare, greatest in having cancers, highest corruption and highest in human rights abuses.

We must guarantee self-determination and autonomy if we form a Federal

Every human being must have a right to live, travel, write, express, get education, get medication, get better economic opportunities, and get greater job opportunities freely and peacefully.

Union. Just in 2021, the government sold many of our natural resources without any proper records. Now, we can only build a new nation with only human resources.

It is every citizen's responsibility to build a nation as they desire. I want each and every one to learn lessons from the past and leave a better and promising future for our future generation.

Every human being must have a right to live, travel, write, express, get education, get medication, get better

economic opportunities, and get greater job opportunities freely and peacefully.

It may be just an imagination if we look at the current situation, however, it will be a Federal Democracy Country which every ethnic group has been longing for many years. The answer will be the same for now and in the future.

**This is the wish and the will of every Myanmar citizen. It is an absolute and determined future that all Myanmar citizens will work to build a Federal Democracy Nation in collective manners.**





လက်နက်ကွဲ ဘေးစဉ်းမခြား  
Tejiendo Lazos Entre Fronteras  
Weaving Bonds Across Borders