

Thang Pu (1939–2008)

ROZAMA

Rozama was born at Tahan, Kalay Town, Upper Myanmar. He received a B.A. in religion from Myaungmya Adventist Seminary and an M.A. in education from Adventist International Institute of Advance Studies, Philippines. He has served as a pastor and evangelist, Sabbath School/Personal Ministries director, and executive secretary in the Upper Myanmar Mission. He and his wife Vanlalthani have four grown-up children.

Thang Pu was a primary school teacher, active ordained pastor, executive secretary, treasurer, district leader, and mission president.

Early Life

Thang Pu was born in Kaptel, Chin State, on June 15, 1939, to Gen Khaw Tual and Thawng Do Cing. His parents migrated to Haimual, where the Mizo dialect was spoken. This taught him to speak Tedim and Mizo fluently. He had six siblings: Vung Khan Man, Khual Pau, Nawn Khup, Vung Za Awi, Khaat Za Langh, and Langh Suan Thang!¹ Thang Pu's oldest sister, Vung Khan Man, and her husband, Khual Do Thang, were the first converts to Adventism through the evangelistic efforts of Pastor Arthur E. Anderson in 1954. Thang Pu's youngest brother, Langh Suan Thang, became a successful businessman with the Dynasty Hotel in Mandalay and also was an elder of Mandalay Church.

Education and Marriage

Thang Pu's oldest brother, Khual Pau, a military serviceman, got in touch with Pastor Chit Maung, principal of Kyauktaing High School nine miles east of Taungngu (now Taungoo). The school was founded on an undeveloped 53-acre plot. Pastor Maung needed students who could work and financially support their own education. Thang Pu was sent to see Pastor Maung in 1958. Kyauktaing High School was the only Adventist secondary boarding school in Burma (now Myanmar) during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Thang Pu started studies at the 7th standard. He was baptized on December 24, 1960. In 1964, he passed the 9th standard at a government high school.

The following year, Thang Pu studied for the matriculation exam but did not pass. The Seventh-day Adventist schools had their own examination, but every student had to take the government's examinations for the primary level, middle school level (Standard 7), high school level (Standard 9), and matriculation exam. In 1965, he studied at Adventist Bible Seminary (now Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary) in Myaungmya, Ayeyarwady

Region. All missionaries were forced to leave the country in 1966, including the seminary's director, Pastor W. W. Christensen, and his wife. As a result, the seminary's two-year course was adjusted to a one-year course in 1965. Thang Pu received his certificate in 1966.² He already spoke Tedim Chin and Mizo and learned Burmese and English as second languages.³

Thang Pu married a young Sizang (Siyin) lady named Dim Uap on March 24, 1969. She was born on April 1, 1947.⁴ Her parents, Ngam Thawng, a carpenter, and her mother were among the first converts to Adventism in Siyin Valley in 1957. Thang Pu and Dim Uap had five daughters: Cing Ngaih Lun, Man Lun Niang, Cing Khan Huai, Man Lian Vung, and Thawng Thian Neam.⁵

Self-Support for Education

During Thang Pu's studies at Kyauktaing High School in Taungngu, he worked in the school's banana and pineapple gardens to support his education. The principal, Pastor Chit Maung, encouraged him to cut and style the hair of students and staff members, for which he earned a quarter of a kyat per service. Burma's currency was strong at the time – one kyat was equivalent to two Thai baht. A monitor supervised each of the nine rooms of the boys' dormitory, which also had four general monitors, one of which was Thang Pu.

Career and Ministry

Thang Pu began his denominational service on May 1, 1966, just after finishing studies at the seminary and taught in a primary school in Upper Burma from 1966-1977. He was ordained on December 22, 1970. From 1978-1980, he served as Tedim's district leader at what is now Upper Myanmar Mission. He was a brave, faithful, and active pastor who even visited places where only one church member from his district lived. In February 1981, a church member was fatally struck by lightning; Thang Pu stayed to watch over the body for the entire night and the next day. From 1981-1984, he served as mission executive secretary. From 1985-1990, he served as treasurer of the same mission. From 1991-1994, he served as mission secretary of South East Mission. From 1994-1996, he served as president of the Upper Myanmar Mission. From 1997 to April 30, 2001, he served as Tahan's district leader.⁶

Later Life

Thang Pu retired on May 1, 2001. After retiring, he served as church pastor at Siyin-Gyothonbin, Kalaymyo Township, Sagaing Region, from 2001-2003. The family then moved to Yangon. On January 17, 2008, Thang Pu went to his rest and awaits the Second Coming to be reunited with his family.⁷ Upon his death, Dim Uap moved to Sweden to be with her daughters who lived there at the time.

Summary

During his service life, Thang Pu baptized 1,086 people, organized 10 churches, supervised the construction of three mission houses and two church buildings, and provided maintenance service for several mission and church buildings.⁸

SOURCES

Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary Academic File, Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary, 1965.

Rozama. "Biography of Thang Pu." *Zomi Seventh-day Adventists*. Accessed September 2019.

<https://zomisda.org/biography-of-thang-pu/>.

Service Record of Thang Pu. Upper Myanmar Mission, Pyinoolwin, Mandalay Region, Myanmar.

NOTES

1. Dim Uap, interview by author, Upper Myanmar Mission, October 2017; and Rozama, "Biography of Thang Pu," *Zomi Seventh-day Adventists*, accessed September 2019, <https://zomisda.org/biography-of-thang-pu/>.
2. Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary Academic File, Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary, 1965.; and Rozama, "Biography of Thang Pu," *Zomi Seventh-day Adventists*, accessed September 2019, <https://zomisda.org/biography-of-thang-pu/>.
3. Dim Uap, interview by author, Upper Myanmar Mission, October 2017; and Rozama, "Biography of Thang Pu," *Zomi Seventh-day Adventists*, accessed September 2019, <https://zomisda.org/biography-of-thang-pu/>.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.; Service Record of Thang Pu, Upper Myanmar Mission; and Dim Uap, interview by author, Upper Myanmar Mission, October 2017.
6. Rozama, "Biography of Thang Pu," *Zomi Seventh-day Adventists*, accessed September 2019, <https://zomisda.org/biography-of-thang-pu/>.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

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