

A Note From The Translator		7
Marriage	Theikpan Maung Wa	9
Close Proximity	Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay	15
Maid Of The Manor	Khin Hnin Yu	29
Muddy Blue Waters	Maung Theikha	39
Pleasant Pond	Htin Lin	47
The Visitor	Htin Lin	55
New Day Breaking	Khin Swe U	69
The Kindergarten Teacher	Aung Thinn	79
Neighbours	Moe Moe (Inya)	87
The Trial	Pe Myint	97
Age Old Differences	Pe Myint	105
The Wedding Reception	Nyi Pu Lay	113
Cleanup	Tin Win Yee	121
Overture	Khet Mar	129
Beyond Bone Turned To Ashes	Nu Nu Yi (Inwa)	135
Once There Were Two Old Men	Ma Sandar	145
Big Notes And Small Coins	Atta Kyaw	155
A Haunting	Ju	163
Pwe	Khin Khin Htoo	173
Stone	Nay Win Myint	181
One Mother	Nyein (Shweli)	189
Chit Khin's Poem	Nyein (Shweli)	197
Tender Is The Night	Kan Chun	207
Mother's Merit	Thu Maung	213
... And With Mercy	Ma Khin Lay	
And Blessings	(Yangon Tekkatho)	221
Biographies		238

A Note From The Translator

Myanmar has a long and rich tradition of literature that is mostly unknown to the world, since few translations are available. The collection here is a small selection from the wide choice available to the Myanmar-reading public. Due to lack of time on my part, I could not read the majority that was published; there are hundreds more that deserve to be presented to international readers, both short stories and novels. I beg pardon from those whose works were left out and I hope that better writers than I will do more than I ever could.

The structure and form of writing in English and Bamar (or Myanmar, which is both the majority race and the official language) in which the original stories were written, are somewhat different. English in general is generally concise, whereas Myanmar has a varied and at times flowery vocabulary. Some editing was necessary for the sake of clarity and for this I must ask forgiveness of the writers, since unlike in the publishing houses of the west we do not have a tradition of another person editing the author's work.

My appreciation goes to U Sonny Nyein of Swiftwind Books, for giving his permission to reprint most of these stories that first appeared in their quarterly publication "Enchanting Myanmar".

I have chosen these stories partly because they cover a wide variety of human life: marriages like tongue and teeth;

- 8 -

love beyond the grave; the anxiety of mothers; the kindness - and unkindness - of strangers; and the snares of enticement and greed.

Mainly, I chose the stories for the spirit of the people of Myanmar they portrayed. Many people may not be rich but they live with contentment, humour, compassion and pride, in the face of grim reality. They are the real representatives of the country, the true treasures of Myanmar.

Enjoy.
Ma Thanegi
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