



No. 1, Thit-ta-bway Quarter
Yenangyaung
Magway Divison
Myanmar



Guest House +95 (0)60 88 21620
Mobile +95 (0)9 505 3342
ept.pet@gmail.com
www.leithargone-guesthouse.com

LEI THAR GONE

Guest House

31 December 2020 / Trimester Report III / September - December 2020



Dear friends,

On this last day of a very challenging and complicated year, I am happy and thankful to nevertheless look back on many blessings! At the beginning of September, Zoe and I went to Yangon for my regular check-up at the Pun Hlaing Hospital. Afterwards, the lockdown was unfortunately prolonged to 21 October, so that we couldn't leave Yangon. As mentioned in the last report, my back was giving me great pain, so as we had to remain in Yangon and my cardiologist gave the green light, I decided to have my discus hernia operated on. Major surgery, with an operation lasting 8 hours, was done on 4 October. Again, thankfully all went well, the operation was a success and I no longer have any pain. Despite the end of the lockdown, our return to Yenangyaung was delayed, because I was too weak to undertake the long car journey. Finally, on 15 November we arrived back home and I have since been exercising regularly to rebuild my strength. I am grateful to Zoe, Nikki and Lyon for looking after my well-being and for Julian, my grandson, for always cheering me up.



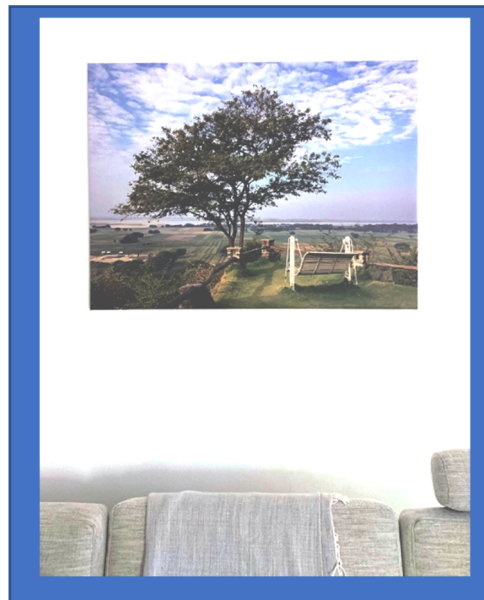
For myself personally, a definite highlight of the trimester was on Christmas Day when I accompanied Zoe to visit all the children in the villages and to give them a surprise gift of MMK 20'000 each, as a compensation for the Christmas Celebration at Light of Love that couldn't take place. They were so happy! The only disappointment was, that I could not meet them face to face because of the risk of infection.

Me, at my home in Pyin Oo Lwin in late summer

Some school facts & figures:

- As the number of virus cases increased at the end of August, the Government, on 26 August, announced the closure of all schools in the entire country. Which means that only the 9th and 10th grade students had any classes this year – they began seven weeks late on 21 July and reclosed just over a month later.
<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-closes-govt-private-high-schools-amid-covid-19-surge.html> *(note from Therese: the article notes the closure after a “surge” of cases and states “a record-breaking 100 positive cases on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning” – here in Switzerland, with a population of 8.5 million as opposed to Myanmar’s 54.4 we had 202 cases on that same day. And in November, cases even went up to over 10’000 per day and nevertheless schools have remained open...this pandemic and how different countries respond to it, is very confusing to me!)*
- At the end of September, restriction measures were prolonged to 31 October, which buried our hopes of having Annick, Therese and others volunteering and/or visiting us and LOL as they usually do during the last quarter.
- The small French organisation «SOLIDAR'BIRMANIE» has sponsored a new house with toilet for one of our needy families. Construction is complete. They will finance another house too, but because of the restrictions due to the virus, we have managed to construct only one so far. They also paid for one-month supply of rice! We are thankful for their ongoing support!
- We also received generous support from the Hirtenkinder Foundation for emergency relief for the children and their families as well as a donation for the ongoing Light of Love Foundation Karaya-Gum Plantation project. Thank you Margrit & Juergen Pumpluen! We appreciate your help and our friendship!
- We also repaired one house on the foundation account.
- Restriction measures continue – there is no end in sight. We have no information whatsoever about the reopening procedure. What has become clear, is that this past year will not count as a school year and is therefore a “lost year” for the students.
- The teachers were by law ordered to stay home but we did encourage them to continue learning the new curriculum on which they had had a 10-day course from the government last June. Some of the younger teachers as well as Zoe, have been taking online classes for English improvement.
- We have paid the teachers 50’000 MMK salary per month as they are trying to learn and improve for the sake of the school. They have had to report what they are learning to Eileen, the headmistress, twice a month.
- The government intended to broadcast classes via television because many families don’t have internet access nor do they have computers, so online learning is not possible, except for students in some international schools. Unfortunately, the idea was never implemented.
- Zoe contacted all the children and did a small interview with each of them for their sponsors, because it was not possible to make and write the usual Christmas cards this year. Thanks to modern technology, the letters were sent to Europe and will be distributed to the sponsors.

Fredrik and Maria from Sweden stayed with us in February 2019. They so missed the school and Lei Thar Gone, that they had a painting made of the view from the Guest House and it now hangs above the couch in their living room! We are very honoured and touched by their gesture!



Meanwhile at the Guest House...

- The most exciting news is that Lei Thar Gone Guest House has now become an integral part of the LOL Foundation, assuring the future of the Guest House as an inherent component of the Foundation!



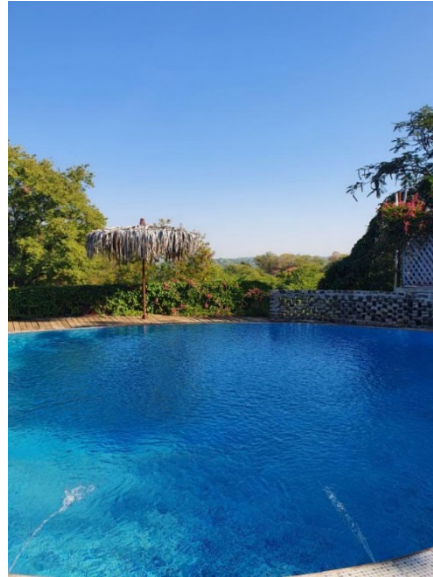
Eric signing the new deed in August 2020

- Besides the lack of foreigners due to the borders being closed, the nationwide lockdown has also severely impacted the Guest House. Travel within Myanmar, from one Division or State to another has been severely restricted, often only possible when complying with quarantine regulations, or has been forbidden altogether.
- A travel ban is in effect now until the end of January, so that Zoe's family wasn't able to visit us for Christmas, nor can we travel to my house in Pyin Oo Lwin, which is in Mandalay Division.
- Due to this unfortunate situation, we have had to let go of most of the staff members. However, we support our LTG staff who cannot work at present with 50'000MMK per month.

- Good news is, the solar system that had been defective for many months was repaired just before Christmas and we are again running entirely on solar power, which will help reduce overheads.
- Unfortunately, the retaining wall built last year collapsed partially and has had to be reconstructed – but the work is done and the wall is more solid than before.
- The pool remains blue and inviting but is missing the sound of happy voices enjoying the refreshing coolness!



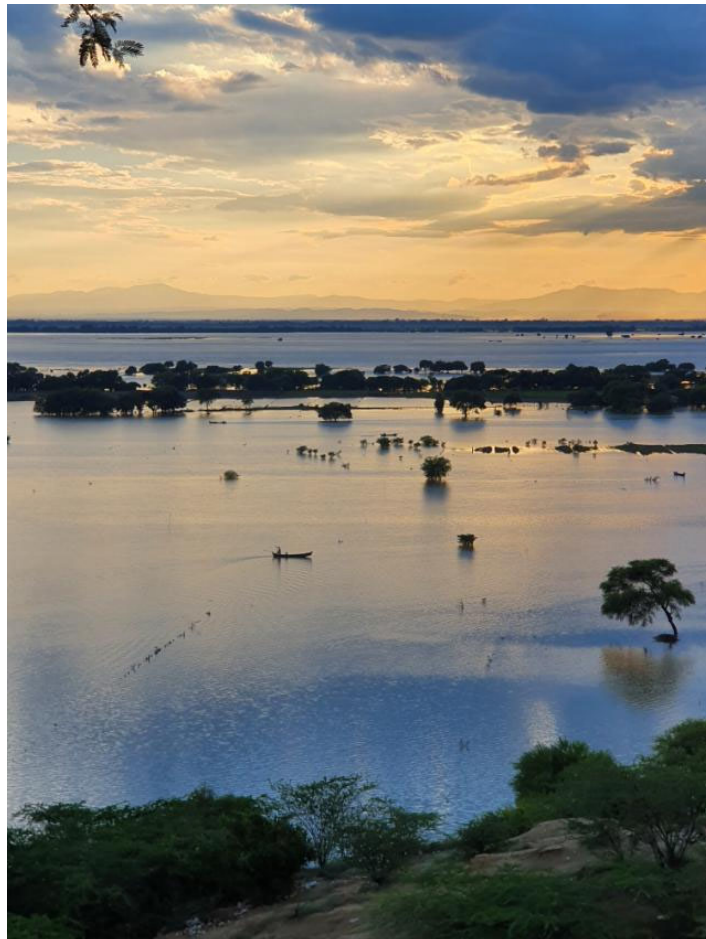
work being done on the retaining wall....



lovely and blue... so inviting!

October 13th – towards the end of the rainy season... beautiful view from Lei Thar Gone

We wish that you could all join us here!



This report was
compiled and written
by Therese, on behalf
of Eric, Zoe & Lyon