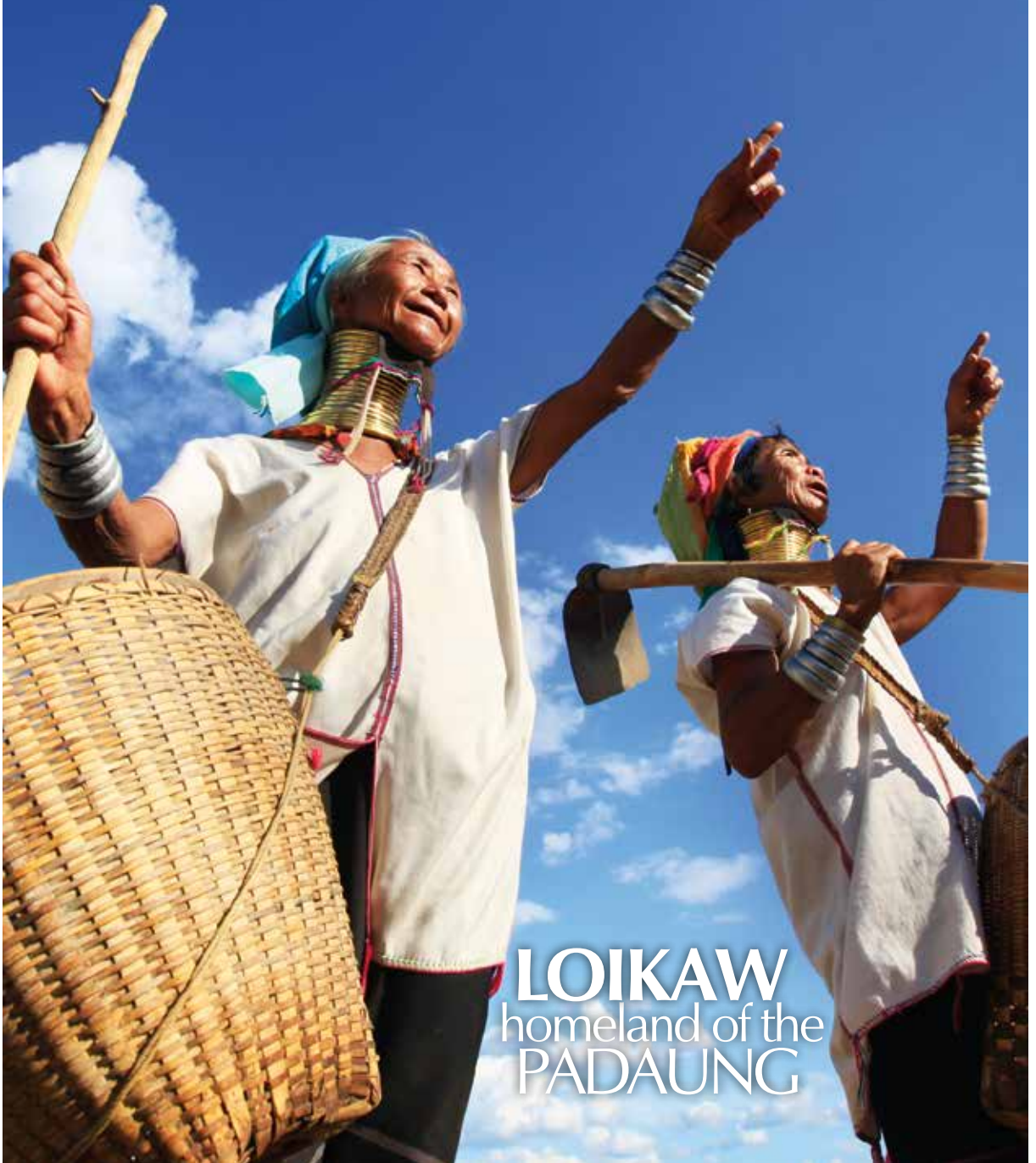


# Yadanarpon

In-flight magazine of Mann Yadanarpon Airlines

Issue 1, March 2014



**LOIKAW**  
homeland of the  
**PADAUNG**

# HEPALUCKY

Soft  
Caps

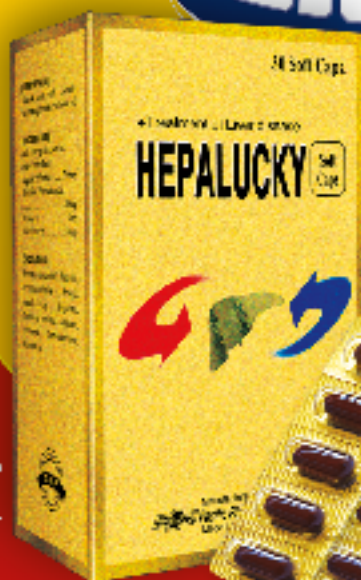


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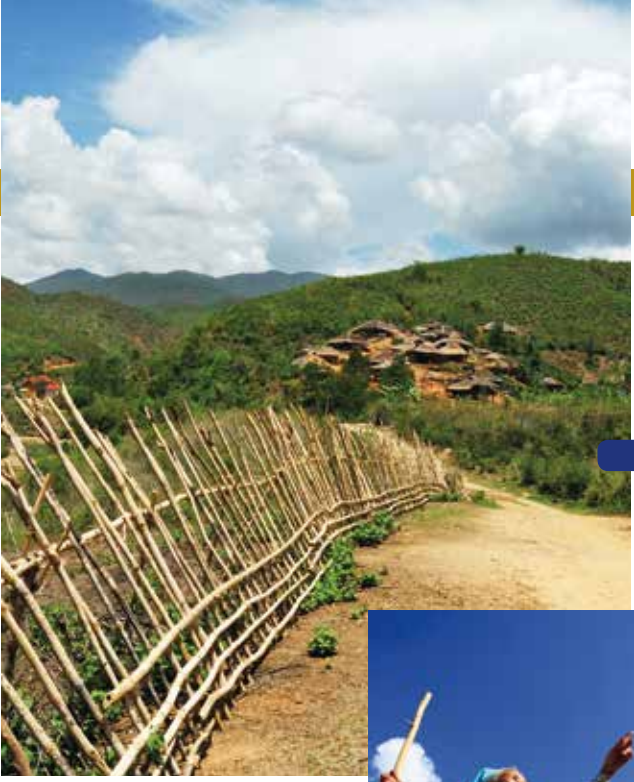
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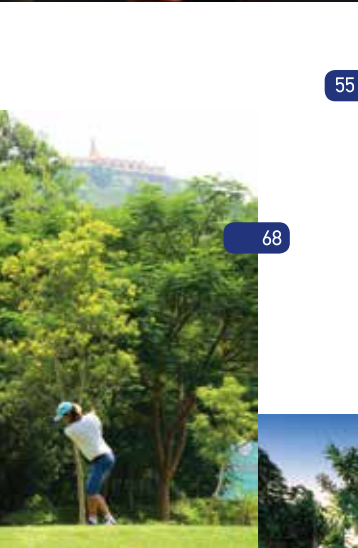
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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

**M**ingalabar!  
Our airline has entered the air transport market in Myanmar at a time of unprecedented changes in the country. Since its election in 2010, our present government has been implementing wide-ranging social, economic and political reforms which have earned the acclaim of the international community.

Myanmar's re-entry into the global family has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of leisure and business visitors by air which means that the country's airline industry needs to expand in order to accommodate the influx of international travelers. Whereas in the past, Yangon was the only gateway to Myanmar by air, recent bilateral and regional air transport liberalisation measures, together with our domestic policies for development of tourism and commerce, have made other major airports accessible by international air carriers. Of these, the most important is the Mandalay International Airport to which regional carriers, namely China Eastern Airlines, Thai AirAsia, Thai Smile and Bangkok Airways, are operating presently from Kunming and Bangkok. In addition, our national carrier, Myanmar Airways International, is operating between Mandalay and Gaya. It is highly anticipated that more international and regional carriers will be operating to Mandalay in the near future, for Mandalay is the cultural centre of Myanmar and is in close proximity to two of the main tourist destinations, Bagan and Inle Lake (via Heho), as well as to our administrative capital Nay Pyi Taw. Such is the reason that Mann Yadanarpon Airlines (MYP) has decided to base its operations at Mandalay International Airport so as to facilitate the travelling needs of international visitors to Myanmar by linking Mandalay to all the main domestic destinations.

Apart from international travellers, our airline's wide domestic network will also offer domestic travellers a convenient choice for air travel. Our airline will strive to give full satisfaction to all our customers and gradually establish a strong market presence enabling us to contribute to our country's social and economic development.

Please enjoy your flight on Mann Yadanarpon Airlines!

**U Than Oo**  
**Chairman**  
**Mann Yadanarpon Airlines**

Enjoy Royal Service!



**MANN  
YADANARPON AIRLINES**



### About Us

Mann Yadanarpon Airlines (MYP) was incorporated as a private limited liability company on July 23, 2013, and granted a permit by the Myanmar Investment Commission under the Myanmar Citizens Investment Law to operate air transportation services on both domestic and international routes.

Mann Yadanarpon Airlines is the first airline in Myanmar to base its operations at Mandalay International Airport. Mandalay is the second largest city and the cultural centre of Myanmar in close proximity to the main tourist destinations of Bagan and Inle Lake (Heho).

Whereas only one international airline was operating to Mandalay International Airport up to a year ago, five international airlines are now operating to the airport. Therefore, by basing its operations at Mandalay International Airport, MYP aims to provide convenient international flight connections to international travellers arriving at and departing from Mandalay.

MYP plans to expand its operations to regional destinations after successfully operating domestic services for two years.

### Our Fleet

MYP's initial fleet will be two new ATR 72-600 aircraft with the second aircraft arriving in March 2014. After two years of operation, MYP

will acquire an Airbus A-320 aircraft on an operational lease basis for its planned regional operations as well as additional ATR aircraft.

### Our Network

MYP's current network with our first aircraft includes Yangon, Mandalay, Nyaung-U, Heho, Tachileik and Kengtung. After our second aircraft arrives in March 2014, our network will be expanded to include Myitkyina, Bhamo, Putao, Monywa, Homalin, Loikaw and Kalembo. All of MYP's destinations are of tourism and/or commercial significance.

When MYP commences regional operations, it plans to operate initially to destinations in Thailand and Singapore.

### Our Flight Crew

MYP's pilots are all qualified on ATR 72-212 and ATR 72-500 aircraft types. MYP's current flight crew consists of two ATR 72-600-qualified rating instructors hired from ATR undertaking line training for MYP's pilots until they are qualified for aircraft type rating on the ATR 72-600 before flying scheduled passenger flights.

### Our Cabin Crew

Our cabin crew supervisors have been trained at ATR in France and hold instructor certificates for ATR 72-600-type aircraft. All of our cabin crew have attended the Airline Cabin Crew Training Course conducted by the Myanmar Aviation Training and Services (MATS) at the







Enjoy Royal Service!



Department of Civil Aviation  
Training Institute in Yangon.  
MATS is a DCA Myanmar-  
approved training organisation  
with instructors certified by ATR  
and trained in the UK.

### Our Aircraft Maintenance Crew

MYP's licensed aircraft maintenance engineers have type ratings on ATR 72-212 and ATR 72-500 and are attending ATR training courses as required to obtain certification approval on ATR 72-600 aircraft. In the interim, maintenance of MYP's aircraft will be contracted to Myanma Airways, a government-owned airline, which has an Approved Maintenance Organization Certificate issued by the Department of Civil Aviation, Myanmar. Thereafter, MYP will carry out airline fleet maintenance with its own approved maintenance and repair organisation.

### Our Strategy

MYP will strive to offer higher safety standards, better customer service and more efficiency which exceeds the expectations of our passengers.



### Our Vision

To be the airline of choice for customers by maintaining the highest levels of safety, service and efficiency

### Our Mission

- 🛩️ We are dedicated to providing quality service that exceeds expectations.
- 🛩️ We respect our employees' aspirations while demanding the highest standards of performance.
- 🛩️ We share our achievements with the community.













**MANN  
YADANARPON AIRLINES**

# Launching Dinner

Sedona Hotel, Yangon

February 11, 2014











A FEW WEEKS BEFORE MANN YADANARPON'S INAUGURAL FLIGHT, CEO U KYAW MYO CLEARED THE RUNWAY FOR A WIDE-RANGING CHAT ABOUT THE CHARMS OF MANDALAY, THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE AND WHY THERE ARE TOO MANY AIRLINES IN MYANMAR

## FROM THE GROUND UP AN INTERVIEW with the **CEO**

By **Wade Guyitt**



If you looked around the conference room of Mann Yadanarpon Airlines (MYP) last December, you would have seen a model of an ATR 72-600 plane on the desk, carry-on luggage monogrammed with the company's logo by the window, and a calendar on the wall already hanging open to 2014 – all in all, a pretty good portrait of a company ready to take to the skies.

In only a few short weeks the airline's first aircraft would be rolling down the runway for the first time. But when I sit down with U Kyaw Myo ahead of Mann Yadanarpon's official launch – and let me say, interviewing an airline CEO gives switching one's phone to "airplane mode" a whole new significance – the first thing he wants to talk about isn't the plane or himself but his employees.

Along with company chair U Than Oo and the rest of the senior management team, he'll personally be congratulating the cabin crew later that day for their successful completion of the Myanmar Aviation and Training (or MATS) course, which covers everything from lifesaving techniques to the proper way to pour a glass of wine.

He'll also be giving the new graduates a pep talk, he says, to encourage them ahead of their biggest test still to come – the passengers themselves.

Mann Yadanarpon is a brand-new airline, with more than 300 staff moving as one to set it apart from the competition. Though all senior staff have prior flight experience, everyone's eager to start fresh, allowing them to build their relationship with customers starting from the ground up.

Pilots, engineers and ground crews have travelled to France and Singapore to certify in the latest safety standards. And branches for hassle-free ticket purchasing are opening in each of the airline's destination cities, to make sure any difficulties are

solved quickly and conveniently for customers.

"Our motto is 'Enjoy royal service,'" U Kyaw Myo says. "So what we are trying to achieve is better service than our competitors. Reliable schedules, efficient ground service, efficient flight service: It all comes down to service."

But airlines are graded on actions, not words. "I don't want to make any promises we can't keep," he cautions. Does that mean promising less? Quite the opposite, U Kyaw Myo says – it means there's more pressure on Mann Yadanarpon to exceed expectations.

"The competition will be fierce," he replies, when I ask how Myanmar's newly crowded airspace will sort itself out over the next few years. "It will be a very difficult task."

He should know; he's no fly-by-night operator in this business. U Kyaw Myo spent 33 years at the Department of Civil Aviation, ultimately serving as director of air transport and overseeing regulations for the entire domestic airline industry. He was also appointed director from the government side of a joint-venture airline which has since gone wholly private.

"When I graduated high school my dream was to be an air force fighter pilot," he says. "But my mother objected to me going into the armed forces, so I trained as an engineer and got a bachelor degree. Afterward I joined the Department of Civil Engineering."

So how did he go from government service to private business himself? He laughs. "I retired," he says simply. But like many hard-working people in







## Enjoy Royal Service!



WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE IS BETTER SERVICE THAN OUR COMPETITORS. RELIABLE SCHEDULES, EFFICIENT GROUND SERVICE, EFFICIENT FLIGHT SERVICE: IT ALL COMES DOWN TO SERVICE.



Myanmar, retirement for U Kyaw Myo wasn't a time to stop working. Rather, it was a time to reinvent himself.

After a couple of years with another airline, in September 2013 he jumped at the chance to join the Mann Yadanarpon team – a 100-percent private, Myanmar-owned-and-operated venture.

"The idea to start the airline came from our chairman, U Than Oo," U Kyaw Myo says. "For more than 20 years he and his brother ran Sun Far Travel and Tours, the major ticketing and travel agency in Myanmar. After selling tickets for so long, he decided to offer his own instead!"

By the time U Kyaw Myo came onboard, he says, the company was already out on the runway – it just needed someone to taxi it to the gate and help it lift off.

"I love aviation," he says – but it's also clear he doesn't have his head in the clouds. When I ask how Mann Yadanarpon decided to operate out of Mandalay, he raises a hand. "Let's start a little earlier," he says. "As you are aware, there are too many airlines in Myanmar."

That's a funny thing, I point out, for someone who is starting a new airline to say. But as he explains, congestion in Yangon airport means new airlines need to strike out elsewhere.

By becoming the first to base operations in Mandalay, Mann Yadanarpon found not only a business plan – it found an identity.

Back in 1857 – or so the story goes – King Mindon fulfilled an ancient prophecy predicting the rise of a new city on the 2400<sup>th</sup> jubilee of Buddhism. Another story says he looked out his palace windows at Amarapura, saw ships carrying British officers docking close by and felt a little crowded. Either way, he ordered his palace deconstructed and carried by elephants 11 kilometres (7 miles) upriver to a place he called Yadanarpon.

Yadanarpon – the name means "pile of gems" – later came to be known as Mandalay, after Mandalay Hill. Though it has long since given up capital status, Mandalay remains a holder of great cultural riches as one of the great modern cities of Myanmar.

"Mandalay is a cultural centre, and all tourists pass through it, either directly or en route to Bagan and other places. By basing our operations there, we are able to offer more convenient links to international travellers. And from there comes the name of our airline. Mann is of course Mandalay, and Yadanarpon refers to the wealth of the former royal capital."

The connections are proudly celebrated in the company's logo. The city's palace and walls are depicted in royal gold, for the richness of the land and culture; its moat is depicted in blue, symbolising the link between water and sky.

With international carriers now operating direct to Mandalay from China, Thailand and Malaysia, it's easier to visit than ever – and easier to jump to other destinations, especially those in upper Myanmar.

In the future Mann Yadanarpon will be expanding to offer international flights. But for now it's busy redrawing the domestic airline map. Opening with six domestic destinations of "tourism and cultural significance", it will then expand to 12 destinations, many of which will help to open up the country's previously underserved north.

As some of the destinations are less well-known and not otherwise easily accessible, a direct flight by a major carrier will make a big difference in the lives of those who live there.

"By operating regularly to those destinations, we will be giving the people from those areas better access to the rest of the country," U Kyaw Myo says.

Describing his hopes of seeing these areas become more developed through easier access and the extra income it will generate, he suddenly pauses. "Maybe I'm taking it too far," he adds, as if remembering his earlier vow not to make promises before he's delivered.

Why not, though? It's a new day in Myanmar, and the start of a new era in air travel. The sky's the limit. So welcome aboard, and enjoy your travels in this remarkable country. We're glad to meet you.





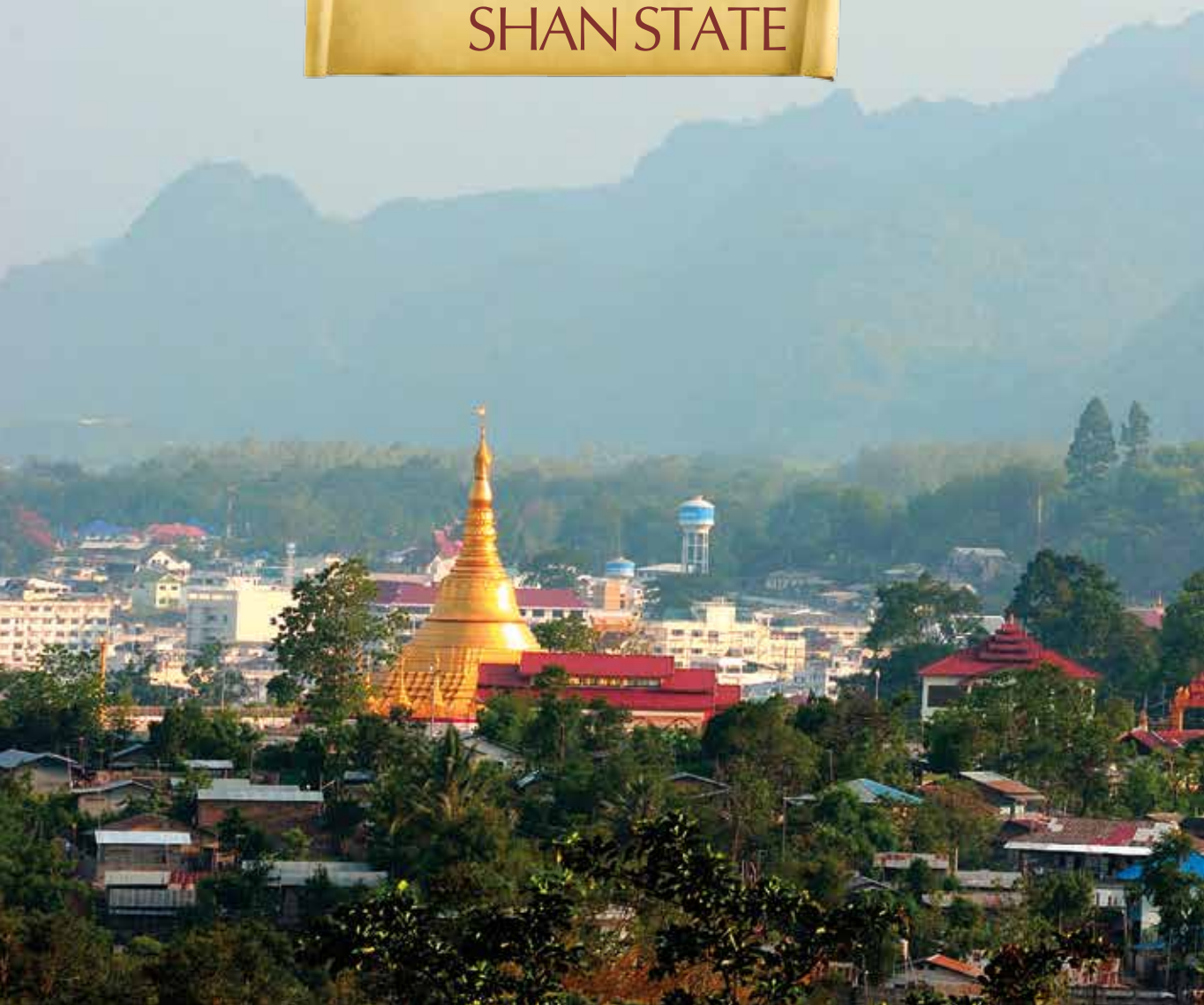
TACHILEIK OFFERS SOMETHING ELSE  
– A 14-DAY PASS THAT ALLOWS THE  
VISITOR TO EXPLORE SHAN STATE,  
WHICH INCLUDES SOME OF THE  
COUNTRY'S MOST INTERESTING TOURIST  
ATTRACTIONS.

Text By **Simon Whiting**

Photo By **Kyaw Kyaw Win**

# TACHILEIK

a window into  
SHAN STATE









**T**he large trading town of Tachileik in Shan State has often enjoyed one particular kind of visitor that the rest of Myanmar sees little of: one who travels overland from neighbouring Thailand.

Sure, there are other places in Myanmar – such as the Tanintharyi Region town of Kawthaung – where Thailand's expat population can pay a fee to cross the border and then return with a renewed visa. But Tachileik offers something else – a 14-day pass that allows the visitor to explore Shan State, which includes some of the country's most interesting tourist attractions. These include picturesque Inle Lake, a freshwater lake that is home



to a community that lives on the lake, and Kyaing Tong, the former heart of the Golden Triangle, which is about 160 kilometres (100 miles) to the north.

The Kyaing Tong area shelters a large number of ethnic groups that can be visited in day-long treks from the town.

But before hopping on a bus or a plane to visit Kyaing Tong, it's worth stopping for a while in Tachileik to have a look at the town. Many of the townspeople speak both Myanmar and Thai, as well as Shan, which unsurprisingly sounds like a mix between the two languages. As the level of English available is not too strong, if you want to arrange a trip outside of town it's worth







asking your hotel or one of the locals who will almost invariably approach you as you wander around.

Tachileik's *raison d'être* is trade and it should come as no surprise that the town's market is jam-packed with goods manufactured from around the region. The market is nearly impossible to miss as it is just off to the side of the bridge and spreads out near the river.

For visitors from Thailand there are exotic animal products for sale, as well as jade and gems, and locally produced handicrafts and clothing that make for excellent presents back home. And for visitors from Myanmar there are the

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latest-issue DVDs, electronics, toys, clothing, reproduction watches, jewellery and sporting goods – some of which remain hard to locate in Yangon or Mandalay. Oh, and there are vendors walking around selling curios that include decks of Saddam Hussein playing cards. At night, the area around the bridge and the market becomes a somewhat seedy entertainment area but it's a good place to grab a meal and a few drinks.

And what town in Myanmar would be complete without a pagoda on a hill? Tachileik is no exception, sporting a miniature replica of Yangon's famed Shwedagon Pagoda that shines radiantly in the sun. Nearby are a couple of monasteries that are also worth a look.

In the late afternoon it's worth climbing a steep hill up to the Golden Triangle Hotel, which was once owned by the government and has now become a







relatively high-end hotel that also offers a little gambling, as many of the better hotels in town do. While I didn't sample the tables or slot machines, I did sit down in the hotel's outdoor restaurant to enjoy a meal of spicy noodles and pork washed down with a big cold jug of beer.

Hotel rooms in Tachileik range from the very cheap – I paid about US\$15 a night for mine, a basic hotel off the town's main road – to the expensive luxury resorts along the river and near the golf course, which can easily cost more than \$100 a night.

Having several days to while away in Tachileik and having recently trekked in

“  
ON A BUS OR A PLANE  
TO VISIT KYAING TONG,  
IT'S WORTH STOPPING  
FOR A WHILE IN TACHILEIK  
TO HAVE A LOOK AT THE  
TOWN.”

Kyaing Tong, I found a tour guide who spoke good English and decided to ride outside the town. The first impression upon leaving the town is that the surrounding area is quite busy – there were construction sites dotted all around Tachileik, with many pagodas, monasteries and religious sites in various stages of building.

My guide, Slim, explained when we stopped that much of the funding for the construction was provided by Thai businesspeople who cross the border to make offerings.

A short drive from town is the village of More Nyin, home to a pagoda and monastery of the same name, that has seen major work in recent years. These include the construction of a four-storey tower and expansion of its already vast hall that houses a bronze replica of Mandalay's Maha Muni Buddha image.

It's rather grim but the hall also features some quite graphic paintings of Jataka scenes and some extremely colourful







renderings of Buddhist hell.

Heading further away from town is the Loi Yuen Zedi (pagoda) and Buddha image. If you're lucky enough to visit the pagoda while the head abbot is there, he might recount the history behind the site, as well as the story of the treasure allegedly buried beneath.

The abbot told me during my visit that a trove of jewels and gems are entombed under the stupa and protected by booby traps. A short walk away from the main pagoda along a path hemmed in by jungle is another building that contains a Buddha







“CROSSING OVER TO THE THAI SIDE OF THE BORDER BRINGS A DASH OF MODERNITY – AND THE ALMOST EVER-PRESENT 7/11 STORES THAT PROLIFERATE IN THAILAND AND WILL PROBABLY DO THE SAME IN MYANMAR.”



image with a distinct difference – it's made from bamboo. A little research revealed that the bamboo image is far from unique – there are another dozen in Shan State and a further one in Yangon – but it was the first and last time that I have seen one.

The jungle path was also a serene environment and it wasn't hard to find a quiet spot to sit down and look out over the scenery, which stretches back to Tachileik and across the Mae Sai river into Thailand.

Crossing over to the Thai side of the border brings a dash of modernity – and the almost ever-present 7/11 stores that proliferate in Thailand and will probably do the same in Myanmar.

The Wat Phra That Doi Wao Buddhist temple is visible from both sides of the river and offers a commanding view over both towns. According to some – the story depends on who you ask – the temple was built to commemorate the Myanmar soldiers who died fighting against dislodged Chinese Kuomintang units in 1965.

Nearby is a monument built to a Thai



king reputed to have held off Myanmar invasions. The unmistakable high point of the monument is the intimidating statue of a giant scorpion with its claws aimed at the border.

Another place of interest near Mae Sai are the Tum Luang caves in the Khun Naam Naang Norn Forest and Park, about 8 kilometres (5 miles) from the town.

For many visitors, time spent in Tachileik will be just enough to have a look at the market and perhaps enjoy a jug of cold Leo beer. Those who get a Shan State pass, however, will have so much more to look forward to.







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THE BRASS-COIL-WEARING WOMEN OF THE KAYAN ETHNIC GROUP HAVE LONG BEEN SYMBOLS OF MYANMAR. A VISIT TO THEIR HOMELAND WILL SHOW YOU WHERE THIS UNIQUE CULTURE COMES FROM AND THE TRADITIONS THAT HAVE SUSTAINED IT DURING DIFFICULT TIMES.

Photos & Text By **Zin Min Swe**

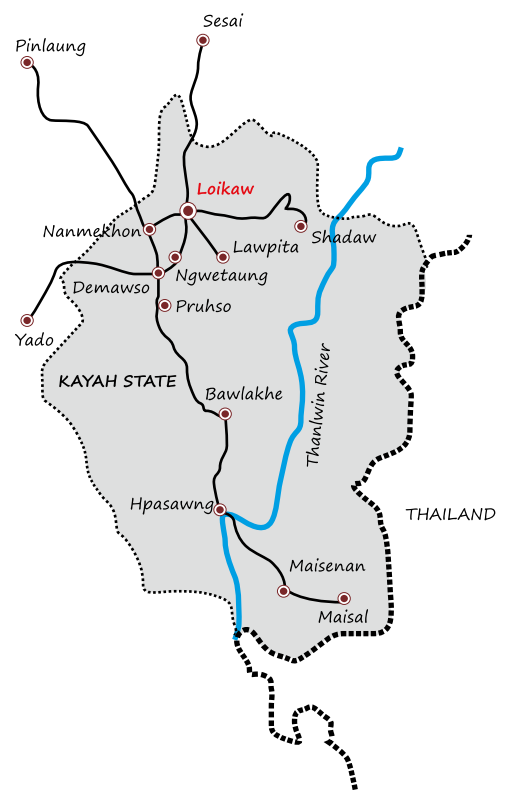
# A visit to **LOIKAW** homeland of the **PADAUNG**



Official counts say there are 135 different ethnic groups in Myanmar, but some say there are even more, with languages, traditions and costumes differentiating each from their neighbours. One of the most famous groups are a subset of the Kayan people, known worldwide for the brass rings worn by women around their necks.

The Kayan are members of Kayin Ni (Red Kayin) race, descended from the Tibeto-Burman family of peoples. There are four main Kayan groups: the Kayan Lahta, the Kayan Ka Ngan, the Kayan Ka Kaung and the Kayan Lahwi. This last group is better known in Myanmar as Padaung (or Pattaung, to the Shan people), meaning “copper neck”.

Among foreigners, the Padaung have also been called by a different, less pleasant name in the past: giraffe women. Over the years their habit of wearing coils on their ankles, their wrists and – most famously – their necks has been subject to much international curiosity, their exotic-looking appearance making them fascinating to ethnographers and snap-happy tourists alike.





AT NIGHT THE WOMEN TAKE OFF THE COILS BEFORE THEY SLEEP. BUT SOME SAY THE RINGS LEAVE THE NECK MUSCLES SO WEAK THAT, ONCE SHE WEARS THEM FOR A LONG PERIOD, A PADAUNG WOMAN IS UNABLE TO HOLD HER HEAD UP WITHOUT THEM. IN OTHER WORDS, THE RINGS ARE FOR LIFE.



The coils give the appearance of lengthening the neck, but in fact they work the opposite way: Rather than stretching the chin upward, they weigh the shoulder bones down. Up to 26 loops of brass can weigh around 6.8 kilograms (15 pounds) in all, and wearing them from the age of five or six, and adding new rings until the body has finished growing in the late teens, distorts the natural skeletal structure of the collarbones over time.

At night the women take off the coils before they sleep. But some say the rings leave the neck muscles so weak that, once she wears them for a long period, a Padaung woman is unable to hold her head up without them. In other words, the rings are for life.

Many Padaung live just over the Thai-Myanmar border, and they are permitted by Thai authorities to remain there as living tourist attractions. Tourism businesses hire the Padaung women, paying them a monthly income to wear the coils and then charging tourists to come and see them and take photos – and hopefully also buy some of their intricate handiwork. It's a complicated arrangement – it provides enough income to give education and a hope of a better future for children displaced by war, but others criticise the arrangement, equating it to a kind of zoo for ethnic people. There's no right or







wrong answer to these questions – as with travelling anywhere, it's up to each traveller to decide how best to contribute to the local economy, and how to learn about local practices sensitively and respectfully.

In Myanmar, the Kayan people – including the Padaung – can also be found in popular tourist sites Bagan and Inle Lake, as well as in Shan State, so you may be able to meet them and learn about their history without having to visit Thailand. But since their traditional homeland is Kayah State, capital Loikaw, why not take a trip to see where these traditions begin?

You can travel overland from Mandalay or Nay Pyi Taw through Shan State along the Pin Laung-Loikaw road. You can also take the Taunggoo-Demawso road,







passes through Taungoo township in Bago Region, but that means crawling along narrow winding hill passes at 15 kilometres an hour. Unless you're a fan of steep slopes and sharp curves, it's recommended to seek another route. Why not fly from Yangon to Loikaw airport?

As you'll see when you arrive, the city itself is reasonably small, at around 20,000 people. But for a city of this size you won't have any trouble finding accommodation. Restaurants, hotels and guest-houses are plenty, offering convenience for local and international visitors.

Getting around is as easy as hiring a car and driver, a motorbike or a trishaw – a sort of bicycle with sidecar. Don't miss the colourful market, and be sure to drop in at the Kayah State Cultural Museum for a display of traditional artifacts and handicrafts made by people in the area.

There's also plenty to see in a day trip from Loikaw. About 20 kilometres away is Lawpita Falls, which powers the country's main hydropower station, producing a quarter of the country's hydroelectricity.

Taung Kwe Pagoda, another landmark of Kayah State, sits on a twin-peaked mountain and allows stirring views of the city. The city is nestled in mountainous countryside, with each stream and



hill seeming to be connected to myth and legend.

South of Loikaw township, past Demawso township, are three famous mountains named Golden Mountain, Silver Mountain and Ruby Mountain. They are made famous by the romantic story Dwe Me Naw, about Kinnari and Kinnara, mythical birds with human heads and torsos. The mountains are visible from Ngwe Taung Dam, and the shrines for the seven sisters of Dwe Me Naw are also nearby, some of different styles than usually seen for nats, or spirits, in Myanmar.

Hti Pwint Lake (or "spreading umbrella" lake), located in the compound of the shrine, is fascinating, as you can sometimes see mud in the lake bubbling up like blooming lotus flowers then fading away.

If you'd like to visit some Padaung villages, try San Boon, Han Thaw Khu or

Pan Pet villages. You'll find more than just coils – the Padaung people have a rich melting pot of traditions unlike anywhere else in the world.

For instance, you may be surprised to discover that the area has a strong Christian tradition. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Italian Catholic missions arrived in the area. Most of the







more than 300 Kayan villages are Roman Catholic to this day – there are only 40 Buddhist Kayan villages – and in some you can see the remains of old churches built by the original converts.

Not many other Catholics in the world, however, probably celebrate Kay Htein Boe, the most famous Kayan festival. For three days at the end of March or the start of April, the residents cut down a long straight tree from the forest, strip off all the branches and carry it into the village so that everyone can gather around it to dance and worship. They pray for better crops in the coming season, using a palm-leaf book and a chicken bone to predict the results.

Kay Htein Boe is but one of many Kayan celebrations, which include New Year festival, Christmas, Kayan National Day and Kayah State Day. All are celebrated boisterously, with unique dancing styles and traditional songs which are always sung

“  
KAY HTEIN BOE  
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MANY KAYAN  
CELEBRATIONS,  
WHICH  
INCLUDE NEW  
YEAR FESTIVAL,  
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KAYAN  
NATIONAL DAY  
AND KAYAH  
STATE DAY.”


loudly and with great happiness.

Among Kayan villages near Loikaw, Pan Pet village attracts the most visitors. Located more than 1200 metres (4000 feet) above sea level, Pan Pet stands in a different world, providing a fascinating glimpse into the traditional culture and livelihoods of the area.

Most of the houses are raised on stilts, meaning the floors are elevated off the ground nearly the height of a person. Residents make their living by cultivating, logging and gardening. Farmers grow corn, paddy, soya-bean and pigeon pea, and also breed cattle, pigs and poultry. To supplement their diet, they hunt the creatures of the forest, including barking deer, sambur, rabbit and wild cat.

If you join them for a meal, you'll probably be offered khuang yay (local wine), a treat given to guests and made from rice or corn. Try it if you like, but go easy: It's an intoxicating brew!

Today, many Padaung wonder about how long the neck-coil tradition will last. As cultures become less isolated, the Kayan are facing a crossroads, and it will be up to the next generation of young women to decide whether their daughters will take up the coils or not.

But as a trip to Loikaw will prove, there is much more to these people than simply their rings. You won't see them as “giraffe women” once you've met them: Instead, you'll remember the skill of their weaving, the sound of their rice being pounded, and most of all the beautiful hospitality they offer in their homes which those driven away miss so much. 



"I ALWAYS TAKE A LOOK AT BAG SHOPS WHEN I'M AT FASHION MALLS – LOOKING AT COLOURS, SIZES, SHAPES AND PATTERNS AND MENTALLY CROSS-CHECKING THEM AGAINST MY WARDROBE BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE."

Photo & Text By **Khin Su Wai**

## Designer plans **BAGS to MEET** every taste

**V**ery few women are immune to the love of handbags and accessories. But some also take the affinity for lovely bags to a level that exceeds obsession. For many, handbags are not just pretty things that hold keys, make-up, money and identity cards: They are reflections of social status, economic achievement and personal fashion taste.

Like many women, I always take a look at bag shops when I'm at fashion malls – looking at colours, sizes, shapes and patterns and mentally cross-checking them against my wardrobe both present and future.

But living in Mandalay gives me access to something special – the Zan Zan shop, to the south of the city, which makes its own bags from a delirious combination of materials. It's fair to say that I have developed a fascination with the sewing of patterns, the hand-weaving of silk and cotton, and the shop's glamorous designs.



*Thet Mon Myint's bag*

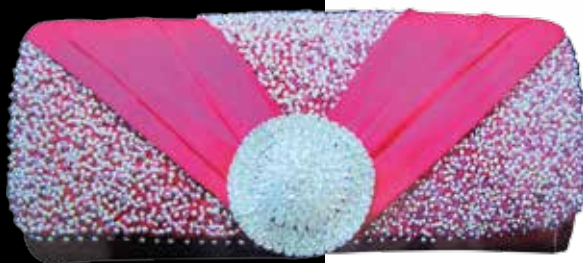




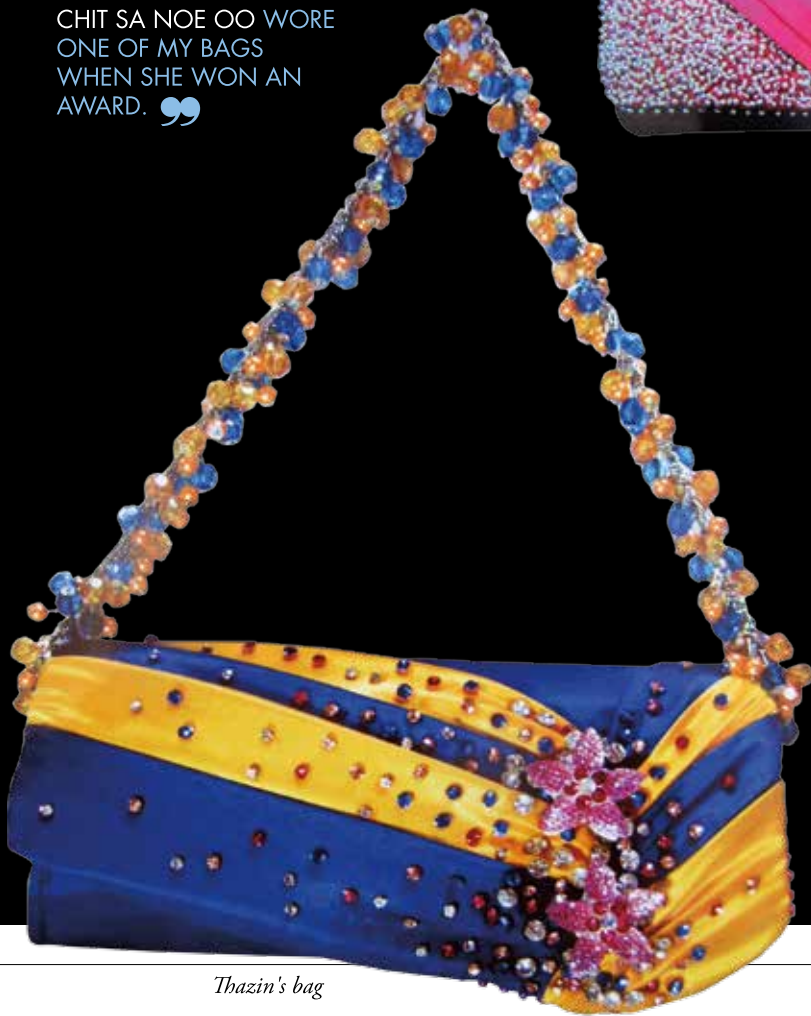
“  
AT LAST YEAR'S  
MYANMAR ACADEMY  
AWARDS CEREMONY,  
ACTRESS  
CHIT SA NOE OO WORE  
ONE OF MY BAGS  
WHEN SHE WON AN  
AWARD. ”



*May Thet Khaing's bag*



*Tin Moe Lwin's bag*



*Thazin's bag*



Most of the shop's products are intended for special events – weddings or important parties. Nearly every bag has been painstakingly embroidered with sequins, diamonds or buttons and stitched in bright colours.

Each bag is a work of art that represents many hours of labour. Ma Nan Kham Hlaing, the young woman who owns the Zan Zan brand – which has produced totes, handbags, shoulder bags and purses for more than a decade – is a member of the Shan ethnic group who lives in Mandalay.

"I started the business when I was about 22 years old," she said. "When I started, I found it was very difficult to make all the bags by hand and make enough for our customers. I have expanded my staff and we can now finish about 20 bags a day or 600 a month. But I still have sleepless nights when I'm trying to come up with new designs."



Ma Nan Kham Hlaing's business idea was encouraged by a neighbour, who ran JOY bag shop and pushed her to keep working hard, even through the hard times. The work has certainly paid off because Zan Zan has expanded quickly and Ma Nan Kham Hlaing's bags are regularly seen on the big stage at national events, such as the Myanmar Academy Awards, as well as in high-end fashion shops in Mandalay and Yangon.

Ma Nan Kham Hlaing's clients have included some well-known actresses, she said.

"At last year's Academy Awards ceremony, actress Chit Sa Noe Oo wore one of my bags when she won an award."







EACH BAG IS A WORK  
OF ART THAT REPRESENTS  
MANY HOURS OF  
LABOUR. ”

Zan Zan has also designed for and sponsored actresses such as Thazin, Saung Endra Tun, Tin Moe Lwin and Nobel Kyaw Kyaw for their appearances at ceremonies, receptions and shows.

But she said that sometimes her products do not receive the mentions they deserve because the major fashion houses are sponsoring the collection.

“If a famous silk cotton shop wants to sponsor an actresses, only that company’s name is mentioned, even if the actress has accessories from another designer,” she said.

The expansion of the Zan Zan brand also brings jobs to the nearby area, employing women to produce the bags. But even that is not enough for Ma Nan Kham Hlaing, who has started teaching her skills to people in other areas such as Lashio and Taunggyi in Shan State through special courses.





“

SHE HAS STARTED TEACHING HER SKILLS TO PEOPLE IN OTHER AREAS SUCH AS LASHIO AND TAUNGGYI IN SHAN STATE. ”

“Every year at the end of Buddhist Lent in October we get a flood of orders for weddings and receptions,” she said. Few Myanmar get married during the Lenten months, creating an artificial rush when the season comes to an end. “But this year we were almost out of stock from the basic bags that we reshape. And we had not saved any stock from last year.”

And while she has dabbled with other products, such as shoulder bags made from leather that she exported to Thailand, Ma Nan Kham Hlaing has returned to the core business.

“I have stopped making the leather shoulder bags because it was tough to crack the Thai market and my margins were small. Instead, I make my handbags for local customers, whose tastes I understand,” she said.

She added that most bags are sold for K3000 to K35,000 with designs available for any taste and budget.







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NOWADAYS IT IS RARE TO SEE LOOMING BY HAND IN AMARAPURA, AS MOST ARE WORKING WITH MACHINES. BUT THE DESIGNS AND QUALITY ARE DIFFERENT, AND PEOPLE VALUE HANDMADE LONGYIS MORE HIGHLY IN THE MARKET.

Photo & Text By **Phyo Wai Kyaw**

## Modernity brings lower prices to **AMARAPURA'S** **WEAVING INDUSTRY** but old ways remain the best

**T**he town of Amarapura, on the outskirts of Mandalay, is a centre of Myanmar's weaving industry – the production hub of fashionable traditional garments that are prized in society.

Amarapura is about 11 kilometres (7 miles) south of Mandalay and about 30 minutes' drive from the downtown. Many people in Amarapura rely on weaving for their livelihoods, and while most production is intended for local use, the town's markets can be crowded with foreigners looking to grab a beautiful keepsake – a silk handbag or breezy shawl – as a reminder of their trip to Myanmar.







“

IN AMARAPURA  
WEAVING IS A  
FAMILY BUSINESS,  
SO YOU CAN SEE  
MANY HOUSEHOLD  
WEAVING WORKS.

”





Of the weaving workshops in Amarapura, the most famous are Daw Saw Shin, Shwe Sin Tine, Pan Thit Sar, Taw Win Nadi and Theingi Shwe War. Traditional Myanmar cloth wraps – called longyis – produced by Amarapura's weavers take centre stage at national events as outfits for famous actors, models and directors.

The weaving industry has moved with the times and few shops rely on handlooms any more, with the rest using machines to



produce garments in a fraction of the time.

A hand-woven longyi can take up to a month to produce, while a machine-woven version can be done in less than a day. However, it is the handmade works that command the highest prices, in part because many use unique designs.

Daw Ma Ma, who works at Shwe Joe Thar silk weaving workshop in Tayoketan ward, Amarapura township, outlined the slow pace of working by hand.

“Looming longyis by hand means we add only about 2 inches a day if the design is intricate,” she said from the busy shop. “Prices depend on the design and material used but some longyis cost up to K700,000 [about US\$725]. We also accept custom orders.”

She said it was rare to find hand weavers in Amarapura, which only served to increase the value of the hand-made goods.

“We always try and create new designs to attract customers. And we put a lot of

“  
LOOMING BY  
HAND MEANS  
WE ADD ONLY  
ABOUT 2  
INCHES A DAY.  
”



effort into our quality control,” she said.

“Most workshop owners have switched to machine looms because it is faster and cheaper, and most buyers are price conscious.”

Shop owners are also facing rising production costs and fierce competition for the best workers.

The high season for weavers is from the Thadingyut festival (sometimes referred to as the festival of light) in October through to Thingyan (Myanmar New Year) in April.

Several of the best-known weaving shops in Amarapura also have showrooms in downtown Mandalay but there is no substitute for visiting the weavers in person to make special orders. Some buyers also consult astrologers to provide guidance on the colour and design of their longyi.

During the high season customers need to make orders early because the designers and weavers sometimes need up to two months to complete particularly intricate longyis.





Famous designs have earned their own names: Para Peik, Kyo Gyi Chaik, Maha Kyo, Ye Hline and Htake Khaung Tin. And while the designs have something close to set prices, some customers choose to add gold, diamonds or other gems, which increases the price.

The most popular designs at present are Para Peik and Kyo Gyi Chaik, which feature slimmed-down vertical colour lines of 2-3 inches and 3.5-5 inches in width against the main background.

And while silk longyis cost up to K1 million each, high-quality cotton variants can be bought for K100,000.





“ IT DOESN'T TAKE TOO LONG TO FINISH A PAINTED LONGYI, ONLY ABOUT TWO OR THREE HOURS. ”

For buyers looking for a colourful, attractive but cost-effective longyi, it is possible to buy garments made using imported, dyed cloth. While the painted versions lack the cachet of a handmade longyi, they are also comfortable and cool – and buyers don't need to wait months.

“It doesn't take too long to finish a painted longyi, only about two or three hours,” said Ma Thaung from Padamyar Shwechi weaving workshop in Amarapura. “We can create unique designs by mixing colours as the customer desires.”

But before the cloth can be painted, it must be steam-cleaned and very carefully dried.

The final price is less than a tenth of machine-woven longyis at about K8000, she said.



WEAVING WORKSHOPS IN AMARAPURA

- Daw Saw Shin
- Shwe Sin Tine
- Pan Thit Sar
- Taw Win Nadi
- Theingi Shwe War
- Shwe Joe Thar
- Taw Win Nadi





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Healing the body  
and mind

# AT SPAS in Mandalay

Photo & Text By **Kyae Mone Win**



Everybody needs to relax and take care of their health, and the need is all the more pressing in Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city, where the temperature soars in summer months.

Luckily, the city is growing more cosmopolitan by the day, with spas opening up to cater to the needs of frazzled clients who need a break, a massage and some personal care.

A decade ago, most people in Mandalay did not know what a spa was until the international hotels arrived and opened centres for weary clients. Most spas targeted foreign clients and were expensive – few locals could enjoy visits, except for special occasions. But over the past two years, spas have sprung up all over the city, mostly attached to beauty salons.



SPA LOVERS CAN CHOOSE  
ACCORDING TO THEIR  
LIKES AND PREFERENCES.  
BUT THERE ARE STILL  
SOME PEOPLE WHO ONLY  
KNOW OF THE CONCEPT  
AND FALL SHORT OF  
UNDERSTANDING THE  
SERVICES PROVIDED.



The increased competition, of course, has brought prices down to a level where many people can enjoy them. And the number of spas available means discerning clients can pick and choose the services that best meet their needs.

Some of the newly opened spas have already become famous for the quality and care of the services they lavish on guests.

Read on for a guide to some of the city's best spas...









## Rupa Spa (Rupar Mandalar Resort)

If you're looking for a massage in Mandalay, Rupa Spa, which serves customers with authentic Thai massages as well as other spa services, is the place to go. It is located inside the Rupar Mandalar Resort compound, in a quiet Mandalay suburb and far away from the noise made by cars and motorcycles.

Spa manager Ma Thandar Tun said the techniques used in the facility are ancient methods handed down and gradually refined.

"Some guests do not want a Thai massage because they have experienced pain when having a Thai massage in Bangkok. I explain to them that we use very old massage techniques that are gentle on the body but bring maximum relief to sore and stiff muscles," Ma Thandar Tun said.

“  
THAI MESSAGES, BODY  
SCRUBS AND SLIMMING  
MESSAGES ARE OUR MOST  
POPULAR SERVICES FOR  
MYANMAR CLIENTS.  
”



Aside from the spa's signature Thai massages, visitors can enjoy facial massages, body scrubs, aromatherapy massages, foot massages, jacuzzi and sauna sessions, as well as plenty more.

The only products used at Rupa Spa are Thai, with body scrubs utilising organic extracts such as sea salt, black and white sesame, turmeric and the powder of glutinous rice.





#### **Rupa Spa**

No (A-15), Corner of 53<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> streets,  
Chan Aye Thar San Township, Mandalay  
Phone: 0940 2658 777



*Body Massage Room*

“Our staff members were trained by Thai massage experts, with the intention of serving our in-house guests. But now we also serve local customers. Foreign guests tend to ask for body scrubs and foot spas, and male foreigners like aromatherapy or Thai massages,” Ma Thandar Tun said.

“Thai massages, body scrubs and slimming massages are our most popular services for Myanmar clients,” she said, adding that the prices are “very reasonable” with most treatments priced from \$25 to \$50.



“OUR CUSTOMERS LIKE THE EUROPEAN METHODS WE USE BECAUSE THEY ARE CLASSIC AND EFFECTIVE.”



### La Source Beauty Spa

The La Source Beauty Spa is one of the oldest in Mandalay, now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of operations. While the spa is situated in the downtown area, it retains the peaceful and pleasant atmosphere that is essential for a relaxation centre. Stepping inside, the first thing that you notice is the music, which almost immediately begins to calm the mind, while the relaxing decorations combine to set you at ease.

Traditional mats are one of the main elements of the décor, with fans and other accessories

helping to instil a feeling of an earlier, more laid-back era.

The spa offers a broad range of services that include face and body treatments, nail care and hair styling. However, unlike most other spas, La Source does not provide a massage service.

The beauty products used in La Source are all imported from Italy and France and include well-recognised brands such as Decleor, Officina de' Tornabuoni and L'Oréal. While the spa offers treatments for men, they are limited to face and hair services.

“We serve customers using the right techniques applicable to each product – the Decleor method with Decleor products and Italian methods with Italian products,” said Cynthia, the spa’s manager. “Our customers like the European methods we use because they are classic and effective. When a customer is very sensitive to chemicals, we advise them to use ODT [Officina de' Tornabuoni] organic products. For others, Decleor is a suitable and effective brand,” she added.

Facial treatments range in price from K55,000 to K90,000; while body scrubs cost about K45,000 and a full body wrap treatment is K80,000. La Source also accepts payment in US dollars at the prevailing market exchange rate.



La Source Beauty Spa



### La Source Beauty Spa

No 13/13, Mya Sandar Street, between 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> streets and 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> streets.  
Chan Aye Thar San Township, Mandalay  
Phone: 0944 4024 496



## Thuzar Beauty Spa

Anybody in Mandalay looking to try a traditional Myanmar massage would be well advised to look up Thuzar Beauty Spa on 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. The spa also offers Western- and Thai-style massages but it's the Myanmar versions that are done best and bring a deep-feel treatment to clients.

"I try to provide Myanmar massages to customers," said spa owner Ma Thuzar. "I found an expert in Yangon to train my staff and I think we provide the best Myanmar massages in Mandalay."

The spa also offers facial, body and foot treatments but the focus is on massages, which Ma Thuzar said are essential elements to relaxation.

"I opened this place for working women in Mandalay, who otherwise have



Facial Room

### Thuzar Beauty Spa

72<sup>nd</sup> Street, between 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> streets,  
Chan Aye Thar San Township  
Phone: 092 004 603



Foot Massage

few other relaxation options. I wanted to provide a place and experience for my clients that will provide total relaxation," she said.

The cheapest treatment in Thuzar Spa is a foot massage, and the most expensive is the full body treatment with Decleor products, which costs K50,000. Pricing is the same for Myanmar and foreigners.



Body Treatment Room

“I OPENED THIS PLACE FOR WORKING WOMEN IN MANDALAY, WHO OTHERWISE HAVE FEW OTHER RELAXATION OPTIONS.”



“ I DON'T THINK ANY OTHER SPAS HERE CAN OFFER OUR SWEDISH AND DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE SERVICES, WHICH ARE OUR SPECIALTIES. ”

### Diamond Beauty Spa

If you need to combine some shopping with a trip to the spa, Diamond Beauty Spa might be your best option in Mandalay because it is located in one of the city's largest retail malls – Diamond Plaza.

Diamond Beauty Spa offers eight treatments for the face, 14 for the body and a further 10 for the hands and feet, although they are all for women only. The spa's extraordinary services include bust lifts, ear candle treatments, pregnancy massages and Thai compression massages.

The spa uses the Guinot-branded products, from France, for most treatments, although American and Thai brands are used in others.

Spa owner Ma Leint Leint said, “I use Guinot for customers who insist on using


### Diamond Beauty Spa

Diamond Plaza, Fourth Floor, between 77<sup>th</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> streets, and 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> streets, Mandalay  
Phone: 0947 606 698

internationally recognised brands on their skin. I find our foreign customers often already know the brand and like it a lot,” she added.

“I don't think any other spas here can offer our Swedish and deep tissue massage services, which are our specialties.”

Ma Leint Leint said the spa employs a professional beauty specialist, who supervises and trains the staff.

Treatment prices are reasonable: US\$10 is enough for a pedicure and foot massage at Diamond Beauty Spa, while the most expensive treatments using high-quality products can cost \$100 or more. 





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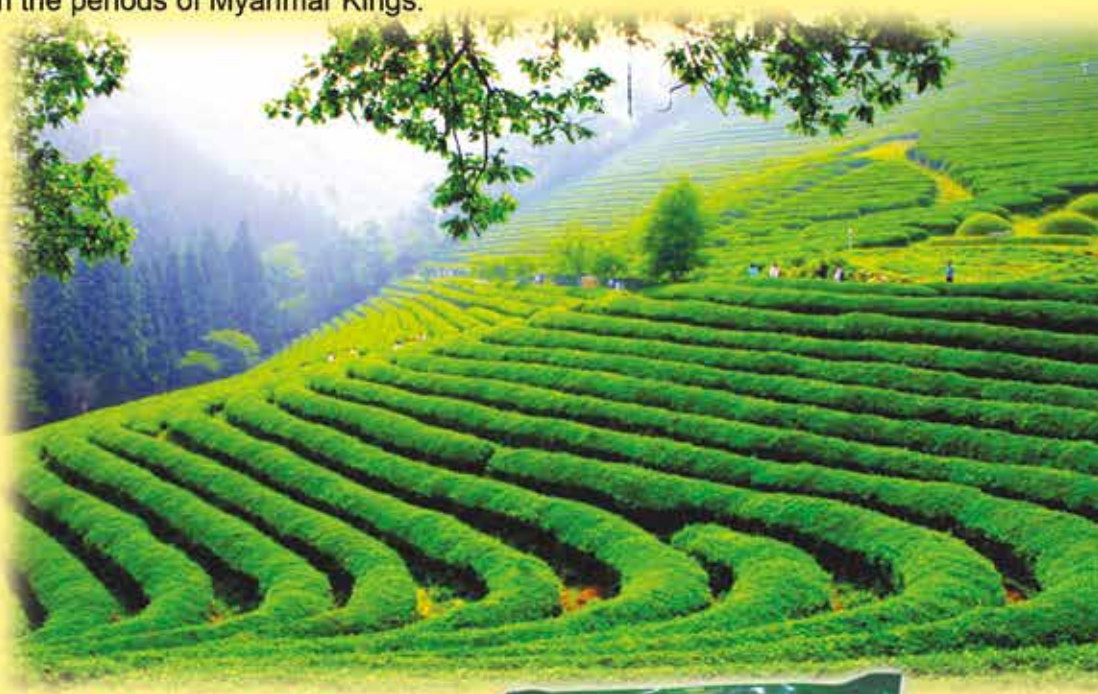
# MYANMAR *tea* TRADITION

## Myanmar Tea

"Tea" plays a strong role in Myanmar Culture and an integral part of all Myanmar People life. It is customarily to serve Tea in the forms of Green Tea, Pickled tea and Milky Black Tea in almost all social ceremonies dated back from the periods of Myanmar Kings.

# Rich<sup>®</sup>

## TEA MIX



## Type of Tea

Two main type of tea namely Assam Type (camellia assamica) and China type (Cammelia

Sinensis) are grown in Myanmar with the total cultivated area around

70,000 hectares with annual production of 80,000 Metric Tons of tea leaves. Tea cultivation in Myanmar are in the hilly regions of Shan State, Kachin State, Chin State, Kayin State, Sagaing Division





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and Mandalay Division. Among them, Shan State is the main tea growing area with the major cultivation in Northern Shan State's mountainous region which produces best quality tea leaves.

Three kinds of tea are produced in Myanmar; Pickled tea (fermented wet green tea or "Laphet So"), Green tea and Black tea. Black tea is mainly used in tea shops around Myanmar which is served with milk to get Milky Black Tea "Laphet Yay". As a foreigner who first arrives to Myanmar, you will be surprised to see so many tea shops in almost everywhere in Myanmar. Most of them are filled with customers who come to the shops not only for eating but also for doing their social activities; friend gatherings, business discussions, news and tips exchanging.

In the tea shop, you could order the tea with your favorite milky and sweet taste like followings:

1. Extra Sweet Tea --- "Cho Saint"
2. Regular Milk Tea --- "Pone Mhan"
3. Creamy Strong Tea --- "Kya Saint"

Reflecting pure Myanmar Tradition, Rich Tea Mix chooses top quality tea leaves and using modern spray drying production process to get the fresh instant tea powder and specially blends with selected creamer to get the Milky Black Tea "Laphet Yay" which widely sold in tea shops around Myanmar.

Rich Tea Mix Double Smooth blend could be matched with Extra Sweet Tea "Cho Saint" sold in Tea Shops while Rich Tea Mix Original blend could be matched between Regular Milk Tea "Phone Mhan" and Creamy Strong Tea "Kya Saint" sold in Tea shops.



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### DOUBLE SMOOTH

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## Mandalay serves up a smorgasbord of **TASTES & STYLES**

MANDALAY IS THE END DESTINATION FOR A HUGE VARIETY OF FOODSTUFFS INCLUDING MEATS SUCH AS CHICKEN, DUCK, PORK, MUTTON, BEEF, PRAWN AND FISH, AS WELL AS BOTH CHICKEN AND DUCK EGGS.

Photo & Text By **Phyo Wai Kyaw**



**D**ining out in Mandalay can be a complicated affair but one that rewards an inquisitive and adventurous diner.

The city is a crossroads, with restaurants serving traditional Myanmar fare, Chinese and Thai, as well as Shan and Indian.

Traditional Myanmar dishes include swarms of side dishes and entrées, as well as the rice and curries that form the main meal.

As a major market centre, Mandalay is the end destination for a huge variety of foodstuffs including meats such as chicken, duck, pork, mutton, beef, prawn and fish, as well as both chicken and duck eggs. Side dishes include vegetables served raw, steamed or fried, fried peanuts and the ubiquitous pickled green tea-leaf salad.

Pickled tea-leaf salad is a traditional Myanmar dish often served after meals or as a snack.

Add to these soups made with vegetables and beans and pulses or chicken broth to

