

ALOHA from the Land of Smiles

January 17, 2006

Sawadee Khrap (in Thai), Min Ga La Bar (in Burmese), How are you (in English :-)? I hope you had a nice vacation during Christmas and New Year. I just want to wish you a happy new year even though it's a bit late. I knew that many of you would be overwhelmed by Christmas wishes and greeting cards from your loved ones. I thought, well, I would just send mine later when everybody is calm down and more relaxing. I sure hope that you are having a relaxing time in the new year after busy Christmas vacation.



First, you would probably notice that the name of the title has changed from "Aloha from Burma (Myanmar)" to "Aloha from the Land of Smiles." I am not in Burma any more. I am currently in the city of Bangkok. Thailand, by the way, is famous for her people's beautiful smiles. There explains the name "the Land of Smiles."

In addition, this will be my last Aloha as my job doesn't involve helping the Burmese directly any more. Occasionally, though, I might send out my Aloha if I come across helping Burmese people here in Thailand. My job mostly will evolve around computational linguistics stuff such as digitizing and preparing dictionaries of South-East Asian languages for publishing online in case any foreigners want to learn any South-East Asian languages. It's been a lot of fun to work with Haas Dictionary of Thai, Shorto Mon-Khmer Dictionary, Shorto Dictionary of Modern Spoken Mon, and Chuon Na Dictionary of Khmer recently.

Consequently, the good news is that I have been forced to learn Thai as I feel illiterate not knowing the language of the streets. Learning a new language and learning Computer Science again after being in Burma for 2 years is a new experience all again and another culture shock. Adjusting to Bangkok is not a very hard thing but it's a bit mentally tiring. It's just mind-boggling to learn all new things --- how to take a bus, how to buy a sky train ticket, memorizing the streets of Bangkok so I know where I am at, at the same time, learning the language so I can at least communicate with the people of the streets. My Thai is pretty terrible now. However, I hope it will get better by the end of this year.



Kids on Thai-Burma Border

Being in Thailand, I have come across local kids near the border of Burma and Thailand. They are stateless kids. They don't belong to neither Burma nor Thailand. There are a lot of NGOs working along the Thai-Burma border helping these kids get better education. The irony though is kids on this side of Thailand are being helped by those NGOs and the King of Thailand himself. However, there remains many kids on Burmese sides who are still being ignored. Please pray for those kids.

Last but not least, please remember all people of Burma in your prayers. May God bless you all!

Love in Christ,

Lwin Moe

<http://lwinmoe.friendsofburma.org>