

# Myanmar

Firstly, I wish to thank everyone for their generous support and donations. I am pleased to say that I raised the funds needed, which made it possible for me to go and work voluntarily in Myanmar. And my thanks go to the acupuncture supply companies\* who generously donated needles, moxa and educational materials.

The project was a huge success, far beyond my expectations. Our team consisted of four acupuncturists from the UK and one from USA. We taught and practiced acupuncture in a clinical setting at the Watchet Jivitadana Sangha Hospital, outside of Mandalay, the heart of Burmese Buddhism. Then, a 100 miles journey and we set up a clinic in a village in Gadaw. During our trip we stayed in Monasteries where the hospitality could not have been more kind and generous, we were so well looked after! The Sayadaw (Head Monk of the Monastery) took the arduous journey to the village to pay his respects to us all. That was such a heart felt honour!

Over the two weeks we worked with about 20 acupuncture students and records show we treated over 1,000 patients. Outside of clinic we ran teaching sessions. We saw fantastic treatment results from patients who reported reductions in musculoskeletal pain, more movement where there had been paralysis and in joints previously immobilised. Patients had felt more sensations where there had been numbness to treating hypertension and seen blood pressure lowered. Patients experienced reduced palpitations and relief from insomnia. I had seen young patients' who had facial paralysis, some had started to talk again and

others moved their tongues. We saw relief from nerve damage in children and adults who had had malaria and conditions as a result of old viper and cobra bites.

I found the Burmese people have a great spirit of warmth, with big bright smiles that really touched my heart, they were so kind, welcoming and generous, especially having known the life, fear and regime they have lived under for all these years. There was often the sound of laughter inside and outside of clinic. The students worked so hard and it was fantastic to see how they learned with a passion, they were thirsty for knowledge, information and experience.

Mr U Win Ko, the project lead at Watchet Hospital, said on my last day "You really don't know the tremendous impact you have all had on the people of Burma from the high standard of teaching you gave us, the great benefits for our health and to bringing huge acupuncture donations and raising publicity in your country! Thank you." The students continue to work voluntarily, three days a week, in regular acupuncture clinics in both the hospital and the temple in Mandalay.

I believe that I was the one who has learned a huge amount!

**Gisela Norman,**  
*Acupuncture Volunteer in Myanmar*  
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\* Harmony Medical, ShuLan, Balance Healthcare and the Journal of Chinese Medicine

for more information visit:  
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