



Myanmar Hope Christian Mission, Inc.

“You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” - Amy Carmichael

Summer 2019

Greetings

It’s newsletter time again! So many things to report on, so little space in which to share them with you.

We do hope that you stay in touch with us via Facebook (FB). Not everyone has a FB account so our FB page is public, meaning you don’t have to belong to FB in order to view it. However, with over a billion users, FB is the best place at this time for us to reach the most people. So even if you have a strong dislike for the social media platform, we hope you will at least check in once in awhile to catch the latest news and see the latest photos and videos.

<https://facebook.com/myanmarhope>

Hope Boarding School

2019 Exam Results

We are happy to report that **all of our students** from grades 5 through 9 passed their final exams and will begin the new school year this month! We praise God for

the students’ dedication and hard work. They spend the majority of their time at HBS attending classes, attending tutoring sessions, and studying. It is wonderful to see them all pass after such a rigorous schedule.

One of our 9th grade students, Mr. Sei Pu was reported to have failed his exam. It was very disappointing and we all felt very bad for him. A few days after the exam results were published, however, it was revealed there was a computer mistake, and he had passed after all. You can imagine how relieved we all were, especially Sei Pu!

2019 10th Grade Final Exams

In Myanmar, students attend school through the end of grade ten, at which time they take a national matriculation exam. If they pass that exam they graduate from high school and are allowed to “matriculate” to university the following year.

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Only about 20% of all the 10th grade students at the high school that our HBS kids attend were able to pass the exam. Only about 30% off all students nationwide pass. It is very hard!

We had four 10th grade students take the exam this year, and one passed. Praise God, our result was a 25% pass rate, which was better than the local high school average. So we are very happy for our one student who passed, Miss Nei San Kim, and sad for the three who did not pass. They will study and attempt to take the

2019 Hope Boarding School Graduates (One Current and Three Former Students)



Miss Nei San Kim (Sunny)



Miss Hat Nei Hoi (Nei Boi)



Miss Neng Khen Them (Khen Them)



Miss Lam Hoi Vah (Vah Si)

exam again next year.

Our 2018-19 10th grade students:

1. **Miss Nei San Kim** (Sunny/San Kim) of Aungzeyah Village—**Passed**
2. **Miss Lam Dei Hoi** (Dei Hoi) of Maingdaungphai Village
3. **Mr. Salai Kaung San** (Tha Thang) of Kalaymyo
4. **Miss Lam Nei Them** (Ti Ti) of Hengiang Village



The 2018/2019 Tenth Grade Class
Tha Thang, Dei Hoi, Ti Ti, and San Kim

Three Former HBS Students Passed the Matriculation Exam!

As mentioned earlier, students who do not pass the matriculation exam are able to re-take the exam again the following year. Three of our former students who did not pass the first time have been studying hard and some of them sat for the exam again this year.

1. **Miss Neng Khen Them** (Khen Them) of Khumnoi Village—Passed
2. **Miss Hat Nei Hoi** (Nei Boi) of Valpabung Village—Passed
3. **Miss Lam Hoi Vah** (Vah Si) of Hengiang Village—Passed

We praise God for these former HBS students who were able to pass their exam! We are very proud of them and we know that God has great things in store for each of them. Their photos are posted on page one.

Miss Khen Them is now working as an assistant at the New Pathway Home in Tamu. **Miss San Kim** will return to HBS as a tutor for the younger students until she begins her first year at Dagon

University.

New Students for 2019-20

This year we have nine new students at Hope Boarding School. They have already begun attending classes and getting acclimated to their new surroundings. Those **marked in red** still need to be sponsored:



Miss Neng Ngai Lhing
(Neng Ngai) of
Maingdaungphai Village (Gr 5)



Mr. Let Len Lal (Lal Boi) of
Janglenphai Village (Gr 5)



Mr. On Kho Chung Thang
(Chu Chung) of Mongiang
Village (Gr 7)



Miss Neng Ngai Dim (Dim No)
of Jonglon Village (Gr 7)



Mr. Thang Len Sei (Len Sei)
of Songpeh Village (Gr 5)



Miss Kim Ngaih Them
(Ngaih Them) of Valpabung
Village (Gr 8)



Mr. Sei Min Thang of
Bokkan Village (Gr 5)



Miss Nem Them Lhing
(Them Lhing) of Hengjang
Village (Gr 9)



Miss Lhing Nei Ching (Ching Nu)
of Joljam Village (Gr 5)

Four of our new students still need sponsors, so please contact us right away if you want to be the person who changes their life forever! Sponsorship is still just \$50 per month, and covers everything they need to survive and thrive at HBS. Thank you!

Hope Preschool 2019 Graduation and the Class of 2019-2020

This past year there were thirty-eight students in the preschool. In May there



Hope Preschool Class of 2019-20

were twenty-four graduates who will now begin kindergarden. The remaining students, along with many new students will begin a new year of preschool.

Hope Preschool is a great blessing to many families in the area, including many Buddhist families. They recognize not only the quality education but also the love and care that the children receive from our teachers. Many of these families are too poor to afford tuition at other private schools, so they are even more grateful for Hope Preschool.

Will you help our teachers give these young children a strong start for a good education? Not only do the children learn their Burmese and English numbers and letters, they learn Bible verses, Christian songs, and hear many Christian Bible stories.

A good education is the surest path out of extreme poverty, and your gifts can help many individuals and their families to escape the chains of poverty through Hope Preschool and Hope Boarding School. Thank you!

East/West Garden

In May our good friend and team member Anne Tetzlaff organized an

online fundraising campaign to benefit the East/West Garden.

Anne is a dōTERRA Diamond Wellness Advocate. I'm sure many of you use or are familiar with dōTERRA essential oils. dōTERRA's Healing Hands Foundation® provides matching grants to many worthy projects around the world. Because of Anne's position with dōTERRA, she was able to sponsor Myanmar Hope to receive a matching grant and an online presence with dōTERRA Healing Hands.

The fundraising campaign ran from April 8th through May 24th. dōTERRA Healing Hands Foundation® pledged to match every dollar donated through their site, up to \$15,000. That amount was reached on May 10th, **with nearly two weeks remaining in the campaign!** Praise God! The final amount donated was **\$16,449**, or 110% of the original goal. We give thanks to everyone who donated so generously.

You can still see the fundraiser here:

<https://doterrahealinghands.org/advocate-led-projects/myanmar-hope>

The funds raised will be used for many much-needed improvements to the farm, including a new irrigation system and more. Most of the funds cannot be used until after the monsoon season, so please stay tuned to our Facebook page and this newsletter for more information.

New Barn Raising

We are finally able to build the barn, for which a good friend donated funds back in January. There have been many



The 2018-2019 Hope Preschool Graduating Class



New barn under construction

unexpected delays, but the most serious one was a severe shortage of lumber in northwest Myanmar.

At one point we thought we had a source for lumber, and had even put down some money as a deposit, but then the lumber was confiscated by the government. Thankfully we were finally able to get that lumber back, and then about a month later we were able to purchase the rest of what was needed.

About a month ago the construction was started, but two weeks into the project the construction team quit on us. They said the location was too remote for them so they could not finish. Another team was located who could do the job so, thankfully, the barn is now almost complete.

Elephant’s Feet and Tumeric

In early May the workers planted 360 pounds of turmeric, 10 pounds of “elephant’s foot” yams, and a few acres of sugar cane. In late May they sowed 20 acres of rice.



Preparing the turmeric roots for planting

The yams used to grow naturally in the area around the farm, but it hasn’t been found in the wild for a long time. A friend of Palal’s brought the yams from Mandalay to plant at the farm. We hope they grow well, in which case we will grow them more often. They should sell well in the Kabaw Valley region.



Sugar cane ready for planting



“Elephant’s Foot” yam seedling



One of the rice fields ready to be planted. To the right in the distance are some of our fruit trees.

Thank you so much for your prayers and financial love gifts for this great project which is helping so many people.

New Pathway Home



In general the widows at the NPH are doing well. In March, though, one of the ladies fell down and broke her hip. Mrs. Lam Kho Neng was doing her laundry when she tripped and fell. She hurt her head and they thought she broke her leg, but the x-ray showed that she had broken her hip.

She needed a blood transfusion for the surgery, but there was no one available with her blood type. Finally, a visitor from Mandalay volunteered to donate blood, so she was able to have surgery.

She was in the hospital for several weeks, and now she is going for appointments to do therapy. She is in good spirits. Thank you to all who prayed for her during this time.

New Staff

Our staff members, Mr. Let Sei and his wife needed to return to their home

in Namihan so she could have her baby.

Thankfully we have two new staff members to take their place. They are **Mrs. Hoi Kho Neng** and **Miss Neng Khen Them**.

Hoi Kho Neng is the mother of Vah Nei Neng, a former Hope Boarding School student. She lives very close to the New Pathway Home.

Miss Neng Khen Them is a former HBS student. She is now nineteen years of age. She attended nurses aide training in Yangon, and she recently passed her high school exam on her third try!

These two new staff will work alongside our other staff member, Miss Vei Nei Them. (Miss Vei Nei Them also helps out at Hope Preschool.)



Mrs. Hoi Kho Neng, Miss Neng Khen Them, and Miss Vei Nei Them.

God bless all of you who have given love gifts for the NPH, and thank you especially for your prayers for the widows, the staff, and the ministry.

New Hope Prison Outreach

In December 2018, Myanmar Hope received an incredible blessing for the New Hope Prison Outreach from West Side Christian Church in Springfield, Illinois.

Because of that gift, we were able to begin construction on a new, permanent



The dedication service for the New Hope Prison Outreach building

building which will be used as a guest house, a ministry center, and more. The construction began on January 28th and was completed on May 31st. A dedication service was held on June 1st at 10:00 am.

We began offering transportation for the prison inmates' families on November 28, 2017. Since then we have transported 108 families from Tamu to Mawlaikalay and back again.

We have distributed over 300 Burmese and Kuki Bibles to inmates inside the prison.

There have been 64 families who have stayed overnight at our temporary Guest House (the bamboo house). We have helped over 200 inmates get in contact with their families.

In addition to this, Pastor Sei Lal visits the prisoners on a regular basis, prays for them, and holds Bible studies with them. He has also been able to deliver money to many prisoners from their families, using a bank account in Kalaymyo for fund transfers.

We give a heartfelt thanks to the generous members at West Side Christian Church in Springfield, Illinois, and to everyone who has prayed for and given to the New Hope Prison Outreach. This new building will be a great blessing to many for years to come!

Special Report: Opium Addiction

In a previous newsletter we mentioned one reason that many Christians are in the Mawlaikalay Prison, which is served by our New Hope Prison Outreach. That reason is drug addiction.

Any person caught carrying, taking, or exhibiting behavior associated with drug addiction can be arrested and sent to prison. The primary drug which causes most to be arrested is opium, and it's derivative, heroin.

Why are people addicted to drugs? There are many reasons, some of which we will attempt to explain here.

The first reason is extreme poverty. The hills of western and northwest Myanmar, known as the Chin Hills, is one of several prime poppy growing regions in Southeast Asia. Not only do

the flowers thrive up there, the region is very remote and difficult to reach. The drug growing syndicates know this and use it to their advantage.

The "drug lords," as they are called, plant huge fields of poppies and then harvest the sap from the bulbs to make opium and heroin. They do not do the planting and harvesting themselves, of course, but they hire local villagers to do the work for them.



Working in the poppy fields

Sometimes these villagers do the work willingly and sometimes they are forced to work by the drug lords and their well-armed thugs.

Many of the villages in the Chin Hills are very small, containing anywhere from a dozen to several dozen families. Their traditional way of living is to farm the hills around their villages using a slash-and-burn technique. In previous generations, villages would farm an area for five or ten years, then move on to a new area and let the previous area lay fallow until it could be farmed again.

However, with increasing populations and new land laws, this



Pastor Sei Lal (left) with a group of families from Tamu who are visiting their relatives in prison



“Slash and burn” farming

method of farming is no longer available to many of these little villages. The traditional crop of rice is no longer providing enough income for the families. They may be able to get enough food for themselves, but even that is becoming harder and harder each year. The meager harvests do not provide the families with income to pay for school for their children, or pay for medicines, clothing, and other necessities.



Harvesting opium

Stepping into this situation, the drug lords promise good paying jobs working in the poppy fields. Families and entire villages are recruited to work in the fields, and they earn much more income than they ever did as slash-and-burn farmers.

The drug lords also “encourage” drug addiction among the villagers, hoping to keep them trapped into this way of life, and preventing them from reporting the locations of the poppy fields to the authorities.

Many of these little villages hold out against the drug lords and the lure of good paying jobs for as long as they can. They know what happens when people become addicted to heroin. They know that working the poppy fields is wrong and illegal. But many of them are desperate.

It is hard for Westerners to understand extreme poverty and desperate hunger. It is hard for us to relate to the choice of working for a drug lord and having enough money for food, education, clothing, etc., or not working and going hungry.

In addition to the lure of good paying jobs, another reason that people get addicted is hopelessness.

Many of these young men and women go to the large cities of Yangon and Mandalay, looking for work. However, the unemployment rate in these areas is also high, and the only jobs for most of the uneducated poor from the rural areas consists of low-paying day labor.

Other young people are lured away to foreign countries such as China, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, where they work as day laborers, maids, housecleaners, and so on. Many young girls and boys are lured into sex-slavery and human trafficking.

Again, in our country (USA) where the unemployment rate is around four percent (4%) and where there are more jobs than people available to fill them, the desperate situation in rural Myanmar is hard to comprehend.

In northwest Myanmar, which is primarily a Christian region, the unemployment rate is around 75%. Many young men and women who want to work cannot because there are no jobs for them. Also, not everyone has a

farm to work on or land on which to plant food.

People living in this situation easily fall into depression and experience a sense of hopelessness. And just as people have always done, they try to medicate against these feelings with drugs and alcohol.

There are other reasons why Christians in northwest Myanmar fall into addiction, and why many of them end up in prison, but these are the most common.

So what is the solution?

Of course, there are no easy answers to such widespread and complex societal problems. If there were, the problems would have been solved already.

However, the situation is not entirely hopeless. While we cannot help everyone, at least we can help some people escape the traps that lead to addiction, prison and an early death.

We work with many villagers in the Chin Hills, some of which are currently working in the poppy fields. There are villages, though, that are still holding out, hoping and praying for some solution to help them avoid the traps of the drug lords and poppy fields.



One such village is Sulpi. Long-time readers of this newsletter may recognize that name. We have had



Sulpi Hill



Sulpi Village in the Chin Hills

several students at Hope Boarding School from Sulpi Village. With the help of I.D.E.S., we installed a water reservoir there in 2011, and we have also helped them during several natural disasters such as mudslides and the rat plague.

The people of Sulpi have been holding out against the drug lords for several years, but they, too, are getting desperate. They have asked on several occasions for help and advice on growing crops that would provide them with enough income so they would not be forced into growing and harvesting poppies.

Palal has been researching this issue for some time, as there are many other villages in this same situation.

After researching and discussing this with many people, the proposed solution is to attempt to grow coffee.

Coffee has been growing in several areas in Chin State for many years, and recently one Chin State coffee grower was awarded with the distinction of “Best Coffee in Myanmar.”

There are several varieties of Arabica and Robusta coffee beans that grow well in the Chin Hills.



Ripe coffee cherries

However, a successful coffee operation requires a significant investment of both time and money—two things that the villagers do not have.

It takes money to purchase coffee seedlings, to prepare the soil, and to pay for expert training. It takes time to wait for the coffee plants to begin producing a sizeable crop. Once a crop is produced, there has to be a market for the beans, and a way to transport those beans to the market.

Because of these things, the poor villagers could never start a coffee farm on their own. However, with our help, we think they would be able to, and they are excited at the possibility of such a venture.



Coffee Cherries

Palal has estimated the cost of starting a ten acre coffee operation at Sulpi Village to be around \$7,500. This plantation would be worked by the fifteen families living in Sulpi Village (about 120 people).

In addition to planting coffee, we would also plant fruit trees, such as oranges, to help supplement the income provided by the coffee.

If a successful coffee operation could be started in Sulpi, then it could be expanded to many other villages in similar situations in the future, with the ultimate goal of providing a viable alternative to poppy harvesting and opium production.

This is an incredibly important project, and we hope and pray that the Lord will provide the funds needed to move forward with this. If this is the kind of project that you or your community would



Palal investigating coffee seedlings at a local market

like to support, please contact us immediately.

Myanmar Hope will be sending a team over in September to do further research and to document the situation around Sulpi Village with photos and videos. Please pray for our team, and for the success of this project. Thank you!

September Trip

We are planning a trip to Myanmar in September for a small team of five people. The purpose of the trip is to explore and investigate the coffee project, to shoot some high-quality video of some of our projects, and to do discipleship training.

We are very blessed that Mr. James Kim, founder of the ministry “**Lost Story**”, will join us with his team of videographers and story tellers to help document the work of Myanmar Hope. You can see examples of their work at their website:

<https://www.LostStory.world>.

Please stay tuned to our Facebook page for more details about this upcoming trip.

March 2020 Trip

We have another trip scheduled for March of 2020. Palal has asked us to bring a team of 20 people to attend our 2020 convention in Tamu. If you are interested in joining us, please let us know as soon as possible.

This is not an easy trip! If you are frail or in poor health, it's not a good choice for

"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."
- Amy Carmichael



MyHope Newsletter

Summer 2019

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you. And while we will be staying in hotels with (mostly) hot water and indoor plumbing, there will be times when you will have to use the "local facilities" (i.e., "squatty potties").

The food is very good, but it is not Western, so you won't be eating your normal menu. You will experience all of the sights, sounds, and smells of a developing country in Southeast Asia. You will see examples of extreme poverty and luxurious wealth, sometimes side-by-side. You will witness things that you could

never see in America or the West.

However, you will also witness God at work, and even have a chance to contribute to that work yourself!

Again, this trip is not for everyone. But if you sense that God is directing you to join us, please let us know so we can begin the conversation.

If you want more information, please give MaryAnn Cherry a call at (217) 415-9187 or send an email to: info@myanmarhope.org.

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