

Translation of interview with Zaw Zaw Aung, head of NLD Youth Wing Mandalay Division about the brutal attack on May 30.

He was going along with Daw Aung Suu Kyi when they were attacked.

If you would like to listen his interview in Burmese, please visit <http://www.nldla-australia.org/>.

Q. You were in the midst of the attack on Daw Su's motorcade at Depayin township in Sagaing Division and escaped luckily. What time did you leave Butalin for Depayin?

A. Between 4:30 and 5.

Q. At about what time did you reach Kyi village?

A. At about 8 in the night.

Q. Were there people on the road to greet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi?

A. Yes. We responded and spoke to the people.

Q. Were there people who shouted and opposed Daw Aung San Suu Kyi there?

A. I heard no such shouting.

Q. It was 8 p.m. when you arrived at Kyi Ywa. How large a number of people were there to greet and welcome you all?

A. I estimate about 3000. Could be 4 or 5 thousand.

Q. It is a big village?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there jungles on both sides of Kyi Ywa?

A. There are paddy fields.

Q. Did you hear any opposition voices in the crowd that was out there to welcome you all?

A. No. I did not hear any opposition voices.

Q. Were there any posters etc. of dissent?

A. No.

Q. So Daw Suu addressed the people, for how long?

A. About 10 minutes.

Q. You all went on from there?

A. We had not gone very far. About 200 feet from the villagers – the cars behind had not caught up with us as yet. We could see the villagers. They had not dispersed. Then, two monks and three laymen stood in front of Daw Suu's car stopping it from proceeding. They asked Daw Suu to speak to the people.

Q. Instead of being at the place where the people had already assembled?

A. They could have joined them if they wanted. Instead of that, they stood and waited at a distance.

Q. Stood and waited, then asked for a speech?

A. Yes, they asked her to step out and speak. It was late. We had to go on to Depayin also. So, the NLD member who was in Daw Su's car said "Hon'ble monk, it is very late and there is no time.

Please excuse your disciples. But the monks did not leave. They were looking back and said “ The people in our gang are useless” . We got out of the car and stood around to protect Daw Su. Then the monk said “My people will be following up. Listen to a monk’s words. Try your best to preach to them”. We requested them to let us pass but they insisted that we stay. Then, the place was lit up with by car head lights and we saw about 7 cars.

Q. What sort of cars?

A. All sorts. Trucks that carry goods, earth, and Dina cars. People descended from those cars and without saying anything they beat up the villagers. Because the head lights were on we could see all that was happening.

Q. Were the villagers beaten up by the people who came out of those cars?

A. Yes. The cars were not close by but because the head lights were on we could see everything. There were a lot of monks who did the beating up. A lot of men too.

Q. So monks came out of those cars?

A. When the villagers were being beaten up they screamed and fled. They were chased by some of those men. Others came around to our side, surrounded us and without saying anything just thrashed at us. We noticed that these monks had pieces of white cloth tied around their right hands.

Q. These monks are referred to as Identity?

A. This is how they identify themselves. This indicates that they are not like the ordinary monks.

Q. Can we accept them as genuine monks?

A. How can that be. When they beat up the villagers and our party who were acting peacefully. We heard and we saw for ourselves how they continued thrashing even those who were dead on the ground. Innocent people were beaten to death. Genuine monks will not do that.

Q. So, they beat up the villagers first, then went between the villagers and the NLD party and proceeded to beat them up ?

A. Yes. They beat up NLD members. The villagers fled and some could have fallen with NLD members. Our numbers were small. But whether our numbers is small or large, no one had any weapons. Our leaders gave strict instructions that even if attacked we were not to respond with violence. We were to bear up with fortitude.

Q. So they continued to brutally beat up all the NLD members who accompanied in the motorcade?

A. To kill, to mutilate was their purpose. So much so that if they saw a body moving they went for it saying “there is still sign of life – beat, beat”. Not with just one stick. They went through the crowd with two or three sticks in hand and thrashed at fallen bodies. They responded to groans or pleas for mercy with severer thrashings. At that time we were very afraid for our lives. So we lay very still and did not move. At that time these were the words they uttered. “ We have built roads, we have built bridges. You do not talk about these things. What has your Aung San Suu Kyi done for the country? You want to be under the authority of the Kala’s wife (Kala meaning white man). Again they thrashed at the fallen bodies.

Q. We heard that women also accompanied Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. What happened to them?

A. Yes, the women wore ‘pinni’ (home spun material). The men also wore pinni. They announced that they did not want to see any ‘pinni’ and ordered all to remove their pinni clothing. They snatched and pulled off the pinni clothing of the fallen bodies and those within their reach. The girls asked not to pull their clothes off but they forced them and grabbed and tugged and removed their clothes off. Some of them had their gold chains snatched. I saw this with my own eyes. Not satisfied with this , they grabbed and took away their hand bags also.

Q. So they beat up the people, then made them remove their pinni garments. For the men, removal of the pinni jacket is no problem but for the women this would be most embarrassing and disgraceful because it is worn as a blouse. So this was a deliberate act to cause them shame.

A. Yes, they took their necklaces and their bags with money.

Q. For how long a time were they doing this?

A. It could have been not less than two hours. They went around all the cars and vehicles and watched to see if there was any movement and looked on at those with injuries.

Q. What about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's car?

A. Very soon after all this started five cars, including Daw Su's and U Tin Oo's car drove off to the front. The Youth Wing Security car and our Mandalay Division car too.

Q. So they escaped from Kyi Ywa and you were left behind? So the beating took place for about two hours after they had driven off?

A. Yes it was more than two hours.

Q. Can you give an estimate of how many died or wounded as a result of that attack?

A. Over 20 persons. I am talking about what happened at Kyi Ywa. What happened after that I estimate that

Q. So Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's car got away. Then again at Depaiyin the same thing happened?

A. Yes. The young people from there fled and I met them. They were beaten up with spears, wooden, bamboo and iron rods. They saw students with hands tied being led away and their cycles confiscated. This person's cycle was taken but he managed to escape.

Q. Our information is that gun shots were heard there.

A. Yes. We heard the gun shots. It was between midnight and 1a:m. We were deeply worried for our Aunty Suu and Uncle U Tin Oo. Without any shooting here about 20 or so died and sustained injuries. With shooting it could be worse. More could die.

Q. Did these attackers go forward or did they retreat?

A. It appears to be a separate group. They turned and dispersed.

Q. At about what time?

A. After 10 pm.

Q. How did you escape then?

A. I was lucky. I escaped without any injury. I fled and crossed the paddy fields to Monywa.

Q. After you escaped what did the USDA do after they retreated?

A. Though I was not hurt, I was shaken and very distressed. It was about 10:30. I saw a person on a cycle. Looked like he came to see the spectacle. He stood and looked at the dead and after some time he departed. Then about 12:45, three Hino buses arrived without any passengers. They saw the injured and fallen, some dead and the line of cars. They turned back and left.

Q. So those injured and the dead were left lying there?

A. Yes I saw some being taken away on cars.

Q. In the end what happened?

A. We were not steady on our feet. I looked on. At about 12:45 (I had my watch on so I knew the time) members of the police force, the fire brigade, local authorities put the injured and dead bodies on to motor vehicles. Then what astonished me most was that our car which was heading west for

Depayin was pushed so that it appeared to be heading south and shoved down the ditch. Another car was pushed into the ditch. This was a deliberate act to create a different scenario. I witnessed this with my own eyes.

Q. To look like two cars collided?

A. Yes, to appear that way. I couldn't believe my eyes. I remember this very clearly. Then some of the cars with injured people drove off towards Depayin. Some cars went in the other direction. About 30 persons remained. I cannot say definitely if they were the police or the USDA members because they all were in the same uniform. They pushed the cars towards Ye U side.

Q. These were the cars in which NLD members traveled?

A. Yes. They pushed them. Then we could hear them removing steel parts from them.

Q. All this happened in Kyi Ywa? You don't know what happened in Depayin?

A. No I don't know about that.

Q. Earlier you said that you heard gun shots from the place towards which the cars were heading after this incident. Some did not say so. Some said they saw. It looks like there was another party of attackers.

A. Yes, that is definite. Because we heard those shots and people who saw have spoken about it.

Q. Thank you for giving us this information.

A. This is an account of what we know. If they fired shouts many would have died. It must be worse than what happened here.

Q. The events that happened later must have been more serious.

A. Yes. We have experienced very serious attacks.

Thank You.