



Working Paper No. 2, February 2006

**LEGAL EDUCATION IN BURMA
SINCE THE 1960s
A PERSONALIZED UPDATE AND ACCOUNT**

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Working Paper Series

**Faculty
of
Social Sciences**

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M996
2006

LEGAL EDUCATION IN BURMA SINCE THE 1960s: A PERSONALIZED UPDATE AND ACCOUNT

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I INTRODUCTION

In the January 1962 issue of *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* the late Dr Maung Maung (31 January 1925- 2 July 1994)¹ wrote a short note and comment in the Comments Section of the Journal entitled 'Lawyers and Legal Education in Burma'.² Since then much water has passed under the bridge in the field of legal education in Burma and to the best of this author's knowledge there has never been an update in academic legal journals or in books about the subject. This article is intended to fill this lacuna in considerable detail and also to comment on variegated aspects of legal education in Burma since the 1960s.

Dr Maung Maung's Note of 1962 is a brief survey of Burma's legal education from the time of independence in 1948 to about March 1962³: the month and the year the

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¹ BA (1946) (Rangoon University), BL (Rangoon) (1949), LLD (Utrecht) (1956), JSD (Yale) (1962), of Lincoln's Inn Barrister-at-law.

² Maung Maung, 'Lawyers and Legal Education in Burma' (1962) 11 *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 285-290. This 'Note' published while Maung Maung was a visiting scholar at Yale University in the United States is reproduced with slight modifications in Maung Maung, *Law and Custom in Burma and the Burmese Family* (Martinus Nijhoff, 1963) 137-141. In June 1965 Dr Maung Maung was appointed as Chief Judge (later nomenclature 'Chief Justice') of the Chief Court (later term 'Supreme Court') (then the highest Court) by the late General Ne Win then Chairman of the Revolutionary Council. (General Ne Win had taken over power in a military coup on 2 March 1962 and he appointed by decree Maung Maung as a Judge of the Chief Court of Burma in July 1962 less than three years before Maung Maung was elevated to 'Chief Judge' by Ne Win in June 1965). In July 1971 Maung Maung was appointed by General Ne Win as a member of the ruling Revolutionary Council (RC) which was a top legislative body. He also served as Judicial Minister from July 1971 to March 1974. He became a member of the Council of State when the 1974 Constitution (the Council of State was the highest legislative body during the period 2 March 1974 to 18 September 1988) came into force and held that post until late July 1988 when he became Chairman of the Council of People's Attorneys ('Attorney-General'). (The 'Council of People's Attorneys' was also an 'organ of State power' under the 1974 Constitution). He became President of the then Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma and also Chairman of the (single and ruling) Burma Socialist Programme Party on 19 August 1988. When the military took over power on 18 September 1988 all 'organs of State power' that were formed under the 1974 Constitution were abolished and Dr Maung Maung's 'term' as Head of State lasted just under a month. Dr Maung Maung died in Rangoon, Burma on 2 July 1994.

As far as the use of the term 'Burma' or 'Myanmar' is concerned I have used the term Burma instead of Myanmar and Rangoon for 'Yangon' unless I am making a direct quote where I used the term from the quoted sources be it Myanmar or Burma, Rangoon or Yangon.

³ Maung Maung, *Law and Custom*, Ibid 139 at foot note 1 stated that '[s]ome 800 candidates offered themselves for the examinations in Part A of the B.L [Bachelor of Laws] degree in March 1962 and some 200 for the Part