

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I started writing these short stories a couple of years ago. My work as a photographer leaves me very little time to write, but I try to find what time I can. I first began writing poems for magazine in 1962, and since then I have published thirteen novels and about thirty seven short stories in Myanmar. I also have presented twenty three short stories (On the middle mountain range and other stories) in English. A famous Myanmar writer once said 'If you really want to write, you will find the time. You can write even as you pound chillies in the mortar'.

I was born on 28 July 1942 in the village of Aungmyegon, in the foothills of the Pegu Yoma, to the east of the Irrawaddy and the town of Myede, sometimes known as Aunglan or Allanmyo, where I attended high school. My grandfather U Mya Yaung was a trader with a love of literature who would read scrolls and palm-leaf manuscripts. I remember him well. He was good-natured and made me toys out of clay and carried me on his back. My parents were U Pan Hmway, a trader and farmer, and Daw Lay Thee. She died when I was young and my father remarried her sister, Daw Aye Shin. I have one younger brother.

I wrote these short stories in English within the space of a year. Although we have different

languages and religions, and although I have not mastered English, I feel sure we feel the same way about many things. Each quarter, village, town and province and nation is made up of husbands and wives, lovers, grandfathers and grandmothers, father and mothers, sons and daughters who react in the same way. They love and hate, help and hinder, argue, cook, eat.

As I grew up, I grew to know and understand the villagers of Aungmyegon. Some were good and some were bad. Sometimes they were wrong, and sometimes right. I have recorded everything they did and thought. I still remember the headman and the elders and my relatives very well. Little has changed there since I was born.

I would like to acknowledge the help and encouragement I have received from Daw Khin Myo Chit, a well-known writer about Myanmar customs, and her husband U Khin Maung Latt, Saya U Myint Aung (Archaeologist), Saya Nan Nyunt Swe, my wife Daw Than Shin and my two daughters Kyawt Theingi Khine and Kyawt Khine Shwe War. I am also grateful to Vicky Bowman (Ohnmar Khin) for editing my manuscript.

May peace, health and wealth always be with you,

Kyawt Maung Maung Nyunt

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