

Upper Myanmar Mission

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.

The Upper Myanmar Mission is an administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Myanmar in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

Territory and Statistics

The Upper Myanmar Mission was established in 1919. The territory of Upper Myanmar (formerly Burma) Mission is made up of the Middle and Northern Chin states, Kachin state, the northern part of Shan state, the upper part of Magway and Mandalay regions, and Sagaing region.¹

Statistics as of September 30, 2017: churches 76; church membership 8,914; population 16,463,237.² The mission headquarters is situated at the corner of the town circular road and Cherry road, Pyinoolwin, Mandalay Region, Myanmar. Presently it is under the administration of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

The Time Before the Mission Was Organized (1912-1953)

Literature evangelist, Mr. Beckner, sold church literature in the Mandalay region. In the 1930's, J. G. Knight, also a literature evangelist, sold literature in the same region.³ In 1953, Zakhuma and C. Lalkhuma were sent to Chin Hills, Myanmar, from Mizoram, India.⁴ Zakhuma became an official worker of the Myanmar Union Mission on February 17, 1953⁵ and Lalkhuma became an official worker of the mission on March 12, 1953.⁶ On May 7, 1953, they started visiting and preaching the gospel in Chin Hills and in the upper part of the Sagaing region.⁷ There was a self-proclaimed Seventh-day Adventist gentleman, C. Khawvelthanga, who lived at Bukphir village, Chin Hills. Even before these pioneers came, C. Khawvelthanga had kept the Sabbath and did not eat unclean meat, but the date he started to keep the Sabbath was unknown. A. E. Anderson took Zakhuma and Lalkhuma to Yangon (formerly Rangoon) to attend the union yearend committee on December 25, 1953.⁸

The Beginning of the Mission (1954-1966)

In January 1954, Zakhuma and Lalkhuma met A. E Anderson and a medical doctor at Tedim.⁹ On March 31, 1954, V. Rualchhina was employed.¹⁰ Ngul Khaw Pau, who had written a letter to the Northeast India Union Mission requesting that they send a missionary to Chin Hills, himself joined the missionaries.¹¹ The first Adventist church in Chin state was organized at Lawibual (Tedim town), on May 21, 1954, and then in June 1954 Bukphir Village church followed. In October 1954, R. H. Woolsey repaired and decorated the war-torn Brightlands building at Pyinoolwin (formerly May Myo), which is still the mission headquarters today.¹²

Though the organizing date of this mission as Central and Upper Myanmar Mission is not known, Philip A. Parker was elected as its president and his wife, Irene Parker, as the secretary-treasurer with headquarters at Mandalay. The committee members were Baw Dee, Aye Maung, and Go Za Kham, and Hla Pe was an alternate member.¹³

On May 5, 1955, 14 people were baptized by P. A. Parker in Tedim. And in October, with people gathered from Bukphir, Darkhai and Tedim, 16 people were baptized at an occasion attended by O. O. Mattison, Southern Asia Division president; C. B. Guild, union president; Pein Kyi, union secretary; and A. E. Anderson.¹⁴

In August 1955 Mandalay was chosen for the mission headquarters and a piece of land was purchased. In October 1955 Ngul Khaw Pau was appointed and sent to Falam. On January 17, 1956, L. Z. Zuala was also employed to help the work among Lushai.¹⁵ Tuivar (Darzo) was organized as a company by Parker, president of Central and Upper Burma region in 1956.¹⁶ In January 1957 Gyothonbin church was organized. Phung Kai was employed as an evangelist in Tedim township. In August 1958 Ba Tin served as church pastor at Mandalay.¹⁷ On November 15, 1958, Mandalay church was organized by Parker. The earliest churches organized in 1959 in this local mission (formerly section) were Darkhai, Kaptel, Khuasak, Kyaukphyar, Kyauktaing, Gyothonbin, Mandalay, Paan, Tahan, Taungngu, Tedim, and Tuivar (Darzo).¹⁸

In 1960 local church schools were upgraded: Mandalay, up to 6th Standard, with Douglas as its headmaster and Khin Maung Ngein, as teacher; Gyothonbin, up to 4th Standard, with Keith Mundt as its headmaster; Tedim, up to 4th Standard, with Ah Gay as its headmaster.¹⁹ At that time, Rawn Ning, of the Zotung tribe, had heard the gospel from Baw Dee in Yangon and come back to his home at Lungngo, where Sabbath keepers began to meet. In August 1961, workers' retreat delegates to Yangon were Keith Mundt, Lalkhuma, Lian Khup, Phung Kai, and Zakhuma. Keith Mundt became the Chin Hills director.²⁰ On January 31, 1962, Lalhluna, the first Adventist in Falam, was employed as an evangelist. In June, "Revival and Reformation" was promoted in the local churches. In September, V. Lalthansiamia of Yangon Hospital was called to serve as a medical evangelist in Tahan. A Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence School was opened at Tahan, Kalay township by F. C. Wyman, and Aitawna was appointed as its principal (1962-1969).²¹

In January 1963, Wyman was appointed as president and Myat Kyaw as secretary-treasurer. On May 1, Daniel Nangno was sent to Siyin Valley to serve as an evangelist. Kyaw Ba Lay, the union Education director, inspected

the schools of Mandalay, Kokkogone, Gyothonbin, Tedim, and Tuivar. Churches organized during 1963 were Farrawn, Myohla, and Darkhai. In 1964, Baw Dee became president. Laymen's institutes were held at Lawibual from April 30 to May 2, and at Tahan, from May 4 to 6. In March 1964, E Maung replaced Keith Mundt as the Chin Hills Mission director. Elisha Paul was sent to Kachin state to explore the possibility of mission work during early summer. In 1964, the Upper Myanmar Section office headquarters was moved from Mandalay to Pyinoolwin. Gyothonbin Adventist Seminary became a boarding school in 1964. Churches organized in December 1964 were Anlangh and Saihmun.²²

Separation of Organizations: Upper Myanmar and Central Myanmar (1967-2017)

On January 4-8, 1967, the Biennial Session of the Myanmar Union Mission divided the Central and Upper Myanmar Section into two local missions: Central Myanmar Section and Upper Myanmar Section. The administrators for Upper Myanmar Section were Elisha Paul, president and Ba Hla Thein, secretary-treasurer. Lungngo church was organized on November 2, 1968; Pyidawtha, Monghin, Tuingo, Kaptel, Mualkawi, and Pyinkhonlay churches were organized in 1969. Pe Yee, Tember Chit, and Thangpu were sent to explore Naga hills, Homalin, in 1969.²³

In 1970, Kyaw Ba Lay was president and Sandy Dee, secretary-treasurer. The 1972 union convention was held at Pyinoolwin from March 30 to April 3. Special guest speakers were R. S. Lowry, *Studies on the Sanctuary Service*; A. J. Johanson, *Evangelism and the Holy Spirit*; and M. E. Cherian, *Spirit of Prophecy*.²⁴

In 1973 Waingmaw and Tonzang churches were organized, and the administrators were Elisha Paul as president and Do Hen Pau as secretary-treasurer. The Chanthagyi, Mawsi, and Mayan churches were organized in 1974. Bukphir and Darkhai churches were disbanded on August 20, 1974. In 1975 churches organized were Hmuntha, Lezang, and Myitkyina; and Sempi church was organized in 1976.²⁵

In 1977, Daniel Nangno served as president, Rualchhina as secretary, and Do Hen Pau as treasurer. Churches organized in this year were Falam, Mualpi, and Theingkaya. Mualkawi and Khampat-3 (Thado) churches were disbanded on January 6, 1979. In Kalay Myo, Gyotonpin Ward, Captain On Pum donated his compound and house to the local mission on January 17, 1979. Zampi church was organized on April 5, 1979. Gyothonbin Adventist Seminary was upgraded to a 10th Standard school. Kaung Haung, Kenneth Suanzanang, and Thang Kawl were ordained to the gospel ministry in 1979.²⁶

In 1981, administrators were V. Kipzanang, president; Thangpu, secretary; and Lalsangvunga, treasurer. The Kalay-Pinlon church was organized in 1981; in 1982, Ngawchang, Letpanchaung, Sakhangyi, and Tuikhal were organized; and in 1983, Lalui, Sakollam, Sawbuayeshin, and Tamꞑ churches were organized.²⁷

In 1985, the mission administrators were V. Kipzanang, president; Thangkhuma, secretary; and Thangpu, treasurer. Paangpi, Lunmual, and Thalmual churches were organized in 1987. The Upper Myanmar Mission requested the Far Eastern Division to survey the mission on the criteria for conference status in 1987. Tuivar church was disbanded on January 20, 1989. Pyidawtha (north) church was organized in March 1989. As a token of appreciation for each retiree, Ks.1500 was given to the following workers: Ngul Khaw Pau, Tial Cung, and Zakhuma on July 13, 1989.²⁸

In 1990 administrators were: Thang Siangh, president; Thankhuma, secretary; and Kham Khan Lian, treasurer. The name of the country, "Burma," was changed to "Myanmar" in 1990. "Gyothonbin Adventist Seminary" was also changed to "Upper Myanmar Adventist Seminary (UMAS). Adventist World Radio (Zomi) program was opened and Do Za Thang was appointed as its first producer and speaker. In 1991, Sanpya Clinic was opened in Kalaymyo. Churches organized in 1991 were Phulmawi, Singgial, and Waingmaw.²⁹

In 1992, administrators were Sandy Dee, president; Thankhuma, secretary; and Gin Sian Mung, treasurer. The only Burmese church in the mission, Ngaphyet, was organized in 1992. Heilei and Langzang churches were organized in April 1993.³⁰

In 1994, administrators were Thangpu, president; Thankhuma, secretary; and Gin Sian Mung, treasurer. Churches organized were as follows: Aungywa and Mankring in 1994; Suangzang and Tahan (Taungphila) in 1995; Khengjang, Matupi, and Sialthawzang in 1997; Cikha in 1999; Kyikone, Tedim (Antioch) and Mayan in 2000. Thintaw Clinic was opened on May 31, 1999. Siyin Valley church was disbanded on December 20.³¹

In 2002 administrators were: Kenneth Suanzanang, president; Kham Khen Pau, secretary; and Min Lwin, treasurer. Churches organized during this year were Mualbem, Saihkhin, Jangaophai, and Vangteh.³²

In 2003, administrators were Min Lwin, president; Kai Khan Khual, secretary; and Thang Lam Mung, treasurer. Churches organized in this year were Bekan, Chawhte, Gelzaang, Htepaan, Lungngo, Lunmual, and Nama.³³

Churches disbanded during 2004 because of involvement in the self-appointed conference movement were Anlangh, Chawhte, Langzang, Ngente, Phaiza, Pyidawtha (B), Sakollam, Tahan (Taungphila), Tuikhal, Jangaophai, Vangteh, Pinlon-(Kalay), and Sawbuayeshin; in 2005 they were Kyigone, Mayan, Pinlon, Sawbuayeshin, and Tonzang. Church membership for 2005 was 6,801. Churches organized were Taungzalat and Gangaw in 2007; Mayan, Pinlon, and Pyidawtha (north), and Kanan in 2008; Anlangh, Pinlon, Sawbuayeshin, Anisakhan, Mayan, Tiau, Tonzang, Cikha, and Tuithang in 2009; Chanthagyi, Mindat, and Kanan in 2010.³⁴

Administrators elected for 2011-2015 were Timothy Muna Paul, president; Rozama, secretary; and Gin Lam Cin, treasurer. Phakant church was organized on February 26, 2011. Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence lessons were printed in Mizo and Zomi. A new Adventist World Radio studio was opened at the mission headquarters in Pyinoolwin; and Kachin programs began on June 1, 2011.³⁵

Churches organized in 2012 were Sakollam, Sinywa, and Layeinsu; in 2013, Naungket, Sialthawzang (Dimzang), and Myothit-Mandalay; and in 2014, Lashio.³⁶

In May 2015 Kap Lian Thang became president, and Tuikhal, Lianhna, and Taungphila churches were organized. Bible Study Charts and Integrated Evangelism Lifestyle (IEL) Handbooks were prepared by the mission and printed in Myanmar, Mizo, and Zomi for evangelism.³⁷

Schools

The Upper Myanmar Mission has 12 elementary schools, four secondary schools (Grade 10), and one higher secondary school (Grade 12).³⁸

List of Presidents

Philip A. Parker (1954-1963); Frank C. Wyman (1963-1964); Baw Dee (1964-1966); Elisha Paul (1966-1968); Pe Yee (1968-1970); Kyaw Ba Lay (1970-1973); Elisha Paul (1973-1976); Daniel Nangno (1976-1980); V. Kipzanang (1980-1989); Thang Siangh (1989-1991); Sandy Dee (1991-1993); Thangpu (1991-1996); Kham Khen Pau (1996-2001); Kenneth Suanzanang (2001-2003); Min Lwin (2003-2010); Timothy Muna Paul (2010-2015); Kap Lian Thang (2015-present).

SOURCES

ADCOM Minutes, Upper Myanmar Mission, 2012-2015, 2017. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Burma Union Committee Minutes, 1954-1955, 1957-1964, 1967, 1969-1970, 1972, 1974-1976, 1978, 1980-1984. Myanmar Union Conference Archives.

Church Leaflet of Mandalay, 2017. Mandalay church archives.

Church Leaflet of Lungngo, 2017. Lungngo church archives.

Church Leaflet of Mayan, 2017. Mayan church archives.

Directory of the Upper Myanmar Mission. Years 2002, 2003, 2017.

Upper Burma Section Committee Minutes, 1962-1964, 1967, 1969, 1973-1977, 1979, 1987-1995. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Upper Myanmar Mission Committee Minutes, 1997, 1999-2000, 2002-2004, 2006-2013, 2016. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Service Record of Ah Gray, Upper Myanmar Mission. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Service Record of Baw Dee, Upper Myanmar Mission. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Service Record of Keith Rawlinson Mundt, Upper Myanmar Mission. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Service Record of Phung Kai, Upper Myanmar Mission. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Service Record of Thang Pu, Upper Myanmar Mission. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Service Record of V. Rualchhina, Upper Myanmar Mission. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Service Record of Zakhuma, Upper Myanmar Mission. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Statistical Report 2005, September 30, 2017, Upper Myanmar Mission. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2017.

<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB2017.pdf>

Zakhuma, *The Journey of My Ministry* (in Mizo). Unpublished document, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

NOTES

1. "Upper Myanmar Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook 2017*, accessed May 22, 2019, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/2017.pdf>.
2. Ibid.
3. *Church Leaflet of Mandalay*. Unpublished document. SDA Church of Mandalay Archives.
4. Zakhuma, *The Journey of My Ministry* (in Mizo), (unpublished document, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives), 1.
5. *Service Record of Zakhuma*. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
6. *Service Record of Lalkhuma*. Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
7. Zakhuma, 3-5.
8. Ibid., 5, 9.
9. Ibid.
10. *Service Record of V. Rualchhina; Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action no. 1954-4176. Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
11. Zakhuma, 3, 9, 10.
12. Ngul Khaw Pau, *Pastor Ngul Khaw Pau's Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1946-1966* (Kalay Myo, Myanmar: Catholic Press, 1996), 6.

13. *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1954-4256 and Action No. 1955-025, 044, 045, 202, 203, 207. Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
14. Zakhuma, 10.
15. *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1955-212, Action No. 1955-139, and Action No. 1955-235.
Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
16. Zakhuma, 14.
17. *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1957-042 and Action No. 1958-134 Myanmar Union Conference Archives; *Service Record of Phung Kai*, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
18. Zakhuma, 13, 14; *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1959-013, 076 and Action No. 1960-040, 176. Myanmar Union Conference Archives; *Service Record of Ah Gray*. Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
19. Ibid.
20. *Lungngo Church Leaflet 2017*, SDA Church of Lungngo Archives; *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1961-218, Myanmar Union Conference Archives; *Service Record of Keith Rawlinson Mundt*, Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
21. *Upper Burma Section Committee* Action No. 1962-007 and Action No. 1963-001, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives. *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1962-148, Action No. 1962-216, and Action No. 1963-082, Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
22. *Upper Burma Section Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1963-001, Action No. 1963-022, Action No. 1963-055, Action No. 1964-001, Action No. 1964-018, Action No. 1963-134, and Action No. 1964-154, *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1963-036, Action No. 1964-124, Action No. 1964-105, and Action No. 1963-077, Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
23. *Upper Burma Section Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1967-001, Action No. 1969-035, Action No. 1969-063, Action No. 1969-102, Action No. 1969-131, and Action No. 1969-134; *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1967-001, 002, 004, Action No. 1967-004, Action No. 1969-083. Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
24. *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1970-278, Action No. 1972-194, and Action No. 1972-244, Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
25. *Upper Burma Section Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1973-015, Action No. 1973-081, Action No. 1973-090, Action No. 1974-053, Action No. 1975-077, and Action No. 1976-026, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives; *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1974-138 and Action No. 1975-078, Myanmar Union Conference Archives; *Mayan Church Leaflet 2017*. Mayan Church of SDA's Archives.

26. *Burma Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1976-235, 236, and Action No. 1978-026, Myanmar Union Conference Archives; *Upper Burma Section Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1977-034, Action No. 1977-039, Action No. 1977-052, Action No. 1979-002, Action No. 1979-127, and Action No. 1979-004, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
27. *Burma Union Committee Minutes* Action No. 1980-179, Action No. 1981-065, Action No. 1982-029, Action No. 1982-031, and Action No. 1983-008, Myanmar Union Conference Archives.
28. *Burma Union Committee Minutes* Action No. 1984-077, Myanmar Union Conference Archives; *Service Record of Thang Pu*, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives; *Upper Burma Section Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1987-078, 217; 1988-007, Action No. 1987-071, Action No. 1989-019, Action No. 1989-024, and Action No. 1989-118, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
29. *Upper Burma Section Committee Minutes* Action No. 1989-182, Action No. 1990-001, Action No. 1990-024, Action No. 1991-039, and Action No. 1991-131, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
30. *Ibid.*, Action No. 1992-002, Action No. 1992-064, and Action No. 1993-060.
31. *Ibid.*, Action No. 1994-001, Action No. 1994-114, and Action No. 1995-035, 073, 121; *Myanmar Union Committee Minutes*, Action No. 1997-089, Action No. 1997-090, Action No. 1999-007, Action No. 2000-077, 124, Action No. 1999-096, and Action No. 2000-195.
32. *Directory 2002*, Upper Myanmar Mission; *Upper Burma Section Committee Minutes*, Action No. 2002-010 and Action No. 2002-131, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
33. *Directory 2003*, Upper Myanmar Mission; *Upper Myanmar Mission Committee Minutes*, Action No. 2003-027, 081, Action No. 2003-020, 081, Action No. 2003-027, 081, Action No. 2003-026, 027, and Action No. 2003-027, 081, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
34. *Statistical Report 2005 (Year-End)*, Upper Myanmar Mission; *Upper Myanmar Mission Committee Minutes*, Action No. 2004-040, Action No. 2008-011, Action No. 2006-084, Action No. 2007-013, Action No. 2008-004, Action No. 2008-035, Action No. 2008-063, Action No. 2008-077, Action No. 2009-004, Action No. 2009-019, Action No. 2009-043, Action No. 2010-049, and Action No. 2010-053, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
35. *Ibid.*, Action No. 2010-082, Action No. 2010-104, Action No. 2011-013, 014, and Action No. 2011-017; 2012-043.
36. *ADCOM Minutes*, Upper Myanmar Mission, Action No. 2012-042 and Action No. 2013-037; *Upper Myanmar Mission Committee Minutes*, Action No. 2012-009, Action No. 2013-011, 077, Action No. 2013-011, 013, 077, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
37. *Ibid.*, Action No. 2015-011, 012; *Upper Myanmar Mission Committee Minutes*, Action No. 2016-045; *Upper Myanmar ADCOM Minutes*, Action No. 2014-072; 2016-014; 2017-061, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.
38. *Directory 2017*, Upper Myanmar Mission, Upper Myanmar Mission Archives.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000