



Press Release

Date: March 2, 2017

### **Commemorative Blue Plaque is installed at BEHS (6) Botahtaung**

YANGON: The historic and reputable Basic Education High School (6) Botahtaung received Yangon Heritage Trust's 17<sup>th</sup> commemorative Blue Plaque today. Formerly known as St. Paul's High School, it is one of the oldest schools in Yangon and located at the corner of Anawrahta Road and Theinbyu Road.

The prestigious school is a prime example of a substantial 19<sup>th</sup> Century missionary school and was once part of a large mission compound that encompassed St. Mary's, the biggest Roman Catholic cathedral in Myanmar.

St. Paul's High School was founded by Bishop Paul Bigandet, who served in Yangon from 1856 until 1894 to promote education and Christianity, together with the services of three De La Salle Brothers from Calcutta (now Kolkata). After foundation of St. Patrick's school in Mawlamyaing in April 1860, the brothers came to Yangon and set up a school in a humble wooden building near the bishop's residence which was on Barr Street (now Maharbandula Park Street).

Within just couple of years, the school had outgrown its small premises and was moved to its present site in 1886. Between 1900 and 1908, two new wings, which were designed by then famous architect Thomas Swales, were added and later in the 1930s, a study hall and refectory were extended. Lessons were taught in English and St. Paul's has produced many prominent leaders, intellectuals and artists. Deedok U Ba Cho, one of the martyrs assassinated in 1947 along with General Aung San in the Secretariat across the road, was also one of the school's many famous alumni.

The Founder and Chairman of Yangon Heritage Trust Dr Thant Myint-U highlighted the profound history of education in Yangon.

"Yangon has a proud history of teaching and learning. And the city has produced many not only nationally but internationally renowned statesmen and scholars. St Paul's has since its founding been one of Myanmar preeminent schools and I'm delighted that we are today honouring its illustrious heritage.

He continued, "Too often when people think of the buildings of downtown Yangon they think of these buildings as 'colonial'. But they were also the seedbeds of 'anti-colonial' thinking and action, the places where new generations connected with currents of global knowledge and imagined afresh the future. We mark St Paul's not because it's a 'colonial' building worth saving but because it is one of the key sites where modern Myanmar was born."

Like all missionary schools, St. Paul's High School was nationalized under the socialist government in 1965. The school administration was replaced by Burmese government teachers and the school eventually became Basic Education High 6, Botahtaung. St. Paul's High School has been home for many talented and renowned students till now.

The commemorative Blue Plaque is a part of Yangon Heritage Trust's efforts to highlight historical buildings and renowned residents who contributed to the narrative of the city. YHT believes that the

introduction of commemorative Blue Plaques will make Yangon's history accessible to people of all age and backgrounds.

Royal Philips agreed to contribute US\$ 75,000 for the Yangon Blue Plaques initiative. Aside from the highlighting key cultural heritage locations, the contribution will also support the research and curation of historical sites, and creation and installation of Blue Plaques that will share the historical relevance and background of notable people and places across the city.

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**Yangon Heritage Trust** is an independent centre of excellence working to promote and integrate Yangon's unique urban heritage into a 21st century vision of Yangon as one of Asia's most liveable cities. Yangon Heritage Trust advocates for heritage protection, develops clear and sustainable policy options, engages with government, business and civil society, communicates its ideas to the widest possible audience, undertakes specific conservation projects, and facilitates research and training.

For more information on Yangon Heritage Trust:

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