

Report on

First Meeting of the Okayama University International

Alumni Association (Myanmar Branch)

and

Signing Ceremony of

The Memorandum of Understanding between

Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA) and

Okayama University of Japan

19 August 2014

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1. Introduction

Contact between Myanmar scholars and Japanese Universities took place since early 19th century. The arrival in war time Japan of 30 military cadets from Myanmar (then known as Burma or Biruma in Japanese) went to the Imperial Military Academy in Zama near Tokyo to be joined a year later by another group of cadets. Also 30 Myanmar civilian scholars participated in the program on Japan Overseas Scholars from the South or Nanpo Tokubetsu Ryugakusei (Nantokus).

The first connection between Okayama University and Myanmar Scholars was in 1981, and the acceleration period could be observed in the year 2000. Since then the Okayama University and the Myanmar academicians and researchers has been in close contact, especially in the field of medicine and allied sciences. An agreement of cooperation between the Departments under the Ministry of Health and Okayama University was signed in the year 2002. In the year 2012, a Commemorative Ceremony to mark the Tenth Year of the Agreement of Cooperation was celebrated at the Department of Medical Research in Yangon, Myanmar. It was honored by Professor Kiyoshi Morita, President of Okayama University and Professor Pe Thet Khin, the Myanmar Union Minister of Health and high ranking government officials and professors. The connection between Okayama University and Myanmar scholars was further enhanced by the work of NPO Myanmar Japan Collaboration Project for Fostering Medical Human Resources which consists of over 500 Japan nationals led by Professor Shigeru Okada who is Professor Emeritus of Okayama University School of Medicine, Dentistry and Allied Sciences.

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Myanmar scholars who had returned from Japan formed a Students Association since the post-World War II period. However, a comprehensive alumni could be formed only in the year 2001. With a strong statute, scholars who returned from Japan formed the Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA) as a federation. It consists of JICA Alumni Association of Myanmar (JAAM), alumni associations of Tokyo, Nagoya, Hiroshima and Kobe Universities and Myanmar Branch of Overseas Human Resources and Industry Development Association (HIDA).

Early this year, a group of scholars who returned from Okayama University, generated an idea to form an ex-scholar group. It was further discussed and an Organizing Committee was formed. The Committee, with the support of Prof. Shigeru Okada, communicated with officials from Okayama University and eventually managed to establish the Myanmar Branch of Okayama University International Alumni Association during a relatively short period of time.

2. The Ceremony and the attendants

The inauguration ceremony was carried out at the Yadanar Hall of the Park Royal Hotel in Yangon, Myanmar according to the agenda. (Annex 1)

The ceremony commenced at 9:00 AM with the arrival of special guests and alumni members. From different parts of Myanmar, 71 alumni members attended the occasion. Those from Upper Myanmar had to travel a day ahead to participate in the meeting. Although, it was an official working day in Myanmar, the organizing committee managed to obtain permission from the Ministry to allow the alumni members to attend the ceremony.

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The ceremony was attended by the following distinguished Professors from Okayama University.

1. Professor Kiyoshi Morita, President of Okayama University
2. Professor Zhang Hong, President of Okayama University International Alumni Association
3. Professor Emeritus Shigeru Okada, Chairman of the Board of Directors of NPO: Myanmar Japan Collaboration Project for Fostering Medical Human Resources

Two senior officials from the Embassy of Japan, Myanmar graced the occasion.

1. Mr. Toshio Yamamoto, Minister Counsellor
2. Mr. Yusuke Masuoka, First Secretary (Culture and Information)

Special guests who honored the occasion were as follows:

1. Professor Paing Soe, Councillor NayPyiTaw and former Deputy Minister of Health
2. Dr. Kyaw Min, Former Director General, Ministry of Health
3. Dr. Khin Pyone Kyi, President of Myanmar Liver Foundation and former Director General, Ministry of Health
4. Dr. Than Sein, President of Public Health Foundation and former Director of WHO South East Asia Regional Office
5. Professor Tin Maung Han, Rector of University of Medicine, Mandalay

The following senior alumni members were also present at the ceremony

1. Professor Aung Kyaw, Patron of Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni
2. U Myint Wai, Patron of Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni
3. Dr. Aung Win, President of HIDA
4. Dr. Thin Aye Aye Ko, President of Kobe University Alumni

3. Opening and Welcoming Remarks

With the permission of the Organizing Committee, the Master of Ceremony announced that the Ceremony was officially opened.

Prof. Si Si Shein, President of MAJA, rendered the opening remarks. She welcomed the guests and mentioned that she was very glad to find out that many persons had studied at Okayama University and that the members were able attend to the first annual meeting. She thanked Prof. Shigeru Okada for helping MAJA through establishment of the MAJA-Okayama Knowledge Center in June 2013. She gave a short history of MAJA and explained about the activities carried out by MAJA. She thanked Professors from Okayama University led by Professor Morita for their support and to those who contributed to make this ceremony a success.

The next speaker is Prof. Kiyoshi Morita, President of Okayama University. He started his speech by congratulating the following events. The first is the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Japan, followed by the successful establishment of Myanmar Branch of Okayama University International Alumni Association and thirdly, the Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between MAJA and Okayama University. He further explained the history of Okayama University and his vision on the future of Okayama University in relation to the development of a system of international research activities. He highlighted that 18 branches has been established so far in the Asia Region and he hoped that the alumni members would enhance the reputation of Okayama University in their respective countries. He concluded by wishing everyone an enjoyable time and congratulating the Myanmar Branch Foundation Committee.

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Mr. Toshio Yamamoto from the Embassy of Japan started his speech by wishing the distinguished guests and congratulating the establishment of the Myanmar Branch of Okayama University International Alumni Association, especially in this symbolic year of the 60th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Myanmar. He mentioned that under the guidance of President U Thein Sein, several positive changes in the fields of education and international relations could be seen. He trusted this Alumni would strongly support those who plan to study in Okayama University, and also to those who want to study in Japan. The Embassy of Japan in Myanmar has been providing support to those who wanted to study in Japan by regular monthly meetings. Moreover, the Education Fair and Scholarship Opportunities will be organized in the coming month. He concluded by wishing the best for this Alumni and for the continuing Friendship between the people of Myanmar and the people of Japan.

Professor Zhang Hong, President of Okayama University International Alumni Association started her speech by thanking everyone who had participated in this event. She specifically thanked Professor Si Si Shein, Mr. Yamamoto, Professor Shigeru Okada for their participation and Dr. Myo Khin and members for their untiring work. She mentioned that since the formation of the Okayama University International Alumni Association in October 2011, it has established several branches overseas including Myanmar. She urged the alumni members to connect with alumni members from other countries by spreading the Alumni information through Newsletters and internet. In her conclusion, she strongly congratulated the formation of Myanmar Branch and hope that more Myanmar students will join the Alumni in the years to come.

4. Congratulatory Remarks

Following opening remarks, U Myint Wai, Patron of MAJA gave a congratulatory remark. He started by giving an overview of the Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni. He explained that Japan Alumni Association had existed immediately after World War II. However, it was not very prominent until the year 2001. Now the Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni is formed as a federated association with several University Alumni. He further explained that ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni (ASCOJA) was established in June 1977 with the aim of fostering international exchange amongst former ASEAN students. The ASCOJA member countries are Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia, Viet Nam and Laos. This year, Myanmar will be leading ASCOJA and MAJA President Professor Si Si Shein will be the Chairperson of the Council. He congratulated the establishment of Myanmar Branch of Okayama University International Alumni Association and greatly praised the work of the Organizing Committee led by Dr. Myo Khin. He also acknowledged the efforts of Professor Shigeru Okada and Okayama University President in the founding of the Myanmar Branch. He wished great success in the future of the Myanmar Branch of Okayama University International Alumni Association.

The next speaker, Professor Shigeru Okada started by thanking the distinguished guests led by Professor Aung Kyaw and Professor Paing Soe for their presence in this meeting. He recalled the discussions between himself, Dr. Myo Khin and the International Center of Okayama University on the establishment of Myanmar Branch of Okayama University International Alumni association and that he was very worried as the time was very limited. He mentioned that he was very glad that the Organization

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Committee in collaboration with International Center of Okayama University, managed to organize this occasion. He thanked the people who organized this event in a very successful manner.

He elaborated on the factors that have led to the success of the training program of Myanmar scholars at the Okayama University. He mentioned that the scholar exchange agreement from the Departments of Medical Research, Medical Sciences and Okayama University is the main contributor. It started in 2002 and has successfully celebrated the 10th Anniversary in 2012. The Myanmar Health Minister and President of Okayama University also attended the celebrations. Another factor is the human factor. He stressed that the Myanmar scholars' sincerity and willingness to learn has led to the continuous collaboration of the faculty members of Okayama University.

He was very pleased to learn that the Alumni will work to create a bridge for the exchange of culture and information between the people of Myanmar and people of Okayama University and Japan. He stated that the NPO Myanmar Japan Collaboration Project for Fostering Human Medical Resources is also working on the same theme and is collaborating with MAJA and has established MAJA-Okayama Knowledge Center. He hoped the Alumni members will use the Center as a place for exchange of information between Myanmar and Okayama.

The next speaker Dr. Than Sein started with a greeting to all distinguished guests. He congratulated the formation of the Myanmar Branch of the Okayama University International Alumni Association and the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between MAJA and Okayama University. He mentioned that the People's Health Foundation was established in

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December 2012 under the guidance of President U Thein Sein and outlined the role of the People's Health Foundation in the Universal Health Care for Myanmar people. He thanked Professor Okada and group for providing material assistance for the health of the Myanmar people. He stated that Okayama University not only brought in the expertise but also people who would like to share their resources to support tertiary health centers in Myanmar. In conclusion, he stated his determination to strengthen the collaboration with the Alumni and Okayama University in the future.

Dr. Khin Pyone Kyi stated that she was very pleased to have a chance to give congratulatory remarks on this occasion. She greeted the distinguished guests, President and Professors from Okayama University, Embassy officials and MAJA President. She highlighted the academic collaboration between Ministry of Health and Okayama University which was started in 1996. She further explained that under the agreement of co-operation, several scholars have visited Okayama University either as a degree student or a trainee or as a visiting scholar and that several professors and scientists from Okayama University have also visited Myanmar and participated in Conferences and Seminars. She also congratulated Professor Shigeru Okada for being awarded the Honorary Professorship at the University of Medicine I and University of Dental Medicine in 2006. She mentioned about her visits to Okayama University in 2009 and 2014 and the benefits obtained. In conclusion, she expressed her gratitude and she looked forward to future support and collaboration from Okayama University and NPO Myanmar Japan Collaboration for Fostering Medical Human Resources Project .

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Dr. Myo Khin, President of Organizing Committee, in his thank you speech, extended greetings to the distinguished guests, President of Okayama University and Professors, Minister Counselor of the Embassy of Japan, JICA Chief Representative in Myanmar, Patrons, President and Executive Committee Members of MAJA, Presidents of University Alumni and Alumni Associations. He explained about the need to establish the Okayama University Alumni and the initiative by Professor Shigeru Okada and the support by Professor Kiyoshi Morita. He also highlighted the willingness of MAJA to support the activities of the Okayama University Alumni and the need for the Alumni members to proactively participate in the activities of MAJA.

He explained about the benefits at the Ministry of Health which were obtained by the Agreement of Co-operation and that the present Memorandum of Understanding will pave the way for academicians to study in Okayama University and researchers to participate in collaborative research projects with the Okayama University. He also thanked the Embassy of Japan for giving permission to use the 60th anniversary logo and for recognizing the event as part of celebrations on “60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Myanmar”. He expressed his gratitude to Professor Shigeru Okada and requested him to continue working throughout the coming years for the success of Myanmar Branch and for the continued friendship between Japanese and Myanmar people. He briefly outlined the five objectives of the Myanmar Branch and urged fellow members to participate in all activities (Annex 2).

Dr. Myo Khin later invited the Organizing Committee members on the stage and explained that with the endorsement of the alumni members at this meeting, the Committee will act as the Executive Committee of the Myanmar Branch of the Okayama University International Alumni Association.

(Annex 3)

5. Signing Ceremony

The Signing Ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni was carried out and Professor Si Si Shein and Professor Kiyoshi Morita signed the document. Professor Paing Soe, Patron U Myint Wai, Professor Shigeru Okada, Professor Zhang Hong and Mr. Toshio Yamamoto also took the stage and official photographs were taken. (Annex 4).

6. Photo Session

The distinguished guests, Professors from the Okayama University, officials from Embassy of Japan, Presidents from associated Alumni, Alumni members took the stage and documentary pictures were taken.

After the photo session, guests were entertained with lunch.

7. News Release

Throughout the ceremony, SKYNET Television crew recorded all the events. The news was broadcasted on 22nd of August, 2014. The whole event including the interviews totaling 15 minutes was broadcasted on 26th and 27th of August, 2014.

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Annex 1. Agenda

Sr.	Time	Agenda
1.	09:00 to 09:30	Registration (VIPs are to be seated in the VIP Room)
Opening session		
2.	09:30	Announcement of the Opening of the Ceremony Master of Ceremony: Eindra Myo Khin (Ms)
3.	09:30	Welcome Speech by Prof. Si Si Shein, President of the Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA)
4.	09:40	Speech by Prof. MORITA KIYOSHI, President of Okayama University
5.	09:50	Speech by Mr. Toshio Yamamoto, Minister Counselor Embassy of Japan
6.	10:00	Speech by Prof. ZHANG HONG, Director of Okayama University International Alumni Association
Congratulatory Remarks		
7.	10:10	U Myint Wai, Patron of MAJA
8.	10:20	Prof. Shigeru Okada, Chairman of NPO Myanmar Japan Cooperation Project for Fostering Medical Human Resources
9.	10:30	Dr. Than Sein, President of People's Health Foundation
10.	10:40	Dr. Khin Pyone Kyi, President of Liver Foundation
11.	10:50	Dr. Myo Khin, President of Organizing Committee
Signing Ceremony		
12.	11:00	Signing of The Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA) and Okayama University of Japan

Closing Session (to be followed by Photo Session and Lunch)

Annex 2. Objectives

The five objectives of the Myanmar Branch of the Okayama University International Alumni Association are as follows:

1. To establish a link between Okayama University and Myanmar Professors, and Researchers to conduct joint research and community development projects.
2. To disseminate information on Okayama University and Japan to Myanmar students planning to study in Japan.
3. To provide a platform for sharing of knowledge on subjects of mutual interest between Myanmar and Japan through Joint Seminars and Conferences.
4. To work together with other International Branches of Okayama University International Alumni Association to promote academic and research opportunities.
5. To create a bridge for exchange of culture and information between the people of Myanmar and the people of Okayama, Japan.

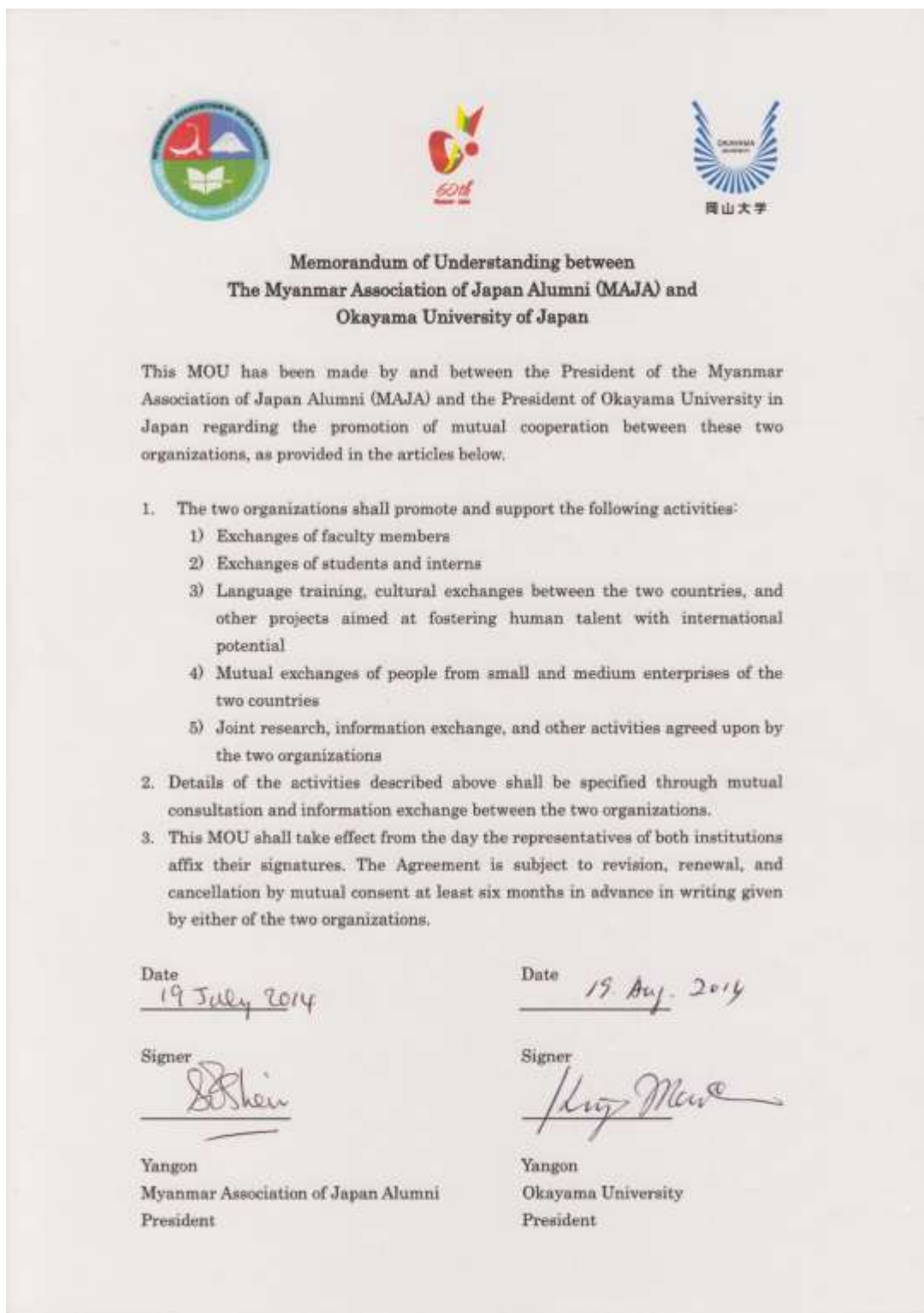
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**Annex 3. Organizing Committee of the First Meeting of Okayama University
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Sr.	Name	Title
1.	Dr. Myo Khin	President
2.	Prof. Maung Maung Soe	Vice-President (1)
3.	Prof. Swe Swe Win	Vice-President (2)
4.	U Mya Lwin	EC member
5.	Dr. Ne Win	EC member
6.	Prof. Moe Thuzar	EC member
7.	Dr. Khin Lay Khine	EC member
8.	Dr. Kyi May Thein	EC member
9.	Dr. Mu Mu Swe	EC member
10.	Dr. Ngu Wah Min	EC member
11.	Dr. Ko Ko Tun	EC member
12.	Dr. Moe Thida Htwe	Treasurer
13.	Associate Prof. Mya Mya Aye	Auditor
14.	Dr. Aye Aye Lwin	Secretary
15.	Dr. Myit Zu Win	Joint Secretary

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Annex 4. Memorandum of Understanding



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Annex 5. Documentary Photos



Preliminary meeting on the 18th August 2014, Park Royal Hotel, Yangon



Venue Prepared at evening of 18th August 2014, Park Royal Hotel, Yangon



Arrival of the guests



Guests seated

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MAJA President Professor Si Si Shein delivering the Welcome Speech



President Professor Morita Kiyoshi delivering the Inaugural Speech



Distinguished Guests attending the ceremony



Alumni members listening to the speech

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Minister Counselor Mr. Toshio Yamamoto delivering the speech



OUIAA President Professor Zhang Hong delivering the speech



Alumni members listening to the speech



Alumni members listening to the speech

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Patron U Myint Wai delivering the Congratulatory Remarks



Professor Shigeru Okada delivering the Congratulatory Remarks



Alumni members listening to the Congratulatory Remarks



Alumni members listening to the Congratulatory Remarks

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Dr. Than Sein delivering the Congratulatory Remarks



Dr. Khin Pyone Kyi delivering the Congratulatory Remarks



Dr. Myo Khin delivering the Thank you Remarks



OUIAA Myanmar Branch Organizing Committee Members

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Presidents signing the MOU between MAJA and Okayama University



Distinguished Guests celebrating the MOU signing



Distinguished guests attending the Inauguration Ceremony



A group photo with Alumni members

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Group photo of Distinguished Guests with Alumni members celebrating the first meeting of Okayama University International Alumni Association Meeting and the MOU signing ceremony between MAJA and Okayama University(19th August 2014, Park Royal Hotel, Yangon, Myanmar)