

## Miracles in a Foreign Land

The 2012 mission trip to Burma, along with preparations and last-minute conferences, was a very memorable time of my life. Because we live in the States, our mission team had to first book a flight to Taiwan. Once we reach Taiwan, we would transfer to Yangon in the south and then take another flight to Mandalay, the heart of Myanmar. From there, a six hour car trip would be waiting for us, set en route to our final destination Laoshi.

I remember the first day of our trip, August 1<sup>st</sup>, the first miracle. Our flight was set to take off at 1 AM, early August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Few days prior to our departure, we heard news that there was a typhoon that was surrounding Taiwan. Thus, around 9 PM August 1<sup>st</sup>, we received a call from the airlines saying that our flight would be delayed for two hours. A delayed flight does not usually cause problems for the passengers; however, because the plane from Taiwan to Yangon flies every two days, a delayed flight to Taiwan may result in our mission trip being cancelled. With the mission trip cancelled, all our preparations, meetings, and prior efforts would be for naught.

As newly scheduled, we boarded the plane at 3 AM, early morning on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. The average time it takes to fly from San Francisco to Taiwan is about 13 hours. So, for the first few hours on the plane, I worried over the possibility that we wouldn't make it on time to transfer to Yangon. Realizing that worrying wouldn't make the plane fly faster, I gave up and went to sleep, praying before I fell unconscious.

The flight from San Francisco to Taiwan lasted 11 hours, arriving two hours early. It shocked everyone that the plane was able to land easily and arrive on time during a typhoon, let alone two hours earlier than expected. Thus, our group made it right on time for the plane transfer, and we were headed off to Yangon without any worries.

The second miracle happened on August 4<sup>th</sup>. We were travelling from Mandalay to Laoshi by car. Similar to toll bridges in America, there were toll stations between different towns in Myanmar. The few toll stations we had crossed simply required a fee to pass, but the last toll station was entirely different. Our driver had paid for the passing fee, but a few nearby Burmese officers stopped our van. Our van had clear windows, so it was clear to see that there was one Burmese driver, nine pale-skinned outsiders, and a pile of suitcases in the back; the majority of the people in the van were females. Despite the pleading tone and explanations from our driver, the police officers insisted that they see our visas. In the dead silence, all eyes were focused on the officers, fearful of the final verdict. With a sneer at our foreign passports, the officers returned them and allowed us to pass.

We sat there, not speaking for a few minutes, stunned at what had passed. I'm pretty sure that the expressions on our faces spoke, "What had just happened?" It was unclear if Burmese officers normally stop foreigners. We weren't completely sure of what had happened, but it was evident that everyone had just avoided what would have been a violent storm.