

Japan – Myanmar Relations in Political, Economic and Cultural Contexts During 1930s

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**Abstract**

The primary purpose of this thesis is to investigate the condition of Japan-Myanmar relations in 1900 - 1940 and also the prominent Myanmar people who visited Japan, to know what they investigate and study in Japan, how they did for both countries relations. These persons were Galon U Saw, U Hla and U Nyi Pu, who were a prominent figure in politics, economy and culture field of Myanmar. If we say the relations between the countries, many people think diplomatic affair, political affair, commercial trading. The definition of relations described “the way in which two people or groups of people feel and behave towards each other’ in the Cambridge dictionary. Therefore in my thesis, I try to describe not only the above mention things but also relations between prominent Myanmar people and Japanese people. In 1907 and 1912, U Ottama visited Japan. Since then Myanmar began to take an interest in Japan. He wrote four books on Japan after getting back to Myanmar. These four books gave the Myanmar an opportunity to learn about Japan. In 1935, Galon U Saw and U Nyi Pu came to Japan. Galon U Saw studied the factories, the navy and air force and the educational system of Japan. U Nyi Pu especially studied the film industry of Japan then produced the pictures of Japan Yin Thwe and the documentary film in Japan. In 1936, U Hla came to Japan who studied the weaving and textile factories in Japan. Then he donated the Buddha images in Osaka and Kyoto and bought bicycles, straw mat weaving machines to introduce in Myanmar.

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## Introduction

The current purpose of this thesis is to investigate the relations between Japan and Myanmar during 1930s by studying the experiences of the prominent Myanmar people in Japan. And I will analyse how the effect of their visiting and the change in Japan - Myanmar relations, especially for political, economic, and cultural sectors. U Ottama, Galon U Saw, U Nyi Pu, and U Hla who were the prominent figures from Myanmar visited Japan. Then they wrote books about their experiences and introduce the Japanese advance and success to intimate the Myanmar people.

There were some papers regards with Japan-Myanmar relations which were U Kyaw, Myanmar Political Relation with Japan Prior to the World War II and Dr. Daw Myint Kyi, Myanmar Japan Relation: Toward Friendship. These papers describe the features of Japan-Myanmar relations prior to the Second World War, especially, the economics conditions of Japan and Myanmar relations before 1939. Although some of the Myanmar students wrote the thesis on Japan-Myanmar relations<sup>1</sup> they wrote mostly emphasized about Sayadaw U Ottama, Dr. Ba Maw, the thirty comrades, and the years after 1939. There was a Master of Research thesis concerned with Japan-Myanmar Relations. In several students, notably, Phone Myint Kyaw wrote about Japan – Myanmar Relations (1900-1962).<sup>2</sup> In this thesis Myanmar-Japan relations are presented in three chapters: (1) Relations in the pre-Thirty Comrades Era, (2) Relations between 1942 and 1948, and (3) Relations between 1948 and 1962. The author discusses on the first Japanese who come to settle in Myanmar in the 16th century, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Phyu Su Aung, *The Corporation Movements of Myanmar Patriotic Leaders and Alliances During World War II (1939-1945)*, History Department, MA, Yangon University, 1992

- Aye Min Than, *Thirty Comrades*, History Department, MA, Yangon University, 1998

- Thin Thin Aye, *Myanmar-Japan Relations (1939-1945)*, International Relations, MA, Yangon University, 1997

- Khin Ma Ma Myo, *Japan-Myanmar Relations Since 1988*, International Relations Department, MA, Yangon University, 1998

<sup>2</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations (1900-1962)*, History Department, Master of Research, Mandalay University, 2006



various books written in Japanese on Myanmar, published between 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The thesis goes on to describe how Sayadaw U Oattam's visit to Japan in 1907 had opened the eyes of Myanmar and roused their interest in Japan. The thesis gives an account of how the efforts of Bogyoke Aung San and other Myanmar nationalist leaders to get external help to fight for Myanmar's independence had led to the emergence of the "Thirty Comrades" with Japanese help. It also describes how the Japanese armies had helped Myanmar drive out the British from their soil and how, as allies, the Japanese had been very cautious in their treatment of the Myanmar people. Especially, he wrote about the period of the Japanese occupation of Myanmar.

Another notably, Dorothy Hess, GUYOT wrote about the political impact of the Japanese occupation of Burma. In this thesis she presented in four parts: (1) Before the War, (2) Anarchy and Nationalism, (3) Government, and (4) Political Mobilization. The author discusses the nature of the prewar politics of Myanmar, the activities of the freedom bloc of Myanmar politicians, characteristics of the Thirty Comrades, the sketch of Dr. Ba Maw, Thakin Aung San, and Col. Suzuki. The thesis goes on to describe how the Japanese conquest of Myanmar, Japanese administration in Yangon, the administrative activity of Col. Suzuki. There also describes an account of how Japanese rule in Myanmar during the three-year, the role of the Burma Army, and changes of the Myanmar politics after the war.

Moreover, some of my secondary reference books included relevant content with Japan-Myanmar relations. Several scholars, notably John F. Cady, and Michael W. Charney wrote a history of modern Burma. Especially they describe the traditional institutions of old Myanmar, political, social, and cultural, the thirty comrades, the ministry of U Saw (1940-1941), Dr. Ba Maw's government and its program, and the Japanese occupation period. John S. Furnivall wrote as an economic analyst and a critic of contemporaneous British policy and John Leroy Christian wrote an account of Myanmar as it was at the time of the Japanese invasion. They didn't describe detail about the relationship between Japan and Myanmar during the 1930s.

Also any other students neither attempted to write the two countries' relations based on the prominent person's travel diaries.

Therefore, I will focus on the relations between Japan and Myanmar in the 1930s by study the visiting experiences of the prominent Myanmar people in Japan. In my thesis I will present in four chapters: (1) Japan-Myanmar Relations in 1900-1940 (2) Study of Myanmar's prominent politician Galon U Saw's experiences in Japan in 1935 (3) Japan Yin Thwe: A Film directed by U Nyi Pu — Study of Myanmar's prominent actor U Nyi Pu Experiences in Japan in 1935 and (4) Study of Myanmar's prominent trader U Hla's experiences in Japan in 1936.

Since the early colonial period, there had been Japanese national who came to live in Myanmar. At first, there had been very few or no reason for Myanmar to have regular relations with the Japanese. But changes in world affairs had created conditions that brought Myanmar and Japan to be in touch with each other. Myanmar nationalist leaders began to look east toward Japan when Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. After the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, U Ottama became interested in the victory of Japan. Then he went to Japan in 1907 and 1912. After U Ottama returned from Japan, he informed Myanmar people of Japan's ongoing industrialization and urged them to follow Japan's example of self-development by writing the articles and books. And also some of Myanmar newspapers, journals and magazines carried the articles about Japan from 1911 to 1935. These articles were on Japanese cotton industries, about Japanese ministry, Japanese Government buying the war ship from England and Japan, and Textile Factory such as. These articles gave full support to the victory of Japan in Southeast Asia.

After U Ottama, the prominent three persons from Myanmar came to Japan in 1935 and 1936. They were Galon U Saw the prominent politician, U Nyi Pu the famous actor, and U Hla the prominent textile trader. These persons were more interested in Japan after they read these articles. Therefore, they may have decided to travel to Japan to study advance technology and

lifestyle. I will describe in my thesis detail about how they visited Japan and studied the advanced technologies, the enterprises, the education system, and the administrative systems. Also, I will mention how they stimulated and urged Myanmar people to follow Japan's example of self-development when returned to Myanmar. The purpose of the thesis is an attempt to know the good relations of the past, to maintain good relations in the future between the two countries.

The primary source material to write this thesis was mostly obtained from the National Library of Myanmar and Professor Dr. U Kyaw Win (Chairman of National Library of Myanmar). The primary sources I uses are U Saw, Japan Lan Nyunt, U Hla, Myanmar – Japan Kyi Pwar Yay Mattan, A1 yoke sone News, Kyi Pwar Yay Magazine, Thuriya Newspaper, and Magazine. The secondary source material was mostly obtained from the library of the History Department (University of Maubin), Library of the Universities' Historical Research Centre, Universities' Central Library, University of Yangon Library and National Archive. In my thesis include interviewing the relative person of U Hla and U Nyi Pu. For the interview sector, I tried to interview with the A1 family and U Hla's relatives from Shwedaung.

## Chapter I

### Japan-Myanmar Relations in 1900–1940

#### Historical Background

Myanmar and Japan are two countries which are far away from each other. Myanmar's historical sources such as U Kala Chronicle and the Glass Palace Chronicles contained no information about Japan. On the other hand, descriptions about Myanmar have been found in Japanese accounts since 1600 AD. A book on contemporary world geography was published in Beijing (Peking) by an Italian man named Matteo Ricci and copies of this book reached Japan. The book contains descriptions of Myanmar. It said that the Ayeyarwady delta region was a huge water-logged area and that four great rivers started in the north and flowed into the Bay of Bengal. The book was translated into Japanese in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by a Japanese cartographer and was published in 1796 with supplementations. The names of some of the towns in Myanmar were wrongly spelt in the book. For instance, Bago was mentioned as Hegou. Notwithstanding its shortcomings, the book showed that the Japanese had known about Myanmar since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The name 'Byuruman' was first used for the people living on the plains of the Ayeyarwady basin by Mitsukuri Shogo in his book *Sinsei Yochi-Zenzu* published in 1844. The same Japanese name for Myanmar was also used by Nagai Soku in his book *Douban Bankoku-Yochi Hozu* published in 1846 and by Suzuki Shigetoki in his book *Koutei Yochi-houenzu* published in 1851. However, the name was changed to 'Biruman' by Japanese writer Mitsukuri Genpo. The change was based on the method of transliteration of sounds devised by the

American Christian missionary Richard Quarterman Way.<sup>3</sup> Since then the Japanese have called Myanmar by the name Biruma.

The beginning of the Japanese influence and prestige in Asia is generally dated from the battle of Tsushima Straits in 1905, when the Japanese navy decimated the Russian fleet.<sup>4</sup> Myanmar newspapers like ‘The Thandawsint Daily (The Herald Daily)’, ‘The Yangon Gazette Daily’, ‘The Yangon Time Daily’, and ‘The Hanthawady Daily’ described the news of the Japanese victory with great joy under big bold front page headlines. Since then Myanmar nationalists were greatly inspired by Japan. Some people from Myanmar like the pro-Japan U Ottama, U Saw, etc. even came to believe that only with Japan’s help would Myanmar be able to free itself from colonial rule.<sup>5</sup>

An especially important figure in the early stages of the Myanmar nationalist movement was the Buddhist monk, Sayadaw U Ottama (1879–1939). U Ottama was an Arakanese monk who had gone to India to teach Pali and Buddhism at the National College and was eventually drawn into the Indian National Congress, which spearheaded Indian anti-colonial efforts. Owing to his experience in India, U Ottama became familiar with modern political campaigning. He soon left India and travelled to various countries, including China, Korea, Vietnam, the United States, Britain, and Japan.<sup>6</sup>

From 1907 to 1911, U Ottama lived in Japan. During this stay, he observed Japanese contemporary conditions relative to Myanmar and was especially impressed by the

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<sup>3</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations (1900-1962)*, p. 4 (A thesis for the degree of Master of Research, University of Mandalay, 2006) (Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*)

<sup>4</sup> Cady, John. *A History of Modern Burma*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1958, p. 185 (Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*)

<sup>5</sup> U Kyaw, “Myanmar Political Relation with Japan Prior to the World War II”, Magway University, *Annual Magazine*, 1975, p. 58 (U Kyaw, “Myanmar Political Relation with Japan”)

<sup>6</sup> Michael W. Charney, *A History of Modern Burma*, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 32 (Michael, *A History of Modern Burma*)

modernization.<sup>7</sup> He also appreciated Japanese discipline and national unity. After returning to Myanmar in 1911, he published books on Japan's development. Both in his writings and in speeches (re-circulated in the vernacular press) given during his tours of the colony, U Ottama informed Myanmar people of Japan's ongoing industrialization and urged them to follow the country's example of self-development.<sup>8</sup>

Another person from Myanmar who went to Japan after U Ottama was Tao An~shan, the sawbwa<sup>9</sup> of Kan-ngai. The Kan-ngai sawbwa went to Japan to study Buddhism as practiced by the Japanese. While in Japan, he made friends which included a member of the Japanese Diet Mr Oye, Colonel Hanasaka, and two ladies from Yunnan. The Kan-ngai Sawbwa was a visionary leader who wanted to develop his state. With this intention in mind, he invited Mr Oye and Colonel Hanasaka to come and teach the Japanese language to his people. In September 1907, the Kan-ngai Sawbwa returned to Myanmar. Sawbwa of Kan-ngai was one of the Myanmar leaders who was keen on pursuing friendly relations with Japan in order to help his own nation develop and prosper. Therefore, the British considered him as a man of foresight.

Then in 1908 Kan-ngai Sawbwa took his two daughters, together with two female relatives, to Japan to enrol them in a girls' school. After the visit, Kan-ngai Sawbwa was so inspired and motivated to introduce reforms in his own state that he started making preparations to send more and more students to study in Japan. He also hired two Japanese advisers for his state, one to advise in financial affairs, with a yearly salary of 10,000 yen, and the other as administrative adviser with an 8,000 yen salary per year. He also employed a 21-year-old

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<sup>7</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 58

<sup>8</sup> Michael, *A History of Modern Burma*, p. 32

<sup>9</sup> The hereditary ruler of a Shan state of Myanmar

English woman under a three-year contract to teach his two daughters. Her salary was 70 yen per month, plus accommodation and meals.<sup>10</sup>

In 1912, U Ottama visited Japan again. While in Japan, the Sayadaw resided in Nagoya. The 'Nagoya Shinbum Daily' of 7 December, 1913 carried the news of the Sayadaw, stating that the purpose of his visit was to study how a small Asiatic state like Japan won against the mighty and huge Russian empire.<sup>11</sup>

U Ottama wrote four books on Japan after getting back to Myanmar. These were:

- (1) Gapan Main Ma (Japanese Women) (1912)
- (2) Gapan Ponpyinmya (Japanese Tales) (1914)
- (3) Gapan Youck Kyar (Japanese Men) (1918)
- (4) Gapan Lumyo (Japanese People) (1921)<sup>12</sup>

These four books gave the Myanmar people an opportunity to learn something about the Japanese. The Sayadaw had two motives in writing these books. The first was to acquaint Myanmar with the development and modernization of Japan and the second was to show how much the youth of Japan loved their emperor. Additionally, he wrote the book *China and Japan* in 1938 during the Second Sino-Japanese War. When Japan's aggression in China intensified, U Ottama openly supported the Japanese. He accused China of starting the war with Japan. However, other Myanmar political leaders like Thakin Than Tun, Thakin Mya, and Thakin Nu were against the Japanese aggressors. Through his book, U Ottama established his stand on Japanese aggression in China and depicted China as a war-monger.<sup>13</sup>

U Ottama wanted the youth of Myanmar to follow the example of Japan and build Myanmar into a modern developed country, to be loyal and faithful to their country, and to

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<sup>10</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 8

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p. 9

<sup>12</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 65

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, p. 59

fight for freedom from colonial rule. Since the end of 1912 and the beginning of 1913, young Myanmar women had been going to Japan to study. These women included Ma Thawt (25 years) of Pyay and Ein Soe Ma (17 years) of Sittwe. Both of them were sent to the Higher Technical School for Girls to study domestic science. Ma Thawt was the wife of Maung Soe Thein, a young wealthy man of Yenangyaung. Ein Soe Ma was the sister of U Ottama. Both of them had passed only the fourth grade in the vernacular education.<sup>14</sup>

## Political Relations

Politically, the first indication of Myanmar's interest in Japan was in connection with the victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. By defeating Russia on land and sea, Japan emerged as 'the strong man' in Asia. The Russo-Japanese war played an important role in fuelling nationalism in Myanmar.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Japan politically entered Myanmar by opening the Japanese Vice-Consulate in Yangon. The Vice-Consulate carried out both propaganda work as well as trading in Myanmar. When the Japanese government announced that a consulate would be opened at No.12, Phayre Street (Pansodan Street) in the Durbar Building and that the first vice-consular officer would be Mr T Fuchi, the British had to agree to it. The opening of the Japanese Vice-Consulate in Yangon was announced in the Indian Government Gazette on 17 April 1920.<sup>16</sup>

After the opening of the Japanese Vice-Consulate, many Japanese officers and the Japanese vice-consul began to travel extensively to upper Myanmar and Yangon. Although they claimed that the purpose of their visits was to study the natural environment of these places, it is likely that they were sent for confidential political and intelligence purposes. These visits

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<sup>14</sup> Kanbawza Myint Lwin, *Great Myanmar Chronicle for 200 years*, Yangon, Mae Gonyi Publishing House, 1969, p. 186 (Myint Lwin, *Great Myanmar Chronicle*)

*Thuriya Newspaper*, 18 December 1913

<sup>15</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 58

<sup>16</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 11



also made it clear that the Japanese were interested in Myanmar's natural resources such as the world-famous rubies and sapphires from Mogok and the oil from middle Myanmar.<sup>17</sup> Japan wanted to establish itself as a dominant power in Southeast Asia and getting access to the natural resources of Myanmar was part of this plan. Japan's goal was to establish itself as a dominant power in Southeast Asia; getting access to the rich natural resources of Myanmar was part of the plan. In order to achieve this, Japan needed to have political influence in Myanmar.<sup>18</sup> Myanmar's struggle for independence created the perfect opportunity for Japan. It gave funding to pro-Japan Myanmar politicians such as U Saw, Dr. Ba Maw, Thakin Mya, and Dr. Thein Maung after 1935 and thus became heavily involved in Myanmar's political affairs.<sup>19</sup>

On 26 May 1936, the Japanese Vice-Consul Mr. Kuga said that Japan had increased military spending for the salvation of Myanmar. After that, Japan's anti-British propaganda considerably increased. Those who were assisting Mr. Kuga in this work were Ohia, Furuhata, and Utagawa. The pro-Japan Myanmar political leaders prior to the era of the Thirty Comrade<sup>20</sup> were U Saw, Dr. Ba Maw, Thakin Mya, and Dr. Thein Maung. The Japanese Vice-Consulate handed to Thakin Mya a monthly sum of Rs. 600 to be used for the Dobama Asiayone

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<sup>17</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 14

<sup>18</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 69

<sup>19</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 96

<sup>20</sup> The Thirty Comrades constituted the embryo of the modern Burmese army called the Burma Independence Army (BIA) which was formed to fight for independence from the British. In August 1940, Thakin Aung San and Thakin Hla Myaing were sent by the Dobama Asiayone to Amoy with the intention to get assistance from the Chinese Communists. In Amoy, they tried to contact the Chinese Communist Party but were unable to do so; instead, they were arrested by the Kempeitai 憲兵隊 (Japanese military police). In November 1940, Thakin Aung San flew to Tokyo where he met Colonel Keiji Suzuki, who explained his plan to give Japanese military training to a group of young Myanmar fighters and to support the independence struggle. A group of Burmese nationalists were recruited by Thakin Aung San after he returned to Myanmar from Japan in February 1941, who found among the Thakins 29 recruits, soon to be known, along with Aung San as the Thirty Comrades. He secreted them out of Myanmar in four batches between March and July 1941, the thirty young Myanmar men (the Thirty Comrades) received military training by Japanese officers of the Minami Kikan on the island of Hainan, China. When the Japanese invaded Myanmar in late 1941 and early 1942, the Thirty Comrades marched with the Japanese to expel the British.

headquarters. Dr. Ba Maw and Dr. Thein Maung also received Rs. 500 every month. This money actually came from the Watanabe Organ, a secret Japanese military intelligence agency. In explaining the expenditure of the Japanese funds, Thakin Mya said that the money was used for the funeral of Bo Aung Kyaw who was killed in student riots. A source revealed that the Japanese Vice-Consul Kaneko gave financial support to the Third Student Boycott of Myanmar which occurred on 20 December 1938.<sup>21</sup>

While trying to penetrate Myanmar with different excuses, the Japanese also tried to indoctrinate patriotic Myanmar youth. They offered to teach the youth of Myanmar Japanese language and other subjects at the expense of the Japanese government. This was a challenging prospect for Myanmar students because they would have to learn Japanese through the medium of Chinese, which would require them to learn two languages at the same time. Despite the difficulties, two young boys from Myanmar, named Maung Kay Lin and Maung Kyaw Sein, arrived in Tokyo to study in 1938. They were accommodated in the International Student's House for overseas students and their bills were paid out of the Japanese government's scholarship money. They were first taught the Japanese language and were enrolled in April in the Government Technical College after which the Japanese government decided to give each of them a stipend of 200 yen per month.<sup>22</sup>

The Japan-Myanmar Association that had been formed in 1933 was expanded on 25 April 1939 in Yangon. This association worked with the Japanese Vice-Consulate to carry out propaganda and intelligence work, not to promote trade and commerce. The Myanmar Nippon Trade Association was formed with the help of political monks namely U Muneind and U Taezeinda of Yenangyang, and some other pro-Japan propagandists on 17 April 1939. The leader of this Myanmar Nippon Trade Association was T Ohba. He supplied funds to the

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<sup>21</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", pp. 61- 62

<sup>22</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 22

newspapers owned by Myanmar people and pro-Japan monks to conduct pro-Japan propaganda work.<sup>23</sup>

Then on 26 May 1939, the Vice-Consulate in Yangon reported to the Tokyo government that a secret society with a strength of 60 members had been formed with Anglo-Indians, Anglo-Myanmar, Indian, Myanmar, and Chinese members. It was said that the Japanese had spent about Rs. 85,000 for pro-Japan propaganda work in Myanmar. The government in Tokyo also gave the Vice-Consulate in Yangon a sum of Rs. 1,000 every month to do propaganda and intelligence work in Myanmar. It was also reported that the Japanese Vice-Consul Kaneko had given U Saw, Minister of Forest in the Myanmar government, Rs. 300,000 to be used in his election campaign for the position of Prime Minister. However, U Saw himself stated that he received only Rs. 100,000.<sup>24</sup>

The Myanmar Nippon Trade Association were prepared to back Dr. Ba Maw. On October 22, 1939, the leaders of the Japanese community—Mr. Kuga, Dr. T. Suzuki, Mr. T. Ohba and Utagawa—had a private interview with Dr. Ba Maw at his house. Mr. Kato, a leader of Japanese community in Singapore, also attended this meeting and he stated that Japan would remain neutral in the European war. Then Mr. T. Ohba arranged to publish a Japanese propaganda newspaper in Myanmar language, and he also proposed to select an educated young person from Myanmar who would be sent to Japan for the purpose of broadcasting in English and Myanmar.<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Ba Maw was born in 1893, at Maubin in Ayawaddy Division. He passed the entrance examination from the St. Paul's School in Yangon and then graduated from the Yangon Collage. After that, he sailed to England to continue his education at the Cambridge

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<sup>23</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 61

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

University. He received the degree of Doctor of Literature from the Bordeaux University in France. On his return home, he started his professional career as a lawyer. Throughout the 1930-1931 rebellion periods, he defended many of the prisoners who were brought before the court for trial. He achieved prominence on 16 November 1931, when he defended the rebel leader Saya San. Saya San had started a tax revolt in Myanmar in December 1930 which quickly grew into a more widespread rebellion against the British rule. In 1937, when Dr. Ba Maw was serving as the first premier, he, with the consent of the British Government, secured the gradual release of all rebellion prisoners.<sup>26</sup> Dr. Ba Maw, who wanted to strengthen his league, founded the Sin-ye-thar party (Poor Man's Party) in 1936. 1 April, 1937, he led the Nyunt Paung government (coalition government) and served as the first premier.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. Thein Maung was born in 1890, at Pyay District, Paungdale Township. He studied at the Paungdale government school and Yangon government high school. He passed the entrance examination in Yangon and then graduated from the Yangon College. After that, he went to England to continue his education at the Cambridge University and earned the LLB degree. When he returned home, he started his professional career as a lawyer in 1913. He served as the counsellor at the YMBA association and then entered the political world in 1918. He went to England as the delegate of Myanmar (Phay, Pu, Maung) in 1920–21. Dr. Thein Maung served as a member of the National Education board in 1922, a member of the Yangon Municipal in 1922–1931, the Mayor of the Yangon Division in 1931, a member of the

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<sup>26</sup> Amar Lahiri, "Prime Minister Ba Maw of Burma Contemporary Japan", *A Review of East Asiatic Affairs*, Vol. XII, December 1943, Foreign Association of Japan, Tokyo, pp.1611-1615 (Amar, "Prime Minister Ba Maw")

<sup>27</sup> Mg Zayya, *Myanmar Lu Kyaw 100*, Vol-1, Yangon, Unity press, 2012, p. 118 (Mg Zayya, *Myanmar Lu Kyaw 100*, Vol-1)

legislative council of India in 1935, Minister of Education in 1936–1937, and Attorney General in 1938–1942.<sup>28</sup>

Thakin Mya was born in 1897, at Pyay District, Htone Bo Township. He studied at the Htone Bo government school. He passed the entrance examination in Tharyarwaddy Township in 1915 and then received the LLB degree from Yangon College. In 1920, he entered the political world by taking up the position of the vice-chairman at the student boycott council. Thakin Mya served as the vice-chairman at the Dobama Asiayone in 1935. In 1940, the Pyithu Ayaydawpon Party emerged as the branch of the Dobama Asiayone. Thakin Mya was the leader of the group and Thakin Aung San became the foreign relations leader. It was an underground revolutionary movement.<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting to study the extent and depth of Japanese penetration into Myanmar before the Thirty Comrades emergence. U Saw's Myo Chit Party (the Patriotic Party) in 1938 and Thakin Mya's the Pyithu Ayaydawpon in 1940 were also thought to be under Japanese influence. Out of so many anti-British organizations, Pyithu Ayaydawpon was the only party outlawed by the British government in Myanmar as a result of being viewed as a serious political threat to the colonial regime. Even when Thakin Aung San went to Japan trying to get Japanese help for Myanmar's independence, he often contacted the Pyithu Ayaydawpon Party in Myanmar for consultations. This demonstrated the degree of Japanese influence on Myanmar nationalist leaders before the era of the Thirty Comrades.

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<sup>28</sup> Mg Zayya, *Myanmar Lu Kyaw 100*, Vol-2, Yangon, Unity press, 2012, pp. 278-280 (Mg Zayya, *Myanmar Lu Kyaw 100*, Vol-2)

<sup>29</sup> Department of Historical Research, *The Famous persons from the modern flow*, Nay Pyi Taw, Department of Historical Research press, 2011, pp. 432-433, (*The Famous persons from the modern flow*)

## Economic Relations

The first contact of Japan with Myanmar seems to have been Japan's import of agricultural products from Myanmar in 1899.<sup>30</sup> After the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese war in 1905, Japan became a trade rival of England in Southeast Asia including Myanmar. Economically, Myanmar-Japan trade relations began after the agreement of the Trade Convention between the governments of Japan and British-India in 1905. At that time, Japan was interested in importing Myanmar raw cotton and rice and exporting cotton textiles and other manufactures to Myanmar.<sup>31</sup>

In 1909, Japanese imports into Myanmar were valued at 6.9 million rupees and peaked at 31.1 million rupees by 1926. Exports to Japan in 1909 were valued at 2.7 million rupees (3% of total export) peaking at 56 million rupees in 1927 (14% of total exports).<sup>32</sup> See the following tables:

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<sup>30</sup> Ohno, Toru, "A brief Account of Burmese studies in Japan, (Basic Studies on Their Cultural and Social Structure)", *Burma and Japan*, Tokyo, Edited by The Burma Research Group, Toyo Publishing and Printing Co., Ltd, 1987, p. 33 (Ohno, "A brief Account of Burmese studies in Japan")

<sup>31</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 69

<sup>32</sup> Ryan Hartley, "Japan's Early Twentieth Century Entry into Burma and British Perceptions (and Misperceptions) of the Friend that Became a Foe, 1903-1943: A Case Study in the Global Blindsight", *The Journal of Burma Studies*, Volume-22, No-1, 2018, p. 85 (Ryan, "Japan's Early Twentieth Century Entry into Burma")

### Imports into Myanmar from Japan 1909-1935 <sup>33</sup>

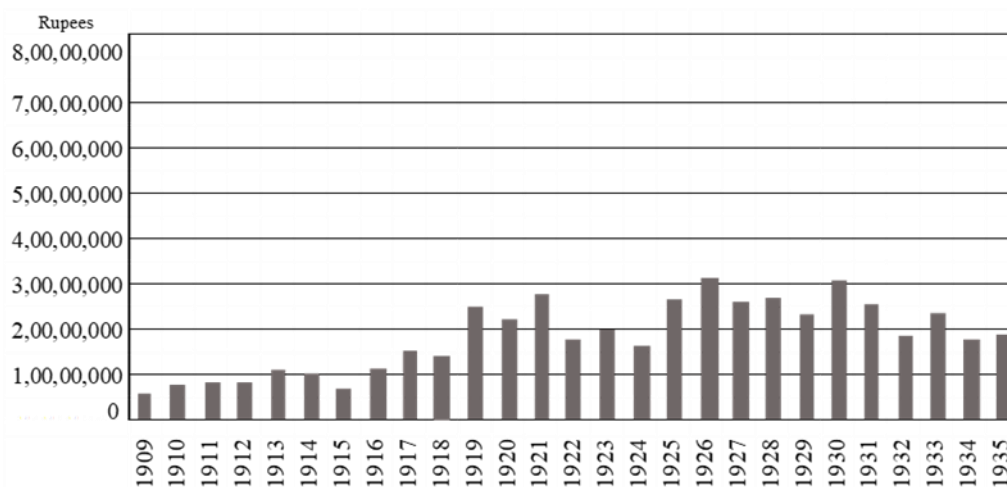


Figure - 1

### Export from Myanmar to Japan 1909-1935 <sup>34</sup>

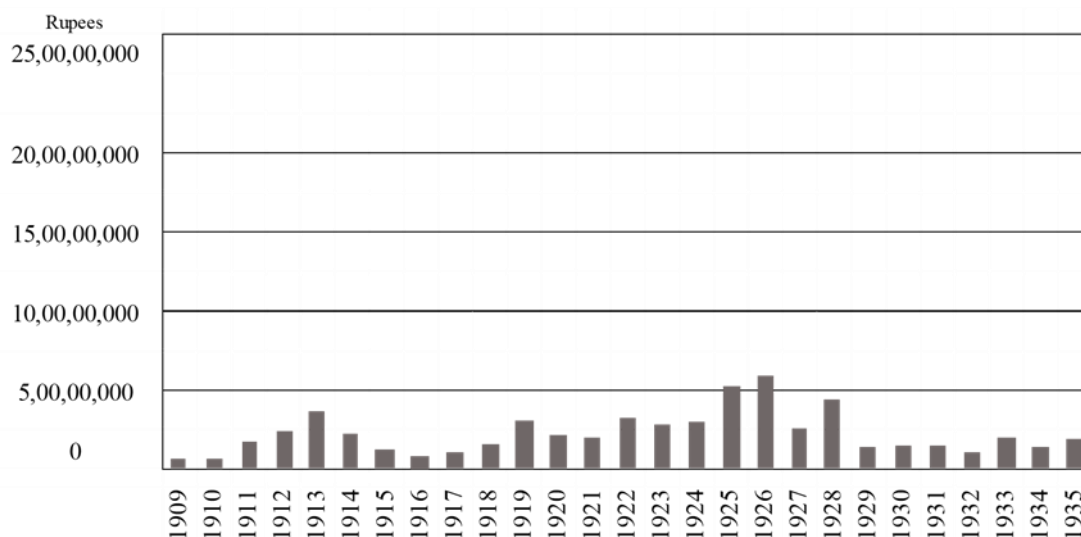


Figure - 2

Between 1910 and 1915, the Japanese had established their offices and companies in Myanmar. Some of these well-known companies' names were:

1. Dr. T. Statou, Dental Office, No. 40, Sulae Pagoda Road, Yangon
2. Dr. Minoa Clinic, No.8, Sulae Pagoda Road, Yangon
3. Burma Nippon Kaisha, No. 264, Dalhousie Street, Yangon

<sup>33</sup> Ryan, "Japan's Early Twentieth Century Entry into Burma", p. 85

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, p. 86

4. Asahi Photo, No. 23, Merchant Road, Yangon
5. Burma Nippon Brother Co., No. 14, 32 street, Yangon
6. Nippon Baiyaku Kaisha Lts, No. 75, Mago Road, Yangon
7. Hata Co., No. 475, Dalhousie Street, Yangon

In general, some of these Japanese trading companies imported medicines, silk, toys, shoes, and rain-coats to Myanmar.<sup>35</sup> In 1918, Japan Cotton Trading Company and Mitsui Bussan Company began their economic activities simultaneously in Myanmar for the first time. Both of them had agents in Yangon purchasing raw cotton, rice, and millets to be exported to Japan. Commercial relations between Japan and Myanmar were concentrated on Japan's export of textiles to Myanmar and import of rice, raw cotton, and mineral products from Myanmar.<sup>36</sup>

Rice import from Myanmar statistics from 1900 to 1929 are as follows:

### **Japanese Rice Import from Myanmar 1900 – 1929**<sup>37</sup>

Year	Average (Yen)	Annual (Tons)
1900-1904	14472	3251
1905-1909	14085	3047
1910-1914	10891	2142
1915-1919	6966	—
1920-1924	11291	—
1925-1929	7642	—

**Figure - 3**

<sup>35</sup> Ryan, "Japan's Early Twentieth Century Entry into Burma", p. 52

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, p. 33

<sup>37</sup> William L. Swan, *Japan's Economic Relations with Thailand, The Rise to "Top Trader" 1875-1942*, Thailand, White Lotus Press, p. 29 (William, *Japan's Economic Relations with Thailand*)



The majority of Myanmar rice went to India and Japan. At the peak in 1926, Japan singularly consumed 15% of Myanmar's rice exports, which was more than any other country. See the following table:<sup>38</sup>

### Top Five Exported Articles from Myanmar to Japan 1909 – 1935<sup>39</sup>

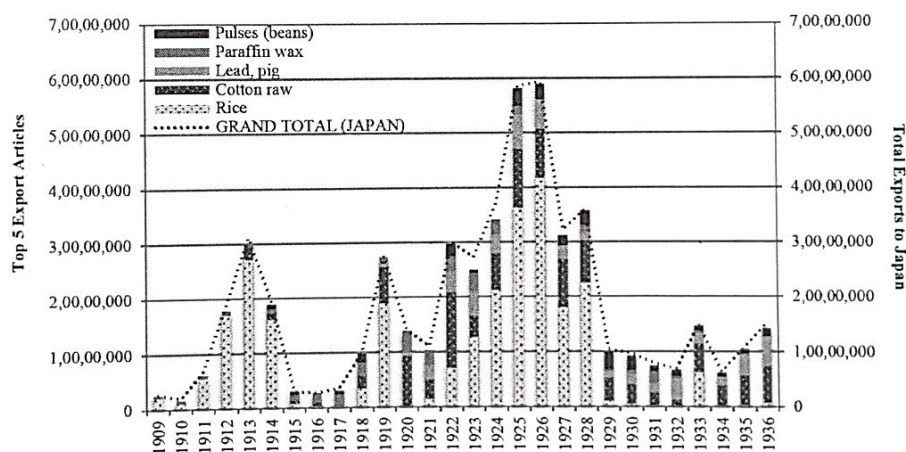


Figure - 4

After the British reluctantly accepted the opening of the Japanese Vice-Consulate in Myanmar in 1920, trading between Japan and Myanmar grew steadily.<sup>40</sup> It was also the time when Japan was actively engaged in commercial expansion in Manchuria and China. Gradually, Japan came to know about the rich natural resources of Myanmar and commercial interests of Japanese manufactures were aroused.<sup>41</sup>

In 1909, 77% of Japanese imports into Myanmar comprised silk, while cotton was zero. After the opening of the Vice Consulate, this situation had reversed, with Japanese imports into Myanmar comprising 29% of cotton compared to 17% of silk in 1923. Import trade, while half

<sup>38</sup> Ryan, "Japan's Early Twentieth Century Entry into Burma", p. 88

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, p. 89

<sup>40</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 11

<sup>41</sup> Dr. Daw Myint Kyi, "Myanmar Japan Relations: Toward Friendship", *The First (MJC) Forum*, Yangon, 2004, p. 54 (Daw Myint Kyi, "Myanmar Japan Relations")

the value of exports, was strongly driven by Japanese textile, particularly cotton.<sup>42</sup> See the following table:

### Top Five Imported Articles into Myanmar 1909 – 1935<sup>43</sup>

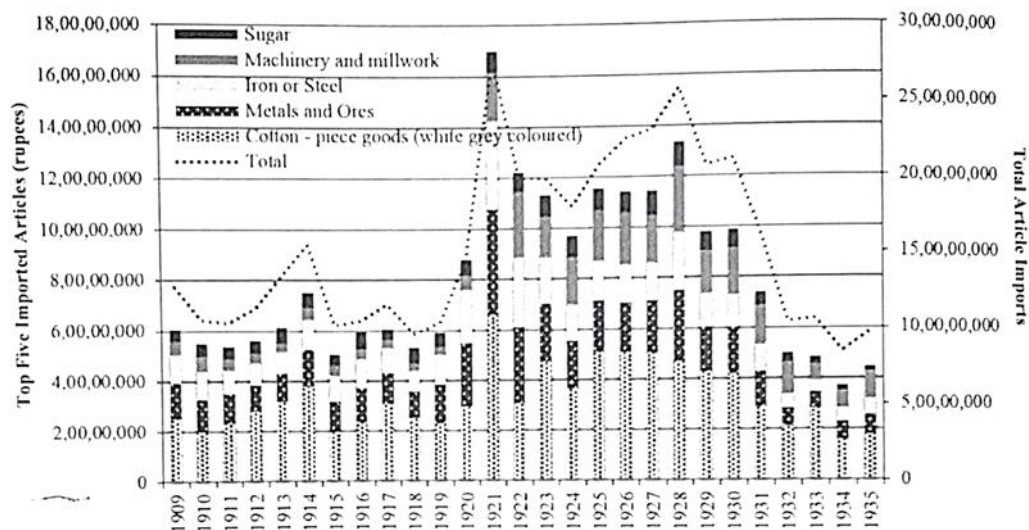


Figure - 5

The Vice-Consulate at Yangon was under the control of the Japanese Consulate at New Delhi in India. Even at that time, the British kept a suspicious eye on Japanese moves and designs. The British government officials advised their foreign office that the Japanese Vice-Consulate at Yangon, after it had opened, should also be closely watched and its activities were to be restricted if required. However, the two-way trade between Japan and Myanmar was steadily growing.<sup>44</sup> It was likely that there were both economic and political motives behind the opening of the Japanese Vice-Consulate in Yangon. The establishment of the Vice-Consulate was soon followed by the opening of Japanese guesthouses, shops, and restaurants in Yangon.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Ryan, "Japan's Early Twentieth Century Entry into Burma", p. 90

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*

<sup>44</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 10

<sup>45</sup> Daw Myint Kyi, "Myanmar Japan Relations", p. 54

Although Japan-Myanmar trade relations began after the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in 1905, the trade statistics did not show any distinctive characteristics until 1936. The trade volumes peaked in 1937. Before the war outbreak with China, Japan had taken very little economic interest in Myanmar probably due to the fact that the Myanmar market was comparatively small.<sup>46</sup> When the war started in 1937, China started boycotting Japanese goods, following which Japanese goods began flooding the Myanmar market. The balance of trade between the two countries was in Myanmar's favour in 1937 by when Myanmar had become the third-largest trading partner of Japan. Myanmar's export to Japan, which was 4% of its total foreign exports in 1930, had increased to 10% by 1937. In the same year, Myanmar's imports from Japan were 8.6% of the total imports.<sup>47</sup> In its trade with Myanmar, Japan began to import in bulk rice, cotton, zinc, and exported tinned fish, rubber, cotton textiles, and clothes. The commercial relations between Japan and Myanmar had increased from 1935 to the 1940s as follows:

#### **Exports from Myanmar**<sup>48</sup>

	<b>1935-36</b>	<b>1936-37</b>	<b>1937-38</b>	<b>1938-39</b>	<b>1939-40</b>
Rice (ton)	8123	47949	5769	100	129622
Raw cotton (bales)	67213	92228	28335	53790	49252
Lead (owt)	827000	963767	930619	1184431	925243
Zinc (owt)	237656	433596	252180	99976	209372

**Figure - 6**

<sup>46</sup> Ohno, "A brief Account of Burmese studies in Japan", p. 34

<sup>47</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 19

<sup>48</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 53

### Imports from Japan<sup>49</sup>

	1935-36	1936-37	1937-38	1938-39	1939-40
Tinned fish(owt)	48395	69870	66315	38115	36071
Rubber Manufacture (No.)	85719	58211	46533	52505	29264
Cotton piece (yard)	48783224	35882781	31364874	26367306	30404150

**Figure - 7**

The following table shows the value of trade between Japan and Myanmar from 1936 to 1939. It shows that the value of Myanmar's imports from Japan always exceeded its exports to Japan.<sup>50</sup>

Year	Exports to Japan	Imports to Japan
1936-37	Rs. 22.2 million	Rs. 23.9 million
1937-38	Rs. 11.4 million	Rs. 20.9 million
1938	Rs. 6.7 million	Rs. 7.0 million
1939	Rs. 2.9 million	Rs. 4.7 million
Total	Rs. 43.2 million	Rs. 56.5 million

**Figure - 8**

<sup>49</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 53

<sup>50</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 20

When the influx of Japanese goods into Myanmar threatened this favourable balance, the British government on 25 March 1937 set a limit on Japanese imports into Myanmar. An agreement was signed, according to which Japan was to buy 70,000 viss (962,500 kg) of raw cotton from Myanmar, who would in turn buy 4.2 million yards of fabric from Japan.<sup>51</sup>

The value of Myanmar's textile imports from Japan fell from Rs. 4.5 million in 1937 to Rs. 3.7 million in 1938. Likewise, exports of pulses, paddy, and raw cotton from Myanmar to Japan had fallen considerably since late 1938. Japanese purchase of pulses also fell considerably after 1937. The decline in trade between the two countries adversely affected the political and economic stability of Myanmar. On the other hand, as Japan came to possess more and more powerful manufacturing plants and factories, it sought to sell its textiles freely and did not approve of the trade restrictions in Myanmar. Japan also wanted unlimited supply of raw materials like cotton from Myanmar to feed its textile factories. This was one of the conditions that led Japan to adopt the 'East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere Policy'.<sup>52</sup>

The Japanese economy was aimed toward self-sufficiency in food supplies, and from the 1930s it imported only a few thousand tons of Myanmar rice each year. During the first three-quarters of 1938, Japan did not purchase Myanmar rice at all, as opposed to importing 38,269 tons for the corresponding period of 1937. Reports from Myanmar have given no conclusive reason for Japan's remarkable increase from 1,850 tons during the first five months of 1939 to 191,711 tons during the same period of 1940.<sup>53</sup> In 1940, Japan and Japanese occupied ports of China (including Shanghai) took 929,554 tons of Myanmar rice as opposed to only 10,773 tons in 1939.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 244

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, p. 12

<sup>53</sup> John Leary, Christian, *Burma and the Japanese Invader*, Thacker and Company Limited Bombay, 1945 p. 109 (Christian, *Burma and Japanese Invader*)

<sup>54</sup> Christian, *Burma and Japanese Invader*, p. 110

Commercial relations between Myanmar and Japan during the 20<sup>th</sup> century centred around Japanese exports of cotton, silk, and textiles to Myanmar, and Myanmar's efforts to increase the export of Myanmar cotton and rice to Japan. The trade balance has been consistently in favour of Japan. In 1936 for example, Myanmar's imports from Japan reached a value of Rs. 235.96 lakhs, while its exports to Japan amounted to only Rs. 153.55 lakhs. The imported goods included cement, hardware, some electrical goods, toys, ironware, crockery, drug sundries, and fish. Textiles were the largest import, amounting to five percent of Myanmar's total imports.

Japan's exports of cotton products to India including Myanmar amounted to Rs. 5,859 lakhs in 1929–30, but by 1934–35 they had declined to 2,176 lakhs. During the first six months of the Sino-Japanese conflict, Myanmar's total taking of Japanese exports dropped by forty percent, due largely to a boycott of these goods by Chinese merchants in the colony. There was no substantial boycott of Japanese goods by Myanmar or Indian consumers in Myanmar. Two other factors account for the steady decline of Japanese exports to India and Myanmar during the period 1920-1930: growing industrialization in India and Myanmar, and various trade and preferential tariff agreements that operated against Japanese goods and shipping. Further, minor factors during the period 1930–37 include the economic depression which resulted in a decline in all import of textiles, both British and Japanese. Gandhi's campaign for keddah (hand-loom fabrics) was of relatively little importance among Indians in Myanmar. Myanmar took no interest whatsoever in attempting to reduce import of foreign cloth for reasons of nationalism and economic self-sufficiency.<sup>55</sup>

Thuriya newspaper wrote about Japanese trading ships which came to Yangon from Japan and India. Some of these ships had advanced equipment like wireless telephones. In 1875, the Japanese government supported the establishment of Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK) to

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<sup>55</sup> Christian, *Burma and Japanese Invader*, p. 301

develop Japan's international shipping business. NYK was the biggest Japanese shipping company at that time. To Japan, one of the most economically important constituents of trade with India was the rice trade from Yangon. NYK began to operate a service to Yangon in 1907.<sup>56</sup> Japanese shipping to Myanmar was conducted by the Japan-India Services of the NYK and OSK lines which transported most of the Japanese imports under direction of the Mitsui and Mitsubishi interests. On their way to Calcutta and other Indian ports, 61 Japanese ships visited Yangon in 1936 as opposed to 64 ships in 1935. Since 1936, the number has declined but no statistics are available since 1938. Largely in response to pressure from Indian and British ship owners engaged in the intercoastal services, legislation was enacted in 1937 placing restrictions on Japanese ships engaging in the intercoastal business or in Myanmar-India trade. This was a severe blow to the Japanese lines in the India-Myanmar run, some of which had been engaged in the service for forty years.<sup>57</sup>

## Cultural Relations

Japan had cultural relations with Myanmar before World War II. As a part of the Japanese propaganda work, a number of Japanese films on the Russo-Japanese war and the China-Japan war had been shown in Myanmar. In 1908, a Japanese movie exhibition brought gas-lit projectors and a film showing footage of the actual fighting in the Russo-Japanese war to Yangon. The film, shown in darkened areas on the streets, was the first movie ever shown in Myanmar.<sup>58</sup> It seems almost certain that they were the earliest Japanese films. Several Japanese films had attracted considerable attention in Myanmar. At that time, Japanese films

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<sup>56</sup> Dr. Chih-lung Lin, "*Japanese shipping and India since the late 19th century*", Department of History, National Chung-Hsing University, Taiwan, pp. 3-6

[https://mosai.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Lin\\_Chih\\_Lung\\_Paper.pdf](https://mosai.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Lin_Chih_Lung_Paper.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, p. 304

<sup>58</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 50

ranked first in Southeast Asia. Japanese propaganda often involved the exhibition of a number of films depicting scenes of life and work in Japan.<sup>59</sup>

In general, Japan and Myanmar's cultural relationship before World War II was limited to the interactions between the two nation's elite. The political, economic, and cultural relations of the two countries before World War II were, in fact, more interesting than the relations they had after World War II as it was the time when Japan was working to establish the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere.<sup>60</sup>

### **Japanese Population in Myanmar**

Although Japanese adventurers reached Siam, Java, and Sumatra during the era of Iyeyasu, there is no record of their reaching Myanmar in great numbers before the restriction of Japan's foreign trade in 1641. The number of Japanese nationals residing in Myanmar and engaged in business and other occupations in 1921 was estimated to be about 582. The census of 1911 reports 442 Japanese subjects in the entire colony; in 1931 the number had risen to only 570. The number of Japanese in Myanmar had never been large.<sup>61</sup> Most of them were dentists, photographers, veterinarians, merchants, or employees of Japanese banking and shipping interests which maintained branches in Yangon.<sup>62</sup> They were distributed in small numbers throughout the larger cities and their overt activities called for no more remark than those of citizens of any other country.<sup>63</sup> There was no Japanese school in the entire province. The Japanese, unlike the Chinese, were in competition with Europeans in Myanmar rather than with Myanmar people. No Japanese in Myanmar operated rice or timber mills, although two

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<sup>59</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 68

<sup>60</sup> Michael, *A History of Modern Burma*, p. 32

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*, p. 175

<sup>63</sup> H. G. DEIGNAN, *Burma Gate Way to China*, Washington, the Smithsonian Institution, 1943, p. 14 (DEIGNAN, *Burma Gate Way To China*)



small cotton gins were Japanese owned. There were no Japanese rural settlements, and no considerable concentration of Japanese nationals in any one town, but rather a sprinkling engaged in the professions mentioned above.<sup>64</sup>

From 1940, Japan's political involvement in Myanmar became deeper.<sup>65</sup> By 1940, the number of Japanese nationals living in Myanmar and engaged in trade and other occupations in various towns had fallen to 360. This decrease was due partly to the constant vigilance of the British government and partly due to the general unrest prevailing in the country. After the peasant uprising led by Saya San had been put down, the political situation of Myanmar gradually deteriorated, accompanied by an economic slump. These conditions might have caused many Japanese to leave Myanmar. As a result, the number of Japanese residing in Myanmar fell from 582 in 1921 to 360 in 1940 and to 305 in 1941.<sup>66</sup>

### **People who came to Japan prior to World War II**

After U Ottama, no prominent Myanmar visited Japan until 1935. However, people of the Myanmar remained deeply impressed by the progress of Japan. Some Myanmar newspapers, journals, and magazines carried articles about Japan from 1911 to 1935. The following are the titles of some of these articles.

1. Japan cotton industries, Thuriya newspaper, 26 October 1911, p. 18
2. Japanese cotton manufacture, Thuriya newspaper, 26 October 1911, p. 18
3. About ship building and sailing of Japanese rich men, Thuriya newspaper, 26 October 1911, p. 18
4. About Japanese dentists, Thuriya newspaper, 14 September 1911, p. 18

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<sup>64</sup> Christian, *Burma and the Japanese Invader*, p. 175

<sup>65</sup> Phone Myint Kyaw, *Japan – Myanmar Relations*, p. 26

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, p. 27

5. About Japanese ministry, Thuriya newspaper, 24 October 1911, p. 9
6. On the late Japanese Emperor, The Light of Myanmar Magazine, Vol.1, No.5, May 1912, pp. 9-10
7. About the making of the boats using with the paper, Thuriya Magazine, Vol.1, No.10, December 1917, p. 50
8. Japanese Government buying the war ship from England, Didot Journal, Vol.2, No.25, 27 Nov 1926, p.5-6
9. Japan and Buddhism, Kyipwaryae Magazine, Vol.2, No.2, 1 November 1933, pp. 9-10
10. Japan and Textile Factory, Kyipwaryae Magazine, Vol.2, No.2, 1 November 1933, p.40
11. The establishing of the new Japan Empire, Thuriya Magazine, Vol. 2, No.3, February 1934, p. 25
12. The toy industry, Thuriya Magazine, No.9, pp. 3-4, November 1934
13. Look Japan from East, Thuriya Magazine, p.95, November 1934
14. Japanese silk, Thuriya Magazine, p.56, January 1935

These articles promoted the victory of Japan in Southeast Asia, and Myanmar people looked up to Japan in appreciation of its progress.<sup>67</sup> Let us look at the content of some of the articles:

England, United States, and Japan were the most successful cotton and textile producers in the world. Prior to World War I, England was the global leader in cotton and textile

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<sup>67</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper-Magazine, Kyipweyae Magazine, Didot Journal*

manufacturing but after the war, it was replaced by Japan, amid active competition from other nations. In 1912, there were 147 cotton and textile factories in Japan. The number of textile factories increased from 147 to 252 in 1931. Japan exported nearly 275000 pounds of textile to China in 1915. This figure reduced when the Chinese launched their own textile factories in China. The Japanese founded the textile factories, not only in Japan but also in China, thus Japan's amount of exports increased in 1915. Before the war, Japan exported cotton and textiles to Korea, Manchuria, China, India, and European countries. Japan worked hard to produce cotton dresses and garments in a large quantity and export those products at cheap prices. These efforts helped Japan become a top textile producer. Mr Sanji Muto, the cotton and textile industry expert from Tokyo, commented that the importance of the textile industry was reflected in the fact that it enabled 500,000,000 souls around the world to wear clothes safely, 750,000,000 souls to wear semi-formal dresses, and 250,000,000 souls to avoid dressing ridiculously. Myanmar's textile industry never aspired to or reached such heights.<sup>68</sup>

The next article mentions the reason behind Japan's rapid development. The Japanese government sent scholars to study various industries in foreign countries. The scholars, who returned after studying abroad, start small manufacturing businesses, producing products such as toys, pens, etc. Also, they shared their knowledge with other Japanese people whom they worked with. The toys they produced were clockwork spring toys which were very easy to build and also the cost was not too much. By manufacturing products within the country, the Japanese prevented money from flowing to other countries. Moreover, products such as toys could be exported to other countries which would bring foreign wealth into Japan. In contrast, Myanmar scholars who returned from abroad only sought government employment. They did not think of starting their own businesses. Through articles on Japanese scholars-turned-

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<sup>68</sup> *Kyi Pwar Yae Magazine*, "Japan and Textile Factory", 11 November 1933, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 40

entrepreneurs and their toy factories, writers tried to inspire Myanmar people to follow Japan's example of self-development.<sup>69</sup>

After U Ottama, three prominent persons from Myanmar came to Japan in 1935 and 1936. They were U Saw the well-known politician, U Nyi Pu the famous actor, and U Hla a prominent textile trader. We may assume that these persons were more interested in Japan after they read articles like the ones described above. Therefore, they may have decided to travel to Japan to study advanced technology and lifestyle.

U Saw, an editor of Thuriya newspaper and member of the legislative council, was highly impressed with Japan's modernity and economic growth of Japan.<sup>70</sup> He visited Japan on 10 June 1935.<sup>71</sup> On his return, he wrote a stream of laudatory articles.<sup>72</sup> Later, he published a book called *Japan Lan Nyunt* in 1935 distributed by the Thuriya Press.<sup>73</sup> After his return from Japan, U Saw's financial position became strong enough to buy out and control the Thuriya newspaper with the support of Japanese. Thenceforth, Thuriya became a decidedly pro-Japan newspaper. Every day the paper carried news and articles in praise and support of Japan. Next U Saw founded his own Myo Chit Party (the Patriotic Party) in 1938 and contested the elections. It was said that the Japanese Vice-Consul Keneko Toyoji gave a lot of funding to U Saw to win the 1936 elections to the Lower House of the legislative assembly. Japanese intelligence was also said to have been involved in U Saw's victory.<sup>74</sup> Until September 1940, when U Saw became prime minister, he continued publishing articles in favour of Japan.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Thuriya Magazine*, "The toy industry", November 1934, No. 9, pp. 3-4

<sup>70</sup> GUYOT, Dorothy Hess, *The Political Impact of the Japanese Occupation of Burma*, p. 46 (A thesis for the degree of Ph.D, Yale University, 1966) (GUYOT, *The Political Impact*)

<sup>71</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 24 July 1935

<sup>72</sup> GUYOT, *The Political Impact*, p. 46

<sup>73</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 24 July 1935

<sup>74</sup> U Kyaw, "Myanmar Political Relation with Japan", p. 60

<sup>75</sup> GUYOT, *The Political Impact*, p. 46

Two other individuals, U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe, together came to Japan with U Saw on 10 June 1935. Their aim was to buy equipment to use for the production of a sound film. While studying film enterprises, they had a sudden idea to direct a picture with a Japanese actress. This is how the film *Japan Yin Thwe* came to be produced.<sup>76</sup>

The next person from Myanmar who went to Japan after U Saw and U Nyi Pu was U Hla, a trader, on 20 August 1936. He studied the Japanese economy and industry, and the Japanese society. The purpose of U Hla's visit to Japan where produced goods mainly used in Myanmar were to introduce Myanmar nationals who did not satisfy the domestic products with the commercial activities by connecting foreign countries directly.<sup>77</sup> After getting back to Myanmar, U Hla wrote articles in the *Thuriya* newspaper about his experiences in Japan to raise public awareness. He collected articles and printed the book called *Myanmar–Japan Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan* in September 1939 at the request of some people.<sup>78</sup> This book opened the eyes of Myanmar people especially with regard to trading.

## Conclusion

Since the early colonial period, there had been Japanese nationals who came to live in Myanmar. At first, there were very few or no reasons for Myanmar to have regular relations with the Japanese. However, changes in world affairs had created conditions that brought Myanmar and Japan in touch with each other. Myanmar nationalist leaders began to look east toward Japan when Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. Since then, Myanmar had begun to think highly of Japan and the Japanese. A pro-Japan political monk, U Ottama, went to Japan in 1907 and 1912. After U Ottama returned from Japan, he informed

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<sup>76</sup> Aye Kyu Lay, *Records of Myanmar Film Silver Jubilee*, Yangon, Seikku Chocho Press, 2016, p. 85 (Aye Kyu Lay, *Records of Myanmar Film Silver Jubilee*)

<sup>77</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 7 August 1936

<sup>78</sup> U Hla, *Myanmar – Japan Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, Pyay, Pyinsa Yupan Press, 1939, p. 270 (U Hla, *Myanmar – Japan Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*)

Myanmar people of Japan's ongoing industrialization and urged them to follow Japan's example of self-development through articles and books. Japanese activities steadily increased in Myanmar from the time of the opening of the Japanese Vice-Consulate in Yangon in 1920. The Vice-Consulate carried out propaganda work and trading in Myanmar.

In 1935 and 1936, Galon U Saw, U Nyi Pu, and U Hla went to Japan and studied Japanese politics, economy, and culture. The pro-Japan people of Myanmar U Saw and U Hla started writing about the progress of Japan to educate Myanmar after they returned from Japan. A number of articles inspired the nationalists of Myanmar. Also, U Saw and other pro-Japan leaders received financial help from Japan for their political activities after 1935. As the nationalist awakening gathered strength in Myanmar there appeared political groups that wanted to drive the British imperialists out of Myanmar by force. This had created an important role for Japan to play in Myanmar.

Although Japan-Myanmar trade relations began in 1905, Japan saw Myanmar as a new field for commercial expansion after the war broke out between China and Japan in 1937. China started boycotting Japanese goods, following which Japanese goods began flooding the Myanmar market. Then Japan-Myanmar trade revived to some extent, with Japan exporting cotton yarn and textile products to Myanmar and the latter selling mainly rice to Japan.

To sum up, in the period between 1905 and 1920, some Myanmar people like the pro-Japan U Ottama, U Saw, etc., decided that Myanmar was in urgent need of Japanese help to drive out the British imperialists and to acquire advanced technology. The Japanese became deeply involved in Myanmar by giving financial support to prop up the Japanese political groups and politicians in Myanmar after 1935. The commercial relations revived after 1937, and also the Vice-Consulate encouraged trade between the two countries. Thus, the period between 1900 and 1940 was a time when Japan and Myanmar relations were friendly and both nations were in a position to help fulfil each other's aspirations.

## Chapter II

### Study of prominent Politician Galon U Saw's experiences in Japan in 1935

#### Introduction

The previous Chapter discusses the history of Japan-Myanmar Relations, and how to penetrate the Japanese into Myanmar. It also addresses why prominent Myanmar figures came to Japan. In this chapter, I will write about one such prominent Myanmar politician who visited Japan, and his endeavour to develop relations between the two countries. After Japan's industrialisation and modernisation, Myanmar sought to emulate its achievements and reforms. Political leaders and entrepreneurs from all sectors took inspiration from the rapid progress achieved by a fellow Asian country. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is how prominent figures from Myanmar at that time studied and observed Japan's achievements.

#### U Saw's Biography

U Saw was born to U Po Kyu, a landowner, and Daw Pan, on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1900 in Okepo Township, Tharrawady District. He attended a Roman Catholic missionary school in Gyobingauk Township from childhood until the 7<sup>th</sup> standard. He learned English language in Calcutta, India,<sup>79</sup> and practiced reading newspapers from childhood at the suggestion of his father. This practice encouraged the growth of national pride, particularly in the context of the First World War. Moreover, it encouraged him to travel around the world.<sup>80</sup> He passed 6<sup>th</sup> standard examination but failed in his subsequent efforts to matriculate at Calcutta and London

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<sup>79</sup> Soe Myint Latt, *Biographical Dictionary of National*, Vol.1, Yangon, Sait Kuu Cho Cho Press, 2013, p. 1  
(Soe Myint Latt, *Bio Dictionary*)

<sup>80</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, Yangon, Thuriya Press, 1935, p. 5 (U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*)

Universities.<sup>81</sup> He entered politics in the early 1920s.<sup>82</sup> Instead of continuing his studies for further education status he took an interest in politics and passed lower grade pleader examinations in 1927.<sup>83</sup>



**Figure - 9. Galon U Saw (Photo courtesy by U Saw, Japan Lan Nyunt, p. 6)**

U Saw had the ability to exploit circumstances that could draw favourable public attention. He admired Saya San, and after offering his services for legal defence at his trial, wrote a spirited pamphlet about rebellion. This was promptly proscribed, but won U Saw fame and fortune in politics.<sup>84</sup> Because of this he published a brochure containing a letter to the

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<sup>81</sup> Kyi Nyunt, *Historic The Sun - The News Light of Myanmar and Myanmar Political*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Yangon, Chit Kyi Yae Press, 1970, p. 201(Kyi Nyunt, *Historic The Sun - The News Light of Myanmar*)

<sup>82</sup> Robert H. Taylor, *The State in Burma*, England, C.Hurst and Co. (publisher)Ltd, 1987, p. 173 (Taylor, *The State in Burma*)

<sup>83</sup> Dr. Maung Maung, *Naing Ngan Taw Loke Kyan Hmu (Union and U Saw)*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Yangon, Kumara Press, 1968, p. 169 (Dr. Maung Maung, *Naing Ngan Taw*)

<sup>84</sup> Maung Maung, *Burma's Constitution*, The Hague, Netherland, Martius Nifhoff,1961, p. 25 (Maung Maung, *Burma's Constitution*)



Secretary of State for India, complaining against the ruthless methods adopted by government officers, especially the police, in suppressing the rebellion. The brochure was also proscribed by the Government.<sup>85</sup>

As he had severely condemned the Government's drastic actions against Saya San, Booth Gravelly, Secretary of Home Affairs, remarked that U Saw became Galon, a mythical bird that had been Saya San's emblem. From then he was popularly known as Galon U Saw.<sup>86</sup> To become one of Myanmar's political leaders U Saw left no stone unturned, first attempting to establish contact with the Thuriya Newspaper.<sup>87</sup> As a separationist in 1932 U Saw became attached to the Thuriya, then an organ of U Ba Pe, one of the proprietors of the newspaper.<sup>88</sup> When a large block of shares of the Thuriya press came on the market, to the value of 40,000 rupees (kyat), U Ba Pe declined to buy them. U Saw bought the shares without hesitation, and therefore come to grip with U Ba Pe over the running the Thuriya Newspaper.<sup>89</sup>

U Saw then acted as a member of the board of directors of the paper, earning 850 rupees per month as his salary. In 1935 U Saw visited Japan as the representative of Thuriya Newspaper. During his stay he studied the administrative systems of Japanese government, its education system, and its factories, writing extensively on Japanese achievements to facilitate their imitation in Myanmar. After his return from Japan, U Saw's financial position became strong enough to buy out and control the Thuriya newspaper with the support of Japanese Vice-

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<sup>85</sup> U Kyaw Min, *The Burma We love*, Calcutta, Calcutta University Press, 1945, p. 21 (U Kyaw Min, *The Burma We love*)

<sup>86</sup> Kyi Nyunt, *Historic The Sun - The News Light of Myanmar*, p. 246

<sup>87</sup> Dr. Maung Maung, *Naing Ngan Taw*, p. 18

<sup>88</sup> Cady, J.F, *A History of Modern Burma*, Cornell University press New York, 1967, p. 366 (Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*)

<sup>89</sup> U Kyaw Min, *The Burma We love*, p. 22

Consul in Yangon. In 1938 he took the position of Chief Editor, indicating his considerable influence over the board of directors of the Thuriya press.<sup>90</sup>

Next U Saw founded his own Myo Chit Party (the Patriotic Party) in 1938 and contested the elections. It was said that the Japanese Vice-Consul Keneko Toyoji gave a lot of funding to U Saw to win the 1936 elections to the Lower House of the legislative assembly. He then served as the third Prime Minister of Myanmar from 1940 until 1942. Until September 1940, when U Saw became prime minister, he continued publishing articles in favour of Japan.<sup>91</sup>

### **Beginning of trip to Japan**

In April 1935, Furuhata announced in the Thuriya Newspaper and other newspapers that those desiring to visit Japan should contact him. Furuhata was a Japanese merchant who had lived in Yangon for more than 20 years. Within one or two days of this announcement, a letter from U Ba Galay, chief editor of Thuriya Newspaper, was received by U Saw. This letter urged U Saw to travel to Japan and write articles for Thuriya Newspaper, arguing that this would benefit both the newspaper and the country. U Saw was also a member of the administration board of Thuriya Newspaper.<sup>92</sup> In order to obtain a passport for the journey, U Saw signed an agreement to satisfy the Governor that he would not express political opposition against the India-Myanmar government, and that connections with other groups hostile to British rule would not be pursued during his stay in Japan.<sup>93</sup> After obtaining the passport, the board of Thuriya decided to support the costs of writing news and articles.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Kyi Nyunt, *Historic The Sun - The News Light of Myanmar*, p. 268

<sup>91</sup> GUYOT, *The Political Impact*, p. 46

<sup>92</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 7

<sup>93</sup> *ibid*, p. 9

<sup>94</sup> *ibid*, p. 12

The purposes of U Saw's visit to Japan were to study the social structure, educational policy, and administrative system, as well as the behaviour, culture, and traditions of the Japanese as an advanced nation. Moreover, Myanmar nationals who came under the British administration imitated the endeavours of the advanced Japanese in order to implement the welfare of the country by unity.<sup>95</sup> The desire to visit Japan grew further following its accelerated rate of progress in the aftermath of the First World War.<sup>96</sup>

As representative of the Thuriya Newspaper and a member of the Legislative Council, U Saw travelled with U Khin, representative from New Light of Myanmar, U Nyi Pu, owner of A1 Film Company and his younger brother U Maung Maung Soe, U Bo Hein from Bawdwin, Mg Maung from Mawlamyaing, and Furuhata. They departed from Yangon for Singapore on board the ship Carora at 4:30 am on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1935.<sup>97</sup> They arrived in Singapore on 19<sup>th</sup> May, staying at a luxury Japanese restaurant by the name of Central Hotel.<sup>98</sup> After staying in Singapore for two days, U Saw and his party left for Japan from Singapore on board the ship Terukuni on the morning of 31<sup>st</sup> May.<sup>99</sup>



**Figure – 10, Galon U Saw and his party on the Terukuni ship**

**(Photo courtesy by Thuriya Newspaper 22 June 1935)**

<sup>95</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 1

<sup>96</sup> *ibid*, p. 5

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*, p. 17

<sup>98</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 7 June 1935

<sup>99</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 15 June 1935

This steamship was Japanese-owned and all the crew members were the Japanese. Based on this fact, the spirit for the preservation of their race and their national spirit can be seen. It should be imitated by the Myanmar people.<sup>100</sup> On 7<sup>th</sup> June 1935, Terukuni landed at Shanghai, one of the four municipalities under the direct administration of the Central Government of China.<sup>101</sup> English and French merchants settled in Shanghai for its commercial advantages around 1853. At that time, the Japanese did not travel to conduct overseas commerce with foreign countries, limiting their economic activity to Japan and its islands. By the time of U Saw's trip, Myanmar was in a similar position, whereas about 18,000 Japanese businessmen now conducted commercial activities in Shanghai.<sup>102</sup>

### **Arrival at Moji**

U Saw and his party arrived at Moji, origin of the Japanese empire on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1935. If Japan was assaulted by naval attack, warships entered into Moji. Therefore, Japan prepared it as a naval base.<sup>103</sup> When they arrived at the harbour, journalists from the English- and Japanese-language press interviewed them. In particular, they asked about the British administrative system in Myanmar, as U Saw was a member of the Legislative Council and a politician.<sup>104</sup> However, U Saw gave no reply to journalists due to the agreement he signed with the Governor regarding political opposition to the India-Myanmar government.<sup>105</sup>

U Saw went to the Yokohama Bank to exchange cash for Japanese Yen. When he arrived at this bank, he found that nearly half of the employees in the bank were female between the ages of 13 and 18. Besides this bank, ticket sellers, ticket inspectors, waiters, and clerks

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<sup>100</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p.67

<sup>101</sup> *ibid*, p. 93

<sup>102</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 3 July 1935

<sup>103</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 108

<sup>104</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 29 June 1935

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*

from railway stations, bus stops, food shops, and factories in Kobe were female.<sup>106</sup> U Saw observed that not only young people but also elders were in active employment in Kobe. It was assumed that Japan prospered because of this work ethic. He therefore concluded that youths in Myanmar, whom he believed to always sit in teashops speaking worthless dialogue, should take note of these factors. There was an abundant supply of work in Myanmar; if only the available work was done without excessive pickiness with regards to the type of work or salary. Further, he believed that this should apply to both males and females in Myanmar.<sup>107</sup>

### **Attending the dinner party of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Kobe**

On 10<sup>th</sup> June, U Saw and his party attended a dinner party given by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Kobe. Vice Chairman Okusuki Akiyama attended the party, as the Chairman of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce was absent. At that dinner, the Vice Chairman delivered an address as follows:

“I am glad to be friendship with the gentlemen who came from Myanmar. Later, I also expected the visitors from Myanmar to visit more Japan. At present, Japan did not import rice from Myanmar because rice is produced not only having sufficient for Japan but also produced to export to the other countries. However, rice from Myanmar will be imported not only for Japan but for Manchukuo as the population of Japan grew nearly eight thousand annually. In purchasing rice from Myanmar, it will be bought directly from Myanmar without brokers. I also expect that the products from Japan will be purchased by Myanmar directly. I also expect that Myanmar will endeavor for the development of commerce as people from the eastern countries have intelligence, industrious, and ability like the westerners”.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 114

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*, p. 115

<sup>108</sup> *ibid*, p. 123

U Saw as the representative of Myanmar expressed his gratitude as follows:

“We thanks specially for giving a dinner for us. I believe that cordial relations between Myanmar and Japan will be existed since the two nations are both the eastern nations and the Buddhist countries. I also expected that all the citizens in Thailand, Philippine, Japan, Myanmar, Manchukuo, and China in the East needed to settle united. Our country, Myanmar is a country where produced a large number of rice and timber. I am happy that the Vice Chairman said to buy Myanmar products directly. By purchasing through the broker dealers, Myanmar will suffer the disadvantages. We could not buy a lot of Japanese products, if the disadvantages and little profits are received. At present, aliens had bought Myanmar rice and timber with low prices. Myanmar has the desire to conduct further relations with Japan”.<sup>109</sup>

Myanmar is a state that depends principally on rice. If foreigners did not need Myanmar rice, there was no impetus for the development of Myanmar's economy. After the annexation of Myanmar by the British, the government encouraged the extension of acreage under cultivation. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Myanmar cultivators benefited from increased prices as European countries bought Myanmar's rice. With this price increase, Myanmar cultivators actively reinvested in cultivation processes more than other business/cultivators of other nations. However, the price of rice fell from the year 1923 and Myanmar cultivators faced challenges.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, it was decided that industrial enterprises should be started to reduce reliance on the cultivation.<sup>111</sup> One feature of the colonial economy was to make colonies dependent on only one product, and hence agriculture predominated in Myanmar.<sup>112</sup> Forty-five percent of foreign export value from Myanmar was gained from rice

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<sup>109</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 124

<sup>110</sup> *Kyi Pwar Yee Magazine*, Vol - 2, No - 1, October, 1933, p. 25

<sup>111</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 149

<sup>112</sup> *ibid*

and rice products. Consequently, price controls on rice caused profound disruption to Myanmar's economy.<sup>113</sup> Myanmar is a country where valuable teak and hard wood forests are plentiful, and fifty seven percent of the land area is covered with forests.<sup>114</sup>

### **Meeting the editors of Asahi press and Mainichi press**

When they arrived at Osaka on the afternoon of 12<sup>th</sup> June, the board of editors from the Asahi press, the most prominent press in Japan, hosted a lunch party. At this meeting, U Saw again discussed commercial relations regarding Myanmar rice, cotton, and timber. The chief editor of the Asahi press addressed the Myanmar delegation as follows:

“I am very glad to meet with Myanmar nationals. I want all the gentlemen to visit and study in Japan thoroughly. Especially I want the gentlemen to study and understand the Japanese culture, literature, education, home industry and administrative system. Friendly relations between the two countries are important in the future since both Myanmar and Japan are eastern nations and the Buddhist countries”.

U Saw as the representative of Myanmar expressed his gratitude as follows:

“At present, Myanmar suffered the feeling of inferiority under colonialism as the absent of self-ruler. All the Myanmar people and I thank to the Japanese as the Japanese welcomed us warmly at this conditions. I also expected that we can serve in order to emulate by the Myanmar national as the knowledge by studying the changing advances of Japan and the Japanese national. One country did not know each other well as distance from Myanmar to Japan is about 5,000 miles. When we met with the Japanese

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<sup>113</sup> U Chit Lwin, *Myanmar Thwe Khae*, Yangon, Zabu Maitse Pitakat Press, 1949, p. 6 (U Chit Lwin, *Myanmar Thwe Khae*)

<sup>114</sup> *Botataung Newspaper*, “Myanmar Forest Yadanar”, 7 February 1982

gentlemen after arriving at Japan, it is enjoyed that we are intimate with the whole of Japanese people".<sup>115</sup>

On the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> June, U Saw travelled to the Mainichi press, which issued the largest number of publications not only in Japan but also in the eastern parts of Suez. When he arrived, the chief editor and all the employees of Mainichi press accepted him cordially. Newspaper readership was very high in Japan,<sup>116</sup> and included clerks and security guards from factories, offices, and hotels.<sup>117</sup>

### **Studying Japanese factories**

After arriving in Japan, U Saw visited the following factories:

- Breweries
- Ironworks at Fukui (Fukiai)
- Toyo garment factory in Osaka
- Enamelware factory in Nagoya
- Paper making factories in Fuji and Tokyo
- Kao soap company in Tokyo
- Tobacco enterprises in Japan

Various factories were established near the river at Moji Township. Among these factories, there was one brewery at Moji. Beer and liquor produced from this factory were not only sold in Japan but also exported to the other countries. The Japanese government authorised this factory to produce beer and liquor, despite most Japanese being Buddhists. Those engaged in this activity were encouraged by the Japanese without judgement. Consequently, Japanese

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<sup>115</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 3 July 1935

<sup>116</sup> *ibid*

<sup>117</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 135



industry could benefit financially from those who chose to consume alcohol. Moreover, exporting alcohol was an effective means of amassing foreign currencies. U Saw recognised that Myanmar could also benefit from domestic alcohol production, even though most Myanmar nationals did not drink themselves.<sup>118</sup>

On 11<sup>th</sup> June 1935, U Saw and party together with the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce visited the ironworks, owned by the Kawasaki Company which was established in 1886. This factory was located at Fukui (Fukiai) and was built in July 1918. It was the largest such factory in Asia, producing nearly half of the iron materials used in Japan.<sup>119</sup> The Kawasaki Company not only produced cargo ships, rail engines, and motorcycles, but also artillery for the Japanese government.

The Japanese government sent scholars to study industry in foreign countries. These scholars were supported extensively by the government, and state funds were provided to establish new domestic industries. Once these scholars returned and shared their findings, Japan was able to become advanced and prosperous within a short period. In contrast, Myanmar cited budgetary restrictions as the reason for their relative inaction in this area. They sent only six scholars a year to study foreign industry, and did not bear their expenses.<sup>120</sup>

Seventy percent of the materials used in the Fukui (Fukiai) iron factory in Japan were produced in Germany. At first, Japan bought all such materials from other countries, but began to gradually develop domestic production. Not only were machine parts imitated, but foreign experts were employed in Japanese factories in order to maximise benefit from western expertise. Although foreign experts returned to their home at the end of their contract, the

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<sup>118</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 109

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*, p. 116

<sup>120</sup> *ibid*, p. 117

knowledge they imparted remained, and continued to be developed by Japanese experts. Therefore, Japan developed as an advanced nation within fifty years.<sup>121</sup>

On 12 June 1935, U Saw and party travelled from Kobe to Osaka by electric locomotive. This train was wider and had more carriages than local trains in Myanmar.<sup>122</sup> In the morning, U Saw also visited the Toyo garment factory in Osaka. This factory employed 2,400 workers and produced 82,000 yards of garment per day. Although investigating the possibility of exporting Myanmar cotton to Japan, it was widely known that American cotton was of superior quality to that of Myanmar. It was also known that this factory and many others used American cotton.<sup>123</sup> Britain, the United States, and Japan were the most successful nations in the cotton and textile industry. Britain dominated the industry prior to the First World War, but was soon superseded by Japan in the context of intense global competition. In 1912, there were 147 cotton and textile factories in Japan; by 1931 this had increased to 252.<sup>124</sup>

The most advanced cities in Japan were Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya.<sup>125</sup> U Saw and party visited the enamelware factory in Nagoya. The cheap and beautiful enamelware produced in these factories was exported to Myanmar, India, Malaya, and the Pashu islands. These products were of high quality and were sold cheaply for the following reasons:

- To encourage state support for industrial enterprises
- To encourage the development of electrical infrastructure for those industries that relied on electrical energy
- To take advantage of low transportation costs for mass exports
- To generate capital for reinvestment and further industrial development

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<sup>121</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 5 July 1935

<sup>122</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 149

<sup>123</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 5 July 1935

<sup>124</sup> *Kyi Pwar Yae Magazine*, Vol - 2, No – 2, 11 November 1933, , p. 40

<sup>125</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 143

In Myanmar, the owners of rice mills often prioritised personal and domestic comforts over the development of business infrastructure. Additional capital was used more for living a life of luxury than for reinvestment. This lack of care and business acuity therefore often resulted in losses.<sup>126</sup> It is suggested that the people of Myanmar learned from their Japanese counterparts and consciously changed these habits.

U Saw and his party visited the paper making industry owned by the Oji Company in Fuji Township, Nagoya. Forty kinds of paper were produced from this paper mill.<sup>127</sup> The only pine trees plentiful in Japan were used in making paper as raw materials. The Oji paper making company was built in 1872 with an initial investment of 150,000 Japanese yen. By the time of U Saw's visit, this mill operated successfully with an investment of 150 million yen over the sixty-three years of its existence.

The year 1933 was critical in the history of papermaking industries in Japan. In 1933, all the paper mills in the Japanese Empire established a joint venture company by merging each individual company. The benefit of this decision is proven by the fact that the Japanese paper industry has continued successfully in this agglomerated form up to the present day.<sup>128</sup>

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1935, U Saw also visited a paper mill in Tokyo at the invitation of the owner. Paper was produced from cotton and linen rags without the use of timber, bamboo, and straw as raw materials.<sup>129</sup> By producing paper from cotton and linen rags, costs are lower and paper quality is higher. Moreover, leftover hair from barbershops was used as fertiliser to further reduce costs and increase productivity. U Saw and party therefore observed that an industrial use could be found for any material in Japan.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 146

<sup>127</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 13 July 1935

<sup>128</sup> *ibid*

<sup>129</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 219

<sup>130</sup> *ibid*, p. 221

With appropriate assistance from the Myanmar government, a similar paper industry could be established in Myanmar, helping to reduce unemployment and stimulating the national economy as a whole. These benefits would not be limited to the printing presses; the Japanese paper industry also supplied the construction and sanitation industries. Fifty-five years prior to this, the Japanese economy was just as reliant on the agricultural sector as that of Myanmar. In the intervening years, numerous industrial enterprises were established and students and academics were sent abroad to study technological expertise.<sup>131</sup>

Scholars were sent to Germany, France, the United States, and Britain in particular, which led the world in industrial technology.<sup>132</sup> Appropriate state funding was provided to establish the necessary industries, and certain products were exported in order to be compared to those of other nations.<sup>133</sup> For example, iron was produced using German technology, and machines were produced using English designs. Garments were exported to such countries as India and Myanmar at low cost by weaving American cotton. Used cars and iron were purchased from China and India to build a steamship based on German technology, which then travelled around the world. From Myanmar's perspective, it was crucial to emulate these proactive processes of industrial development.<sup>134</sup>

It was felt by U Saw and party that Japan became such an advanced nation because of this industrial development, and due to being an industrious and inventive people. Moreover, they observed that the Japanese people helped and supported each other without jealousy. Myanmar, it was felt, did not become an advanced nation as people competed with each other and were unable to unite.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 221

<sup>132</sup> *Kyee Pwar Yae Magazine*, Vol - 3, No - 1, October, 1934, p. 10

<sup>133</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 151

<sup>134</sup> *ibid*, p. 152

<sup>135</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 15 July 1935

U Saw also visited the Kao soap company situated in eastern Tokyo. This company produced various types of soap using coconuts. Besides coconut oil, butter, and perfumed shampoos, it also produced fertiliser from coconut waste for use in agriculture. Other waste materials were used to produce chemicals commonly used in bomb manufacture. This provided a framework for the development of the Myanmar soap industry. The necessary raw materials were readily available, and with consistent improvements in quality a captive domestic market could be expected to develop.<sup>136</sup>

The Japanese cheroot and tobacco industry was placed under Government control, and consisted of thirty government-owned cigarette factories and one cheroot factory. The Japanese government bought all the tobacco produced in Japan, as well as importing additional supply from abroad. Private cheroot and tobacco enterprises were illegal, and those responsible were severely punished if caught. U Saw visited the Narihira-chojo cigarette factory in Tokyo at the invitation of the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce. This factory operated with 1,400 employees, covering all steps from boiling the raw tobacco to the production of machine-made cigarettes.<sup>137</sup>

With a view to exporting Myanmar tobacco to hasten the development of the industry and to increase trade revenues, U Saw also visited the government-run company responsible for importing tobacco from foreign countries. He discussed the export of Myanmar tobacco to Japan, and was told this had last occurred ten years ago. The Japanese government prohibited the purchase of tobacco from Myanmar as it was deemed to be impure; tobacco was instead imported from Madras, India.<sup>138</sup>

The Japanese government used home-grown tobacco for the production of cheroots and cigarettes, and so did not need to import any raw materials. Tobacco cultivators systematically

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<sup>136</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 20 July 1935

<sup>137</sup> *ibid*

<sup>138</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 214

cultivated pure, unmixed seeds, making it cheap and easy to produce a high quality product. Myanmar cultivators, in contrast, used impure, mixed seeds, and hence their tobacco was unable to penetrate foreign markets. Therefore, it was felt that the tobacco cultivators in Hinthada, Shwekyin, Karma, and Myin Gyan townships should notice this fact.<sup>139</sup>

### **Meeting the Japanese foreign secretary**

As a politically minded person, U Saw was eager to meet the Japanese foreign secretary.<sup>140</sup> During the meeting, U Saw addressed the political conditions of Myanmar as follows:

“At present, Myanmar is under the control of foreigners. However, Myanmar nationals enthusiastically attempt to regain her independence from colonial rule. I think that the independence of Myanmar could be expected if Myanmar youths attempted this vigorously within five to ten years”.

U Saw asked about the attitude of Japan towards Myanmar and suggested the possibility of an intimate relationship.<sup>141</sup> He wanted to send scholars from Myanmar to Japan to learn both Japanese literature and technology, and discussed ways in which the Japanese could help Myanmar.<sup>142</sup> The Japanese foreign secretary replied as follows:

“At present, intimate relations exist between Japan and England. We also regard Myanmar affectionately as an intimate friend. Myanmar will succeed if attempts are made patiently. Reform movements are the most important for the development of a nation. Japan has also made reforms in every sector over the last sixty years to reach the present conditions”.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 216

<sup>140</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 18 July 1935

<sup>141</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 176

<sup>142</sup> *ibid*, p. 180

<sup>143</sup> *ibid*, p. 177

He stated that Myanmar would also need to make reforms in various sectors. He also promised to give assistance where possible with regards to sending scholars, and that they would gain practical expertise if sent into the factories.<sup>144</sup>

### **Visiting the navy and air force in Tokyo**

U Saw also visited the Japanese air force and navy in Yokosuka, fifty miles from Tokyo. There were twelve battalions of naval and air forces in the Japanese empire. U Saw observed the air force practising combat manoeuvres. All the pilots were Japanese youths, which he hoped Myanmar could emulate.<sup>145</sup> He was shown aboard a warship by a Japanese colonel. It boasted a top speed of thirty-three miles per hour, and twelve 12-inch cannons capable of firing four or five shells per minute. Moreover, it featured twelve torpedo launchers,<sup>146</sup> anti-aircraft guns capable of firing 250 rounds per minute, six range finders, wireless telegraph technology, and a crew of 500 sailors. It was a second-class warship, of which there were 150 in the Japanese navy. The Japanese Colonel asked U Saw's point of view regarding the Japanese navy. U saw replied as follows:

“Formerly, nobody respected the Japanese as they were of small stature in the world. Nowadays, the Japanese have achieved strength of naval forces, air forces, and army, and especially could be called the Emperor of Ocean in the Pacific. Somebody in the world assumes themselves the Emperor of Ocean. Nowadays, Japan accepts the title of Emperor of the Ocean. Some people in the World gave respect to the Japanese and we prayed that all nations would give respect to the Japanese like Manchukuo, by cooperating with Japan and Myanmar”.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 181

<sup>145</sup> *ibid*, p. 181

<sup>146</sup> Torpedo-launchers are specialized weapon designed to blow apart the hulls of enemy vessels. They are quite powerful, though they deal somewhat less damage to beasts and enemy crew.

<sup>147</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 161

Over the previous sixty years Japan made advances in every sector to reach the position observed by U Saw. Prior to the opening of Japan, it did not possess modern warships or a range of sophisticated weaponry.<sup>148</sup> Despite this, U Saw felt, they were able to maintain their independence due to their self-confidence as a nation surpassing that of others. Whenever they were attacked, they defended themselves industriously and with great strength of mind, and so were able to become an advanced nation over a period of roughly sixty years.<sup>149</sup>

U Saw found that about 150 Japanese students studying aerial combat upon visiting the air force. The Japanese government tried to inculcate admiration for novel modes of warfare such as this from childhood. After studying the air force, U Saw travelled by boat to study the Japanese cruiser anchored at the Marine Central Department. He saw the warships Ataro (Atago), Akagi, Nachi, Hosho, Yamashi (Yamato) and Naka.<sup>150</sup> Yamashi (Yamato) was one of the two largest warships in the World.<sup>151</sup>

In 1868, during the reign of Emperor Meiji, the Japanese navy possessed six western-style steam warships, deployed in the Osaka Sea. Among these, the largest warship was 600 tonnes, and the total tonnage of all six ships was equal to a single ship possessed by Japan in the 1930s. The navy now consisted of over 300 warships, and Japan was considered by many to be the primary naval force in the Pacific.<sup>152</sup>

## Observing flooding

On Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June, heavy rainfall caused flooding in many parts of Japan.<sup>153</sup> Flooding killed many people who resided in Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Fukuoka, and throughout

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<sup>148</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 177

<sup>149</sup> *ibid*, p. 178

<sup>150</sup> *ibid*, p. 161

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*, p. 162

<sup>152</sup> *Thuriya Magazine*, Vol - 24, No - 8, October, 1940.

<sup>153</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 2 July 1935



the Kyushu region, and caused extensive damage.<sup>154</sup> The government provided fifteen million yen to support victims of the flooding.<sup>155</sup> By the arrangement of Furuhashi, U Saw and party had already arrived in Tokyo when the flooding occurred. They remained in Tokyo in order to avoid the effects of the flooding.



**Figure - 11. Flooding in Kyoto (Photo courtesy by Thuriya Newspaper, 17 July 1935)**

### **Studying the educational policy practiced in Japan**

The development of education in Japan since the Meiji Era (1868-1912) will be analysed here in close relation to her economic development. The modern school system was inaugurated in the early years of the Meiji Era. Meiji, the most prominent Emperor in Japan's history, issued a Royal Order on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1890, the twenty-third anniversary of his rule of Japan. The brief of this royal order runs as follows:

“Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the

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<sup>154</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p.168

<sup>155</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 17 July 1935

glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of our education.

Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.

So shall ye not only be our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers. The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, our subjects, that we may thus attain to the same virtue".<sup>156</sup>

朕惟フニ我カ皇祖皇宗國ヲ肇ムルコト宏遠ニ德ヲ樹ツルコト深厚ナリ我カ臣民克ク忠ニ克ク孝ニ億兆心ヲ一ニシテ世世厥ノ美ヲ濟セルハ此レ我カ國體ノ精華ニシテ教育ノ淵源亦實ニ此ニ存ス爾臣民父母ニ孝ニ兄弟ニ友ニ夫婦相和シ朋友相信シ恭儉己レヲ持シ博愛衆ニ及ホシ學ヲ修メ業ヲ習ヒ以テ智能ヲ啓發シ德器ヲ成就シ進テ公益ヲ廣メ世務ヲ開キ常ニ國憲ヲ重シ國法ニ遵ヒ一旦緩急アレハ義勇公ニ奉シ以テ天壤無窮ノ皇運ヲ扶翼スヘシ是ノ如キハ獨リ朕カ忠良ノ臣民タルノミナラス又以テ爾祖先ノ遺風ヲ顯彰スルニ足ラン斯ノ道ハ實ニ我カ皇祖皇宗ノ遺訓ニシテ子孫臣民ノ俱ニ遵守スヘキ所之ヲ古今ニ通シテ謬ラス之ヲ中外ニ施シテ悖ラス朕爾臣民ト俱ニ拳々服膺シテ咸其德ヲ一ニセンコトヲ庶幾フ

明治二十三年十月三十日

<sup>156</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 202

The Emperor himself donated land for many schools in Tokyo, provided the school buildings, and funded their establishment. U Saw studied a school building donated by the Emperor for the teaching of history at Waseda University. Other than this donation, it received no state support.<sup>157</sup>

In 1886, the modern elementary school system started as compulsory education. Until 1947, only elementary schools were compulsory. Immediately before and during the Second World War, state education was used as a propaganda tool by the Japanese fascist government.<sup>158</sup> In the Japanese education system, primary education was compulsory between the ages of six and fourteen, and was supported by the government. Every child above the age of six was supported by the government in order to continue their education, and so the number of educated persons rose. There were 25,665 primary schools, and a total of 10,382,590 students in primary education. Universities and colleges were not accounted for in these statistics. There were 160,004 male and 73,858 female primary school teachers, totalling 233,862. Headmasters received an average salary of 160 yen, and other teaching staff an average of 76 yen. All teaching staff gained the right to a pension after retirement.<sup>159</sup> The Japanese government allocated a budget of 650 million yen for education spending. Of this, 15 million yen were provided by the central government, and the rest by the municipality. Therefore, three fifth of national revenues were used for the primary education sector.<sup>160</sup>

In primary schools in Japan, reading, mathematics, Japanese history, geography, chemistry, electrics, painting, singing, and physical exercise were taught. Sewing and knitting were also taught for girls. In chemistry, not only theory but practical exercises were taught from childhood. When U Saw studied these primary schools, he found that stones, various

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<sup>157</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 202

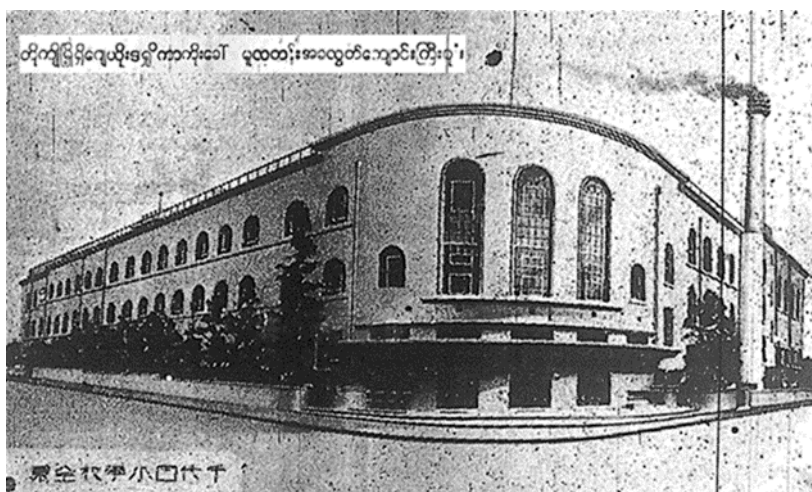
<sup>158</sup> Japan's Growth and Education 1963, Ministry of Education July 1963

<sup>159</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 195

<sup>160</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 22 July 1935

kinds of iron, saltpetre, alum, ammonium nitrate, paddy, peas, gourd, pumpkin, radish plants, various flowers, and birds were used as teaching aids for practical purposes. Moreover, the practical elements of electrical technology were also taught from a young age.<sup>161</sup>

Moreover, children were trained to practice reading newspapers from childhood. All teachers placed a suitable newspaper on the class notice board, with a particular focus on military news, exploration and adventure, and honouring national heroes.<sup>162</sup> In Myanmar, although newspapers were placed at some schools, it was not organised systematically.<sup>163</sup> It was concluded that it was necessary to emulate the Japanese state-funded compulsory primary education system in Myanmar. This, it was hoped, would help cultivate the virtues of moral behaviour and national patriotism.<sup>164</sup>



**Figure - 12. Chiyoda Elementary school in Tokyo**  
(Photo courtesy by Thuriya Newspaper, 22 July 1935)

<sup>161</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 22 July 1935

<sup>162</sup> *ibid*

<sup>163</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 198

<sup>164</sup> *ibid*, p. 200

In Japan, 1,800,000 students finished their primary education and among them, ten percent of male students and six percent of female students continued their middle school education. The rest of the students joined the workforce. Therefore, very few students continued their education into high school. It was not necessary for blue-collar workers or soldiers to complete high school education. Females in particular were less expected to continue their education, and many found work in suitable government departments after primary education.

U Saw visited the Kyoritsu Women's Educational Institution in Tokyo, which was donated by a woman named Maydin Hatoyama. It provided education for 2,000 female students at a time.<sup>165</sup> Education focused on the virtues of moral character, and taught household chores and the skills necessary to serve as an assistant. In particular, women were trained to become virtuous spouses, to respect their parents, to raise children in the appropriate manner, and encouraged to develop patriotic beliefs.<sup>166</sup>

### **U Saw returning from Japan**

After returning from Japan, U Saw delivered lectures on his experiences in Japan. He spoke at Yangon University Union Association on 20<sup>th</sup> August and at the Hall of Government High School Yangon on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1935.<sup>167</sup> U Saw inspired Myanmar youths by emphasising the honesty of the Japanese, their willingness to give their life for the country and their nationality, their bravery, and the reforms that enabled Japan to become an advanced nation so rapidly. He also encouraged Myanmar youths to take advantage of the Japanese foreign secretary's offer to support those wishing to study in Japan. Not only students, but Buddhist monks also attended and listened to his experiences, advice, and encouragement. He

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<sup>165</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 23 July 1935

<sup>166</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 24 July 1935

<sup>167</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 224

published *Gyapan Lan Nyunt* (Japan Points the Way) in 1935, which was distributed at the cheap price of one kyat by the *Thuriya* Press. Thuriya's price in 5 pya in this period. This book described the industrial and commercial prowess of the Japanese, their concern for cooperation with other Asian countries, and his belief that the Japanese model of economic development and cultural conservatism was appropriate for Myanmar.

From the time of this visit to Japan, which was paid for by his hosts, until sometime shortly before he became Premier in 1940, he maintained close contacts with Japanese diplomats and agents in Yangon, and, in the words of the governor of Myanmar, there was good reason to think that he accepted money from them. After cultivating the favour of the Japanese consul in Yangon, he had sufficient funds to buy the *Thuriya* press in February 1938, and began to organise his Myochit Party the following month. In the same year he became the chief editor of the *Thuriya* press. From that time the *Thuriya* Newspaper became the primary paper propagating Japanese ideas.<sup>168</sup>

## Conclusion

U Saw went to Japan as the delegate of the *Thuriya* newspaper to study the social structure, educational policy, administrative system, behaviour, culture, and tradition of the Japanese as an advanced nation. Upon his return to Myanmar, he stimulated and urged Myanmar people to follow Japan's example of self-development by spreading his experience and knowledge gained in Japan. He and other pro-Japanese politicians received financial help from Japan, and relations between the two countries became more closely related after 1935.

Regarding U Saw's experiences in Japan articles, the opinion of U Ngwe, high school teacher from Pyapon, Ayeyarwaddy Division described in *Thuriya* Newspaper on 5 July 1935.

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<sup>168</sup> Taylor, *The State in Burma*, p. 173

U Ngwe wrote that Myanmar people look forward to U Saw's articles published from Thuriya Newspaper, carefully. U Saw's writing is very interesting and also included Japan's progress in political, economic, and education sectors. Thus, we can know more detailed information about Japan's progress. This is a very valuable record. Furthermore, he urged and requested to publish his articles as the book together with the photos and maps.

## **Chapter III**

### **Japan Yin Thwe: A Film Directed by U Nyi Pu**

#### **— Study of Prominent Actor U Nyi Pu's Experiences in Japan in 1935**

#### **Introduction**

The above chapter discusses the experiences of Galon U Saw in Japan and how to stimulate Myanmar people to follow Japan's example of self-development by spreading his experience and knowledge gained in Japan. In this chapter, I focus on how a film was produced with Japan-Myanmar cooperation when U Nyi Pu, the first Myanmar actor-director and his younger brother U Maung Maung Soe arrived in Japan in 1935. This cooperation film is very important for the cultural exchange.

#### **A1 U Nyi Pu's Biography**

U Nyi Pu was born in Pyay District on 12 September 1900, to U Ba Nyunt and Daw Nyein Shin. In his childhood, he was called Maung Ba Then. He had nine siblings and most of them worked in the film industry for a living. U Nyi Pu studied at Ye Gyaw Methric School and Government High School near Yangon General Hospital when his parents were transferred to Yangon. In 1920, U Nyi Pu was a student leader in the student strike against the British colonial education system. He also served as an officer in charge of Dagon Magazine published from Myanmar Aswe Company and occasionally composed the articles. He wrote poetry against the British government, primarily about the 1300 uprising, and published them in this magazine.





**Figure - 13, U Nyi Pu (Photo courtesy by A1 Yoke Sone News, August 1935)**

Consequently, the British government shut down the magazine offices and arrested U Nyi Pu. First, he sent to the prison cell near Bar Street in Yangon and then, to the Thayarwaddy Jail. Moreover, when the British re-entered Myanmar after the Japanese retreated in 1945, U Nyi Pu along with his spouse Daw San Yin and U Maung Maung Soe who was U Nyi Pu's younger brother were arrested by the government for contacting the Japanese.<sup>169</sup> U Nyi Pu was recognised as the father of the Myanmar film industry and the first Myanmar actor. Besides, he was an active member of Myanmar Motion Picture Association, Film Council and Motion Picture Association.

He also served as the chairperson of the Myanmar Motion Picture Association from 1968 to 1975. He went to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Germany, Japan, and China for studying the about the film enterprise and production.<sup>170</sup> He fell in love with Ms. Takako

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<sup>169</sup> Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures of Early Myanmar Film Directors*, Yangon, Aung San Press, 2009, p. 93 (Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*)

<sup>170</sup> *ibid*, p. 94

Suzuki, a hotel cashier, and married her in 1935 while taking the movie Japan Yin Thwe.<sup>171</sup> Ms. Takako Suzuki followed U Nyi Pu to Myanmar and lived there by the name of Daw San Yin. U Nyi Pu and Daw San Yin parented five children, namely Ma Pyi Thein, Ko Aung Pe, Ko San Maung, Ko Pan Hla, and Ma Pyi Nyein. He died on 1 September 1996, while serving as a patron of Myanmar Motion Picture Association.<sup>172</sup>



**Figure - 14, U Nyi Pu and Daw San Yin (Mrs. Takako Suzuki)**

(Photo courtesy by [www.aveyarwady.com/n\\_musume/](http://www.aveyarwady.com/n_musume/))

1993年ヤンゴンのウー・ニープのご自宅で

## **U Nyi Pu and Myanmar Film Industry**

The Myanmar Film Industry began as the first silent picture during the British colonial period in 1920. U Ohn Maung created the documentary about the funeral of U Tun Shein, a leading politician of Myanmar, and was screened at the Royal Cinema, near Scott market

<sup>171</sup> Kyaw Than Myint (Bhamo), *The Pictures of Myanmar Film Actors*, Yangon, Shwe Yi Myint Myat Press, 2007, p. 16 (Kyaw Than Myint (Bhamo), *The Pictures of Myanmar Film Actors*)

<sup>172</sup> Kyaw Than Myint (Bhamo), *The Pictures of Myanmar Film Actors*, p. 19

together with an English picture.<sup>173</sup> After 1916, U Ohn Maung started searching for a script to direct a complete film based on his short pictures, which he made incessantly. He received the story, *Myitta Ne Thura* (Love and Liquor) written by Pi Moe Hinn with the help of U Nyi Pu, son of U Ba Nyunt, owner of Myanmar Aswe Departmental Store and U Pu, manager from Pyinnya Ahlin Newspaper and Magazine press.<sup>174</sup>

In 1918, U Ohn Maung shot the first silent Myanmar film, *Myitta Ne Thura* with U Nyi Pu as the actor and Ma Yi as the actress. This film was screened at the Royal Cinema on 6 November 1920. The audiences welcomed the film and it was screened to a full house.<sup>175</sup> Many film production companies were founded after Myanmar's cinema gained success. These included British-Burma, Myanmar Aswe, Parrot, Shwe Myint Mo, Shwe Pyi Soe, Yangon Film, Thet Hinn Brother, Zabyu Meik Swe, and Budget-Burma.<sup>176</sup>



**Figure - 15, U Ohn Maung**

**(Photo courtesy by Min Yu Wai, *The First Myanmar Peoples*, p. 104)**

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<sup>173</sup> University Khin Maung Zaw, *Domestic and Foreign Trips (Myanmar's Music, Film, Drama and Literature)*, Yangon, Nawaday Press, 2014, p. 106 (Khin Maung Zaw, *Domestic and Foreign Trips*)

<sup>174</sup> *Myanmar Film Symposium Bulletin*, Yangon, the board for the publication of Myanmar Film Symposium Bulletin, 1969, p. 29 (*Myanmar Film Symposium Bulletin*, 1969)

<sup>175</sup> University Khin Maung Zaw, *20<sup>th</sup> century trends of Myanmar Film Industry and the Classical Myanmar Artists (20)*, Yangon, Shwe Press, 2012, p.1 (Khin Maung Zaw, *20<sup>th</sup> century trends*)

<sup>176</sup> Khin Maung Zaw, *Domestic and Foreign Trips*, p. 107

The second film wherein U Nyi Pu acted was *Kyay Taw Thu Ma Nu* (A girl namely Ma Nu from the village), which was directed by U Ohn Maung. To shoot this film, U Nyi Pu studied books about movies. At that time, the actors and actresses smeared the Insein Pharmacy on their faces, which was dissolved with sugar, to get pure white skin on the screen. The lip was rubbed with the red papers which were used to pack the sticks of incense and the red fan so that it could be reddened. The Chinese ink sticks were used for drawing the eyebrows. This second film was produced within three months and screened in March 1921. This film received the public's encouragement. Thus, it can be seen that Myanmar film technicians endeavoured to acquire the knowledge of filmmaking within a short time because the interval between the first movie and the second movie was only four months.<sup>177</sup>

Being a rich man and the owner of Myanmar Aswe, U Ba Nyunt wanted to send his sons, U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe, to Britain for studying economy and commerce. Before leaving, U Nyi Pu made *Taw Myaing Son Ka Lwan Aung Phan* (The jungle creates nostalgia), the third film, with the help of his brother, U Tin New. This film was screened on 12 May 1923 and it was successful and liked by the audiences. Thereafter, U Ba Nyunt did not send them abroad to become a scholar; he permitted them to start film production because they wanted to succeed in this field. U Nyi Pu was only 19 years old when he acted for the first time in the first film, and only 23 years old when he directed the first film.<sup>178</sup>

At that time, the foreign capitalists predominated Myanmar economic enterprises and the foreigners overshadowed the film enterprises.<sup>179</sup> During this period, all the cinemas in Yangon were owned by the Indians. There were ten film companies in Myanmar and thirty-six motion pictures were produced on the average.<sup>180</sup> Among these film companies, Burma Film

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<sup>177</sup> Aye Kyu Lay, *Records of Myanmar Film Silver Jubilee*, p. 12

<sup>178</sup> Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*, p. 84

<sup>179</sup> Khin Maung Zaw, *The 20<sup>th</sup> century trends*, p. 2

<sup>180</sup> Pyae Sone, *Movie and Myself*, Yangon, Thwe Thauk Press, 1976, p.38 (Pyae Sone, *Movie and Myself*)

Company, which was owned by U Ohn Maung's family, existed on the length of time. Before New Burma Film (A1 Film) was founded, Burma Film Company discontinued film production because of the differences of opinion among U Ohn Maung and the shareholders. Consequently, it was reformed as the Myanmar Aswe Company owned by U Ba Nyunt. Thus, U Nyi Pu decided to hand over the management of the Burma Film Company to his brother, U Tin new, which continued as the New Burma Film Company from 1923 to 1931.<sup>181</sup> From 1932 to 1939, it was called the Myanmar Aswe A1 Film Company Ltd. From 1940, they continued film production under the name of A1 Film Company. Their later generations also produced films under this banner.<sup>182</sup>

Su Htoo Pan (The Divine Entreaty), which was produced by U Nyi Pu as a director-actor in 1929, was the first picture to become famous in the Myanmar film industry and was screened in a foreign country. This was the eighth film that U Nyi Pu produced and directed. He translated the world-famous novel, Camille, into Myanmar language, and made it into a picture. This was named Lady Prefer Bond; it was captioned in English language was screened in London in Britain and other European countries.<sup>183</sup> The sixteen sound pictures, seven musical pictures, seventy-four silent pictures, and seven historic pictures have been lost because the A1 Films store caught fire in July 1950.<sup>184</sup> The following table enlists films acted and directed by U Nyi Pu and produced by Burma Film, New Burma Film, and Myanmar Aswe A1 Film (A1 Film);<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*, p. 83

<sup>182</sup> J. Kyaing, (M.A, History), "The Pictures Directed and Screened by A1 Film Company", *Yoke Shin Aung Lan Magazine*, No. 391, 1989, p. 60 (J. Kyaing, "The Pictures Directed and Screened")

<sup>183</sup> Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*, p. 87

<sup>184</sup> J. Kyaing, "The Pictures Directed and Screened", p. 150

<sup>185</sup> *ibid*, pp. 64-66

Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*, pp. 95-96

Before go to Japan (1920 – 1935)				After returned from Japan (After 1935)			
No	Title	Year	Action	No	Title	Year	Action
1	Myitta Ne Thura (Love and Liquor)	1920	Actor	1	San Yae Yin (The holy stream)	1936	Joint Director
2	Kyay Taw Thu Ma Nu (A girl namely Ma Nu from the village)	1921	Actor	2	Chit Thu Yaung (lovely Thu Yaung who is a beautiful lady from the legend)	1937	Joint Director
3	Taw Myaing Son Ka Lwan Aung Phan (The jungle creates nostalgia)	1923	Actor-Director	3	Pan Thitsar (The Vow)	1954	Joint Director
4	Kyar Thit Mal (The queen of Leopards)	1923	Director	4	Koe Yin Thwe (My Baby)	1955	Joint Director
5	Pauk Kyaing (Pauk Kyaing is the name of a king who came from the legend)	1924	Actor	5	Chit Than Tha Yar (The Futurity of Love)	1957	Joint Director
6	Ta Khaing Lone Shwe (The Golden Bunch of Leaves)	1924	Actor	6	Ngar Yar Nasal Shit (Five hundred and twenty-eight which mean the value of love between parents, friend, relative, etc.,)	1957	Joint Director
7	Hmaing Wai Wai (The Hazy Days)	1925	Actor-Director	7	Nan Htat Pan Takhat (A Red Rose of the Royal Garden)	1963	Joint Director
8	Pa Loke Tote Tote Sat Kyar Shin	1925	Director	8	Ma Hmung Thaw Alin (A shimmering light at the end of the tunnel)	1965	Joint Director
9	Shwe Min Won	1926	Director	9	Tha Mann Kyar (The Werewolf)	1970	Joint Director
10	Mya Tha Bat (The Emerald-Scarf)	1926	Director				
11	Mya Aye Yin	1927	Director				
12	Su Htoo Pan (The Divine Entreaty)	1929	Actor-Director				
13	Myaing Nan San (The throne of jungle)	1929	Director				
14	Shwe Hnin Si (Golden Rose)	1931	Actor-Director				
15	Thamine Nyunt Paung (The History Coalition)	1933	Actor-Director				
16	Than Ka Mout (The Steel Helmet)	1934	Joint Director				
17	Chit Yae Sin (The stage of love bowl)	1934	Joint Director				
18	Japan Yin Thwe (Japan Daughter)	1935	Actor-Director				
19	Four Seasons in Japan	1935	Director				

## U Nyi Pu and Japan

In April 1935, Mr. Furuhata announced in the Thuriya Newspaper and other newspapers that anyone who has the desire to visit Japan could contact him. Mr. Furuhata was the Japanese merchant who had been living in Yangon for more than 20 years.<sup>186</sup> Galon U Saw, U Nyi Pu, and U Tin Nwe<sup>187</sup> is the friend. After they read this announcement, U Nyi Pu contacted the Thuriya newspaper to follow up with Mr. Furuhata because they aimed at going abroad and buying the equipment for sound film production.<sup>188</sup> U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe prepared to leave for Japan along with U Saw, the leading politician and reporter from Thuriya newspaper, and other colleagues on 13 May 1935.<sup>189</sup> They arrived in Moji in Japan on 10 June 1935.<sup>190</sup> While the seven colleagues had different purposes for going to Japan, U Nyi Pu and his brother was interested in knowing more about movies and filmmaking.<sup>191</sup>

When they arrived in Japan, they had to attend a dinner party at the invitation of the Chamber of Commerce in Kobe on 10 June 1935.<sup>192</sup> U Saw served as a representative of Myanmar U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe showed a documentary film portraying Myanmar.<sup>193</sup> Moreover U Saw held a public lecture at Myo kin Gyi monastery in Kyoto on the night of 15 June 1935 and 3000 people attended the lecture. At the meeting, U Nyi Pu showed a documentary film directed by him which portrayed the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Myanmar, but it was unsuccessful because of the incompleteness of instruments. However, the documentary film which was about the pagodas, the method of playing Myanmar Chinlone, and the country's

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<sup>186</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, Yangon, Thuriya Press, 1935, p. 7 (U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*)

Ei Thandar Aung, "Study of Galon U Saw's Experiences in Japan in 1935", *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Okayama University*, Vol.47, 2019, pp. 209-229

<sup>187</sup> U Tin Nwe is the scriptwriter, producer, director and U Nyi Pu's elder brother

<sup>188</sup> Interview, U Thein Htut (A1 Family) (11 October 2019)

<sup>189</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 17

<sup>190</sup> *ibid*, p. 108

<sup>191</sup> *ibid*, p. 154

<sup>192</sup> *ibid*, p. 122

<sup>193</sup> *ibid*, p. 125

traditional dances were screened in other towns and the Japanese audiences were instantly taken by it.<sup>194</sup>

On 21 July 1935, the meeting of the world's Buddhist association was held at Tsukiji Hongan-ji (Sakagi Hongan-ji)<sup>195</sup>, which was a Buddhist monastery in Tokyo, based on Ceylon construction style. Forty representatives from Buddhist countries, including U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe attended that conference. This meeting, which had been held for two years, was the last one.<sup>196</sup> At that meeting, everyone, young and adult included, came to embrace Buddhism and U Nyi Pu ordered 10 robes from Myanmar to initiate a boy into the Buddhist order before he went back. He also offered a typewriter to a monk from Ceylon named Sīrijinavansa Ñānachvāmi Mahāthera for the publication of Buddhist literature. The cost for this typewriter was forty Yens and it was equivalent to thirty-five Myanmar Kyats.<sup>197</sup> U Nyi Pu held the ordination led by the monks from Ceylon while he was in Japan. The eight articles required by the Buddhist monks were donated by U Nyi Pu and other donators from Myanmar.<sup>198</sup>

## U Nyi Pu and Japan Yin Thwe

U Nyi Pu was famous in the Myanmar film industry as a person who produced pictures in Japan, maintained the Japan-Myanmar relations through film industry, and ensured cooperation between Myanmar-Japan film technicians. In 1935, U Nyi Pu went to Japan to buy the equipment for directing a sound film. While he stayed in Japan, he produced Japan Yin Thwe.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> U Saw, *Japan Lan Nyunt*, p. 142

<sup>195</sup> U Nyi Pu wrote this temple name is wrongly in his article.

<sup>196</sup> *AI Yoke Sone News*, September 1935, p. 41

<sup>197</sup> *ibid*, p. 50

<sup>198</sup> *ibid*, p. 52

<sup>199</sup> Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*, p. 89



The history of Myanmar motion pictures started with the silent film, and in 1932, the first sound film was screened by the Burma Imperial Film Company. In the silent film, the recorded words were captioned on the screen without the actor's tone. The background music and songs were directly played by a musical troupe in the cinema when the film was being screened. The sound recorded film was like the silent film, only difference being that the melodies for the background music and songs were recorded on the film. In the song film, the actors' tone was recorded directly on the film and screened at the cinema.<sup>200</sup> The first sound film was Ngwe Pay Lo Ma Ya (Money can't buy it) directed by U Toke Kyi, which was produced by the Burma Imperial Film Company and screened at Plaza cinema on 18 May 1932.<sup>201</sup>

Although Myanmar Aswe Film Company was experienced in film production, it was left behind in the age of sound film. However, New Burma Film (A1 Film) tried to produce unique pictures. Therefore, U Nyi Pu and his younger brother, U Maung Maung Soe went to Japan to buy the equipment for sound film production. In Japan, they studied about sound film equipment and film studios.<sup>202</sup> Although they came to Japan to buy equipment, they became interested in the Japanese Film industry because among the Asian countries, the Japanese technology and industrial sectors had advanced rapidly within a short span of time.<sup>203</sup>

While studying filmmaking, they had a sudden idea to direct a film with a Japanese actress. Therefore, they took permission from their father and elder brother and produced and directed a film named Japan Yin Thwe with cooperating from P.C.L (Photo Chemical Laboratory) Company (写真化学研究所)<sup>204</sup>. It was the biggest film company which employed

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<sup>200</sup> Aye Kyu Lay, *Records of Myanmar Film Silver Jubilee*, p. 100 (Aye Kyu Lay, *Records of Myanmar Film Silver Jubilee*)

<sup>201</sup> Aye Kyu Lay, *Records of Myanmar Film Silver Jubilee*, p. 94

<sup>202</sup> *ibid*, p. 85

<sup>203</sup> *AI Yoke Sone News*, September 1935, p. 58

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.toho.co.jp/company/info/history.html> (1 October 2019)

1,000 workers, along with 600 actresses and 20 directors.<sup>205</sup> All the participants in this film were from Japan film association except U Nyi Pu, U Maung Maung Soe, and U San Nyunt. U San Nyunt lived in Japan.<sup>206</sup> Mitsuko Takao, the film's Japanese actress, later changed her name into Aye Mi San.<sup>207</sup>

This is the film's story in brief: Two Myanmar brothers arrived in Japan to carry an airplane named Myanmar Gon Yi and they fell in love with a Japanese girl. In this film, certain sequences were exciting to direct, such as skilfully flying the airplane, falling from the plane as it crashed, and landing on the ground with parachutes. Moreover, the beautiful scene of Fuji Mountain, Japanese traditional dances and festivals were produced together with Japanese traditional music.<sup>208</sup> The P.C.L Company from Japan conducted the indoor and outdoor film shooting and sound recording. U Nyi Pu took over editing and recording the background music. There were two crucial scenes in the play and the film: In the play, when a Myanmar actor spoke in Myanmar language, it was accompanied by Japanese subtitles for the local audiences; in the film, when the Japanese actor spoke in Japanese, it had Myanmar subtitles for its audiences.<sup>209</sup>

U Nyi Pu's Japan Yin Thwe was his first production abroad. His ability to direct the characters perfectly earned him praises from the experienced Japanese film technicians.<sup>210</sup> Moreover, the Japanese newspaper and magazines wrote about U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe, as the Myanmar film technicians who penetrated into the world of Japanese movies successfully.<sup>211</sup> The Japanese Film Company offered the brothers 1000 Yens to cooperate with

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<sup>205</sup> *Ai Yoke Sone News*, August 1935, p. 56

<sup>206</sup> Aye Kyu Lay, *Records of Myanmar Film Silver Jubilee*, p. 85

<sup>207</sup> Interview, U Thein Htut (A1 Family) (28 September 2019)

<sup>208</sup> Kay Myu, *The Fifteen Pictures*, p. 90

<sup>209</sup> *History of Myanmar Film Industry, 1920-1945* (Silver Jubilee), Yangon, Myanmar Motion Picture Association, 2004, p. 206 (*History of Myanmar Film Industry*)

<sup>210</sup> *ibid*, p. 210

<sup>211</sup> *Asahi Newspaper*, 12 September 1935, p. 7 (morning news)

the Japanese film enterprises. However, they did not accept the offer. At that time, Japanese Yens 1000 was equivalent to Myanmar kyats 1500.<sup>212</sup>



**Figure - 16, U Pyi Pu, U Maung Maung Soe, and Ms. Mitsuko Takao**

**(Photo courtesy by U Thein Htut - A1 Family)**

During this period, the income of Myanmar film technicians was as follows. The salaried actor and actress were paid 125 to 150 Kyats. The director had a salary of 75 to 100 Kyats. The actor and actress who acted as contact system had a salary of 500 to 600 Kyats for one film and director had a salary of 125 to 400 Kyats.<sup>213</sup> The sound film, *Japan Yin Thwe*, was screened at Bayint cinema and Olympia cinema on 25 November 1935, simultaneously. As this film was a joint effort by Myanmar actors and Japanese actress, the public response to this film was impressive as they went in huge numbers to watch the movie. Therefore, this film was successful in encouraging the people.<sup>214</sup> As this film was screened in Myanmar and Japan at the same time, it can be assumed that it supported the development of Japan-Myanmar

<sup>212</sup> *History of Myanmar Film Industry*, p. 210

<sup>213</sup> Pyae Sone, *Movie and Myself*, p. 78

<sup>214</sup> Aye Kyu Lay, *Records of Myanmar Film Silver Jubilee*, p. 88

relations. People in Japan also showed an interest in this film.<sup>215</sup> It was also shown in Thailand, in 1937.<sup>216</sup> Besides, this film was also screened at the Southeast Asia Film Festival which was held in Japan in 1992.<sup>217</sup>



**Figure - 17, (Photo courtesy by A1 Yoke Sone News, September 1935)**

U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe produced a documentary film on Japan which has four seasons: the onset of the dry season, dry season, beginning of the cold season and the cold season. The seasonal festivals, cultural festivals, sports competitions, musical concerts, Japanese traditions, and sports activities were portrayed in this film. This documentary film was jointly shown with Japan Yin Thwe.<sup>218</sup>

While Japan Yin Thwe was directed in Japan, the song Mya Khwar Nyo by U Maung Maung Soe was recorded with assistance from Philippine musicians. This tape was distributed all over the country from Myanmar Aswe Studio, after they returned to Myanmar. Before U

<sup>215</sup> *History of Myanmar Film Industry*, p. 211

<sup>216</sup> Nay Chi Zaya, *A Dictionary of Myanmar film Industry*, Yangon, Sar Pay Law Ka Press, 2015, p. 87 (Nay Chi Zaya, *A Dictionary of Myanmar film Industry*)

<sup>217</sup> Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*, p. 90

<sup>218</sup> *History of Myanmar Film Industry*, p. 211

Nyi Pu left for Japan, Thabin Won Studio was founded in Myanmar and they took training to sing Mya Khwar Nyo for studying tape production in Japan.<sup>219</sup> When he returned from Japan, he hired two Japanese recording technicians, Mr. Yano and Mr. Watanabe.<sup>220</sup>

## **U Nyi Pu and the experiences of directing Japan Yin Thwe**

U Nyi Pu also visited Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Nagoya, and Tokyo in Japan. Galon U Saw and other colleagues returned from Tokyo to Myanmar, but U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe stayed back. Thereafter, they started to talk to Film production companies for direction opportunities. Then, they coordinated with the P.C.L Company for shooting Japan Yin Thwe.<sup>221</sup>

The Japanese Government supported U Nyi Pu's endeavours and made the required arrangements. On 3 August 1935, U Nyi Pu went to the Japanese foreign office, responding to their invitation. The Japanese Government thanked U Nyi Pu for publicising Japan worldwide, through a motion picture.<sup>222</sup> Japan Yin Thwe's direction started on the first week of September.<sup>223</sup> Although there were some disturbances with a crowd gathering around to watch the direction, the police contained the situation. The Japanese Government also supported the participants.<sup>224</sup> After the film's direction was complete, U Maung Maung Soe started for Myanmar on 18 October and arrived on 6 November. This was the first sound film produced by Myanmar Aswe A1 Film (A1 Film).<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*, p. 91

<sup>220</sup> Dagon Pa U Ba Tin, *The world of Myanmar Movie and Myself*, Yangon, Sapay Beikman, 1966, p. 51

(Dagon Pa U Ba Tin, *The world of Myanmar Movie and Myself*)

Khin Maung Zaw, *Domestic and Foreign Trips*, p. 167

<sup>221</sup> *A1 Yoke Sone News*, Special Issue, No. 7, p. 8

<sup>222</sup> *A1 Yoke Sone News*, September 1935, p. 55

<sup>223</sup> *A1 Yoke Sone News*, Special Issue, No. 7, p. 8

<sup>224</sup> *ibid*, p. 2

<sup>225</sup> *A1 Yoke Sone News*, Special Issue, No. 7, p. 8



**Figure – 18, (Photo courtesy by A1 Yoke Sone News, Special Issue, No. 7)**

Although U Maung Maung Soe returned to Myanmar on 18 October, U Nyi Pu stayed back to screen the film in Japan. During this time, the Japanese recording engineers carefully tested the equipment which was to be exported to Myanmar for the first time.<sup>226</sup> The film industry in Japan was far more superior to that in Myanmar. The electricity used in directing a crucial scene in the film at night had enough power to light up a small town in Myanmar. Machines were used for washing films which resulted in clearer and cleaner pictures. The sound films were also excellent; the ones produced in Myanmar did not sound clear because of the absence of suitable technology.<sup>227</sup>

In Japan, a good film costs one million kyats. One foot of good film costs ten to fifteen kyats and that of an ordinary film costs five kyats. In Myanmar, it costs three kyats for one foot. It was estimated that the picture directed in Japan by U Nyi Pu cost fifteen to twenty kyats for one foot. As this picture was brought to Myanmar, it cost twenty-five to thirty-five kyats for one foot of film, inclusive of customs duty. Although the expenditure for one film cost one million kyats in Japan, the return to the investment was good because numerous people watched

<sup>226</sup> *A1 Yoke Sone News*, Special Issue, No. 7, p. 16

<sup>227</sup> *A1 Yoke Sone News*, August, 1935, p. 57

the picture. There were 2,000 cinemas in Japan and Osaka Cinema was the most popular. The same picture was showed simultaneously in all the cinemas and screened five times per day. The cinema received 3,100 to 6,000 Yens per one-time show. The admission fee was 1.5 to 5 Yens per person which was equivalent to 1 to 4.80 Kyats.<sup>228</sup> The admission fee in Myanmar was one to two kyats per person.



**Figure - 19, (Photo courtesy by <https://www.nfaj.go.jp/exhibition/unesco2019/>)**

U Nyi Pu preferred to produce a good film, without caring much for the expenditure. It cost four times more to shoot Japan Yin Thwe in Japan compared with what it could have been in Myanmar. Through the direction of this film, the ability of the Myanmar people became evident.<sup>229</sup> The tasks carried out by U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe in Japan were as follows;

- (1) Recording the Mya Khwar Nyo song by U Maung Maung Soe in PCL
- (2) Achievement of directing a play named four seasons in Japan
- (3) Achievement of directing the sound film, Japan Yin Thwe

<sup>228</sup> *AI Yoke Sone News*, August, 1935, p. 58

<sup>229</sup> *AI Yoke Sone News*, Special Issue, No. 7, p. 15su

- (4) Learning the technology of new recording equipment by U Nyi Pu and buying the instruments
- (5) Learning modern photography and buying the necessary materials for Dagon studio
- (6) Buying the new machines for the publication of Dagon Magazine<sup>230</sup>

### **U Nyi Pu's Return from Japan**

In his lifetime, U Nyi Pu shot ten films as an actor, ten films as a director, twelve films as a joint director, and six films as an actor-director. When he returned from Japan, he built an audio studio to record for the sound film production in the yard of the A1 family. After the construction of the building and installing the equipment, U Nyi Pu and U Maung Maung Soe practically learned the sound recording techniques from the two Japanese recording technicians. Then, he shot the films by applying what he had known in Japan and his experiences. San Yae Yin (The holy stream) and Chit Thu Yaung (lovely Thu Yaung) in 1936 and 1937 were the first production of U Nyi Pu as the joint-director after returned from Japan. In 1938, Chit Thu Yaung (lovely Thu Yaung) was screened at Bayint cinema, the audiences fully supported this film. Unfortunately, I could not get the records of San Yae Yin (The holy stream) even though try to interview with U Nyi Pu's grandson.



**Figure – 20, Aadvertising flyer of Chit Thu Yaung (lovely Thu Yaung)**

**(Photo courtesy by U Thein Htut - A1 Family)**

<sup>230</sup> *Myanmar Film Symposium Bulletin*, 1969, p. 32



After returning from Japan, U Nyi Pu concentrated on film production and sound recording technology than the acting. U Nyi Pu has made an effort to improve the production of sound films by learning the audio technologies from the two Japanese technicians. Therefore, the quality of pictures and sound systems also more progressed than in the past. Moreover, he invented certain techniques which contributed to the development of filming technology. His inventions consisted of various camera twists, special effects, dual-role shoots, and the transformation system from still image to the film, different film productions, and different silent films.<sup>231</sup>

After his father, U Ba Nyunt died in December 1945, U Tin Nwe managed the company and U Nyi Pu served as a director. The people in Myanmar wanted to escape from the clutches of their British rulers. Therefore, the country's nationalist leaders searched for help outside to fight for Myanmar's Independence and they found an ally in Japan; this marked the emergence of the Thirty Comrades. The Japanese came to Myanmar as an ally along with Thirty Comrades; then, the Japanese conquest and occupation of Myanmar lasted from 1942 to 1945. When the British re-entered Myanmar after the Japanese retreated in 1945, U Nyi Pu, Daw San Yin, and U Maung Maung Soe were arrested by the government for contacting the Japanese. In 1953, U Nyi Pu handed over the works of A1 Film Company Ltd to his brothers and sisters and founded his own Mahawizardo Film Company and Studio. Even when U Nyi Pu became old, he continued to produce and direct films and made a copy of photographs from Mahawizardo Film Company and Studio.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Interview, U Thein Htut (A1 Family) (12 May 2020)

<sup>232</sup> Kay Myue, *The Fifteen Pictures*, p. 85

## Conclusion

During the colonial period, in 1920, the Myanmar Film Industry began with the silent picture directed by U Ohn Maung. English films dominated the Film Industry, and all the cinemas in Yangon were owned by Indians. When the first Myanmar film started to show, the audiences fully supported the venture. Therefore, many film companies appeared after 1920 which were owned mostly by the Myanmar people. After 1935, there was a remarkable progress in the standard of the Myanmar Film Industry, and this was because of the efforts of the filmmakers, including U Nyi Pu. From 1936 to 1941, Myanmar Film Industry's standard reached at par with Indian Films. U Nyi Pu was the first Myanmar actor and director who tried to direct a film in a foreign country. Japan's technology was advanced and Japanese were sharp and bright like the westerners. Prior to 1935, Myanmar people held a positive view of Japan because most of the newspapers described Japan's progressions. Due to these factors, U Nyi Pu became interested in visiting Japan and he decided to buy the equipment for producing sound film from there. When he arrived in Japan, he studied about the advanced filmmaking technologies, sound film equipment, and film studios. His interest in the Japanese Film Industry was rooted in finding out how, among other Asian countries, they had advanced so rapidly within a short span of time. Besides, he also wanted to promote the Myanmar Film Industry in the foreign countries. To this end, he directed Japan Yin Thwe with Japanese actress and technicians. When the film was screened, it was supported by the audiences of both the countries. He also directed a documentary film named four seasons of Japan. Japan Yin Thwe and documentary film was shown together in Myanmar. These films played an important role in strengthening the cultural relations of Myanmar and Japan and cordialised the countries about their social and cultural lives. Japan Yin Thwe represented the cultural relationship between the countries in the past and it continues to do so in the present. A press conference was held on 18 July 2019 in Yangon Film Development Centre, Shwe Taung Kyar, Bahan to restore Japan Yin Thwe to a digital version. This process was carried out with the cooperation

of Japanese and Myanmar technicians. Mr. Yoshiro Irie who is the National Film Archive of Japan stated that this film was to be shown at the Nagase Memorial Theatre OZU (2nd floor), Tokyo on 26 October 2019, and then at the Myanmar Film 100 years Festival in October 2020.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Interview, U Thein Htut (A1 Family), (28 September 2019)

<https://www.nfaj.go.jp/exhibition/unesco2019/> (12 October 2019)

## **Chapter IV**

### **Study of Prominent Trader U Hla's Experiences in Japan in 1936**

#### **Introduction**

In the above chapter, the Myanmar actors visits Japan and describes his efforts for cultural exchanges with Japanese filmmakers. In this chapter, I focus on the characteristics of Japan and the Japanese people as portrayed by U Hla, a trader from Myanmar who studied the Japanese economy and industry, and the behaviour of the Japanese people during his visit to Japan in 1936. At that time, very few people from Myanmar travelled to foreign countries in search of opportunities to earn money through commercial activities. The Myanmar people were reluctant to engage in economic activities in other countries. In fact, they were afraid of visiting foreign countries. U Hla went to Japan where produced goods mainly used in Myanmar were to introduce Myanmar nationals who did not satisfy the domestic products with commercial activities by connecting foreign countries directly. The economy and commercial activities played an important role in the cordial relations among nations.

#### **U Hla's Biography**

U Hla's parents were U Hmat Kyi and Daw Thar Lan, and he was born in the village of Duyindubo, Shwedaung in Pyay District.<sup>234</sup> He was a merchant specialising in silk, and owned a silk house and loom factory. He opened the Lun silk house in Shwedaung. After he married Daw Hla Yin, they relocated to Yangon, Merchant Road. He resettled his business in Yangon and attempted to make inroads into overseas markets. Therefore, U Hla decided to visit

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<sup>234</sup> Interview, U Tint Maung (18 May 2019 at Duyindubo village, Shwedaung)

Japan to study the economic life of the Japanese and explore the textile business in Japan.<sup>235</sup>

### **The purpose of U Hla's visit to Japan**

The numbers of people who travelled from Myanmar to foreign countries and found ways and means to earn money by the commercial activities were small in number. Myanmar nationals are afraid of making economic activities in other countries. However aliens not only conducted the commercial activities in Lower Myanmar and Upper Myanmar but controlled the whole country for fifty years and people from Myanmar felt aggrieved in economy. Therefore Myanmar was anxious about the passing away of national race under the foreign domination if they adhered to old idea and traditions. As all the commercial activities which is the essential elements of economy and prosperity were not interested by the Myanmar nationals, foreigners who entered into Myanmar and influenced the economic activities were became prosperous.<sup>236</sup> The foreigners in Myanmar became rich as Myanmar nationals used the foreign products at present although the domestic goods were used at some time in the past. The purpose of U Hla's visit to Japan where produced goods mainly used in Myanmar were to introduce Myanmar nationals who did not satisfy the domestic products with the commercial activities by connecting foreign countries directly.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Interview, Daw Kyu Kyu (18 April 2019 at Yangon)

<sup>236</sup> U Hla, *Myanmar – Japan Gyi Pwar Yaee Mattan*, Pyay, Pyinsa Yupan Press, 1939, p.4 (U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yaee Mattan*)

Myanmar – Japan Gyi Pwar Yaee Mattan mean Myanmar – Japan Diary (This book title is refer to advise the Myanmar business people how to promote the nation's economy in the future, especially to imitate in matters of behavior of Japan)

<sup>237</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 7 August 1936



**Figure - 21, U Hla**

**(Photo courtesy by U Hla, Myanmar - Japan Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan, p. 56)**

### **U Hla's Meeting with Galon U Saw before the Trip**

On 8 June 1936, U Hla, on receiving his passport, met with U Saw, who had visited Japan in 1935 to study the Japanese social structure, educational policy, and administrative system, to enquire about the costs of travelling by ship, procedures for travelling, and the behaviour of the Japanese. As U Saw and his colleagues encouraged U Hla and offered him assistance in travelling to Japan, the purpose of U Hla's visit, which was to help the development of his country's economy, was confirmed. Moreover, Japanese Vice-Consul Mr Kaneko Toyoji wrote letters to departmental officials in Japan introducing U Hla to them. U Hla decided to leave for Japan via Singapore by steamship although there was a direct route between Yangon and Japan.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 7

## Arrival in Japan

U Hla left to Japan from Yangon Port by KARAPARA, a ship owned by BI Company,<sup>239</sup> on the morning of 31 July 1936.<sup>240</sup> U Hla arrived in Singapore at 6:00 a.m. on 5 August 1936.<sup>241</sup> After leaving Singapore, U Hla reached Kobe, Japan, at 4:30 p.m. on 20 August 1936. U Hla left for Osaka after staying one night in Kobe.<sup>242</sup> He hired a motorcar for four yen to travel from Kobe to Osaka. However, he paid five yen because the journey took a longer than expected time as U Hla had to exchange currency at the bank and drink tea on the way to Osaka. This amount was equivalent to 3.5 Myanmar kyats.<sup>243</sup> At that time, 100 kyats could be exchanged for 130 yen.<sup>244</sup>

By the arrangement of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce, U Hla stayed at Dobi Hotel in Osaka on 22 August 1936. This Japanese hotel was a ten-storey building that cost four yen per day in rent.<sup>245</sup> Following the Osaka Chamber of Commerce's invitation, U Hla met with some traders and was shown samples of Japanese goods. As U Hla wanted to study commercial affairs, he made an appointment with Hasegawa Company.<sup>246</sup>

## U Hla's visit to Asahi press

U Hla took assistance from a guide in order to travel in Japan. Although an Act regarding tourism had not yet been passed by the Government, an interpreter's wages were set at ten yen per day. However, by the arrangement of the hotel, Mr T. Nishikawa, a Japanese

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<sup>239</sup> British India Steam Navigation Company Limited

<sup>240</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 7 August 1936

<sup>241</sup> *ibid*

<sup>242</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 24 August 1936

<sup>243</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 102

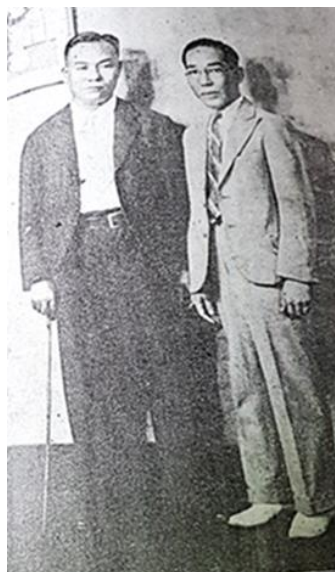
<sup>244</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 24 August 1936

<sup>245</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 27 August 1936

<sup>246</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 116

instructor who had studied in the US, was hired on 24 August 1936 for five yen per day.<sup>247</sup>

U Hla, after connecting with his interpreter, visited the Asahi Press, where he met with Mr Sebechirino and other journalists. He then studied the newspaper printing process.<sup>248</sup> He was impressed by the machines used for printing newspapers of the Asahi Press. The Asahi head office was located in Osaka and branch offices were established in Nagoya, Tokyo, Kobe, Yokohama, and Shanghai. There were arrangements in place to ensure synchronous delivery of the newspapers all over the country. The Osaka office sent the same photographs to the branch offices by the Telephoto system.<sup>249</sup> There were two machines at the Asahi Press, one made in Germany and the other made in Japan using the German technology. This Japan-made machine was operated more easily at a lower cost than the German machine. U Hla wanted to learn more from Mainichi Press and other print media companies, but was unable to do so due to lack of time.<sup>250</sup>



**Figure - 22, U Hla and T. Nishikawa**

**(Photo courtesy by U Hla, Myanmar – Japan Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan, p.128)**

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<sup>247</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 126

<sup>248</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 30 August 1936

<sup>249</sup> *ibid*

<sup>250</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 130



## Studying the textile industry in Japan

Keeping his appointment with Hasegawa Company, U Hla on 25 August 1936 visited the company workshop in Hamamatsu that produced machines for the weaving industry. The factory manager and officer showed him the whole process of building weaving machines, starting with dissolving the iron to putting the parts together. He observed that they had made 600 weaving machines ordered from South America and 150 from Belgium. The manager said that first-class garments can be produced if the weaving industry used these kinds of machines. U Hla wanted to buy ten weaving machines for Myanmar, but did not know how to operate them. Therefore, he asked the manager to train Myanmar people, and the manager promised to do so. If someone visited Japan, it was necessary that they understood the Japanese language. Therefore, he requested the manager to send the price of the machines and required materials.<sup>251</sup>

On 28 August 1936, U Hla travelled to the Nagoya Chamber of Commerce and met with the chairman and secretary. The secretary warmly welcomed him and explained that there were many traders and industrial enterprises. Moreover, the law book of the Chamber of Commerce was presented to U Hla. The secretary introduced him to the other factories that U Hla wanted to visit. The World Trade Fair was to be held in Nagoya the next year. The secretary invited the Myanmar people to the event. U Hla replied that the Myanmar Chamber of Commerce had announced the trade fair in the *New Burma Newspaper* and other local newspapers, and that he would also urge his country people to attend the trade fair. The secretary said that transport charges will be subsidised for the Myanmar people and Indians. U Hla said that Myanmar traders should study commercial business.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 30 August 1936

<sup>252</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 2 September 1936

On 29 August 1936, U Hla travelled to the Toyota weaving and textile factory located in Nagoya. This factory was at that time Japan's most important plant.<sup>253</sup> One machine at the facility could weave the same amount of products as ten hand spinning machines. U Hla thought that 90 percent of workers would become jobless if the machine was introduced in Myanmar. If hand spinning machines were operated, the unemployment problem will be resolved and cotton produced in Myanmar will be used. Therefore, he called for using hand spinning machines rather than the machine. After studying all the factories, U Hla returned to Osaka.<sup>254</sup>

On 1 September 1936, U Hla travelled to Kobe by train. He discussed about the textile industry with Mr T. Ban at the Chamber of Commerce in Kobe. Mr T. Ban explained that Kobe businessmen were more interested in and gave more attention to the production of slippers and airplanes than textile products. The majority of traders bought products from Osaka and exported to foreign countries.

Mr T. Ban also said that there were 700 stores owned by Indians, and that 8,000 Indians lived in Kobe. Mr T. Ban added that he could arrange for U Hla to meet the entrepreneurs who had rubber slipper manufacturing operations in Kobe. As U Hla wanted to meet the businessmen and study the slipper industry in Kobe, Mr T. Ban telephoned the slipper traders to introduce him.<sup>255</sup>

U Hla also visited the Japan Trading Company located in Yamato Gawa, Kansai region, Osaka on 3 September 1936 in response to the company's invitation. At this factory, over 2,500 workers made first-class weaving machines or looms. The process of making a loom from wood included at least ten steps. Over 15,000 looms were made per day. These looms were

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<sup>253</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 5 September 1936

<sup>254</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 167

<sup>255</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 8 September 1936

made for weaving silk and cotton. As Myanmar had not invented a weaving machine yet, it could acquire general knowledge by studying this machine.<sup>256</sup>

U Hla visited the Ito Company on 9 September 1936 with an introduction from the manager of the Yasuda Bank. This company employed 150 clerks and exported textile products to other countries. When the person in charge showed U Hla sample clothing, U Hla found that they were being sold by Indian traders in Myanmar. The company manager asked U Hla whether the retail shops in Myanmar were all owned by Indians and Myanmar women worked for these foreign traders. U Hla replied:

‘Myanmar people own many shops at present although most of the shops used to be owned by foreigners in the past. Not only Indians and Chinese, but also Myanmar people purchase materials from retail and wholesale shops owned by Indians’.

It was necessary to consider why Myanmar people could not engage in trade in their own country. Moreover, it was time for Myanmar to reoccupy all commercial enterprises legally.<sup>257</sup>

Peasants in Myanmar had been practising traditional methods of cultivation without any innovations for many years. Traditional methods were used for fertilising the farm, and cultivating and harvesting the paddy. In Japan, new techniques had been invented to improve cultivation. For instance, farmers lighted lamps after fertilising the paddy fields to prevent insects from destroying the crop at night. Therefore, paddy plants were thriving and developed. After harvesting the paddy, winnowing machines were used for separating grain from chaff unlike in Myanmar, where buffalos and cows were used. U Hla bought five winnowing machines for Myanmar peasants. This machine could winnow 500 baskets of paddy per day at no great expense. String-making machines were invented for twisting straw produced from

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<sup>256</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 13 September 1936

<sup>257</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 28 September 1936

winnowing into rope. U Hla also bought a string-making machine as a sample for Myanmar.<sup>258</sup>

On 11 September, on the invitation of Mitsubishi Company, U Hla visited its factory where fabric was dyed and colour was set. This factory was huge and magnificent. It had 500 workers who were involved in dyeing the clothes and setting the colour. After studying the factory, U Hla asked about garments produced from jute as he knew that the Japanese government's supervision of the factories was good. The person in charge of the factory replied:

‘The Japanese government specifies the products that can be made at a factory. This factory has permission only to produce cotton fabric. These specifications help prevent competition between one factory and another and losses that could arise from producing the same products’.<sup>259</sup>

This showed the effectiveness of the Japanese government administration. Moreover, the Japanese government gave capital loans with low interest rates for rehabilitation of public enterprises. Occasionally, the government even offered interest-free loans to factories. Thus, Japan became prosperous within a short time.<sup>260</sup> In Myanmar, textile industry players in Shwedaung and Mandalay produced the same products and competed with each other. Governmental departments that were supposed to encourage the weaving industry in Myanmar had not made any effective contribution thus far.<sup>261</sup>

## **Yasuda Bank**

On 3 September 1936, U Hla went to Yasuda Bank to withdraw money with an introduction letter given to the manager by the Lloyds Bank branch in Myanmar,<sup>262</sup> which

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<sup>258</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 219

<sup>259</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 30 September 1936

<sup>260</sup> *ibid*

<sup>261</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 233

<sup>262</sup> *ibid*, p. 173

opened in 1923 and was owned by the British.<sup>263</sup> He met with the deputy manager of the bank. The manager was about 30 years old and good-natured. Moreover, he was skilled in the banking business. Myanmar youths did not have knowledge about the banking business and did not know what kind of work was done at banks.<sup>264</sup> In 1828-29, the banking business was introduced in Myanmar. The Presidency Bank of Bengal opened in Yangon in 1861 as the first bank.<sup>265</sup> During the years 1862-1863, the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China was established in Yangon.<sup>266</sup> After the British occupied Myanmar in 1886, banking businesses were required for capitalist companies.<sup>267</sup>

On 30 June 1940, Yokohama Bank was added to the list of economic banks that operated in Myanmar.<sup>268</sup> This was the only bank that played an important role in the commercial relations between Myanmar and Japan.<sup>269</sup> At the end of the Second World War in 1945, Myanmar had only one bank, U Kyaw Thu and Company Limited that was managed by the local people. This bank was first established with an investment of 1.821 billion rupees in Sittwe in 1924-1926.<sup>270</sup> U Hla wanted the Myanmar people to become like the Japanese. Among the commodities imported from many countries, nearly half came from Japan, including soaps, bicycles, and shoes. Therefore, more benefits could be gained if the Myanmar people established business centres in Japan and exported the materials to Myanmar.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> <https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/our-group/our-heritage/timeline/1901-1950/> (12 May 2019)

<sup>264</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 173

<sup>265</sup> U Tun Wai, *Burma's Currency and Credit*, Orient Longmas, New Delhi (in India), 1953, p. 23  
(U Tun Wai, *Burma's Currency*)

<sup>266</sup> Daw Tin Aye, *Currency and Banking Enterprises*, Yangon, University Press, first edition, 1969, p. 78  
(Daw Tin Aye, *Currency and Banking Enterprises*)

<sup>267</sup> U Tun Wai, *Burma's Currency*, p. 23

<sup>268</sup> Daw Tin Aye, *Currency and Banking Enterprises*, p. 78

<sup>269</sup> U Tun Wai, *Burma's Currency*, p. 26

<sup>270</sup> Daw Tin Aye, *Currency and Banking Enterprises*, p. 89

<sup>271</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 173

## **Visit to straw mat factory**

At the invitation of a company that distributed weaving machines, U Hla on 12 September visited a factory that produced weaving machines and looms used for making mats from straw. Straw mats were used as a container to store charcoal and paddy in Japan. Poor people used straw mats as flooring. Raw materials that were not useful were rare in Japan. Responding to an invitation, U Hla travelled to a village called Miyakemura. After arriving at the village, he travelled by foot from the administrative office to a weaving facility located on a field, where he studied the production of straw mats. A mat with a width of three feet and length of six feet was produced in this factory within 15 minutes.<sup>272</sup> After observing the making of straw mats, U Hla bought a machine with the purpose of helping peasants make surplus income after completion of the harvest.<sup>273</sup>

## **U Hla's visit to a bicycle store**

With an introduction from the Chamber of Commerce, U Hla visited a bicycle store, which distributed bicycles to global markets. The store supervisor showed him different kinds of bicycles for children and adults. These bicycles were sold in the US, China, Thailand, India, and Myanmar. The bicycles exported to Myanmar were poor in terms of quality and were inexpensive. The bicycles exported to America were expensive and of the best quality. Although the bicycles exported to Myanmar were not of the best quality, the quality was not lower than that of bicycles made in England. If the bicycles exported to the US were sold in Myanmar, they would have fetched a price of not more than 70 kyats. As Indian traders imported and sold low quality bicycles in Myanmar for their personal benefit, the local people

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<sup>272</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 30 September 1936

<sup>273</sup> *ibid*

had to pay high prices for these products.<sup>274</sup>

After studying the bicycle store, U Hla ordered one bicycle with accessories for sale in Myanmar. He wanted to pass the cost advantage to the Myanmar people by selling the bicycles at a low price. He decided to consider any profit potential later. The purpose of doing this was to help the Myanmar people have access to the best quality bicycles at relatively low prices.<sup>275</sup> At the time of his visit, rickshaws were no longer used in Japan, where the use of motorcars, motorcycles, and bicycles was more prevalent. The reason was that using bicycles was quicker and more cost effective. As the use of bicycles was increasing in Myanmar day by day, the number of bicycle traders had also increased. However, bicycle imports by the Myanmar people were very few. Therefore, Myanmar should import and sell bicycles in Myanmar. According to U Hla's study, a retail bicycle business could be started with an investment of 2,000 kyats.<sup>276</sup>

In Japan, bicycles were used extensively for various purposes. The Japanese used the bicycle for not only riding but also carrying baggage.<sup>277</sup> In fact, bicycle use was more common in Japan than other countries in the world. Cars were used extensively in towns, but bicycles were used for various other purposes. Therefore, the bicycle industry was the most important business in Japan. Japan produced 3.6 million bicycles annually and exported to other countries. Japan's bicycle industry had advanced greatly and many western nations emulated Japan's success story. It was important for Myanmar to achieve economic prosperity by emulating the Japanese example. Therefore, technology should be studied in one's mother tongue like the Japanese did.<sup>278</sup>

Japan, like Myanmar, used motorcars that were imported from America. However, the

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<sup>274</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 181

<sup>275</sup> *ibid*, p.182

<sup>276</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 26 September 1936

<sup>277</sup> *ibid*

<sup>278</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 7 July 1935

Japanese themselves were engaged in the importation and purchase of cars. Therefore, the prices of motorcars were cheaper in Japan than in Myanmar. U Hla thought that it was unfortunate that it was the foreigners in Myanmar, and not the local people, who were involved in and thereby benefited from the importation of bicycles into Myanmar. He noted that this business would require cooperation as it could not be conducted by one person.<sup>279</sup>

### **Interview with reporter from *Shūkan Nipponsha* press in Kyoto**

Kyoto is the ancient capital city of Japan and the land of Buddhist heritage. U Hla donated five Buddha images to Japan. A reporter from *Shūkan Nipponsha Press* in Kyoto met with U Hla on 12 September to interview him on the donation. This publication was the only one that particularly focused on the Buddha's teachings. When U Hla met the reporter, the reporter said that religious and secular affairs could be explored. Then, U Hla asked how Myanmar youths who wanted to study in Japan would be assisted. The reporter replied:

‘Myanmar youths will be taught the Japanese language in a Buddhist monastery in Japan and Japanese Buddhist monks will help them to continue their study’.

Regarding the donation of the Buddha images, the *Asahi Press* also interviewed U Hla at 8 p.m. on the same day.<sup>280</sup> The Osaka Chamber of Commerce arranged for the donation of the five Buddha images to three monasteries located in Osaka on Tuesday, 15 September 1936.<sup>281</sup> Three Buddha images were donated to three famous temples in Osaka, Shitenno-ji temple, Honpa Hongan-ji temple, and Otani-ha Hongan-ji temple, and one to Manshu-in temple in Kyoto. As U Hla was set to return to Myanmar on 17 September, the remaining image was placed at the Chamber of Commerce because a monastery had not yet decided on whether to

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<sup>279</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 185

<sup>280</sup> *ibid.*, p. 244

<sup>281</sup> *ibid.*, p. 246



accept the donation.<sup>282</sup>



**Figure - 23, U Hla's donations of Buddha images to Japan**

**(Photo courtesy by U Hla, Myanmar – Japan Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan, p.148)**

After donating the Buddha images, U Hla said:

“Carrying the five Buddha images, U Hmat Kyi and sons, who live in Shwedaung in Myanmar, arrived in Japan for commercial affairs and donated one Buddha image to this monastery with the purpose of establishing cordial relations between Myanmar and Japan based on the Buddha’s teachings. May Buddhism flourish in the world.”

Mg Hla

U Hmat Kyi and Sons

Shwedaung, Myanmar

(1298 Myanmar Era, 1 Waxing of

Thadinkyut, Japanese Era - 2596,

Showa Year 11, Tuesday, 15. 9.

1936.)<sup>283</sup>

<sup>282</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 3 October 1936

<sup>283</sup> *ibid*

## Meeting with the foreign secretary of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce

When Mr Sato, the foreign secretary of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce, came to meet U Hla in the morning on 17 September, they discussed matters regarding scholars from Myanmar, with Mr Sato saying:

‘At present, 300 Chinese scholars, 100 Thailand scholars, 150 Philippine scholars and a small number of German scholars study in Japan. However, there are only one or two Myanmar scholars in Japan, but the country is hoping for more Myanmar scholars. Necessary assistance will be given to Myanmar scholars’.<sup>284</sup>

U Hla replied:

‘I will pass on the information to Myanmar people who want to study in Japan and tell them that they can make the necessary enquiries with you. In western countries, scholars can study only western techniques. As scholars can study both western and eastern techniques in Japan, it is a wonderful opportunity for Myanmar. Thanks for your invitation’.<sup>285</sup>

U Hla left Kobe for Myanmar on board the Hakusan Maru on the evening of 17 September.<sup>286</sup> He arrived at the port of Moji in Kyushu on the morning of 18 September. At the Moji port, export commodities and goods destined for Germany, Norway, and England were being placed on cargo ships. Various kinds of liquor were produced in Moji in Japan. Moji, a prosperous town, could be seen first while travelling to Japan via water way. U Hla left Moji at 12 p.m. on 19 September 1936<sup>287</sup> and arrived in Yangon at 6 a.m. on 6 October 1936.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 265

<sup>285</sup> *ibid*, p. 265

<sup>286</sup> *Thuriya Newspaper*, 9 October 1936

<sup>287</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 270

<sup>288</sup> *ibid*, p. 302

## **The point of views of U Hla upon the Japanese People**

U Hla has studied many books and articles written about Japan before he went to Japan as he wanted to know about Japan. He studied the weak and strong points of the Japanese in these books and articles. He has studied that some books recorded the merits of the Japanese people and demerits of the Japanese were written in the others. He also experienced both the merits and demerits of the Japanese people. It is natural that not only the Japanese but other people have the merits and demerits. The good and bad behaviors studied by U Hla in Japan are as follows.

### **The good behavior of Japanese**

Japanese became prosperous surprisingly within a short time because of the following factors. Living neat and tidy, giving respect to each other, industrious and working of the adults, making business without dividing the possessions from the family, giving no permission to smoke under the age of twenty years, avoiding the gambling and the best education system are the factors for economic development of Japan. These factors were the experiences of U Hla in Japan.

- (1) By the experiences of U Hla, the Japanese were the first class people in the world. They lived neat and tidy in the house not only at the towns but also at the villages. They always used the stockings and gloves in farming, and industrial enterprises. The covers were used in selling foodstuffs. Foods were taken with spoons and chop-sticks. The garbage was thrown away systematically without flinging on the streets.
- (2) In Japan, respects were given to each other by bowing their heads in meeting with other. The bicyclists were given priority by the drivers on the street. They used to speak gently.
- (3) Myanmar thought that the rich person enjoyed the good things of life rise in dignity and fame. If five persons lived in a house, about two or three persons works the business in Myanmar. Almost all the people engaged the work in Japan. They thought that the

joblessness will be shame.<sup>289</sup> All person engaged works in Japan except the older people and the students. U Hla knew from the explanation of interpreter that some of the ageing people used to suicide themselves as they do not want to burden the other.

- (4) The Japanese generally lived together with their parents in a house although they have already marriage. In Japan, father or the elder son took the responsibility of the family as a head of family. The entire member of the family gave their income to the head of the family.<sup>290</sup> The head of the family are the most influential person in the family. If the marriage person wanted to set up and live a separate house, they satisfied the shares distributed by the head. The inheritance cases in the court of law seldom occurred in Japan. Moreover family member competed to get more income than the other in their family. Therefore Japan became an advanced nation in the world because the Japanese became prosperous and workers also increased in Japan.
- (5) The Japanese seldom wear the valuable garments except in the important ceremony. Although the price of motor car and fuel were cheaper in Japan than in Myanmar, rich person only brought to use their owned car. Although the officers from Mitsubishi Company, Toyota Company and Japan Trading worked their business with the monetary investment of million they lived simply without using their owned cars. Besides they take foods as vegetable and fish. As the vegetable and fish were cheap in prices, the expense was low. The Japanese were rich because the income was high and expense was low. U Hla also thought that Japan became prosperous like America and full of high building in Japan after fifty years by living this style. As Myanmar nationals bought cars without having their owned house in Myanmar, it cannot think what happened after fifty years. During the British occupation of Lower Myanmar for fifty years and the whole for one hundred years, many cultivated lands were transferred to

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<sup>289</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 187 - 189

<sup>290</sup> *ibid*, p. 191

the hands of Chettiars and Chinese. Therefore it is important to reoccupy the lands by using the methods of Japanese.

- (6) Among the Japanese, not more than five by one hundred people wear the jewelry. Diamonds were seldom to found in Japan. The Japanese girls put on the ring sometime without adorning the earring with a screw on back piece. Knowing the value of the gold and silver, they gathered money by working hard. They borrowed their money to the Government Bank with the low interest and Government lends money to the public for the advantage business.
- (7) The Japanese Government did not give permission to smoke under the age of twenty. Therefore the Japanese women smoke a little in number. There were many males who liked smoking.
- (8) Moreover the Japanese Government prohibited the gambling and one who commits the gambling was given punishment severely. However permission was given to the horserace in order to use the horses in their works because they used the horses in transporting the commodities. Being sluggish, the oxen were not useful at present. The gambling did not found in the towns where U Hla visited in Japan. As the Japanese Government prohibited the gambling, the criminal cases occurred a little in Japan.
- (9) In Japan, the family name was attached with the name of a person in giving the name. Therefore the lineage of a person can be seen by looking the name of a person. The majority of the Japanese avoided the bad habit as they were anxious to lose the dignity of their lineage. For instance, if the name of a person is Nishikawa and his family name is Toyoda, his name will call as Toyoda – Nishikawa.
- (10) The compulsory education system was adopted for the age of six years in Japan. Therefore 99.12 percent of the populations were educated in Japan and they wear the uniform by their standard. Therefore they have given the priority for their study without competing each other. The students in Myanmar still competed each other by wearing

the silk garments.<sup>291</sup>

## **U Hla's Return from Japan**

After U Hla arrived in Myanmar from Japan, he wrote articles in the Thuriya weekly newspaper about his experiences in Japan with the purpose of raising public awareness in Myanmar. Myanmar people who had visited Japan so far had done so with different objectives, such as tourism, scholarship, and political affairs. Some wrote their experiences and published them in book form. However, the articles written by U Hla were beneficial for the prosperity and economic development of Myanmar. Therefore the collection of articles was printed by the Pyinsayupan Press in Pyay Township in September 1939 at the request of some people.<sup>292</sup>

U Hla travelled to Japan several times for his business before the War with Japan. The last time he went to Japan was with his wife, but when he returned to Myanmar, he suffered a paralytic attack.<sup>293</sup> When the Revolutionary Council assumed the power on 2 March 1962, all industries, large and small, were nationalised. U Hla's business was also nationalised. Then U Hla's condition became worse after he lost his business, and he died in 1965 in Yangon.<sup>294</sup>

## **Conclusion**

U Hla went to Japan because he wanted to study the country's textile industry, which was related to his business. Moreover, Japan also produced many commodities and goods that were used in Myanmar. He wanted his people to be interested in commercial activities to ensure the economic well-being and prosperity of Myanmar. U Hla also wanted the Myanmar people

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<sup>291</sup> U Hla, *Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan*, p. 192 - 200

<sup>292</sup> *ibid*, p. 1

<sup>293</sup> Interview, Daw San (7 April 2019 in Shwedaung) (She did not remember the exact date and year. Other documents were destroyed because of the Japanese bombing of the town during the war)

<sup>294</sup> *ibid*

who were not satisfied with domestic products to connect with foreign countries directly. U Hla visited and studied many weaving and textile factories. He also bought machines and bicycles, which would be useful for the Myanmar people. U Hla learnt how the Japanese became prosperous within a short time. The factors of economic development in Japan were the living standard, the culture of showing respect to others, the industrious nature of adults, the tradition of engaging in business without dividing family possessions, and a superior education system. U Hla was interested in Japan's banking business because it played an important role in the commercial relations between both countries. He wanted the Myanmar people to emulate the Japanese people's knowledge and experiences in the banking business. After U Hla arrived in Myanmar, he wrote and published a book titled Myanmar – Japan Gyi Pwar Yae Mattan. Among eastern countries such as Japan, China, Thailand, the Philippines, and Myanmar, the people of Myanmar in particular were anxious about getting involved in economic activities in other countries. Myanmar had inferior economic, social, and educational conditions compared with other Asian countries at that time. The factors for the poor standard included people's unhelpful attitude, tendency to waste money, laziness, impatience, reluctance to study abroad, and weakness in commercial matters. Therefore, U Hla, in his book, urged the Myanmar people to emulate the Japanese behaviour. The readers would be willing to conduct their business like the Japanese after reading this book. Unfortunately, I could not know exactly what he did in his business after he returns from Japan. Although my family even went to his hometown and interviewed some relatives, but they couldn't say exactly because they were very old. And also I didn't find in other books about him.

## Conclusion

To sum up, we may say that, prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there had not been many relations between Japan and Myanmar since there was no reason to do so. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, some Japanese came to reside in the Rakhine region and the Shan state. Although these early Japanese lived in Arakan (Rakhine State) and Shan state they did not come with any specific purpose. Their arrival was more or less accidental in trying to get away from Japan's internal political troubles. Anyway, the Japanese had been seen here and there in Myanmar since the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it was not until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that Myanmar people had been to Japan. Myanmar nationalist leaders began to look east toward Japan when Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. Since then Myanmar had begun to think highly of Japan and the Japanese.

In Chapter (1) I gave the information about Japan-Myanmar relations in 1900-1940. The first phase of Japan-Myanmar relations had assumed one of friendship and cordiality. We can't deny the relations between Myanmar and Japan have the friendly relations because (1) The Myanmar nationalist leaders' request of Japanese help to drive the British imperialists out of Myanmar was a gesture of friendship towards the Japanese. (2) The Japanese wanted to help liberate Myanmar from the British yoke and gave the financial help to the pro-Japanese politicians like U Ottama, Galon U Saw, Thakin Mya and Dr. Thein Maung. (3) The prewar days, Japan-Myanmar trade was revived to some extent, with Japan exporting cotton yarn and textiles to Myanmar, and the latter selling mainly rice to Japan.

In Chapter (2) I discuss on Galon U Saw's observation on the Japanese developed achievement and some disadvantages of Myanmar under British administration and the necessary factors to make reforms. And also, Galon U Saw urged the Myanmar youths to admire the honesty of the Japanese, giving life for the country and their nationality, their bravery and becoming an advanced nation because of their reforms in Japan by delivering his



experiences and knowledge from Japan. When U Saw returned from Japan, he had sufficient funds from the Japanese, he bought the Thuriya Press and began to organize his Myochit Party. Afterward, the Thuriya newspaper became the paper for Japanese propagation works. Just like him, other pro-Japanese politicians also received financial help from Japan. At that time, the Myanmar nationalist leaders needed money to oppose the British imperialists and the money could only come from Japan. Therefore they had no other choice but to accept the Japanese financial support willingly. We may say that politically Japan and Myanmar relations deeply started by giving financial help to pro-Japanese politicians after U Saw returned to Myanmar.

In Chapter (3) I gave the information how a film can support the relation between the two countries. U Nyi Pu can produce Japan Yin Thwe film by cooperating with Japanese actress and technicians in Japan in 1935. This film played an important role of the cultural relationship between Myanmar and Japan. Moreover, it was served more understanding the social life and behavior of both countries. Asahi newspaper was the famous one in Japan which also described about this film. Due to this film showing, Japan-Myanmar has closely related culturally. Now, this film restored to the digital version and showed in Tokyo, Japan on 26 October 2019 then will show in Myanmar in October 2020. Due to this factor, we may say that Japan Yin Thwe film carried out as the cultural relationship between both countries not only in the past but also in the present.

In my last Chapter (4) I describe U Hla's observation on the Japanese economy and the textile industry, and the behavior of the Japanese people. U Hla wrote articles in the Thuriya newspaper about his experiences in Japan to raise public awareness after getting back to Myanmar and then he collected articles printed the book. Myanmar people got the chance to learn how the Japanese became prosperous within a short time from his book. Besides, Myanmar people get much knowledge and conduct to emulate the advance of the Japanese industry. This book opened the eyes of Myanmar people especially for the trading.

To sum up, the Japanese had known about Myanmar since the 18<sup>th</sup> century due to a book written by Japanese cartographer. Myanmar people came to know about Japan when the victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War. After the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, U Ottama became interested in the victory of Japan. Then he went to Japan in 1907 and wrote a series of articles in Thuriya Newspaper about the China-Japan War and the development of Japan. During 1905 to 1939, most of the Myanmar newspapers and magazines supported the victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War and the progress of Japan. Especially, Thuriya Newspaper and Magazine gave full support to Japan after 1935. It was an opportunity for the Japanese propaganda and the Japanese propagandists continued to receive aids from Japan for Myanmar Independence.

We may say that Japan-Myanmar relations were in good conditions during the 1930s. In that period, Galon U Saw, U Nyi Pu, and U Hla attempted to educate Myanmar people by producing articles, books, and a film based on their experiences in Japan. Especially, they presented the advanced technology, good behavior, and traditions of the Japanese. After returning their trip, they have the same opinion which is Japan became such an advanced nation because of this industrial development, and due to being an industrious and inventive people. Therefore, they wrote the reasons why the progress of Japan within a short period in their books and articles.

U Saw's opinion is that (1) the Japanese government sent scholars to study industry in foreign countries. (2) Appropriate state funding was provided to establish the necessary industries. (3) The foreign experts were employed in Japanese factories. Although they returned at the end of their contract, the knowledge they imparted remained and continued to be developed by Japanese experts. U Nyi Pu's opinion is that (1) Japan's technology was advanced and Japanese were sharp and bright like the westerners. (2) The government supported the requirements in the necessary sectors. U Hla's opinion is that (1) the Japanese

government gave capital loans with low interest rates for rehabilitation of public enterprises. Occasionally, the government even offered interest-free loans to factories. (2) the Japanese people were living neat and tidy, giving respect to each other, industrious and working of the adults, and the best education system are the factors for economic development of Japan. (3) Moreover, the Japanese people helped and supported each other without jealousy.

Although their travel experiences in Japan does not have much impact on the development of Japanese-Myanmar relations, most of Myanmar people are highly impressed with the modernity and strength of Japan after reading, listening, and watching their books, speech, and film. Among these three persons, U Saw's visit to Japan impact on the development of the political sector. Because of the pro-Japanese politicians like U Saw, Dr. Ba Maw, Dr. Thein Maung, and Thakin Mya received financial help from Japan after 1935. Then the Japanese had been carrying out systematic propaganda in Myanmar. The Japanese government used a lot of money for propaganda work in Myanmar. By using the Japanese's funds, some of the leaders formed their own political parties such as U Saw's Myo Chit Party in 1938 and Thakin Mya's Pyithu Ayaydawpon party in 1940 for the anti-British movements. Furthermore, Japan agreed to give arms and military training to nationalist groups seeking independence. Therefore, we may say that politically Japan and Myanmar relations deeply started by giving financial help to pro-Japanese politicians after U Saw returned to Myanmar.

U Nyi Pu directed Japan Yin Thwe film and a documentary film in Japan with Japanese actress and technicians, it was served more understanding the social life and behavior of both countries. Japanese traditions, lifestyle, cultural festivals, seasonal festivals, sports competitions, and musical concerts were portrayed in these films. Furthermore, Japan Yin Thwe film restored to the digital version and showed in Tokyo, on 26 October 2019 then will show in Myanmar in October 2020. Thus, we can assume that Japan-Myanmar has closely related culturally not only in the past but also in the present due to this film showing.

Unfortunately, I could not know exactly U Hla's visit to Japan how the impact on the development of the economic sector. Even though my family went to his hometown and interviewed some relatives, but they couldn't say exactly because they were very old. And also I didn't found in other books about him.

To sum up, we can't deny the relations between Myanmar and Japan have the friendly relations during 1930s because (1) Myanmar were greatly inspired by the successes and development of Japan (2) The Myanmar nationalist leaders' request of Japanese help to drive the British imperialists out of Myanmar was a gesture of friendship towards the Japanese (3) The Japanese wanted to help liberate Myanmar from the British yoke and gave the financial help to the pro-Japanese politicians (4) The pre-war days, Japan-Myanmar trade was revived to some extent, with Japan exporting cotton yarn and textiles to Myanmar, and the latter selling mainly rice to Japan.

Although most of my reference books were the travel diaries, these were very important for regional knowledge and historical evidence. I want to give an example, Kin Wun Mingyi's Paris and London Diary, U Chaint's Italian Diary, and Theippan Maung Wa's Oxford University Diary were the good travel diary books in Myanmar. At present, these records were still useful for foreign relations and historical evidence. U Saw, U Nyi Pu, and U Hal's books and articles were the travel diaries, we can know their experiences, the two countries' attitudes, and the good relations of the past by reading their books and articles. Likewise, I hope that we can maintain good relations between the two countries in the future.

## Appendix I

### List of Japanese Residents in Myanmar in 1922

No	District	Number	Page
1	Akyab (Sittwe)	1	3
2	Rangoon (Yangon)	359	5 - 10
3	Insein	0	13
4	Hanthawaddy (Bago)	7	15
5	Prome (Pyay)	2	17
6	Bassein (Patheingyi)	22	19
7	Myaungmya	7	21-Jan
8	Pyapon	4	23
9	Taungtha	7	25
10	Amherst (Kyaikkhami)	13	27
11	Tavoy (Dawei)	4	29
12	Mergui (Myeik)	84	31-32
13	Magway	10	35
14	Mandalay	29	37
15	Bhamo	4	39
16	Yamethin	5	41
17	Myingyan	8	43
18	Northern Shan States	7	45
	Total	573	

\*by courtesy of National Archive Department, Yangon.

## Appendix II

### List of Japanese Residents in Myanmar in 1940

No	District	Number	Page
1	Akyab (Sittwe)	11	3
2	Sandoway (Thandwe)	1	4
3	Rangoon (Yangon)	170	5 - 10
4	Insein	6	11
5	Hanthawaddy (Bago)	6	12
6	Prome (Pyay)	5	15
7	Bassein (Patheingyi)	16	16
8	Myaungmya	7	18
9	Pyapon	2	20
10	Taungtha	9	21
11	Thaton	3	23
12	Amherst (Kyaikkhami)	11	24
13	Mergui (Myeik)	42	26-27
14	Pokokku	6	29
15	Magwe	6	31
16	Mandalay	42	32-33
17	Bhamo	3	34
18	Shwebo	1	37
19	Lower Chindwin	1	39
20	Yamethin	5	43
21	Myingyan	4	44
22	Railway	1	45
23	Northern Shan States	2	47
	Total	360	

\*by courtesy of National Archive Department, Yangon.

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3. U Tint Maung, 95 years old, Duyindubo village, Shwedaung, U Hla's neighbour (18 May 2019 at Duyindubo village, Shwedaung)
4. U Thein Htut (A1 Family), 75 years old, U Nyi Pu's grandson, (28 September 2019)

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