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In reconstructing the Burmese cultural scene, art records are so very rare and Nyo Win Shin has researched, collected and written what he has fathomed and that is why this book can be generally called a sketch profile. Actually, Nyo Win Shin's portrayal of the biographies are deduced from personal encounters, word-of-mouth from elders, re-construction of the profiles by the painters' close friends and relatives, and so these pages are written by a living painter about past master painters in colourful visual presentation which can be likened to an oil 'portrait' painting.

Art Lover / Paw Thit

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NYO WIN SHIN

Nyo Win Shin was born on 6 April 1925 in Taung Twingyi, Magway District. Before WWII broke out, he passed the ninth standard in 1939 from Taung Twingyi national school. He learnt the basic techniques of painting from U Ba Shwe and U San Shein from Taung Twingyi. He studied watercolour and oil painting art under watercolour prince Saya Saung and U San Win. From 1951 to 1985, he served for 34 years at the Education Department as art instructor, Assistant lecturer, Assistant superintendent (Inspection) at State High Schools and Teacher's Training College. As an obligation to the Rangoon University Art Club, he served as part-time art instructor for two years.

He wrote articles on art in many magazines, journals and newspapers. Also wrote two books on International and Burmese artists. He was awarded a diploma for training of children on painting art by the Professor of Yugoslavia Art Academy. He was also Patron of Myanmar Artists Organization (Central). He passed away on 7 October 2013 at his home on Pan Hlaing Road, Sanchaung Township, Yangon. His given name was U Nyan Shein.

MRA HNIN ZI

Mra Hnin Zi is English to Myanmar, Myanmar to English translator. An economics graduate, she served as senior postal officer, assistant general manager and director of foreign Post Division at Myanmar Posts and Telecomms from 1975 to 2000 and later as head of Foreign Relations Division at the Immigration Department from 2000 to 2005. She started her translation career after retiring from government service. She won the "Sarpae Beikman" Translation Award in 2005. She has translated over 30 books including the Myanmar translation of Thant Myint U's River of Lost Footsteps and the English translation of Ma Sandar's The Sixth Enemy and Other Stories.

Portrait in Words : An Artist's Depiction

Panchi lover / ပန်းချီ ရုပ်သူ
(Paw Thit) / (ပေါ်ဘင်)

Recently I went to an exhibition of paintings at the Lawkanat Art Gallery. Among other paintings for sale, I spotted a rare art work. I say it is rare because the painting depicts the Yadanarbon Age. Drawn after the Yadanarbon Age, it is a watercolour painting by Saya Ni meticulously drawn on a skin of silk.

To us Saya Ni is not too well known. Perhaps because we do not have adequate knowledge. In books, magazine articles and records about ancient panchi (Art) masters, descriptions about Saya Ni are rarely seen.

In the Yadanarbon and post-Yadanarbon ages, names such as U Kyar Nyunt, Saya Htar, Saya Chone, Saya Aye, Saya Mya, Saya Pone, "Yahine Zay" Saya Saw, etc., were popular. Among them, personal images and art images of Saya Htar, Saya Pone and Saya Saw have regrettably become obscure and faded without any glimmer.

Looking at Saya Ni's artistic silken painting, I felt saddened by the realization that ancient Burmese painting masters have lost their footprints along the path of Burmese painting history.

Then an individual appeared who doggedly retraced the lost footprints of painting artists and reconstructed their life stories. That individual is the writer of this book Artist Nyan Shein.



(Above) Fig- a , **Chit Mye**, Birth of the Future Buddha (Pen & Ink on Paper) (26.6 x 41.2 cm)
Private Collection

I have known Artist Nyan Shein for over forty years since the time of "Sarpay Beikman" (Burma Translation Society) art exhibitions. His mastery in clear watercolours has been recognized. But I was not closely acquainted with him so I didn't find out that he had the bent to write. I didn't know either that he was a researcher of painting art history.

Quite recently Artist Nyan Shein came to us with stacks of handwritten manuscripts.

'I have unusually written biographies of our master artists. Please have a look'.

'Great ! It has been a long wait for this kind of thing '.

'Don't know whether it's good or not but this is what I have researched, compiled and written. How about reading it and assessing it ?'

I read it and it was good. Good in the sense that besides the characteristics of good biographies such as multiple background information, factual life stories and scholarly reviews, He has made an in-depth fact-finding study of Myanmar master painters and their art.



Fig- b , **Nyan Shein**
"Lat Pan" Road
(Watercolour on Paper)
(12.7 x 19.6 cm)
Private Collection

U Nyan Shein himself is an artist. He had studied under now-departed Art masters, Saya Saung. He also asked and collected relevant facts from people who were close to the masters. That is the good point of U Nyan Shein's clue-searching of the Art masters' identities and biographies.

In reconstructing the Burmese cultural scene, art records are so very rare and U Nyan Shein has researched, collected and written what he has fathomed and that is why this book can be generally called a sketch profile. Actually, U Nyan Shein's portrayal of the biographies are deduced from personal encounters, word-of-mouth from elders, re-construction of the profiles by the painters' close friends and relatives, and so these pages are written by a living painter about past master painters in colourful visual presentation which can be likened to an oil 'portrait' painting.

Up to this day for over fifty years, U Nyan Shein has created and produced a lot of great works and has greatly contributed to the establishment of Burmese cultural arts.

He has also written various articles on painting art and children's painting lessons in Pyin-nya Tazaung, Ludu newspaper, Hanthar-waddy newspaper, Kyaymon newspaper, Doe Kyaung Tha, Tayza Yatesone, Loketha journal and Ngwe-tar-yi magazine under his own name or under pseudonyms Zin Yaw and Nyo Win Shin. By writing this book, I am sure he has contributed greatly to the archives of Burmese cultural arts heritage.