

PREFACE

MYANMAR

Friends asked if we could prepare a basic English Myanmar dictionary for young people. What a challenge! The country of Myanmar has many languages. Communication within the country would be facilitated by common speech, yet each group needs to know their own speech and its relation to others. Thus, a trilingual dictionary for children. We began with the third language as Karen and Kachin, and this is the third dictionary in the Chin (Lai) language.

This second children's dictionary is a modest effort to bridge the communication gap between peoples of Myanmar and the outside world. The dictionary follows a classic format. Letters of the English alphabet are provided and then examples of words beginning with that letter, with their definitions. A sentence follows that uses the word in context. The word and each sample are translated into Myanmar and then Kachin.

Traditional English grammar recognizes eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection. In fact, many words function as more than one part of speech. For example, the word *paint*. In the sentence The paint is wet paint is a noun, the subject of the sentence. In Please paint the wall paint acts as a verb, the action of the sentence. In this dictionary the use of a word as a noun (n) or a verb (v) is indicated next to the word.

English is difficult because most words have more meanings than a dictionary can list. When feasible we have listed examples of different meanings of words in sentences. For example, the word *frog*. Here are three different meanings:

- I have a *frog* in my throat.
- She wore a jacket fastened with braided *frogs*.
- Let's visit the *frogs* in the pond.

A dictionary cannot teach students how to read English. Children can learn words by memorizing them, and using them in sentences. Experts believe the accepted method for learning a foreign language is to teach

the sounds that letters and groups of letters make- the use of *phonics*. By using phonics, children can sound out unfamiliar word. This dictionary does not provide phonic guidance, but it may be provided by a teacher. The dictionary is a beginning and an introduction to a **Basic English vocabulary: a vocabulary of concrete objects, actions and descriptions. It is not complicated. We hope the lively illustration by Sai Hseng Twill will help the students learn these words more quickly.**