

Escape from the Hell or A story of a girl domestic worker who was brutally abused

Kaw Kaw, Yangon



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“They threw hot water at me. They cut my nipple with scissors because I slept during the night. They did not want me to sleep.” She said this while she was crying so heavily I hardly heard what she said. She seemed to be afraid of people and she held her head down. She could not answer much of anyone’s questions. It is difficult to predict how deeply she was traumatized by her experience.

15 years old Ma Than Than Aye lost her mother when she was young and she stayed with her father. She has 4 siblings and she is the youngest among them. Her life in hell started 4 years ago when a monk from a monastery in La Ha, North Dagon, Yangon helped her find work as a housemaid through her father. Her father U Htun Thein with a sad face said ***“A monk from that monastery told me that one of his female donors, Daw Aye Aye Win, was in need of a housemaid. She has a granddaughter and took my daughter to her house as a companion for her granddaughter. I allowed my daughter to go because the monk himself guaranteed it. I went to see her only one time in year 2014 within 4 to 5 years. At that time, my daughter did not look happy. She told me she wanted to come back. We did not get any wages for her work because the house owner is the***

female donor of the monk."

So far, Ma Than Than Aye said she got 10,000 kyat one time and 5,000 (around \$5) for another time only, in 5 years of working as a housemaid. She was tortured after 2 months of her arrival at Daw Ay Aye Win household, who live in Taw Win housing (Dagon), Yangon. She did not get any benefits.

With a very soft voice with head held down she said ***"They give me a room at the back of the house where there is nether blanket nor pillow. I had to sleep just like that. They hit my head with steel cooking spoon."*** When looking at her head where we can hardly find hairs and saw the scars and some of them were treated but the whole head were full of different kinds of wounds. ***"They beat me until it bled. So treated my wounds by putting salt in them."***

7 people live at Daw Ay Aye Win house and among them the 2 women who beat her with chains, steel cooking spoons, and cut her with scissors, her whole body was full with all kinds of wounds and scars. They did not give her any food and furthermore they accused her of stealing food to eat. Because of that they pulled her little finger with pliers. We can see that her little finger is windling.

"They did not give me any food to eat for a whole week to 10 days. If I told anyone on the outside about this, they said they would ask me to compensate for the things that were broken or destroyed because of me. My hands are numb because they pulled with pliers and from beating. Because of that if I try to hold something, I drop and break things. Even if I tried to escape, they threatened me that everyone in this area is their people." she said.

One of her teeth was broken because Daw Ay Aye Win son-in-law kicked her in the face. She ran away because she could not bear or endure the abuse. She was not able to see or visit her family for five years. When she ran to the township section leader house and with the help of township section leader, on July 14, she could get contact with her uncle Ko Myo Oo.

Ko Myo Oo said ***"She ran from the 41th section and hid at one of the houses, and the house owner saw her bleeding. They***

worried about her wound and went to report it to the township section leader. With the contact of the township section leader, she came back to our place and with the help of the section leader, we reported the case to the police after taking her to the hospital".

The Township chairperson of the executive committee of National League for Democracy (NLD) of South Dagon, U Nyi Nyi said *"We filed a complaint with 4 sections of act. Section (325) on Punishment for voluntarily causing grievous hurt, section (354) on Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty, section (506) on Punishment for criminal intimidation and section (294) Obscene acts and songs. The case is charged at North Dagon police station on 20th".* U Nyi Nyi said if the police ignored this complaint, he will continue to prosecute the case according to the justice law based on the desires and feelings of the survivor herself. *"We will report to the International Labour Organization. Moreover, we will inform the case to the Ministry of Home Affair. We will inform to all organizations working with children. Then, there should be a law that will prevent these kinds of cases from happening in the future."*

In Burma, there are similar cases of underage maids being abused in all regions of the country. He continued to explain that *"We will conduct discussions with international workers association".* U Nyi Nyi said at the press conference that he will circulate this case to 500 networks within his social networks and as for the press conference so the information will be circulated to 200 networks. *"We heard that this kind of case happens in 4 different areas. There are many similar cases like this happening to our young girls, where they aren't seen or heard by anyone. How many of them are being tortured or abuse invisibly? How many of them are dead – where no one knows?"*

The member of the executive committee of National League for Democracy of Dagon said that even though this inhuman treatment case was reported to the police, no action has been taken until today.

Ma Than Than Aye who was both physically and mentally suffering could only give a few answers while she was bombarded with questions.

While there is no mother to care for her and her father was occupied with work, now she is living with her uncle U Myo Oo. U Myo Oo said that she felt safe living with him and the family. She is feeling at ease. Although Ma Than Than Aye is still a child, it seemed like she can somehow forgive those who committed these sins against her. ***“I felt really painful. I don’t want to go back to that place but I don’t want to do anything against them.”***