

Shan State Baptist Theological Seminary



Welcome to Shan State Baptist Theological Seminary in Taunggyi, Shan State, Burma (Myanmar). This Seminary was founded in 1956 by two American missionaries, Dr. William Hackett and Erville E. Sowards.



Under the able leadership of Dr. M Khaw Thein, Principal and Dr. Blut Phaw, Vice Principal the school now has 110 students and four different degree programs.



Current student body.



This community of learning is living proof that Christ can bring people of various ethnic groups together to work for a common goal. There are thirteen different ethnic groups represented in

the student body. They are Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Shan, Chin, Burman, Yawon, Kayan, Lisu, Wa, Lahu, Naga, and Asho Chin.



While each ethnic group has its own language, customs, and dress, they are united as they study together so they can serve their Lord. The language of instruction is Myanmar (Burmese) for the four year License of Theology program.



Students work together to raise a lot of the food they eat. They get meat, usually fish, once a week. They also get an egg once a week. Mostly they eat rice and vegetables which they like. Occasionally a well wisher will donate meat for a special meal for all the students and faculty.



Students also take turns helping the paid cook with the cooking. When cooking for 110 students, things must be cooked in quantity!



Several students go to the market daily to buy food for the whole school. Of course they have to bargain for the best price which is part of Myanmar culture.

They eat twice a day. There is little talking during the meal because eating and talking is not part of Myanmar culture. They talk among themselves in Burmese (Myanmar) and English—the two languages they all understand.



After eating, the students take turns washing their dishes.



The school is very proud of its new girls' dormitory built with some aid from foreign well wishers. The men and women live in separate dormitories in large rooms with eight to ten students in each room. They sleep on hard wooden beds side by side on woven mats. They say these mats are more comfortable in hot weather than soft western mattresses.

Washing is done outside each morning. No hot water here! They wash their clothes while they are wearing them. Simple but effective. There are no cleaning staff or laundry persons. The students do the cleaning of the classrooms and dormitories. They also keep the bushes and weeds trimmed.



But it is not all work and study. Both men and women students and the staff love to play soccer.

They also love Chin Lone—a Burmese (Myanmar) game. It is played in a circle and the object is to keep the ball in the air. There are no sides or scoring. It is a game of skill for mutual enjoyment. They also play volley ball, Table Tennis, and Badminton.

They love doing various folk dances. Often they dance to entertain visitors. These are authentic dances they do back in their villages.



They also like to sing. They even create their own songs. Many of their songs express their ethnic heritage or their Christian faith.



Each year the students produce a DVD which has gospel songs they have composed as a fund raiser.

Choir is compulsory. On Sunday the choir is divided into two groups with each taking part in a local church worship.

The SSBTS choir takes part in choral competitions with local churches at the association meeting.



They also learn and practice music with various instruments—violin, guitar, keyboard,



Shan State Baptist Theological Seminary has four programs. The License of Theology is four years and had 78 students in 2011.



The Bachelor of Theology is also four years and is taught in English. Twenty students are taking this course in 2011. All classes are held in this, their original building.



There is a Bachelor of Theological Studies which is two years of evening classes with 7 students which is also taught in English.



The fourth program is a Bachelor of Ministry which is also a two year program with 5 students. Altogether there are 110 students taking courses at Shan State Baptist Theology Seminary



There are only three computers for 110 students so they must share and wait their turn. Computers cost more in Myanmar—about \$500.



Many students are unable to come without help. These students receive some scholarship from Americans who give \$200 to help them fulfill their dream.



The library has 8,000 books, pamphlets, and magazines. About a third are in English. Many students can read English but are not able to speak it.



The school is served by 12 full time teachers and 5 part time teachers. Like the student body, the faculty is mixed ethnic background including Kachin, Karen, Chin and Myanmar.

The cost of the programs and messing fees range from 50,000 kyats to 260,000 kyats or \$60 to \$305. While low compared to cost in the United States most students can only earn 400 kyats per day (\$.50).

During Christmas and Summer Break the students go out to villages in teams of ten students and one faculty member and have fellowship with the local churches.

They also preach the gospel, witness, sing, dance, teach action songs, tell stories, and present drama.

The faith of each student is very important to them and they take Jesus very seriously. They seek to understand and deepen their relationship with God as they study at this school.



They feel called by God to share the Good News to their fellow Burmese and look to Shan State Baptist Theological Seminary to develop their knowledge and skills of ministering.



Their newest building.



Students helping with construction.

Wish List

1. Scholarship for needy student to supplement the support from family, church and association \$200.
2. Need \$40,000 toward a new building. They have already collected 2/3 of the cost and need more to complete it.