



Newsletter

Burmese American Association of Texas

April 2006



Message from the President

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Please contact any officers above if you have any inquiries or business communication concerning the Burmese community.

Dear Members and Friends,

First, I would like to wish you Happy Burmese New Year! This is the time for our favorite gathering of the year, **Thingyan!** I am sure those of us who participated in Thingyan back in Burma will remember these joyous days. For the younger generation, who as not had opportunity to see the Thingyan in Burma, you can recall BAAT's Thingyan gathering where you've enjoyed various authentic Burmese dances and Burmese dishes, playing outdoor games, and throwing water at one another. This year, as a special arrangement, we moved Thingyan back to April to get the essence of True Thingyan Spirit. We want to encourage participation from our younger generations who will be responsible for carrying on our traditions in the Twenty-first century.

Our last gathering in February, for Union Day, was very successful. Thanks to everyone's hard work, we all enjoyed plenty of traditional Burmese food and music. It was the first time we tried out the singing contest. Due to its success, we have requests to hold other contests as well. When we get more volunteers, we can look into expanding it.

We are planning on having a big **Thazaungdine** party in the later part of October or early part of November. BAAT will keep you informed in advance.

But, first things first. We are about to celebrate our new year. I would like to invite all of you to our celebration of Thingyan and hope to see you all there.

Happy New Year!

Yours truly,

Myo Aye Thane
President, 2006



Invitation

BAAT's annual Thingyan Picnic will be held at Bear Creek Park on Sunday, April 23, 2006. You and your family are cordially invited to join us for a day of fun, great food, music, fellowship and of course splashes. Bring your friends along to share the fun. Please bring extra clothing if you are going to participate in water throwing event.

When: April 23, 2006 (Sunday) 10:30 am - 6:00 pm

Place: Bear Creek Park, Pavilion #6. Please see map for location. If you need further assistance, please call Ko Myo Aye Thane (281) 221-6255; Ma Thant Zin Han (832)-633-9598; Ko Stephen Yoe (832) 452-5757.

Welcoming a new year

Burma is known to have festivals for each month of the Burmese Calendar. Among all the festivals, *Thingyan* is Burma's biggest and most enjoyable. The four days of water-throwing and celebrations are rich in symbolism and significance as well as fun and youthful exuberance. It is a time when Burmese people have a chance to cleanse themselves of the past year's mistakes and regrets and motivate themselves for success in the new year. It is also a time for reflection on the past year's successes and a chance to set goals to capitalize on those already attained. *Thingyan* is a time of sharing, when family and friends join together at a time of joyous celebration. Another aspect of the water festival is the relief it offers against the sweltering temperatures of the peak of summer. The Padauk flower is a potent symbol of *Thingyan*. People love the flower not only because of its beauty and charm, but because the Padauk is faithful; it blooms once a year during the festival. Partners in life say to each other "*Padauk ka Thingyan gko thitsar shi thalo ko lai min gko thitsar shi nay hma ba*" – "I'll be faithful to you, as Padauk is faithful to Thingyan." The holding of the festival is not linked solely to religion. That is why almost every Burmese will include themselves in the celebrations even though not all venture into the streets for a thorough soaking. *Thingyan* is a social and cultural festival as the heat of the summer takes hold before the rains come. The late British academic, J.G. Frazer, in his book *The Golden Bough*, offered the theory that the festival originated because of a perceived need to "call" for rain by invoking celestial beings. For many Burmese, *Thingyan* is a time to seek deeper refuge in Buddhism or in Buddhist meditation. Many Burmese enter the monkhood or become nuns during the festival. Many others, especially young women, spend the festival at meditation retreats. Offering alms and performing meritorious deeds are also among the ways of acknowledging *Thingyan*. For some, *Thingyan* is a time to have parties or spend time with family or friends. Some renew their vows or look for romance. Others take the opportunity to go on holiday. However you intend to spend *Thingyan*, make it a happy and healthy celebration. (From Myanmar Times Online)

The BAAT wishes you an auspicious beginning to the new year.

BAAT was saddened to learn the recent passing of the loved ones of some of our members. All of us here at BAAT extend our most heartfelt condolences to those who have experienced such a profound loss. Please remember that our hearts, prayers and thoughts are with you at this most difficult time.

- Daw Lily (age 78, passed away in Yangon on March 1, 2006) – the beloved mother of our Active Member Ma Mona and Ko Salim Kyaw Sein
- Aryn Hussein (age 21, passed away in Padre Island on March 19, 2006) - the beloved son of active member Mithu of Savoy Restaurant.
- U Maung Gyi (passed away in Connecticut) - the beloved brother of our active member U Ko Lay.



Thank you!

BAAT appreciates the efforts of all volunteers for the November event and generous contributions. BAAT strives to acknowledge the names of all volunteers who brought in the delicious food items, participated in the event, and assisted with the setup and cleanup before and after the event. There is too long a list to mention your name individually. BAAT wishes to thank all of you such as members, board members and EC members for your support, time, and effort. Once again, BAAT beseeches you for your collaborative efforts for the future events. Thank you all for your contributions, large or small.



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*****DISCLAIMER*****

BAAT was incorporated with the mission to promote friendship, cooperation, and entertainment among Burmese Nationals, people of Burmese descent, and friends of Burma. BAAT's activities are conducted primarily for the benefit of its members. BAAT and its officers and members take no responsibility and will not be held responsible for any injuries or any liability that may occur during its events, howsoever caused. All participants should exercise utmost care and participate in its events at your own risk.