



**OLD MYANMAR PAINTINGS  
IN THE COLLECTION OF U WIN**

HLA TIN HTUN



# OLD MYANMAR PAINTINGS IN THE COLLECTION OF U WIN

by HLA TIN HTUN

*In Loving Memory of My Father, U Win*

*U Win Aung Thu*



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<sup>1</sup> U = Mr; Saya(r) = Teacher; Sayagyi = Master or Specialist; Daw = Mrs; Ko = Brother; Maung = Young Brother

# FOREWORD

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**Jørn Middelborg**  
Thavibu Gallery

Thavibu Gallery is pleased to present this book of old Myanmar paintings. Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) has a long artistic tradition. Early works include frescos and mural paintings in temples and pagodas, and in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, both Myanmar and foreign artists were appointed to serve at the court, and the arts flourished.

As the art scholar Shireen Naziree<sup>2</sup> notes: “By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, evidence of change was signaled by the Western influences of British colonial rule. The continuing traditional painting with its carefully crafted lyrical and poetic symbolisms remained a vital aesthetic within the cultural psyche of Myanmar. But with the increasing number of foreigners who visited the country and the numerous architects and civil servants with artistic interests who settled in the larger cities of Mandalay and Yangon, the disciplines of Western art became of interest. The representative techniques of classic European art were studied and adapted to enhance the illusion of reality by the traditional Myanmar artists in their

Buddhist interpretations.” ..and.. “The emergence of Myanmar modern art at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be sighted through the works of U Ba Nyan (1897-1945). He played an important role in articulating new artistic thoughts, which later became the basis of Myanmar modern art. Originally apprenticed under a traditional painter, U Ba Nyan was the first Myanmar artist to have a formal art education that led him to graduate from England’s prestigious Royal College of Art in 1924 and consequently exhibiting his art in Europe as well as in Myanmar.”

This book highlights works from the large collection of paintings accumulated by U Win. He was an avid collector for over forty years who recognized the importance of preserving part of the country’s heritage. The paintings shown in this book are part of probably the best and most comprehensive collection of paintings in Myanmar.

The fifty-three artists are presented in a chronological sequence according to year of birth. Most works are not dated.

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<sup>2</sup> In *U Lun Gywe - A Master Painter from Myanmar*, Thavibu Gallery, 2005

# PREFACE

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## **Thoung Han**

Artist & Chairman  
Myanmar Traditional Artists and  
Artisans  
Association (Centre), Yangon

To maintain our Myanmar traditional art heritage and to improve it continuously is an important task. It is remarkable to see that just as some persons are taking the responsibility to perform cultural duties, others are pursuing them admirably as a hobby. Thus people all over Myanmar, especially the younger generation, will study and acquire the heritage of the art of painting.

This book, containing numerous reproductions of paintings, will be a documentary record of history for the future. The works of art produced by our great Myanmar painters is a pride for our nation. We should cherish and honour their accomplishment.

The most valuable and priceless works will last throughout history. Thus all art lovers will be able to love, cherish and treasure these works of art.

## **Hla Tin Htun**

Artist & Secretary  
Myanmar Traditional Artists and  
Artisans  
Association (Centre), Yangon

There is a saying to the effect that “One good picture is worth a thousand words.” This would seem to refer especially to painted pictures. In such works of art are many hidden and missing points that are vital for Myanmar history and culture, and that need to be revealed. I believe that this book is an introduction to a type of art that will reveal some of these points. A survey of Myanmar painting can be divided into six periods: 1) the prehistoric age and the Pyu period, 2) the Bagan period, 3) the Inwa period, 4) the Konbaung period, 5) the Yatanabon (Mandalay) period, and 6) the twentieth century.

With the flow of the Myanmar current of painting through the ages, in the twentieth century it has become necessary to keep abreast with developments in the world. The great Myanmar artists U Ba Nyan and U Ba Zaw (both returnees from England) paved the way for the adoption of European academic painting methods. These methods eventually flourished and became influential, as we can see in many great paintings. Some of these paintings from selected

Myanmar artists, some fifty-three in number, have been warmly honoured and recorded in this book, titled (in the Myanmar language) *An Introduction to the Artistic Variety of Art*. In addition to viewing the paintings, art lovers are introduced to the lives of the Myanmar artists themselves. We have made a special effort to publish this book.

You may hear in one painting more words than merely a thousand. We hope that you will hear cheerful and joyous remarks. In the small space between art journeys, we will make you smell the sweet fragrance of these works of art. It is our greatest desire to present this book to the people.

# INTRODUCTION: EVOLUTION OF MYANMAR PAINTING

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## Minn Tin Aung

Artist

If you study the evolution of the art of Myanmar painting, you will notice that the earliest works of art on the walls of Pyadarlin Cave express the social life of prehistoric cavemen. Before medicine, art and technology were fully developed, these individuals did their best to express their way of life visually.

In the period of Srikshetra (the Pyu period), decorative art could be more often seen in the ornaments, dress and utensils of the people, especially Pyu coins, beads and pottery. In the eleventh century, the Theravada or “Southern” Hinayana Buddhism received from Thaton and Thuwunna Bonmu flourished in the kingdom of Bagan. The king of Bagan and his followers built countless pagodas and stupas. On the walls of the pagodas the lives of the Buddha described in the five hundred and fifty *Jataka* tales were depicted as homage to the religious edifices. In those days, mural paintings were the most important feature of the Palla art style flourishing in the southern part of India. Then the art of painting murals was handed down to the Sagaing, Pinnya, Innwa and Konbaung periods respectively. In the Konbaung period, a

typical Myanmar period, court artists were appointed to draw or paint royal ceremonies and *Jataka* tales on palm leaf. Sayar Chone, Sayar Saw, Sayar Kha and Nandi Meitta Sayar Ni were preeminent artists of the time.

In the later Konbaung period, the British colonial forces invaded Myanmar. Artists following the British army recorded the foundation plans, side plans, cross-sections and perspectives of the ancient pagodas in Bagan. They also painted the tropical environment of Myanmar in a natural way. This marked the introduction of the Western art style into the Myanmar traditional art style.

During the reign of King Mindon, as a sign of the mutual goodwill between the British and Myanmar, a group of foreign envoys entered the palace. The group included British artists led by Henry Yule. Myanmar court artists and British artists learned about each other’s styles of painting. Thus the traditional art style of Myanmar was supplemented by the painting of nature making use of light and shade, natural perspective and volume. The traditional style was exemplified in the work of

Myanmar court artists. These included Sayar Chone, U Kyar Nyunt, Nandi Meitta Sayar Ni, the portrait painter Bawdigon Sayar Aye, Kwan Chan Gon Sayar Saw, “Chinatown” Sayar Kyauk, Shwe Pyi Sayar Mya Gyi, Sayar Kha, Sayar Ni, U Saw Maung and U Chit Myae, all of whom painted *Jataka* paintings. The story of the Buddha’s many lives based on the *Jataka* tales expressed in great detail royal customs, costumes, buildings, elephants, horses and the way of wearing clothes down through the ages. Each one of the great *Jataka* artists was skilled in his own way.

The British occupied the whole of Myanmar. The artists Sir Gerald Kelly, Talbot Kelly and J. R. Middleton completed portraits in oil and reproductions of Myanmar scenery in watercolour. Sir Gerald Kelly painted portraits of Theinni Saw Bwar’s sisters, Saw Ohn Nyunt and Ma Than Aye. In the book *Burma*, Talbot Kelly depicted Myanmar scenery in watercolour. The watercolour paintings were unique and attractive.

In 1918, British officials such as the Railways Commissioner Martin Jones, Mr. Ward from the University of Yangon Physics



Department, and Commissioner Mr. Kinch established the Burma Art Club in Yangon. They formed the association with Myanmar artists U Ba Zaw, U Ba Nyan, U Thar Dun, U Tun Hla, Sayar Saung and U Ba Kyi. At the Burma Art Club building, they joined together for still-life and portrait painting. They also did outdoor and indoor paintings on weekends. The art club paid too much attention to system and method in the art of painting. So those in the circle of art called this club the "Labyrinth of Technique."

Two outstanding artists, U Ba Nyan and U Ba Zaw, who were members of the Burma Art Club, were sent to England for further studies. U Ba Zaw was clever at watercolour painting. When U Ba Nyan came back from abroad, he transmitted his knowledge of art to U San Win, U Ba Kyi, U Ngwe Gaing and Sayar Saung. They all became skilled in their own ways in oil or watercolour painting.

In 1930, led by the English official Mr. Morris Collis and Dee Doke U Ba Cho, the artists U Tun Hla, U Ba Sein, U Ba Lone and U Ba Nyan formed the Traditional Arts Association. In 1932, an exhibition of traditional art was held on the top floor of Scott Market (now called Bo Gyoke Aung San Market).

Then the Second World War broke out. The government art and music school, opened in 1930, now moved from Yangon

to Sit Kwin. Under the Japanese regime in Myanmar, a military art department was formed, led by U Ngwe Gaing. During the Japanese occupation, art exhibitions could not be held at all. In 1946, the Japanese surrendered and an art club from the English army and the Burma Art Club jointly participated in the Post-War Art Exhibition (Services Art Exhibition) held on the western grounds of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Yangon, together with other venues. In addition, the Union Culture Art and Photography Exhibition and Competition was held for three years running.

In 1946, U Ba Kyi presided over the Associated Artists of Burma organization. In 1952, the State School of Fine Arts (Yangon) and the State School of Fine Arts (Mandalay) were opened. In Yangon, U Khin Maung acted as the director. The art instructors were U Thein Han, U M. Tin Aye, U Myat Kyaw and U Ba Lone Lay. In Mandalay, U Sein Nyunt served as director and the instructors were U Ba Thet, U Aye, U Chit Myae and U Kan Nyunt. In 1952, the National Museum started to buy and collect national paintings. The great artists U San Win and U Ohn Lwin displayed their skills in the art of mosaic in artworks at the Institute of Medicine and the Nat Mauk Institute of Technology.

In 1992, as an amazing and unique event, the Burma Art and Sculpture Council was dissolved and replaced by the Myanmar

Traditional Artists and Artisans Organization (Centre), consisting of artists and skilled manual workers. In 1998, under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Culture, the organization held the All Myanmar Art and Sculpture Exhibition. The exhibition was held in the art gallery at the National Museum with 936 paintings and 53 works of sculpture. These all-Myanmar art exhibitions, as well as one-man shows and group shows, are increasing in number each year.



# ARTISTS' PROFILES

## U Tun Hla [M T Hla]

(1874-1946)



**Hill Tribeswoman** | Watercolour | 37 cm x 29 cm

The artist U Tun Hla was also skilled at composing poems. Many kinds of poems he recited were quite remarkable. At the time when U Tun Hla was born, the British Army had already occupied the central part of lower Myanmar and, taking advantage of political conflict in the Mandalay Palace, were making arrangements to occupy the upper part of the country.

He was brought up by his parents, U Soe Pae and Daw Mi. He studied under Sayadaw U Thone Da Ya of Ma Ngae Ah Lae village. U Tun Hla was indefatigable in drawing arabesques, celestial beings, ogres, dragons and other figures including bas-reliefs from monasteries. Thus in a few years he became a talented contributor to the art of national festivals and the funerals of monks (*phongyi-pyan*). He was married to Ma Sein of Ma Ngae and made a living by decorating and painting at the funerals of monks. In the circle of Myanmar artists, U Tun Hla and U Ba Ohn were the earliest artists to study oil and watercolour in the Western style. In the late nineteenth century, the well-known British artists J.M.W. Tarna, Thomas Grafton and J.S Cothman were contemporaries of U Tun Hla in the field of watercolour painting.

Prior to World War Two, U Tun Hla went by the name of M. T. Hla. He painted the portraits of the Second Abbot Sayadaw U Wi Mala and the comedian U Kyin Kae, the Shwedagon Pagoda, and portraits of King George and Queen Mary. These works are well known as his masterpieces. He used modern, Western-style watercolours to paint Myanmar subjects, such as a scene from Bagan. He used to paint with only two or three colours of his own choice. He was skilled in using consistent water and paint and depicting both dry brush strokes and wet brush strokes. In his painting "Hill Tribeswoman," he made a great effort to create a lifelike representation of his model.

# Sayar Myit

(1886-1966)



**An Auspicious Charity** | Oil | 51 cm x 31 cm

Sayar Myit was the eldest of three children born to U Saing (a skilled sculptor) and Daw Phwa May. While he was attending school, his father died. His mother learnt that he had a keen interest in painting and sent him to the artist Sayar Nyan in Kwan Chan Gon. Sayar Nyan earned his living by painting and decorating at monks' funerals. Sayar Myit became famous through his religious paintings, glass paintings and paintings of *Jataka* tales. During his childhood, while he was studying at a monastery in Ma Win village, he painted leaves, vines and clusters of fruit hanging down on the monastery wall. The

story goes that a squirrel saw the fruit thinking that they were real and jumped on them, causing the wall to collapse backwards.

At the age of sixteen, Sayar Myit became quite skilled in painting and decorating at monks' funerals. He joined the Myanmar Ah Swe Film Company as a wage earner for a few years. At that time, he lived with his wife in an apartment at the Sule Pagoda Road corner.

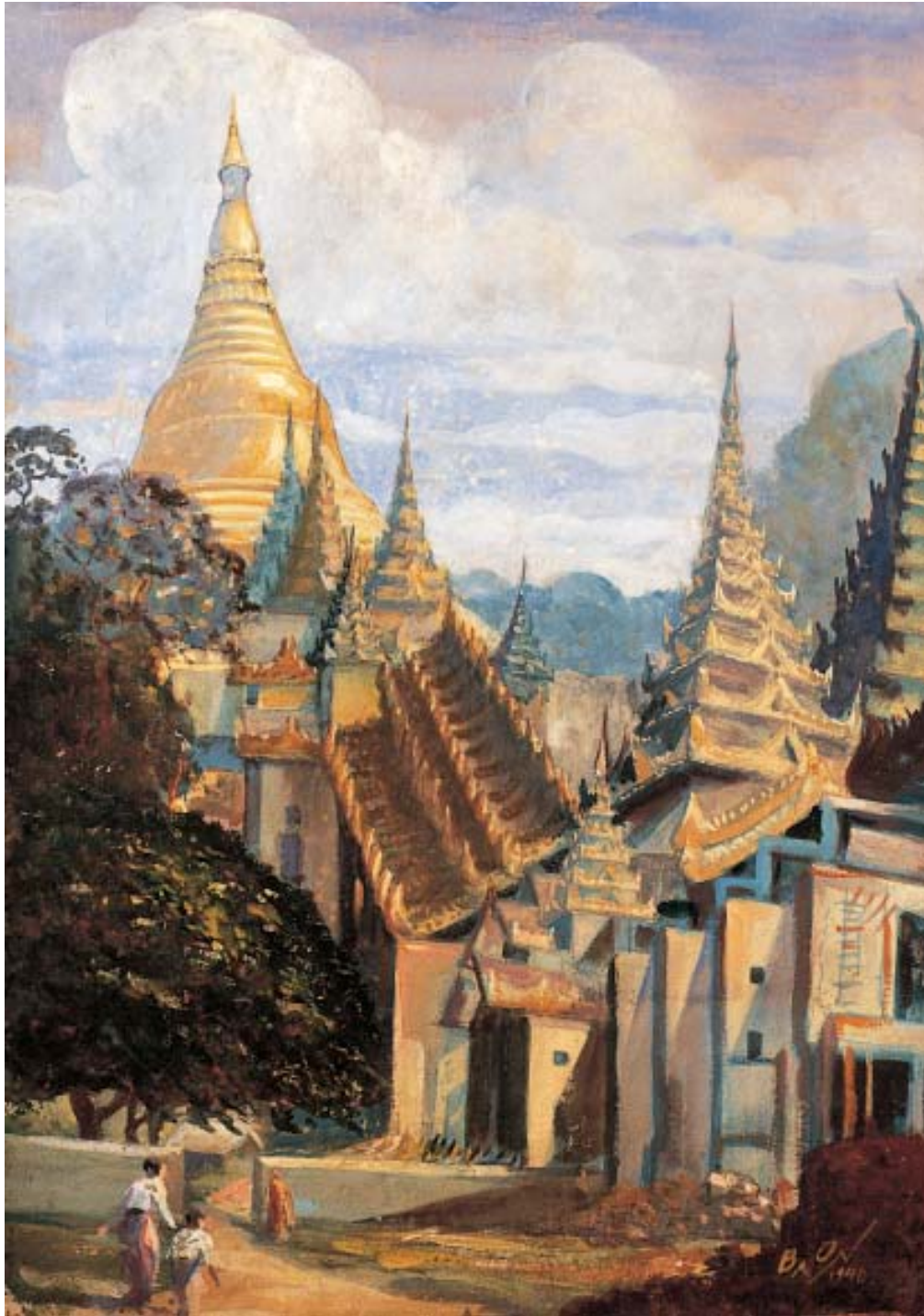
Later he resigned from the company and accepted commissions to produce art works. These included religious paintings, glass paint-

ings and *Jataka* paintings. In 1930, when the Myanmar Arts Association was formed, he became a member of its executive committee.

The oil painting "An Auspicious Charity" shows that Sayar Myit was not only skillful in the Myanmar traditional art style, but also in the Western European academic art style. The way of wearing Myanmar clothes and the ceremony of merit making are conspicuous features in this painting, along with the cart with its olden-style spokes and golden umbrellas.

## U Ba Ohn

(1887-?)



Shwedagon Pagoda | Watercolour | 51 cm x 36 cm

U Ba Ohn graduated from St. Paul's High School and thus was quite competent in the English language. At that time, Myanmar traditional art had become out of date. Studying Western style art strenuously, he had the inclination to change the art world. He was bright and soon became skilled in painting. He was the first artist to depict Western art in Myanmar magazines.

He was a student member of the Burma Art Club. He learned landscape painting and charcoal drawing from an artist named B. H. Wild, and soon excelled at both. U Ba Ohn's earliest ink drawings were shown in the school yearbook. These included "Zanaka and the Shipwreck," "Playing Cane-ball," "Sailing Ships on the Ayeyawady River" and "Cock-fighting." On a trip to Myeik and Dawae with a dancing troupe, he met U Ngwe Gaing, who became his student. Later on, the Royal Consultant Chief Officer was quite pleased at U Ba Ohn's portrait in oil of King George and Queen Mary, and took it with him when he moved from Myanmar. In England, the portrait was copied and printed into wall sheets. Every courtroom throughout Myanmar was required to have this reproduction on its walls. It is said that U Ba Zaw learned the wet brush method of watercolour painting from U Ba Ohn.

# U Maung Maung Gyi

(1890-1942)



**My Wife** | Watercolour | 47 cm x 36 cm

U Maung Maung Gyi's parents were U Saw Maung (chief superintendent) and Daw Ngwe Nyunt. At the age of sixteen while he was studying in the eighth grade, he became angry with his teacher. He left school and went off to London by ship as a sailor. In those days, a young man could hardly live apart from his parents or relatives, let alone go abroad. However, he was good-looking and could speak English fluently. Thus he got on well with others. On board he sketched the portrait of the captain.

In England he learnt agriculture and studied painting. In 1938 a riot broke out among

people from Myanmar and India. Some of them were tried in court. The judge did not allow photographing the defendants. So U Khin Maung Latt, a reporter from the *Myanmar Light*, took U Maung Maung Gyi to the trial and had him sketch their portraits.

He was familiar with using both wet and dry watercolour in the European colour scheme, but was stronger in dry watercolour techniques in his paintings. In those days before the First World War, the artist B. H. Wild met with U Maung Maung Gyi and they painted together. U Maung Maung Gyi's oil colours were reproduced in Germany and sold at the

Rowe Company, Rangoon. He served as an agriculture chief superintendent and later as artist of the Yangon Government Arts.

In addition, U Maung Maung Gyi served as an art instructor at the State Polytechnic School (Art and Music School) established in 1939. He was the father of U Khin Maung, a former headmaster of the State School of Fine Arts, Yangon. The painting "My Wife" depicts a damsel carrying a water pot on her head at a riverbank. The lady, standing by herself, is still and calm.

# U Ba Nyan

(1897-1945)



**View of Shwedagon Pagoda from ShweTaung Tan | Oil | 62 cm x 51 cm**

U Ba Nyan had an extraordinary ability to create art. His inborn aptitude for painting made him renowned internationally. He was the fourth of six children raised by U Ba Oh and Daw Nyo. He had a talent for painting since childhood and copied everything from nature. He studied the application of colour and the principles of depicting arabesques

and dragons under the guidance of U Pho Maung. U Ba Nyan stayed with him for four years as a disciple. One day, the Maubin district officer, Major Roberts, visited Pandanaw, and observed U Pho Maung's art workshop. The major saw the results of U Ba Nyan's workmanship, and as he had a smattering of basic art, formed an estimate of the young

man's ability to be an up-and-coming painter. In 1915, at the major's recommendation, the government supplied U Ba Nyan with a stipend to study painting at the Norman School in Mawlamyaing with Sayar U Ba Lwin, a master who had studied Myanmar traditional art as well as perspective drawing. After he passed the seventh standard at Norman School in





**Portrait of a Myanmar** | Oil | 99 cm x 63 cm

1911, U Ba Nyan painted a portrait of King George V. This painting received first prize in the All Schools of Myanmar Art Competition. Mr. Kinch, headmaster at St. Matthew's in Mawlamyaing, sent for him and taught him the European painting style.

A tuberculosis specialist, Doctor Lancaster, staying with his friend, the Royal Consultant Chief Officer Sahar Court Butler, visited many Myanmar towns and villages during his observations of the disease. While on tour, he came across some of U Ba Nyan's paintings at the Norman School. Doctor Lancaster mentioned these paintings to Royal Consultant Chief Officer Sahar Court Butler at dinner. The next day, this official wrote a letter to the Norman School headmaster Mr. Mart asking him to bring U Ba Nyan's paintings over as soon as possible. As a result, with the arrangement of Sahar Court Butler, U Ba Nyan proceeded to Yangon. Professor K. M. Ward, who had earlier seen and appreciated U Ba Nyan's paintings during a stay at Mr. Kinch's school, appointed him assistant drawing master at the Yangon High School. He tried painting Myanmar designs in the Myanmar style repeatedly. After three years, he became well trained in this style of art.

In 1920, the Burma Art Club expanded its classes. Professor Ward taught oil painting, Martin Jones taught the anatomy of the human figure and U Ba Nyan taught basic design. He was the foremost class teacher among Myanmar teachers at the Burma Art Club. In early 1921, the Ministry of Education textbook committee bought U Ba Nyan's Myanmar designs. On 24 August 1921, U Ba Nyan left for England together with a scholar

ship architect, U Thar Dun. His sketchbook was full of seascapes, skies, wharf labourers and sailors on deck. Upon arrival, he proceeded to learn painting at the Royal Art Academy. At about the end of 1922, he moved to the Yellow Door Fine Arts School, the fashionable establishment of the artist Stephen Lat. The master taught him separately at his studio. On 18 July 1924, the title of “Royal Etcher” was conferred on U Ba Nyan. In that year, the Wembley Exhibition was held in London. Backgrounds of Myanmar were needed for two paintings at the exhibition. So the Office of India assigned U Ba Nyan to paint these backgrounds.

In early 1925, he returned to Myanmar, together with over three hundred of his paintings. He attended weekly classes at the Burma Art Club and communicated his experiences whenever he got the opportunity to talk about art. Soon an exhibition was held to show his paintings brought from England. U Ba Nyunt, owner of the Myanmar Ah Swe Film Company, commissioned U Ba Lone and U Ba Nyan to paint film posters. The name of the film was *Hmime Wai Wai*. U Ba Nyan painted with bold brushwork, lively colours and rough strokes. A poster competition held by the Marketing Board received three paintings by U Ba Nyan. He won first prize at the competition. This prize, a round-trip ticket, entitled him to travel all over Europe within the next one and a half years. Moreover, he received sixty pounds each for the three posters. Before the end of 1925, U Ba Nyan left for England for the second time.

He continued studying at the Yellow Door Fine Arts School. At this time he became ac-

quainted with the artist Frank Brangwyn and the headmaster of the Royal Art Academy, Sir William Rothenstein, using these contacts to keep in touch with local associations of artists and oil painters. He also had the opportunity to take part in seasonal art exhibitions. When the British Colonial Office arranged to hang paintings that depicted products from the colonies, they accepted U Ba Nyan’s representations of Myanmar oil fields, forests, mines and farmland.

In January 1927, he visited Europe. While in France, he submitted three paintings to the Paris Salon Museum, all of which were sold. When he returned to London in 1928, his scholarship had expired. He kept on studying on his own. In 1929, he sent some paintings from his three or four boxes full by ship to Myanmar. One day he saved a man from drowning in the river Thames. On hearing the news, King George V conferred an honorary certificate upon U Ba Nyan. In June 1930, he came back to Myanmar. With the permission of Mr. D. G. Sloss, the Head of the University, he stayed at Thaton Hall.

Then, with Mr. Sloss’s permission, he moved to an apartment at the B.O.C College consulting with U San Win. Every Sunday, he gave an art lecture at the College. On 19 August 1930, at the house of the Royal Consultant Chief Officer, U Ba Nyan held a one-man art show. On 6 September 1930, he met with other great artists to form a local association. He was elected as vice-chairman. The chairman was U Tun Hla. In February 1931, there was a special art exhibition of U Ba Nyan’s work. On the wall of the Jetty and Wharf Office, he applied poster colours to depict

the Yangon wharf and various kinds of transportation in Myanmar. He was also commissioned to paint two pictures for the Union Building at Yangon University. He painted portraits of the Sawbwa (ruler) of Hsipaw and his Queen. In addition, his designs of a “dance peacock” and a “fighting peacock” were accepted to appear on the original flag of Do Bama Aisayone. On 4 December 1934, U Ba Nyan was appointed as an art master at the Teachers’ Training College. In the rainy season of 1934, his one-man art show was held at the house of the Royal Consultant Chief Officer for the second time.

In 1935, U Ba Nyan married Ma Sein Khine. In 1936, he was elected chairman of the Burma Art Club. His murals were displayed in the Art Hall, History Hall and the living room of the Teachers’ Training College on Pyay Road. Ko Aye Maung outlined and filled in the background colours, and Ko Ba Kyi added some additional colour. Then U Ba Nyan gave finishing touches to the paintings. Sometimes Ko Thein Han came and helped them. U Ba Nyan did not ask for any money from the government for these murals, which took three years to complete.

In 1943, he was appointed headmaster of the newly opened Art Academy. The Chancellor, Dr. Ba Maw, bought three of his paintings. In November 1944, Dr. Ba Maw presented one of them, “Night of the Shwedagon,” to the Japanese Emperor. The other two paintings were given to the Royal Consultant Chief Minister Kuniaki Koiso. After making water-colour sketches, U Ba Nyan tried to paint “The Abduction of Mae Thi Dar” and “Mae Ma Di Coming Back after Searching for Fruit.”



**A Wharf** | Oil | 153 cm x 102 cm

His masterpieces of this period included "The Shwedagon," "Prosperous Myanmar," "Portrait of Father U Ba Oh," "Fat Man" and others. He passed away on 12 October 1945. His work, praised in England as equal to the standards of academic painting and of the British royal artists, contributed to the acceptance and popularity of Western-style techniques in the Myanmar art world. While U Ba

Nyan was studying painting in London, a well-known Chinese artist, Shu Pae Hone, was painting at the National Art Institute in Paris. After Shu Pae Hone arrived back in China, he was able to improve and cause Western-style painting methods to flourish in his country. U Ba Nyan played the same role in Myanmar.

"Shwe Taung Tan" is one of his most famous

masterpieces. The painting was originally titled "From Shwe Taung Tan to the Shwedagon Pagoda." The view is from U Ba Nyan's house, which was situated on Shwe Taung Tan Street. It is a bird's-eye view. In the background of the painting, we have a rare glimpse of the pagoda on Thinguttaya Hill.

## Sayar Saung

(1898-1952)



Lovers' Bridge | Watercolour | 38 cm x 26 cm

During the Second World War, there were a large number of paintings that tickled the fancy of most Europeans. Amongst those paintings, Sayar Saung's watercolours had the power of glamour. He was regarded as an expert in watercolour painting in the circle of his fellow artists, including

U Thet Win, U Ngwe Gaing, U San Win and U Ohn Lwin.

His parents were U Sint and Daw Thi. He was the second of six siblings. At first he studied under U Maung Maung Gyi. Then he came to U Ba Zaw, with whom he studied the painting

of outdoor scenes. In 1920, he received a gold medal from the Burma Art Club. He learned by copying each of the pictures in the book *The Art of J. J. Hilder* twenty-five times. He later became known for his ability to complete a watercolour painting in half an hour. In addition, most art lovers have nicknamed him



**Mandalay Palace and Moat** | Watercolour | 49 cm x 34 cm

“the Prince of Watercolour” for his use of fresh natural colours. Sayar Saung’s methods and fame in this medium (he painted only in watercolours) spread far and wide. He served as a high school teacher, chief forest ranger, senior clerk and eventually art instructor at St. Paul’s High School. In 1952, shortly after being

appointed to the post of headmaster at the newly opened State School of Fine Arts, he passed away.

One of his paintings, “Mandalay Palace and Moat,” is an example of fresh and clear watercolours. The composition of the pointed palace

arch is especially effective. The strokes show Sayar Saung’s extraordinary workmanship. The painting “Lovers’ Bridge” indicates the skillful application of wet brush and dry brush methods.

## U Thar Dun

(1899-1974)



**Thabyinnu Pagoda, Bagan** | Oil | 46 cm x 34 cm

His name cannot be left off the list of Myanmar artists, even though he was a practicing architect and was regarded as an artist only in his small circle of fellow-artists. Nevertheless, he had a great attachment to the art of painting and thought that there had to be some connection between painting and architecture one way or another.

He was born and brought up by his parents, U Myo and Daw Yin. He was the eldest son. Whenever middle school student Mg San

Win visited the art teacher, Professor K. M. Ward, U Thar Dun followed him. When he was a university student, he visited Professor Ward very often. Thus he became friendly with the artists U Ba Nyan and U Ba Phan. As a scholarship architect he went to England for further studies on the same ship as U Ba Nyan. At the Royal Art Exhibition, he submitted a watercolour painting named "Mount St. Michael." The painting was chosen to be exhibited and hung at the exhibition. It was the first painting from an Asian country and

U Thar Dun was the first Asian artist whose painting was shown. After the war he worked for the Mandalay City Development Corporation. Then he served as a university lecturer in architecture and the history of architecture.

## U Saw Maung

(1900-1969)



U Khan Ti, the Hermit | Oil | 122 cm x 92 cm

U Saw Maung's natural disposition was to be very kind-hearted. He abided by the regulations laid down by his father, which he used to guide his disciples. U Saw Maung was well versed in the traditional art of ancient Myanmar. He had friendly relations with his friends and disciples. Everyone was pleased with his good will, polite attitude and kindness. But he was a fanatic on the art of painting.

His parents were the famous artist Sayar Aye and his wife, Daw Yi. He was the eldest of two sons. He took part in the painting activities of his father. He became famous not only in painting scenes from the Buddha's lives, the *Mahar Win*, *Nipat* and other traditional topics but also in Western-style painting. For three years, U Saw Maung corresponded with an art school in England. In addition to portraits and landscapes, he also painted magazine illustrations. He was skilled at all kinds of drawing and painting, especially his *Nipattaw* painting. In 1953, he was appointed chairman of an art academy formed in Mandalay. In 1956, as part of a project for the promotion of education, he was sent to the United States for further studies in art. When he came back to Myanmar, he received the title of "Ah Lingar Kyaw Swar." In his painting "Cattle on the Threshing Ground," the colours and images of the cattle were striking enough to attract the notice of viewers. As a consequence, he was nicknamed and became known as "Cattle Saw Maung."

The picture "U Khan Ti, the Hermit" is another successful work of art. The hermit possibly helped famous Myanmar artists who painted "*Nipattaw*" on the Mandalay Hill.



Taymi | Gouache | 75 cm x 52 cm



## U Yadanarbon Maung Su

(1901-1965)



**A Shan National** | Watercolour | 26 cm x 19 cm



**Smoking** | Watercolour | 31cm X 26cm

He was not only a noted singer before World War II, but also a great artist. He was a contemporary of Sayar Saung. Largely self-taught, he usually painted portraits of members of Myanmar nationalities. When he signed his name on the painting, he used beautifully formed English letters.

He used watercolour to paint only the upper portion of the persons who were the subjects of his portraits, leaving the background blank. U Tun Hla and Sayar Saung were contemporaries of U Yadanarbon Maung Su.

## U Ngwe Gaing

(1901-1967)



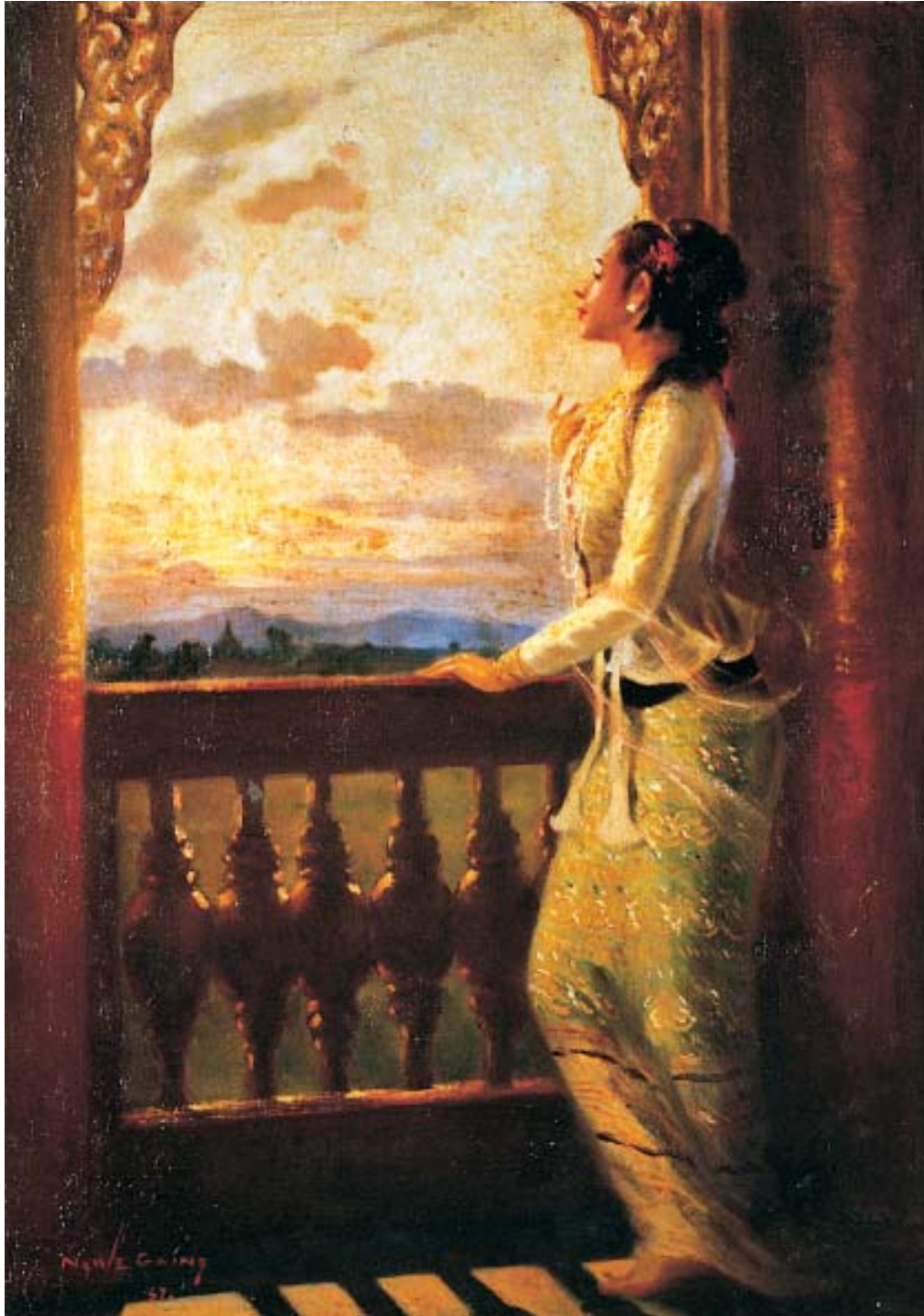
**Kite of Pride** | Oil | 76 cm x 61 cm

After the Second World War, U Ngwe Gaing became famous all of a sudden. As he hailed from Myeik, he used to speak with the strong accent of that district. U Ngwe Gaing was a determined man with a very frank, friendly and serious disposition. Not fond of worldly pleasures, he always abstained from drinking alcohol. Nevertheless, he had a predilection for tea and cakes, and was also fond of smoking cigars. He forever had a smile on his face. Besides being polite in manner, he was a very

pious person. Thus he commanded respect among those in the circle of literature, art, music and the performing arts. There is a saying that goes: "To master a subject, one has to acquire virtue and intelligence." But U Ngwe Gaing's model qualities were his eagerness and endeavour. Such qualities enabled him to become an eminent artist.

His parents were U Aike Pon and Daw Su Ma. He used to copy pictures from old newspapers

used in the grocery. When he moved to live in Dawei, he studied painting under the artist U Ba Ohn who had come to Dawei with a troupe. He also studied art under U Pho Aung, a disciple of U Ba Ohn, who arrived in Dawei and opened an art shop. When U Pho Aung returned to Yangon, U Ngwe Gaing ran the art shop on his own. He took a correspondence course with an art school in the United States. Then U Ngwe Gaing left for Yangon to continue his studies. He lived with his first and foremost



**A Damsel Pining for her Beloved** | Oil | 55 cm x 40 cm



**A Golden Neck** | Oil | 31 cm x 20 cm

teacher U Ba Ohn at Than Zay. In addition, he studied with U Ba Nyan for about three years when the latter came back from England.

During the British times before World War II, he became famous as a great artist at Pansodan in Yangon. He had his own studio and made a comfortable living. Under the Japanese regime, he served as a major in the Burma Defense Army and in the War Department. He produced documentary paintings about Burma's *Tatmadaw* (armed forces). In 1951, the post-colonial government sent U Ngwe Gaing to London in order to study European paintings and to copy Myanmar royal artifacts in the British Museum. He wandered about museums and copied paint-

ings all day long. When he came back to his lodging, he had to go over his sketches and drawings all night long to give them the final touches. Because of the language barrier, he used sketch paper to draw pictures of the food and drink that he wanted to order when eating out. In 1953, he received the title of “Ah Lingar Kyaw Swar.” A prolific artist, he created paintings of the struggle for independence, scenes of historic battles, and portraits of historic, well-known figures. He also produced huge paintings commemorating the anniversaries of Union Day, May Day and Peasants Day. U Ngwe Gaing joined U Ohn Lwin in his outstanding ability to master various styles of painting and media, including watercolour, oil, ink sketches and pencil sketches.

The painting “Life of Fishermen” is one of U Ngwe Gaing’s masterpieces. The background is an indistinct mountain range quiet under the blue sky. Another painting, “Life of Fishermen,” shows the fishing families selecting the fish after the fishermen have returned from their toil at sea. U Ngwe Gaing also excelled at portrait painting. In “A Damsel Pining for Her Beloved,” we see a woman thinking about her beloved who has gone to war. Another portrait, “A Golden Neck,” is charming and lively. The lady’s jewels are as sparkling and animated as her bright smile.



**Solo Dance** | Oil | 62 cm x 47 cm



**Boats** | Gouache | 75 cm x 52 cm



**Life of Fishermen** | Oil | 122 cm x 92 cm



**A Bridge** | Gouache | 75 cm x 52 cm



**Entrance to a Village** | Oil | 46 cm x 58 cm



**A Herd of Cattle** | Gouache | 75 cm x 52 cm



**Shwedagon Pagoda in the Distance** | Gouache | 75 cm x 52 cm

# U Ba Thet

(1903-1972)



Mandalay Palace Moat | Watercolour | 34 cm x 25 cm





**Royal Throne** | Watercolour | 38 cm x 27 cm

U Ba Thet was the son of U Shwe (an expert at analyzing jade) and Daw Zan. He was the second of four children. At the age of 14, he studied under the great artist U Htun Ya, as well as under Sayar Aye and Sayar Pu. After moving to Mandalay, he learned about art from U Ba Zaw who was studying at St. Peter's School.

In his youth, he grew up among jade merchants and workers. But his aptitude for the art of painting grew rapidly. As a child, he studied Buddhism with a monk, U Kay Tu, at a local monastery. He was interested in copying images of the statues of gods, ogres and lions in the pagoda precincts. His first and foremost teacher, U Htun Ya, taught him how to make sketches. Later, he practiced outdoor painting together with Sayar Saung. He had a capacity for music too. He joined a band of musicians and became instructor of a group of violinists. He painted pictures and played the violin at will, and mastered the guitar and harp as well. When among friends, he would always feel happy.

U Ba Thet always tagged along with U Ba Zaw, who did outdoor paintings along the Mandalay Palace Moat. U Ba Thet was also a sculptor in wood and stone, and could demonstrate his skill working with gold, cutting jade and carving Buddha images. A famous composer, Myo Ma Nyein, studied music and also learned the art of painting under U Ba Thet. "Mandalay Palace Moat" is one of U Ba Thet's most famous works of art. It shows the artist's energetic composition and natural taste in the use of colour, light and shade. Another watercolour, "Royal Throne," is also unique and outstanding.

# U Chit Myae

(1904-1976)



A Confluence of the Ayeyarwady | Oil | 76 cm x 60 cm



**A Barge of Pye Gyi Mun** | Oil | 107 cm x 77 cm

U Chit Myae became an artist of the first rank among the preeminent artists of Myanmar. Of calm and placid character, he was skilled at painting using all kinds of methods.

His father was U Tae (a seller of religious accessories) and his mother was Daw Khin Gyi. Since childhood he had acquired the habit of

drawing bas-reliefs, ogres, dragons, elephants, horses, lions and other figures. His drawings are famous in the monasteries situated in the southern part of Mandalay. He thoroughly studied *nipattaw* under Sayar Mya and Sayar Aye. At the School of Fine Arts in Mandalay, administered by Sayar Gyi U Saw Maung, U Chit Myae served as an art instructor.

U Chit Myae was a contemporary of U Saw Maung; both were art students under the same teacher. His masterpieces included the paintings "Mandalay Shwe Pin Monastery" (a water-colour), "Encounter of Two Knights on Horseback (Anawrahta and Sukatay)," "Rural Scene with Myanmar Women Threshing" and "A Confluence of the Ayeyarwady."

## U Hla Shein

(1904-1979)



**A Forest** | Oil | 91 cm x 62 cm

U Hla Shein was the second of four children born to U Cho and Daw Oo. He was enthusiastic about painting since childhood. Perhaps he inherited his artistic aptitude from his grandfather, who was a sculptor. U Hla Shein also had a capacity for education. He passed the BS examination at the age of nineteen

and received a scholarship covering the seventh standard up to university. Later, he left for England for the degrees of Bachelor of Law and ICS. He stayed with U Ba Zaw in the same apartment and became friendly with U Ba Nyan, who visited them. After returning to Myanmar, he continued to paint while carry-

ing out his responsibilities as a civil servant. U Hla Shein also studied art under U Ba Nyan and U Ngwe Gaing.

He regarded himself as an amateur but was indeed one of the professionals. He could create original colours to attract the viewers'



**Spring** | Oil | 91.5 cm x 122 cm



**Waterfall** | Oil | 75 cm x 60 cm

attention. He could imitate the world's great painters, although his painting style was notably influenced by Impressionism. U Hla Shein served as a treasurer-in-charge in the Shan State. While there, he painted hill

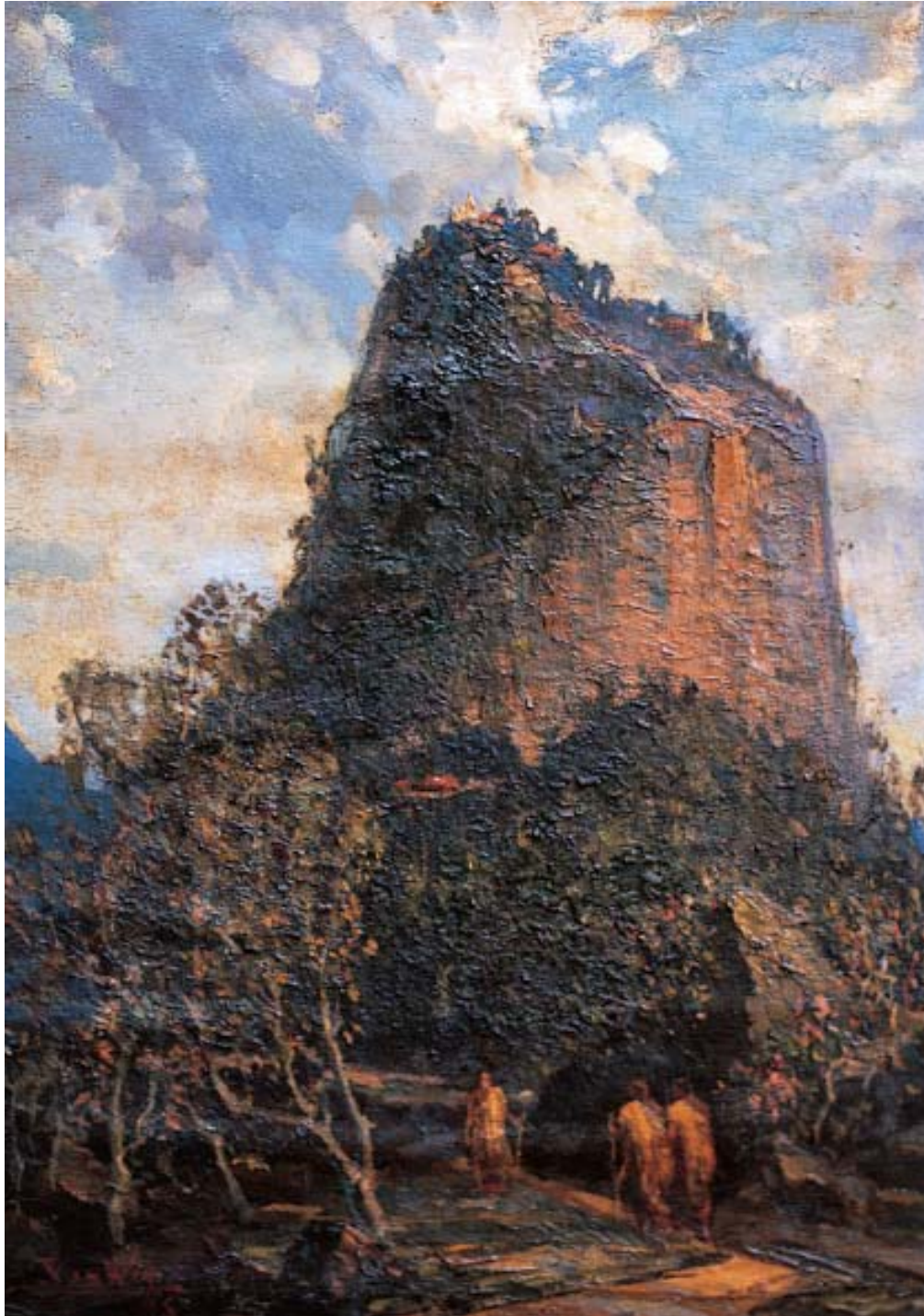
country landscapes whose charm entranced viewers.

The paintings "A Forest" and "Spring" show perhaps too much emphasis on greenery.

However, their overall effect is to attract viewers and make them pensive.

## U San Win

(1905-1981)



**Mt. Popa** | Oil | 61 cm x 44 cm

U San Win was regarded by other great artists as the creator of a new style in oil painting. The figures in his paintings are very smooth and lithe, and are captivating and intriguing in an original and extraordinary way.

U Maung Maung and Daw Tun May were his parents. He was the only son and had an aptitude for painting since childhood. In 1917, Professor Ward wanted to adopt U San Win and his grandparents finally gave in to the professor's wishes. On school holidays, he went to the countryside with Professor Ward to paint the scenery. U Ba Nyan, U San Win and the architect U Thar Dun accompanied them. Thus they became friendly with one another. U Ba Nyan consulted with U San Win and formed an art club at college.

Soon after Independence, he went to London and studied at the Goldsmith Art Institute for two years. Before that, in 1935, he received a Fulbright Scholarship to study art at Columbia University in the United States. He got permission to study there another year. In Myanmar, he excelled in painting images of the Buddha. So he was nicknamed "Buddha-San Win." During 1933-34, he served as an art lecturer at the Yangon Teachers' Training College. After returning home from the United States, he became the one and only Chief Art Supervisor. In 1939, in addition to this position, he served as a headmaster at the State Arts School. Under the Japanese regime, he served as a lecturer together with U Ba Kyi at the Art Institute. In 1949, the title of "Wanakyawhtin" was conferred on him.

In the Myanmar art world, people refer to "Pagoda-San Win," "Elephant-Thein Nyunt" and "Ox-Saw Maung." As the latter two artists excelled in representing elephants and cows



**Thara Par Gate** | Oil | 46 cm x 35 cm

respectively, so U San Win had great skill in painting pagodas (as well as Buddhas). In his paintings, he used light sparingly and his strong colour scheme was extraordinary. He has been likened to the world-famous artist, Monet. In the painting “Flower-Seller at the Stairway

of Shwedagon Pagoda,” pilgrims and flower vendors in the shade are contrasted to those in the light. His paintings reveal his skillful application of light and shade, as well as the use of colour in perspective, colour gradation and tonal gradation in the dark. U San Win’s

“Kyaikkhahmi View” represents a beautiful twilight. He produced many paintings of Kyaikkhahmi pagoda and beach. In his painting “Ceremony for the Demise of a Monk,” he expresses the nature and tradition of Myanmar’s hill peoples.

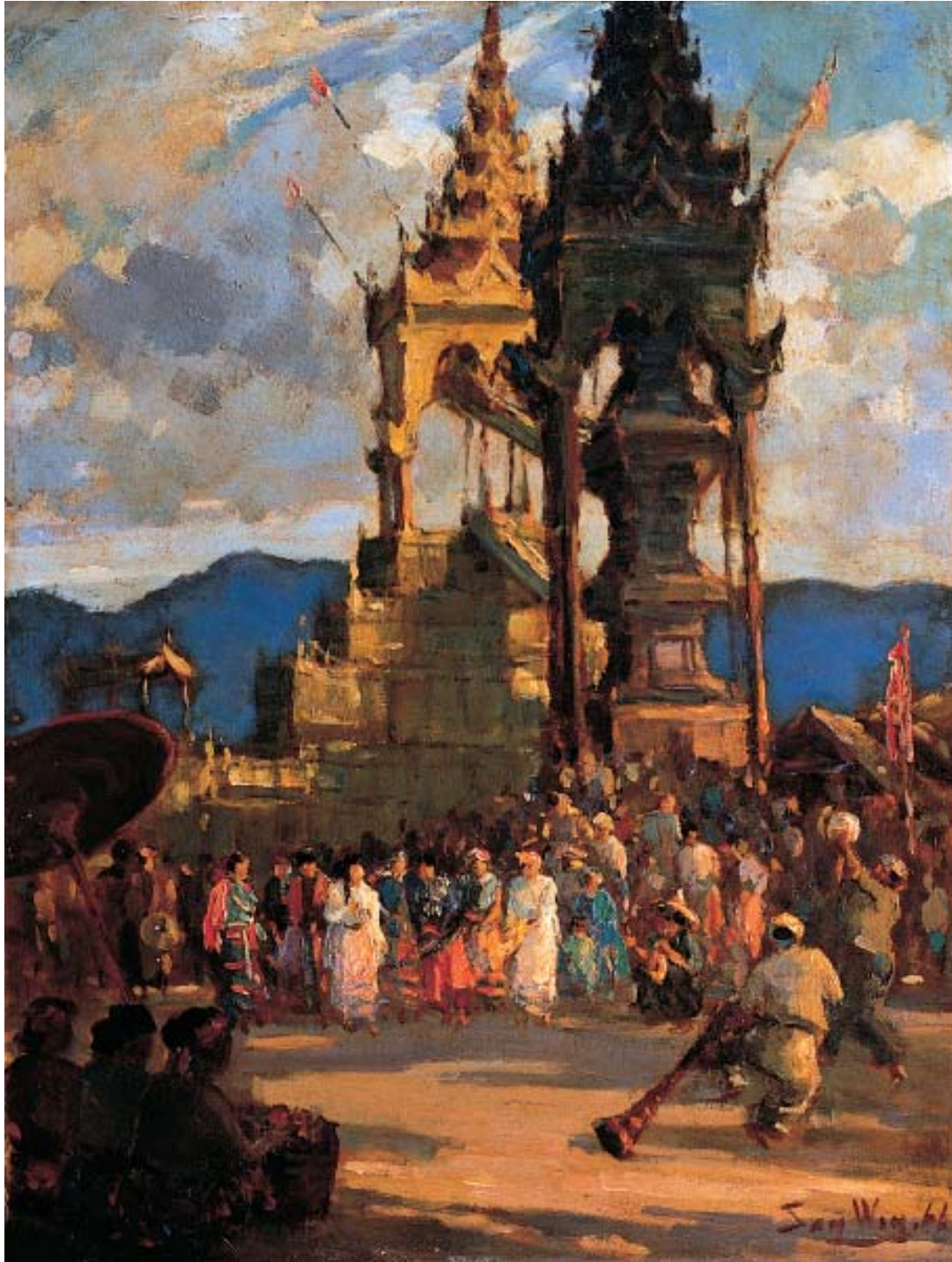




Mandalay Moat | Oil | 46 cm x 36 cm



**Under the Sein Pan Tree** | Oil | 54 cm x 40 cm



Ceremony for the Demise of a Monk | Oil | 30 cm x 40 cm

## U Ohn Lwin

(1907-1988)



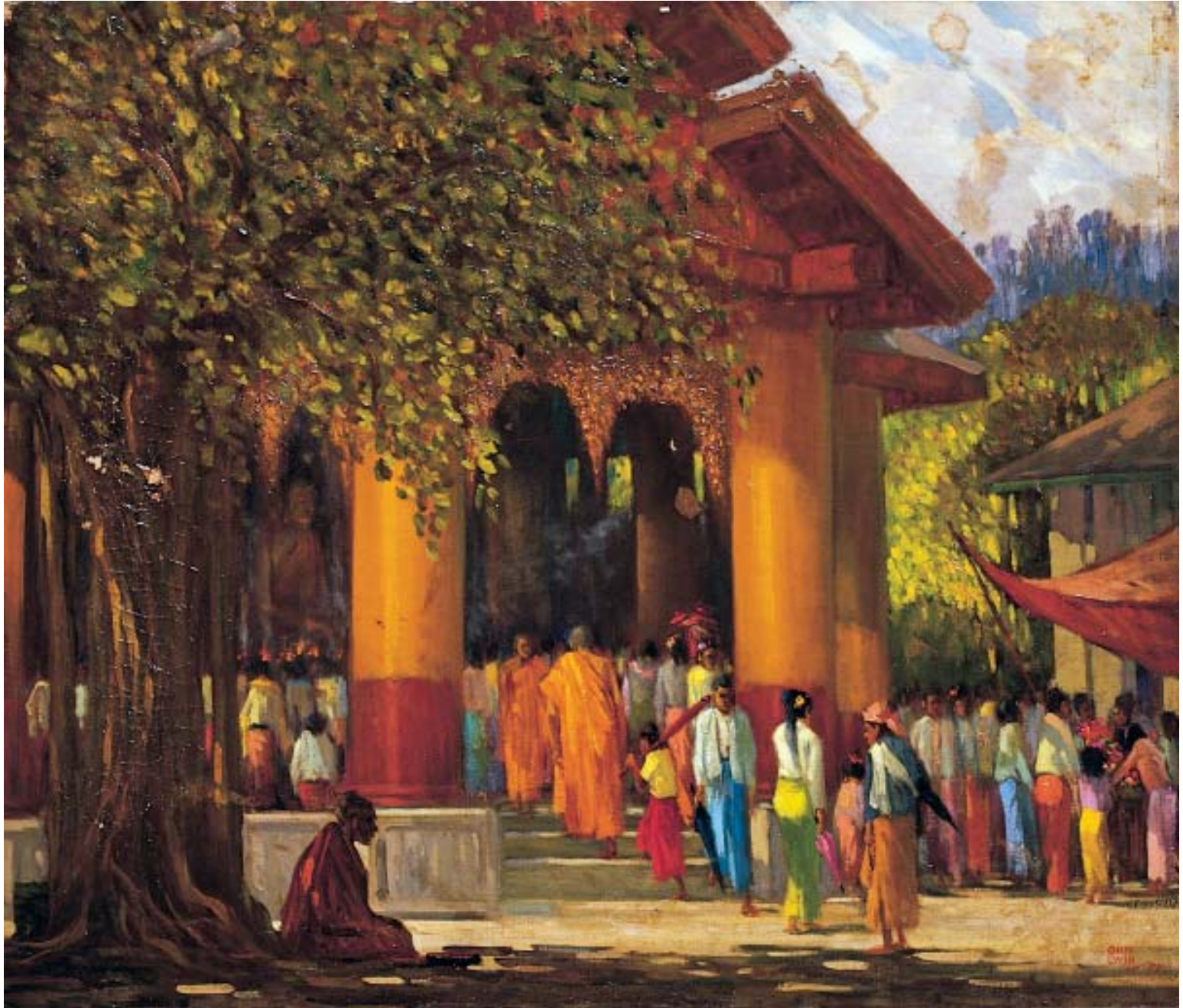
**Cheroot Lover** | Oil | 35 cm x 27 cm

U Ohn Lwin was quite friendly with artists, young and old alike. He also made friends with topnotch journalists and the editors of magazines and journals. When he was in the eighth standard, he left school and went away from home. While he was in Yangon, he installed himself at the Myanmar Ah Swe Film Company. At that time he met with artist U Ba Lone.

In 1924, when Mr. Martin Jones became chairman of the Burma Art Club, U Ohn Lwin attended the art club as a student together with U Ba Zaw, U Ba Gyan, U Hein Swan, U San Win, U Thet Win, U Shwe Soe and Sayar Mya. He was certainly confident of his future success and worked very hard at the art of painting.

His parents were U Nge and Daw Swe The. He was the youngest of seven children. He practiced copying the artist U Ba Lone's illustrations from magazines. He also studied under the artist Phu Thein Maung (the "movie joker"). In September 1952, he was a member of a delegation to the Asia and Pacific Peace Conference held in Peking. In 1954, there was an all-Asian design contest sponsored by the Stuben Glassware Company in the United States. Artist U Mya's workmanship and U Ohn Lwin's Myanmar elephant design received special mention at the contest.

U Ohn Lwin could perform the ogre dance well and thus became known as "Ogre Ohn Lwin." He completed two hundred watercolour paintings. But U Ohn Lwin's favourite painting was an oil painting named "Poem." Another of his paintings, "Food Treasure of the Soil," painted in a lacquer ware style, appeared on the cover of a magazine published by the Writers' Association.



To the Pagoda | Oil | 58 cm x 49 cm

## U Chit Maung

(1908-1973)



**Water Bearer** | Watercolour | 47 cm x 35 cm

U Chit Maung was a born artist and an all-round genius in art, excelling in oil painting, watercolours, ink sketches and pencil sketches. He was the youngest of four children born to U Tin and Daw Ni. During British rule, U Chit Maung took part in a contest for reproducing the Equestrian Statue of Maha Ban Doola. Other participants included U Ba Lone, U Ba Phan, U Ba Sein, U Saw Maung, U Ngwe Gaing and U Chit Myae. The resulting painting of the equestrian statue is now in the possession of

his son, U Chit Aung.

After Myanmar gained her Independence, there were many art exhibitions. U Chit Maung was one of the members of the Art Union who took part in such exhibitions. He was also well known as the leader of the watercolourists. He studied painting under U Saw Maung. At that time his fellow-students were U Ba Moe, U Kham Lun and U San Mya.

Most of his work is in watercolour. In these paintings, his enchanting colours and brushwork have attracted the attention of viewers. He was also expert at needlework on cloth using gold and silver thread in the Myanmar style. Scenes from *Jataka* stories (tales of the Buddha's previous lives) are a favourite theme. Some of these *Jataka* paintings can be seen in a shrine hall at the Shwe Mawdaw Pagoda in Bago.

## U Ba Yin Gyi

(1908-2001)



**Pye Gyi Mun Barge** | Oil | 61 cm x 92 cm

U Ba Yin Gyi was a frank and outspoken person. He also tended to speak in a loud voice. Young art students, who did not know about him, were timid in expressing their opinions. But in dealing with him, everyone came to know that he was honest and

upright and devoted to the study of painting. He abstained from drinking. Although he lived to be over ninety years of age, U Ba Yin Gyi was still active and cheerful.

His parents were U Chit Naing and Daw

Kalayma. After he passed the seventh standard, his father found out that he had a strong desire for painting. So U Chit Naing sent his son to the artist U Thein Pe in Mawlamyaing to learn the basic course. Then U Ba Yin Gyi attended the Liberty Art School founded by



**Working Elephants** | Oil | 73 cm x 51 cm

U Ba Lone. At the age of seventeen, he began studying under Sayar Myit.

He studied for three years and worked under Sayar Myit for about one year. At the Myanmar Ahswe Film Company in Yangon, he painted posters together with U Ba Lone. His illustrations in *Dagon* magazine were published

during the prewar years. Since there was another person going by the name of “Ba Yin” and that person was younger than he, he was known as “U Ba Yin Gyi” (*gyi* meaning “older”).

He started as an artist-in-charge at the A1 Film Studios. He painted film posters and illustrations. His style of oil painting combined bright

colours with simple careful brushwork. One of his oil paintings, in which a sculptor is carving a statue, was especially popular and artistic. He had to copy the painting quite a lot.

Another painting, “Working Elephants,” shows an eye for detail and a strong sense of composition.



## U Thein Han

(1910-1986)



**Pagoda Festival** | Oil | 45 cm x 31 cm

U Thein Han found delight in painting, but his parents U Shwe Lwin (a farmer) and Daw Theint refused to give him permission to study art. So he ran away from home and went off to Yangon. There he lived in a monastery where his cousin dwelt as a monk. This relative entrusted him to the care and knowledge of the artist U Ba Nyan. U Ba Kyi, U Aye Maung and U Thein Tan (a gold medal winner) were his fellow students.

Beginning at the age of nineteen, he studied art under U Ba Nyan for about eight years. Before World War II, he taught at the State High School and State School of Fine Arts. He took part in many art competitions, receiving eight gold medals in oil painting and six gold

medals and six silver medals in watercolour painting. In 1936, he joined U Ba Kyi and U Aye Maung in helping the master U Ba Nyan paint huge murals on the walls of the fine arts hall, cinema hall and living room of the Teachers Training College on Pyay Road. After World War II, he served as an art instructor for oil and watercolour painting at the Yangon State School of Fine Arts. He also instructed students in art classes at Yangon College. After he retired, he acted as a part-time teacher at the Yangon Artists' Association.

U Thein Han was a disciple of U Ba Nyan, the "Father of the Myanmar Art World," and was one of the few arts students who studied painting with him. Thus U Thein Han, as an

instructor at the Yangon State School of Fine Arts, was fully able to transmit the heritage of art from his teacher to the younger generations of art students. He was a calm and quiet person who was very patient in his teaching and spoke in an easy manner. Because he had a keen interest in teaching, his output in terms of art was rather small. One of his masterpieces is a picture simply titled "He."

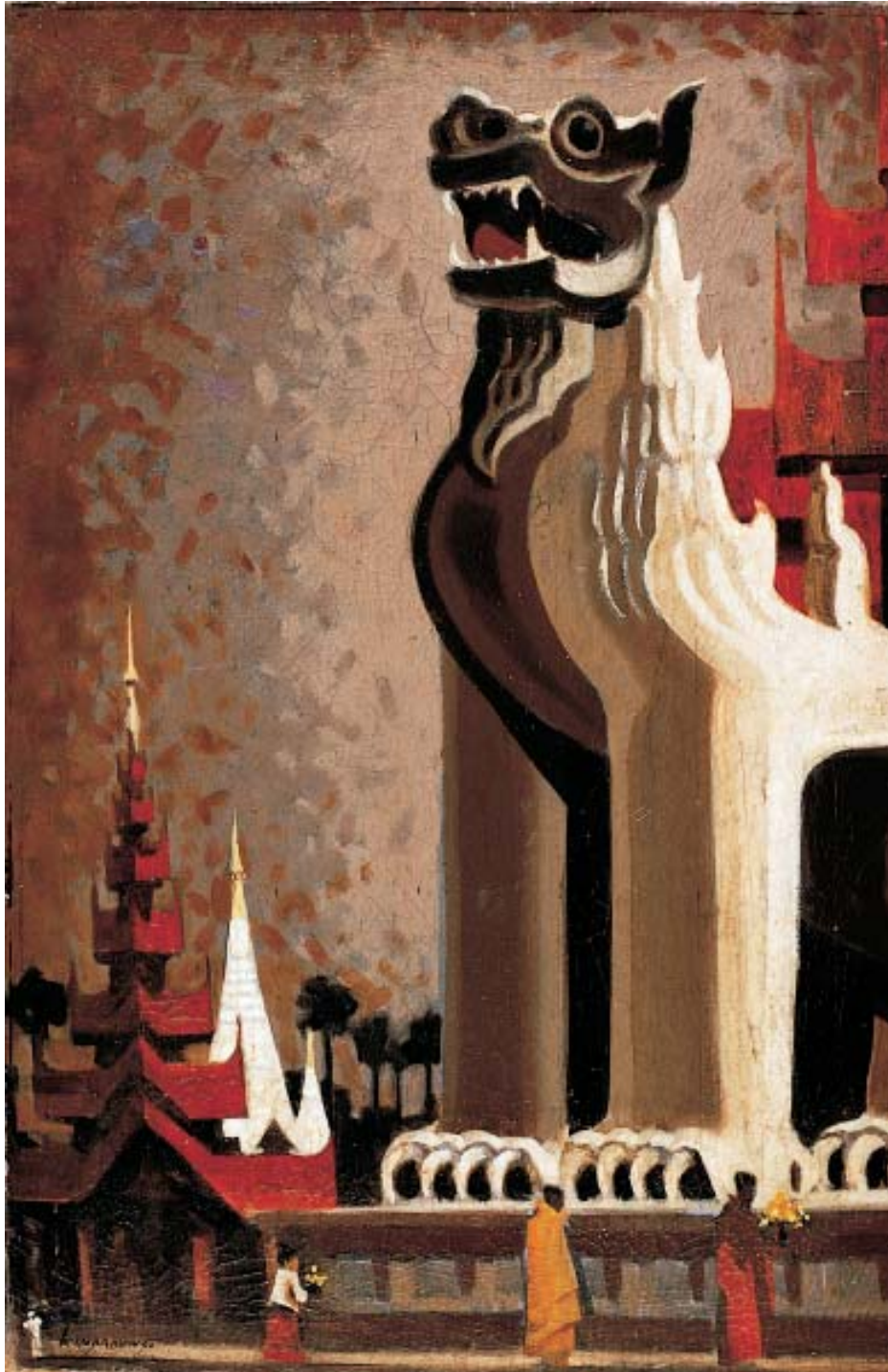
The view of the Pagoda Festival demonstrates his flair for using a strong and vivid colour scheme. Especially remarkable is the casting of light on the important sectors, in contrast to the darkening of other parts of the painting. Skills of this sort are apparent in most of his paintings.

## U Khin Maung [“Bank”]

(1910-1983)



Offering the Morning Meal | Oil | 61 cm x 61 cm



**Lion** | Oil | 64 cm x 42 cm

U Khin Maung was not famous as a professional in the world of commercial art. He considered himself an amateur. But he was well known in the circle of artists. When an art gallery first opened in Yangon, he was among those responsible for its establishment (the others were U Hla Shein, U Ngwe Gaing, U San Win and U Ohn Lwin).

He was in the banking line but was very fond of the art of painting. Since the colonial period before the Second World War, he had been interested in modern art. At that time, Myanmar traditional art was still fashionable. So he dared not express the style of Western modern art. Later, he gradually introduced the expression of this new type of art by mixing it with Myanmar traditional art.

His father was U Su (who worked as a cashier at the township office) and his mother was Daw Myint. He was the second of four children. U Khin Maung took a correspondence course from the Continental Art School in the United States. At the BBOA Bank, he worked as a professional and painted in his spare time after coming back home from work. After showing his skill in watercolour and oil by using realism effectively, he became the first to introduce modern art to Myanmar audiences. Although his style was modern his subjects represented Myanmar style, characteristics and culture.

## U Tun Nyunt

(1910-1989)



**Duet Dance** | Oil | 93 cm x 73 cm

Before World War II, U Tun Nyunt was a sportsman who was fond of hiking and playing golf. Later he became a well-known artist and arts administrator. His parents were U Lu Gale (a merchant) and Daw Mi (a schoolteacher). He was the fifth of six children. He attended St. Paul's School from kindergarten to matriculation. In 1929, he first studied art under the cartoonist U Ba Gyan and then studied under U Ngwe Gaing for about two years. During 1935-36, U Tun Nyunt learned about watercolour painting from Sayar Saung and studied oil painting under Sayar U San Win. He served as a drawing master at the Teachers' Training College, Pa Thein. In 1952, he worked as a chief supervisor of art at Hantharwaddy, Yangon. In 1953, he became chief arts officer. In 1954, the government sent him to the United States for a year of further study. In 1959, he went to New Zealand to study art education. When U Saw Win retired, U Tun Nyunt became an art supervisor.

In 1957, he became a well-established artist. In order to revive the age of watercolours, he resorted to modern painting styles and dominated the Sar Pay Beik Man art exhibitions. After his studies in the United States, he replaced his ordinary watercolour painting style with a new, modern style. He also used the Dry Method and the Direct Method, which led to changes and improvements in the Myanmar watercolour art world.



**Rahu Corner** | Oil | 61 cm x 46 cm



**A Bridge** | Oil | 57 cm x 39 cm



**Cliff of Nyaung-U** | Oil | 38 cm x 28 cm

In 1958, while in company with twenty other artists on an outdoor painting tour through Mandalay, Sagaing, Pagan and Nyaung-U, he painted an oil picture titled “Cliff of Nyaung-U.” This painting shows his skill with the palette knife. He also painted “Duet

Dance,” which describes the traditional dancing style of male and female dancers. The oil paintings, “Rahu Corner” and “Friday Corner,” exposing the grandeur of the Shwedagon Pagoda, were strikingly painted to impress viewers.

# U Ba Kyi

(1912-2000)



**Plowing Time** | Oil | 84 cm x 59 cm

U Ba Kyi was another student of U Ba Nyan who was able to help his teacher paint the huge murals on various walls at the Teachers Training College. Later, as an artist he was praised for being a superb observer and for depicting Myanmar's scenic beauty.

He was the youngest of four children born

to U Bo Sin and Daw Aye Tin. After he had passed the tenth standard, he entered the University of Yangon, eventually earning an ISC degree. At the university, he took advantage of the opportunity to study painting with U Ba Zaw and U Ba Nyan. As a result, he became skillful in oil painting. In 1936, U Ba Nyan enabled him to attend the Teachers

Training College. At the age of twenty-seven, U Ba Kyi became an art instructor at the State School of Fine Arts and Performance Art. He also served as an art lecturer at the University of Education. In 1949, he received a scholarship and left for Paris to paint there for one year. In 1952, while visiting China as a representative of culture, he studied the



Myanmar Orchestra | Watercolour | 63 cm x 54 cm





**Mythical Birds** | Oil | 97 cm x 52 cm

Chinese fine arts. In 1958, he went to Philadelphia to study painting on easels and mural paintings. He was a member of the Art Association, USA, and the Royal Art Club. His illustrations in books and magazines (cover art, cartoons, etc.) were widely admired and made him famous in the literary world.

The oils “Close Encounter with Two Knights on Horseback (Thamein Ba Yan and Gar Ma Ni)” and “The Battle of Pan Wah” are examples of his paintings of historical subjects. His glass paintings may be seen in the Yangon International Airport lobby. The Young Men’s Buddhist Association published a book on the Buddha’s life featuring illustrations by U Ba Kyi that depict traditional figures in a modern way.

A famous writer, Sayar Zaw Gyi, praised U Ba Kyi for his powers of observation. Using modern methods and styles, U Ba Kyi was successful in painting pictures dealing with Myanmar traditional seasonal festivals. Equally remarkable are his illustrations of the Eight Great Victories of the Buddha.

“Plowing Time” is one of his rarest masterpieces. It portrays a farm at the beginning of the rainy season. In the upper right, the dark and gloomy clouds are clear signs of rain.

# U Ba Moe

(1912-1996)



**Pagodas** | Oil | 111 cm x 84 cm

Since childhood, U Ba Moe had been interested in the art of painting. His father was his first and foremost teacher. Other teachers were Sayar Aye and U Saw Maung. He was successful not only in portrait painting but also in modern painting.

His parents were Sayar Thi and Daw Nyein Tint. When he came of age, he became a disciple of U Saw Maung, learning the methods and principles of traditional Myanmar painting. He showed proficiency in painting scenes from the *Jataka* stories. In addition to painting, U Ba Moe served as art officer-in-charge at the Information Department and also as a long-term executive at the Burma Art Union. He acted as a patron of the Myanmar Artists

and Artisans Organization (Centre).

Before the Second World War, he worked at the State High School and the State School of Fine Arts. He took part in many art competitions and received eight gold medals in oil painting, six gold medals in watercolour painting and six silver medals in watercolour painting. After the war, he served as an art master for oil and watercolour painting at the newly opened Yangon State School of Fine Arts. After he retired, he worked as a part-time tutor at the Yangon University Arts Association.

U Ba Moe was one of the artists who had taken part in the numerous activities of the Burma

Art Union since its inception. He was a publisher of the periodical *Thukhuma Yeik Myon* distributed by the Union. After the country's independence, he was appointed as an art assistant in the Information Department. While in this department, he had an opportunity to paint the portrait of President Dr. Ba Oo.

He also painted a portrait of King Bayinnaung. Making use of the methods and principles of Myanmar painting learned from Ahlingar Kyaw Swar U Saw Maung, he could paint contemporary subjects as well. For example, he copied and painted the black and white drawings added to *Burma*, G. C. Harvey's book about ancient Bagan written in English.

# U Hla Maung Gyi

(1913-1984)



**Sein Ban Tree** | Oil | 41 cm x 30 cm

Frank and open-minded in his dealings with others, U Hla Maung Gyi made a name for himself as an artist in the years prior to World War II. He was one of seven children born to a Bago police officer, U Ohn Cho, and Daw The The. His first teachers were U Aung Pho and U Hla Aung. In 1932, he studied film poster

painting under U Ngwe Gaing and got a job at a film company. With due respect for his close teacher U Ba Yin Gyi, he changed his real name "Hla Maung" to "Hla Maung Gyi." He showed his many paintings at various exhibitions.

In 1967, he was appointed to the post of art

supervisor-in-charge in the Art Department of the Construction Corporation. He was responsible for painting at the display pavilions for Independence Day, Union Day and Peasants' Day. U Hla Maung Gyi worked at this agency for ten years before retiring.

## U Kyi

(1913-1987)



**Shwe Set Taw** | Oil | 61 cm x 46 cm

U Kyi became famous for his crystal-clear, transparent watercolour pictures. When he was a student of education at the High School in 1933, he became a member of the Burma Art Club. His first employment was that of a drawing teacher at a high school in Shwe Kyin. He trained a large number of students

who were well versed in the art of painting. He studied under U San Win, U Ngwe Gaing and U Maung Maung Mya. He was skilled in painting both in watercolours and in oil. His watercolour style made use of the methods of U Ba Zaw and Sayar Saung. He was fond of rendering fog and water vapour

in nature through the use of original colours. The talented water-colourist U Kyi was also known as “Shwe Kyin” U Kyi. The painting “Shwe Set Taw” shows a temple on a hill. U Kyi stresses the creek and the uphill arch of Shwe Set Taw in the painting.

## U San Shein

(1913-1999)



Beautiful Waterfall | Oil | 46 cm x 36 cm

U San Shein hailed from Tun Tae. He studied poster painting under the artist U Aung Myat Kyaw. Later he continued painting under the tutelage of the great artists U Ngwe Gaing and U San Win. Painting was his only source of income during his life. An important funeral decorative artist during that time was U Pho Kwe, U San Shein's uncle.

## (U) Bogalay Kyaw Hlaing

(1914-1996)



**Royal Lake** | Oil | 61 cm x 46 cm

U Kyaw Hlaing was a calm and quiet person, a man of few words who meant no harm to his fellow artists. He had a predilection for tea and cigars. U Kyaw Hlaing kept working hard at painting all his life.

His parents were U San Win and Daw Nu. He was the second of four children. His first teacher was U Thar Don-Kyaik Latt. U Kyaw

Hlaing passed the course at the Teachers' Training School, Bogalay. He was proficient in producing oil paintings, watercolour paintings and posters. He was skillful in applying cerulean blue to his paintings. He could paint clouds wonderfully and thus was nicknamed "Cloud Kyaw Hlaing."

Bogalay Kyaw Hlaing was U Ba Nyan's close

disciple. He attained his great skill in painting clouds because of many hours studying them while practicing art under the guidance of U Ba Nyan.

U Ba Kyi recommended U Kyaw Hlaing to be appointed as an art instructor at the State School of Fine Arts, Yangon. He worked there for about ten years.

## U Kham Lun

(1915-1985)



**Kaung Tine Camp** | Oil | 101 cm x 60 cm

U Kham Lun, U Pho Saw and U San Pe are preeminent artists from the minority nationalities residing in the mountainous regions of Myanmar. U Kham Lun was more enthusiastic about painting than going to school. His cousin Sus Shwe Thike, the *sawbwar* (ruler or chieftain) of Nyaung Shwe, took him to the famous artist U Saw Maung to learn the art of painting. At that time, U Saw Maung's arts students included U Chit Maung, U Beik Kyi,

U Ba Moe and U Ohn Maung. U Kham Lun became very friendly with all of them.

His parents were Hta Mon Myat (Ywar Ma) and Paung Cho (Nyaung Shwe). He was the youngest son of five offspring. When Myanmar gained her independence, U Kham Lun settled down in Yangon and made a living as an artist. In 1957, he was commissioned to paint a documentary painting titled "The

Signing of the Pinlon Agreement."

His paintings of *Jataka* stories display his mastery of colour theory and sound composition. One of U Kham Lun's mural masterpieces can be found on the walls of a prayer hall at the Phaung Daw Pyan Pagoda in Shwe Nyaung.



**Bullock Carts** | Oil | 61 cm x 42 cm



## U Ba Yin Kalay

(1915-1988)



**Market on the Hill** | Oil | 50 cm x 36 cm

U Ba Yin Kalay was born to U Thin (a weaving expert) and Daw Paw. His first teacher was U San Thin, who was an expert in painting *Jataka* tales. He studied under U Khin Maung ("Bank"), U Ba Thet and U Thein Han. During 1952-53, as a representative of the World Peace Association, he journeyed to Austria, Russia and China. His style of painting in oil was extraordinary. He was called "U Ba Yin Kalay of Mandalay" to differentiate himself from another artist, U Ba Yin Gyi of Yangon. Since childhood, he had learnt the Myanmar

and English languages. His parents wanted him to get on with his education. But he had a strong desire to practice the art of painting. U Ba Hmi of the British-Burma Film Company encouraged him to become a film poster artist.

U Ba Yin Kalay was skilled in both the fine arts and the commercial arts. He introduced a new kind of painting to the world of poster art. He was opposed to the stress on beauty with brushwork reduced to a series of smooth

strokes. His posters were characterized by a lively realism. His magazine illustrations similarly reflected a new, lively style and made him famous.

"A Dancer" is one example of this style, showing a modest female dancer in action. Another work, "Market on the Hill," is dominated by bright colours. It reminds the viewer of the painting "Tahiti Islanders" by the world-famous painter Gauguin.



**A Dancer** | Oil | 112 cm x 109 cm

# U Kan Nyunt

(1917-2005)



**Toddy-Palm Climber's Hut** | Oil | 61 cm x 46 cm

The son of U Ba Cho and Daw New, U Kan Nyunt was born in Sagaing Division in 1917. During the British colonial period, he studied at the State School of Fine Arts, which was first established in 1939. He remained there until 1941. At the country's independence, he began his lifelong career as an art educator in the state schools. U Kan Nyunt acted as an artist-in-charge in the Sagaing Division. In 1955, he then served as an art instructor at the State School of Fine Arts in Mandalay.

During the academic year 1964-65, as an

outstanding artist U Kan Nyunt was allowed to attend the Central Art Institute in Beijing for one year in order to further his studies. In 1974, he returned to the State School of Fine Arts in Mandalay to become its headmaster. The following year, he went on a study tour of the Soviet Union. U Kan Nyunt retired from the post of headmaster in 1980 and carried on with painting for the rest of his life.

The artist's notions and ideas were vigorously transmitted through his art. U Kan Nyunt believed that those who lacked sympathy

and loving-kindness and who were fond of making war were incomplete human beings. If they were able to realize the true values and characteristics of the fine arts, the artist would feel confident that he had contributed something valuable to the human world indeed.

U Kan Nyunt passed away at the Workers' Hospital in Mandalay on 30 September 2005, leaving his wife Daw Khin Khin and family.

## U Myat Kyaw (1918-1977)



**Bagan Pagoda** | Oil | 66 cm x 31 cm

Outwardly, U Myat Kyaw was sour and stern in appearance but inwardly he was good-natured and at heart was a kind and generous person. U Myat Kyaw was a patriot and keen on nationalism. He also disapproved of unkind and unjust action. In his youth, he grew up among a large circle of artists.

His parents were U Pho Min (an expert in gold-trimmed stained glass) and Daw Kyawk. He was the second among four offspring. His grandfather was the sculptor U Shwe

Taung. U Myat Kyaw's first teachers were his father and grandfather. He also studied art under U Ba Nyan and U Ngwe Gaing. He worked on film posters, sets and design along with U Ngwe Gaing, U Hla Maung Gyi, U Na Lone Lay and U Harry Aung. In 1952, he began working as an art instructor at the State School of Fine Arts. In 1963, he was promoted to the post of headmaster. The following year, U Myat Kyaw went on a study tour to the Soviet Union, and later to the German Democratic Republic.

## U Ohn Maung

(1918-1996)



**A Monastery** | Oil | 84 cm x 60 cm

U Ohn Maung was the youngest of three children born to U Pho Tu (a merchant) and Daw Mae Thant. He studied art under U Saw Maung. As a trusted disciple, he assisted U Saw Maung in his work for many years. On 7 January 1960, he won a special prize and got an honorary certificate at the Poster Painting Competition.

**U San Pe**  
(1918-1977)



Demawsoe Bazaar | Oil | 122 cm x 92 cm



Portrait of U Ngwe Gaing | Oil | 91 cm x 71 cm

U San Pe was a versatile artist in a number of media. He was born in Taunggyi in 1918, the second of eight children born to an architect, U Khine, and his wife Daw Chit Mae. Since childhood, he had been very much interested in painting. He attended Nyaung Shwe Middle School and Taunggyi High School. In 1934, he took a correspondence course with an art school in Pyinmanar for about a month. The Education Chief Officer E. G. N. Kinch sized up U San Pe's penchant for art and liked what he saw. On holidays, the official took him home and taught him the art of painting. In 1935, Mr. Kinch adopted U San Pe and helped him to continue his art studies, as well as English and sports. He was sent to study the art of sculpture under well-known sculptors in the neighbourhood of Nyaung Shwe. He learned how to sculpt in stone, wood and bronze.

Then in 1937 U San Pe continued studying art under U Ngwe Gaing. He helped a British sculptor, Mr. Copnell, cast the bronze statue of Bogyoke Aung San. "Mother and Child in Need" is one of U San Pe's excellent paintings. Similarly, Dunn Lun Sayadaw's lifelike statue is considered to be a "perfect masterpiece" from this artist. In 1952, U San Pe served as a master of sculpture at the State School of Fine Arts for over one year.

## U Khin Maung

(1919-2000)



**Orchids** | Oil | 107 cm x 103 cm

In the Myanmar art world, there were two artists who went by the name of U Khin Maung. Both of them were also Mandalay natives. They were the modern artist U Khin Maung ("Bank") and U Khin Maung, headmaster of the State School of Fine Arts. The latter was skilled in watercolour painting. Critics considered that his oil paintings were no better than his watercolour paintings.

U Khin Maung was the son of U Maung

Maung Gyi. In 1948, he received a government scholarship and went to Goldsmith University in England to study art for three years. While there he met U Ba Kyi and U San Win. He traveled all over England, Ireland and France to study art and to paint.

U Khin Maung returned to Myanmar to take part in art competitions. In 1952, he was appointed as the first head of the newly opened State School of Fine Arts. After retire-

ment, he spent the rest of his life painting and giving lectures to foreigners.

His painting "Fruits" depicts various kinds of Myanmar fruit. He was able to distinguish the texture of one fruit from another. The thorns of the durian are distinct from the juicy watermelon whose sweet taste and fragrance make the viewers' mouths water.





**My Garden** | Oil | 71 cm x 56 cm



**Fruits** | Oil | 86 cm x 59 cm



38th Street Market | Oil | 86 cm x 62 cm



Eyes | Oil | 107 cm x 62 cm

## U San Lwin

(1920-1972)



**Village Girl** | Watercolour | 30 cm x 25 cm

U San Lwin was famous in the world of magazine illustrations. His works of art appeared in many magazines. His parents were U Pho Hla (a bailiff's clerk) and Daw Hla Yi. He attended high school at the Paung-de National School. While there, U San

Lwin took a keen interest in the art of painting. At the age of nineteen, he married Daw Tin Nyunt. Then he moved to Yangon and studied art under U Ohn Lwin and U Ngwe Gaing. When the Second World War broke out, he returned to Paung-de. After the

war, he came back to Yangon to take up his illustrator's career.

U San Lwin was a skillful commercial artist who relied upon the Myanmar traditional art styles and culture that he had grown up with.

## U Ko Lay

(1920-1982)



Myanmar Gilt | Oil | 43 cm x 35 cm



**Pagoda Platform** | Oil | 41 cm x 31 cm

U Ko Lay was the youngest and most successful of the painters in prewar Myanmar. He started to earn a living at age eighteen.

His parents were U Chit (a doctor of Myanmar indigenous medicine) and Daw Ma Ma. He was

the younger of two children. He studied painting with U Maung Sein (Sayar Sein) at the Shwe Taung Primary School and drawing with the master U Hteik Tin Gyi at the Pyay High School.

He produced magazine covers and illustra-

tions and established a photography studio. In 1934, U Ko Lay studied under U Ohn Lwin and learned as much as possible about painting. In 1950, he studied oil painting under Sayagyi U Ngwe Gaing. He also taught art at the State School of Fine Arts.

# U Aung Khin

(1920-1996)



**Mandalay Moat** | Oil | 236 cm x 117 cm

U Aung Khin was brought up by his parents, U San Shwe and Daw Ngwe Tha. At the age of twelve, he joined a funeral decoration business together with his brothers and uncles. In 1937, he studied painting under U Ba Nyan in Yangon for five years. He learned to copy the exact way of the art of painting from U Ba Nyan and gradually evolved his own individual style. This was based on Western techniques, with a taste of Myanmar traditions.

In 1947, U Aung Khin married Daw Tin Tin and moved to Mandalay, where he became

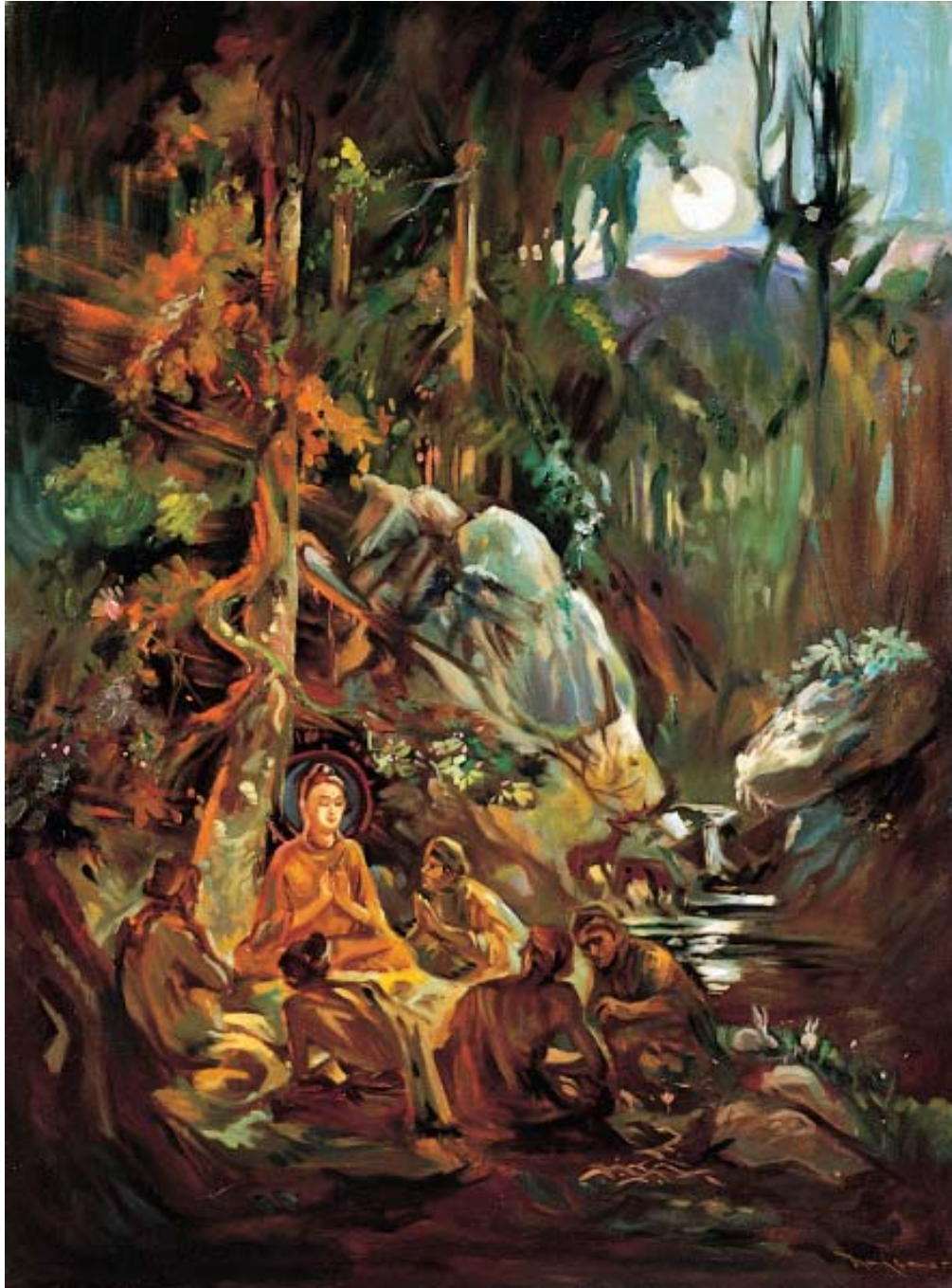
active in various local art associations. Later, he became the secretary of an art club and then was appointed chairman, serving for about twelve years.

In 1951, he won first prize at the New Burma oil-painting contest sponsored by the American-Myanmar Cultural Association. Much later, in 1981, he was appointed vice-president of the Traditional Artists and Artisans Association. In 1996, he opened the Yellow Tent 1 Art Gallery in Mandalay and continued with his painting. On 14 May 1996, he passed away at the age of seventy-six.

U Aung Khin was thought to be a placid, calm person. But he was full of modern attitudes to life and the world, qualities of personality that found their way into his art. The oil painting "Mandalay Moat" is his earliest work of art. In the background is the dark bluish mountain range of the Shan Yoma. In his earlier works, he excelled in painting scenes from the lives of ordinary people such as boatmen and poor villagers.

## U Ba Lone Lay

(1921-1998)



**The Preaching for Five Monks** | Oil | 81 cm x 61 cm

U Ba Lone Lay was proficient both as a painter and as a commercial illustrator. He showed his skill in numerous illustrations for periodicals and novels. His parents were U Thi and Daw Pon. His teachers were U Nyi Sein, U Ba Nyan, U Ba Lone and U Ba Yin Galay. In honour of U Ba Lone, he went by the name of “U Ba Lone Lay,” or “U Ba Lone the Younger.” (There are also the artists Ba Yin Gyi [the elder] and Ba Yin Lay [the younger]). In 1963, U Ba Lone Lay served as a commercial artist and a commercial art instructor at the State School of Fine Arts. In 1970, under a cultural exchange programme between the Soviet Union and Myanmar, he went off to USSR for one month to study art and painting.

The oil painting “Shwedagon” shows the famous shrine from a unique viewpoint. The skillful depiction of the scene also demonstrates the artist’s well known ability to paint human figures.

The painting “The Preaching for Five Monks” has the Buddha delivering a sermon to five monks under a tree. It is an eye-catching work of art because of the realistic depiction of the natural scenery — the stillness of the jungle, lakes and waterfalls, rabbits and water-drinking deer.

# U Thein Nyunt

(1923-1995)



**Market on the Hill** | Oil | 71 cm x 53 cm

U Thein Nyunt studied under U Ngwe Gaing, U San Win, U Shwe Soe, U Maung Maung Mya and U Khin Hlaing. He was skilled in painting pictures of elephants and therefore was called “Elephant Thein Nyunt.”

U Thein Nyunt was especially proficient in painting pictures of elephants pulling logs. In addition, he showed his skills in depicting sacred places in the paintings “The Southern Stairway of Shwedagon,” “The Platform of

Shwedagon Pagoda” and “Views from Shwe Saykan Tazaung,” all of which are quite artistic.

U Thein Nyunt often skillfully painted pictures of various aspects of the great Shwedagon





The Southern Stairway of Shwedagon | Oil | 87 cm x 68 cm



**Harvesting** | Oil | 61 cm x 45 cm

Pagoda. He was able to use the right consistency of paint and colour to depict light and shade in competition with each other. The Shwedagon shines with bright gold in his paintings. There are many pilgrims and other

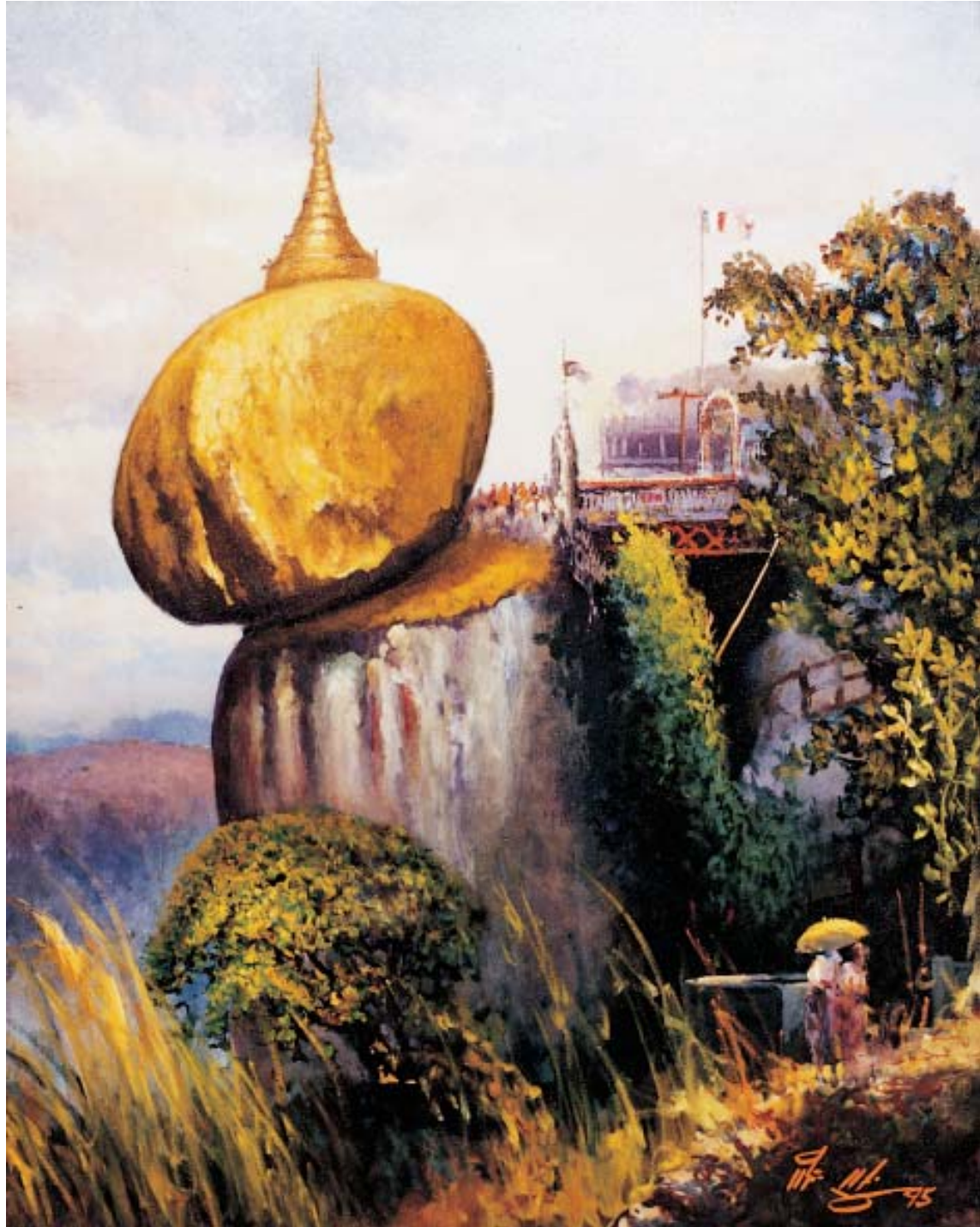
temples and spires to make the pagoda truly magnificent.

The painting "Harvesting" is one of the rarest things done by U Thein Nyunt. This is a subject

that he seldom painted. The painting "Market on the Hill" shows the lively movement of buyers and sellers.



A Tree from Hlaw Gar Lake | Oil | 87 cm x 69 cm



**Kyaik Hti Yoe** | Oil | 86 cm x 69 cm

## U Tin Hla

(1923-2004)



Shouting "Swan Daw Byo" | Oil | 52 cm x 37 cm

In the field of Myanmar art, U Tin Hla was known as "Poster Tin Hla" (because of his specialty, film posters), although his close friends and companions also nicknamed him "Mar Mu Gyi." U Tin Hla was the first and foremost student of the famous artist U Thoun Han. He also studied the art of painting under U Ga Ni and U Ohn Maung of the Aung Film Studio. In 1945, he started work at the A1 Film Studio painting posters for films.

After Myanmar gained her independence, U Tin Hla had the chance to associate with other young artists and gradually became well known as a painter. He was able to submit his paintings to art exhibitions. In 1963, after the establishment of the Artists and Artisans Council (Centre), U Tin Hla became an executive member of the council.

The painting Shouting "Swan Daw Byo" shows this artist's proficiency in using light and shadow.

## U M Tin Aye

(1924-1997)



Mountain Range | Watercolour | 35 cm x 26 cm



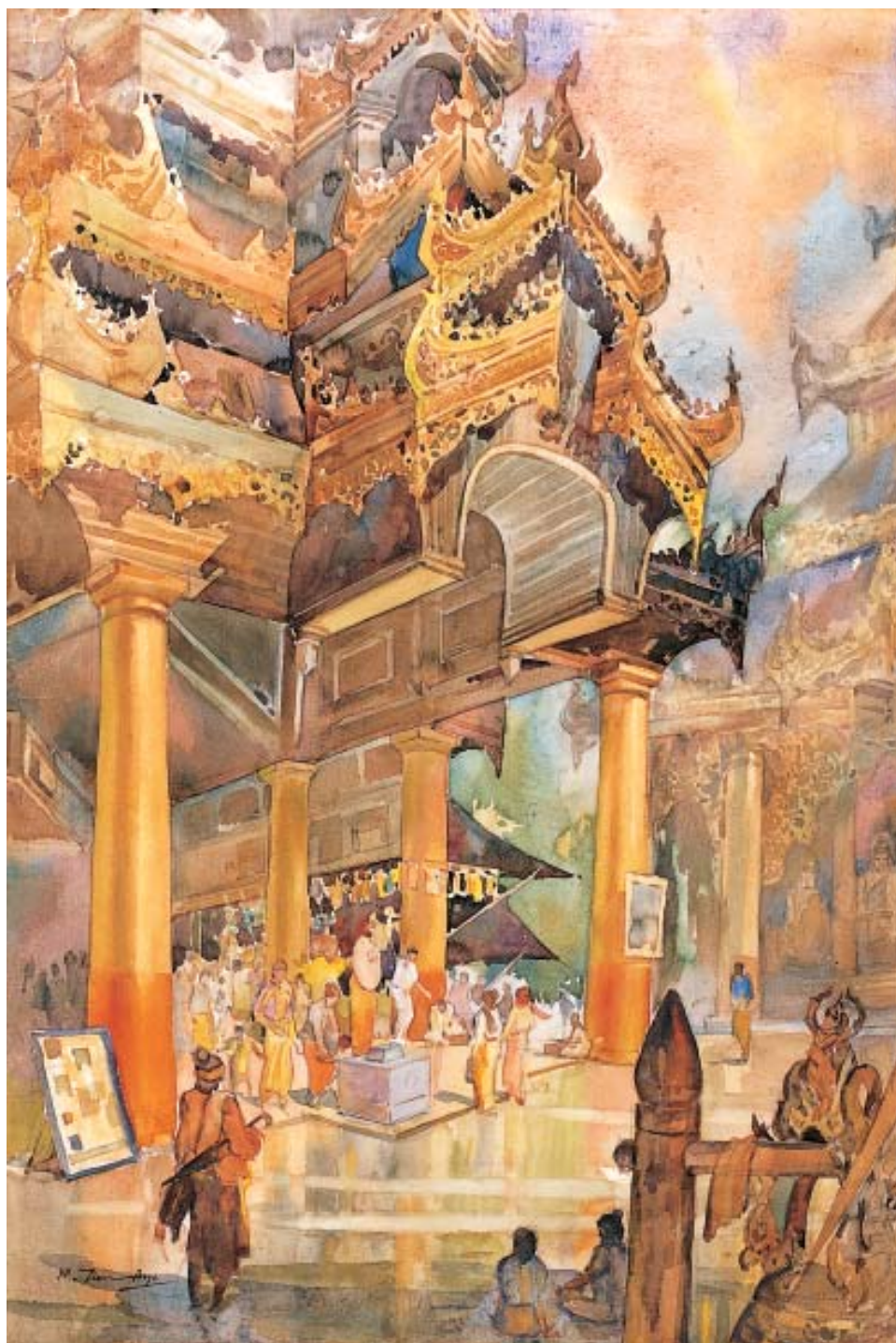
**A Typical Hut** | Watercolour | 34 cm x 25 cm

U M Tin Aye followed in the footsteps of the “Prince of Watercolour,” Sayar Saung, who was one of his teachers. He was an heir to Sayar Saung’s dexterity and use of bright colour. His paintings and murals are highly regarded throughout the country.

His parents were U Swe and Daw Sein Nyunt. In 1939, he began painting at the newly opened State School of Fine Arts and Music. He studied under U Ba Kyi, U Maung Maung Gyi, U Ba Nyan, U San Win, U Ohn Lwin and U Ngwe Gaing. After World War II,

he took up the study of painting with the master Sayar Saung.

He worked as a drawing instructor and taught watercolour at the State School of Fine Arts when it reopened in 1952. In 1957,



**On the Shwedagon Platform** | Watercolour | 77 cm x 52 cm

he received a scholarship to study modern art in Munich for one year. In 1963, he and U Thaung Han produced a large painting (17.5' x 22') on Myanmar's agriculture to be presented to the World Health Organization (WHO) office in New Delhi by the Myanmar Government.

In 1964, U M Tin Aye returned to West Germany to study stage design and painting. In 1971, he went to England and Italy. In 1975, he was appointed art director for a state culture troupe that performed in Japan. In 1977, he became the headmaster of the State School of Fine Arts. Shortly after becoming chairman of the Myanmar Traditional Artists and Artisans Association, he passed away.

Art experts claim that he contributed to the art of watercolour painting the practice of using more water, more colour and bigger brushes. The results are universally regarded as enchanting. Of his paintings, "The Kyaik Thalan Pagoda of Mawlamyaing" and "A Typical Hut," are his masterpieces. Examples of his fine mural paintings include the representations of the Buddha's life on the walls of the Pavilion of Shwedagon and the Maha Wizaya Pagoda (1990), and on the inner wall of the Myanmar Monastery (1992).

U M Tin Aye's painting "On the Shwedagon Platform" is another masterpiece. In this painting, he emphasizes the magnificent stairway. The composition is excellent. In the foreground, a bronze bell, which seems to block a bit of the view, in fact leads the viewer's eye to pilgrims in the religious hall.



## U Ba Lwin

(1925-1985)



**Moving People** | Oil | 53 cm x 43 cm

This artist, the son of U Pho Hla and Daw Myint, honoured his teacher, U Ba Yin Gyi, by referring to himself as “U Ba Lwin Gyi” (i.e., the elder). He arrived in Yangon after passing the tenth standard in his hometown.

He worked as a teacher of art at the Number 4 State High School in Ah Lone. The paintings “A Time to Seek Knowledge,” “Still-life,” and “Ma Aye and Me the Artist” are examples of his perfect and well-made artworks.

## U Han Tin

(1925-2000)



Orchid | Oil | 53 cm x 41 cm

Sayagyi U Han Tin was noted for his sculpture. But he had a solid foundation in the fine arts and was able to paint skillfully and artistically. And his carvings were always of the right size and proportion. His painting "Orchid" is notable for its mixture of colours and masterful strokes.

## U Nyan Shein

(1925-2003)



Shwedagon | Oil | 64 cm x 54 cm

U Nyan Shein, the son of U San Ba and Daw May, passed the ninth standard at the National School in Taung Dwin Gyi in 1939. He then proceeded to study basic education under Sayar U Ba Shwe and U San Shein and at the Art Propagation Association. He studied watercolour painting with Sayar Saung and learned oil painting from U San Win. In 1952, he served as a drawing instructor at the No.2 State High School at Kyi Myin Daing. During 1953-55, he acted as a part-time art teacher at the Performing Arts Association. During 1965-67, he became an assistant lecturer at the Teacher Training Institute (Mandalay) and an assistant art supervisor (school art core). In 1974, U Nyan Shein received the Diploma in Art Education (School Course) from the Central Academy Committee, Yugoslavia.

## U Aung Htwe

(1927-1996)



**Obtaining a Set of the Three Pitakas Performed by Shin Arahan | Oil | 47 cm x 85 cm**

U Aung Htwe became a well-known artist among those working in the city of Da Wei in the Tanintharyi Division. He was born in 1927; his parents were U Ba Shin and Daw Khin Sein. He had twelve brothers and sisters. In his youth, he studied the art of painting under U Khin Hlaing of Da Wei. Later, U Aung Htwe studied under U Ngwe Gaing who had just received the title of

“Ahlingar Kyawswar.” U Aung Htwe became an educator and a school headmaster, but kept on painting. At a May Day Celebration held in Pha-An, he painted pictures together with his master U Ngwe Gaing.

“Obtaining A Set of the Three Pitakas Performed by Shin Arahan” resulted from an assignment from the Bagan Ancient Research

Museum. The “Three Pitakas” refers to the complete teachings of the Buddha.

Another work by this artist is the painting “Mountain Tribeswomen at Work.” Its background is filled with the mist characteristic of the mountain region.

## U Min Naing

(1928-2004)



**A Chin Girl** | Oil | 77 cm x 68 cm

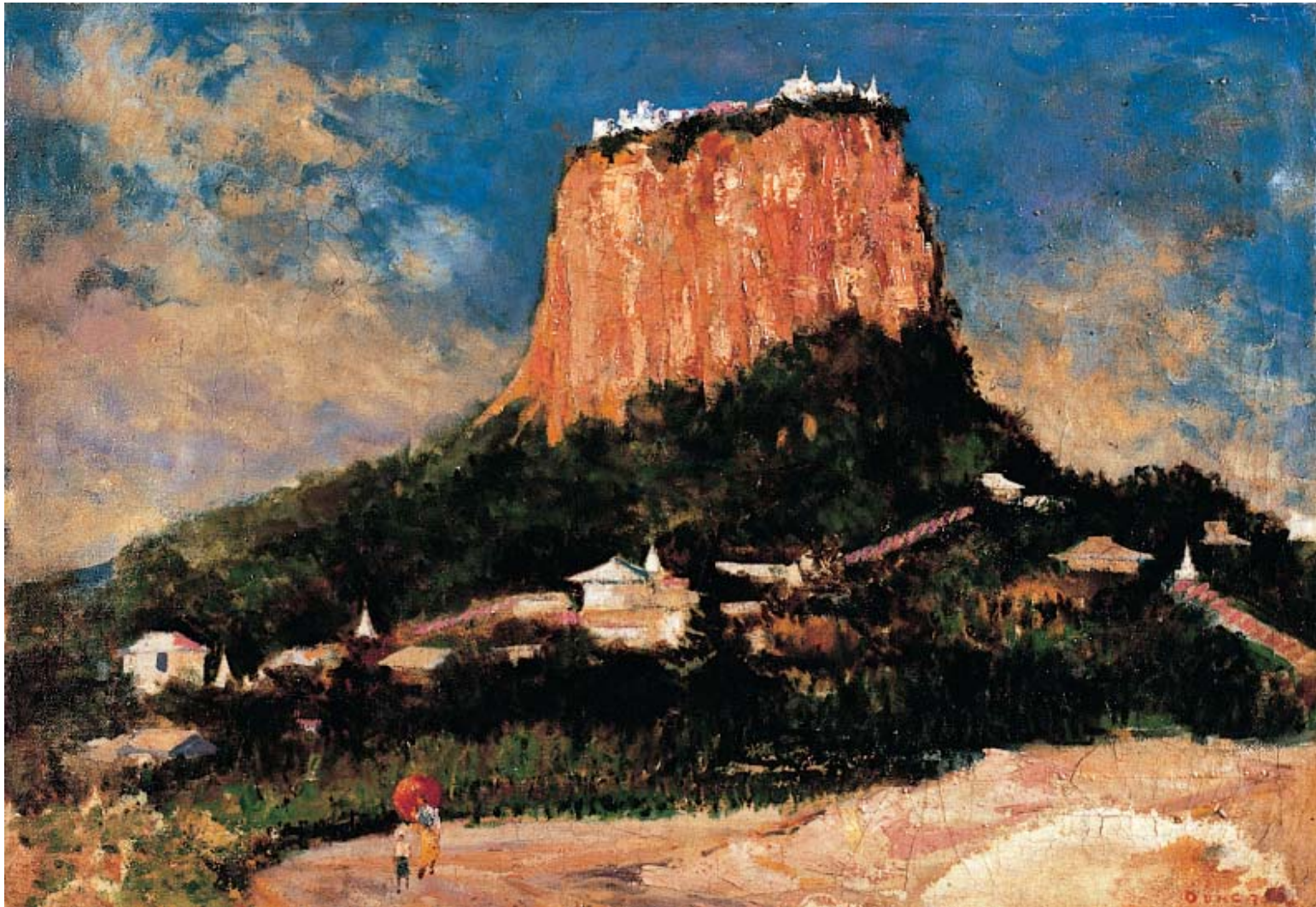
The son of U Pho Han and Daw Saw Yin, U Min Naing began his study of the fine arts under the artist U Ba Kyi between 1946 and 1948. He was also a member of the Correspondence Art Training Centre founded by the artist U Hla.

For many years, Sayar Gyi Yadanarbon Maung Su and Sayar U Min Naing were the only persons among Myanmar artists who painted and thus recorded the indigenous peoples of the country. In addition to painting pictures, U Min Naing also wrote articles. Between 1954 and 1956, he served as a national culture senior official in the Ministry of Culture. In 1957, he was appointed to a UNESCO commission for the study of antiques and manuscripts. From 1958 to 1985, he worked as a research-in-chief and chief curator. During that period, he sent his paintings to China and Japan for art exhibitions. He also went to the Soviet Union in 1977 (for the second time; the first was in 1964) to hold a Myanmar sculpture exhibition. In 1967, he was off to Germany and in 1982 he was sent to China and North Korea by the Myanmar Government to study libraries, museums, and paintings and sculptures.

Between 1986 and 1988, he assumed the responsibilities of director at the Jubilee Hall of Culture. There he wrote descriptions of the lives and work of the great artists U Ba Nyan, Sayar Chin and U Kyar Nyunt, with reference to the art of painting. In 1986, he submitted his oil paintings to the Fukuoka Exposition in Japan.

# U Shwe Oung Thein

(1932-1994)



**Mt. Popa** | Oil | 77 cm x 53 cm

Since childhood, U Shwe Oung Thein was immersed in the art of painting. He was diligent in the study of art and produced many fine paintings.

U Shwe Oung Thein was born at No.10, Htar Na Street, Kyi Myin Dine Township, Yangon.

He was one of four children. His parents were U Pho Sine and Daw Aye Hla. U Shwe Oung Thein studied art under the well-known artist U Ba Thet. Starting from February 1961, he showed more than 300 paintings at Sarpaybeikman Exhibitions. He also wrote and published several novels, *Madman* in

1969 and *A Way Out through the Treasure Cave* in 1974. In these books, he described his life, his philosophy, his art and other subjects. His paintings were exhibited at Honolulu in 1986 and at Seoul in 1988 and 1990.

## U Ohn Thwin Gyi

(1933-2004)



Myanmar | Oil | 48 cm x 81 cm

He was born to U Bo Htwe, a merchant, and his wife Daw Aye Thin. He had a good chance to learn the art of painting under the film artist U Aung Than Gyi. Then U Ohn Thwin Gyi became a disciple of U Ba Yin Gyi, U Hla Maung Gyi, U Chit Pe, U Ba Yin Pe and U Ba Yin Kalay. He painted many film posters.

# U Kyaw

(1933-2004)



**Mountain Girls** | Oil | 123 cm x 63 cm

U Kyaw was the eldest of three children born to U Maung Mya and Daw Aye Kyi. In 1952, he undertook the study of painting at the State School of Fine Arts, Yangon. His first teachers were U Khin Maung, U Thein Han, U Myat Kyaw, U M Tin Aye and U San Pe (a sculptor). In the school art competitions, he won first and second prizes. In 1955, he left the School of Fine Arts.

Afterward, he took a deep interest in the art of painting and studied on his own. Enthralled

with a sample of works by U Ba Kyi, he also studied the sketches of Sayagyi U Ngwe Gaing and U Ohn Lwin. He visited Bagan to study and copy mural paintings from temples. U Kyaw also copied ancient woodcarvings and arabesques from the Shwedagon Pagoda, Sule Pagoda and Ko Htat Hyi Pagoda.

In 1955, he worked as an artist-in-charge for periodicals such as *Payfoohlwar*, *Sarpanchi*, *Myatlulin* and the *Kalay Journal*. U Kyaw produced oil and watercolour paintings in both

Western and Myanmar traditional styles. He had a strong liking for Myanmar traditional forms and studied them all his life.

Regarding Western style painting, he showed his enthusiasm for Realism, Impressionism and Post-Modernism. With the desire to augment Myanmar traditional style by using Western techniques, he became expert in painting tones and gradations of light and shade.





A Kettle | Oil | 55 cm x 39 cm

# (U) Maung Ngwe Htun

(1935-1992)



At the Shwedagon Pagoda | Oil | 61 cm x 46 cm



**A Boat** | Oil | 92 cm x 61 cm

U Ngwe Htun's father was the artist U Htun Shein (the "Red Dragon") and his mother was Daw Hla Sein. He was the third of seven siblings. U Ngwe Htun studied the art of painting under the master U Hla Maung Gyi. Since his years as a schoolboy, he had painted posters and scenery for plays. U Ngwe Htun was a regular at the Art Club where U Ohn

Lwin U Ba Kyi, Sayar Saung and U Ba Gyan instructed him in the art of painting. In 1953, at the age of seventeen, he contributed illustrations to magazines. Enjoying his work with periodicals, nevertheless he continued pursuing a career in painting. U Ngwe Htun also painted film posters together with U Shein Htun, U Harry Aung and U Thein Han.

In 1968, he published a book titled *A Tourist for Art* with his own illustrations. This increased his fame in the world of art publications. His output was widely recognized as meeting critical standards of good taste in art.

## U Toe Nwe

(1936-1989)



**Shan Market** | Oil | 77 cm x 51 cm

He was the one and only child of U Pho Nyan and Daw Thein Kyin. Before attending the State School of Fine Arts, he studied the art of drawing portraits with charcoal under U Soe Win. U Toe Nwe was also an inventor. He was very fond of using a palette knife of

his own invention instead of foreign-made knives. With this knife, he produced oil paintings such as “Morning Meal,” “Spring” and “Shan Market.”

The latter picture depicts a familiar subject

for U Toe Nwe. It is the view of a mountain market. Perhaps it should be given a name such as “Market Time Nearly Over,” as there are not a whole lot of people to be seen.

## U Paw Oo Thet

(1936-1993)



**At the Foot of Mandalay Hill** | Pastel | 51 cm x 36 cm

U Paw Oo Thet took a keen interest in art at an early age and began the study of painting with his father (a drawing teacher at the State School of Fine Arts) before he was twelve years of age. His parents were U Hla Gyi and Daw Ngwe Ma. At the age of fifteen, he studied painting strenuously under U Ba Thet and

U Khin Maung ("Bank"). Since the age of twenty-one, he earned his living only through the practice of art. In 1959, he got an art scholarship from the Famous Artist School in the United States.

In 1969, at an art exhibition in Yangon

sponsored by the American-Myanmar Cultural Exchange Programme, he displayed over fifty of his paintings as a one-man show. Because of his outstanding ability that tried to blend Myanmar traditions and modern artistic ideas, he became a distinguished artist in the Western world of art.

# U Than Aung

(1936-2001)



Pagoda Platform | Oil | 77 cm x 31 cm



His parents were U Pho Hote and Daw Thein Shwe. He studied painting and finished his art course at the State School of Fine Arts in 1952. His principal teachers were U Ngwe Gaing, U Myat Kyaw and U M Tin Aye. He died on 11 March 2001.

## U Kyaw Lay

(1938-1998)



**Asters** | Oil | 82 cm x 61 cm

U Kyaw Lay was the youngest of four children born to U Owm Ma Yaung Kum and Daw Sa Ki Na. He attended school in Moe Kok and studied the art of painting under the artist U Tun Sein. His headmaster was U Khin Maung

and other art teachers were U Thein Han, U Lun Gywe, U M Tin Aye and U Myat Kyaw. From 1961 to 1964, he served as an art instructor at the State School of Fine Arts, Mandalay. In 1965, U Kyaw Lay was transferred to the

Yangon State School of Fine Arts, where he taught for many years. In 1992, when the University of Culture first opened, he was an assistant lecturer and head of the Art Department, where he was responsible for drawing





**The Arch** | Oil | 92 cm x 61 cm

up and revising the curriculum.

In 1988 and in 1993, he participated in cultural exchange programmes with Thailand and China respectively.

In using both oil and watercolour, U Kyaw

Lay was regarded as a skillful colourist who did his best to paint with short strokes in a modern way.

“The Arch” describes an approach leading to the premises of a pagoda. A pavilion near the arch is covered with red *sein pan* flowers

to create a pleasant and beautiful scene. We can see more flowers in “Asters,” with vases of fresh blooms vying with one another for beauty.

Myanmar [Burma] has a long artistic tradition. Early works include frescos and mural paintings in temples and pagodas, and in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, both Myanmar and foreign artists were appointed to serve at the court, and the arts flourished. The emergence of Myanmar modern art at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be sighted through the works of U Ba Nyan (1897-1945) and his contemporaries.

This book highlights works from the large collection of paintings accumulated by U Win. He was an avid collector for over forty years who recognized the importance of preserving part of the country's heritage. The paintings by fifty-three artists shown in this book are part of probably the best and most comprehensive collection of paintings in Myanmar.



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