

CETANA news

human resources for myanmar's future



CETANA STUDENTS FACE DOWN CHALLENGES TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS

Occasionally our readers have asked to know more about Cetana students – what the challenges were for them before they received their scholarships and what they faced in an unknown academic world outside Myanmar. The following stories are of four students – one at Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, another at Linfield College in the U.S. state of Oregon, and two others in the United States at DePauw University, in Indiana.

— EDITOR

zin mar win had no difficulty finding words to express her feelings about her Cetana scholarship. “Plants do not grow without water. My Cetana scholarship is an oasis for my life.” This energetic 34-year-old is an MBA candidate in the School of Management at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok.

Zin Mar graduated from high school in 1988, a year of student-led protest in Myanmar. The government closed the universities, opening them only sporadically until 2000. Students graduating from high school searched with difficulty for ways to further their education.

Near her hometown of Mawlamyine (formerly Moulmein), Zin Mar found classes in Japanese, Chinese and English. Without money for bus fare, she rode her bike the half hour to classes, and when her bike broke down, she walked.

Later she attended Mawlamyine University when it was open, and in 1995, received a B.Sc. (Hons.) in physics. She then found employment in Yangon, until receiving scholarships from AIT and Cetana in 2005.

At AIT, she is studying management of technology. She sees many product opportunities for Myanmar, but a need for skills to improve and technology availability to increase, especially in the realm of information and communications systems. She traveled in her AIT program to China and Switzerland, where she and other students met with business leaders and visited companies and banks.



ZIN MAR ON AIT'S SWISS STUDY TOUR

FALL 2006

EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN MYANMAR CETANA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION provides educational opportunities for the people of Myanmar, through scholarships for study in Asia and the United States and through resource and professional development. The Foundation is nonsectarian, working without regard to religion, race or ethnicity, and entirely independent of the governments of Myanmar or the United States. The Foundation is a public charity, a 501(c)(3) foundation, as defined by the United States Internal Revenue Service. **CETANA** is a Burmese word meaning “goodwill, benevolence without recompense, service to others or one’s country.”

This summer she interned at the Thai subsidiary of TUV PSB (Asia), a German/Singaporean company in food safety technology. Based on her research, Zin Mar proposed workshops to train member businesses in the Myanmar Fishery Products Processors & Exporters Association in the uses of food safety technology. Her proposal was accepted. If it comes about, she says, "TUV can have customers from Myanmar and our people can have the knowledge transfer from TUV. It is win-win solution for both of us."



APRIL, LINFIELD FINANCIAL TALENT

april hla khaing, 28, is in her final semester at Linfield College, McMinnville, Oregon, where she will receive a B.A. degree in accounting in December. She arrived at Linfield in 2004, with two-year scholarships from the College and Cetana.

The road to Linfield was not an easy one. She graduated from her Yangon high school in 1995 and found Myanmar's universities closed. Her father, a civil engineer, died right after her graduation. Although April had wanted to study abroad, there was no money for such a dream. Her mother, as well as a younger brother, 12, and sister, 15, would need her help.

Between 1997 and 2001, she managed to earn a degree in English, with honors, from a suburban Yangon university, and to attend the first classes of the Cetana English Proficiency Center.

At Linfield, a leading undergraduate business school, she planned to study English, but she and her teachers soon discovered her talent for finance. She became an accounting major and, along with her studies, is an accounting intern at nearby Evergreen International Aviation.

Credits from her studies in Yangon will allow her to complete the B.A. degree in two and a half years. She is living frugally off-campus this last semester on the pay of a student intern. On weekends, she works at the campus library.

April, like other Myanmar students, has overcome the challenges of university study in the United States with unusual warmth and intelligence. Myanmar students suddenly are forced to communicate entirely in English, a language they no longer *hear* regularly in Myanmar. They must sink or swim in a new kind of education system which requires understanding of material and class participation, instead of memorization, often on topics that are unfamiliar. Amazingly, they most often out-swim their fellow students.

After graduation, April hopes to work for a year in Evergreen's tax department, before returning to Myanmar. In Myanmar, she would like to apply her skills on the business side of an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization).



ORLAY ON ENGINEERING CO-OP JOB

aung kyaw sint (orlay), 26, came to Cetana with the dream of studying electrical engineering in the U.S., so that one day he might help bring reliable electricity to Myanmar. He had studied by candlelight while in high school in Mawlamyine, graduating sixth among 390,000 Myanmar seniors in 1997.



Universities were closed in 1997, and so he worked in his father's film distribution business for two years. In 1999, he enrolled in the Institute of Medicine #2 in Yangon when it opened, but soon decided to study abroad.

For the first time, Myanmar high school graduates were beginning to hear from a few Burmese returning with master's degrees from U.S. institutions, that they, too, could enter U.S. universities and succeed, something the high school students had not imagined.

For the first time, SAT and TOEFL exams became available. Orlay studied for them with private tutors. In 2001, he learned that he had received a full tuition, four-year scholarship from DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, and the remaining support he needed from Cetana. He could not have studied abroad, much less in the U.S., without this support.

It was observed recently that Orlay was "a pioneer" – a kind of astronaut. He was among a very few first students of his generation to take the plunge and become undergraduates in the unknown world of U.S. universities.

In 2002, his math professor and advisor wrote of Orlay, that he "is a dream student who may come along once in ten years..." Orlay excelled as a math and physics major, earning his B.A. in 2005, and now will complete in 2007 a B.S. in electrical engineering at Washington University in St. Louis. It was important to him to have the applied, as well as theoretical, knowledge before returning to Myanmar.

This semester he is coming even closer to fulfilling a dream. He landed a co-op job with Ameren Corporation., the St. Louis electric utility. He is working on a Fortran cable-rating computer program, identifying how much power can be used without overloading a line, and analyzing causes, including lightning, of the nine-day outage in St. Louis this summer.

Orlay hopes that one day soon when he returns to Myanmar, he will be able to contribute his engineering knowledge in ways that will be useful to his country.

hnin pwint soe, 20, followed Orlay to DePauw, where she is majoring in Education with emphasis on Early Childhood, a relatively young field in Myanmar. She, like Orlay, was at the top of her national high school class when she graduated in 2002, and also has full scholarship coverage from DePauw and Cetana.



HNIN PWINT VISITS OREGON

After her high school graduation, she briefly studied Chinese at the Foreign Languages Institute in Yangon, but soon found her way to a branch of Webster University (St. Louis) in Thailand, where she studied for a year under a half scholarship. Her family could not afford to send her to the U.S. for study. Credits from Webster will allow her to complete her B.A. in three years at DePauw and earn a Master of Arts in Teaching in her fourth year.

Hnin Pwint credits her grandmother with having the greatest impact on her education. Her grandmother was Principal of the International School in Yangon, attended by the children of diplomats. At home, she oversaw the education of her grandchildren, bringing understanding to their learning in schools.

Her mother was a Lecturer at Rangoon University when Hnin Pwint was young, and is now head of a pre-school in Yangon. Says Hnin Pwint, "I think it runs in the family that I've decided to be a teacher like my grandma and my mother. We need to educate children in a healthy way to be future leaders."

Hnin Pwint combines a talent for working with young children with a special interest in music.

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DEAR CETANA FRIENDS,

In late June, I returned from Myanmar, where I interviewed potential scholars, worked on the new dictionary publishing process, and discussed management of the Cetana English Proficiency Center (CEPC). Center staff are encouraged by visitors, so be sure to visit the new CEPC (see story opposite) if you are in Myanmar this year.

Cetana is dependent on its partners! You, the donors, are our core partners. Others are organizations that make contributions in varied ways. Recently, we welcomed a new partnership with the Burma Medical Association of North America, which has given \$6,500 toward a scholarship for a student in the Infectious Diseases Master's degree program at Mahidol University, Bangkok, for 2007.

Cetana Foundation is developing deep roots by building a reserve fund capable of supporting students two years into the future. You can help. The items below are typical of varied expenses per student:

- ❑ \$5,000 pays for one year's tuition in Thailand;
- ❑ \$3,000, one year's tuition and expenses in Malaysia;
- ❑ \$2,000, living expenses for a year at a Thai university;
- ❑ \$1,000, books and fees each year for a student in the U.S.;
- ❑ \$500 pays for half of airfare to the U.S.;
- ❑ \$250 buys 100 dictionaries for distribution to Myanmar schools;
- ❑ \$150 pays for a year's scholarship at the CEPC.

All, or even a small portion, of these amounts are very welcome. You may designate how you would like your donation spent.

All of these needs become opportunities for us to share our wealth with those who so deeply appreciate it. Please join us in this effort.

*Jean Dickason
President*

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT
CETANA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.CETANA.ORG
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COUPLE PLEDGES \$100,000

A BOSTON AREA COUPLE HAS ANONYMOUSLY PLEDGED \$100,000, IN THREE ANNUAL INSTALLMENTS, FOR SUPPORT OF TWO CETANA SCHOLARS AT SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY, BOSTON. CETANA WILL RECEIVE \$50,000 AND SUFFOLK THE OTHER HALF TO COVER TUITION. THE STUDENTS WILL ENTER AS JUNIORS, THE FIRST A YEAR FROM NOW, THE SECOND THE FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER. MORE DETAILS IN SPRING 2007 NEWSLETTER.

RIVERSIDE CHURCH SUPPORTS CETANA PROGRAM TO TRAIN THERAPISTS IN MALAYSIA

The Riverside Sharing Fund of Riverside Church, New York City, has provided a grant of \$5,000 to support a new Cetana six-month program for training Myanmar professionals in therapeutic care in Malaysia.

The grant will support two women – Ms. Heh Clay of Eden Handicapped Service Center, and Ms. Thazin Lyan, of the Montessori Program for Autistic Children, both in Yangon. Ms. Clay will study special education, and Ms. Lyan, occupational therapy, in six-month internships at the Bethany Home in Epoh, Malaysia. Bethany, supported by the Lutheran Church, specializes in the care of handicapped children.

The program, which will begin in January, will be the first non-collegiate training program to be offered by Cetana and fills a gap in available therapeutic care in Myanmar.

In 2005, Cetana brought to Myanmar two retired physical therapists, Carolyn Dixon and Lois Dickason, to evaluate rehabilitation needs at the Eden Handicapped Center and the Rehabilitation Clinic at Shin Ba Ku Hospital. The Eden director requested that they work alongside the Myanmar therapists to assist them in techniques of evaluation and treatment. The Myanmar therapists, who receive training mainly from books but little hands-on instruction, “were like sponges in absorbing demonstrations,” said Mrs. Dickason.

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CETANA ENGLISH CENTER MOVES TO ITS NEW HOME

In March, the Cetana English Proficiency Center (CEPC) took a major leap forward with a move to downtown Yangon from the suburbs. Housed on the full third floor of a new YMCA building, the staff and students are enjoying twice as much space as they had in their prior home, where the CEPC began in 1999. Present quarters include a much-expanded computer lab, comfortable library for study, administrative offices and a teacher's room, in addition to expanded classroom space. Plans are underway to add afternoon classes and evening classes for people who must come after work. The goal of the library is to open eventually as an English language resource for the general public. The need now is for more full texts of works currently in easy reader form.



THE COMPUTER LAB ALLOWS STUDENTS TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY WITH INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS.



STAFF OF THE CEPC (L TO R), TIN MAUNG LWIN, LIBRARIAN; ALBERT BO TOE, TEACHER; AYE THAN, COMPUTER LAB TECHNICIAN; DAW ALVINAH TAPA, CEPC DIRECTOR; TEACHERS HTOO HTOO WAH, CARRIE THET LWIN, MIE MIE LIN; AND SAN MYO EI, OFFICE ASSISTANT.

TOP RIGHT: A CLASSROOM WITH STUDENTS PAIRED OFF FOR ENGLISH CONVERSATION.



THE SPACIOUS LIBRARY PRESENTLY HOUSES 2500 BOOKS.

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...CETANA STUDENTS continued from page 3

She will sing in a School of Music play this fall and in a Gospel Choir that performs in a variety of churches. In Yangon, she sang in the Judson Church Choir and taught Sunday School.

This summer she taught young children at vacation Bible schools of Burmese churches in Buffalo and Washington, D.C. In the spring 2007 semester, she will study European education practices at a school in Copenhagen.

Of these highly motivated students, Ethelyn Pankratz, Cetana Executive Director, says: "The challenges are real for any students, but are more so for a young person adapting to a new language and culture.... I'm impressed with the courage of these students, and their ingenuity."

...THERAPISTS continued from page 4

Mrs. Dixon assessed skills and treatment procedures, made wheelchair adaptations and gave instruction on water therapy. Mrs. Dickason, at the hospital clinic, saw adults with strokes, spinal-cord injuries, and hand injuries.

Physical therapy is relatively new to Myanmar. In February 2005 there were about 200 practicing therapists. Rehabilitation skills currently lacking are occupational therapy, special education and speech therapy.

Cetana will continue its program as made possible by further grants or donations.

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