

‘Moe Thauk Kye’: The First Burmese Library in Japan

Soe Win Shein

Editor-in-Chief of the Monthly Bulletin ‘Moe Thauk Kye’

We are very grateful to you for having given us an opportunity to make this presentation. Now, I’ll explain the facts about our library. You can get the details in the already distributed pamphlet.

Introduction

First, let me introduce myself. My name is Soe Win Shein. I am a Burmese. I am a founding member of the Moe Thauk Kye Burmese library in Tokyo, Japan. The name of our library means ‘morning star’ in English. I would like to explain the aims of our library and the services that we provide.

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Aims

Our aims include the following.

1. to collect hard-to-obtain books and preserve them.
2. to collect the historical writings of our country for the reference of the next generation.
3. to safeguard and preserve the customs, traditions, and the culture of our country.
4. to encourage every library user to study the differences between our motherland and our present temporary residential country, Japan.

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About the library

Moe Thauk Kye library is a Burmese library. We founded the library Ahhara (food for thought) in 2000 and then we changed into the present name, Moe Thauk Kye (morning star) in 2004.

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We started this library with only 1,500 books and a few volunteer staffs, but now, it has over 5,000 books in three languages, Burmese, Japanese, and English, and more volunteer staffs.

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Our collection was made up of donation by friends, authors, and purchases by mail order from Burma through our friends living there.

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Books are now arranged alphabetically by authors' names. We are not yet ready to use computer system. Eventually, we will promote the online public access catalogs so that everyone can access our collection through the internet.

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As we cannot afford to establish a library in separate building, we share an apartment by dividing it between living quarter for my family and library space.

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[Activities](#)

We collect Journals, poetry books, traditional humors, folk tales, social science, and some books which are banned by Burmese military junta in our country.

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As our regular activities we publish books on culture, politics, poetry and monthly journals.

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These are monthly distributed free Moe Thauk Kye Journal.

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This picture shows members of Moe Thauk Kye volunteering in the publishing of the monthly journal.

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The celebration of the literary day is one of our most popular activities. We annually invite Burmese writers who live around the world to come and talk about Burmese literature for the Burmese community.

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This picture shows the celebration of the fist literary day at Tokyo, in 2001.

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We invited two famous exiled Burmese writers in 2005 to talk about Burmese literature on the literary day. They are Maung Swan Yee and Maung Sin Kye.

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Maung Swan Yee is one of the noted literary critics in Burma. He has also been a teacher and a librarian. He is a poet, too. His poems were once taught in high schools in Burma. Now he lives in America as a political dissident. He is a patron of the Moe Thauk Kye Library.

Maung Sin Kye is an ethnic Karen writer from Burma. Now he is writing anti- military literature .He has won the national literary award. Now, he lives in Australia. He is also a patron of the Moe Thauk Kye Journal.

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There is a program to help Burmese migrant workers living in Japan who have trouble with health, seeking employment, immigration procedures, and others.

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Our fund-raising projects for the education of children who are living in Burmese-Thai border were a great success.

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We donated cash to self-help schools located on the Burma-Thailand border. These schools are run for the children of refugees and internally displaced citizens and are managed by concerned Burmese citizens groups.

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With the affiliated libraries, such as “Thu Ta Tha Har Ya Library” of Nagoya, Japan and “Shwe Thin Ga Har Myanmar Association Library” of South Korea, we collaborate to organize literary day and publish books.

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We have so far invited the following authors and held literary talks previous years and we have also published their books.

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The title of this book is ‘Master of our own fate’. It is written by Tin Maung Than. He mentioned gentlemen’s spirit and master spirit in his book.

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Tin Maung Than was a medical doctor and the editor-in- chief of the Think Ba Wa (Your Life) Magazine. He has been writing weekly political voice-articles for a radio station called Democratic Voice of Burma based in Norway for several years. Besides, his voiced articles were aired by Radio Free Asia, another Burmese radio stations based in Washington, U.S.A. He has published a few books on his political thoughts and essays. He is also a political dissident residing in U.S.A.

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The title of this book is "Diary written on the falling leaves" which was published in 2004. It is written by Tin Moe.

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Tin Moe is well-known Burmese poet. He was also the editor of the poetry section of the daily newspaper Lu Du (Mass) in 1966. He joined the Translation and Publishing Department of the University. He has received the National Poetry Awards twice in 1957 and in 1975 respectively and the Prince Clause Award from the Netherlands in 2004 for Poetry, too. He has published about 7 Poetry books until now. He is also a patron of the Moe Thauk Kye Journal.

The military junta of Burma does not allow their names to appear in the entire media inside Burma.

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We will continue to learn and improve the library in order to provide better services for our readers. We have performed to the best of our capacity as volunteers to establish the library. With the assistance and advice of Japanese librarians, we are going to make our library more systematic and effective.

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One of our Burmese affiliated libraries is in Seoul, Korea. We will visit there at 9:00 AM on 25th August. Those who are interested are welcome to join us.

Thank you

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[Contact us](#)

The library can be contacted by telephone or e-mail

- General information; 813-3364-5163

- Location maps;

[E-mail- mtk@s2.dion.ne.jp](mailto:mtk@s2.dion.ne.jp)

[Home-Page- http://www.moethaukkye.com/](http://www.moethaukkye.com/)

Library hour

Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays; 11:00 AM-11:00 PM

We are closed on all weekdays. Library book drops are available at all times for returned items.

Location

1-11-7(301) Ochiai Eiko Mansion

Shimoochiai Shinjuku Ku 161-0033, Tokyo, Japan