

ALOHA from Burma (Myanmar)

December 9, 2004

Well, I finally got my passport after going through many impatient visits to the Passport Office downtown Rangoon (Yangon). I left Burma on the 2nd of December. Bangkok was my first stop. I could feel the difference between Burma and the outside world again right after I landed at the Bangkok Don Muang International Airport. The immigration kiosks are grander and the airport's marble so nice and clean. The airport is huge compared to Rangoon International Airport. Uncle Mehm Tun Thein and friends picked me up at the airport.



As soon as I got out of the airport and got onto the highway, a familiar tarmac road similar to the I-80 running Chicago to New York was greeting me with only one and important exception --- they drive on the left side of the road. Bangkok has gone Americanization. After two years in Burma, I felt really strange to be in Thailand. I noticed that Thailand has been suffering from Americanization and Globalization. Americanization would be a better choice of word. I saw many things that Thailand has imitated to be like America. Even the software used by the Immigration Department, I noticed, is the same as the one used by the US immigration.

A big Bridgestone billboard on the outskirts of Bangkok



Unfortunately, with Americanization and freedom comes the disadvantage of abuse of freedom. I don't have enough time to go into details on this since I have more interesting things to write. The most rewarding experience for me was to have a chance to visit Three-Pagodas Pass on the Thai-Burma border. On the way to Three-Pagoda Pass, we stopped by a Mon Studies Center Museum (www.monstudies.org) and saw the large Mon population in existence in Thailand today. Uncle Soe Myint (in the right in the following picture) and I took a picture with a Mon man who shared the same ethnic trace back to our forefathers.



In addition, visiting a Mon village and a Karen village was also an interesting experience. If you would remember to pray sometimes, please remember that there are people out in the world who seriously need education and knowledge to prevent their lives and their children's from the effects of globalization. To further explain this, as countries like Burma surf the wave of globalization, the local people start to suffer the damages caused by tourists in terms of culture and self-confidence. They start

to think highly of tourists who could spend a lot of dollars leaving a negative impact on their plight and situation.

Generally, it is always best to dedicate our lives and live there to educate them and improve their lives. Unfortunately, there are not enough people in the world who can do that for

a few years of their lives. I hope one day God would let me live in those places for a few years so I can work for the development of the people and the area.



Left: A family in a Karen village. Right: Famous Three-Pagodas on the border of Burma and Thailand before the sunset.

Last, but not least, I would like to say thanks to Uncle Mehm Tun Thein and Ruth who opened their house for me so I can have a glimpse of Thailand and villages on the Thai-Burma border. I am now in Vientiane, Laos working for Digital Divide Data Laos to help Laos people.

May God bless you all!

Love in Christ,

Lwin Moe

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