

Dr. Ba Maw's Narrative

5 August 1946

On this day, the former Adipadi Dr. Ba Maw arrived back to Rangoon in a British army plane. Among those who went to meet him were myself, Dama party members Bandoola U Sein, Henzada U Mya, Pyaw-bwe U Mya, U Ba Win and many other dignitaries. The meeting party came in about 20 cars altogether.

In a short while, the army plane carrying Dr. Ba Maw landed at Mingaladon airport. When the plane stopped its engines, Dr. Ba Maw came down with two army policemen.

Dr. Ba Maw had lost some weight. He was wearing black silky European suit. Also his famous Dama party cap. He shook hands with everyone. His authoritative voice still hadn't changed. It was as brusque as ever.

When the reporters prepared to take photos, he requested them not to do so.

Afterwards, Dr. Ba Maw, together with the two army policemen, left for his residence on Kandawgyi circular road (now Natmawk road). I went along with him. Only when he reached home, he related his experiences to friends and reporters.

'In 1945, I fled to Moulmein and Mudon together with the Japanese. On 17 August, I flew to Bangkok from Mudon. The next day, I left for Saigon. While in Saigon, I met my wife and family and arranged for them to return to Rangoon. After that, I flew on to Formosa (Taiwan).'

'After arriving in Formosa, I flew to Japan. En route, we unexpectedly encountered an American war plane and it fired at us with machine guns. The pilot who was flying our plane was a brilliant man. When the American plane fired at us continuously, our pilot kept losing height under the pretence of being hit till our plane got very close to the sea. Only after a while, the plane rose again and continued its flight. We could still see the American plane but it was at quite a distance and it did not fire at us any more'.

'On 23 October, I arrived in Japan. At the time, the Japanese had lost the war and were surrendering. The American army had given orders that no Japanese plane must land or take off without its permission'.

'Therefore, our Japanese plane had to land secretly at the edge of a forest quite far from the capital city. We then took refuge in a small Japanese village. We stayed

at a Japanese monastery. The Japanese monk took good care of me. I will never forget his kindness’.

‘While in hiding, I kept my ears opened for news of the political situation in Burma. I heard in January that U Aye (the son-in-law of Turf Club Chairman U Hpo Byawt) had formed a government with the British governor Mr. Rand. I felt the urge to return to Burma so I made a decision and surrendered myself to the colonel of the American army admitting that I was the former Adipadi of Burma. They arrested me and sent me to Tokyo prison’.

‘At the time in Tokyo prison, prisoners were divided into two categories. Japanese national prisoners had to wear red jackets. Foreigners had to wear blue. So I had to wear blue too. The prison chief (American national) assigned me to wash the plates and sweep the floor. I refused to do it’.

‘Because of my refusal, I was taken to a 6ft. by 9 ft. cell and kept there. That was my cell until the day I was freed’.

‘The captains from the American army often came to my room and tried to intimidate me. They showed me pictures of war criminals being hanged or brutally executed. In time, I thought to myself, ‘Well, I am bound to die like that. Guess I can never return to Burma. I will never see my friends again’. To have the chance to see all my friends now gives me immense pleasure. I feel sad to think about the past’.

While saying this, his voice weakened and tears flowed down his face. We sympathized with his feelings and we were moved.

‘The American Home Department informed about me to the American Councilor in Burma saying that the American army had handed me over to the British Liaison Department on 31 July, that the American army had arrested me because the British had requested them to do so, that my personal belongings had been returned to me. That was why I have returned to Burma in a British army plane.’

His narration took about half an hour. Afterwards, the reporters queried what they didn’t understand and what they wanted to know more. Dr. Ba Maw answered as best as he could.

I, Sutsu : How is my friend Subat Chandra Bose?

Dr. Ba Maw: Subhas Chandra Bose was flying from Chinese Formosa (Taiwan) to Japan when the plane caught fire. The entire plane was destroyed. The second-in-line military general who flew with him from Burma died on the spot. I heard from a reliable source that Subat Chandra Bose was taken to Taihoku hospital and was treated for burns but died 2 days later.

When I heard the unexpected bad news of Subhas Chandra Bose, I realized the suddenness of life's twists and turns. I am very fond of him so I was sad. I felt the great loss. I said to myself 'Oh.... my great friend Subhas Chandra Bose is no more' and felt disheartened.

When he heard what Dr. Ba Maw said, Dr. Ba Han seemed to remember something and exclaimed 'When my house was bombed, the first ones to arrive were you and Subhas Chandra Bose, wasn't it? I feel so sad to lose such a good friend' in a distressed voice. At that moment, the events at the bombing of Dr. Ba Han's house cropped up vividly in my mind.

I went and told my good friend Bogyoke Aung San about Subhas Chandra Bose. That Bogyoke was also sorrowful was testified by his sad countenance.

In this world, people of different race and different origins come together as friends. In time, they become attached to one another. Then, when one loses his life unexpectedly, the remaining persons feel saddened. This is the love and affection that is naturally born between one fellow human being and another, isn't it so?

Two days later at 8 a.m., I and a group of friends went for worship to the Shwedagon pagoda together with Dr. Ba Maw. Afterwards, there was hsoon (alms)-offering to Buddhist monks at Dr. Ba Maw's residence.

U Sut Su's 'Burma : 75 years information and 49 years observation'

Told by U Sut Su

Written by U Myint Tun

Edited by U Yan Aung

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