

Maung Maung (1862–1936)

By Suak Khaw Ngin

Maung Maung was one of the founders of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Myanmar.

Early Life

Maung Maung is one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Burma (now Myanmar).¹ He was also a pastor and an evangelist. His father and grandfather, descendants of an old Burmese noble family, were among Dr. Judson's early converts to Christianity. He was born at Moulmein (now Mawlamyine), on May 7, 1862. Elder Maung Maung's mother was a granddaughter of Thumana, the last king of the Mon Kingdom of Baraivati; his father was Maung Baik, a Wun, or governor, of Henzada under the King of Burma just before the second Burmese war. His father, mother, and grandfather, Prince Suthi, were converted to Christianity and baptized by Dr. Adoniram Judson at Mawlamyine and were among the early converts.² He had one brother, Ko Miya Thum, and a sister, Mah May.³

Education and Marriage

Maung Maung grew up as a Christian and received a good education, having an interest in medicine and the care of the sick. Later he worked for the Port Trust in Yangon as a draftsman. He married a Mon woman named Aye May and they had only one daughter, Ma Than Tin, who became the beloved wife of U Saw U, and the best translator in the Myanmar Adventist Church. The Maungs had nine grandchildren (one boy and eight girls) and nine great grandchildren.⁴ One of his granddaughters, Mrs. Aye Hnin Saw, serves as office secretary at the Myanmar Union Mission.

Career and Ministry

Maung Maung heard the Sabbath message from his sister, Mah May. He became interested in the Third Angel's Message from the literature and Bible studies of the first colporteur who came to Myanmar, and he was one of the first company to be baptized soon after the arrival of Pastor and Mrs. Heber H. Votaw in early in 1905.⁵ Shortly before the first Seventh-day Adventist missionary came to Myanmar, his sister read in her Bible that Saturday was the holy day and began to observe it. Later H. B. Meyers, the pioneer colporteur in Myanmar,⁶ held Bible studies with her and Maung Maung, with the result that Maung left his good-paying government position and began to preach his new-found faith among the Burmese people at this own expense.⁷ Brother Maung translated a number of tracts and printed them with his own money. He refused to take anything from the mission funds for printing.⁸ Brother Chapman, of Nashville, Tennessee, United States, took up a collection, and sent him US\$16 to print some tracts.⁹

In 1904 he attended a meeting of Seventh-day Adventist workers in Calcutta at his own expense, and his plea for the establishment of regular Adventist work in Myanmar led to the assignment of H. H. Votaw to the field. Maung himself was in the first group to be baptized by Votaw, who arrived in Myanmar in 1905. On Sabbath, March 23, 1907, the first church in Myanmar was organized by Elder Votaw and G. B. Thompson with 23 members. The next day, nine persons were baptized by Elder Votaw amid the beautiful surroundings of the Royal Lakes. The officers of the first Adventist church were as follows: Heber H. Votaw, elder; Maung Maung and David Hpo Hla, deacons; Anna Speer, church clerk; and Carolyn Votaw, treasurer.¹⁰

For nearly 30 years Maung Maung gave his time and strength to preaching in the villages and towns, treating and praying for

the sick, translating and writing, and pastoring and evangelizing. He was ordained in 1927, near the close of his service.¹¹

Maung Maung wrote the following articles, "The Law of God Written in the Heart,"¹² and "The Second Coming of Christ."¹³

Later Life

Maung Maung died at Thonze, Myanmar, on July 2, 1936.¹⁴ Early in the year he contracted dysentery and his strength gradually failed. He was conscious until the last and assured those with him of his hope in the first resurrection. He left to mourn his wife and adopted daughter and family, and an older brother in the message, besides other relatives. Although the funeral was held on a rainy day, about 500 Christian and Buddhist friends attended. The service was conducted by Pastors Beckner and Hamilton, assisted by Saya Saw U and Saya Freddie.¹⁵

Sources

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Notes

1. Pe Yee, *The Story of Seventh-day Adventists in Myanmar* (Yangon: Kinsaung Publishing House, n.d.), 42.↵
2. *Eastern Tidings*, August 1, 1936, 5.↵
3. *ARH*, May 10, 1906, 15.↵
4. *ARH*, June 11, 1926, 26.↵
5. *Eastern Tidings*, August 1, 1936, 5.↵
6. "Maung Maung," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), 761-762.↵
7. Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, vol. 3 (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), 111.↵
8. Heber H. Votaw, "Burma," *ARH*, September 14, 1905, 17.↵
9. *ARH*, May 10, 1906, 15.↵
10. *ARH*, May 23, 1907, 15-16.↵
11. "Maung Maung," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1966).↵
12. *Eastern Tidings*, August 1, 1904, 30.↵
13. *Eastern Tidings*, October 1, 1904, 40.↵
14. *Eastern Tidings*, July 15, 1936, 8.↵
15. *Eastern Tidings*, August 1, 1936, 5.↵