Yangon Adventist Seminary

LAY WAH

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Yangon Adventist Seminary (YAS) is a Christian institution owned and operated by Myanmar Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1975. The school is located in Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

History

In the 1950s, the Yangon Seventh-day Adventist church school was known as Miss Gifford School. It was named after Miss Lockie Gifford, a missionary teacher from the United States.

Church mission schools were nationalized in 1966, and children of Adventists attended state schools all over Myanmar for their education. Students were to attend school on Saturday, and examinations were also conducted on Saturdays. If Seventh-day Adventist children at public schools did not sit for examinations held on Saturday (Sabbath), this would result in failure of the examination, and the students were barred from moving up to the next level. Church leaders decided to provide education for Seventh-day Adventist children in the form of a Bible seminary. The Park Lane Junior Bible Seminary was established on June 9, 1975.

The seminary was operated under the leadership of Yangon Attached District until 2013. On November 29, 2013, a
church business session voted that the school would operate under the administration of the Myanmar Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists.³

**Development of the School**

The Bible seminary started with 14 students, the children of church workers and lay members. The classroom was a single room located in the basement of a building.⁴ In 1978, a 24 x 36 ft. wooden building was constructed for the students to use as a classroom.⁵ Under the leadership of Yee Yee Shwe, the first principal of the school, the available space accommodated students up to grade 9. The name of the school was changed to Yangon Adventist Seminary in 1996.⁶

As the number of students enrolled increased year by year, the need arose for more space and the upgrading of grade levels. In 1998, the school board started planning for a bigger building for the school.⁷ In 2000, a two-story brick building, which could accommodate 150 students, was constructed.

Initially, the majority of students were Adventist children. From 2000 onward, non-Adventist parents learned of Adventist education services and enrolled their children, and YAS continued to grow in numbers. The classrooms were becoming more congested. According to the school statistical report for the 2017–2018 school year, the school had more than 630 students,⁸ with 28 percent of the student population being Adventist and 72 percent non-Adventist.

Considering this as an opportunity for mission to the cities, and looking to create a center of influence, church leaders from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division and Myanmar Union Mission started planning for a bigger building to accommodate more students. With funding sources from a 13th Sabbath offering from the General Conference and from the Division, Union, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), a six-story building was constructed.⁹ The building was completed on June 5, 2018.¹⁰

In 2019, 651 students were enrolled and 38 teachers employed at YAS.¹¹

Yangon Adventist Seminary is accredited by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA), in Maryland, United States.¹²

Table: Growth of the student population at Yangon Adventist Seminary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Male Students</th>
<th>Female Students</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–2007</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–2008</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008–2009</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009–2010</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–2011</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principal List


SOURCES


NOTES

4. School Admission Record Book (Yangon Adventist Seminary, 2000).
11. Contract agreement with the construction company, TM Engineering Company Limited, June 1, 2016 (Yangon Adventist Seminary records).
13. Adventist Accrediting Association Certificate issued on May 4, 2016 (Adventist Accrediting Association, Silver Spring, Maryland, USA).