



RICE is LIFE

Aung Kyaw Htet

RICE is LIFE

Solo Exhibition by

Aung Kyaw Htet

20 June – 18 July, 2015



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FOREWORD

Jørn Middelborg

Thavibu Gallery

Thavibu Gallery has the pleasure of presenting the current catalogue and exhibition *RICE is LIFE* by the Myanmar artist Aung Kyaw Htet (b. 1965). The exhibition takes place in Bangkok on 20 June – 18 July, 2015 and features a series of oil paintings on canvas. In this exhibition, the artist explores how rice is at the centre of religious and secular life in Myanmar.

Aung Kyaw Htet is a devout Buddhist and grew up in a small village – two factors which have a strong influence on his art. In the current exhibition *RICE is LIFE* Aung Kyaw Htet paints canvases showing what rice means to the population and life in Myanmar. He explores the way rice is planted, and how it is harvested and stored in traditional ways. These are ways that once were common throughout Southeast Asia, but now are becoming rarer as mechanization is taking over. He also shows how rice is traditionally cooked and served, and how rice is offered to the hundreds of thousands of monks, novices and nuns every morning throughout Myanmar.

Aung Kyaw Htet has emerged to become one of Myanmar's most important contemporary painters. His detailed depictions of novice monks and nuns have received acclaim as being both realistic and sensitive as he captures their expressions with humanity and dignity. His paired-down compositions and use of colour emphasise the serenity of his Buddhist faith an important foundation to his Myanmar culture despite the desparate conditions and poverty that prevail in Myanmar.

I take this opportunity to thank Aung Kyaw Htet for his collaboration and Ralph Kiggell for checking the language.

PLATES

RICE is LIFE

PLANTING RICE

Buffalos are used to plough the irrigated soil and mud to prepare it for planting the rice seedlings. Also smoothing is performed where a log is dragged by a buffalo over the field to smooth the earth, creating an even bed for the seedlings to be planted and ensuring that the water depth is equal.



Ploughing the Rice Fields, 2014 | Oil on canvas | 122 x 76 cm

The rice seedlings are started in beds and after a period of 30-50 days are transplanted byhand to the permanent rice fields which have been flooded by rain or river water.



Planting the Rice Seedlings, 2015 | Oil on canvas | 127 x 86 cm

Planting the rice seedlings is followed by weeding and maintaining the rice fields.



Planting Rice, 2014 | Oil on canvas | 167 x 116 cm

HARVESTING RICE

When rice is harvested, it is called 'paddy'. When the paddy is ripe it is cut and harvested by hand.



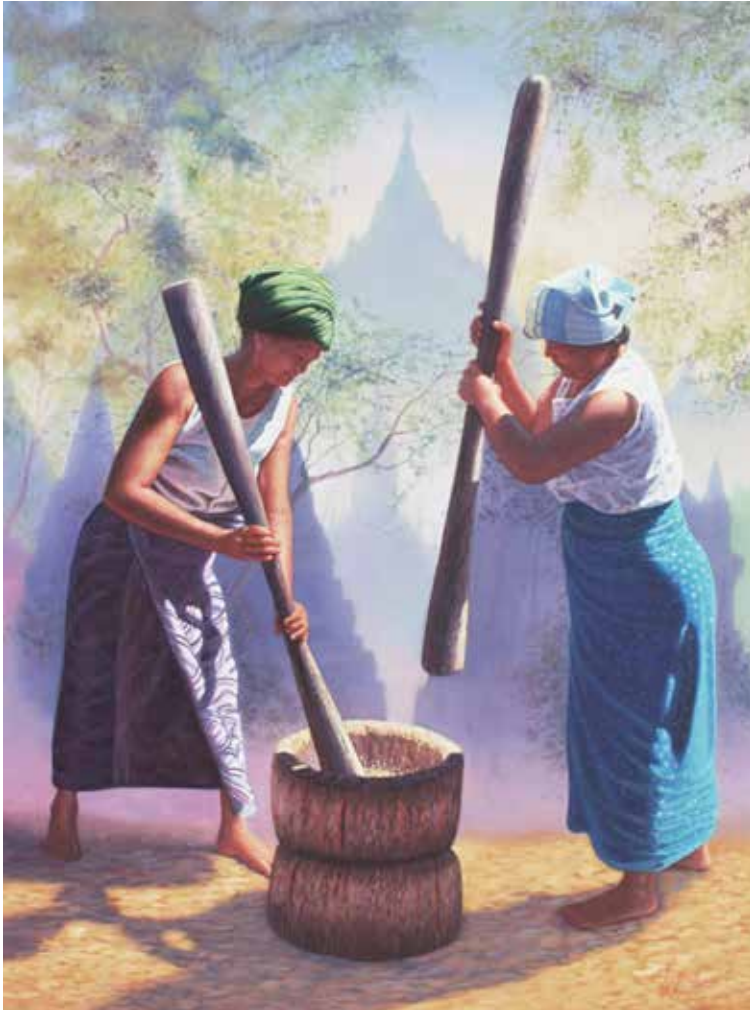
Harvesting Rice, 2014 | Oil on canvas | 122 x 91 cm

After the rice has been harvested, it is threshed to loosen the hulls, normally by flailing, treading or working in a mortar and winnowed free of chaff by tossing it in the air above a sheet or mat.



Threshing Rice, 2015 | Oil on canvas | 168 x 116 cm

The outer husk is removed, but the bran layer is left intact. This forms brown rice, which is then cleaned and graded. If the brown rice is to be sold as white rice it is then taken to the mill for milling, an abrasive action to remove the bran layer surrounding the rice grain.



Pounding Rice, 2015 | Oil on canvas | 91 x 122 cm

COOKING RICE



Cooking Rice, 2015 | Oil on canvas | 76 x 102 cm



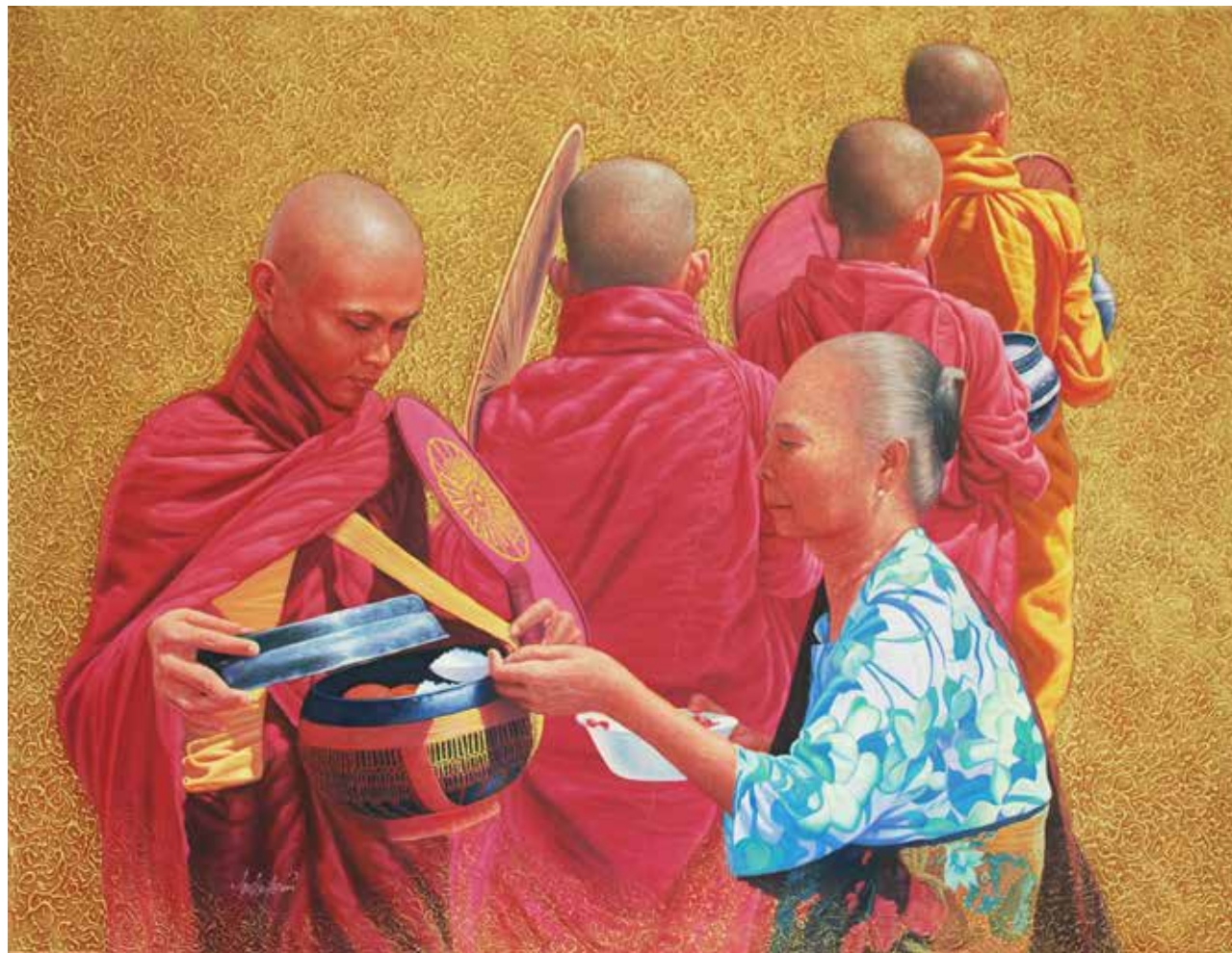
Preparing a Rice Meal, 2014 | Oil on canvas | 114 x 86 cm



Cooking Rice in the Village, 2015 | Oil on canvas | 152 x 117 cm

OFFERING RICE

Rice is an essential part of the food being offered to monks, novices and nuns every day when they walk their morning round.



Offering Rice, 2014 | Oil on canvas | 152 x 117 cm

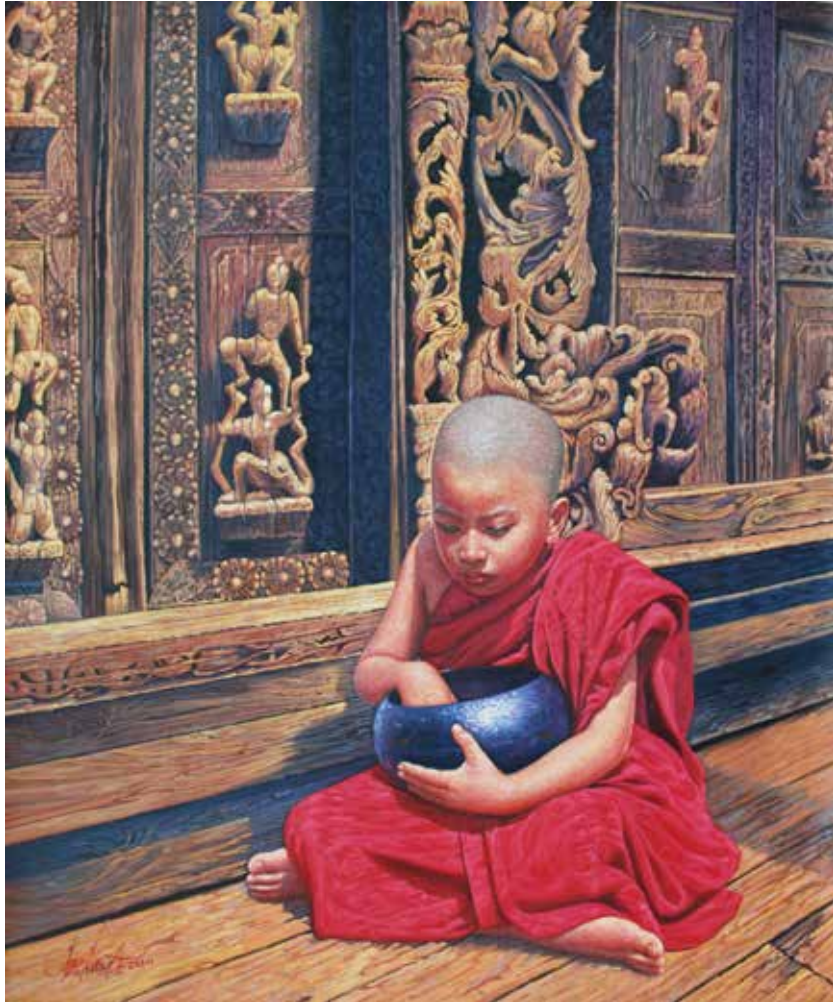


Offering Rice to the Abbott, 2014 | Oil on canvas | 152 x 117 cmf

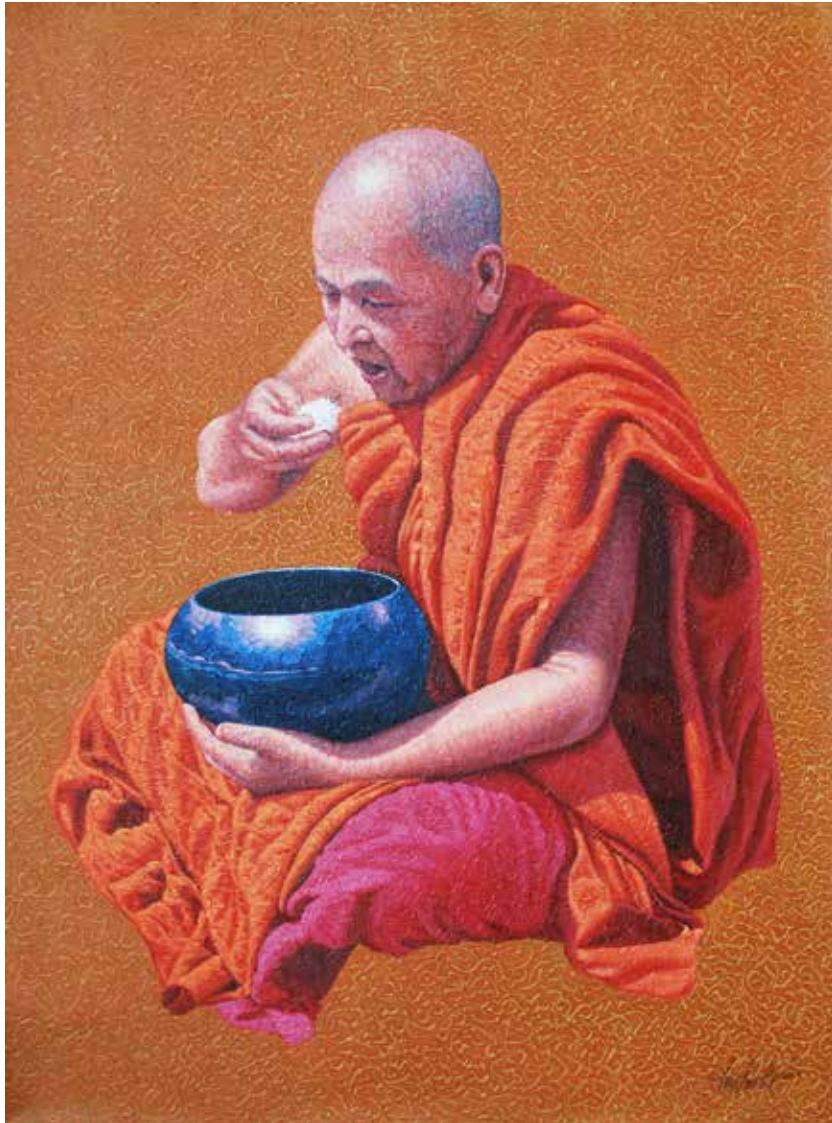


Offering Rice in Shan State, 2015 | Oil on canvas | 101 x 76 cm

EATING RICE



Novice Enjoying Rice 2014 | Oil on canvas | 76 x 91 cm



Abbott Eating Rice Offerings 22014 | Oil on canvas | 91 x 122 cm

CHRONOLOGY



Aung Kyaw Htet

Born 1965 in Myaungmya
Studies at the State School of Fine Arts,
Rangoon and with art masters
U Thukha and U Aung Moe

Selected Art Exhibitions

- 2002 – *Burmese Days* at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok
- 2003 – Group exhibition - **Singapore**
Shades of Asia at HKFinearts - **Hong Kong**
- 2004 – *Burmese Master Paintings* at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok
- 2006 – Art Taipei – **Taiwan**
Spirit of Burma at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok

- 2008 – Art Singapore 2008 – **Singapore**
Solo show: *Burmese Inspirations* at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok
Spiritual Spaces at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok
- 2009 – The India Art Summit – New Delhi, **India**
Solo show: *The Silent Journey* at the Red Gallery – Dubai, **UAE**
- 2010 – Solo show: *Shades of Grey* at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok
Art Monaco'10 – **Monaco**
- 2012 – Solo Show at Chan Hampe Galleries – **Singapore**
Solo show: *Illuminations* at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok
- 2013 – Solo show at Gallery Jireh – **Korea**
- 2014 – Group show: *East Meets West* at Agora Gallery, New York – **USA**
- 2015 – Solo show: *RICE is LIFE* at Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok

Museum Collections

The National Museum of Myanmar
The National Art Gallery of Malaysia



B1G1 - Thavibu Gallery has partnered with Buy 1 Give 1, which implies that when you buy an artwork from Thavibu Gallery you will automatically give a donation to a charity in the B1G1 network. Donation from one painting purchased provides one blind person with accommodation and shelter for one month. www.b1g1.com



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