

Promoting Public Outreach: Awareness of Astronomy in Myanmar

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Myanmar, as one of the ASEAN countries, has a respectable history of Astronomy, Astrology, Astrophotography and Science Facts. In fact astronomy has been part of the beliefs and perceptions of Myanmar people starting from the ancient time and carrying over as cultural heritage. Thus, most people now-a-day has unclear mindset between Astronomy and Astrology which is just a part of Astronomy.

Basic Astronomy subject has been instilled in the government's education system and included in the **Basic Education School Curriculum** starting from Grade II level by introducing day and night formation. By this the young children are being stimulated to start observing sun-rise, sun-set, moon phases and even planets in the night sky. Also they are introduced to Solar System on earth's rotation and how weather has been formed in the secondary school curriculums (Science and Geography). The advanced technology for Astronomy is now teaching in Astrophysics subject and in some Mathematics lessons at the **University level**.

Astrophotography is also developed perfectly by many Stargazers and Astro-photographers but communication between Astronomy groups was measured by busy works. However, Astro-photographers willing to show up their products inside the nations as well as to the world.

Basic awareness and science has some **challenges by anecdotes** and culture itself. Over believing is that nature makes people unsafe and unsecure. Astronomy lovers in Myanmar are provoking awareness of people on astrology and communicating well in the community through media especially Facebook to overcome chitchats as much as possible.

Many people do believe in fortunetelling with astrology. **Myanmar Astrology Research Team** had established for more than 20 years and many astrologers used to attend and conduct stargazing party once a year.

At present the most astounding culture that exists is the use of astrology in forecasting a year's prediction for every citizen according to their borne days at the Myanmar's New Year in April and people love to cling to these speculations according to the birth day. The country has 12 National Festivals in every lunar month of a year especially on the full moon day and moreover, people used to communicate some medicinal plants to be more efficacious especially in some special Full Moon Days.

Weather has been one big challenge for stargazing in Myanmar as it is one of the Tropical Countries and has a lot of rain during rainy season (June to September). The best time for stargazing is during winter and spring. Even in winter, some fog and haze can disturb especially at early morning sky events. There are many good places to conduct stargazing according to the location and places where there is away from city lights. The **best place** to look up to a clear sky is at the middle part of the country where there are bunches of plain fields and farms.

Myanmar possess own characters **of constellations** for every month and Astrologers believe there are also some stars representing our country's situation; Food production, Weather conditions, Flooding, War, etc.

Myanmar has many **famous people** in Science and Technology relating to Astronomy and even some physics graduates are working as Professors in different part of world and even at NASA.

In Summary, Myanmar has awareness and familiar with night sky but culture heritage and astrology believes are mixing up with Astronomy subjects. Scientifically proof Astronomy subject need to introduce more especially to young generations who interested.