

The 2nd Niwano Peace Prize Visionary Award



Mr. Myint Zaw

Nationality: Myanmar

Year of birth: 1975

Position: Environmental Peace Activist

Religion: Buddhist

1. Reason for Selection

The Niwano Peace Prize Visionary Award Committee has chosen to present the second Niwano Peace Prize Visionary Award to Mr. Myint Zaw of Myanmar.

Mr. Myint Zaw was born in the Irrawaddy River Delta in northern Myanmar. From an early age he has lived alongside the country's largest river, experiencing for himself the deep interconnection between the natural environment and human beings.

A state-led project to build the Myitsone Dam in the Irrawaddy River Delta began in 2009. The project risked destroying the natural environment and disrupting the lives and culture of the people living in the watershed, who became seriously concerned as they depended on the river's environmental resources.

Mr. Myint Zaw believed it was important to raise awareness of this issue among the people of the river basin as well as the general public. He continually photographed life in the communities along the river and wrote articles about how the dam construction damaged the lives of many of the river basin's residents. Concurrently, he used art galleries, collaborating with artists, writers, poets, musicians, and others to hold a series of exhibitions aimed at visually capturing the impact of the dam. He also crafted and distributed educational materials explaining these issues, thereby fostering heightened awareness and providing opportunities and venues for people's concerns to be heard and addressed.

Ultimately, the Myitsone Dam project was cancelled because the people's voices were heard.

Mr. Myint Zaw's work is not limited to the Myitsone Dam. He continues to focus on environmental conservation and encouraging democracy in Myanmar, despite severe restrictions. Mr. Myint Zaw has been recognized beyond the borders of Myanmar for his unique work and peaceful methods to promote a harmonious relationship between the natural environment and human beings.

The Niwano Peace Foundation is honored to present this award to Mr. Myint Zaw in acknowledgment of his gentle and peaceful initiatives amidst violent conflicts and clashes. Much like the Irrawaddy River, his endeavors are characterized by magnanimity and inclusivity, embracing all individuals. His commitment to peace, rooted in spiritual values, exemplifies the kind of actions the Niwano Peace Prize Visionary Award aims to promote.

2. Photo

(Coming soon)