”ALL I OWN IS BOOKS"

For international friends let me share in English post from Tayzar San, one of the leaders of the Myanmar’s nonviolent protest movement. But let me introduce Tayzar San first. Tayzar San studied medicine but dedicated himself to education and empowerment of others. With group of friends, young students like him in 2010 or 2011 he initiated formation of “knowledge society”, opened small library and started to run informal educational courses. He was very thin, looked fragile, soft speaking, extremely kind men of books and letters. I mostly remember him sitting somewhere in a corner reading some thick book.

I have never heard him raise the voce. He never tried to impose himself as a leader. He always tried to be the person bonding others together, always listening and trying to bring understanding. When I talked with him at the end of the last year, after yet another big electoral victory of the NLD, he was talking about his frustration and disappointment because, as he said, “we Bama have never learned to listen and understand our ethnic brothers and sisters. However, without that listening and understanding, how we will fix our country? How we will find reconciliation and peace? How we will cope with the military?”.

Few days after the military coup, Tayzar San suddenly appeared on streets of Mandalay with few dozen friends, most of them students and youth, to stage demonstration against the coup. I was terrified when I have seen photos of that small demo. When I was lecturer in Myanmar, between 2011 and 2016, I had in class many students who have spent 20-30min demonstrating bravely on the streets in 1988, 1990, 2007 and then spent next eight or even fourteen years in jail, being first tortured and than hungry most of the time. I believed the same will happen this time once again, that few more generations will be wasted by the ruthless, power-thirsty military.

However, I was wrong with my fear. Tayzar San and his friends have not been arrested by the soldiers after 30minutes of demonstrating. With that initial example of personal bravery, they have -- together with several other similar groups that staged as brave protests in other cites -- managed to wake up the whole nation in strong and determined disobedient movement and civil resistance.

Because of strong bonds of friendships and trust among students and youth, because of deep lying networks of civic activism that matured through decades of resistance to military dictatorship and due to solidarity of neighbors and ordinary citizens, Tayzar San and his group is managing to be in hiding for already more than two months. They re-appear if not every day, then ever second day to lead yet another protest and then to disappear again in the protective body of the supportive society.

They know what is the risk they are facing. They have no illusions about that. They know, if they will be captured, they will be tortured to death. And still, day after day, they appear and reappear again and again, to lead and to give example and encouragement to others. I admit, I tremble with awe in front of such heroism. I have seen wars and dictatorships in my life and I know that we humans are not made to be heroes. It is too much of a demand for us, humans. But thanks God, that some of us, in front of utmost challenge and threat, grow from their normal human being in something much bigger.

Tayzar San also become much bigger in last two months than he used to be. He is still very thin, as many in Burma who in their childhood never had enough food in families. But now the strength radiates from him when he is out on the street and his voice is loud and determined. He has grown up to be able to accept and carry his mission.

Here is Tayzar San’s latest FB post

Overthrow the era of fear
This evening I got information that the apartment in Mandalay in which I used to live has been raided twice by a group of soldiers, policemen, and plainclothes agents. Some sources said that it was already third time. They've known the exact address of this apartment for a while.

They broke down the locked door and destroyed the whole apartment. Before destroying it, they took everything they could in small bags like termite ants. There was nothing of value there. I regret only books being destroyed. It took me time to stock them and some have been beautiful. Luckily, few favorite ones are on other place. Hopefully they will survive, for better days.

I do not understand why they destroyed books and other small things in the apartment. Most of the stuff in the apartment is not my property. Actually, all I own is books. My sister's guitar is among things they stole from the apartment. How is the guitar related to the revolution against the dictatorship I'm doing? Hard to grasp.
Actually, what we called "army" is a thief and a robber gang. How sad it would be for the General Aung San, the founder of the Tatmadaw army, if only he would found out that his child has become robber gang. General Aung San requested from the army to be the “Mother and Father of the People”.

Would he now reverse that motto? This Burmese (Bama) army is the killer of the people. Actually, Tatmadaw has been been a big gang of thieves and robbers for years. Over 70 years similar crimes have been committed on regular basis in other non-Bama ethnic regions where Tatmadaw’s war against civilians never stopped.
We the Bama, majority ethnic people have a clear view of the inner workings of this murderous and robbery army during the current 2021 Spring Revolution. We are experiencing it first-hand and in front of our own eyes. It is now becoming obvious to everybody in the country who is the common enemy. Who is the main obstacle to the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous federal democracy. It is in a plain sight that the only obstacle for the peace and prosperity in our country is a terrorist military regime. Clarity of this fact is the biggest gain in our current revolution.

Unite, all oppressed people.
Fight the common enemy.
Look for the common goal.
Earth will not collapse
Do not give up
Do not back down
If there is a struggle, there is a victory
The military dictatorship must fail
Uprising must win