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Pu Loi Hom was born on Tuesday, the 19th of February 1935, in the Town of Mong Pawn, Southern Shan States. Pu Loi Hom matriculated from Kambawsa College, Taunggyi, in March 1952, the only student from the Shan State to pass in the First Division that academic year. He enrolled in the University of Rangoon, and won the "Jardine Prize" Silver Medal, for standing highest in the Intermediate of Arts examinations of the University of Rangoon in 1954. During those first two years at the University, Pu Loi Hom also served as the Secretary of the Rangoon University Shan Literary Society. Pu Loi Hom graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1956 and served as an English Tutor for three years.



Pu Loi Tun (a) Sai Aung Tun

Pu Loi Tun was born on Sunday, the 3rd of July 1932 in the town of Hsipaw, Northern Shan State. Pu Loi Tun matriculated from the Hsipaw Government High School in March 1952. He joined the University of Yangon and got his B.A (Honours) in history in 1957 and became a tutor at the Department of History of Yangon University. He went abroad to continue his further studies at the University of Denver, Colorado, U.S.A. where he got his M.A degree, in International Relations, in 1960. He came back to Myanmar to serve as history lecturer at the Department of History in various colleges and universities in Upper Part of Myanmar before he became the Principal of Myitkyina College from 1972 to 1980. Pu Loi Tun is now serving as part-time member of the Myanmar Historical Commission and also as a Patron of Shan Literary and Culture Society in Yangon.

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Moreover, I must mention here, my gratitude to my very close friend Sao Hso Hom, without whose help, I would not be able to publish a book of such ethnic historical value. I would also like to express my thanks to Nang Moe Tip for her most generous financial help to enable me to translate these Shan Legend articles from Shan into English. She willingly promised to contribute all the costs involved in the publication of the book.
Lastly I would like to mention the debt of gratitude to Nang Noom, my wife, who untiringly takes care of me and my health and well-being, catering me with nutritious and tasty food while I am fully engaged in this translation project. I must say that I am very lucky to have such a loving and considerate wife by my side.

Sai Aung Tun

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Foreword

This collection of Shan legends takes the reader into a world of wonder and excitement. Even though they come from different regions, from places as far apart as Hsenwi, Kengtung and Mong Nai, there is a certain unity to them as well as flavor which makes them peculiarly Shan.
The world of these Shan legends is a world of human beings ranging in status from the King to the common man engaged in various occupations such as trading, hunting, fishing and washing clothes for hire. But although different in status and in their means of livelihood, they were bonded together in a common society in which each person's behaviour and actions had an effect on the others. It is on the basis of these social relationships that many of the legends create their stories: the relationship between the powerful and the weak, between the rich and poor, between the conniving and the innocent.
But the legends go beyond human society. The world which the legends create is also a world in which men interact with the natural world about them, with animals and plants, the inhabitants of the natural world, playing a part in the playing out of human lives. And beyond the animals and the plants, the inhabitants of the natural world, are the elements of the supernatural world, nagas, garudas, ghosts and spirits.
The inclusion of elements of the natural and supernatural world in the playing out of human lives makes the world of these Shan legends a richly textured, multidimensional world, a world of wonder and excitement.
Overriding everything in this world of wonder and excitement is the dominant tone of morality which extols the pursuit of the good and various life. The commitment to the moral teachings of the Buddha holds the legends together as it has Shan society through the ages.

Foreword

Enjoy the legends for their wonder and excitement and the insight that they give regarding the Shans. Enjoy also the moral teaching of these Shan legends.
Tun Aung Chain

Foreword

The people of Myanmar, with over a hundred different ethnic groups all have oral narratives of their folklore, folktales, legends and myths. Many of these ancient tales were put down in writing only in recent times.
For Myanmar folktales, one of the foremost collectors of these tales was our former Rangoon University Rector Dr. Htin Aung, a versatile academic and intellectual. He wrote down the Bama (Burmese) folktales in English and published them in various forms from 1947 - some as textbooks, some as Monks Tales, Law Tales and so on.
In Myanmar languages Ludu U Hla of Mandalay, another prolific, energetic writer, journalist and an avid collector of folktales who was able to record, put down in writing and publish at his Ludu Press in Mandalay, about (50) volumes of Myanmar folktales. U Hla was one of the first to record from oral traditions folktales of many of the ethnic groups of Myanmar, including Shan, Mon, Kachin, Chin and others.
Many of the folktales of the ethnic groups of Myanmar can be read only in their languages, or in U Hla's rendering in Myanmar (Bama/Burmese) language.
For Shan folktales, my two close friends of over half a century from our students days together at the University of Rangoon (Yangon) in the 1950s, U Sai Aung Tun and Sao Hso Hom have put down in English, many for the first time. Now that the Shan folktales are about to be printed and published in English, I would like to recommend them for a wide reading public from all over the world, from scholars to readers who want to enjoy journeys to far off, strange and fantastic lands of not only human inhabitants, but of animals and birds, some mythical, and nat spirits of wonderful faery lands forlorn.

Introduction

The Shan ethnic people are scattered all over various parts of Myanmar, but their settlements are concentrated on the Shan plateau, located in the eastern part of Myanmar. They began migrating into this county since the first century A.D and established their Baans or villages which later developed into states or Mong as their population increased. Each Mong was ruled by their traditional Chief called, "SaoHPa". A few of the old states established by the Shans are Mong Mao, Hsenwi, Hsipaw, Mong Mit, Mong Nai, Mong Pai, Mong Pan, Mauk Mai, Yawng Hwe, Lai Hka, Lawk Sawk, Keng Tung, etc. The Shan ethnic people were, since the old days, known to have possessed highly developed culture, customs, traditions and literature of their own. They migrated down to Myanmar bringing their culture and traditional method of wet-rice cultivation which developed into an agricultural economy under the feudal system. They practised ancestor worship during the pre-Buddhist period and later after the Enlightenment of the Buddha and the spread of His teachings the Shan people became Buddhists while they were in Yunnan during the dynastic period of Nan-Chao.
During the illiterate period of history, the Shan ethnic people were known to have settled down in the fertile regions of Hwang-ho and Yangtze in China, keeping their folk-like life style as agriculturists, with the firm belief that they must grow rice to survive. Therefore, "growing rice is the main objective of the Shan people wherever they go and wherever there is a Shan village, there is a rice field."
In the period of illiteracy the Shan ethnic people created a culture of "Story telling". Shan people of the old days loved to tell stories of all sorts to their children. Grandparents, during their free time and leisure would tell stories, legends, folklores, folktales,

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fables, and other mythical stories to their grandchildren. Children also loved to listen to these stories which helped to enrich their knowledge of history, customs, traditions and beliefs. Telling stories is like a cord that binds each other in their relationships and creates the atmosphere of family love and affection towards each other. The Shan stories also give moral lessons to the young people. The tradition of "telling stories to the children" has been passed down from generation to generation up to the literate period and during that period all these stories are recorded on paper, palm leaves, to become historical records, folded parabaiks and books.
In 1939 and 1940, the Chief Education officer of Shan States and Karenni (Kayah) in Taunggyi by the order of the Education Standing Committee of the Council of Federated Shan Chiefs (1939) collected old Shan Legends from various parts of Shan States and published them in two books in the Shan language. Book I consisted of 16 legends and Book II consisted of 18 legends, contributed by various Shan local scholars. These two books were published in 1939 and 1940 respectively by the New Light of Shan States Press in Hsipaw. Most of the contributors of these legends in the two books were local Shan scholars from various parts of Shan States. Without their effort and generous help these two books of Shan legends written in Shan, would not have been successfully published. None of these contributors have survived, but their invaluable good work remains as gem of cultural heritage for the Shan people. Moreover, it also enables the children of today to have a chance to read and learn all these stories, full of moral lesson, which have been passed down to them by their fore-fathers. For that, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to those local Shan scholars for their literary pieces of "Golden Works" by recording their names in this present book. (See their names and legends as listed in End Notes on the last page of this book.)
I had these two rare books in my possession since a long time, and these two books could hardly be found anywhere in the Shan

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State at present. Many friends who are interested in these stories came to borrow them from me and some of them suggested I translate them into English. I remember my class mate, Sao Hso Hom, with whom I very often, read these books when we were at the University of Yangon from 1952 to 1956. I asked if he could help translate them which he willingly agreed. Thus we both planned out a project to translate them into English. I also have a collection of some Shan stories which I have translated and kept in my desk since a long time ago. In this little book we have 52 Shan stories which we think will meet the interest of the young people of this generation.
I would like to thank Daw Penny Tip (Nang Moe Tip) for her financial contribution to our project. Without her generous support this book on Shan Legends may not have been published, and rare records of Shan ethnic tales will be lost forever. For that we tender our deepest appreciation.
We also hope, that this book will meet the interest of many who love stories, and those who would like to learn whatever moral lessons the stories will convey.
Sai Aung Tun
February 7, 2014.