

*A Short History of  
Christianity in Burma*



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- *Burma (Myanmar) has an area of 261,789 sq miles – roughly the size of Texas, USA.*
- *Population of Burma currently is around 58 millions. 89% are Budhists; Christians: 5%.*
- *Bounded on the West by Bangladesh, Northwest by India, North - N. East by China, On the east by Laos, and on the East and south east by Thailand.*
- *Burma was a Sovereign Country with its monarchy system beginning 1044 AD.*
- *Burma was colonized by Britain in 1885; Burma's monarchy was abolished.*
- *Separated from India in 1935 as limited self-Government.*
- *Burma got Independence from Britain in 1948. Democratic government installed 1952.*
- *Military took over (coup d'etat) on March 2, 1962. And the country declined in all aspects.*

Figure 1 : Map of the present-day Union of Burma

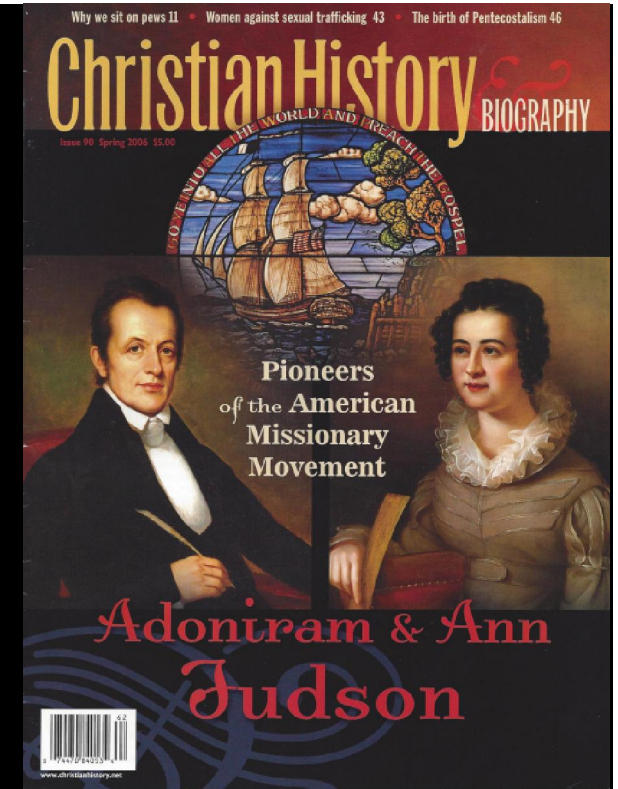


- **Adoniram Judson**: First Protestant Missionaries to Burma from the USA:

- Judson was born August 9, 1788, in Malden, Massachusetts, USA.
- He arrived with his wife Ann Judson in Burma on July 13, 1813.
- His counterpart from Britain was William Carey, arriving India in 1793).
- Dr. William Carey founded Serampore College in West Bengal, India.

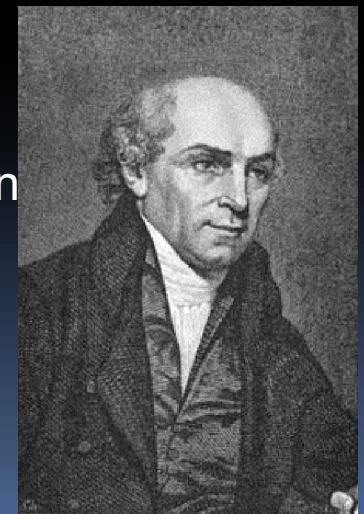
- Judson's initial works: Learn Burmese language 12 hours a day, for 3 years;

- Started a preaching booth in Rangoon – known as “Zayat” – to attract the populace in the city to hear the Gospel preached.
- Wore white robe of similar pattern with the Buddhist monks' yellow robe.
- Started to translate the Gospel of Matthew in Burmese.
- After 7 years received a first Burmese convert named U Naw.



Adoniram  
Judson

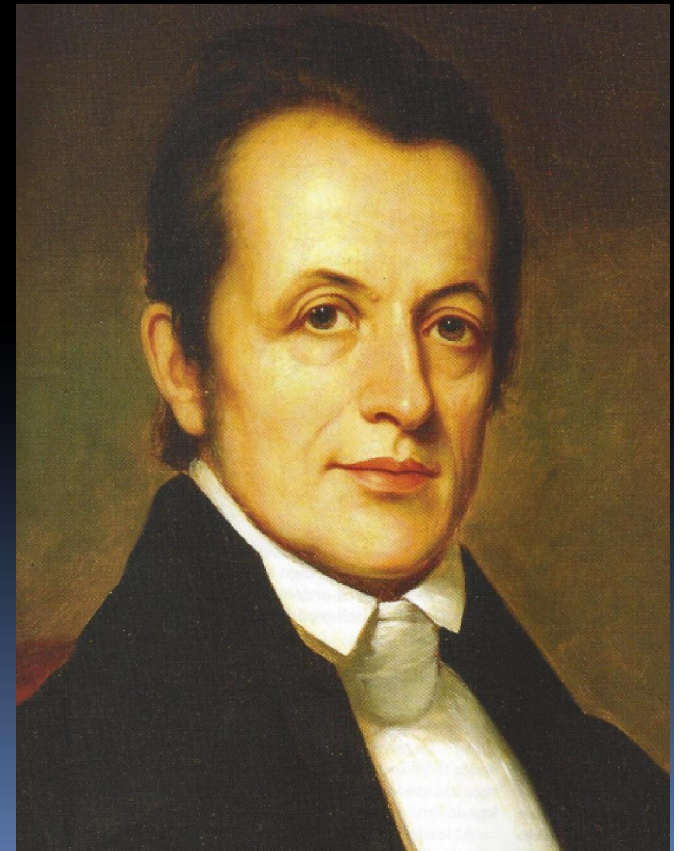
Ann Judson



William Carey



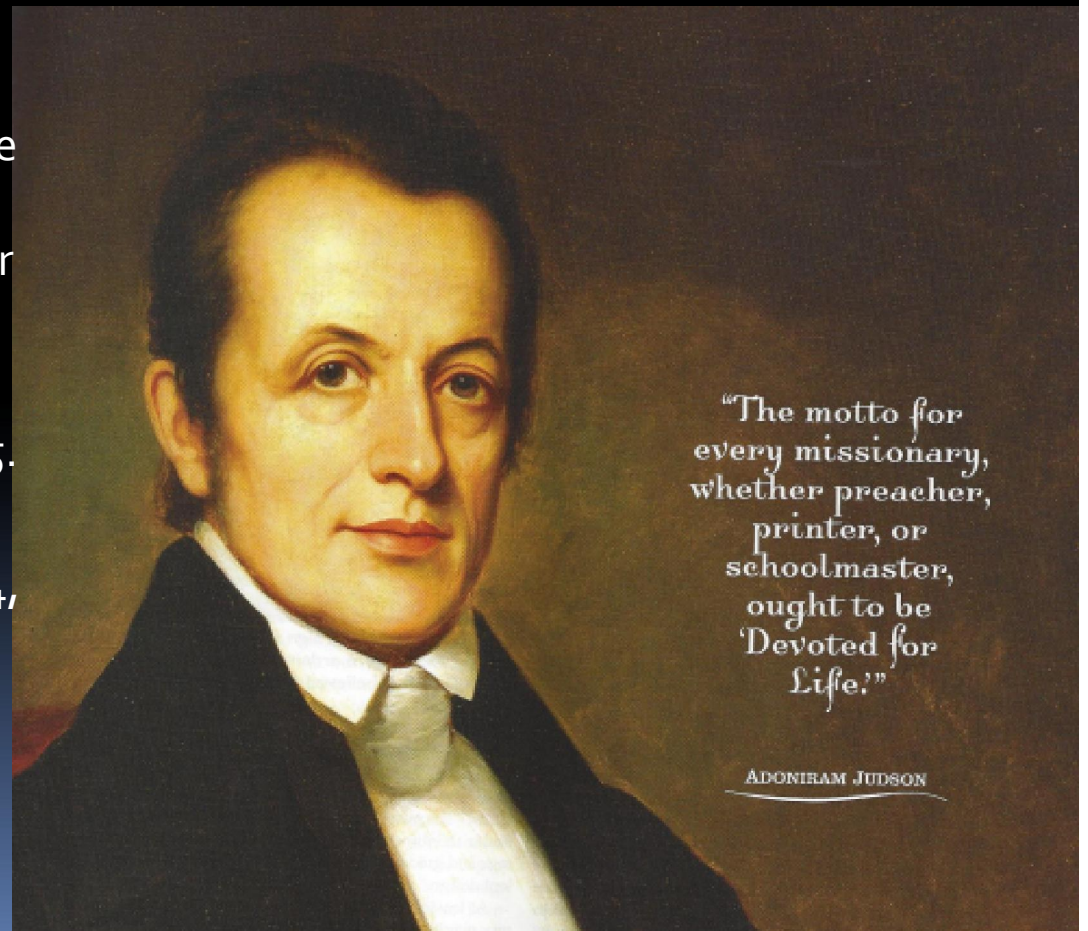
- Judson appealed to the Burmese King in Mandalay for permission for Christians to practice and propagate their new religion with freedom.
- His appeal rejected, his documents thrown and trampled on the ground.
- He was arrested and tortured as suspected British spy,
  - He was put in stocks, in up-side-down position for 7 days.
  - He was forced to walk in dirt road without shoes in hot sun many miles
  - He was moved to crude and dirty jail in a village called Aungpinlay.
  - Many of his fellow prisoners died on the torturous road





- Judson's wife Ann saved his NT translation who hid it in her pillow.
- Judson survived the "hellish ordeal" and began translating the OT.
- He suffered loss of his two wives, children, and his ill-health; He even suffered a long year of depression. Miraculously he recovered!
- Judson finished translating the Bible into Burmese - still revered by the Burmese today. It took 24 years for Judson to finish translation into Burmese;
- It was printed and published in 1835. The first ever Bible in Burmese.
- --- His wife Ann died on Oct 24, 1816, and buried in Amherst, now Kyaikkami.

- Judson was seriously ill, advised to travel to USA by Sea.
- On the way to USA, he died in the Sea of Bengal on April 12, 1850.
- He was buried in the Sea – at the age of 61.





- Missionaries to Chin Hills (later Chin State) in Burma:
  - First missionary couple: the Rev Arthur Carson and Laura Carson, arriving in Hakha on March 15, 1899.
- The Chins were described as “uncivilized and savage”.
  - Rev. Carson died after laboring for 7 years,
  - Laura Carson continued to serve for 12 years.
  - A dozen of missionaries arrived in Chin Hills.
- After the Second World War Christianity grew in strength and numbers;
  - Association was formed in 1938 as “Chin Baptist Association”
  - Joining Christians from 3 townships;
  - Zomi (Chin) Baptist Convention was formed in 1954.
  - Currently, Zomi Baptist Convention is the largest Organization in Chin State: consisting of 28 Associations, with over 2 million members.

Laitlang Missionary



- Half a million Chins live in the Chin State, and over 75% are now Christians.
- The last American Missionaries were the Rev. Robert & Mrs Johnson, arriving in Hakha, Chin State in July 1946, and were forced to leave Burma by the Government in May 1965.
- The total population of Christians in Burma: about 5% of the total population.
- In spite of difficulties and challenges for Christians in Burma, Christians grow slowly but steadily during the last 50 years, in the midst of military dictatorship and persecutions – to be seen below.



Laitlangah Missionary





- Falam Baptist Church – largest church in the Chin State

