

ALOHA from Burma (Myanmar)

May 23, 2005

First of all, I haven't written Aloha news for a few months now that I am not in Burma. My recent work doesn't involve Burma-related activities. I have been an Information Technology consultant in Vientiane, Lao for about five months, and I just finished my contract. I left Vientiane on the 15th of May for Bangkok, Thailand.



Recently, I had an opportunity to visit Phuket, a touristy area in Thailand badly hit by the Tsunami, to check out on the Burmese Tsunami victims, thanks to Bangkok Burmese Christians groups. It was a very interesting and rewarding experience for me.

We saw first-hand the after-effects of Tsunami. The area was being rebuilt very fast. Rev. Say Lar and I went to U Aung Thein and family. A tall, handsome ex-volleyball player from Chaung Sone, Mon State, told us about his life experiences. A dark and thick eyebrow below his forehead proves that he is a Mon, an ethnic group from Burma. He must really have been very handsome when he was young. His belly is now showing his age; he is about 55 years old. His life experiences include how he has crossed the border to find a new life in Thailand. There are many Burmese economic refugees there. U Aung Thein, being in Thailand for 15 years, has helped many new comers in search of better lives. It was an honor to have a chance to meet him and talk to him. Rev. Say Lar and I had a very interesting conversation with him.

Before having lunch, he told us how he has crossed the border from Burma to Thailand many times with a cool head and calmness, outwitting border patrols. It seems he has found a new life in Thailand because he has been there for 15 years even though his daughter is still in Burma and he wants to go back some day. His wife, Daw Sein Aye, is also an ex-volleyball player. An educated lady with a nice smile has also related to us some of her past from Burma. People like her could do a lot for Burma. But here she is in Thailand leading a small and mediocre life. It is a sad living proof of brain drain for Burma. However, she is proving her life useful by helping many new-comers to settle in their newly found lives in Thailand. God has been using them in a way that we don't understand.

Fortunately, the weather has been in our favor, raining only when we were in the car. The rain stopped when we got off the car. We drove to a very remote place out in the country. The winding roads up to the mountain and the beautiful mountains along the road reminds us of God's love for every single living thing He created. We went to meet a Mon group who came from villages near Than-Byu-Zayet in Burma. They were so happy to see us and their smiles and singing with us made our long trip worthwhile. They have been in Thailand for a long time now, searching for better future and lives. The food was great after the worship service. Mon people are known for eating good food :-)

Overall, I enjoyed meeting these people. It's such a blessing to be able to come back to Asia and meet people like them after I studied in the States. It's really an eye-opener. Now that I have saved some money for my survival in Burma and breathed the air of freedom for about six months, I am ready to go back into Burma to teach at BARS again. :-) It's quite a challenge and fun to work in Burma and I will have more ALOHAs when I am back in Burma.

Last, I would like to thank Rev. Mehm Tun Thein, Mehm Tun Than, Ko Zaw Zaw, Rev. Say Lar and others from Bangkok for making this trip possible.



Mon families smiling and singing with us!

May God bless you all!

Love in Christ,

Lwin Moe

<http://lwinmoe.friendsofburma.org>