

The Beginning of Karen Education in Irrawaddy Division  
during the British Colonial Period

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## The Beginning of Karen Education In Irrawaddy Division during the British Colonial Period

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In this paper I emphasize the Karen who live in Irrawaddy Delta. The aim of this paper is to know what is Karen, why Karen willing to accept Christian Missionary, What kind of subject and language were use in Baptist Mission School and why the Baptist Mission schools get achievement and make progress among the Karen. In writing this Paper I use the material available from the library of the History Department (University of Yangon), Department of Historical Research, National Archive, Library of the Myanmar Institute of Theology, Library of the Karen Baptist Theology, Library of St. Paul's Church, Library of Pathein-Myaungmya Karen Baptist Theology, Ko Tha Pyu Seminary, Pathein.

### **The Background History of Karen**

The karen are one of Burmese nationalities, who many centuries ago left their home in Eastern Tibet and South China and migrated South to the warmer climate and more fertile soil of South-East-Asia. Although ethnologist have advanced various theories, it is not known when the Karens first reached Burma, or where they came from, or why they came, or where they first settled. Their own traditions speak of "a river of sand" which they had to cross in their travels. It may have been, as some have maintained, the Gobi Desert or the Yellow River. More probably it was the Salween or the Sittaung. Certainly it seems that they are the Tibetan origin, like the Burmese. The Karens are more like the Chinese in appearance.

The Karens are known to have inhabited parts of what is now called Burma for several hundred years, but there are no definite record of Karen leaders ever establishing large-scale Kingdom as Arakaneses, Burman, Mon and Shan. In fact there is very little historical documentation on the Karens in Burma before the Konbaung Period (1752-1885). This is because earlier historical records consist almost exclusively of dynastic chronicles. However, beginning in the Konbaung period, the customs, beliefs and experiences of Karens were recorded in great detail.

An account of Christian missionary among the Karen must include a reference to some of their traditions which made them ready to accept Christianity in large number. Before the Karen had a system of writing, these traditions were handed down orally from one generation to

another. The tradition varied from locality to locality, but there was a general agreement that there was a Creator who was the Father of several sons. The Karen lost the valuable Book of life that the Father gave him and consequently sank into the ignorance and misery. On the other hand, the youngest brother, the White Man, took the Book and went away. However, according to the traditions, he would come and give back his Book to the Karen, his eldest brother. When the American missionaries came with the Bible, the Karens recognized them as the younger white brother who was sharing his Book of life with his eldest brother. This tradition accounted for the Christian missionaries.<sup>1</sup>

A mission to Burmans was began in Bassein by the American Baptist Missionary Society in 1854. Next an important to the Burmans are the Karens .In 1911 the number of Karen who live in Bassein are 97,906. After British occupation the population rapidly increased. The Bassein district increased to 268,169 in 1881, 320,973 in 1891, 391,427 in 1901 and 440,988 in 1911. The separate races were as follow-

Year	Burmese and Mons	Karens	Indians	Others	Total
1901	276,582	85,300	19,027	10,578	391,427
1911	314,329	97,906	19,936	8,817	440,988

Of the 440, 988 in the district 311,458 are Burmese, but there is also a large Karen population 97,906.

There are of two Kinds of Karen; Sgaw and Pwo Karen. The Revd.S.W. Cronkhite of Bassein in a note on the Pwo Karens says:

“Tradition ascribes to all Karens a common origin, probably in China, whence they were driven some six centuries ago. About the separation of Sgaw and Pwo history says nothing. The Pwo call themselves the mother race and the Sgaw the father race, legend relating that there were a father, mother, six sons and a daughter, of whom the mother and daughter were driven out as being possessed of an evil spirit, from them come the Pwos, while the Sgaw sprung from the father of the family.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Burma Baptist Chronicle*, Book. II, edited by Genève Sowards and Erville Sowards, Rangoon University Press, 1963, p. 306 (Baptist Chronicle, Book. II)

<sup>2</sup> *Burma Gazetteer, Bassein District*, Vol. A, Rangoon, Superintendent Government Printing, 1916, pp. 23, 24, 28, 117 (Bassein District, Vol. A)

### British Colonial Rule And Its Education System

In 1826 after First Anglo-Burmese war British occupied Arakan, Tananthayi and put them under the India Empire. After Second Anglo-Myanmar war in 1852 British occupy Pegu and put under India Empire. Ten years later after Second Anglo-Burmese war in 1862-1863 Arakan and Taninnthayi were united to Pegu to form the province of British Burma. During this time the organization of the Province of British Burma are as follow-

British Burma <sup>3</sup>	
Divisions	Districts
Rakhaing Division	Sittway, Yenbye, Thantwal
Pegu Division	Rangoon, Bassein, Myaung Aung, Promé, Taungoo
Taninthayi Division	Kyitekame, Shwekyin, Tarwal, Myeit

After the Third Anglo-Burmese war in 1885 British annexed the whole country of Burma. For purpose of general administration the Province of Burma is divided into two great areas- Lower Burma and Upper Burma. To Upper Burma are attaches the Shan States and the Chin Hills. Lower Burma has an area of 81,161 square miles, and a population according to the Census of 1901 of 5,405,967. Upper Burma including the Shan States and the Chin Hills has an area of 157,600 square miles and a population according to the Census of 1901, of 5,084,657. Lower Burma is divided into four divisions- Arakan ,Pegu, Irrawaddy and Tenasserim. The Pegu and Irrawaddy Division were formed in 1881 by the Partition of the old Pegu division.<sup>4</sup>

The Irrawaddy Division was formed in 1881 by the separation from the Pegu Division of the four districts of Bassein, Thongwa (now called Ma-ubin), Henzada and Thayetmyo. The last – named district was transferred in 1893 to the Minbu Division of Upper Burma which was then known as the Southern Division. The Myaungmya district was formed at the same time out of portions of the Bassein and Thongwa districts. The Bassein district consists of two subdivisions and six townships. The new Myaungmya district consists of the Myaungmya and Wakema subdivisions which are divided into four townships. The Henzada district has two subdivisions and six townships. The area of Irrawaddy Division is 13400 square miles and its population is

<sup>3</sup> U Than Oo, *History of Myanmar Education Department*, First edition, Yangon, Mya Mya Win Press, 1999, pp. 24, 25 (U Than Oo 1999)

<sup>4</sup> *Report on the Administration of Burma 1911-1912*, p. 204. (Administration of Burma 1911-1912)

1663,669. The headquarters of the division are Bassein.<sup>5</sup>

Lower Burma divided into four Division<sup>6</sup>

Divisions	Districts
Arakan	Nothern Arakan, Akyab, Kyaukpyu, Sandoway
Pegu	Rangoon, Hanthawaddy, Pegu, Tharrawaddy, Prome
Irrawaddy	Bassein, Henzada, Thongwa(Maubin), Thayetmyo, Myaungmya
Tenasserim	Moulmein, Taungoo, Salween, Thaton, Amherst, Tavoy, Mergui

In 1868, the Chief Commissioner of Burma, Sir Arthur Phayre compiled a report concerning with the aims and objectives of the Burma educational system according to the directives of the India Government. The educational system that Sir Arthur Phayre wanted to lay down was the educational system based on the monastic education.<sup>7</sup> In 1864-1865 Sir Arthur Phayre propose a scheme the main feature of which were-

- (i) To use the Vernacular (Burmese) as the medium of instruction and thereby to diffuse Primary or Elementary education among the masses.
- (ii) Under Elementary or Primary Instruction to include not merely Reading and Writing but also Elementary Arithmetic, Land Measuring, Geography and eventually Astronomy and the outlines of Ancient History known to Europe.
- (iii) To utilize monastic and lay schools for this purpose.
- (iv) In order to induce Pongyis (monk) to teach such subjects (a) to furnish them with books in Burmese, (b) to supply qualified Burmese teachers to superintend the studies occasionally.
- (v) To appoint a Director with four Burmese teachers (for the above purpose) at Rs.30 per mensem.

Sir. Arthur Phayre's scheme has sought to adapt its method of vernacular education to the

<sup>5</sup> Alleyne Ireland ,F.R.G.S, *Colonial administration In the Far East The province of Burma*, Cambridge, The Ribeside Pess, 1907, pp. 111, 112, 113 (Alleyne Ireland 1907)

<sup>6</sup> U Ba, *The Far East in Modern Times*, Yangon, The American Baptist Press, 1941,p.144. (U Ba 1941)

<sup>7</sup> *Brief History of National Day and National Education Movement*, Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1970. p. 59

monastic system and to induce the monks to accept so much at least of Western knowledge and modern principles of education as is not incompatible with Buddhist doctrines and rule of life.<sup>8</sup>

To make a life these Scheme, in 1866 Sir. Arthur Phayre appointed Mr.G.H.Hough as the first Director of Public Instruction but because of Mr.Hough health condition was became wore and went back to his country Sir Arthur Phayre appointed new Director on December 16, 1867. The new Director of Public Instruction Mr. P. Hordern, B.A continue to emphasize on Monastic education and try to insert Western Education . Sir. Arthur Phayre's Scheme was not successful, (1) because of the Monks can't accept the Western Education ; (2) Monastic school did not accept the Scheme and they did not attempt to follow the scheme<sup>9</sup> ; (3) The objective of monastic education and western education was very different. The objective of the Monastic Education is mainly based on religion and this educational system is suited for the basic nurturing of Burmese culture and moral building of the youth but the objective of the Western Education is based on secular.<sup>10</sup> So Government searched another way as Grant-in-aid.<sup>11</sup>

As in India the Colonial Education System implementation in Burma was mainly based on Macaulay Scheme. The basic principle of the schemes were-

- (1) Instead of giving priority to eastern studies and encouraging their literati, priority should be given Western Studies and encouraged English;
- (2) To use English as medium of teaching and
- (3) To create a strata of brown skin people who were well versed in English and had the same body and mind as English men in order to act as a bridge between rulers and ruled<sup>12</sup>

Grant-in-aid method was used as instrument by the British government to implement Macaulay Scheme. In so doing Monastic schools and Private Schools became Vernacular School and the Missionary schools became Anglo-Vernacular schools gradually.<sup>13</sup> Educational grant-in-aid funds are administered under the control of the Department of Public Instruction and the grant

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<sup>8</sup> *Administration of Burma* 1911-1912, p. 98

<sup>9</sup> U Than Oo ,1999, p. 31

<sup>10</sup> U Than Htut, *History of Monastic Education*, First Edition, Yangon, Ohn Pin Press, 1980, p. 154

<sup>11</sup> U Than Oo 1999, pp. 31, 32

<sup>12</sup> (a)J.S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, New York, New York University Press, 1956, p. 123-130. (Furnivall 1956)

(b)Taw Sein Kho, *Burmese Sketches*, Rangoon, Superintendent British Burma Press, 1913, pp. 259-262

<sup>13</sup> U Kaung, "A Survey of the History of Education in Burma Before the British Conquest and After" JBRS, XLVI. 1963. p. 74. (Hereafter cited as U Kaung)

payable are subject to Budget limits. The Grants-in-aid obtainable are as follows:-

- (i) "Ordinary grants" calculated on the difference between the income and expenditure of an institution.
- (ii) "Boarding grants" for pupils supplied with board and lodging on The school Promises
- (iii) "Special grants" to supplement private expenditure on buildings, land, school furniture and equipment.
- (iv) "Salary grants" to certificated teachers.
- (v) "Fixed grants" to institutions of recognized efficiency and permanent character.
- (vi) "Normal School grants"
- (vii) "Results and other grants" for technical subject in-
  - (a) Ordinary Schools
  - (b) Technical Schools or Departments
- (viii) "Extra grants."

In no case is the total allowed to any institution under the grants specified against (i), (iv) and (vii) permitted to exceed the sum contributed from other sources (such as fees, endowments, or grants from Missionary bodies) to the direct expenditure of the institution in the previous year.<sup>14</sup>

The system of education which obtained in Burma during the colonial period was one of grant-in-aid. With the exception of a few government schools, the majority of the schools were aided schools which fell into three classes according to their management aided monastic schools, aided vernacular school (lay school), and aided mission schools under the management of various Christian missionary societies; Vernacular Mission Schools and Normal School (teachers' training school).<sup>15</sup>

In 1921, Burma had a complete educational system from primary school to university as Rangoon University was opened in December 1920. It was a complete system, including primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, university and special schools such as normal schools, law, medicine, agriculture etc. The primary schools were of two kinds, Anglo-Vernacular and upper and lower vernacular primary schools. The lower vernacular school had two standards and the upper vernacular extended from the first through the fourth standard. The vernacular schools

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<sup>14</sup> *Administration of Burma* 1911-1912, p. 204

<sup>15</sup> *History of Education in Burma Bibliography and Readings*, (unpublished, 1964) p. 41. *Burma Bibliography and Readings* 1964)

were by far the most numerous, being eighty-two percent of the totals.

The secondary schools began with the fifth standard and ended with the tenth. There were two kinds of high schools, the English or Anglo-Vernacular School. In the vernacular high schools, English was not usually taught. In the Anglo-Vernacular schools, English was usually the medium of instruction with the vernacular as a second language. The middle school constituted a most important phase of secondary education. The middle stage began with the fifth standard and ended with the seventh, but middle schools generally included the primary standard as well. The normal schools also played an important role in Burma. There were two kinds of normal schools up to March 1931. They were the Anglo-Vernacular and the vernacular.<sup>16</sup>

### Mission School By American Baptist Mission

#### Sgaw Karen School

The Baptist Mission schools among Karens in the Delta were started by Rev. Beecher in 1852 at Bassein.<sup>17</sup> The school of the highest order was opened at Koesue in 1854. Some of these school have higher character that is more thorough and extended in some studies (especially arithmetic, land-measuring and Burmese literature). There were 50 students in that school.<sup>18</sup> Rev. Beecher start and make mission at Bwat Gyi Tan. After the government granted 26 acres to the Karen for educational purposes, a new building was erected in 1858 at Taingtayar Gone. The school started to function in 1858 as the Bassein Sgaw Karen Normal and Industrial Institute managed by Rev. Beecher. In this school they emphasize to teach English, Bible and Mathematic, Geography, History and Health subject were also teach. For male student they teach industrial subject and for female student housekeeping subject.<sup>19</sup> For the industrial subject the pupils were required to work three hours a day. They had to work with carpenter, joiner, wheelwright, pounding and cleaning the rice, making bamboo and care furniture and sewing. The work of this school later became the ideal for Burma schools.<sup>20</sup> Under the leader of Rev. Beecher only English teaching school were for the students who don't have basis English and want to attend that

<sup>16</sup> *Fact Finder's Report, India-Burma*, Vol. IV, edited by Orville A. Pretty, Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry, U.S.A, 1933, pp. 645, 655, 656 (Fact Finder's Report, , Vol. IV)

<sup>17</sup> Zaw Min Htut, *Kaung laung Than Dhamatae Nit Aye Yeit Thar Yar Kyaung Daw Maha*, 2013, pp. 22. (Zaw Min Htu, kyaung Daw Maha)

<sup>18</sup> C.H. Carpenter, *Self-support, History of the Bassein Karen Mission 1840-1880*, The Franklin Press 1883, p. 243.

<sup>19</sup> Zaw Min Htut, *Kyaung Daw Maha*, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Maung Shwe Wa, *Burma Baptist Chronicle*, Book I, Rangoon University Press, 1963, p. 178 (Shwe Wa, Baptist Chronicle, Book I)



school, they start and accept under the age of 11. The student of this school have to attend the class 10 months in a year. And to get certificate they have attend that school 10 years. The headmaster of this school is Sayar Saw San Nay who studied in USA 7 years.<sup>21</sup>

Rev. Beecher was succeeded by Rev. C.H Carpenter. Rev. Carpenter came to Bassein station in 1868. He was an energetic missionary with fiery zeal for reform and progress.<sup>22</sup> When he first arrived in 1868 Rev. Carpenter found that most of the school buildings built by Rev. Beecher were in a dilapidated condition. Rev. Carpenter drafted plans for a new set of building of the most substantial description, suited to the accommodation of a female department and to meet other important ends. Under his management fourteen buildings were completed and a two-storied dormitory for girls was erected.<sup>23</sup> He also built the old Ko Tha Byu Memorial Hall. It was dedicated on 16 May 1878, the 50th Anniversary of the baptism of Ko Tha Byu. Rev. Carpenter established two scholarships for the education of the Karen Christians and also helped collect the Abbott fund.<sup>24</sup>

Rev. Carpenter was a person who inclined to the Karen of Bassein and tried to benefit them as much as possible. When he was assigned to take charge of the Baptist College in Rangoon in 1874<sup>25</sup> he wanted to shift the college to Bassein because he was convinced that he could do little for the Karens while it was located in Rangoon. But the Committee of Missionaries decided that it should remain in Rangoon and serve all races for which the Baptist Mission was working.<sup>26</sup> After his proposal was rejected, he resigned from the College and returned to Bassein and worked there until he retired.<sup>27</sup> The work of Rev. Carpenter at Bassein was epochal. The Bassein Sgaw Karen Mission became one of the model mission stations of the world.<sup>28</sup>

In 1879, prior to the retirement of Rev. Carpenter, Rev. C.A. Nichols undertook the oversight of the mission.<sup>29</sup> During Rev. C.A. Nichols' period of supervision, the school was raised to the level of a High School. In 1910, Rev. C.A. Nichols replaced many of the old wooden

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<sup>21</sup> Zaw Min Htut, *Kyaung Daw Maha*, p. 23

<sup>22</sup> H. Porwy, A Summary of the *History of Bassein-Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Baptist Association*, 1837-1963, Unpublished, Pathein, 1963, p. 1 (Porwy, Bassein-Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Baptist)

<sup>23</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*. Vol.I, p. 265

<sup>24</sup> Porwy, *Bassein-Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Baptist* p. 1

<sup>25</sup> Shwe wa, *Baptist Chronicle*, Book.I, p. 219

<sup>26</sup> *Burma Bibliography and Reading*, p. 2

<sup>27</sup> *Burma News*, September-October 1961, Vol. 74, No. 5, p. 28

<sup>28</sup> Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of Baptist Mission, Rangoon*, the Judson Press, 1927, p. 118 (Henry C. Vedder, History of Baptist Mission)

<sup>29</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*. Vol.I, p. 271

buildings with brick buildings in the school compound, including one of the most well-known the New Ko Tha Byu Memorial Hall, dedicated on 4 February 1922 at an approximate cost of Rs. 400,000. He brought a saw mill and built a rice mill to benefit both the school and the mission.<sup>30</sup> The saw mill helped much in the construction of the school buildings, boarding house, church, hospital etc. The rice mill helped to feed the students with fine and wholesome rice.<sup>31</sup>

The mechanical skill of Rev. C.A. Nichols and his careful business management made him able to train Karen workmen to operate the mill. In 1889 Rev. C.A. Nichols wrote:

“The mill is going on finely, managed and worked by Karen young men who have mostly been trained in our school here and have thus learned systematic application and accuracy. I know fully as well that with a little advice from the missionary they are people of splendid capabilities as Christian men.”<sup>32</sup>

Rev. C.A. Nichols also erected a printing press in 1883. It served to promote literary education among the Karens.<sup>33</sup> The printing press published five books in Burmese, twelve books in Karen and ten books in English. The printing press published the book concern with Ko Thar Pyu, Hymn book with note (English Language), the book encourage the young people and it also published a Karen newspaper called Dawkalu (Entire Race) in 1885.<sup>34</sup>

The school had accumulated an endowment of over Rs. 100,000, part of it invested in a commercial and technical enterprise, a saw mill, which yielded not only good interest on the capital but gave a practical business and mechanical training to the Karens connected with it. In 1903 buildings worth over Rs. 100,000 had been constructed under the charge of Rev. C.A. Nichols, none of which had come from government or the mission society, and in the ten years, 1903 to 1913-14, dormitories, dining rooms, bathrooms, steam cooking plant and gymnasium were added at a cost of over Rs. 50,000, of which Rs. 10,000 was contributed by government. At that time school had no less than 816 pupils, 539 boys and 277 girls. The trustees of the school were elected from among the Karen and the school was supported partly by a grant from the

<sup>30</sup> Porwy, *Bassein-Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Baptist*, p. 1

<sup>31</sup> P'doh Thabwa U Zan, Bler Tei Mee Sher A'tah Sei Soe Te' Soe Ler Pwa K'nyaw A'Klah Peh Kaw P'yaw Pue, (History of the Baptist Mission among Kayins in Myanmar), Yangon, Le Hsue Nya Press, 1961, p.119 (Zan, Mee Sher A'tah Sei Soe Te'Soe)

<sup>32</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*. Vol.I, p. 272

<sup>33</sup> Zan, *Mee Sher A'tah Sei Soe Te'Soe*, p. 119

<sup>34</sup> Thra Ba Tu, *Kaw Pathe Myaungmya Bler Tei A'tah Aouh Pwao*, 1837-1963, 1963, (Pathein-Myaungmya Baptist Churches, 1837-1963, 1963), Insein, Seminary Press, p. 77, 78 (Ba Tu, Bler Tei A'tah Aouh Pwao, 1837-1963)

government and municipal funds, which covered about one quarter of the total expenditure, but mainly from its own resources. All the work required in the care of the building and compound, including minor repairs, purchase, preparation and serving of food was done by pupils and that was considered an essential part of their education.<sup>35</sup> In honour of the faithful and fruitful service of Rev. C.A. Nichols to the Karen Baptist in the Bassein-Myaungmya mission, the Sgaw Karen High School in Bassein was named Nichols Sgaw Karen High School in 1923.<sup>36</sup>

The growth of the Bassein Sgaw Karen High School, and especially the increasing number of girls in it made it necessary for a lady missionary to be constantly present. Miss. I. Waston was the first lady missionary to help in Bassein in 1881. She was succeeded by Miss A.B. Harris in 1887. Miss H.E. Hawkes also arrived in 1888. Miss Edna Scott worked there until ill health forced her to return to America. In 1900, Miss J.G. Craft was transferred from Kyemyindine to Bassein and after two years, returned to Kyemyindine. In 1904 Miss C.B. Tingley began her long service of 36 years in this school. Miss G.L. Pennington took up work in 1911. Miss Virginia Barrett joined the school staff in 1925 and served till her marriage to Rev. E.T. Fletcher of Pwo Karen Mission. Rev. E.E. Sowards and Miss Sharp began their service in the school in 1921.<sup>37</sup>

Rev.E.E Sowards introduced many projects such as book-binding, weaving, gardening, carpentry and cookery. Just before the Depression in 1930 the enrollment in the school rose to 1,300. After the last American missionary for the Bassein-Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Mission, Rev. E.E. Sowards, left the station, Thra San Ba was the first national to take charge of the school. He started the Sgaw Karen monthly magazine written in Karen language. He also inaugurated the "Our Day" celebration to help knit the growing teachers into a dynamic spiritual organization.<sup>38</sup> Thra (Sayar) San Ba served the station.<sup>39</sup> Besides the Sgaw Karen High School in Bassein, there were also 129 primary schools, 4,927 pupils and 155 teachers in the Bassein-Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Mission in 1929. All of them were self-supporting.<sup>40</sup> Sayar Saw San Ba was succeeded by Sayar Saw Thar Lue. In 1942 Sgaw Karen High School was annexed by Japanese military forces and they used school as their military camp. Therefore Sgaw Karen High School was moved to

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<sup>35</sup> *Bassein District*, Vol. A, p. 117

<sup>36</sup> Ba Tu, *Bler Tei A'tah Aouh Pwao*, 1837-1963, 1963, p.81

<sup>37</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*. Vol.I, pp. 274, 275

<sup>38</sup> Porwy, *Bassein-Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Baptist* p.2

<sup>39</sup> Thet Khaing, "*Summary of the History of Kothabyu High School*", Unpublished, 1963, p. 2 (Thet Khaing, Kothabyu High School)

<sup>40</sup> St. John, "*Baptist Investment*". Vol.I, p. 275

the Thutaw Gone during 1942. In 1945 after Japanese Military forces moved out from Burma, school was move back to the original place Taingtayar Gone. In 1947 Sayar Saw Thar Lue was went to America as a scholar student therefore Sayar Saw Thet Khine was succeeded his place.<sup>41</sup>

Another Sgaw Karen Baptist Mission was Hinthada. The first American Baptist Mission School for Sgaw Karens in Hinthada was opened by Rev. W.C. Thomas in 1855. From its outset the school received liberal yearly grants from the government and the school made considerable progress in giving an elementary education to the Karen converts. In 1861, village mission schools were opened and the school of Hinthada was converted into a normal school for the training of teachers for the village schools. In 1863, there was an increase of another five normal schools and forty village schools in Hinthada. However in 1866 the number was reduced to one normal school and sixteen village schools, all aided by government and eight non-aided village schools. All schools were classed as primary schools and the pupils in all schools were taught through the medium of the Karen language.

In 1879, a Deputy Inspector for Karen schools was appointed, who spent most of his time in Hinthada, Thayawady and Bassein. In most of the Karen schools the missionaries taught their pupils in the Karen language. It was therefore impossible for the schools to use the books of the Education Department or to take the government examinations. Many circulars were issued requesting that the Burmese language be made the medium of teaching. Thus the test book in Burmese was introduced into the Karen schools and became the medium by which the various subjects were taught. In 1881-1882 special teacher's certificates were granted to Karen. In 1885, the standard of education had risen and the Karen teacher's certificate was raise to the ordinary student.<sup>42</sup> The teachers of Hinthada were generally Karens and their educational qualifications at that time were too limited for them to assume all responsibilities.<sup>43</sup> Both boys and girls were taught in Hinthada mission schools. The students of Chin converts were also accepted in ordinary Karen schools.<sup>44</sup>

During the time of Rev. W.C. Thomas, the classroom of the American Baptist Mission Hinthada Sgaw Karen Middle School or normal school was also used as a chapel on Sunday. The school had about 60 pupils at that time.<sup>45</sup> Rev. W.C. Thomas was succeeded by Rev. W.I. Price in

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<sup>41</sup> Zaw Min Htut, *Kyaung Daw Maha*, pp. 29, 30

<sup>42</sup> Burma Gazetteer, *Henzada District*, Vol. A, Rangoon, Superintendent Government Printing, 1963 pp. 196, 197 (Henzada District, Vol. A)

<sup>43</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*. Vol.I, p. 307

<sup>44</sup> *Henzada District*, Vol. A, p. 197

<sup>45</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*. Vol.I, pp. 330, 301

1887. During of his supervision, Rev. W.I. Price built the Thomas Memorial Chapel; the building included a number of classrooms along with the chapel for religious worship. As Rev. W.I. Price had to spend some of his time touring among the village, Miss Eva Squires joined the Hinthada Mission to care for the Hinthada School in 1890. In 1896, Miss Eva Squires was succeeded by Miss Mercy Lash who gave four years of service to Hinthada. In 1898, she was joined by Miss Violetta Peterson who remained for six years. Mrs. J.C. Morgan also took up educational work at Hinthada in 1901 and in 1904 she was joined by Miss Anna Gooch.

In 1906, one of energetic of missionaries Rev. A.C. Phelps arrived in Hinthada and took charge of the Mission. In the same year he married Mrs. Morgan. Mrs. Morgan Phelps took a keen interest in the Hinthda School. Because of her efforts the Hinthada Sgaw Karen Middle School of 200 students rapidly increased to a high school of more than 500 students. The Thomas Memorial Hall of chapel and ten classrooms were no longer able to accommodate the school and for a time classes had to be held in nine different places.

In 1928 when Rev. A.C. Phelps found that the old Thomas Memorial Hall, the church-cum-school building became congested due to the increasing number of students, he planned the erection of a brick school-cum-church building. The main structure was to be a combination of Assembly Hall to seat 1,500, twenty-two classrooms, two large examination halls, a library, offices and gymnasium. This building was erected at a cost of Rs. 250,000. The government granted Rs. 90,000 for the part of the building which was to be used for education. Besides the High School in Hinthada, there were one grammar school and eighty-six primary schools with 6,263 students under the ABM Hinthada Mission in 1928.<sup>46</sup> In 1938, the number of the schools increased to ninety-one and all were self-supporting.

When Rev and Mrs. Phelps retired from the Hinthda Mission, it was left in the hands of Hinthada Karen workers. Thra Po Myaing took charge of the field work while Thra Po Myat acted as the Headmaster and Thra Myat Tin<sup>47</sup> as the superintendent of the large high school. At the annual meeting of the Association in 1941, it was voted to change the name of the high school from the American Baptist Mission Karen High School to the Phelps Karen High School to honour Rev. Phelps.<sup>48</sup>

The educational work of the Hinthada Sgaw Karen Baptist Mission was less advanced than that of the Bassein Sgaw karen Baptist Mission. In 1911, when the Bassein mission had 187

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<sup>46</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*. Vol.I, pp. 307, 308, 309

<sup>47</sup> Thar Po Myat (1883-1954) graduated from Judson College

<sup>48</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*. Vol.I, p. 331

school with 3,452 pupils, the Hinthad Mission had only 59 school with 2,093 pupils.<sup>49</sup> Among the schools of Karen, the schools of the Bassein Mission became a model for all other missions. Dr. Ba Maw, the Minister of Education, declared that the Bassein Karen Schools would be the theme of his address everywhere.<sup>50</sup>

The Sgaw Karen of the Delta formed a majority of the Christian and literate population. The vigorous effort of the missionaries resulted in the emergence of prominent Sgaw Karen leaders such as Cabinet Minister (like Saw Pe Tha, Saw San Po Thin, Mrs. Ba Maung Chain), and government officials in the Education, Health, Public Works, Forestry, Police, Defence and Customs Departments from both rural and urban areas.<sup>51</sup> Saw Pe Tha after he graduated from Rangoon College (B.A) and then studied abroad at United Kingdom and got Barrister-at-law. Saw San Po Thin graduate from California, University of Redlands. Mrs. Ba Maung Chain she is graduate from Rangoon University.<sup>52</sup> There were Karen Inspectors, Deputy Inspectors of schools, college teachers, headmasters and teachers in school all over Burma. Doctors and nurses by the scores served in many phases of health work in almost every section of Burma from the best hospital in Rangoon to move jungle villages. The mission produced outstanding doctors, all holders of foreign degrees, like Dr. Ba Than Chain etc.<sup>53</sup>

### Pwo Karen School

The educational work of the Baptist Mission among the Pwo Karens of the Bassein-Myaungmya Mission was begun by the opening of the Pwo Karen Middle School of the Bassein in 1860. In 1863, the school had twenty-four pupils.<sup>54</sup> Before this the Bassein Pwo Karen did not have their own school, and they obtained their education by attending Dr. Binney's school and Rev. Brayton's school in Rangoon.<sup>55</sup> The Pwo Karen Normal School was started in Bassein in 1865.<sup>56</sup> Miss Sarah Higby served in the Pwo Karen Normal School till 1892.<sup>57</sup> The Pwo Karens were less

<sup>49</sup> *Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Burma-Baptist Mission Convention*, Rangoon, American Baptist Mission Press, 1911, p. xii (Forty-Sixth Annual Report)

<sup>50</sup> Randolph L. Howard, *Baptist in Burma*, U.S.A, The Judson Press, 1931, p. 59 (L. Howard, Baptist in Burma)

<sup>51</sup> "Burma News", September-October 1961, Vol. 74, No. 5, p. 9 (Burmese News, 1961, Vol. 74, No.5)

<sup>52</sup> Maung Sin Kyal, *Myanmar Pyi chit Kayin Amyothar Kaung Saung Myar, (Karen National leaders who love Myanma)*, Seik Ku Cho Cho Press, pp. 99, 134, 233. (Maung Sin Kyal)

<sup>53</sup> "Burma News", 1961, Vol. 74, No. 5, p. 9

<sup>54</sup> *Bassein District*, Vol. A, p. 117

<sup>55</sup> St. John Wallace, "Baptist Investment". Vol.II, p. 346 (St.John, Baptist Investment, Vol.II)

<sup>56</sup> *Burma Baptist Chronicle*, Book. II, p. 330

<sup>57</sup> Ragmond W. Beaver, *A History of Baptist Mission among the Pwo Karens of Burma*, Yangon, Pwo Kayin Press, 1960, p. 15 (Beaver, Mission among the Pwo Karens)

advanced than the Sgaw Karens and little progress was made at first.

Much progress was made among the Pwo Karens during the years of Rev. Cronkhite (1884-1922). In 1886, the Pwo Karens built a new dormitory for school boys under the charge of Rev. Cronkhite. The Karens, American and the government provided Rs. 10,000 for a new chapel-school house.<sup>58</sup> Besides the Pwo Karen Middle School at Bassein and the Pwo Karen Normal School, there were also 80 village schools in Bassein District in 1884.<sup>59</sup>

Later the Pwo Karen Middle School of Bassein was raised to the level of a high school. In 1932 when the mission was under the charge of Rev. Conrad, there were 175 boys and 160 girls in the school, the total enrollment thus being 335. Of these 335 pupils there were 239 Pwo Karen, 52 Burmese, 2 Chinese, 1 Indians and 1 Anglo-Burmese<sup>60</sup> In the school year of 1936-1937 a great number of races were represented in the student-body. Of total number of 395 students enrolled, there were 242 Pwo Karens, 8 Sgaw Karens, 72 Burmese, 2 Mons and 2 Japanese.<sup>61</sup> The different races of the pupils showed that although it was named the Pwo Karen High School, it imparted learning to all nationalities.

In 1932, the management of the school was handed over to Miss Rebecen Anderson. This freed Rev. Conrad from the duty of looking after the school and enabled him to serve fulltime in evangelistic work. Mr. Charles Taw, B.A. served as headmaster.<sup>62</sup> In 1936-1937, a new national headmaster, Saw Timothy Po Gyaw, B.Sc, B.Ed. was appointed.<sup>63</sup>

Another Pwo Karen Mission was the Rangoon-Maubin Mission. In 1879, Rev. and Mrs. Walter Bushell arrived in Maubin as the first missionaries to be located in that town.<sup>64</sup> In 1883, Rev. Bushell purchased land in Maubin for a school and mission compound.<sup>65</sup> Miss Carrie Putnam came to Maubin in 1887 and worked long and effectively in the Maubin School and through the district until her death in 1927. She left an endowment fund in her will, the interest of which was used to help support the educational and evangelistic work of the Association.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to the Pwo Karen School, there were two grammar schools and two primary schools under the Rangoon-Maubin Baptist Mission in 1928. But in 1933, the grammar school was

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<sup>58</sup> St. John, *Baptist Investment*, Vol. II, p. 352

<sup>59</sup> *Baptist Chronicle*, Book. II, p. 330

<sup>60</sup> "*Burma News*", Sep 1932, Vol. XLV, No. 9, p. 139

<sup>61</sup> "*Burma News*", July-Aug 1936, Vol. XLIX, No. 7&8, p. 123

<sup>62</sup> "*Burma News*", Sep 1932, Vol. XLIX, No. 9, p. 139

<sup>63</sup> "*Burma News*", July-Aug 1936, Vol. XLIX, No. 7&8, p. 123

<sup>64</sup> "*Baptist Chronicle*", Book. II, p. 333

<sup>65</sup> Beaver, *Mission among the Pwo Karens*, p. 28

<sup>66</sup> "*Baptist Chronicle*", Book. II, p. 333

reduced to one while the primary schools increased to sixteen with 754 pupils. Baptism in connection with the Rangoon-Maubin Mission School totaled twenty-one in 1938-1939.<sup>67</sup> The educational work of the Baptist Mission among the Sgaw Karens was more successful than the Pwo Karens in the Delta. In 1911, when the Sgaw Karen schools numbered 187 with 3,452 pupils, the Pwo Karen schools numbered only 25 with 815 pupils in Bassein.<sup>68</sup>

### Conclusion

Therefore the achievement of the Baptist Mission was due to (1) according to Karen traditions which made ready to accept Christianity in large number (2) the strong desire of the Karens to achieve literacy and read the lost Book of their myth (3) the policy of the British Government in giving grant-in-aid to qualified private schools (4) the effort of the missionaries who sympathetically and vigorously work among with Karen. That is why the Baptist Mission success at Bassein among the Karens. I will do further study concern with why the great achievement of the Baptist Mission was due to the Karens knew the necessity and benefits of education and they were eager and willing to send their children in the school and the achievement was due to not only to the effort of the missionaries but also to the strong desire of the Karens to achieve literacy.

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<sup>67</sup> *"Burma News"*, March 1939, Vol. LII, No. 3, p. 194

<sup>68</sup> *Forty-Sixth Annual Report*, p. xii



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