

**Annual MBSPF Myanmar Trip
December 25, 2016 – January 11, 2017**

From Steve:

Saturday Dec 25, 2016 Yangon

Steve arrived from Singapore the night before Christmas and didn't wait up for Santa. On Christmas Day, Steve went to Hse Main Gone, Panditarama Forest Center to offer copies of the *Manual of Insight* to Belin Sayadaw for the library at Hse Main Gone and one for his personal use.

Along with Ma Vajirañāni, Steve and Belin Sayadaw traveled 10 minutes to the nearby school site previously visited last year, that Maung had also visited in early December, They Phu Cha. We needed clarification of the number of current students and the condition of the current building. The current cement building has been condemned due to severe cracking in the walls so a temporary thatch-roofed, partial-sided open air shed had been constructed for classrooms.



Met by two teachers and about 35 students (who had come in for the meeting in the middle of their holiday break from school), we discussed the current situation, Maung's visit, the dire need for a new school building, preferably before the start of school again in June 2017. The teacher housing for 2 is ragged but with a new roof, and the well supplies water to a holding tank throughout the year. There is a great need for a safe school building and it will be considered along with all the other possibilities that we see in other areas of Burma later in the trip.



Steve then stopped in to see a couple of students at Shwe Oo Min Meditation Center, ie. Gray Meckling (Duke's nephew) and the ghost writer of U Tejaniya's book, *When Awareness Becomes Natural*. Later, Steve took in the crowds at the Shwedagon on Christmas Day at dusk. It was a scene of many foreigners and Burmese, leaving a good feeling in the heart after a couple hours.

Monday, Dec 26

Steve stayed around Classique handling correspondence, offering books to U Nanda, Ma Gandhasobha and Dr. Kyaw Thein for the libraries at Panditarama, the nuns' library at Panditarama and the Sydney, Australia Panditarama; later preparing for Roger and Sharon's arrival the following day and taking in another sunset from the Shwedagon.

Tuesday, Dec 27

Off to the airport at 9 am to pick-up Roger and Sharon coming in from Vancouver, Steve stopped off at Panditarama again to deliver a copy of *Manual of Insight* for Ma Gandhasobha's personal use and while there was informed that Belin Sayadaw had arrived from Hse Main Gone and was soon going to meal dana at Daw Aung San Su Gyi's to offer the dhamma. It was suggested that if another copy of the book was available, it would be good to offer one to Daw ASSG. Yes, another was available so Steve went back to Classique to retrieve one, inscribed it and offered it to Sayadaw Paññasāmi to offer to ASSG.

After that short delay it was a short trip to the airport for a long wait for Roger and Sharon to emerge from immigration and security without their 2 large checked bags of toys, Frizbees and soccer balls for the kids. Evidently, they had not arrived on their flight. Nevertheless, Roger and Sharon were hustled into the van with Steve and off they went to Ma Kamalañāni's for a quick lunch and to pick her up to translate for us as we visited with some nuns later in the day. Before

departing Nirodharama Meditation Center, we were invited to meet Sayadaw Dhammasiddhi, the abbot, and offered him a copy of the *Manual of Insight* too. In exchange, he offered his talks about his spiritual journey.

Ma Kamalañāni was her usual bubbly, easy-laughing, self-deprecating self, a great delight to be with. We arrived at Shwe Oo Min in time to go visit Ma Rupasinghi at Chanmyay Thaya Nunnery; a nunnery that a group of Seattle meditating women has been supporting for many years. Spending time with Ma Rupa, we caught up on events of the last year, current condition of the nuns and buildings and their current needs. Again, we met the young woman who had arrived at the nunnery when she was only 2 years old. She is now 8 years old and a bright kid in her studies.

We then went to visit Sayadaw U Tejaniya for a short discussion of his Maui retreat, to offer him a couple copies of the *Manual of Insight* for the Shwe Oo Min library as well as for himself. We spent some easy-going time with Sayadaw and then went to check in on Gray and encouraged him in his practice there for a month. Back in the car, we dropped Ma Kamalañāni off and as we were heading back to Classique, we were informed that the missing luggage had arrived and could be picked up. We made a detour to the airport, picked up the newly arrived luggage and we made it back to Classique around 6 pm.

After a light lunch, we all headed to bed early for an early rising to catch the 4:30am van to the airport for the flight to Loikaw. Wednesday was going to be a long day starting early, so we pre-packed in the evening and happily got prone.

From Sharon:

Dec 27 on the plane to Loikaw. Description of Yangon day

We are now on the plane to Loikaw so I'm taking a few minutes to write. Yangon was hot and crowded and wonderful. We were late getting in and lost the bags with all the give-aways and Roger was struggling with his health but Steve and Sai oo (Kalya's driver) met us at the airport with smiles.

We went immediately to Ma Kamalani's retreat center for lunch. (Remember her, Joy? That dear nun who took us to Golden Rock? She laughed and recalled the trip as 'unforgettable!').



Huge amount of food for lunch so we ate what we could and it seemed we hadn't started. Then to visit Ma Rupasingy and leave Dana for the orphan nuns and then to Swee Ooo Min to pay our respects to U Tejania. He is well and very very busy. Steve was presenting his book to Sayadaws wherever we went. Very proud moments.

We said hello to Grey, the young pre-med guy from Vancouver who is here for meditation for a month. Such a dear young man. What a doctor he will make!



We went home via the airport as they had found our bags. Traffic here is much improved-- no longer gridlocked. A tiny dinner while Roger and Kalya did business and Steve and I drank beer. Fell into bed to be up at 4 AM for this flight. Everything would be perfect if Roger were feeling stronger. I trust he will soon. Today he was better than yesterday.

We are in good spirits and loving being here. I hope you are all in good health. And that we are soon.

P.S. flight interrupted: fog in Loikaw. so, we all disembark for a while. Just how it is.

From Sharon:

Dec 28 Yangon to Loikaw

The alarm went off at 3:45 this morning but Roger was already awake. A bad night's sleep for him. Kalya handed us a brown paper bag full of breakfast and we went off to the new domestic terminal at Yangon for our 6am flight to Loikaw-- our first time there.

Flying in was spectacular, over a dammed-up lake that created a wide valley full of rice patties. Our guide told us later the dam was made by the Japanese in 1942. Think green hills, nearly mountain peaks, covered with trees. Maung met us at the terminal with a van and driver and Clement, a translator, and we drove through the shady streets of Loikaw to pick up the assistant education officer. About two hours later we turned into a school with children waiting. There were several of the long neck women and little girls wearing the brass rings on the neck, knees and ankles. We called this 'No school' because it was not on the schedule and we are not building there this year.

Our first official stop was Rum Ku, nicknamed 'Kindergarten School' where we were greeted by two monks and the headmistress and other teachers, students and villagers. The school is up a dirt roadway. A very poor village where until recently most of the children have not gone to school. Classes were very small. They want to add to add two grades and a 60' x 30'. We would place this on the graded lot up behind the existing school. They also need a teacher's cottage which could be built on an existing foundation above the school. The new monastery above the school has a vigorous young monk who plans to board boys and girls whose parents have left them in the village when they go away for work to Thailand. We are only 150 km from the Thai border here. Both electricity and water are on their way to the village shortly.

The next school was nearby. Wan Pan Palo is a big school with 14 teachers and 200 students. The largest building has a leaky roof and needs to be replaced. New higher rafters need to be installed for better drainage.

Their main request was a 60' x 32' to house the kindergarten and pre-kindergarten which are currently in separate buildings in great disrepair.

We went for lunch at Marco Polo and saw our first tourists since we came to Loikaw. This is the first year you haven't needed a special permit to visit--perhaps the Civil War has had something to do with that.

'Worst School' of the day was Pu Pha. Nicknamed 'Crossing Road". Only two years old, it has three classrooms and 100 students. The grade one and two classrooms have dirt floors, no windows, leaky tin roofs and walls made of boards on end.

They want to add three more classrooms to make six (30' x 60') and said they would rebuild the old building for office and teacher housing. Currently there are two government teachers of four. Two are paid by the community. They bought the land five years ago. The government will send five teachers.

The children go to another close village across a busy road for grades 3-6.

A new 100' x 30' would house the whole school.

They have a well and pump.



Back to Loikaw Resort with an Infinity pool and a golf course across the road. Roger is desolate as he has no time to play. Beer and bed sound very good.

From Steve:**Fri Dec 30, 2016, 1st full day around Kalaw**

9:00 am departure when Ernest, Win and a translator, Thiri, arrived at 9 along with our driver to head left out of the resort heading toward Sintaung, where we had built our first clinic. We didn't go as far as Sintaung, but after 30 min or so arrived at a small intersection of two dirt roads: right heading along the Mandalay division border line of Kalaw and left into the Shan state. We met a handful of local men there and walked 300 yards to a fork in the dirt roadway. The intersection of these two divergent roads formed a triangle, the initial 2 acres of which was the site of a hoped-for clinic. It was the site of a former Japanese Army camp during WWII.

In discussing the need and possibility of building a clinic at this location, we



learned that it was just a 10-minute walk to the nearby village and there were 2 other villages nearby with another 3 a bit further away with a total population to be served of 2,000+. The name of the town is Myain Daik. There is a source of water uphill across the upper roadway about $\frac{1}{4}$ mi away that could be piped to the clinic site. The village offered to supply sand, rock, brick and labor to help construct the clinic.

We were told that if we build, 2 midwives will be sent by the government and since both would stay on-site, we would need to also install a solar PV system, 2

toilets and a cooking shed. We were shown a floor plan and told it was the clinic plan but we recognized it as the Rural Health Center plan, which is slightly larger and has a different arrangement of rooms. There is a new government plan to train more teachers and midwives. Also, the daughter of one male school teacher we were meeting with had completed 3 years of University. She would undertake the 6-month training for midwives and would return to staff the clinic we were being asked to build.

We were excited about the idea of building a clinic and this location provided a perfect opportunity. The site would be accessible even during the rainy season.

Back at the intersection, we declined the invitation to have tea and headed out toward a school we had briefly stopped at a few years ago when we built a clinic that the Stewarts visited. The school at Myin Sai Gone is a large 5.9 A parcel at the intersection of a few dirt farm roads. It currently holds classes for pre-K through 10th standard, or grade 11. There are 281 boys and 287 girls attending classes here. 74 students from distant villages stay in one building. 9 teachers live on-site in a large crowded building; one teacher from Mon State in southern Burma has a new baby with her and her husband is in the army.

There was a new large 4 over 4 building completed by the government in Feb 2016 and even though we saw a couple of empty rooms in a large building we had re-roofed a few years ago, they were asking for a new building, 30' X 30', for a computer room. They currently have a rudimentary solar PV system to run 3 computers and would like an upgraded PV system to operate more computers so more students could be introduced to computers.

While this is an admirable aspiration, and may be needed to qualify for a free-standing high school (rather than being attached to Kalaw HS #2), and the locals were nice and responsive, it didn't rate highly in our needs category when we had seen much more need at other school sites. Nevertheless, we got the information, inquired about how difficult and long would it take to get electricity from the power grid to the school. We said our good-byes after the usual explanation of our timing to complete the survey of needs on this trip and the decision-making process involving finances and contractor's time available to construct each project, suggesting we would let them know by mid-January.

Back in the cars, we drove along the familiar dirt farm roads past the clinic we had completed a few years back and continued to Phatama Village where the 2 A school compound is sandwiched between a large monastery, currently being repaired, up the hill and a sprawling pagoda compound, also under repair, at the far end of the plateau shared with the school.

Currently there are 29 boys and 48 girls, all the kids in the village, in grades K-6, housed in 3 classroom buildings. Kids from 4 nearby villages come for classes in grades 5 & 6. The only cement building was constructed by the villagers with UN

help 16 years ago. It has 2 classrooms housing grades 1 & 2, and a teachers' office. The village has built two additional structures on dirt floors: one with woven bamboo siding, the other with re-cycled corrugated metal siding. Both have new corrugated metal roofing and are dry for the most part during the rainy season. One houses the K & 3rd grades and the other houses grades 4, 5 & 6. There are currently 8 government paid teachers and if we build the additional 30' X 90' 3-classroom building they were requesting, they would not need additional teachers. They are all housed in 3 houses in the village built by villagers.



We called this the “clean school” because it was neat and tidy without any litter on the ground in the compound. The plateau looks out over a farm-forest land to far mountains but immediately above a stream in which water buffalo were wallowing.

They were requesting construction of a classroom to house grades 6, 7, 8 which would accept students from 4 additional nearby villages, expecting at least 30 more in the first year and more in subsequent years. Currently, students from this village walk 2 miles to go to grade 7 in a nearby village. We secured confirmation that the villagers would help with materials and labor and we also requested that they pour cement floors in the two smaller classroom buildings. Ernest offered that he would be able to help them do that with some extra materials. We liked this village and confirmed the need for the building. We are hopeful to be able to build here.

Back in the cars, we headed back to Kalaw, arriving by 2 pm for an early dinner at 7 Sisters. The usual-great food in a quiet room while most of the kitchen women there were out shopping for food or preparing vegetables for the evening rush sure to come soon. There were large cooking pots, trays, etc. in the kitchen area filled with chopped vegetables ready for dinner and generally it was a quiet scene but not without activity. Very pleasant.

From Sharon:

Dec 31, 2016

Today we left the hotel rested (and warm!) Roger hit his head going up the stairs and I had longyi issues. Staff girls helped me.

Picked up the Minister of Education and went to three school openings for schools MBSPF built in 2016. First was Myay Char ('Platform School').

Lovely little school, the usual band and dancers and speeches. The NLD member for the area, the Shan leader and deputy, the Village chief etc., all gave the same speech in each village. We gave three different speeches as Roger, then Steve, then I spoke.

For the first time, three teachers paid by the government will come next year--a great gift to the village who have been paying the teachers themselves. We plan to improve the teacher housing and provide solar and furniture here.



Next school was Kon Tha or 'Great view School'.

Three teachers, two now paid by the government. Same speeches. 35 students. Very friendly cheerful village. They also need solar and furniture.



Last school opening: Nyaung Gyo



70 students. 8 government teachers. This school was donated by Roger Telschow, Frances Gatz, Robert Close and Nina Frost. They are adding a grade each of the next two years and will likely double the number of students. They need teacher housing as the teachers are living in the village in bad circumstances. We need to visit next year to see if expansion is happening.

Final visit was due to a teacher imploring us to come and see Phin Mee Ywar ('Last minute school'). 130 students, 9 government teachers, they plan to add a grade a year the next two years. The road widening took their fence and toilets! Very grimy, two buildings, one concrete, one not. Asked for three rooms, but will likely also need catchment system. Need solar in my opinion.



We headed home tired and very satisfied. Now for New Year's Eve! Buffet! Dancing! Fun and games! Fireworks. Can we do it? Stay tuned.

January 1, 2017

Our last working day in Kalaw.

Last night was New Year's Eve. We ate dinner with Esther and Ralph, two Brits from London. We were back in the room by 9:30 and missed the fun games, the singing and the dancing. And the fireworks! Too bad. We enjoyed staff Christmas carols earlier on. They really looked like they were having a good time.

Roger got a big hunk of turkey and Steve had a turkey leg to chew on for dinner which made them happy.

This was a great hotel.



Bright and early we were we off to our fourth and last school opening at Pwe Hla Shwe Gone, also known over the year as Fowlers' School. It is the biggest school we have ever built in Kalaw, 30' x 150' As we drove there, we passed a clinic we had built the year before and a school where we had built the teachers' cottage and put a new roof on. Other times driving about we saw schools we had built in previous years – I love the feeling.



Pwe Hla Shwe Gone school has 160 students, all in our building. It is a primary school.

Currently, they have six teachers and will increase by one grade each year over the next three years to become a middle school. The government is building a new 60' x 30' there also, but the contractor is having difficulty with the foundation to Ernest's great interest. The government is also fixing up the old school building as classrooms and the UNESCO building that houses six teachers near the village will be hopefully improved. (Not seen). Three years from now there may be over 300 students and they may want to talk about building a high school here.

The celebration was lively. Roger made an excellent speech with a translator who struggled for possession of the microphone. The sound system was even more appalling than usual. At the snack afterward, a bottle of whiskey appeared. Some was consumed by the officials, none by us. The school gave us a gift of white jackets with the name of the school and the district and the date January 1, 2017

Next we drove further into the forest along a beautiful road lined by huge eucalyptus trees on either side. We fear that the widening may remove them. (Everywhere roads are being widened). This lovely drive was marred by Roger's realization that he had left his phone at the school opening. Half the convoy turned back to get it and the rest of us carried on. We wound our way up a mountain road to find a small village nestled in a small fertile valley where they grow tea and oranges and have a spectacular view. The village monk who grew up here has come to Ernest's house twice to ask for a new school.

The village/school is called Wah Bo Yee, 'Tea School' (the villagers gave us a gigantic bag of tea as we left.) The old school is on monastery land but the villagers have donated land for a new school across the ever-flowing river and on



a rise of land that is flat and prepared and big enough. It is currently a primary school with 92 students and five teachers paid by the government.

Sharon visited the building that serves as the teachers' cottage and office. It is large enough but rickety and wooden with two braziers, large gaps between the boards, a leaky roof, and holes in the floorboards. Not good.



We walked up to the new school site which Ernest says is accessible although the road is very steep.



This is not in the Kalaw school district but the education official said he would contact his counterpart to be sure this is agreeable to them. We are considering building a four room 80' x 30' school and a 30' x 15' teachers cottage.

If funds permit, we will also consider building 'Last-minute School' but will make that decision later in the year depending on how things go.

On our drive back, we passed a tourist site called Blue Lake with giant Buddhas which Steve enjoyed seeing. We will stop for a visit next year.



In An Ban we met briefly with the Education official.

He is now second-in-charge of the district and has a budget for school upkeep of \$50,000 per month for 200 schools. Teachers are paid \$150 US per month.

Teachers are trained for one year, then practice-teach for one year, then go back for training for another year. The government is training many new teachers right now. He has opened 50 new schools in the Kalaw area in the last 10 years. We believe more than 20 of those are ours. He says hopefully, "See you next year!"

The education official wishes us to consider the following schools:

His #1 is Clean School

#2 is one which we did not see this year but saw last year, Oo Min.

#3 for him was 'Last-minute school.' (The one that lost its toilets and fence to road widening.)

In a later meeting with Ernest, we confirmed the following buildings to start when he is ready:

One. Myain Daik clinic

Two: Phatama "Clean school"

Three: solar and furniture for the 2016 hilltop schools

Four: Wah Bo Yee "Tea school" and teacher's cottage

We offered Ernest \$400 for our trip expenses and \$\$ for his medical expenses this year. We asked him to stay in touch about the hiatus hernia that he is suffering from. Steve offered Dana for Rise, Ernest's granddaughter, for her last year at University and encouraged her to stay in school.

Last Night in Kalaw. We went to Seven Sisters of course. Steve was heading home the next morning and Roger and I were going to Inle Lake for a couple of days of rest and relaxation. Some sadness. Much love. Good trip.

January 3-4 Mandalay

After opening three schools, we came in the dusk to Sanid Kine 'Dusk school'. Teachers waited for us under a tree. The headmistress had hurt her foot and could not walk about with us. A condemned school building, the result of the recent earthquake, was still standing but empty. A 20' x 20' canopy on a concrete floor waited for walls. A bamboo tin roof, 16' x 40' building with concrete floor(?) had been built by the villagers. plus KG. They need a 60' x 30' school.

Next morning, we left the comfort of the Sedona hotel at 9 o'clock.

Our first school today, Ye Twin Kaung, nicknamed 'Busy school', was reached after a long drive over the Irrawaddy River past the lovely hills of Sagine and down a (very) long dusty road. We were met by many villagers. This was the big school of the day, with 539 students, five buildings, and 6 teachers living here. Eight beautiful girls threw sparkles as we walked in!



We sat under a covered roof and a feast was offered. Roger made a good speech and then we walked about. They also had earthquake damage. They want a 120' x 30' for 6 classrooms, a primary school. The government will send seven more teachers because current class sizes are much too crowded. After that they will consider a high school but will probably need another building first. A big school, we wondered if we could 'wrap our arms around it.'

At our second school, Mye Net, we were met by a motorcycle cavalcade and a sign to welcome us. Meg made a fine speech. The children were well dressed and the Headmistress, a Burmese woman, seemed capable. A large concrete building needs some updating. Two open classrooms need replacing. There are five good toilets.



The school plus well are functioning and the people look healthy. A nice new kindergarten.



Our last school today in the village of Naung She Htauk left us a bit low. A lot of betel being grown and chewed. Headmaster had good English and was drunk. Garbage. Dirty. Broken windows.



Request for high school was impossible as enrolment too low. We gave the village a talk about taking care of what they have. Sharon made a speech and did the Yellow Pad. Not any likelihood we will work here.

Home after dark to the lovely Sedona for dinner and lots of laughs. Life is good--for us.

January 5, 2017 Sekalay, Seytoe, Nwar Shar Yoe
Sekalay

Built 2016. 4 teachers – village had collected \$200 to finish a teachers' cottage and classroom: need \$500 to finish
 85 students K-Grade 4.
 No electricity, have a well, nice trees.



Village cannot afford to replace the old building which is decaying – need brick walls (bamboo now), timber structure, tin roof, back wall disintegrating.



Seytoe

Built 2016.

Headmistress Daw Win Hme – 12 women teachers and 1 man – all paid by gov't, only 1 sleeps at school

229 students, grades 1-8

Grades 5-8 in old building which is 30 years old – most of those students are from other villages.



Our new building has higher ceiling and roof to keep building cooler – roof tiles are zinc coated – rafters are aluminum to avoid rust
 Grades 1-4 in new building
 Need a well – 700,000 kyat estimated cost – need water for children and trees

Nwar Shar Yoe

visited January 5, 2017

Maung's crew is still working here finishing up the school building.

8 villages send students –

600 students – 27 teachers –

8 in the new teachers' cottage

Our new school is a 120' x 30' building with 10 inch walls and 6 classes



Government is building a 90' x 30', with 5-inch walls and 9-inch foundation thickness – Maung thinks it will not do well in an earthquake
 250 volunteers worked on our new building, some bringing food, some carrying bricks
 Need water tank: Roger approved – Maung will finish before team leaves
 need \$500 to finish

From Roger:

January 7

Up early for our final school visit here, the 2016 Nwar Chan Gyi Kone school building, funded by the Swiss Suyana Mundial foundation. We had previously built, in 2015, a well, toilets, teachers' cottage, and an 80' by 30' school building, also supported by the Swiss foundation. We came back in 2016 and built another

80' by 30' which we officially opened today. It was a fun celebration and all seemed happy.

After 2015, they were a K/ 6 with 210 students. Now with the second building completed, they are K/ 8 with 287 students and have added 3 teachers for a total of 8.

All our buildings looked good and were well maintained. They are completing a traditional school building for prekindergarten and then will move all the classes out of the dangerous old brick building. The education department will decide what to do with the old building. What a success to see the students now in all new schools; it was a mess when we first visited.



Back to the Sedona so looking forward to a swim but found the pool closed for a Big Wedding. So now writing up our day's visit. We will have a meeting with John and Maung before dinner to talk about plans for 2017.

Later...

Meeting now done. We will build 3 small projects at completed 2016 schools: a water tank, a well, and repair a teachers' cottage.

Also, we will build 4 schools:

- at Hse Min Gone (They Phu Cha) a 90' by 30';
- at Pu Pha in Loikaw a 60' by 30';
- in Mandalay at Mye Net an 80' by 30'
- in Mandalay at Ye Twin Kaung a 120' by 30'.

Details on these will be in a separate confirming email to John and Maung.

We then had a fascinating visit to the art gallery of Sein Myint, one of Burma's most famous citizens and a supporter of our schools. A long story. Final dinner at Cafe City with lots of hugs and tears.

January 10

Up to feed the monks, what a wonderful way to start the day. Being here with Kalya and her family is so sweet.

Then we went to U Hla Maung's house for a visit. He looked good but said that he doesn't have much energy and can only stay out for an hour at a time. He is quite upset with the situation here as I see from his daily Facebook posts. However, he came with us to visit to Daw Sanda. Both of us left Dana.

Daw Sanda talked about Hmawbi and the overcrowding and the need for a 30' by 60'. John / Maung's visit to evaluate the situation at Hmawbi did not go well and we sadly said that we did not have funds this year. She may build a cheap traditional building herself though I am not sure where she will get the funds. Pyapon, her Delta school, now goes to Grade 9 and has 282 students, 40 resident nuns, and 10 teachers. A big success and so nice to have helped.

Daw Sanda's Yangon nunnery is a wonderful, clean, well-managed, and with almost 90 nuns. What they do need is a well as government water is a big problem. The monastery next door has one but not enough for them. We agreed to supply one, the estimated cost is 13 lakhs. So happy to help and continue our relationship with her. We sadly said goodbye to UHM and his family and headed to the Canadian Embassy via Scott Market.

Met the new Ambassador, Karen MacArthur, as well as Loc Pham, commercial counsellor, and Zaw Moe Aung. A very pleasant meeting where Ambassador MacArthur had lots of questions for us. Loc manages their Facebook page which has 450,000 followers. They would love to do an article on us. Karen would be happy to attend an opening and will keep in touch. She wanted the names of our local contractors.

There are no changes expected this year in the banking sector although they tried. They also said progress in a wide variety of areas within the country would be slow.

Back to Classique where we will try the new local restaurant, Horn, for dinner. Tomorrow begins the long trip home with Sharon now on antibiotics for a chest infection but feeling a little better.

Cheers