



Whisperings from the Seed

from little things...
big things grow!!!

Issue 1, August 2012



Recent Events

- July Maung Maung & Phyo
Eindra Birthdays
- August Back from visit to US &
Peru. New crafts &
fundraising plan to come
out within the next month
- September-
October Trip to US, Burma & work
on the new website
- The Future **EXCITING NEW
BEGINNINGS!!!!**

A word from Jim

Mingalaba Friends,

It's been a long time since most of you have had word from us here along the border. The last two years have brought many trials, changes & tribulations to our door. Forgive us for our silence and know we are still here and making our way.

Throughout all the struggles and challenges, we have learned many, many things and found strength in each other. Although it is often hard to hold the belief in the midst of the storm, we do continue to believe that all things do happen for a reason and ultimately create endless opportunities to learn and better ourselves. And now...we have found the space in which to move forward with the creation of something new and exciting once again!

We welcome & invite you to join us as we begin a new journey into the unknown. We will keep you posted throughout the next few months as the way becomes clearer. Hope you enjoy hearing from us & we would love to hear from you!!

-jim

Coming to Thailand or Burma this year?

Drop us a line, we'd love to hear from you, and love to see you!
There is always something to come and lend a helping hand with.

WWW.WHISPERINGSEED.ORG
WhisperingSeed@gmail.com





Meet our Newest Family Members..

Jim said 'only one', and naturally, we came home with two!

For those of you who have spent time with us, you will have already met Mi Phyu. A few months back these two lovely little critters joined our family. Meet Luna & Hummus!! They are growing fast but have brought much joy & happiness to our home! Together they cause more trouble than you can imagine, but their eyes and gentle demeanor ease the heart quickly. Luna with her loving eyes and belly rubs she loves and dopey Hummus and all his silly ways as he falls over. It has been a huge blessing for the kids and little nips of happiness every day!!!

Aye Aung sets sights on the United States

Aye Aung, our eldest has been invited to attend a camp in North Carolina this fall by Play in the Wild, www.playinthewild.org. She also has been invited to visit and stay with friends and family as well as two wonderful invitations to visit schools and the possibility of doing some studying while she is there. She is very excited about this possibility and looking forward to spending a few months in the US, learning, visiting friends & family, seeing the leaves change colors and hopefully playing in the snow!!!!



We are aiming for late September, and right now are in the difficult process of registering her as a Burmese citizen. Once that is processed, she will be eligible for a passport and then fingers crossed for a visa.

She will be traveling into Burma during the first week of September to begin the process. It is a long journey for her, but we are thankful for all the support friends on the other side ready to help and support her with this process. This will be her second big trip into Myanmar, so look for her thoughts on this as well as her plans for the US in the next newsletter!!!!

Are you or anyone you know in a position to support Aye Aung in making this new journey in her life?

If so, please drop Jim a line at whisperingseed@gmail.com or make donations directly on the website.





Whispering Seed Update

It has been a year of ups and downs and lots of rain!!

As many of you may know, we had some major difficulties out at our farm about two years ago involving our crazy gov't official neighbor who shot on the farm and threatened our lives. From that point on, living at the farm became difficult, but we continued to try. Following this...we received threats of a different kind, causing us to have to leave the farm once again, as well as lose our foundation status in Thailand and almost having the children deported to Burma as well as many other problems.

For the last 2 years we have been navigating between these different threats and accusations finding support in unexpected places, but also facing continued attacks against us.

Due to the tremendous lack of support and lack of options we have found here in Thailand, along with the uncertain futures of the kids, as well as the recent "opening" of Burma, we began discussing the possibility of moving the project inside Burma.

We waited until the elections in Burma in November of 2010 and then made our first of several "investigative" trips into Burma to learn about the current situation and sourcing how we could navigate living and working there.

Throughout the last year and half we have been in and out of Burma and are still making our efforts to start things there...as slow as it is...it is a place the children and I both would very much like to live and work. We have a wonderful young woman named Nilar who is privileged to be our first staff in

Myanmar, working hard to support our beginnings there. (More on this in the New Sprouts section later)

Meanwhile, we were forced to leave the farm, which has now been subject to much thievery from the local villagers, getting their hands on everything...even things nailed down!!



We have been living in Sangklaburi and trying to carry on with our lives. It has been and continues to be extremely difficult not being able to go back to the farm, especially after many years of hard work, getting everything established at the farm and very comfortable living. We continue to miss the farm and all the treasure that it provided us throughout the years.

Ever since the problems at the farm, things have scaled down due to our forced living in town. Now it is Poo Pwint Weh,

Win Myant Han, Maung Maung, Phyo Eindra and Aye Aung staying with me. A few months back the kids began attending school for the first time, in an attempt to appease some of the complaints targeted at us. It has been a huge leap for all of them...and so funny to see them dressed in their uniforms! The novelty of "going to school" wore off after a month!! September & October bring the easing of the rainy season and a time for new beginnings. We have another trip into Myanmar in September and will have more details upon our return.

We are currently working to overhaul the website...to keep better in touch...so stayed tuned for that too!!!!



Fusion of the 'Seeds'

Music Seeds comes to Whispering Seed

Throughout the last two years we have had the pleasure of working with Ross Green of Music Seeds International.

<http://www.musicseedsinternational.com>. Together Ross, the kids and Jim have written, shot and created 3 songs with music videos. It was a wonderful time having the opportunity to work with Ross and the kids absolutely loved having our home over the lake turned into a recording/dance studio. Please visit his website to see the songs we created together.



The Way to Burma-by our family regarding our current situation. (*click the link*)

Listening to the Seeds-written by Maung Maung and Ross

Alphabet Food-for Music Seeds newest English program SONGLISH.

Please visit their website to see the videos of the kids and to support the ongoing work of Music Seeds in Asia!



Fundraising plans for Whispering Seed



First we would like to thank all of you that have heard of our struggles and stepped up to support in us many ways. We want to thank you for all your support, energy and time in helping to raise funds and other support you have offered to Whispering Seed!!! To make the next phase of things work here at Whispering Seed, we are seeking more funding.

At this stage...we are trying to support the development of several different crafts and products which the kids and local women will be making and gaining training in.

A little to grow into a lot more....

Is what we are aiming for. To raise the funds to make several different products which we can sell to raise more funds. This way...several of the kids and local woman are also learning the different crafts. Aye Aung will also then be able go into Burma where she can teach these skills to woman there, where we aim to open a small craft shop, training centre, café & bakery. (We are working on the cookbook now!! To be released soon!!).

Crafts to raise funds for the new projects we are starting

Fairie Lights
t-shirts
stickers
hand sewn bags of all sizes

knit & crocheted hats & scarves
post cards
calendar

We are also in the process of creating a sponsorship program for the children. Please stayed tuned as we will be ready to get things out for sale in the near future. If you can help in any way by selling or marketing the crafts, please contact us and let us know!!!



New Sprouts in Myanmar



a warm thank you!!

At Whispering Seed we have been blessed to have been visited by many volunteers over the years. In that time we have built houses, learned English, splatter mud, planted, sang, danced, written songs & created videos, planted, chased and been chased by critters, delivered babies, taken trips to Burma and planted some more. We could not have done ANY of this without your love, support, dreaming and your hands!!

Many of you have been unable to make the long journey to Asia to be with us, but have supported us in your own very unique and creative ways from your own homeland.

A very belated **thank you** for everyone's love and support!



For the last year and half, Jim has had the opportunity to travel into Myanmar to begin the foundations for starting future work there.

Whispering Seed has been truly blessed to receive a tremendous amount of support and positive energy, taking shape in many forms for this new journey.

Challenging as it is to begin a new project in Burma, we are committed to be there and have already started working.

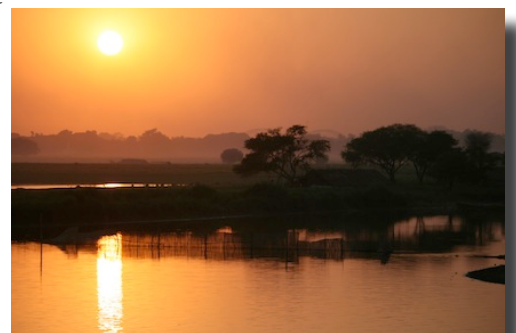
Throughout the last year and half, Jim has been traveling in and out of Burma, getting more familiar with the people, issues and the land. During this time he has been able to also offer various teacher training programs to both the Buddhist monastic community as well as to teachers and educators from various parts of Burma.

We were very fortunate to have a great deal of support from Nilar and our dear friend Trudy with wonderful financial support to assist in taking a group to the 20th International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) in Puerto Rico and then a short exposure tour in New York City. Besides this,

Jim has also had the opportunity to do some trainings around different regions of the country with long time friend Bruce Gardiner from Solar Roots. (www.solarroots.org). From our first travels together, Bruce has continued traveling back to Burma for several months working various project in solar, renewable energy, alternative cook stoves and basic trainings in appropriate technology.

We are stilling sorting out all the details of the transition to Burma, but we will be working closely with various communities to support the children and the beginning of our work there.

Once everything is organized and in place, we will be looking for helping hands to come over and support our work as well as support the local communities and individuals that we are already working with. Please stayed tuned for more information on this as we will keep you informed as the plans are manifested.



Soggy thoughts from Sarah (our august volunteer)



My bottom and the slippery driveway became friends over the week I spent at Whispering Seed. In fact slime covered the roadsides like cake icing, such was the legacy of the rain, rain, rain. And while it quietly fell, we danced on the deck. Amazed was I that the feverish teen pop of the West had immediate appeal to the less fame-saturated minds of Jim's children (must be an intangible generational thing?)

When I first arrive there are lots of children, a mish mash of Whispering Seed family, local orphanage, and staff children. I can't make sense of who is who or who lives where..let alone names! Oh strange and beautiful names. Dinner sorts things out, and as we sit at the family table, I am introduced to the smarts of Maung Maung, the sass of Phyo Eindra, the grace of Aye Aung, the sensitivity of Poo Pwint Weh and the delightful cheek of Win Myant Han

The youngins trot off to school in crisp, red and black uniforms, and lungi-clad Jim taps on his computer, while Aye Aung stews concoctions of strange herbs and jellyfish like mushrooms and then pours the elixir in to recycled bottles. Clay streaks her face and signposts her identity as a young Burmese woman.

We walk in to town, arm-in arm, chattering away about young love - Burmese style. Walking back, loaded with groceries and singing away, *Close your eyes, give me your hand, darling..* as she plucks a rose for my hair from the garden

Jim, Aye Aung and I had had a hectic day baking and preparing cakes and dishes for Maung Maung's birthday. I fumbled around the outdoor kitchen, substituting this for that. While Jim split wood for the clay oven, and Aye Aung rolled gnocchi. Jim and I giggled incessantly as we tried to beautify the cakes - everything was going wrong.

The children are happy here. I'm reminded of our over-indulged Western lifestyle when I see the ecstatic joy of Win Myant Han and Poo Pwint Weh when Jim brings home two big, new umbrellas. Whispering Seed children are offered something neither Burmese, nor Western children get: a dramatic fusion of culture and tradition; a taste of technology and simplicity; a natural playground of snakes and river swimming, and an i-playground of Mac Mania; the responsibility of sharing domestic chores, and the spontaneity of jungle living; an insight into International society, and a grasp of three languages.

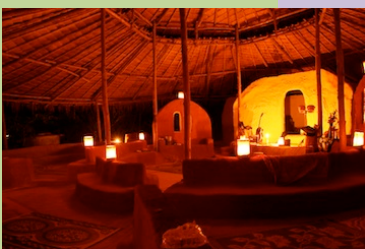
They are the lucky ones, touched by the hand of Jim. He is the lucky one, touched by the love of innocents. They are the displaced - difficult pasts, unrecognised identity, limited (for the now) to their imaginations and the stories of volunteers' homelands - unable to travel until bureaucracy and racism open the door, or look the other way.

He is the displaced - battling for their future in an alien society, caught in a political maelstrom, repeatedly stung by the venom of the jealous, greedy, or critical eyes of the local bureaucrats and foreign aid workers.

I am grateful for my short time with this little family. Each day I see how many people Jim's support reaches, beyond this nucleus. I leave with lovely memories: I've been touched by the Whispering Seed fever, even during the wet...

Wishing you all the best & much happiness through the rest of the Year!

Many blessings from all of us here at Whispering Seed!!!



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