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## INTRODUCTION

I was at U.C.L.A studying for my MPH, in the academic year 1988-1989 when I visited the Research Library on campus for my research paper. Sheer curiosity led me to scan through the title "Burma" and to my pleasant surprise I found a few books that contained some information about my father, Bo Let Ya, who was second in command to Bogyoke Aung San, a member of the thirty comrades during the time when Burma Independence Army was formed in Bangkok in December 1941.

I was able to glean some information concerning him as a member of the thirty comrades, an officer in the Burma Independence Army, the first Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister after Independence in 1948. I found out that there were some discrepancies between what I found out in those books and what I had really known about him. Many assumptions had been made where most books described him differently from the actual fact.

There was no other additional information apart from that although I searched from other libraries on campus and tried to reach

other US libraries online as well. I even personally visited National Congress library in Washington D. C. to search for other data but failed to get further information. I then decided that I had to start my research to write a biography about my father.

I began to read and collect materials concerning his life with a fervent wish to reveal what kind of man he had been, and to repay him and the country he loved. I also wanted true facts to be documented as he was very much a part of history in bringing Independence to Burma. So, with the hope that this book would cover his life history, I have tried my best to analyze his views and thoughts to present to the readers in this book, "Burma's Fate: Vision and Struggles for Independence, Unity and Development."

I had little opportunity to know the different roles he had played in his lifetime as circumstances forced us to be separated when I was sixteen. After reading some books that mentioned him, I started to collect actual facts about him from family members, relatives, his friends, colleagues and staff. My mother as an avid reader had carefully and meticulously kept newspapers, journals, magazines, books and other reading materials for over four decades. With her blessing, all those materials, her diaries as well as autograph, diaries, notes, pictures and documents of my father came to my possession for my research. Many years had passed since then and eventually I was able to discover his character, the political evolution that had taken place since his schooldays, the political milestones in Burma, the opportunities missed leading up to the present day situation.

The book that I started writing about my father had a different meaning: it was at first curiosity to know more about him, and as I continued, I came to appreciate and understand the sacrifices he had made in his lifetime and his commitment towards Burma. His ambitious aims and objectives for the best outcome of the country were not

fully materialized. Many people called him a bureaucrat, capitalist even a millionaire. In reality these names did not mean anything to him. He was not for material gain. He was a man of simple needs and put the country first before everything.

As I write I came to understand him born as Maung Hla Pe, later Ko Hla Pe at school, Pin-ni Hla Pe during University days, Calcutta Hla Pe after his short trip to Calcutta, Thakin Hla Pe during independence movement days and eventually known as Bo Let Ya when he became a member of the Thirty comrades and joined the Burma Independence Army. He had many facets as a student leader, Thakin, army personnel, cabinet Minister, businessman, an artist and a resistance leader. His roles in life should be pieced together to give an overall clear picture of him with his many talents and skills comparable to a rainbow.

I want to share the work and view of a man who had, in his lifetime, done invaluable things for the country. I deeply regret that he was no longer in our midst by the time I came to fully understand and appreciate the value of his work.

Writing about my father is very difficult, but I have tried to give a true picture as I knew him. I want to share him with others and repay for what he had given me in life. The legacy he left with me was invaluable: teaching me about life and its value, to have principle, to love the people and the country and to have respect for others. I found it to be an extremely difficult task to fulfill, but this book bears testimony for my determination to follow his ideals. At the same time, I would like to remind the readers to bear in mind that this book became a reality despite encountering many hurdles over three decades. I have tried my best to get the actual facts for the presentation of this book, and hope to be forgiven should there be differences in opinion with the readers.

My father had taught us to share since we were young and as I write I wish to share his life, his work, and his teachings with others. He would surely be very pleased and proud that his daughter was able to write about his political and economic life and trends during his lifetime. I take pride in the fact that I am at least, able to justify my birth as his daughter and let the world know about Burma through his eyes and views.

The terminology used in this book varied from time to time covering from pre-war days to present day.

Dr. Khin Let Ya,  
3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2017

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is an account of the vision and struggles for Independence, Unity and Development of Bo Let Ya, the author's father. It covers the period from pre-war days to his death in 1978.

As the elder daughter, it is her birthright to write about her father which is not based on conjectural writing. The authentic photographs, documents and diaries of her parents are available only to the writer.

This books aims to be of interest to a wider audience desirous of knowing how a young nationalist man's commitment and sacrifices made during his lifetime to bring Independence, Unity and Development in Burma. His ambitious aims and objectives for the best outcome of a newly Independent country were not fully materialized as he faced hardships and difficulties.

Those were dark days and he was unable to speak out the truth. History was not allowed to be revealed but swept under the carpet.

A photo gallery follows each chapter to give readers an insight to events that took place.