

# Burmese Women Through the Ages

## The Heritage

by  
**Myint Myint Khin**

Edited and revised by Myint Zan

Professor Dr Myint Myint Khin obtained a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) with distinction in English language and literature in 1946 and Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (M.B.B.S) in 1950 from the University of Rangoon. She became a Member of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) (Edinburgh) in 1956 and Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (FRCP) (Edinburgh) in 1971. She was the Head of Department and Professor of Medicine at the Institute of Medicine in Mandalay, Burma from 1965 to December 1984. After her retirement she was a Visiting Professor of Medicine at the National University of Malaysia and was a consultant for the World Health Organization, Southeast Asia Regional Office in New Delhi, India.

She published about 10 books on medical and education matters including about AIDS, cancer, Burmese food and diet, the ill-effects of cigarettes and tobacco use, general educational reform books in the Burmese language and two books/monographs in English on medical education and science subjects. *Poetry for Me* by Dr Myint Myint Khin was published in March 2013. *Burmese Women Through the Ages: The Heritage* is her posthumous publication. She worked on the book for about eight years from 2006 to 2014.

She also established the philanthropic organisation Support Group for Elderly Doctors (SGED) and Day Care Centre for elderly doctors as well as Myint Myint Khin Scientific Literacy Awards.

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### Burmese Women Through the Ages : The Heritage

#### Preface (by the Editor)

By Myint Zan, Ph.D.  
(retired Professor of Law)

My late mother Professor Dr Daw Myint Myint Khin (15 December 1923 - 19 June 2014) started preparations to write the book *Burmese Women Through the Ages: The Heritage* around 2006/2007 when she was 83 years old. As she had written herself in the Prologue, Epilogue and Acknowledgments it was an arduous task. She completed a rough draft of her book at the age past ninety in April 2014 two months before she passed away.

A few minutes before she passed away I promised her that I would complete the tasks that was left unfulfilled of which she was eager to undertake. Three months before she passed away she presented to the families of two late Burmese authors who have written about scientific matters in the Burmese language the inaugural Myint Myint Khin scientific literacy awards. I did fulfil that pledge when, out of my own initiative, in May 2017 I presented the second Myint Myint Khin scientific literacy awards to science enthusiasts and founders of the online Burmese language *Curiosity Science Magazine*.

The second promise that I made to my mother was that I would continue to support to completion the book she has been editing where about 25 Burmese medical doctors from various medical disciplines contributed chapters in the book titled *History of Medical Education in Myanmar 1885-2010* where my mother was initiator and Chief Editor until she passed away. In December 2015, about 18 months after my mother passed away, the book was published. Just before my mother passed away the late Professor Dr Aung Than Batu indicated to me that she would be mentioned as 'Posthumous

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Chief Editor'. This was also mentioned in his tribute article after my mother's death (as reproduced in the Appendix). However, when the book was published, on the cover page of the book my mother's name did not appear. Instead, the names of the late Dr Aung Than Batu and the late Dr U Ko Ko were mentioned as 'Editors'. Inside the book, in his Preface, Dr Aung Than Batu mentioned and thanked my late mother for initiating the project to compile the book. at times cajoling the medical doctors to contribute chapters to the book. He also thanked me for providing the finances and the production of the book which was around six million (60 lakhs) kyats.

The third promise that I made to my mother was that I would see to it that this book *Burmese Women Through the Ages: The Heritage* that she had completed in rough draft would be published. That would prove to be a more complicated and difficult task. From March 2014 to July 2014 I was on unpaid leave from the post of Professor at the Faculty of Law, at Multimedia University in Malacca, Malaysia to look after Mum who was in the Shwe Gon Dine specialist hospital in Yangon. In July 2014, I had to return to Malaysia to do further teaching and research at the University there till I retired from full-time teaching and returned to Yangon in December 2016. I could not locate the draft of my mother's book in one location; various parts and chapters of the book were all spread out.

After some six years I was able to retrieve the drafts of the book from my mother's laptop computer which has been misplaced for some time and collated them in a single file. Retired Professor of Medicine Dr Tin Htut who had assisted my mother a lot in the preparation of her book draft was able to retrieve the files typed in PageMaker format from his own collection. After nearly eight years since my Mum completed the rough draft of the book I was able to collate the materials and manage to print out the drafts. I visited Mandalay in February 2023 for the unveiling ceremony of the busts of my mother and late father Dr San Baw (29 June 2022 - 7 December 1984) at the U Hla Tun Cancer Foundation, Mandalay. I have donated substantial amount of monies to the hospice for the extension building for the library and computer room at the U Hla Tun

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hospice to honour my late parents. The ceremony held in Mandalay on 26 February 2023 to dedicate the extension building and the unveiling of my late parents' busts in the library was attended by over a hundred persons. Professor Dr Tin Htut was one of the speakers at the unveiling ceremony. He also provided me with a thumb drive of my mother's manuscript. From the thumb drive, the printing of about 160,000 to about 180,000 words of the manuscript was done at the library at the University of Medicine, Mandalay. I thank Daw Aye Aye Khaing, librarian and the library staff for assisting me.

I also had to arrange to transfer the PageMaker format to Microsoft Word so that I can edit on the Microsoft Word. I thank computer technician Ko Wei Phyoo of Yangon for assisting me with this and the technical aspects of the book.

Since March 2023 I have been collating, reading, editing, providing sources and references, preparing the Bibliography, preparing the Appendixes etc for the draft of *Burmese Women Through the Ages*. As stated above, the draft that my mother completed was indeed a rough draft. In many places Mum had left unfinished in citing sources. For example, she would write 'see Sar Desai book' or even 'see the book that I bought from Sri Lanka' without naming the title of the book. It was an arduous task for me to search online and in the 'hard copy' of the books that I have to provide sources. I realise that in a few cases there may be a lack of exact sources for the statements and claims made in the book. Mum has stated to me that hers is not a fully academic or scholarly book as such but to give the information about the historical and current status of Burmese women to the general interested public. Mum has transliterated many Burmese/Myanmar words. The transliteration is not in accordance with the standard transliteration usages and phonetics. For the non-conformity, so to speak, of the transliterated Burmese words and phrases with the proper phonetic usage, I beg the reader's indulgence.

The most recent drafts of my mother's book is as of April 2014. There may be much earlier observations and statements written

years earlier than 2014. Hence there is a need to update them by the Editor, I have done so with my comments and updates in italics. I trust that these notes and updates clarify, add and provide background perspective to the statements made by the Author.

My late mother had expressed her thanks to various persons in the Acknowledgments. I would like to especially express my gratitude to Dr Tin Htut, retired Professor of Medicine, University of Medicine, Mandalay for his kind assistance given to my Mum when she was writing the book and for the assistance given to me to retrieve the drafts of the book, for his help, suggestions and encouragement during the editing process.

My thanks also to those who wrote the Introductions (in chronological order according to age) James Boyd White, Dr Tin Hlaing (alias) Phoehlaing, Dr Hla Yee Yee, Janelle Saffin and Ei Shwe Sin.

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November 2023