

ALOHA from Burma (Myanmar)

July 27, 2004

As We Honor Our Teachers

A girl walks in ten minutes late
Says "Excuse me, Saya. I had a date.
I met a handsome boy down at Ashee's
Wrote a poem in English over two cups of tea
He liked my rhythm. He liked my rhyme,
Said my assonance was oh-so fine.
I'm late, but I'm sure you will understand
I love poetry, Saya, not the young man."

The above lyrics were not from Shaggy's latest hit, but from the more-famous-than-Shaggy **MIT Saya-G-3's**¹ *The lesson*. The one-year old band, MIT Saya-G-3, is cracking open about their feelings to BARS classes and students. A girl walked in late to her class because she just had a date at Ashee's teashop. She wrote an impromptu poem for her handsome young boy. He liked her rhythm, rhyme and, most important of all, her *assonance*.

MIT Saya-G-3 got all the cheers from students and teachers at the 2nd Annual Ceremony honoring BARS² teachers. Everybody there was having fun. Musicians are playing prelude --- songs after another, being deep in their mood. They didn't even care whether you listened to them or not. They are deeply lost in their mood. The violins and the piano blended together to make a beautiful tune to touch everybody's heart.

After the prelude, our master and mistress of ceremonies, Elizabeth Thawng and Zem Khem Kai announced the opening of the ceremony. After the prayers and opening hymn, Lerr Bwe Blu, a senior student widely known as the *Mommy* of BARS, had a story to tell to the Nation --- her kindergarten experiences and how her teacher has impacts in her life.

Following Lerr Bwe Blu, BARS juniors had a poem in honor of the teachers. On behalf of BARS juniors, sweet-smiling and loving Si Baw Mi, a Lisu student from religion major read the poem while Ruth Khin Aung (English major) accompanied with the piano. The piano music was soft like a breeze and Si Baw Mi's smiles and rhythm were in harmony. Her smiles made me write the following adapted to the lyrics from "*When You Say Nothing At All*."

The smiles on her face let the teachers know that the students need them. There's a truth in the teachers' eyes saying they will never leave them. The touch of the Dean's (the father's) hands says he will catch the students whenever they fall. The students say it best when they say nothing at all (not answering when the teachers ask them questions)
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Yet, the students are learning skills to think critically and discuss. One day, I hope they will write something critical of me in this kind of newsletter and I will have the strength to forgive them in the name of Love. Oh, don't get me wrong. I do mean Agape's Love.

¹ MIT stands for Myanmar Institute of Theology. "Saya" is a Burmese word for "Teacher." Saya-G-3 refers to Bob Winter from Chicago, IL, USA, Oliver J. Gamche from Canada, and Tony Hayes from the U.S.A (The Three Great Teachers of the English Department here at the Myanmar Institute of Theology)

² BARS is a liberal arts program at the MIT and it stands for Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies.

In addition, BARS seniors were proud to perform their song, “Silver Stars”, which won the first prize at the Song Competition. All the students, of course, are stars brightly shining up in the sky and beyond to give light to the poor and the needy after they graduate and go into the real world. As a mentor to all of them, Dr. Anna May Say Pa, the principal of MIT, did say to the students to believe in themselves. She also said, “You are unique and you can change the world.” That’s true. “All you have to do is, like Bob, the English professor, said, to respect yourself, your neighbors and the BARS program. You will go into the world and change it, hopefully.” Saya Bob said, “Think global, Act local.” “You sure can change the world by changing little things on our campus and in your community.”

Dr. Anna May Say Pa and Saya Bob Winter had a chance to talk to the students only. However, our dean, Saya Paw Lu got a chance to talk to the greatest Divine. He led the program with a special prayer.

Moreover, the students had a small gift for each teacher as a token of love. Last, but not least, our BARS Family and Social Committee president, K Nu San Lung had words of thanks for everybody who made this program a success. Everybody who did the washing, cleaning and arranging contributed to the success of this program.

Finally, the program was closed by the benediction from Rev. Cooler. There were photo sessions and refreshment after that. We all had fun that day.

Fig. BARS students in front of Myanmar Institute of Theology’s Diamond Jubilee Building



May God bless you all!

Love in Christ,

Lwin Moe

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