



Dear EMA family,

Maybe you've heard. There was a military coup on February 1st in Myanmar where Earth Mission Asia is privileged to provide and teach healthcare to the Karen people. The military claims election fraud in the November 8th, 2020, elections. By all accounts, the move seems to have been well planned and executed as there has been no reports of violence so far. But the people of Burma have been here before. And they are afraid. Now, an ominous cloud hangs over this young democratic nation.

Here's an update from **Dr. Mitch Ryan (EMA's Program Director)**:

"As you know, Earth Mission operates a 5-year Physician Assistant training program specifically for ethnic Karen people from the remote parts of Eastern Burma (Myanmar). For the last 70 years, the Karen and the Burma military have intermittently fought a bloody civil war in these mountainous jungles. Even during the best of times, life in these areas is hard. People struggle to grow enough rice to eat. They live in simple bamboo huts and own few possessions they can't make themselves. At best, the surrounding jungle environment is unforgiving. Sweltering heat and daily downpours rule half of the year. Insects and the pyramid of critters that hunt them, thrive. Then, an all too short pleasantly cool season quickly degenerates into months of bitterly cold nights and dry dusty days. Add on to that diseases like malaria, typhus, typhoid, pneumonia, diarrhea, and dysentery ... And on to that, the potential that at any minute the violent political struggle could visit your pain-vulnerable body ... And you have a pretty good idea of what living is like in these areas.

Yet there is also beauty here. One that stops me in my modern stressed-out self-orientated tracts. Together, the jungle Karen have learned the power of tribe ... that we humans are made to be in community. Women weave beautiful cloth for their families. Children are loved. The elderly are sincerely respected. And everyone holds babies. When necessary, neighbors willingly carry heavy loads for each other, even for those who they don't like. I don't mean to describe the Karen community life as a syrupy collection of Disney-esque platitudes. It certainly has its own set of struggles and challenges. But this is a lifestyle that many of us have forgotten and dare I say, need to re-learn if we are to survive our times. For this is where our strength lays. I say again ... I am convinced of it ... this is where as humans, our strength lies. In community.

*Jesus boils down our duty as Christians to a single task. Ok perhaps two things but he says they are similar, and that similarity is terribly important. But I believe our Karen friends, like a patient older brother, is showing us how to better live that kind of life. **As foreigners, we bring the technical skills of medicine and engineering and we bring resources to the Earth Mission PA training program. But the Karen are teaching us many of life's more important lessons.** While there are serious and very real political problems in Myanmar, we at Earth Mission feel we have been called to work and learn next to our brother's side. To work quietly*



and if needed sacrificially through these problems to the extent that we can. That's what we are focused on.

We trust you to form your own opinion on the plethora of information available online about the political situation. You don't need us to tickle your ears, except for one thing. We love the Karen people and are dedicated to empowering them with healthcare.

*While politicians plotted and schemed, **our teams delivered babies**. One delivery at EMA's Rain Tree Clinic was particularly difficult. The delivery team was in communication with our midwife through the night. The team did a great job in a difficult situation and although they saved the life of the mother, the baby was lost. They would have needed a C-section to save the baby and that just was not available. The team finished up and a few hours later headed out on another delivery at a nearby village. That mother also had some difficulties. Thankfully, this time, our staff were well equipped to handle the problem. Mom and baby are doing well. Our medical director, out of town on a CoVid-19 training, also ran into a delivery. He said he was glad he was available. One suggested name for this youngster was a very Karen*

*sounding name ... ကုဒတၢ်သီ ... KhuDayTaThaw. Thaw means new. **The struggle for life and health in the midst of a pandemic and political change is a stark reminder of the importance of having dedicated local people being empowered to provide their own high-quality healthcare.***

We want you to know that all EMA's staff in Myanmar are safe and accounted for. The mission of providing quality healthcare to the remote villages in Myanmar is ongoing. Healthy babies are being born, and the lives of mothers are being saved. Ailments, illnesses, and diseases are being treated. **Last year (2020), because of YOUR gracious sacrifice and financial support, EMA served 12,183 patients.** Thank you. YOU make this a reality.

Please receive this brief update as a call for prayer and support. Times are uncertain in Myanmar. Literally, anything could and might happen. Yet, by God's grace, EMA remains steadfast to provide quality healthcare.

Please pray and consider a gift so that EMA might respond swiftly to the challenging days ahead (<https://www.earth-mission.org/give/>).

Blessings,

Dr. Rob Campbell
Director of Development