



“ Rights are the foundation of life ”

Kyun Par

My name is Kyun Par. You can call me Champa who is The president of Network of Migrant Domestic Workers in Thailand, 46 years old, I'm Burmese. Nepalese descent that lived in Kachin State. My grandparents were Nepalese who emigrated to Burma during World War II. I have been a domestic worker for 29 years.

My father passed away when I was 5 years old, so my mother looked after all 9 children. When I was young, most women of relatives in my village send more money home than men because men can't save money. They told me that they worked in Bangkok. I don't know what Bangkok was and what they did, but I noticed they send money home that made me think about working in Bangkok. I came to Thailand at the age of 17 who is smuggling of Illegal Migrants because the government wasn't permit migrant to register in that time. That's why I worked under the radar.

Initially, the problem is I don't know Thai language, but I could speak Hindi that make me have more opportunities than anyone, So I was determined to find an Indian who can speak Hindi. I started working as a babysitter at the age of 17. When I knew Thai, I sense of the bias of Thai colleagues who work as domestic worker same. When they see me, they'd

say, " I'm going to take our job." It's so hard for Thai people to find job. I felt guilty when I heard it because I worked illegally, but now I've changed my mind because I am legal migrant worker who pay taxes, visa and work permit that makes me have right. I believe everyone has a chance to work and depend on employer's decision. In addition, the obligation of domestic workers are many which Thais are not enough. Sometimes, employment don't require Burmese and require only Burmese because they can pay and make us work more.

I work without a contract which is indefinite. Mostly I work with my employer for at least 2 years, I worked as a domestic worker with Indian for 5 years and with a weterner for 10 years. he didn't say that he would hire me for 10 years. I just stayed untill he back to his country. My work makes my family finances and well-being is better because I've sent all my money to my house.

I had no idea what employment was before, and I know this just now, it's a problem: I couldn't take time off since I didn't have a day off. Until I noticed my friend had a day off, at which point I resigned my job and looking for a job with a day off. when I did a job interview, I would negotiate with my employer that I needed a day off once a month.

I agree with Thai migrant worker policy that permitted migrants to register as legal workers, but the process is so cumbersome that migrant workers still prefer to come illegally. Then they are exploited by recruiters. I would like the government to make the process easy. I also think that the health insurance policy that's great. When I was sick, I still have this money to help me. In the past, I didn't have health insurance, I had to pay for it all.

My work permits expired in 2014. I don't know which way to turn. I didn't have opportunity to hear the government of Plan. When this happened, I met HomeNet Thailand which lets me listen to the government about how to proceed with migrant workers. after that I told my friends.

I met Thai domestic workers and realized that Thailand currently has the ministerial Regulation No. 14 on the protection of domestic workers. it made me realize that Domestic workers have right. I would like to migrant domestic workers in Thailand know about the law and negotiate with employer for right protection. It's not fortune, it's our right. In the past, I think that I have a day off because employers are kind, and I don't have a day off because of bad luck. In fact, life is based on right if everyone has right. At least everyone gets their right and not lower than that we have. So, I thought I couldn't work alone because my voices aren't loud, and no one listens when I have an issue. Domestic workers who are Thai and migrant

workers in Thailand have the same problems, so organization makes our voices sound louder and Thai domestic workers and migrant domestic workers are on the same page.

I have a network which organization makes everyone notices us and interest in advocate for increased legal and social protection of domestic workers in Thailand. Most workers are female workers who are motherhood that the law doesn't protect. Government don't look upon work of domestic work as work and don't have benefit for the country's economic development because we work in employer's house. So, we're not in Section 33 of the Social Security, I don't see it that way because we have jobs, our workplace are employer's houses, when domestic workers unemployed, we lose job, No one's here to endorse it and motherhood don't have. we must have the right in Section 33 of social security because We have employers. We're employees. We're workers. We look after employer's family and let employee have time to work outside that they don't worry about their home, I would like to say that domestic work has value, we're workers, we just work in the employer's house. The employer pays us the wages. when we buy things in a convenience store, we buy the same price. The store doesn't say who we are.

COVID-19 has an economic and social impact on many domestic workers. someone works a lot because employer worked from home and their children don't go to school but instead study online learning which I had to do with them. Someone got suspended, or lost their job, works less hours and reduction of salary. In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic in Samut Sakhon Province, Causes social deprivation. Most people are afraid of us. Many people think burmese who were the cause of Local transmission. Actually, COVID-19 does not discriminate between Thais and foreigners based on ethnicity. It is, in my opinion, unfair to migrant workers. To solve it, we'll have to work together.

(Interview and translation from Thai by Kullanat Suksumek.)

