



Yangon January 2011

I was back again.....

.....in the shadow of the soaring, gleaming Schwedagon which is even more ravishing and resplendent by night.

Back to bring the donations you gave me to help the deaf and dumb children in the Mary Chapman School, and the old people in the care of Sister Mary and her Little Sisters of the Poor.

The Shopping

I set out early in the morning in a pick-up with Nyein Chan who, once again, said he would help me in the local market.

We bought dozens of packs of pencils, rulers and pens, and stacks of copybooks. Nyein Chan said to take the ones with photos of Asian movie stars on the covers, "The kids love them," he told me.

Then we bought sacks of rice, lentils, potatoes, onions and garlic, oil, biscuits and sweets. Porters carried everything on their backs to the waiting pickup and we crossed town to the Mary Chapman School.



Into a silent but smiling world

A group of smiling children were waiting to greet me. Many remembered me, and so I got a lot of pats on the back, hugs and hand squeezing

The children unloaded the provisions from the pickup before going off to lunch, and I sat down to chat with Daw Margaret, the headmistress, and her assistant.

They asked me to thank you for your help.
"Please tell your friends the food you buy and their donations help us very much."



Laughter and music in the Home for the Aged Poor

With my friends Laurent and Maurizio and Roger and Elvire, and Sai with his guitar, I returned to the Home for the Aged Poor. Sister Mary and Sister Glory greeted us and told us the ladies were waiting for us.

On the way we stopped to say hello to some of the men in their dormitories.

At Christmas my friends had come dressed as Santa Claus and the ladies clapped and were happy to see them again.

Sai played Jingle Bells, Feliz Navidad and Myanmar favourites and many of the ladies danced.



Giving is sharing. Sharing is caring

Thank you all for giving and caring. What you give me to bring to the school and the home for the aged makes a difference. More than you can imagine.

Not only does it bring material help to the children and the old folk.

It also brings a smile to their faces. Because it means someone cares for them. And that is something that has no price.



Where your donations went

I started spending your money at the market, buying the provisions for the school. I then bought a glucose-count machine for Sister Glory who did not have one to test the diabetes levels of the old people.

Sister Mary says to thank you for the generous contribution I gave to help feed the old folk. She will also give some to the orphans in her sister convent near Mandalay, and I asked her to help the two young orphan girls we helped last year who are studying at Yangon University.



But there is more.....

.....I bought a Braille Dictionary. For an extraordinary young blind man called Kyaw Kyaw Win who teaches blind children in Sittwe, in Rakhaing State, near the border with Bangladesh.

It was a chance meeting. Visiting a museum I saw a sign for a blind school. Kyaw Kyaw Win and 6 pupils were in a simple open cabin, Braille-reading on scraps of paper. He punched out my name and they read it for me.

In very clear English Kyaw Kyaw Win read from a philosophy book he is studying. "I never had a dictionary, it would help me, and I could teach my pupils many new things."

I sent him one from Yangon



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My Asian Trails friends, who first brought me to the school and the home for the aged, and without whom Myanmar would not be the same for me.

Nyein Chan for his time, and his brilliant bargaining in the market

And to Kyaw Kyaw Win, whose radiant smile, serene strength and courage is an inspiration to me.