



Hla Kyi <HlaK@thmulti.com.sg> on 31-10-2000 05:35:09 PM

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cc:

Subject: FW: Once-in-a-life-time Reunion [and a Homage to my father]

FYI & A

> -----Original Message-----
> From: HLA MIN [SMTP:hla_min@yahoo.com]
> Sent: Monday, October 30, 2000 1:51 PM
> To: hla_min@yahoo.com
> Subject: Once-in-a-life-time Reunion [and a Homage to my father]
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> Dear Sayadaws and Colleagues,
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> At this time of writing, several alumni [including KMZ, our web
> master] and ex-faculty are on their way back to their homes after
> spending two or three wonderful days of their lives at the
> once-in-a-lifetime Reunion and Saya Pu Zaw Pwe.
> After receiving the Distinguished Member Award, KMZ promised -- in
> public -- his grand plans: a preview of Version 2 of the RIT Alumni
> International web site, a special CD-ROM that will try to cover as
> comprehensively the Reunion and Saya Pu Zaw Pwe [with the contributions by
> most if not all of the private, semi-professional and professional
> photographers and video men], ...
> Unlike the closing ceremonies of the Olympics, there was no singing
> and dancing to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne" and "Aloha Oe", but there was
> a striking resemblance when the "Reunion and SPZP" Banner was lowered and
> then handed over to Ko Daniel Tint Lwin (Mech 69), an Associate Professor
> at NTU in Singapore, who pledged to try his best to hold the next Reunion
> and SPZP in Singapore 2002. According to Danny, there are 1000+ [mostly
> young] alums in Singapore. They had asked Danny to take videos for the
> 2-day [official] event. They cannot wait a few weeks for the official
> video.
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> The following are random jottings of the 3-day [unofficial] event.
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> Never before have I witnessed a gathering that surpassed all
> expectations. Despite the meticulous planning by the Organizing
> Committee, the Emcees -- Ko Myat Htoo (Civil 69) and Ko Thein Aung (Met
> 72) -- found it hard to follow the schedule. There was a spontaneous Saya
> Ga Daw Pwe where many old alums -- some in their 60's -- took part. There
> was a "follow-the-leader" dance to compliment the singing talents of Ko
> Daniel Tint Lwin (Mech 69), Ma Myint Myint Sein (Mech 70) and Ko Tan Yu
> Sein [guest and brother of Ko Benny]. Saya Krishna showed his hidden
> talent -- playing "Peaceful Myanmar" (Aye Chan Thar De Myanmar Pye) on
> his harmonica. Ko Benny brought the crowd down relating his futile
> attempts to get his grades readjusted by Saya Allen Htay,
> Saya U Aung Khin and Saya U Tin Htut to name a few. Saya Allen said that
> "Had I given you a 5 [equivalent to "A" in the US], you would likely be a
> Saya to this day. If I gave you a 4, you would probably be a government
> employee. But, my intuition told me that you would be a very successful
> entrepreneur, so I gave you a 3." Saya U Aung Khin -- being a taciturn --
> replied diplomatically that the "statuette of limitations had run out".
> Saya U Tin Htut would not entertain any discussion that does not involve
> stocks.
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> Although Asians are known for showing up late for weddings and
> ceremonies, throngs of alums showed up early at the Embassy Suites Hotel.
> I was called in to verify attendees who told the reception desk volunteers
> that they had [genuinely] forgotten to bring their tickets. I saved the
> day for Ko Anthony Kyam (a) Ko Kyaw Win (a) Ko Joe Kyin and several other
> alums and sayas.
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> Every attendee got [at least] a commemorative mug, but a lot of smiles
> and memories. Several said that they would not mind even if dinner was not
> served. Saya U Myo Myint Sein's friend -- a world renowned architect --
> told Saya that he would trade all his gold medals and prizes to be honored
> in a SPZP tradition. Saya U Min Wun -- the last but not the least invited
> speaker -- reminded that without "cetana", even Internet and the modern
> technologies are not sufficient to hold Reunion and SPZP. Saya U Khin Aung
> Kyi clasped his hands and verbally [and physically] paid respect to his
> two Sayas -- Sayagyi U Ba Toke and Sayagyi U Num Kok. Sayagyi U Ba Toke,
> on behalf of all the Sayas, prayed that we should all be "wealthy"
> spiritually and be "healthy" physically -- the two mottos/guidelines he
> had treasured all his life. Saya U Aung Gyi's key note speech touched
> lessons of the past, the importance of the present, and well-laid plans
> for the future.
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> On Friday, 27th October, there was an informal get-together at an all
> you can eat Japanese, Korean and Chinese buffet in San Bruno. 40+
> attendees including two of our Golden Sponsors: Steeve Kay (a) Ko Thaung
> Sein (EC 70) and Ko Benny Tan (a) Tan Yu Beng (Mech 70) were present. Both
> are successful entrepreneurs and CEOs, but they took their precious time
> off to support RIT Alumni International and its activities.

> Usually Steeve does not surf the web. When Sarina Tan (EC 93), who
> helps Steeve part-time while pursuing her postgrad degree, informed him
> about the RIT Reunion and Saya Pu Zaw Pwe in general and my "Count down"
> articles in particular, Steeve sent in a check of \$1000 for the Saya Pu
> Zaw Pwe Fund. He later sent in another check of \$2000 to cover the costs
> of printing RIT Reunion and Saya Pu Zaw Pwe T-shirts that were designed by
> Ko Benny. At the Reunion and SPZP dinner [on Saturday, 28th October 2000],
> all Sayas and sayamas -- young and old -- were given the memorabilia
> T-shirts. At the get-together picnic [on Sunday,
> 29th October, 2000], the remaining T-shirts were put on sale. They were
> sold out in no time. The Sayas and alums proudly sported the T-shirts.

> Steeve told me that he liked the explicit as well as the subliminal
> messages -- "If one person can dream, others can make the dream come
> true", "Face adversity", "Be kind to your parents and sayas", --- that
> were present in my e-mail articles/updates. He said that at the end of
> three days, he is reliving sweet memories of his days at RIT.
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> Ko Tun Aung (a) Jeffrey (EC 68) brought unannounced commemorative
> pens. Now a Director of Engineering -- and probably one of the highest
> ranking government employee in Southern California and my be elsewhere --
> Ko Tun Aung showed his appreciation of RIT Alumni International in general
> and Reunion and SPZP in particular but his deeds and not words. Ko Tun
> Aung is a past President of BASES, the BAPS counterpart in Southern
> California. The Reunion and SPZP owe in part to the existence
> and activities of BAPS and BASES.
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> Ko Maurice Chee (Mech 75), our co-chair, thanked the spouses and
> family members. Without their support, who in the world would bet that a
> world-wide event can be planned and executed within four months. Thanks to
> our better halves who tolerated long meetings [which often had schedule
> conflicts with other social events such as offerings at monasteries], and
> a quick "I love you, honey, but I need to read the latest update about the
> Reunion and SPZP", ...
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> One Sayagadaw -- the spouse of Saya Chris Lee -- gave me several home
> grown fruits and an impromptu Gardening 101. "You need TLC [Tender Loving
> Care] to the trees and plants. You might have to use 50 lb fertilizers two
> or three times a year."
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> Nearly all of the alums and some of their spouses said that we had
> done a great job. Some said that they feel 30 years younger. They
> requested me to relax for a while, but to keep on writing.
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> Relieved and overjoyed after being part of a team that gave 200%, I
> would second what Saya U Myo Myint Sein's colleague said. From my KG days,
> I had won numerous prizes and awards, but the recognition from my Sayas,
> my fellow alums, their spouses and their families is far more precious
> than all those.

> My only regret concerns my multi-talented father [an alum of
> "Lay-ne-ban University" (or Lan ne be University -- the University of
> Life). According to the leading medical doctors of his day, he was given
> three months to live -- at the tender age of 14 or 15 -- but a
> Burmese say-sa-yar gave him a new life and even imparted his knowledge.
> Though he defied death for nearly seven more decades, he did not live long
> enough to see his son strive over one and half years not for a degree
> exam, not for monetary awards, but to show that he can follow some
> footsteps of his father.

> Without formal training in Civil Engineering and Architecture -- built
> pagodas and his the houses for himself and his brothers. He was known for
> his culinary skills and for organizing "Sa-tu-di-tha" [often at Tabaung
> festivals of Shwedagon']. Like Ko Benny and Ko Maurice, he loved tools. He
> told me bed time stories. He taught me astrology, numerology, ..., but
> most of all he loved and honored all his sayas -- thin saya, myin saya,
> kyar saya. His sayas loved him and his children. One of his sayas gave me
> a special chessboard that he had kept as a treasure for years.

> Dear father, wherever you are [although I believe that you would be
> in one of the good abodes in samsara], I'm thankful for for being my first
> saya. You brought smiles to countless people. Thanks for passing that gift
> on to me.
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>
> With metta,
> Hla Min
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