

# On the Evolution of Rohingya Problems in Rakhine State of Burma<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

The monsoon season in South and Southeast Asia brings catastrophes to these regions every year. Storms, cyclones and floods are yearly events which bring about loss of crops and lives and heavy human migrations, particularly in certain areas.

At such a time in the year 1991, news of Muslims fleeing from Arakan (Rakhine State of Burma) to Bangladesh broke out. The Burmese Army as well as the Bangladeshi Army posted along the Arakan-Bangladesh border was increased, and both sides accused each other of violating the peaceful co-existence of neighbours. Consequently, the issue of military abuses against the "Rohingyas" in Arakan was raised. This was vehemently denied by the military government in Rangoon (Yangon). They stated that Burmese immigration authorities were undertaking a routine check of illegal immigrants along the country's different borders and claimed that most of the "Rohingyas" were illegal immigrants or new settlers coming from overpopulated Bangladesh because of natural catastrophes, hunger and other reasons. This was also vehemently denied by the Bangladeshi authorities.

In the mean time, the number of people on the Bangladeshi side grew so that in December 1991 some newspapers reported that about 200,000 (two hundred thousand) were already concentrated there. However, the number of refugees according to Bertil Lintner was nearly 20,000 (twenty thousand)<sup>2</sup>. It can not be ruled out because of printing error one zero was not there (by Bertil Lintner) and therefore, it became twenty thousand instead of two hundred thousand.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper I have taken the liberty of using the word "Burma" instead of "Myanmar" for the country, though the latter is the real and correct word in the Burmese language. I have also used the word Burmese for the language and not Myanmar. Also other "anglicized" terms like Rangoon instead of the correct name Yangon were chosen because these words were and are still known and established in the international media.

The word Burmese or Burman, applies only to the "Bamas", the biggest and most dominant ethnic group in Burma and not for the citizens of Burma, because if one asks a Karen or a Shan or even a Tavoyian who speaks a dialect of the Burmese Language: "Are you a Burmese or a Burman?" his answer will be, no doubt, " I am neither Burmese nor Burman. I am a Tavoyan, Chin, Shan, Karen and so forth.

The term Arakanese is also only for the "Rakhaing" people, the largest ethnic group living in Arakan (the Rakhine State of Burma) and not for the other ethnic groups. The Arakanese (Rakhaings) are devout Buddhists and are called "Yakhaings" (Yakhines) by the Burmese. There are two variations of the spelling, namely Rakhaing or Rakhine. The Arakanese favour the spelling Rakhaing, however, the official spelling use by the Burmese Government is Rakhine. Therefore I use both terms in this paper.

I have used the word Indian in this paper to represent not just the people of India, but rather the people from the Subcontinent that means Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis.

<sup>2</sup> Bertil Lintner, "Chronology of the Events" in *du, Sonderbeilage*, Heft 11, 1993.

During this time, some Muslim Extremists Groups published journals such as the "Rohingya Journal", "Echo of Arakan Rohingya Independence Front (ARIF)", "Arakan" etc., and demanded "the claims of the Rohingyas"<sup>3</sup>. Although none of these journals were published by historical or etymological researchers; many well known journals, newspapers, articles etc., especially published in Bangladesh, supported "the claims of the Rohingyas". These statements were later copied by some international press.

The following are their claims:

1. They, the "Rohingyas", are the descendants of Arabic Seafarers and are the aboriginal Arakanese.
2. The word "Arakan" is therefore a derivation of "Rohan" - "Arohan" - "Arokan" - "Arakan".
3. The majority of the population in the Rakhine State (Arakan) are Muslims.
4. The Mrauk U Dynasty in Arakan (A.D. 1430-1784) was established by the "Rohingyas", and all the kings were Muslims until the Burmese King Bodawphaya annexed Arakan in 1784.
5. The invading king expelled most of the "aboriginal Arakanese" (who were "Rohingyas", according to them) and eventually let his soldiers settle there.
6. The Buddhists Maghs<sup>4</sup> (the Rakhaing/Rakhines) are the descendents of the hybrids of the invading soldiers from the Bodawphaya's Burmese armies and native women of Arakan (who were Muslims, according to them).
7. The "Rohingyas" are now expelled again because they are Muslims and their properties are given to the Buddhists Maghs (the Rakhines). The present military government is doing the same thing as what Bodawphaya did 200 years ago.

These claims affect not only the then military junta known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) but also the Democracy Movement born after the uprising and subsequent massacre of 1988 because many journals, newspapers, articles etc., especially published in Bangladesh, supported "the claims of the Rohingyas". These statements were later copied by some well known international press. Some stated that Arakan were the one and the only non-Buddhist majority state in Burma. According to them, Arakan is the Muslim majority state in the nation where at least 85% of the population are Buddhists.

Leaders and members of the different opposition groups and organizations could not clearly position themselves when this problem was discussed. The opposition groups have no doubt about the news of the brutalities of the Burmese military government because the SLORC

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<sup>3</sup> The problems of the Rohingya Muslims, *Arakan*, Vol. 4, issue 9, December 31, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Myo Min, *Old Burma*, Hanthawaddy Publications, 1946, p. 69 where it was written: "Mogen: The Maghs, which was a Bengali term for the Arakanese, never applied by the latter to themselves". See also in: P.R. Pearn, "King Bering" in *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol. XXIII, 11, 1933, p. 443.

came to power through a blood shed coup. There were news of the various military authorities in Burma used even tanks and machine guns to crush down brutally against any anti-government demonstrations of the majority population and students even those demonstrations were organized, led and participated in by Buddhists monks. All oppositions as well as the populace inside Burma agreed that human rights violations, military abuses and brutal crimes committed against the "Rohingyas" by the various Burmese Military Governments must be strongly condemned. The issue, however, is what should they do with the seven claims of the "Rohingyas" mentioned above because they have never heard of those kind of "history" before. If they don't support those claims of the "Rohingyas" they could be accused either racists or sympathizers of the SLORC. If they support the claims what kind of side effects can occur? Either way seems to be a trap into which they could fall.

In this paper, the present author, as a born Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) but now a naturalized citizen of Germany, will attempt to meet the claims raised by the "Rohingyas" looking into all available authentic historical facts of Arakan (Rakhaing/Rakhine) and its people, and carefully scrutinize the roots of the existing "Rohingya" Muslim problems.

In fact, this article is the revised and extended version with more details on the Arakanese History and the Analysis Part of the original paper read at the International Conference on "the Tradition and Modernity in Myanmar", Berlin, Germany 1993. However, due to the length of this paper, in 1994 only one part of this paper could be published as "Who are the Rohingyas, the Origin of the name". In the mean time, some Rakhaings either inside Burma or abroad as well as some Westerners like Jaques Leider of Luxembourg wrote some books and articles about Arakan and this problem in nut shell. Their articles encouraged me and provided me some more information to write this version and point out more details about the 'Rohingya Problem'.

## **2. The names**

### **2.1. Rakhaing/Rakhine (Arakan), country and race**

The Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) believe that their ancestors had to chase out the demon-like beings (most probably Negrito tribes) before they established their first kingdom. After that the people had to be very united to repel the invasions of the tribes they chased out. That's why they named themselves Rakkhita People. The Pali word Rakkhita means 'the one who protects his own race'. And therefore their country was called 'Rakkhita Mandala' and later deviated to 'Rakkhita Mandaing' and then to 'Rakkha Mandaing'. The word "Arakan" is therefore a derivation of "Rakkha Mandaing - Rakhaing" - "Arakhaing" - "Arakan".

There is another hypothesis: The Sanskrit word *rakshasa*, Pali *rakhaso* can be translated as "the demon of water" or "an ogre-like being living in water". That's why the etymology of Arakan can be traced as a Sanskrit or Pali words *A-Rakkha Desa* (The Land which is now free

from the Demons). The word "Arakan" is therefore a derivation of "A-Rakkha Desa - A-Rakkhan" - "Arakan". Sir Arthur Phayre supported this version too<sup>5</sup>.

Here, I would like to cite Col. Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell's "Hobson-Jobson" A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive (First Published in 1886, Last Edition: Calcutta, 1990). At page 34, where it was written: "ARAKAN, ARRACAN, n.p. This is a European form, perhaps through Malay [which Mr. Skeat has failed to trace], of Rakhaing, the name which the natives give themselves. This is believed by Sir Arthur Phayre [see Journ As. Soc. Ben. xii 24 seqq.] to be a corruption of the Skt. *rakshasa*, Pali *rakkhaso*, that is "Ogre" or alike, a word applied by the early Buddhists to unconverted tribes with whom they came in contact. It is not impossible that the '*Apyupn*' of Ptolomy, which unquestionably represents Arakan, may disguise the name by which the country is known to the foreigners; at least no trace of the name as 'Silverland' in Old Indian Geography has yet been found. We may notice, without laying any stress upon it, that in Mr. Beal's account of early Chinese pilgrims to India, there twice occurs mention of an Indo-Chinese kingdom called *O-li-ki-lo*, which transliterates fairly into some name like *Argyre*, and not into any other yet recognisable (see J.R.A.S.(N.S.) xiii. 560,562)."

Some Rakhaings/Rakhines (Arakanese) felt insulted because of the term "Ogre". Here I would like to cite Maung U Shang, who wrote: "There is another word for ogre in Pali Yakkha which is written with y "Ya" and not with r "Ra" in Burmese Scripts. The Burmese normally do not enunciate the sound "Ra" but only the sound "Ya" for both. The Burmese pronunciation for "Rakhaing /Rakhine" is "Yakhaing /Yakhine". Because of this Burmese pronunciation people were confused by the terms ရက္ခပူရ "Rakkha Pura" and ယက္ခပူရ "Yakkha Pura", and made the wrong translation to designate Rakhaing/Rakhine as "The Land of the Ogres" instead of "The land of the People who protect their own Race and Culture". The word "Arakan" is therefore a derivation of "Rakhaing" - "Arakhaing" - "Arakan" - "Araccan."<sup>6</sup>

Sir Arthur Phayre translated the Sanskrit word *rakshasa*, Pali *rakkhaso* as an ogre; however, some Pali dictionaries give the meaning as 'a type of demon living in water' or 'an ogre like nether *deva* living in water'. According to Buddhist Mythology, the Sanskrit word *rakshasa*, Pali *rakkhaso* is defined as "a being, protector of water, a half *deva* and a half *gombanna*, belongs to the lowest abode among six abodes of *devas*".

Most probably because of the word 'ogre' Maung U Shang became confused with the other Pali word Yakkha meaning 'Human Flesh eating Ogres'. I can understand his feeling. Who wants to be named as the descendants of the human flesh eating ogres?

## 2.2. The Term Magh or Mogen:

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<sup>5</sup> Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, "Hobson-Jobson" A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive (First Published in 1886, Last Edition: Calcutta, 1990). P. 34

<sup>6</sup> Maung U Shang, "The Arakanese (Rakhine) Community in Bangladesh" in The Voice of Rakhine, Rakhine Student Organisation of Bangladesh, March 7, 1987, p. 17.

The Bengali term for the Arakanese is "Magh" or "Mogen", however, it was and is never applied by the latter to themselves<sup>7</sup>.

Some Arakanese believe the term Magh to be a derogatory. Here I would like to cite Maung Tha Hla: "The people of Bengal contemptuously referred the Rakhaings as *Magh*, which suggests mixed race or unclean beings, a smearing racial slur. The early European historians confused the term and erroneously concluded that the Rakhaings were products of interracial marriages before they finally discovered that it was an ethnological fallacy because the Rakhaings are Mongoloid and are cognate to the Burmese. In confusing the term, the Rakhaing chronicles pointed out that *Magh* applies to the descendants of Rakhaings who married Bengali wives during the time when parts of Bengal were under the wing of the Rakhaing monarchy. They are Buddhists and their dialect Chittagonian. A theory expounds to implicate *Magh* with *Maga*, the name of an Aryan race people, who were speculated to have migrated into Rakhaing from Bihar, adjoining Bengal. The exposition was unsubstantiated in the light of the Rakhaing annals".<sup>8</sup>

Another hypothesis stated: In the early dynasties, the Arakanese (Rakhaings) as well as the Burmese from Pagan used the Pali language. The synonym of Pali is Magadha. That's why the land Arakan was called Magadha Desa and the natives of Arakan were named Maghs by the people of the Indian Subcontinent. Then, the name 'Magh' could be positive and not a derogatory. However, almost all Arakanese (Rakhaings) consider this term to be an unsavoury meaning. The present author too, wants to point out bluntly the following to argue the above mentioned hypothesis: "If the Rakhaings were called Maghs because they used the Pali language before they switched to the Mramar Language, then, why the Burmese from Pagan were not also named the Maghs although they used the Pali language before they switched to the Mramar Language, as same as the Arakanese (Rakhaings) did?"<sup>9</sup>

"Hobson-Jobson" A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo Indian Words and Phrases, at page 594 where it was written: "Mugg, n.p. Beng. Magh. It is impossible to deviate without deterioration from Wilson's definition of this obscure name; 'A name commonly applied to the natives of Arakan, particularly those bordering on Bengal, or residing near the sea; the people of Chittagong.' It is beside the question of its origin or proper application, to say, as Wilson goes on to say, on the authority of Lieut. (now Sir Arthur) Phayre, that the Arakanese disclaim the title, and restrict it to a class held in contempt, viz. the descendents of Arakanese settlers on the frontier of Bengal by Bengali mothers." ..... "There is a good reason to conclude that the name is derived from Maga, the name of the ruling race for many centuries in Magadha (modern Behar). The kings of ancient Arakan were no doubt originally of this race. For though this is not distinctly expressed in the histories of Arakan, there are several legends of kings from Benares reigning in that country." ..... "On the other hand the Mahomedan writers

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<sup>7</sup> Myo Min, *Old Burma*, Hanthawaddy Publications, 1946, p. 69

<sup>8</sup> Maung Tha Hla, *The Rakhaing*, P. 18, NY, U.S.A, 2004

<sup>9</sup> See and compare: Maung Tha Hla, *The Rakhaing*, P. 18, NY, U.S.A, 2004.

sometimes confound Buddhists with fire-worshippers, and it seems possible that the word may have been Pers. magh = magus."

The Rakhaings/Rakhines (Arakanese) traditionally believe that they are the descendants of the "Sakya Sakis" the race from which Lord Gautama Buddha came<sup>10</sup>. Most historians and anthropologists, however, say that they belong to the Tibeto-Burmese groups. On the other hand, not only the Arakanese but almost all of the Southeast Asians in the mainland, including Burmese, Mons, Khmers and Thais believe that they came from India instead of Tibet or China. The main reason is that all of them are Buddhists and everybody, especially the kings, wanted to claim to be related to Lord Buddha. If Lord Buddha were a Chinese instead of an Indian, their traditional beliefs would have been changed the other way round. U San Shwe Bu and Maurice Collis<sup>11</sup>, on the other hand, stated that the Rakhaings/Rakhines (Arakanese) are of Indo-Mongoloid stock and the date of immigration of Mongolian races as A.D 957.

The present author does not mind to share their view that the Arakanese are the descendants of the hybrids of the Tibeto-Burmese and Indo-Aryan races after the immigration of Mongolian races because the Rakhaings/Rakhines (Arakanese) traditionally believe that they are the descendants of the "Sakya Sakis" the race from which Lord Gautama Buddha came and some Arakanese have Indo-Mongoloid features and appearances. Apart from that, Arakanese language is only a dialect of the Mramar language, hence, it belongs to the Tibeto-Burman Branch of the Sino Tibetan Language Family. However, I do not agree with their stated date of immigration of Mongolian races as A.D 957. I believe they came much earlier, most probably in the same period (at about 2nd century A.D., if not earlier) as immigration of the other Mongolian ethnic groups of Pyus, Kamyams and Saks (Thak) to the country which is now Burma.

The Burmese traditionally believe that the Pyus, the Kamyams and the Saks were the first Tibeto-Burmese ethnic groups immigrated to the country which is now Burma. Traditional historians like Thakin Kodaw Hmaing, U Pho Kya etc. etc., believed that the Pyus were the fore-fathers of the Burmese, the Kamyams were the ancestors of the Arakanese (Rakhine/Rakhaing) and the Chins are descendants of the Saks (Thak). However, some anthropologists and some historians believe that Kayins (Karens) and Karenni or Kayans are the descendants of the Kamyams.

The oral history or legend of the Arakanese kingdom stated that the Sakya Saki prince, Arjuna, left his country, settled in a Jungle in Northern Arakan and became a hermit. Later, he met a female Sak called Indra Mayu there and married her. She bore him a son who was named Marayu. He defeated the "ogres" or the cannibals and established the kingdom of Dhanyawaddy. The Burmese and Arakanese word "Sak" has a meaning of sambur (a kind of deer). Hence, some people misinterpreted that Prince Arjuna cohabited with a female sambur called Indra Mayu. Later, a human son called Marayu was born. This kind of statement is

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<sup>10</sup> U Aung Tha Oo, *A Short History of Arakan* (in Burmese), Mya Yadana Press, Rangoon, ca. 1954, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Maurice Collis in collaboration with San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay" in *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol. XXIII, p. 488.

really not logical! Some interpreted that the term Sak is a short form of Sakya Saki. They said that Indra Mayu was a Sakya Saki princess who had many followers. Some historians like U Aung Tha Oo, on the other hand, interpreted the word "Sak" as the ethnic group Sak (Thak). He interpreted that Indra Mayu was a queen of the newly immigrated Mongolian tribe called Sak (Thak). That was the reason why their son Marayu could defeat the cannibals later and built the city of Dhanyawaddy.<sup>12</sup>

The present author shares U Aung Tha Oo's view that the word Sak really means the ethnic group, the Saks (Thak). Most probably, Indra Mayu was a Sak princess with many followers. Since the Sakya Saki prince, Arjuna was an Indo-Aryan, and the Sak princess, Indra Mayu was of Tibeto-Burmese stock, one of the Mongolian tribes, their son Marayu, the founder of the Dhanyawaddy Kingdom was an Indo-Mongoloid. This hypothesis is very logical. Because of this reason Maurice Collis and U San Shwe might have generalized that the Arakanese are the descendants of the hybrids of the Tibeto-Burmese and Indo-Aryan races.

The famous professor of "The History of Burma", Prof. G. C. Luce and his disciples believed that the date of immigration of the "Mien" or Myanmar (the Burmese) at about 650 A.D. Those "Mien" or Myanmar (the Burmese) lived together with Pyus, mixed with Pyus and eventually the ethnic group called Pyus became extinct at about 12th century A.D because they were absorbed or engulfed by the "Mien" or Myanmar (the Burmese). Since the Pyus are the predecessors of the Burmese and the Arakanese used to call Burmese as Pru (Pyu), and also the Kayin (Karen) term for Burmese is "Piao" (i.e. Pyu), I believe, the date of immigration of Mongolian races into Arakan must be much earlier than that of the Burmese to what is now Burma.

### **3. Language:**

There is no doubt that the language in ancient Arakan was Magadha or Pali, however, the modern Arakanese language is a dialect of "Myanmar" language (Mramar in Arakanese pronunciation, and from here all Arakanese pronunciations will be put in parenthesis later). Some scholars regard Arakanese as Archaic Burmese. It is found out through stone scripts that "The Old Burmese" used during the Pagan Dynasty, from 8th to 14th century A.D, is very similar to the Arakanese-today. In fact, the language which is known today as "the spoken Burmese" is only the "Irrawaddy Valley Dialect" of the Myanmar (Mramar) language based on the language used by the people of the Kingdom of Ava (14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century). However, since it is spoken by the majority it can be called "the main dialect of the Myanmar (Mramar) language". Therefore, it is easy to say that both dialects belongs to the same language ie. "Myanmar" (Mramar), however, it is very difficult to define whether Arakanese is a dialect of the Burmese language or the Modern-Burmese is a dialect of Arakanese Language or Archaic Myanmar (Mramar)!!

It is also very difficult to say when the people in the place which is now Arakan started using "Arakanese", a dialect of Mramar language however, it is definitely sure that they were using

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<sup>12</sup> U Aung Tha Oo, *A Short History of Arakan* (in Burmese), Mya Yadana Press, Rangoon, ca. 1954, p. 8.

the very similar language with the people of Pagan Empire even before the time of King Anawratha or Aniruda (1044 -77 A.D.), if not earlier. As mentioned before, even if we have to consider the stated date of Mongoloid stocks immigration as A.D 957 by Maurice Collis and U San Shwe Bu were correct, it is to be assumed that the "Myanmar (Mramar)" language was used in Arakan at least from the 10th century A.D, if not earlier.

Both Arakanese and Burmese chronicles recorded that the Arakanese king မင်းဘီလူး Min Bilu ((Man<sup>13</sup> Bilu) was murdered by his minister အသင်္ခယာ Athinkhaya (Athankhaya) at A.D. 1068. Min (Man) Bilu's son မင်းရဲဘယ Min-Ye-Baya (Man Ree-Baya) took refuge by ကျန်စစ်သား King Kyansittha of Pagan and requested the Burmese king to help him to regain the Arakanese throne, however, his request was not granted by the Burmese King. Only Kyansittha's successor and grandson အလောင်းစည်သူ King Alaung Sithu helped Min-Ye-Baya's (Man Ree-Baya) son လက်ျာမင်းနန် Letya Minnan (Latya Manan) to become the ruler of Arakan. Even at that time, names, words, meanings and usages -except for some pronunciations- were the same. Hence, it is safe to say that the people of Pagan Empire and the people of Arakan were using the same language.

During the Mrauk U Dynasty (A.D. 1430-1784), the last dynasty of the Arakanese kings, the Arakanese used to call themselves မရမာ "Mramar" and their country ရခိုင်ပြည် Rakhaing-pre. Their term for the Burmese was either ပြူ "Pyu" (Pru) or အရှေ့သား "Ashay-tha" meaning "our compatriots from the East", and they named the Burmese kingdom as အရှေ့ပြည် "Ashay-pre" meaning "the Kingdom of the East".

The "Mramars" were subdivided into: (a) ရခိုင်သား "Rakhaing-tha" meaning people of Rakhaing, who were the people of the capital city ရခိုင်မြို့ "Rakhaing-mro" (Mrauk U), (b) ရမ်းဗြဲသား "Rambree-tha meaning people of ရမ်းဗြဲကျွန်း Rambree Island, (c) သံတွဲသား "Thandwe-tha" meaning people of သံတွဲ Thandwe or Sandoway , the second city then and its province, (d) မန်အောင်သား "Man-aung-tha" meaning people of မန်အောင်ကျွန်း Man-aung or Cheduba Island (e) အနောက်သား "Anauk-tha" meaning "our compatriots from the West" in which they mentioned the Arakanese (Rakhaings), who lived in the then Western Part of the Arakanese Empire which is now Chittagong District of Bangladesh and Tripura of India, and (f) အရှေ့သား "Ashay-tha" meaning "our compatriots from the East which included all ဗမာ "Bama" or Burman/Burmese living in the Irrawaddy Valley and ထားဝယ်သား "Dawe-tha" (literally people of Tavoy, however, here it included all people from Southern Tenasserim Province, which is known today as ထားဝယ်ခရိုင် "Tavoy District" and မြိတ်ခရိုင် "Mergui District". The Tavoyans and Merguians still name the Burmese language as ပုဂံစကား "the Pagan Dialect".

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<sup>13</sup> The Burmese pronunciation of the word မင်း is Min, however, the Arakanese pronunciation varies between Mang to Mong due to the places in Arakan. It sounds slightly like the French pronunciation of Man. Hence, I took the liberty of transcription as Man in this essay.



There are many examples of Arakanese literature such as ရခိုင်မင်းသမီးချင်း "Rakhaing Minthami E-gyin" (the classical poem addressed to an Arakanese Princess extolling the glory of ancestors)<sup>14</sup>, မဟာပညာကျော်လျှောက်ထုံး "Maha Pyinyakyaw Hlyaukhton" (the Advices of Minister Maha Pyinyayaw) and ဓညဝတီအရေးတော်ပုံ "Dhanyawaddy Ayetawpon" (the Dhanyawaddy Chronicle) played and still play a big role in the "Myanmar ("Mramar") language and literature.

The "Father" of the Burmese Department of the University of Rangoon, the late Professor U Pe Maung Tin wrote in the page 31-32 of his book History of Burmese Literature: "It is amazing that the Burmese literature was more advanced in Mrauk U than that of in Ava at the 15th century A.D. According to the chronicles မင်းကြီးစွာစော်ကဲ King Swa Saw Ke of Ava, due to the request of Arakanese ministers, sent his uncle စောမွန်ကြီး Saw Mungyi (Saw Muangri) to rule Arakan. Many Burmese poets accompanied Saw Mungyi (Saw Muangri) at A.D. 1377. Most probably because of it Burmese literature was very advanced in Mrauk U at the 15th century". However, Arakanese Chronicles mentioned differently.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, I would like to add one very important point. There is a Burmese traditional saying which was created most probably at the end of the Pagan Dynasty. Which said: တရုတ်ကဖိ၊ ရှမ်းကအိ၊ ရှိသည့်မြန်မာ အနောက်မှာ which can be roughly translated as: "Because of the [military] pressure of the Chinese, man waves of Shans are coming [to us], and the rest of the "Myanmar (Mranmar)" should live in the West"!! So, it is very possible that many Burmese immigrated to Arakan at the downfall of Pagan. Apart of that the kings of the three dynasties, namely the Myinsaing-, the Pinya- and the Sagaing Dynasties following the collapse of the Pagan Dynasty, though their lives were short, were Shans and not Burmese. Even Thadoe Minphya, founder of the First Ava Dynasty was a Shan-hybrid. Hence, no wonder, the "Myanmar (Mranmar)" literature was more advanced in Mrauk U than that of in Ava at the 15th century.

Since the Arakanese are Buddhists as the Burmese and share the same language with them, there are many similarities between the two peoples in their culture and traditions, including their proverbs and folktales.

## 4. History

### 4.1. The Ancient History

The Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) history, according to their chronicles, is very long and goes through a long line of legendary dynasties, capital cities and kings.<sup>16</sup> Some scholars

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<sup>14</sup> Well known in Arakanese Literature as မောက်တော် ချင်း Mauktaw E-gyan to honour the Princess စောရွှေကြာ Saw Shway Kra, the favourite daughter of King Ba Saw Pru.

<sup>15</sup> These facts were not mentioned nor supported in U Aung Tha Oo's 'A Short History of Arakan (in Burmese)'. See details in Chapter 4.2.

<sup>16</sup> U Ba Than, *History of Burma* (in Burmese) First published in 1929, reprinted by the Sarpebeikman Press, Rangoon, 1964, p. 194.

argue that these chronicles are based on the hear-say stories, and therefore they are not reliable. Basically, I do not share the view with those scholars.

Here I would like to cite the late Prof. Dr. U Htin Aung who was the Rector of the University of Rangoon: "It has been the fashion among modern scholars to scoff at Burmese traditions and chronicles, and to demand 'scientific proof' of the statements made in the native histories. A colleague of mine in the University of Rangoon, a lecturer in history, has even described the 'Glass Palace Chronicle' as 'the most glorious fairy tale on record'. It is not denied that the Glass Palace Chronicle dealing with the period before Anawratha does contain much folk lore and some folk tales, but it also contains some reliable tradition that was handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth." ---- "I am of the opinion that the person who writes that standard history must have some respect for native traditions and chronicles. I do not say that the Glass Palace Chronicle is an immaculate conception and all its statements must be accepted as absolute truth. But I do maintain that the chronicle contains much that is historical fact. Scholars in all countries and at all times are ever the same in that they strive to get at the truth, and the Burmese chroniclers were scholars searching after true facts regarding their country's history, and it is unfair to class them all as merely makers of dreams and fairy tales".<sup>17</sup>

No doubt that the early kingdoms of Arakan were Hindu states and later they became Buddhists. In this paper, names of the cities and kings will be given both Burmese/Arakanese script as well as in English transcription. Original Pali pronunciation will also be given with Italics in the parenthesis and the Arakanese Pronunciation will be given in the parenthesis with normal script. According to the Arakanese chronicles the First Arakanese Dynasty was established in ဒွာရာဝတီ Dwarawaddy (*Dvaravati*) which is now called သံတွဲ Thandwe or Sandoway. After Dwarawaddy Dynasty, the kings from ဝေသာလီ Waythali (*Visali*) Dynasty, the ညောင်တီ Dhanyawaddy (*Dhanyavati*) Dynasty, ဝေသာလီကျောက်လှေကား Waythali Kyauk-laykha Dynasty, ပဉ္စာ Pyinsa (Pansa) (*Pancha*) Dynasty, လေးမြို့ Lemyo (Lemro) Dynasty, ပရိမ် Parin (Prem) (*Puremma*) Dynasty, လောင်းကြက် Longkyet (Longkrat) Dynasty and မြောက်ဦး Myauk U (Mrauk U)<sup>18</sup> Dynasty ruled Arakan accordingly.

<sup>17</sup> Myo Min, *Old Burma*, Forward, Hanthawaddy Press, Rangoon, 1947.

<sup>18</sup> Myauk U (Mrauk U) could be roughly translated as 'The Holy City of the north' as well as 'The First Accomplishment'; however, it became 'Monkey-Egg' because of the Burmese pronunciation. The Burmese normally do not enunciate the sound 'Ra' but only the sound 'Ya' for both scripts or alphabets 'Ra' and 'Ya'. The Arakanese differentiate these two sounds properly. For the Arakanese people 'Mrauk' is north and 'Myauk' is monkey, however, in the Burmese pronunciation both, ie. North and monkey; are homonyms.

U San Shwe Bu referred to the Legend of the Death of King Sula Taing Sandra, after defeating the Pru (ie. Burmese) invaders, Prince Pai-Phyus named the place "Mrauk-U" "Mrauk" means accomplishment and "U" means first. In Arakan the old pronunciation is still preserved in spite of the corrupted form ( Mrauk-U) that crept in with the Burmese conquest in 1782. To explain this later perversion a very silly story was invented in later times. A female monkey is supposed to have mated with a peacock causing the former to lay an egg on the spot which afterwards on that account came to be known as "Myauk-U" "Myauk" being a monkey and "U" an egg, - a version obviously absurd and wholly in keeping with the best traditions of legendary Greece and Rome.

One of the hear-say stories stated, once a British Colonial Officer (most probably Maurice Collis) asked his Burmese clerk in Burmese with very strong English accent, "What is the meaning of Myauk U?" That Burmese

It is believed that the Maha Muni Image<sup>19</sup> was cast at about 563 B.C during the reign of စန္ဒသူရိယ King Sanda Thuriya (*Chandra Suriya*) of the Dhanyawaddy Dynasty in the presence of Lord Buddha himself. It is also believed that five copies of the Image were also cast and Lord Buddha predicted that the Holy Image (the original) would remain in Arakan for 5000 years. Hence, the kings and people of Arakan were Buddhists since 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.

#### 4.2. Connection with Burmese History:

About the year A.D 1050, အရှေ့ရိယာ King Anawratha (*Aniruda*) of Pagan invaded Northern Arakan and forced Arakan to become his vassal state. At that time Arakan was ruled by a king of the Pyinsa (Pransa) (*Prancha*) Dynasty whose name was not mentioned in Burmese chronicles. King Anawratha (*Aniruda*) wanted to take the Maha Muni Image to Pagan, however, his attempt failed. The Arakanese Chronicles recorded this Invasion as "The king of the Prus came together with ninety thousand Pru soldiers" because the Arakanese called the king of Pagan as ပြုတသိန်းရှင် "The supreme Commander of one hundred thousand Pru soldiers". This was the first attempt of the Burmese kings to snatch the Holy Image, and also it was the first contact between Burmese kings and Arakanese kings historically recorded.

There was a legend that the "Burmese" prince ကံရာဇာကြီး Kamraza Gyi(Kamraza Gri) (*Maha Karma Raja*) and his followers came to settle in Northern Arakan after the prince lost the struggle for the throne to his younger brother ကံရာဇာငယ် Kamraza Nge (*Chula Karma Raja*) at about B.C. 1100. It was during the Dhanyawaddy dynasty. Kamraza-gri was the elder son of အဘိရာဇာ King Abiraza (Abiraja) who was the first king of the legendary Tagaung Dynasty, the first dynasty of the Burmese according to their Chronicles. Hence, according to this legend, the Arakanese and the Burmese are supposed to be the descendants of the elder brother and of the younger brother respectively.

As mentioned in Chapter three, both Arakanese and Burmese chronicles recorded that the Arakanese king မင်းဘီလူး Min Bilu (Man Bilu) was murdered by his minister အသင်္ခိယာ Athinkhaya (Athankhaya) at A.D. 1068. Min (Man) Bilu's son မင်းရဲဘယ Min-Ye-Baya (Man Ree-Baya) took refuge by ကျန်စစ်သား King Kyansittha of Pagan and requested the Burmese king to help him to regain the throne. However, King Kyansittha was not able to help him,

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clerk translated literally as he heard, 'Myauk' meant Monkey and 'U' meant Egg and the clerk told Maurice Collis the above-mentioned invented story of a female monkey and a peacock. Because of that 'misunderstanding' or the 'unscholarly answer', the 'Holy City of the North' or 'The First Accomplishment' Mrauk-U မြောက်ဦး became 'Monkey-Egg' မျောက်ဥ. Once, Maurice Collis translated the poem called ' Thingyan' (Thangran) or 'Water Festival' written by the famous Arakanese Poet, Uggā Byan. There he translated 'At the south of the Golden City of 'Monkey-Egg' instead of 'At the South of the Golden City of Mrauk U.

In the late 50's, U Shwe Mra, the then Chief Secretary in U Nu's Government wrote many articles about Arakan in the Guardian English Newspaper and he had explained about 'Monkey Egg'.

<sup>19</sup> Maha Muni Image, a colossal image cast in bronze and inlaid with gold, became the envy of almost all kings of Burma. Whenever they expanded their empire, they tried to rob this holy image.

most probably it was more important for the Burmese king to solve ethnic conflicts between the Burmese and their archrivals, the Mons, because there were wars between the Burmese and the Mons during the reigns of his two predecessors, King Anawratha and King Saw Lu. Only in the year A.D. 1104 Min Ye-Baya's (Man Re-Baya's) son လက်ျာမင်းနန် Prince Letya Minnan (Latya Mannan), who was born in the Pagan City, had a success to persuade King Kyansittha's grandson and successor အလောင်းစည်သူ King Alaungsithu. It was also possible that there were no ethnic conflicts under King Alaung Sithu because the king himself was a Mon-Burmese hybrid. So, he could help the Arakanese prince. In this way Prince Letya Minnan (Latya Mannan) regained the Arakanese throne and established the Prem Dynasty.

The Arakanese Chronicles recorded this incident as "The king of the Prus came with one hundred thousand Pru and one hundred thousand Talaings<sup>20</sup> and helped Prince Letya Minnan, the real heir of the Arakanese throne".

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<sup>20</sup> Talaings was an ancient Burmese and Arakanese term for the Mons, however, this term was not commonly applied by the latter to them.

Talaing, n.p. The name by which the chief race inhabiting Pegu (or the Delta of Irawadi) is known to the Burmese. The Talaings were long Rivals of the Burmese, alternately conquering and conquered, but the Burmese have, on the whole, so long predominated, even in the Delta, that the use of the Talaing language is now nearly extinct in the Pegu proper, though it is still spoken in Martaban, and among the descendants of emigrants into the Siamese territory. We have adopted the name from the Burmese to designate the race, but their own name for their people is *Mon* or *Mun* (see **MONE**)

Sir Arthur Phayre has regarded the name Talaing as almost undoubtedly a form of **Telinga**. The reasons given are plausible, and may be briefly stated in tow extracts from his Essay on the History of Pegu (J. As. Soc. Beng., vol xlii. Pt. i) : "The names given in the histories of Tha-htun and Pegu to the first kings of those cities are Indian ; but they cannot be accepted as historically true.. The countries from which the Kings are said to have derived their origin ... may be recognised as Kara`nta, *Kalinga*, Venga and Vizianagram ... probably mistaken for the more famous Vijayanagar. . . . The word Tilinga`na never occurs in the Peguan histories, but only the more ancient name Kalinga" (*op. cit.* pp 32-33). "The early settlers from Talinga`na. satisfactorily accounts for the name Talaing, by which the people of Pegu are known to the Burmese and all peoples of the west. But the Peguans call themselves by a different name . . . *Mun*, *Mwun* or *Mon*" (*ibid.* P.34). (Source: Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, "*Hobson-Jobson*" A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive (First Published in 1886, Last Edition: Calcutta, 1990). pp. 889-890

Prof. Forchammer, on the other hand, wrote in *Notes on Early History and Geography of British Burma*, Part II, pp. 11-12, Rangoon, 1884: "The prior to the time of Alaung Phaya's conquest of Pegu (middle 18<sup>th</sup> century) the name Talaing was entirely unknown. ....The word '*Talaing*' is the term by which the Muns acknowledged their total defeat, their being vanquished and the slaves of their Burmese conqueror. They were no longer to bear the name of Muns or Pegu. Alompra stigmatized them with an appellation suggestive at once of their submission and disgrace. Talaing means (in the Mon Language) 'One who is trodden under foot, a slave ..'"

In U Ba Than's, *History of Burma* (in Burmese), first published in 1929, reprinted by the Sarpebeikman Press, Rangoon, 1964, p. 111, where it was written: ." The statement of Prof. Forchammer is very unreasonable because the term Talaing was already used in the Pagan stone inscriptions and also mentioned in U Klala's Maha Razawin Gyi written at least one hundred years before Alaung Phaya's conquered the Mon kingdom of Pegu".

The present author, neither a Burmese nor a Mon but an Arakanese as a neutral person, shares the view of U Ba Than, because the Arakanese Chronicles such as မဟာပညာကျော်လျှောက်ထုံး "Maha Pyinyakyaw Hlyaukhton" (the Advices of Minister Maha Pyinyayaw) and ခေတ္တဝတီအရေးတော်ပုံ "Dhanyawaddy Ayetawpon" (the Dhanyawaddy Chronicle) used the term Talaing for the kingdoms and people of Mons from Irrawaddy Delta, Pegu and Matarban. These chronicles were written prior to the Alaung Phaya's conquest of the Mon kingdom. Apart from

Hence, no doubt, since that time Arakan became tributary state of Pagan Empire of the Burmese for more than one hundred years. However, Arakanese revolted against the Burmese rule when the Pagan Empire became weak at the middle of 13th century A.D., and when Kublai Khan's armies invaded Pagan Empire of the Burmese at the last quarter of the 13th century A.D., Arakan became a sovereign state again.

Here I like to cite Prof. Myo Min's Old Burma, Page 2 where it was written: "In writing about the Kingdom of Mien (ie. Myanma), Marco Polo made no claim to have visited the country itself, though he seemed to have got as far south as the western part of Yun-nan. His description of the battle of Nga-Saung Gyan, which marked the beginning of the disruption of the Pagan Empire in the reign of King Narathihapate is wonderfully vivid and accurate. Marco Polo called it a memorable battle by which the Grand Khan effected the conquest of the Kingdom of Mien and Bengala, apparently because some outlying eastern parts of Bengal were part of the Burmese Empire then".

Arakanese chronicles recorded that လောင်းကြက် Longkyet (Longkrat) City was built at 1251 A.D. by အလောမာဖြူမင်း King Alawmar Phyu (Phru). So, it is safe to say that the kings of လောင်းကြက် Longkyet ( Longkrat) Dynasty were sovereign monarchs.

### **4.3. The Crucial Mrauk U Dynasty.**

The Arakanese kings of Mrauk U Dynasty usually resided in the capital city. Either the eldest son or the younger brother of the king was granted the title of သံတို့စား "Ruler or Lord of Thandwe". Since Thandwe was the second city then and bordering with Burmese and Mon Kingdoms, it was the important garrison town too. Therefore, the title can be roughly translated as "Lord of Thandwe". Normally, that prince became the crown prince or the heir to the throne too.

The crucial part of the Arakanese History was at the beginning of the 15th century A.D., when Arakan became a "Pendulum" between the Sultanate of Bengal and the Ava Empire of the Burmese. In the year A.D 1404 the king of Arakan was မင်းစောမွန် Min Saw Mun ( Man Saw Muan) and the capital city was လောင်းကြက် Longkyet ( Longkrat). He liked the very beautiful

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that, the late U Ba Than himself was a Mon, born at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century and worked as the Principal of the Shin Maha Buddhagosa Mon High School in Moulmein at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. At that time, Burma was a British colony and he could have pointed out clearly what Burmese had done to the Mons only about one hundred and fifty years ago, if the statement of Prof. Forchammer were true. Just for one example, till in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, some Arakanese historians pointed out their ill feelings about the Burmese king Bodaw Phaya's (Alaung Phaya's third son) conquest of Arakan and the robbery of the Maha Muni Image as well as the cruelties of the Royal Burmese army lead by Field Marshal Maha Bandoola towards the Arakanese/Rakhaings during the First Anglo Burmese War.

In any case, one has to respect the wish of Mon people that they do not want to be called Talaings, whatever the reason maybe. Since mid 50's U Nu's government of Burma replaced the term Talaing with Mon officially in all books and Newspapers etc. etc.

wife of a minister and requested that minister, his wife to be presented to the king and as an exchange the minister would receive two pretty maids of honour. When the minister refused, the king offered to give four maids of honour as an exchange, but all in vain. Hence, the king took the minister's wife by force. Committing adultery with a married lady is always a big scandal for a Buddhist, especially for a king. The husband of that lady and her brother went to Ava, the Burmese capital, and requested မင်းခေါင် Min Gaung (Man Gaung), the Burmese king, that he should overthrow the disgraced Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) of Arakan. The Burmese kings of the Ava Empire, especially for King Min Gaung (Man Gaung), automatically considered Arakan as their vassal state because Arakan was feudatory to the Pagan Empire of the Burmese, and apart of that Min Gaung was a war-like king. During the era of his father King Swa Saw Ke, the young prince Min Gaung personally did lead the Burmese invasion armies to Pegu, the Mon kingdom ruled by King Razadiriz.

So, in the year 1406, Min Gaung (Man Gaung), the king of the Burmese, sent his warrior son မင်းရဲကျော်စွာ Min Ye Kyaw Zwa (Man Ree Kyaw Zwa) with a big army. Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan), the king of Arakan fled the kingdom and took refuge in Gaur, the capital of the Sultanate of Bengal. In this way Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) became the last king of the Longkyet (Longkrat) Dynasty and was given a nick name by later historians as ကုလားပြည်ရောက်မင်း meaning "the King who took refuge in the Land of Kalas (Indians)".

The Burmese let their viceroy, who was a son in law of the Burmese king Min Gaung, rule Arakan. The Arakanese king's younger brother Min Kayi (Man Kari), "Lord of Thandwe" and the crown prince then, went to Pegu, the capital of Mons, the archrival of the Burmese and he requested the Mons for help. With the help of ရာဇဓိရာဇ် Razadiriz (*Raja di Raja*), the king of the Mons, he liberated Longkrat, killed the Burmese viceroy and Min Gaung's daughter was sent to Pegu as a gift to the Mon king. He could rule Arakan on behalf of his brother, but only for a few months, because Arakan could not survive the second Burmese invasion in A.D 1408 headed by Min Ye Kyaw Zwa (Man Ree Kyaw Zwa). This time the Burmese armies invaded Longkrat and Thandwe simultaneously. The king's younger brother Min Khayi (Man Khari), the prince regent then, had to take refuge by the Mons.

Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) stayed in Gaur for more than 22 years. His Pseudonym was Nara Meik Hla. His younger brother's pseudonym was Nara Nu. With the help of the Sultan of Bengal he regained his throne in A.D 1430, and built the new capital of Mrauk U, while the Burmese were very busy having wars against the Mons.

Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) thought that the city of Longkyet (Longkrat) was a cursed city from where he was ousted and which city also saw the rise and fall of many kings, Harvey writes: The turmoil of foreign inroads showed that Longkyet (Longkrat) was ill-fated and the omen indicated Mrauk U as a lucky site, so he decided to move there; though the astrologers said that if he moved the capital he would die within a year, he insisted, saying that the move would benefit the people and his own death would matter little. In 1433 he founded and in the next year he died. A populous sea-port, built on hillocks amid the rice plains, and intersected by canals which served as streets. Mrauk U remained the capital for the next four centuries."

To show his gratitude to the Sultan he asked what he could do for the Sultan. The Sultan persuaded him to be converted into Islam but he refused; however, he promised the Sultan that the Arakanese kings would bear Pseudonym Muslim Titles in the future, the twelve towns in Bengal will be returned back to the Sultanate of Bengal and to pay taxes and presents annually.

According to Maurice Collis<sup>21</sup> Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) became feudatory to the Sultanate as well as the 11 subsequent kings following him. Though they were devout Buddhists, they had to take on Muslim titles too. Altogether 12 out of 49 kings of the Mrauk U Dynasty were feudatory to Bengal (see the table by Appendix I). Also, Arakan had to surrender 12 towns, including Chittagong and Tri Pura to the Sultanate of Bengal as a gift.

U Aung Tha Oo, more or less shared the view of Maurice Collis and U San Shwe Bu, but U Po Hla Aung did not share their views.

U Po Hla Aung, on the other hand, wrote: "Only Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) was the real feudatory to Bengal. The other 11 kings were no longer feudatory to Bengal because Min Saw Mun's (Man Saw Muan's) younger brother and throne successor Min Khayi (Man Khari) (1434-1459) entered into a Friendship and Border Treaty with the Burmese king, King Narapatigyi (Narapatigri) of Ava and declared himself as well as his country to be freed from Bengal"<sup>22</sup>.

When his son ဘာစာဖျူ Ba Saw Phyu (Ba Saw Phru) succeeded the throne of Mrauk U after the death of Min Khayi (Man Khari), he defeated Babe Shah, the Emir of Chittagong and re-occupied the 12 towns. However, U Po Hla Aung admitted that these 12 towns were re-annexed by the Sultanate of Bengal after the death of King Ba Saw Phyu (Ba Saw Phru) in A.D. 1481, and there was influence from Bengal again for about 50 years until Min Bargyi (Man Bargri) reoccupied the Chittagong District in A.D. 1532. (See also Appendix II).

The fact that Min Khayi (Man Khari) signed a Friendship and Border Treaty with King Narapatigyi (Narapatigri) of Ava was supported by Burmese and Arakanese chronicles. If he were still feudatory to Bengal, he might not be able to sign such an important treaty on his own. Therefore I do not share the view of Maurice Collis that "12 kings in the Mrauk U Dynasty were feudatory to Bengal" though I have great respect for Maurice Collis and his scholarship.

Most probably, in the Mrauk U Dynasty only 9 kings among the 11 subsequent kings following Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan), i.e. except Min Khayi (Man Khari) and his son King Ba Saw Phyu (Ba Saw Phru), were feudatory to Bengal. (See and compare Appendix I, table based on Maurice Collis)

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<sup>21</sup> Maurice Collis in collaboration with San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay "in Journal of Burma Research Society, Vol. XXIII, pp. 503 - 505.

<sup>22</sup> Po Hla Aung, *A New History of Rakhaing (Arakan)*, (in Burmese), p. 28.

#### 4.4. Re-establishing of the Arakanese Empire:

As mentioned before, because of the mistake of Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) Arakan became feudatory to the Sultanate of Bengal and had to surrender 12 towns, including Chittagong and Tri Pura to the Sultanate of Bengal as a gift. However, when the "Lord of Thandwe" ဘဏ္ဍာသီရိ Ba Saw Thiri became the 13th king of the Mrauk U Dynasty (A.D. 1531-1553), as a tradition of the Arakanese kings, he took the Pali title သီရိညူရိယမဟာဓမ္မရာဇာ Thri Thuriya Maha Dhamma Raza (*Sri Suriya Maha Dhamma Raja*). When the Sultan of Bengal granted him the Muslim title "Zabauk Shah"; as usual as during the reign of his 12 predecessors, he felt as an insult. He refused to be a feudatory to Bengal, declared himself as well as his country to be freed from Bengal, reoccupied the 12 towns including Chittagong and Tri Pura in A.D. 1532, which traditionally belonged to the Kingdom of Arakan, and re-established the Arakanese Empire.

He was known in the Arakanese chronicles also as မင်းဘင် Min Bin (Man Ban) *alias* မင်းဘာကြီး Min Bargyi (Man Bargri). One of the biggest Buddhist temples in Arakan, ရှစ်သောင်းဘုရား Shitthaung Phaya (Shite Thaug Phara), meaning temple of 80,000 Buddha statues was built by him. His son Tekkha succeeded to the Arakan throne after him and built ကိုးသောင်းဘုရား Koe Thaug Phaya (Koe Thaug Phara) meaning temple of 90,000 Buddha statues. Therefore, there is a saying in Arakan that " If your father donates 80000, then you have to donate 90000". That means the son has to work much harder than his father.

In any case, starting from Min Bin (Man Ben) *alias* Min Bargyi (Man Bargri) the other 37 out of 49 kings of the Mrauk U Dynasty were not obligated to take on Muslim titles even though some of them still bore Muslim titles. Why? The answer is clear. Some parts of Bengal became a part of Arakanese Empire and they wanted to please some of their Muslims subjects who were Bengalis living in the western part of the Arakanese Empire then, which became now South Eastern Part of Bangladesh. Min Khamaung (Man Khamaung), who came to throne of Arakan in A.D. 1612, and his son Thri Thudhamma who came to throne of Arakan in A.D. 1622 were the last kings with assumed Muslim titles "Hussein Shah" and Selim Shah the Second respectively (see appendix I & 2). The last 28 kings had only either Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) or Pali names.<sup>23</sup>

In the year 1666, the Chittagong District was annexed into the Mogul Empire after the Mogul-Arakanese War. Starting from that era, the Chittagong District never again belonged to Arakan, but instead to Bengal. That was the main reason why the last 28 kings of the Mrauk U Dynasty did not need to have assumed Muslim titles. There were very few Muslim subjects in their kingdom. Hence, they could avoid the Muslim titles easily.

##### 4.4.1. Bearing Foreign Names:

Here I like to emphasize that taking assumed Muslim Titles or a Muslim name did not and does not mean that that person must be a Muslim. Even President Obama of USA, a Christian, has

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<sup>23</sup> Collis, Vol. XXIII, pp. 501-503. See also Appendix I of this article.



a second name Hussein. One of the famous singers of the Burmese Classical Songs during the late Colonial Era and in the early 50's bore the name U Ali, but he was a Buddhist. Many people of Burma took and still have some Christian names though they were and are devout Buddhists. The late Daw Khin May Than, wife of the late Dictator General Ne Win, bore the Christian name Kitty Ba Than. A son of the first President of the Union of Burma, Sao Shwe Thaik, a Shan and a devout Buddhist had the name Eugene Thaik. There are many reasons for bearing a foreign name. It may be because of friendship, in some cases just for courtesy and sometimes just to show respect for that society.

Maung Tha Hla also wrote: "To assume Muslim Title or to adorn an Islamic guise is not the ground for specious supposals as fabricated by the Muslim agitators. .... While mounting campaigns against the Persian Empire, Alexander the Great wore the Persian robe and married the daughter of a local chief in Central Asia before he crossed to India. None of the Macedonian Greeks, Alexander, his generals, or the troops who followed the lead, had ever forsaken their root or belief of their religion. What the conquerors did was only a clever ploy, with a view to consolidating power and rallying support of the conquered people".<sup>24</sup>

#### **4.4.1.1. Buddhists kings with Pseudonym Muslim Titles:**

All kings of the Mrauk U dynasty were Buddhists. Some kings had assumed Muslim Titles because, as mentioned above, Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan), the founder of the Mrauk U City wanted to show his gratitude to the Sultan of Gaur who helped him to regain the Arakanese throne in 1430. Hence, he promised the Sultan that the Arakanese kings would bear Pseudonym Muslim Titles. But in fact, all of the Arakanese kings were donors of many temples in Mrauk U as well as in the other parts of Arakan. They did make coins, one side with Burmese/Arakanese scripts and the other side with Persian (NOT Bengali).

For example: Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan), the founder of the Mrauk U City with the assumed Muslim Title 'Suleiman Shah' built seven Buddhists temples in Mrauk U. One of them was Laymyetna Phaya (Leemyatna Phara) in Mrauk U (now Mrohaung). His successor and younger brother Min Khayi (Man Khari), who had an assumed Muslim Title 'Ali Khan', erected the Nyidaw Zedi (Satee), which can be roughly translated as 'The Pagoda built by the Younger Brother'. His son and successor King Ba Saw Phru alias Kaliman Shah constructed four Buddhists temples including the Maha Bodi Shwegu Pagoda. His son Dan Uggā alias Daluya, who bore the Muslim Title Moguh Shah, was the donor of Thongyaik Tasu Temple (meaning the temple of Thirty One Buddhas). His successor Min Yan Aung (Man Ran Aung) alias Narui Shah founded the Htupayon Pagoda. Min Bin (Man Ban) had an assumed Muslim Title of Zabauk Shah; and was the donor of seven temples including Shit Thaung Phaya (Shite Thaung Phara) or the Temple of Eighty Thousand Buddha Statues. Min Phalaung (Man Phalaung) alias Secudah Shah was the donor of six temples including Htukkan Thein, his son Min Yaza Gyi (Man Raza Gri) with the Muslim Title Salem Shah donated Phaya Paw (Phara Paw) Pagoda and Pakhan Thein in Mrauk U and also Shwe Kyaung Pyin Monastery in Thandwe. Min Khamaung, who subjoined the Muslim Title Hussein Shah constructed Yatanapon (Ratanabon) and Yatana Pyethet (Ratana Prethat) Pagodas and his son Thri

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<sup>24</sup> Maung Tha Hla, The Rakhaing, p.103

Thudhamma (meaning the Protector of Buddhist Religion) alias Salem Shah the Second, erected the Sekkya Manaung (Sakkyia Manaung) Pagoda.

Muslim Sharia Law dictated the Muslim community to convert all 'infidels', i.e., all who supported any other religions except Islam. A Muslim who converts to another religion can be punishable with a death penalty. If those kings of the Mrauk U Dynasty were Muslims, they would have been condemned to death by the Mullahs for breach of the Islamic faith.

There was and is no Muslim ruler who undertook or undertakes to promote Buddhism or Christianity or any other religion. The Crusade Wars had proven this in history. In 2000, the Taliban of Afghanistan destroyed two 2000 years old gigantic Buddha Statues despite of the protests from the whole world. They could not keep those statues even as historical monuments. For them, those statues were the "Idols of the Infidels"!

#### **4.5. The military power:**

The military power of Arakan was proven already when Min Bargyi (man Bargri) conquered back the 12 towns including Chittagong and Tri Pura in A.D. 1532, which traditionally belonged to the Kingdom of Arakan. During his reign the Burmese king Tabin Shwe Htee had re-established the Second Burmese Empire with the help of his warrior brother-in-law General Kyaw Htin Anawratha *alias* Bayint Naung. They tried to annex Arakan into the Burmese Empire and invaded Southern Arakan, however, their invasion forces were repelled by the Rakhaing forces. Tabin Shwe Htee had to swallow his pride, approached Burmese and Arakanese Buddhist Monks to play the role of peace mediators. The peace treaty was signed from both sides and Burmese invasion armies retreated.

Later, during the reign of မင်းဖလောင့်: Min Phalaung (Man Phalaung)<sup>25</sup> (A.D.1571-1593), the youngest son of Min Bargyi (Man Bargri), King Bayint Naung, co-founder of the Second Burmese Empire and the successor of his brother-in-law Tabin Shwe Htee became very proud because he had annexed all of his neighbouring countries including Langxiang and Siam. So, in the year 1581 his armies and navy marched towards Arakan. However, his forces were totally defeated by the Arakanese in all fronts and he was forced to sign a peace treaty. King Bayint Naung was well known in Burmese History Books as 'the co-founder of the Second Burmese Empire'. He was a pride of the present military government and named him 'The Founder of the Second Union of Myanmar'<sup>26</sup>. This so-called 'The Second Union of Myanmar' or 'The Second Burmese Empire' had reached to its extreme limit. In fact, that empire had the

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<sup>25</sup> Phalaung is the Arakanese term for the Portuguese. It is a corrupted word from Persian Farangi or Firingi, i.e. a Frank, meaning European. This term for European is very old in Asia. Till now, in Thailand all Whites are called "Phalang". The Burmese used to call Portuguese as Ba-yin-gi (Barangi), a corruption of Farangi. However, a modern Burmese meaning of Ba-yin-gi is only for Roman Catholic Christians.

This Arakanese king's real name was Chit Hnaung (Shite Hnaung) meaning the latest beloved (son). He was the youngest son of Min Bargyi (Man Bargri) and was born on that day when Arakanese armed forces destroyed the Portuguese fleet and conquered the Portuguese fort of Dianga. That's why his father named him Min Phalaung (Man Phalaung) which can be roughly translated as "King or Ruler of the Portuguese".

<sup>26</sup> His statue can be seen in the new capital 'Naypyidaw', together with the statues of King Anawratha and King Alaungphaya, the founders of the First and the Third Burmese Empires respectively.

almost all territories of the Union of Burma except Arakan or Rakhaing, although some neighbouring countries like Siam, Changmai and Langxiang became the vassal states of that empire..

When မင်းဖလောင်း: Min Phalaung (Man Phalaung) died in 1593, his son ရာဇာကြီး: Razagyi (Razagri) succeeded the throne (1593-1612), and the military power of Arakan reached at the peak. This time, the Arakanese armies could invade, occupy, plunder and destroy Hanthawaddy or Pegu, the capital of the Second Burmese Empire. They took the daughter of the Burmese Emperor, Cambodian statues and white elephants which Burmese had taken as booty from Siam a few years ago. These statues were originally taken from Angkor Wat to Ayuddiya by the Siamese as booty after they annexed Cambodia centuries ago. Later in 1774, after the Burmese conquest of Mrauk U, these statues were taken to Ava as booty and till now they can be seen in the premises of Maha Muni Pagoda near Mandalay.

#### 4.7. Declining of the empire:

Unfortunately, King Thri Thudhamma was poisoned slowly by Queen Nat-Shin-Mai. When King Thiri Thudhamma died his son Min Sanay (Man Sani) became king of Arakan. Unfortunately, he could rule Arakan only for 21 days because he too was poisoned by Queen Nat Shin Mai<sup>27</sup>. Later, her secret lover Minister Nga Kutha was declared king of Arakan with the title of နရပတိကြီး: Narapatigyi (Narapatigri). King Narapatigyi (Narapatigri) was known to be a notorious king in the Arakanese history and the empire became weak. During the reign of his grandson စန္ဒသုဓမ္မ Sanda Thudhamma (*Chandra Sudhamma*) (A.D 1652-1674) the empire declined.

In the year A.D. 1660, Prince Shah Shuja, the younger brother of Mogul Emperor Aurang Zebe, his family and followers came as refugees to Arakan after he lost his attempt to get the Mogul throne. King Sanda Thudhamma welcomed them and granted political asylum at the beginning, however, when the Arakanese king wanted to take one of the daughters of Sha Shuja, Princess Amina, as one of his minor-queens, the Mogul prince felt insulted and answered rudely that his daughter should better die than marry an "infidel". Up to this point all Arakanese Chronicles stated unanimously.

However, they stated different versions for the Mogul-Arakanese War. Some chronicles stated that the Arakanese king became angry because he was insulted by the 'Infidel who was an asylum seeker in his shelter'. Hence, he ordered all of the Mogul refugees to be liquidated by drowning. This was the main cause of the war between Arakan and the Mogul Empire which broke out in A.D. 1666. As a result Chittagong district was annexed by the Moguls and never

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<sup>27</sup> All chronicles unanimously stated that King Thri Thudhamma and his son Min Sanay (Man Sani) were poisoned by Queen Nat Shin Mai. No doubt that Nat Shin Mai was the "Chief Queen" မိဖုရားခေါင် of King Thri Thudhamma during his last days, otherwise she was not able to manipulate by declaring her secret lover as a new king. However, no chronicles stated clearly whether she was Min Sanay's (Men Sani's) own mother or step mother. Most probably she was Min Sanay's (Men Sani's) step mother.

again belonged to Arakan more. It was the beginning of the fall of Mrauk U Dynasty.<sup>28</sup> U Po Hla Aung<sup>29</sup> on the other hand, stated that Shah Shuja and family were not executed by King Sanda Thudhamma. According to him, Sha Shuja and followers tried to escape from Arakan because they did not want to surrender the Mogul princess to the Arakanese king, but the Arakanese soldiers did not let them to leave Mrauk U City. Sha Shuja and his followers revolted against the Arakanese, the first time in December 1660 and again in February 1661. Both attempts failed and only after the second aborted revolt, in which they tried to burn the Mrauk U City, Sha Shuja was executed and his sons and daughters were arrested. The Mogul Emperor demanded the Arakanese king that the Mogul princes and princesses to be freed, however their demand was turned down by the Arakanese king. In 1663 A.D., the Moguls invaded Arakan to free Sha Shuja's children. King Sanda Thudhamma ordered the three sons of Sha Shuja to be beheaded. The Arakanese sent the corpses to the Moguls. The invasion of Moguls was repelled by the Arakanese. The Moguls attempted again in 1664 and 1665 A.D., but all in vain. In the mean time, Moguls used a new tactic and strategy. They bribed the Portuguese mercenaries serving under the Arakanese. The Portuguese became renegades. Again in 1666, they could persuade the Dutch, the traditional allies of the Arakanese, to leave Arakan. Arakan had no supporters. As a result, Chittagong district was annexed by the next Mogul invasion in 1666, and it never again belonged to Arakan more.

Therefore, as mentioned before, the empire declined and the last 28 kings of the Mrauk U Dynasty did not need to have assumed Muslim titles. There were very few Muslim subjects in their kingdom. Hence, they could skip the Muslim titles easily. The subsequent kings were weak and some were on the throne for a few days. (See Appendix I)

After the Burmese king Alaungphaya conquered the Mon kingdom and annexed it into the Burmese Empire, the southern parts of Arakan, particularly in the Provinces of Thandwe and Am, had direct contacts with the Burmese, hence, Burmese influences came into being in those provinces. The people of Rambree Island revolted against the king of Mrauk U, they overthrew the king and the Lord of Rambree became the king of Arakan. The last two kings of the Mrauk U Dynasty were from Rambree Island. The disunity in Arakan was the main cause of the downfall of the kingdom.

#### **4.8. Burmese Invasion and Annexation of Arakan into the Burmese Empire:**

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<sup>28</sup> Compare with Tekkatho Nandameik, *The Arakanese Queen*, In: Ngwe Tayi Magazine, no. 119, Rangoon, May 1970.

It was only a translation of George Calderon's play with the same title. The original story was written by Ravindranath Tagore. Tekkatho Nandameik admitted that Tagore's version did not match history. He pointed out that Tagore's story ended up with the marriage of the Arakanese king and the Muslim princess and not in tragedy as in written history. According to Tekkatho Nandameik the name of the Arakanese king was Nga Kutha alias Narapatigri, which is not true. Nga Kutha *alias* Narapatigri ruled Arakan from 1638 to 1645; but Sanda Thudhamma ruled Arakan from 1652 to 1684. Hence, Sanda Thudhamma was the king who ordered the Moguls to be killed. Since Narapatigri *alias* Nga Kutha was known to be the most notorious king in the Mrauk U Dynasty it is possible that Tekkatho Nandameik was confused.

<sup>29</sup> U Po Hla Aung, *A New History of Rakhaing (Arakan)*, (in Burmese), pp. 68-71.

In the year A.D. 1784, the Burmese king Bodawphaya<sup>30</sup> (Bodawphara) annexed Arakan. Here again some Arakanese, headed by ဦးထွန်းဇံ U Htun Zan (U Htuan Zan) and ဦးသံဒေ U Thande, went to Ava to request the Burmese king to liberate Mrauk U from the incompetent မဟာသမ္မတ King Maha Thamada of Arakan.<sup>31</sup> It cannot be ruled out that it was a conflict between the Arakanese from the North and those from the South because Maha Thamada and his predecessor were not from Mrauk U but from the Rambree Island.

Believe it or not, according to the Arakanese chronicles, အလောင်းဘုရား Alaungphaya (Alaungphara) *alias* ဦးအောင်ဇေယျ U Aung Zeya, founder of the Konbaung Dynasty, the last dynasty of the Burmese kings, was an Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) prince. The Arakanese chronicles stated that it was the main reason why Alaungphaya and his sons never invaded Arakan during the reign of Alaungphaya (Alaungphara) and his two elder sons although Arakan was very weak at that time. It was proven in history that Alaungphaya (Alaungphara) and his successors invaded and annexed almost all of their neighbours, including the kingdoms of Mon, Siam, Changmai, Langxiang, Assam, and Manipur.<sup>32</sup>

When Bodawphaya's army invaded Arakan, the Arakanese did not resist properly, hoping that the Burmese army headed by the crown prince would overthrow the hated king of Arakan, Maha Thamada and liberate Arakan because the Burmese crown prince was a son of Bodawphaya that means he was a grandson of Alaungphaya, hence, he was also an Arakanese. Only Maha Thamada's followers resisted.<sup>33</sup> The hope of the Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) was illusory, however. The Burmese army annexed Arakan and took the Holy Shrine of Maha Muni Image to Ava.

#### 4. 10. Anglo-Burmese Border Conflicts

After the Burmese annexation of Arakan, the Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) in Arakan were tortured. The Burmese Royal Armies looted the colossal statue of Maha Muni from the Arakan City or Mrauk U and they used the Arakanese prisoners of war, about thirty thousand including

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<sup>30</sup> The real name of King Bodawphaya was U Waing. When he was prince he was granted the title of the Prince of Badon and was therefore called Badon Mintha, and when he became King he was called Badon Min, but his successor was his own grandson Phannan Shin, *alias* Sagaing Min. Whenever Sagaing Min mentioned his predecessor Badon Min he used the term "Bodawphaya" meaning "my royal grandfather" and thus the word "Bodawphaya" was used by the later historians as "King's Grandpa". Sagaing Min himself was named by the later historians as "Bagyidawphaya" meaning "King's uncle" because he was the uncle of King Pagan (Pagan Min) and King Mindon (Mindon Min). Whenever Pagan Min and Midon Min mentioned Sagaing Min they used the term "Bagyidawphaya" meaning "my royal uncle"

<sup>31</sup> P.R. Pearn, "King Bering" in *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol. XXIII, 11, 1933, P. 445.

<sup>32</sup> U Aung Tha Oo, *A Short History of Arakan* (in Burmese), Mya Yadana Press, Rangoon, ca. 1954, p. 132-133.

<sup>33</sup> U Aung Tha Oo, 1956, p. 132-133.

the last King of Arakan Maha Thamada, as slave labour to carry that colossal image across the mountain range and for other slavery works. These prisoners of war were used in the reconstruction of Meikhtila Lake, the building of the Mingun Pagoda, and the aborted war against Siam.<sup>34</sup> The Burmese viceroy<sup>35</sup> in Arakan was also very cruel to the natives. About 50,000 Rakhaings/Rakhines fled to British occupied Bengal.<sup>36</sup> Finally, U Than De and U Tun Zan (U Tuan Zan) who 'had invited' the Burmese, became fed up with Burmese rulers and revolted against them<sup>37</sup>. The armed Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) tried to invade Arakan from Bengal but their attempts failed and the Burmese army marched into British territories to crush them. There were a lot of border conflicts between the British and the Burmese and these were the main reasons for the first Anglo-Burmese war, which broke out in 1824 and lead the fall of the Burmese Empire.

#### 4.11. The First Anglo-Burmese War

During the First Anglo-Burmese War many Arakanese helped invading British armed forces with the hope that they could liberate their country with the help of the British. Because of that act, the Royal Burmese Army lead by the famous Field Marshal Maha Bandoola had a great amount of savagery and war crimes in Arakan. Maha Bandoola was the national hero for the Burmese but for the Arakanese he was noted as a barbaric warrior.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> U Ba Than, History of Burma (in Burmese), 1929, reprinted by Sarpebeikman Press, Rangoon, 1964, p. 352-353.

<sup>35</sup> In fact he was the "Myowun" of Dhanyawaddy appointed by the Burmese king. Myowun is a ruler of a town or a province on behalf of the king, hence, equivalent to a governor or a viceroy. The meaning of viceroy given by the Oxford Dictionary is: "A person governing as the deputy of a sovereign". The meaning given by the Webster Dictionary is: "The governor of a country or province who rules as a representative of his king or sovereign". Dr. A. Judson too, translated Myowun of Rangoon as 'The Viceroy of Rangoon'. Since Dr. Judson was an American, that means a native speaker of English language, I took the liberty and used his translation though the meaning of viceroy as well as governor general given in modern English-Burmese Dictionaries is ဘုရင်ခံချုပ် . This term is the later development. Maurice Collis, on the other hand, used the term 'the Burmese Governor of Arakan'. The meaning of governor given in modern English-Burmese Dictionaries is ဘုရင်ခံ .

<sup>36</sup> Maung U Shang, "The Arakanese (Rakhine) community in Bangladesh" in The Voice of Rakhine, Rakhine Student Organization of Bangladesh, March 7, 1987, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> As a parallel case, one could compare Aung San and the Thirty Comrades who 'invited' Japanese Forces hoping for the 'Liberation' in 1940, however, later in March 1945 they had to revolt against the Japanese.

<sup>38</sup> See and compare: Maung Tha Hla, The Rakhaing, P. 18, NY, U.S.A, 2004.

.Before the First Anglo-Burmese War many Arakanese were used by the British. Here, I would like to cite U San Shwe Bu and Maurice Collis:<sup>39</sup>: "Mr. C.R. Cartwright was the acting Controller of Chittagong. One Mr. Linguist attached to some small force landed on the island of Shapuri (ie. Shinmaphyu), and without authority removed the Burmese Flag. He was severely censured for this. It was early in 1824. Ill feeling between the two peoples being really due to the boundary dispute, Robertson on the 8th January, 1824, sends a letter to the Burmese Governor of Arakan to appoint some one to meet him to adjust the boundary. The dispute arose out of the arrest of two Englishmen who were found anchoring near the island. The Raja's letter being unfavourable, war is expected and Robertson takes precautions. He finds Arakanese co-operation indispensable. He praises their patriotism and their regard for their ancestors."

#### **4.9. Arakan under British Rule:**

Here again, the hope of the Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) was illusory, however. The British army annexed Arakan and ruled Arakan as a province of Bengal until 1852. After the Second Anglo-Burmese War, when lower Burma was annexed by the British, Arakan was administered as a province of British-Burma. After the annexation of the whole of Burma by the Third War in 1885, Arakan became a Division of Burma. British Government ruled Arakan through a commissioner who was directly responsible to the British Governor in Rangoon.

The armed Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) independence struggles were brutally crushed by British-Indian forces. The well known leaders were မင်းသားကြီး ဦးရွှေဘန်း Prince U Shwe Ban (U Rhwe Ban) and ဒေဝန်းကြီး ဦးအောင်ကျော်ရှိ *Dewan*<sup>40</sup> U Aung Kyaw Shi (U Aung Kyaw Rhi).

British rulers changed the capital from Mrauk U to the small island of Sittwe after their annexation of Arakan, on account of sickness among their troops stationed at Mrauk U. From that time Mrauk U was called Mro Haung meaning old city and declined eventually to a small town. Sittwe was called Akyab by the British. Before 1826 it was only a small island of fishermen's village. During the First Anglo-Burmese War, British and Burmese armies stationed there alternatively, hence, it was called "Sittwe Kyun" (Site Twi Kyuan) meaning

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<sup>39</sup> Maurice Collis in collaboration with San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay "in Journal of Burma Research Society, Vol. XXIII, p. 499.

<sup>40</sup> A Persian word *Diwan* is: „ The head financial minister, whether of a state or a province”. (Source: Hobson Jobson, pp. 309-310)

"Garrison Island". There is a hill in Sittwe upon which the "Arkyap Daw" or "An Kyane Daw" Pagoda was built. The hill is named "Arkyap Daw Gon" or "An Kyane Daw Gon" . When the British army came and stationed in that area they misunderstood and interchanged the name of the hill with that of the fishermen's village. When they started to build the town they called it "Akyab", adjusting the word to their own way of pronunciation. Anyway the natives called it Sittwe (Site Twi).

Most of the descendants of the 50,000 Arakanese refugees, who took refuge in British occupied Bengal during the 40 years of Burmese occupation of Arakan (1784-1824), re-immigrated to Arakan when it became a British colony in 1826. Some of the Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) living in East Pakistan came back to the Arakan Division of the Union of Burma after it regained independence in 1948. As they were Buddhists they did not want to stay in a Muslim dominated country. In the year 1966 alone, 230 Rakhine families returned to Burma.<sup>41</sup> These returnees as well as the Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) living in the former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Tripura in India are called အနောက်သား: "Anauk tha" meaning our compatriots from the west by the Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) in Burma.

#### **4. Religions in Arakan:**

##### **4.1. Hinduism:**

As mentioned before, the early kingdoms of Arakan were Hindu states. Some Hindu deities were found in ancient cities. However, Hinduism might have been replaced by Buddhism when the kings and people became Buddhists.

##### **4.2. Buddhism:**

According to the legend of Maha Muni Image, Arakan was already a Buddhist Kingdom during the time of Lord Buddha.

Arakan was well known to be "the Land of Pagodas and Temples". There is a famous Arakanese verse: သင်္ဃေပန်းခိုင် တမြိုင်မြိုင် ရခိုင်ဘုရားပေါင်း Thazun pan Khaing ta mraing mraing Rakhaing Phara paung", which was nicely translated into English verse by Maung Tha Hla as:

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<sup>41</sup> Maung U Shang, 1987, p.17



“The Thazun (a type of orchid) sprigs in sheer clusters, Sum the total of the pharas grandeur”. According to this verse, there were 6352755 Pharas (Buddha Statues) in Arakan.

Maurice Collis described about the situation of Buddhism in the year 1630 during the reign of မင်းဟရီ Min Hayi (Man Hari) *alais* သီရိသုဓမ္မ Thiri Thudhamma (*Sri Sudhamma*). In his book *The Land of the Great Image* in page 168 where it was written: " The Buddha had died in 543 B.C. Altogether 2173 years had elapsed since then, and for that immense period the image of the Founder of the Religion had remained on *Sirigutta*, the oldest, most mysterious, the most holy object in the world. The relics detailed to the disciples on *Selagiri* had all been found and enshrined. Arakan was a sacred country; it was the heart of Buddhism; and he (King Thiri Thudhamma) as its king, was the most notable Buddhist ruler in existence. Grave indeed was his responsibility. He had not only to maintain the state as the homeland of the Arakanese race, but as the one place on earth where an authentic shape of the *Tathagata* was preserved, a possession of greater potency than the most precious relics".

#### **4.3. Christianity:**

Many Portuguese mercenaries served under Arakanese kings since 16th Century A.D. So, there is no doubt that there must have been some Christians in Arakan, but they were not natives.

Here, I would like to cite Maurice Collis, “The appeal of the Portuguese”: "We (the Portuguese) have come to assure His Majesty that the Portuguese of Dianga are His Majesty’s devoted humble servants, as they have ever been in the past, having served him and his father and grandfather of the glorious memory, not only by harrying the Mogul in Bengal, but fighting his enemy, the king of Pegu. If God grants me the fortune of being admitted to the royal presence, my endeavour will be convinced His Majesty of my nation continued to serve him".<sup>42</sup>

The first chapel, however, was built only after 1630 A.D., because the Catholic Missionary, Father Manrique arrived Arakan from Goa in 1630 and asked permission from the Arakanese king a chapel to be built. King Thiri Thudhamma was so kind by not only allowing the Portuguese priest to build a chapel near the royal palace, but also he lent him money. Father Manrique recorded in his memoirs by praising King Thiri Thudhamma that the Buddhist king was so generous and helped him what even a Protestant Christian monarch would not have

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<sup>42</sup> Maurice Collis, *The Land of the Great Image*, p. 153

done it although the Protestants and Catholics share the same god and follows the principles of Jesus Christ.

Father Manrique also recorded that though Arakan had a common border with India, particularly with Bengal, there was nothing common between Arakanese and Bengalis or Indians regarding race, features, language, religion, characters, mentality, culture, traditions and civilization. He also recorded that he had never seen intermarriage between an Arakanese and a Bengali or an Indian. Nor he had noticed a single Arakanese (Rakhaing) who became a Muslim.

Here, I would like to cite some words of Father Manrique: "The city of Arracan according to general opinion must have contained one hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants, excluding foreign merchants. There were also a great number of foreign merchants, as there were many ships trading with this port from Bangala, Masulipatan, Tenasserim, Martaban, Achen und Jacatra. There were other foreigners also, some being merchants and some soldiers, the latter being enlisted on salaries; these soldiers were Portuguese, Pegus (i.e. Mons) Burmese and Mogors (Moguhls) in nationality. Besides these, there were many Christians of Japanese, Bengali and other nationalities".<sup>43</sup>

#### **4.4. Muslim Settlements in Arakan**

##### **4.4.1. Pre Colonial Era**

Arakan has a common border with Bengal, so there is no doubt that there must have been very few Muslim settlers in Arakan even before the Mrauk U Dynasty was established, however, their number could be negligible and apart of that they were not Arakanese (Rakhaings) instead they were some foreigners.<sup>44</sup>

Martin Smith stated that Muslim settlements in Arakan date back to the 9th century A.D"<sup>45</sup>. His statement is wrong and baseless, because even in Bengal the Muslim settlements began

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<sup>43</sup> Myo Min, Old Burma, p. 38

<sup>44</sup> See and compare with Maurice Collis in collaboration with San Shwe Bu, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay" in Journal of Burma Research Society, Vol. XXIII, p. 493.

<sup>45</sup> Martin Smith, Burma Muslims' Borderland: Sold Down the River" in CS Quarterly, 13(4), p. 68.

much later, and in Chittagong not until the 14th century. In the ninth century A.D., even the biggest country in Southeast Asia with the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia, was under the Sri Vijaya Empire, which was a Hindu-Buddhist Empire.

Maurice Collis, on the other hand, wrote: "**Bengal was absorbed into this polity, [that is, Islam] in 1203 A.D. But it was its extreme eastern limit. It never passed into Indo-China; and its influence from its arrival in 1203 till 1430 was negligible upon Arakan**"<sup>46</sup>.

#### **4.4.1.1. Kaman Muslims**

The real Muslim settlement began only after Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) regained the throne of Arakan with the help of the Sultan of Gaur. There were some Muslim troops in Mrauk U to protect Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) from the Burmese invasion. About two hundred years later, some followers of Mogul Prince Shah Shuja joined the descendants of these soldiers. These groups of mercenaries were Afghans and Moguls. They were called "Kamans", meaning archers in Persian language. Their descendants still live in the Rakhine State, particularly in Akyab (Sittwe) District and Rambree Island. Now they are assimilated into the Arakanese society. Only in religion and complexion do they differ from the Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhines), they know the Arakanese language, literature and Buddhist traditions very well. Most of them have Burmese/Arakanese names. They rarely used their Muslim names.

#### **4.1.1.2. Myay Du Muslims**

There are some Muslims living in Thandwe District. These Muslims are called "Myay Du". They are the descendants of the former "Pagoda Slaves".<sup>47</sup> When King Min Bin (Man Ban) *alias* Min Bargyi (Man Bargri) reoccupied the Chittagong District in A.D. 1533, he brought back some Bengalis as prisoners of war and let them work as menial workers at Andaw, Nandaw and Sandaw Pagodas in Thandwe. Since they had to do menial works and were not free people anymore, they were called "Pagoda Slaves". In the year 1624, these Bengali "Pagoda Slaves" supported the 'Palace revolution' of the 'Lord of Thandwe' against his own father, the Arakanese king. After the aborted revolution against the Arakanese king these 'Bengali Pagoda Slaves' and their families, all together about four thousand people, escaped to Ava to

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<sup>46</sup> M. Collis, "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay", XXIII, p. 493.

<sup>47</sup> Tydd, W.D., Burma Gazetteer, Sandoway District, Vol. A, Rangoon, 1926.

take refuge. The Burmese king accepted them as his subjects, gave them their freedom by royal orders declaring that they were no longer "Pagoda Slaves", and let them settle in the small town မြေပွဲ: Myay Du. That's why they were known as "Myay Du Muslims". These "Myay Du Muslims", generation by generation, served in the Burmese Royal Army. When Bodaw Phaya's armies invaded Arakan in 1784, the descendants of these "Myay Du Muslims" came together with the Burmese Army at Thandwe front. When the Burmese occupied Arakan they let the "Myay Dus" resettle in Thandwe and near by villages. Since these people had lived about 150 years in Upper Burma, these "Myay Dus" were assimilated into Burmese society. Although their descendants live in Thandwe District, they speak Burmese central dialect instead of Arakanese Thandwe Dialect. Only in complexion and name (in some cases only) do they differ from the Arakanese and Burmese, yet they know the Burmese language, culture and traditions very well. Officially, they have Burmese/Arakanese names. They rarely use their Muslim names in public.

Since the "Kamans", the descendants of Afghan archers started living in Arakan since 1430 and their population increased in 1660 when Sha Shuja followers joined them, and the "Myay Dus" the descendants of Bengali "Pagoda Slaves" started living in Arakan since 1533 they may be called "the Indigenous Muslims of Arakan". For centuries to now, these "Indigenous Muslims of Arakan" lived and live peacefully with Burmese and Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines), who are Buddhists. Even in the country-wide racial riots between Buddhists and Muslims starting from Rangoon in 1938, there was not a single riot in Thandwe<sup>48</sup>.

The histories of "Myay Dus" and "Kamans" attested that no "Indigenous Muslims of Arakan" were expelled from Arakan after the Burmese annexation in 1784 instead, the Burmese even brought "Indigenous Muslims of Arakan" back to Arakan.

#### **4.4.2. During the Colonial Era**

##### **4.4.2.1 Early Bengali Muslim Settlers**

Only after the British annexed Burma and placed under British India did a lot of Bengalis, especially Chittagonians, come to settle in Arakan, particularly in the north. After the First

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<sup>48</sup> U Aung Thein (Publisher), Biography of Rector U Kyaw Yin (in Burmese), Pyi Daw Tha Press Rangoon, 1967, p. 187.

Anglo-Burmese War which broke out in 1824 and ended in 1826, some parts of Burma were annexed by the British. These areas became part of British India since 1826. Hence, since 1826 people from the Subcontinent were able to come to Burma freely, unconditionally and some were brought by the British for various reasons. However, the volume of Indian immigration before the middle of the nineteenth century, though continuous, was never on a very large scale compared to what it came to be from 1852 onwards. A new chapter in the history of Indian immigration into Burma began after the British annexation of Lower Burma after the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852), and the whole of Burma after the Third War in 1886. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 marked a turning point in the economic and administrative history of British-Burma. The British government wanted to export Burmese rice and they extended the rice fields in Lower Burma, and they also constructed railway lines. As they needed peasants and coolies they imported tens of thousands of Indians.

There were five types of Indian immigrants: (1) Permanent settlers; (2) Long-term settlers, who came to seek their fortune in the then most prosperous country in Southeast Asia, but for retired life they preferred to stay in India rather than in Burma; (3) Seasonal workers who came for a fixed short period; (4) Government servants and traders who wanted to earn and save money so that they and their offspring could settle permanently in Burma as rich people; and (5) People brought by the British for various reasons.

#### **4.4.2.2. Racial riots between Chittagonian Bengali Settlers and native Arakanese**

Since Arakan has a direct land border with East Bengal many Chittagonian Bengalis were brought to Arakan. These latter settlers are called "Khawtaw Kalas"<sup>49</sup> in both Burmese and

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<sup>49</sup> All people from the Subcontinent are called 'Kala' by the Burmese and the Arakanese. Some believe it came from the Pali word "Kula" meaning "the noble race" (short form of "Kula Putta" meaning "son of the noble race") because the Lord Buddha himself was an Indian.

The other hypothesis traced by Prof. Forchammer to Gola, the name applied in an old Pegu inscription to the Indian Buddhist immigrants, a name which identifies with Sanskrit Gauda, the ancient name of northern Bengal, hence the famous city of Gaur.

Since there are many Indian races some prefix is added to the word "Kala" to distinguish one Indian race from the other. For example The Sikhs are named Punjabi Kala ပန်ချာပီကုလား, Tamils are called Kalai Kala ကလယ်ကုလား and Khawtaw Kala ခေါ်တောကုလား for the Chittagonian Bengalis. There are two hypotheses for that name:

(A) Chittagonian Bengalis always use the word which sounds in Burmese ears like "Khoto Baja" or Khawtaw Bagya" whenever they speak. The Burmese and Arakanese do not know the meaning but they presume that it can be a greeting word. Therefore the Chittagonian Bengalis are named "Khawtaw Kalas" ခေါ်တောကုလား which can be roughly translated as the Kalas (Indians) who always use the word "Khawtaw".

(b) Since the British brought them from remote villages of the Chittagong District to Arakan and let them work as coolies they were named Taw ga Khaw la de Kala တောကခေါ်လာတဲ့ကုလား which can be roughly translated as the

Arakanese. Some settlers learnt Arakanese and Burmese; hence, some of them were assimilated in the native society. However, these Chittagonian Bengalis differ from the Arakanese in their features, complexion and religion as well as in some customs which their religion directs; in writing they use Burmese but among themselves employ colloquially the language of their ancestors, either Urdu or Bengali.

Unfortunately, however, many latter settlers never tried to assimilate in the native society and therefore they were and are never welcomed by the natives, neither by the Burmese nor by the Arakanese society. Nor they could join even in the society of "Indigenous Muslims of Arakan", the "Kamans" and the "Myay Dus". That was the main reason why racial riots happened often during the whole colonial era, especially in Northern Arakan.

It reached the peak when the British Civil Administration collapsed in Arakan in 1942 because of the Second World War. There was blood bath of racial riots. Khawtaw Kalas were helped by the Muslim deserters of British Indian Army. All 195 Rakhaing villages in Butheedaung and Maungdaw area were wiped out. They vandalized, raped and slew. Many Arakanese including the Deputy Commissioner of that area U Oo Kyaw Khaing, who was on a mission to defuse the communal conflict, were killed. Many Rakhaings had to take refuge inside the Border Town Tet Chaung also well known as Maungdaw<sup>50</sup>. These Khawtaw Kalas wanted to commit ethnic cleansing of the Rakhaings living in that town. The town was blockaded, besieged and attacked by Khawtaw Kalas together with the deserters. An Arakanese Judge called U Aung Tha Kyaw sent a type of S.O.S message to Captain Taylor of the British Army stationed at the other border town Teknaf, the yonder side of the Naaf River in British East Bengal. Though both towns were British Colonies, Teknaf was under the administration of British India and Maungdaw was under the administration of British Burma. Due to this bureaucracy, Captain Taylor could not cross the border without permission from the British Administration in India. However, the Judge U Aung Tha Kyaw could persuade Captain Taylor successfully by asking him to come over to the yonder side of the river to take charge of the government treasury which was being evacuated to India. Before Captain Taylor and his company, mainly recruited by well disciplined Karens and Gurkhas, could enter Maungdaw,

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Kalas (Indians) who were brought from the remote areas. From that it was shortened to Taw Khaw Kala တောခေါ်ကုလား and then deviated to Khawtaw Kala ခေါ်တောကုလား, the present author personally prefers the first hypothesis because it is more logical and reasonable. The second hypothesis seems to be a forced Burmanized explanation.

<sup>50</sup> The original Arakanese name of this town was Tet Chaung. To honour the Headman of this town whose name was Maung Taw, the authorities changed the name to Maung Taw. However, it deviated to Maungdaw later.

they had to crush the Muslim renegades and Khawtaw Kalas. In this way captain Taylor could take care of British government treasury and the judge U Aung Tha Kyaw could save a few thousand lives of the Rakhaings.

The Rakhaing in Butheedaung were not as lucky as their compatriots in Maungdaw. They had to flee from the attacks of the Khawtaw Kalas and the Muslim deserters. They embarked a ship to sail to the yonder side, however, unfortunately, their ship capsized because of overweight and many died.

When Japanese troops invaded Burma, most of the Indians - including Chittagonian Bengalis "Khawtaw Kalas"- ran away to British India, but the "Kamans" and the "Myay Dus" remained in Arakan. After the war the Chittagonian Bengalis ("Khawtaw Kalas") came back, bringing with them new settlers.

#### **4.4.3. After the Burmese Independence**

##### **4-4.3.1. Bengali Settlers' Plan to split Arakan**

After Burma regained her independent these settlers wanted to turn northern Arakan into an autonomous Muslim state. "Some members of the 'Juniyatu Olamai' religious association went to Karachi on a delegation to discuss the incorporation of Butheedaung, Maungdaw and also Rathedaung townships into East Pakistan"<sup>51</sup>. The Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) could not tolerate it, and there was bloodshed because of riots between the Arakanese and the Bengali settlers who were known as "Khawtaw Kalas". Eventually some of these settlers went back to East Pakistan but some of them went underground and called themselves "Mujahid" rebels fighting U Nu's government while the rest of them remained in their villages. With the help of the educated Bengalis from Arakan and Rangoon they demanded for Burmese citizenship.

##### **4.4.3.2. Mujahid rebels**

The leader of the "Mujahids rebels was Mir Cassim, an uneducated fisherman. Abul Mabud Khan<sup>52</sup> wrote: "It was only an illusion of an uneducated man like Cassim who wanted to turn a

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<sup>51</sup> Khin Gyi Pyaw, "Who are the Mujahids in Arakan", in: Rakhine Tazaung Magazine, 1959 -60, p. 99.

<sup>52</sup> Abul Mabud Khan, "The Liberation Struggle in Arakan (1948-1982)", in Bangladesh today, May 16-June 15, 1984.

traditionally Buddhist land like Arakan into a Muslim state". As a result, in the 1950's these rebels were totally crushed by the Burma Armed Forces. Some surrendered while some fled to East Pakistan. Cassim fled to East Pakistan and he was shot dead in Cox Bazaar<sup>53</sup> by an unknown person in 1966.

#### 4.4.3.3. Was or is Arakan a Muslim State?

Arakan used to have four districts namely Akyab (Sittwe), Kyaukphyu, Sandoway (Thandwe) and Meyu Frontier Districts. Except the Frontier District, the three others had and have Buddhist majority. Nowadays the Rakhine State or Arakan has 20 townships, 17 of which have a majority of Buddhists and only 3 border townships namely - Rathedaung, Butheedaung and Maungdaw, all of them were in former မေယုနယ်ခြားခရိုင် Meyu Frontier District which have a Muslim majority.

**Hence, it is clearly proven that there was and there is no Muslim majority state in Burma. By the way, there are two Christian majority states in Burma, namely Kachin and Chin States, where at least 60% of the population are Christians. The Karen (Kayin) state, however, was and is not the Christian majority state. Only 30% of the Karens in Burma are Christians. At least 35 % of Karens are Buddhist<sup>54</sup> and the rest are natural worshippers.**

### 5. The Word "Rohingya"

To be honest, I had never heard of the word "Rohingya" until the late 1950's. I traced it in all history books, literature, encyclopaedias and so forth published before 1955, written by foreigners as well as Burmese, but I cannot find a single word called 'Rohingya'.

Even in Hobson-Jobson. "A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive" published by British Colonial Officers of British East India Company, Col. Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell (First Published 1886, Last Edition 1990) the word "Rohingya" was not mentioned. Since this book

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<sup>53</sup> The original name of this town was မော့ကံသုဇာ Mauk Thuzar. The early Bengali settlers could not pronounce that name properly and called with their own accent 'Maghs Bazaar' meaning Arakanese Market Town. When Bengal became a British colony, the British authorities changed the name of this town to Cox Bazaar, to honour the British Officer Captain Cox. Before Chittagong District was annexed into the Mogul Empire in 1666, it was an Arakanese Seaport for foreign vessels, mainly Portuguese and Dutch ships. That's why this town was named colloquially ဖလောင်းချိတ် Phalaung Shaik meaning 'Portuguese Harbour' by the Arakanese. See also footnote no. 17 for the meaning of 'Phalaung'. Till now, the Arakanese name of this town is ဖလောင်းချိတ် Phalaung Shaik.

<sup>54</sup> It was the main reason that the SLORC could use the 'Divide and Rule Policy' between the Buddhist Karens and Christian Karens in 1995 which lead the fall of Manarplaw, the head quarters of the Karen rebels.



was published by the Bengal Chamber Edition, Calcutta, India, and is an indispensable dictionary for those who want to study the history of India during the last 300 years and its impact on the East and West, it should be considered as a standard literature.

Even a well known author and scholar, Maurice Collis, who wrote many articles and books about Arakan, also never mentioned the word "Rohingya".

None of the British Colonial Officers' contributions about Burma and India mentioned that word "Rohingya". I have consulted elderly persons and scholars, including "Burmese Muslims", "Myay Du Muslims" and "Kamans". Nobody knows its meaning. The only thing the people know is that those "Mujahid" rebels who surrendered did not want to be called "Khawtaw Kalas" or Bengali Settlers. They wanted to be called either Burmese Muslims or Arakanese Muslims. This could not be accepted by the Burmese Muslim Congress in Mandalay, and also by the "Indigenous Muslims of Arakan" known as "Kamans" and "Myay Dus". As a result, they settled for the name "Rohingya".

The fact that there has never been a "Rohingya" race in Burma is quite evident. There is no such name as "Rohingya" in the Census of India, 1921 (Burma) compiled by G. G. Grantham, I.C.S., Superintendent of Census Operations Burma, or in the Burma Gazetteer, Akyab District (1924) compiled by R. B. Smart. Since these were written for administrative purposes, needless to say they were objective.<sup>55</sup>

In the late 1950's, the demand for the statehood of the Rakhaings/Rakhines (Arakanese) was at the peak. The Bengalis who started calling themselves "Rohingyas" asked for the same status as the Arakanese (Rakhines). When their demands were turned down by the Burmese government on the grounds that they were not an indigenous race, some educated Bengali Muslims like M. A. Tahir, well known through his Burmese name Ba Tha, Maung Than Lwin and some Bengali Muslim students from the University of Rangoon began to fabricate historical facts to prove that they were "Indigenous Arakanese Muslims".<sup>56</sup>

There are four or five stories for the origin of the word "Rohingya".

## **5.1. The Different Versions of the name "Rohingya"**

### **5.1.1. Rwaung ga Kyar (Tiger from the Old village)**

The first version stated that it comes from the Burmese or Arakanese word ရွာဟောင်းကကျား: Burmese pronunciation "Ywahaung ga Kyar" (Arakanese Pronunciation "Rwahaung ga Kyar") meaning "Tiger from old village ". According to that "story" the "Rohingyas" were good warriors in their native land (somewhere in Arabia). After the ship wreck in the eighth century

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<sup>55</sup> See and compare with U Kyaw Zan Tha, "Background paper on the Rohingya problem, Rangoon. 1992.

<sup>56</sup> See and compare with U Kyaw Zan Tha, "Background paper on the Rohingya problem, Rangoon. 1992. See and compare also with *Bonpauk* Tha Kyaw, "The Rohingyas; the Danger for the Union of Burma"(in Burmese), Sittwe, 15. Feb. 1990.

they served as "Muslim mercenaries" under Arakanese kings. Since they were so brave they were called "Tigers from old village".<sup>57</sup>

This must have been derived from the history of the Muslim mercenaries in Arakan who were called "Kamans". They came to Arakan only during the Mrauk U Dynasty (established 1430). In the eighth century A.D. Arakan was ruled by the Buddhist kings of the Dhanyawaddy Dynasty and that old city site can still be seen near the small town Kyauk Taw. There is not a single evidence of Arabic culture or Islam faith there. The only non-Buddhist evidence found there are the Hindu deities.

### 5.1.2. Rahingya or Rahinja

The Second version stated that once there was a Muslim prince and his followers who took refuge in Arakan during the Mrauk U Dynasty, after they were defeated by a "Palace Revolution" in the Mogul Empire. The name of that prince was Mohammed Rahin. Their descendants were called ရာဟင်ကျ (pronounced Rahingya) meaning descendents of Rahin.<sup>58</sup>

This story does not match with history. According to history, in the year A.D. 1660 Prince Shan Shuja, the younger brother of the Mogul Emperor Aurang Zebe, took refuge in Arakan. As mentioned earlier, at the beginning the Arakanese king, Sanda Thudhamma welcomed him. Later the Arakanese king wanted to take one of the daughters of that Mogul prince as his concubines. When the Muslim prince refused the royal orders the Arakanese king killed all of them. Therefore they could not leave any descendants. Even if they could have left some descendants they would have been Moguls with fair colouring and would have spoken Urdu, rather than a Bengali Chittagong dialect. The killing of Shah Shuja, his family, and his followers was one of the reasons why there was a war between Arakan and the Mogul empire and as a result Chittagong was annexed by the Moguls in A.D. 1666. It was the beginning of the fall of the Arakanese Kingdom.<sup>59</sup>

### 5.1.3. Roan Ane Gya

The third version stated that there was a Sultanate called "Roang" which was feudatory to Arakan after King Min Bargyi (Man Bargri) reoccupied Chittagong district. The Sultan sent his son Shah Ali and one thousand followers to the court of Arakan to study the Arakanese language, literature and culture. After their studies they settled in Arakan. According to the third version of the origin of the name "Rohingya" the descendants of that prince and followers were called ရုံအိမ်ကျ Roang Ane Gya (Yoang Ane Gya in Burmese pronunciation) meaning the descendants from Roang Residence.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See and compare with Ba Tha, "Rowengyas in Arakan", in Guardian Magazine, May, 1960.

<sup>58</sup> Unpublished story fabricated by the educated Bengali Muslims during anti- Arakan State movement, 1960.

<sup>59</sup> U Po Hla Aung, 1990.

Compare with Tekkatho Nandameik, *The Arakanese Queen*, In: Ngwe Tayi Magazine, no. 119, Rangoon, May 1970.

<sup>60</sup> Unpublished story fabricated by the educated Bengali Muslims during anti- Arakan State movement, 1960.

This prince, Shah Ali might have existed. In Arakanese chronicles and literature like ဧည့်ဝတီအရေးတော်ပုံ (Dhanyawaddy Ayaydawpon) and မဟာပညာကျော်လျှောက်ထုံး (Maha Pyinyagyaw Hlyaukhton) it was written that there was a Muslim Sultanate called ရုံးဝသီပြည် Roang Muslim Land (Roang Pre). Those chronicles also supported the statement that Prince Shah Ali came to learn မရမာ(မြမာ) Mramar (Myamar in Burmese pronunciation) language in the court of Arakan. However, the Arakanese chronicles never stated that the prince and his followers had settled in Arakan.

This history too, shows that it has nothing to do with the people who are now calling themselves "Rohingyas", because even if the statement were true that Prince Shah Ali and his followers had settled in Arakan, the prince and his followers must have learnt Arakanese language, literature and culture. Since Arakanese is only one dialect of the Burmese language there is no doubt that they had to learn written Burmese. Hence, there is no doubt that their descendants who stayed in Arakan at least three centuries might have spoken Burmese/Arakanese fluently and known native traditions and cultures like the "Burmese Muslims" in Shwebo District, "Myay Du Muslims" in Thandwe District and "Kaman Muslims" in Arakan. Even the Arakanese (Rakhaings) living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts nowadays, where Bengali plays the role of the official language, can still speak, read and write Burmese. Unfortunately, however, the people who are now calling themselves "Rohingyas" do not know any Arakanese/Burmese language and culture. The only language they speak is Bengali Chittagong dialect.

#### **5.1.4 Ro-wun-hnyar**

The fourth version stated that the name "Rohingya" was derived from the Burmese word ရိုးဝန်းညှာ "Yo wun hnyar" (Arakanese pronunciation "Ro Wan Hnyar").<sup>61</sup> According to that tale the Arab seafarers who served as Muslim mercenaries at the court of Arakan in the eighth century were favoured by the Arakanese king whose name was not mentioned. They were honoured by the title of "Rowunya" which can be roughly translated as honest and brave people.

There are no historical facts about this story presented by an educated Bengali with the Burmese name Maung Than Lwin.

#### **5.1.5 Ronjan**

The fifth version stated that the "Rohingyas" are the descendants of Arabic seafarers and they became settled in Arakan after a shipwreck near the Rambree island ရမ်းဗြဲကျွန်း off the Arakan coast in the eighth century. When they were brought to the court of Mrauk U by the Arakanese coastal guards they shouted in their language "Ronjan" or "Rohan" meaning "mercy please" or

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<sup>61</sup> Maung Than Lwin, "Rakhaing Kala or Ro Wan Hnyar People" (in Burmese), in "Myawaddy Magazine" July, 1960.

"Please give us something to eat and drink". Since that time they were named "Ronja" people by the natives and the word "Rohingya" is therefore a derivation of "Ronjan or Rohan".<sup>62</sup>

Let us analyse this story: At the eighth century A.D. the kingdom of Mrauk U was not yet established and Arakan was ruled by the kings of Dhanyawaddy Dynasty. There is no historical evidence of any Muslim settlement in that dynasty.

#### 5.1.6. *Bonpauk Tha Kyaw's version*

*Bonpauk Tha Kyaw*<sup>63</sup>, a veteran Arakanese leftist politician wrote: "After the Second World War when British Administration restarted in Burma, all Bengalis who went back to Bengal during the war came back to Arakan. They brought many new settlers with them. Because of their immigration waves many Arakanese left their villages in Northern Arakan and moved southwards. These villages were named "Old Villages", Ywa-Haun in Burmese (Rwa-Haun in Arakanese pronunciation). Those new settlers could not pronounce 'Rwa-Haun' properly and called these villages with their Bengali accent "Ro-han". Later when Burma became an independent state, whenever immigration and border forces asked them who they were or where they were going, since they neither understood Burmese nor Arakanese, the authorities had to use Bengali Chittagong Dialect 'Kuam Ja' meaning 'Where are you going?' (Hindustani or Urdu: Gaham Ja yeka?). Then they answered back "Rohan ja" meaning "I am going to Rwa-Haun" or 'I am from Rwa-Haun' in Bengal Chittagong Dialect. That's why they were given a nick name of "Rohanja Kala"(The Indian tribe called Rohanja) by the Burmese immigration and border police. Since that time, all Chittagonian Bengalis, whether their ancestors had lived in Arakan before the Second World War or not, if they wanted to get Burmese citizenship they used the term "Rohanja" meaning Villagers of Rwa-Haun.

The surrendered "Mujahids" too adopted that name to prove that they were the villagers of "Rwahaung" (Rohan in their pronunciation), that means they had lived there since after the second world war so that they could claim Burmese citizenship. Since the word "Rohan" is neither Arakanese nor Bengali word, today nobody can guess what this word means unless one knows the background of this word. He pointed out also that most of the "Rohingyas" nowadays are real illegal immigrants and most of them are illiterates, know nothing about history but have only heard the name "Rohingyas" and claim to be. Some Muslims in Burma and Bangladesh helping them also don't know the origin of this word and created fanciful

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<sup>62</sup> See: Proposal of the Rohingya People to the Constitution Commission, Rangoon, 1972.

<sup>63</sup> *Bonpauk Tha Kyaw*, "The Rohingyas; The Danger for the Union of Burma", Sittwe, 15th Feb. 1990, p.2. *Bonpauk* can be literally translated as 'Drum skin breaker'. When U Tha Kyaw was a young boy, the famous theatre troupe of 'The Great' U Po Sein came to their town. The young boy Tha Kyaw went to the theatre troupe and asked U Po Sein whether he would be allowed to play the drums. U Po Sein loved children; so, he asked the boy's name only and gave him the permission. While Tha Kyaw was beating the drums one of the drum skins was broken. U Po Sein was not angry but gave him the nick name *Bonpauk* (Drum skin breaker). From that time the boy was well-known as *Bonpauk Tha Kyaw* because there were and are many Tha Kyaw in Arakan.

stories. They even misinterpreted the word "Rohan" as the whole Arakan and wrote in their journals that "Rohan" means "Arakan" in Arabic and so forth.

**Although this version of the origin of the name "Rohingya" is only a statement of *Bonpauk* Tha Kyaw, it is very logical and cannot be ruled out that it is the real origin of the name "Rohingya".**

#### **5.1.7. The present author's version based on Kyemon U Thaung's explanation**

The veteran journalist *Kyemon* U Thaung (Aungbala)<sup>64</sup> stated on the other hand that the name "Rohingya" was created by the Red Flag Communists for the "Mujahid Rebels" at the beginning of the 1950's while they were fighting together against U Nu's government. At that time, the "Mujahids" wanted to get a new name which had some connection with Arakanese History so that they could claim that they were the "Indigenous Muslims of Arakan", and the "Red Flag" Communists invented the name "Rohingya" for them. However, U Thaung does not know what the word means.

It is also very possible that the name "Rohingya" was invented by the Red Flag Communists because they were "Tip Top Specialists" for creating names and nicknames. As far as I know, the late Red Flag Communist Leader Thakhin Soe read a lot of books and he might have come across the term ရုံပြည် (Roang Pree), and the then Red Flag Communist Leader in Arakan, ကျော်ဇံစွယ်: Kyaw Zan Hrwee, was an Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine). So they might have created the hybrid English word "Roangians" meaning the people of "Roang". Since "Roang" can also be pronounced "Ro-ang" the word "Rohingya" is corrupted from "Roangian" (pronounced Ro-an-gian) because those "Mujahids" used their own pronunciation. Naturally the "Mujahids", the predecessors of the "Rohingyas", might have thought of the word which has some connections with Arakanese History, to identify themselves to be the descendants of a country which once belonged or was feudatory to Arakan and might have accepted willingly and immediately. Is it not possible? **But this is only my hypothesis and I have not yet been able to find any written documents.** Since this word is only a word created in the

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<sup>64</sup> U Thaung, well-known through his pen name Aungbala, was owner, publisher and chief editor of the then most popular newspaper in Burmese language "The Kyemon (Mirror) Daily", until the newspaper was nationalized. He was detained for a few years without any trial and released in 1967. Now he lives in Florida, U.S.A as an exiled opposition.

jungle, it is no wonder that any written documents cannot be found till now and may not also be found in the future.

## **6. The "Mujahids" and the renewed movement with the name "Rohingyas"**

As I mentioned before, one group of Chittagonian Bengali settlers went underground named themselves "Mujahids" while the other group stayed "above-ground" named themselves "Arakan Muslims" and struggled to get Burmese citizenship.

### **6.1. Premier Nu's political way out**

Since 1948, the then Burmese Prime Minister U Nu was having problems in politics. There were many groups of insurgents every where. The Arakanese (Rakhines/Rakhaing) withdrew their support for the government because their demand for a union state status like the Shans, Kachins, Kayahs, Karens and Chins was not granted in the early 1950's. The party of the Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines), "The Arakan National Union Organization" supported the opposition.

In 1952 elections, the Arakanese voted against the ruling AFPFL Party and they voted for "Arakanese National Union Party" which was the allied party of the opposition, the leftist National United Front or the so-called above-ground Communist Party (just to differentiate between the underground Red Flag and White Flag Communist Parties). The Government of U Nu allowed the "above-ground" Bengali Muslim leaders to stand for election, as a punishment for the Rakhaings/Rakhines (Arakanese). The then Prime Minister U Nu and his deputy U Ba Swe also wanted to please their two Muslim ministers, Mr. Rashid and Mr. Latiff, *alias* U Khin Maung Latt, who expected support from the Bengali settlers.

Here I would like to cite Maung Tha Hla, the Rakhaing, page 75 where it was written: "In keeping with the Islamic custom not only that the cabinet Ministers retained their Muslim names but the minister of Interior, in his official visit to the Bengali infested Maungdaw, also portrayed himself the characteristic image of a typical Muslim. Dressed in a white suit, with a red tarboosh fitted tightly, he exchanged greetings with fellow Muslims in the Islamic ritual. Along the way from the jetty where he landed to the mosque where he gave audience to his folk, groups of Bengalis chanted slogans in their native language welcoming him in their midst, who gathered around the dome-shaped arches built across the road, which were fashioned in the Islamic architecture. Some mullahs surrounded by the enthusiastic followers murmured

the Koranic verses from beneath the banners inscribed the Arabic script. O persons other than Muslims had the privilege to get involved in the visit or were given a chance to meet, see, or hear him who was supposed to represent the government and the people of the Union of Burma. The Muslims congregated in the mosque precinct where the infidels were not allowed. The non-Muslim citizens had no means of knowing what the speech was all about for the simple reason that it was in Urdu”.

U Nu promised to grant Burmese Citizenship to the Bengali immigrants living in "Rwa-Haun" as well as some surrendered Mujahid Rebels. Later about fifty thousand Chittagonians, regardless of they or their ancestors had lived in Rwa-Haun or in Arakan Division of Burma before the Second World War or not, became Burmese citizens. As a result, the Party of the Arakan Muslims, the allied party of the AFPFL won all four constituencies in Northern Arakan. Then, Mr. Abu Bawshaw became MP in Bootheetaung Constituency, Mr. Sultan Mahmud and Mr. Abu Gaffer in Maungdaw and Mr. Abul Kai in Rathedaung. Their rival candidates U San Tun Aung, an Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) and even a "Kaman" Muslim advocate called U Po Khine lost in the elections because they could not speak Bengali language Chittagonian dialect. **However, U Nu never accepted them as indigenous ethnic nationality.**

The whole Arakan had 12 constituencies then, the rest seats were taken by "Arakanese National Union Party" and her allies. **These four Muslim Members of Parliament neither named themselves nor their followers 'Rohingyas' at that time, instead they called themselves 'Arakan Muslims'.** They could not use the term "Arakanese Muslims" because this term was reserved for the Myaydus and Kamans and so did the term 'Burmese Muslims' only for the Muslims in 'Mainland Burma'.

### **6.3. The appearance of the name 'Rohingya' in public for the first time**

These MPs and their followers supported U Nu as their benefactor. Later, Bengali Muslim settlers in Arakan did not want to be called "Khawtaw Kala" which had a derogative meaning according to their own interpretation<sup>65</sup> and they started using the name 'Rohingya' for

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<sup>65</sup> Although the word *Kala* has a harmless meaning, the people from the subcontinent do not like to be called *Kala*. They feel insulted because the word *Kala* means "coloured" or "blackie" in their Indic languages such as Hindi, Urdu and Bengali. In particular, Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis living in Burma often complain to foreigners, especially to non-Burmese Burma Scholars that they feel discriminated by the people of Burma, especially by the *Bamas* (the Burmese), the *Rakhines* (the Arakanese) and the Mons, calling them *Kala* (meaning "blackie" in their own interpretation). Such a misinterpretation was never intended by the people of Burma (the Burmese, Mons, Karens, Shans and Arakanese (Rakhines) etc.), in fact, on reflection some people from Northern

themselves. U Nu might have decided to accept the name "Rohingya" to identify the group. Since that time, the word "Rohingyas" occasionally appeared in Burmese Newspapers. Premier Nu and his deputy U Ba Swe occasionally used this term in their speeches that these Bengali Muslim Immigrants favoured this term rather than other terms. It cannot be ruled out that U Nu and U Ba Swe wanted to please those fifty thousand voters for their party as well as their two Muslim ministers.<sup>66</sup> The Muslim Minister U Rashid was the strong supporter of U Nu and the other Muslim Minister Mr. Latiff *alias* U Khin Maung Latt was a protégé of U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein, the other Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home affairs then.

Even the famous history professor, Prof. G. C. Luce started using the term "Rohingyas" in his lectures for the Bengali settlers living in Northern Arakan, although he has had never mentioned this terminology in his lectures in the pre-war days, and also in his books published before 1955.

U Nu and U Ba Swe might have planned to accept the name "Rohingyas" for the Chittagonian Bengalis who became Burmese citizenship eventually with the hope that these people will vote for their party, however, they never planned to accept them as an indigenous race of Burma.

Before all these could happen, however, the ruling party, the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL) split into two factions, the Clean AFPFL headed by U Nu and the Stable AFPFL lead by U Ba Swe. U Ba Swe's fraction (the Stable) was supported by the majority of the AFPFL members of parliament (ie. the ruling party). Seeing his danger by vote of non-confidence by his former comrades, U Nu promised to grant States for the Arakanese and the Mons, and he also promised to the "Arakan Muslims" leaders that he won't forget their gratitude if they could help him during that political crisis. In June 1958, U Nu's fraction narrowly escaped the vote of non-confidence submitted by U Ba Swe's fraction in the Burmese Lower House because the "Arakanese National Union Party", the party of the Mons and "Arakan Muslims" MPs together with the MPs of the main opposition party then, the leftist National United Front (NUF) party, voted for U Nu's fraction.

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India and Pakistan are much fairer in complexion than some people of Burma, especially some Mons, Burmese and Arakanese (Rakhines)!!

<sup>66</sup> "In November 1959 the late prime minister U Nu, during a hectic campaign, in the Mayu District, Arakan near then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, mistakenly uttered the word Rohingya. Since then politically motivated Bengali Muslims have been taking advantage of this by discarding their identity as Bengali to become a new race called Rohingya. These political Islamists have been working very hard for world acceptance of them as a new race. (Arakan Information Website 2006)



U Nu showed his gratitude by appointing his supporters as ministers in his new coalition government. Two NUF MPs called U Thein Pe Myint and Dr. E Maung, one Arakanese MP U Hla Tun Phru, one Mon MP U Mon Pho Cho and one "Arakan Muslim" MP Mr. Sultan Mamoud became ministers in this cabinet. **Here, U Mon Pho Cho and U Hla Tun Phru were named Minister for Mon and Arakanese Affairs respectively apart from their other posts as the minister of their other ministries. Mr. Sultan Mahmud, , on the other hand, was only the replacement for the other Muslim minister U Latiff *alias* U Khin Maung Latt who sided with the Stable Fraction of the AFPFL and voted against U Nu<sup>67</sup>.** Mr. Sultan Mahmud wanted to make hay while the sun shines, expected to get the lion's share and requested U Nu to name him "the Minister for Arakan Muslim Affairs". His request was turned down by U Nu on the grounds that the "Arakan Muslims" were in fact Chittagonian Bengalis; hence, their ancestors were settlers only and were never of the indigenous race of Arakan.

On 31st July 1958 U Nu offered an amnesty to all insurgents who would surrender themselves. Some Mujahids surrendered. They and other Bengali settlers ask for citizenship. However, this government did not last long to grant them citizenship. The government was in power for three months and seventeen days only.

In September 1958, the three leading officers from the Burma Army, namely Brigadier Tin Pe, Colonel Aung Gyi and Colonel Maung Maung went to Premier Nu's resident and demanded to transfer power officially to the military or otherwise they could not prevent the military coup planned by other officers. In the mean time Brigadier Aung Shwe (now chairman of the opposition NLD Party, the party of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi), the then commander of the Southern Command ordered some of his troops to occupy the Mingaladon International Airport and Insein Town, both of them are only ten miles away from Rangoon City Centre. Prime Minister U Nu had no other choice, but to surrender power to a Caretaker Government headed by General Ne Win constitutionally through the parliament just to prevent the army coup d'état. The Caretaker Government ruled Burma until March 1960. The multi-party election was held in February 1960 in which U Nu's party won with landslide majority.

#### **6.4. The first attempt of Bengali Muslims for the acceptance as an indigenous ethnic group**

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<sup>67</sup> It was the beginning of the end of U Latiff's *alias* U Khin Maung Latt's political career. In the 1960 elections he was the candidate of the Stable Fraction in the Central Rangoon Constituency where the populace were Muslims. His rival candidate was U Rashid, also a Muslim from U Nu's fraction. U Rashid won the election. In March 1962 Gen. Ne Win made a Military Coup. In 1964 all political parties were abolished.

Those Bengali leaders tried again to have their group accepted as "Indigenous Muslims" or as an "indigenous ethnic group" of Burma as well as many people to be granted for citizenship again. This time they generally used the name "The Arakan Muslims", however, occasionally they also used the name "Rohingyas" try to prove" that they are an "indigenous ethnic group" of Arakan. Unfortunately, however, the population of the "Rohingyas" given by them was much higher than the registered "Surrendered Mujahids" and the former villagers of Rwa Haung. The government answered that citizenship will be considered only for the people who were eligible, that means the former villagers of Rwa Haung, the former "Mujahids" and their descendants but not for the latter settlers. Their demands for an "indigenous ethnic group" was turned down again on the ground that Chittagonian Bengalis were never of the indigenous race of Arakan and they and their ancestors were settlers only, and therefore they could be considered in the same category as the Indians, the Pakistanis and the Chinese immigrants. Then their "History Professors" like Ba Tha and Maung Than Lwin began to fabricate the "Histories" as mentioned earlier.<sup>68</sup>

The name "Rohingya" disappeared during the Caretaker Government. It reappeared in April 1960 when U Nu was re-elected as Prime Minister. U Nu, just to please the 'Arakan Muslim MPs and their followers who supported him in the election, allowed broadcasting in the "Rohingya" language in the Burma Broadcasting Station (BBS) under the Foreign Languages Programme in addition to English and Hindustani, but never allowed it in the National Languages Programme. According to U Kyaw Min Shwe of New York the "Rohingya" language is a Bengali Chittagong dialect.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See and compare: Kyaw Zan Tha, "The Background Paper on The Rohingya Problem, Rangoon, 1991, where it was written: "During his campaign for the 1960 elections, U Nu promised to grant statehood to Arakanese (Rakhaings) and Mons respectively. After he won the elections and became prime minister again, the movement for the formation of Arakan State and Mon State came into life. Meanwhile Bengali Muslim leaders also started an anti-Arakan State Movement and also asked for the same status as the Arakanese (Rakhaings). Even at that time they neither used the term 'Rohingya' nor 'Arakanese Muslims' instead they used the term 'Muslims of Arakan'. When their demands were turned down on the grounds that they were not an indigenous race, some educated Bengalis began to fabricate the historical facts to prove that they were indigenous Arakanese Muslims. Some stories presented by their instant historians are ridiculous. For example, they say that their Arab ancestors became settled in Arakan coast in the Eighth century. In the 8<sup>th</sup> Century Arakan was ruled by the Buddhist kings of the Dhanyawaddy Dynasty. The old city site can be seen near the small town of Kyauktaw. There is not a single piece of evidence of Arabic Culture and Islamic Faith their. The only non- Buddhist evidence found there are the Hindu deities".

<sup>69</sup> Kyaw Min Shwe, "Rakhaings and Rohingyas" in Asiaweek, February 5, 1992.

When U Nu's government was overthrown by General Ne Win through a military coup in March 1962, the name "Rohingya" disappeared from the Burmese political scene again. Hindustani and "Rohingya" broadcasts ended.

### **6.5. East Pakistani war refugees:**

In 1970 the Independence War in East Pakistan broke out. At that time there were about one and a half million "war refugees" in Arakan Division of Burma. In the mean time, there were more than ten million "war refugees" on the Indian soil, the West Bengal State of India. India was open and called the International Organizations such as ICRC, FAO, WFP and UNHCR etc. etc., for help immediately. On the other hand, the Revolutionary Council of Burma headed by Ne Win was too much afraid of International Organizations coming inside Burma. They wanted to stay as an isolated state and they wanted to deal "under table" with the newly formed Bangladeshi Government as neighbouring countries, like the way U Nu's government recognized 'Red China' in 1949. They recognized Bangladesh immediately and there were tensions between Pakistan and Burma. Pakistan even withdrew her membership from British Commonwealth and threatened Burma too, to break off diplomatic relationship. Ne Win had to send a special envoy to explain the situation. Later, Pakistan did not cut the diplomatic relation with Burma.

Had the then Burmese Govt. were wise and open enough like India, since that time, these people might have accepted as "East Pakistani or Bangladeshi Refugees inside Burma", not the other way round like now. If one looks back deeply to the history the main cause was the mistake and stupidity of Ne Win's regime in this new 'Rohingya' immigration waves started in 1970. **In fact, most of the people claimed to be the 'Rohingya People' nowadays crossed the border and settled down inside Burma in 1970 during Bangladesh Liberation War and later.**

At that time the living conditions inside Burma were much better than that of East Pakistan, later Bangladesh. Hence, although Sheik Mujibur Rahman, the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh willingly accepted all of the war refugees coming back to his country, many of them crossed the border back into Burma and settled down in Northern Arakan illegally. Then, they were helped by the former settlers who became Burmese citizenship already since U Nu's Era. Then, the population growth of 'Rohingyas' inside Burma became at least ten times higher than before.

### **6.6. The second attempt of Bengali Muslims for the acceptance as an indigenous ethnic group**

In 1972 the name "Rohingya" reappeared inside Burma, when the Revolutionary Council Government formed a commission called the Constitution Commission and this Commission requested citizens for suggestions. The "Rohingyas" took the opportunity and responded immediately by sending suggestions and proposals to grant them the rights of ethnic minorities and requesting for an autonomous Muslim State in northern Arakan. They presented those "stories" and "created history" again. Their demands were turned down again on the ground

that they and their ancestors were neither "Indigenous Muslims" nor Indigenous ethnic group of Arakan nor Burma. Some of their leaders went to Former East Pakistan and established the "Arakan Rohingya Liberation Front" under the slogan of "Rohingya National Liberation" on 15 July 1972. This "front" has very few members, not more than two hundred. They got a few help from fanatic Muslims and some rich Muslim countries but neither from the Pakistani nor Bangladeshi governments directly. After that nobody heard the name "Rohingya" again until 1978.

### **6.7 The first Naga Min (King Dragon) Operation in 1978**

In the year 1978 the name "Rohingya" was heard again when the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) government made "routine immigrant check" with the Naga Min (King Dragon) Operation at the Arakan-Bangladesh border. Most people fled to Bangladesh claiming that they were "Rohingyas" and the issue of military abuses of the Burmese Army was raised. This was denied by the Burmese government and declared these people were new settlers coming from overpopulated Bangladesh because of a cyclone which hit the neighbouring country recently, which was vehemently rejected by Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi government requested the UN and some powers like China and U.S.A for help.

In fact, BSPP government should have called International Organizations immediately and given shelters for those cyclone refugees and issued them temporary settling certificates as foreigners. Instead of that, Ne Win's Regime (BSPP at that time) unwisely started the Naga Min (King Dragon) Operation and chased out those Bangladeshi Settlers who named themselves 'Rohingyas'.

Unfortunately for the Burmese government but fortunately for the "Rohingyas", many of these "refugees" had Burmese identity cards. However, it was found out later that some of the Burmese identity cards were faked ones printed in Bangladesh, and some of them though genuine were issued illegally due to the corruption of Burmese immigration officers in the Arakan (Rakhine State). Their salaries were too low, so, they took bribes and issued those people identity cards. Some powers like United States of America and China pressured BSPP government of Burma.

The BSPP government, after its difficulties in internal problems, such as riots during former UN Secretary General U Thant's funeral and the semi-annual demonstrations of workers and students since 1974, wanted to avoid creating an international problem. Those "Rohingyas" were allowed to return after a bilateral agreement between the Burmese and Bangladeshi

governments. But the number of returnees was much higher than the number of official "refugees" declared by the Bangladeshi authorities. The government lost face, however, to the Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhines) among the BSPP members and military officers who were very unhappy about it.

The Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) members of parliament including the then Burma Air Force Chief Brig. Gen. Saw Pru, pointed out that the number of these people was much more than the registered Ywa Haung Villagers, Surrendered Mujahids and their descendants, the predecessors of the "Rohingyas". Their population growth was an absolute miracle, and they were afraid of the wave of "Rohingyas". Because of these kind of Bengali immigration will turn the Arakanese (the Rakhaings/Rakhines) into minorities in their native land.

Many Rakhaings named the failed Naga Min (King Dragon) Operation as Tee Kaung (Earth Worm) Operation jokingly because it brought only negative effects for the Rakhaings.

**In fact, the aborted Naga Min (King Dragon) Operation put 'the Rohingya Issue' to the attention of the intentional community. Because of that many foreign media were trapped by 'the tragic history of the Rohingyas'.**

## **6.8 The Second Naga Min (King Dragon) Operation in 1991**

After that the word "Rohingyas" was rarely heard of either in Burma or in the outside world until the 1990's until the Second Naga Min Operation started in 1991. Consequently, the issue of military abuses against the "Rohingyas" in Arakan was raised and it was vehemently rejected by the Burmese Junta as mentioned at the beginning of this essay.

This time, the international pressure was even harsher than in 1978, the First Naga Min Operation, because the reputation of the then Military Junta called SLORC was worse than the reputation of the Ne Win's BSPP Regime.

As mentioned in chapter 1, all oppositions as well as the populace inside Burma had no doubt on the news of human rights violations, military abuses and brutal crimes committed against the "Rohingyas" by the various Burmese Military Governments, however, what should they do with the seven claims of the "Rohingyas"? They "Rohingya History" was never heard before the Naga Min Operation!

## **7. Analysis of the "Rohingya" Problem:**

### **7.1. Why some writers were trapped by "Rohingyas":**

**If one carefully scrutinizes all available authentic historical and etymological facts it comes out clearly that there was no ethnic group called "Rohingya" in Arakan as well as in Burma, and it is only an invented name in the late 1950's. All seven claims of the "Rohingyas", which were mentioned at the introduction part of this essay, are baseless and found out to be incorrect. Arakan was and is not a Muslim dominant state. The Kingdom of Mrauk U was not established by the 'Rohingyas' as they claimed. All kings of the Mrauk U dynasty were Buddhists. Some kings had assumed Muslim Titles but all of them were donors of many temples in Mrauk U as well as in the other parts of Arakan.**

Even though, some of the international journalists favoured the dishonest claims of the 'Rohingyas'. Why?

The answer is very clear. Most of them are only writers and neither etymological scholars nor historical researchers. They don't know the real history of Arakan as well as the history of Burma, however, they made their conclusions based only on many correct points; that the present government in Burma (SLORC earlier and SPDC later) is a military dictatorship, did not surrender the power to the party won in the election in 1990, put the opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest for no reason, discriminating other ethnic minorities of Burma and violating a lot of human rights. The news about the military abuses against the 'Rohingyas' was also more or less true. Hence, they concluded that all claims of the 'Rohingyas' to be the truth.

#### **7.1.1. Bad Image of the various Burmese Military Governments since 1962**

The various Burmese Military Governments of Burma since 1962 have and never had a good reputation and image, neither in the internal nor in the international media. They are well known for never respecting human rights. To maintain their power, the various military authorities in Burma used and still use even tanks and machine guns to crush down brutally against any anti-government demonstrations of the majority population and students even those demonstrations were organized, led and participated in by Buddhists monks. The military had been killing thousands of people and imprisoned tens of thousands of people since

1962 till now. In fact, the military authorities, starting from Ne Win to the present leaders, could have swum in the tears and bloods of the Burmese people already.

In the year 1991, the SLORC had a very bad image in the international and internal media, as mentioned before. They came to power through a blood shed coup, demonstrations of the majority population lead by students and Buddhist monks were crushed brutally. Many demonstrators asked only for democracy were massacred by the soldiers using automatic rifles.

Most of the oppositions including the former prime minister U Nu and the famous opposition leader, the secretary general of the NLD, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Burma's national hero Gen. Aung San, were put under house arrest. The image of the military government was worsened after the 1990 elections when they refused to surrender power to the winning party, "The National League for Democracy" (NLD). International pressure, too, grew and became harsher and reached its peak in the third quarter of 1991 when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Sakharov Peace Prize followed by the Nobel Peace Prize. Despite such pressures, the SLORC refused to release her from house arrest.<sup>70</sup> **Hence, no wonder that international media neither trusted the SLORC nor the various Burmese Military Juntas, even if in sometimes, though it is very rare, the statement of the junta could be true.**

There is no doubt that "Naga Min (King Dragon) Operations" for the 'Illegal Immigration Checking' in Arakan were also brutal towards the 'Rohingyas', many human right violations such as killing, raping, vandalizing etc. etc., might have been committed by the Burmese Armed Forces.

Therefore, no wonder, some of the writers unwittingly supported the "Rohingyas" and their claims. Some Muslims backing them were also trapped, when they issued their "fantastic historical claims".

## **7.2. Mistakes committed by some writers unwittingly:**

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<sup>70</sup> She was released only in July 1995. Two or three years later she was rearrested and released only in May 2002 but rearrested again in May 2003.

Even a well known British journalist Martin Smith was unfortunately trapped by the claims of the Rohingyas and unwittingly made two important mistakes in his article "Burma Muslim's Borderland: Sold down the river"

(i) He wrote: "Muslim settlements in Arakan date back to the 9th century A.D."

Here, one may compare and contrast Maurice Collis, who wrote in his paper Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay: **"Bengal was absorbed into this polity [that is, Islam] in 1203 A.D. But it was its extreme eastern limit. It never passed into Indo-China; and its influence from its arrival in 1203 till 1430 was negligible upon Arakan".**

(ii) Martin Smith wrote: "The (present) government officials also began replacing names from the Muslim past with their Buddhist counterparts Rakhine for Arakan, Sittwe for Akyab."

This above statement has also no basis in fact. I have had already explained for both words. The words "Rakhaing"/"Rakhine" and "Arakan" are like "España" and "Spain". Sittwe is a Burmese pronunciation and the Arakanese pronunciation is "Site Twi. Sittwe was not even a town until the first Anglo-Burmese war in 1824. The Burmese viceroy lived at the time in Mrauk U. Only after their annexation of Arakan, British rulers changed the capital from Mrauk U to the small island of Sittwe on account of sickness among their troops stationed at Mrauk U. Since that time Mrauk U was called Mro Haung meaning old city and declined eventually to a small town. Sittwe was called Akyab by the British. Before 1826 it was only a small island of fishermen's village. During the First Anglo-Burmese War, British and Burmese armies stationed there alternatively, hence, it was called "Sittwe Kyun" meaning "Garrison Island". There is a hill in Sittwe upon which the "Ar Kyap Taw" or "An Kyane Taw" Pagoda was built. The hill is named "Ar Kyap Taw Gon" or "An Kyane Daw Gon". When the British army came and stationed in that area they misunderstood and interchanged the name of the hill with that of the fishermen's village. When they started to build the town they called it "Akyab", adjusting the word to their own way of pronunciation. Anyway the natives called it Site Twi and the Burmese called with their own pronunciation Sittwe.

The definition of "Akyab" given in Hobson-Jobson (First Edition 1886) is: "AKYAB, n.p. The European name of the seat of administration of the British province of Arakan, which is also port exporting rice largely to Europe. The name is never used by the natives of Arakan (of the Burmese race), who call the town Tsit-htwe', 'Crowd (inconsequence of) War'. This indicates how the settlement came to be formed in 1825, by the fact of the British force encamping on



the plain there, which was found to be healthier than the site of the ancient capital of the kingdom of Arakan, up the valley of the Arakan or Kaladyne River. The name AKYAB had been applied, probably by the Portuguese, to the neighbouring village, where there stands, about 1.5 miles from the present town, a pagoda covering an alleged relique of Gautama (a piece of lower jaw or an indurations of the throat), the name of which pagoda, taken from the description of the relique, is An-kyait-dau, and of this Akyab was probably a corruption. The present town and cantonment occupy dry land of very recent formation, and the high ground on which the pagoda stands must have stood on the shore at no distant date, as appears from the finding of a small anchor there about 1835. The village adjoining the pagoda must then have stood at the mouth of the Arakan River, which was much frequented by the Portuguese and the Chittagong people in the 16th and 17th centuries, and thus probably became known to them by name taken from the pagoda. (From a note by Sir Arthur Phayre.) [Col. Temple writes \_ 'The only derivation which strikes me as plausible, is from the Agyattaw Phaya, near which on the island of Sittwe', a Cantonment was formed after the first Burmese war, on the abandonment of Mrohaung or Arakan town in 1825, on account of sickness among the troops stationed there. The word Agyattaw is spelt Akyap-taw, whence probably the modern name."].

The name Akyab was first documented only in 1826: [1826.- "It (the dispatch) at length arrived this day (3rd Dec.1826), having taken two months in all to reach us, of which forty-five days were spent in the route from Akyab in Aracan." -Crawford, Ava, 269.]".

The present author cannot understand why a famous journalist and "Burma Specialist" like Martin Smith wrote such things. Most probably he wrote only through his emotions and without checking his facts carefully. These kinds of mistakes can either be misused or profited on by the Burmese Military Junta or can have negative effects on the opposition movement.

### **7.3. Some negative effects on the opposition movement:**

The Arakanese (Rakhaings) were very unhappy with Martin Smith's article. Even the underground Arakanese (Rakhaings) became so upset, lost trust on foreign journalists. They cried for their destiny that their land and their history were just ignored by "Free Press" and given to the "Kalas" as a gift. They said, because of those statements they could either lose their mother land and religion or they could become minorities in their native land.

Some underground Arakanese (Rakhaings) like U Khaing Saw Htun (U Khaing Saw Htuan) became afraid and declared that a destiny similar to that of the Palestinians will befall the

Arakanese. Later he surrendered to the SLORC. These are the over-whelming sorrow for the opposition movement.

#### **7.4. Who immigrate to where:**

If we compare Burma and Bangladesh by means of population density, we will see that Bangladesh has one of the highest in the world while Burma has a very low one.<sup>71</sup> Natural catastrophes, like storms, cyclones and floods hit Bangladesh every year, but rarely Burma. Soil fertility in the Rakhine State is much better than that of Bangladesh. Burma was a very rich country compared to East Pakistan (later Bangladesh). Even now, although Burma has become a poor country, the way of life in Burma is much easier than that in Bangladesh. Besides, Burma has more space, so logically who immigrates where does not need to be explained.

As mentioned in Chapter 6.5, during East Pakistan's struggle for independence from West Pakistan to establish a new nation which is now Bangladesh, many war refugees ran to Arakan (the Rakhine State of Burma). It was the main reason why Burma immediately recognised the new nation, disregarding the anger and objections of Pakistan. As usual, however, the then military government of Burma (The Revolutionary Council headed by Gen. Ne Win) did not like any UN observers, particularly from the UNHCR, coming to Burma. So, they did not report anything about the refugees, preferring a solution through bilateral agreements. Some refugees returned to Bangladesh as a result, but eventually they went back to the Rakhine State of Burma (Arakan). Since the border was never properly controlled nobody can say when they came over to Burma or since when they have lived there. Had they invited UN observers during the time of the civil war in East Pakistan, this problem would not have evolved.

#### **7.5. Illusions of some fanatic Muslims:**

In the 1970's, after they were given a "Rosy Picture" by Libya, some fanatic Muslims from the overpopulated Subcontinent and Muslim fundamentalists in Southeast Asia dreamed of a Muslim-dominated Southeast Asian Coast. They noticed that the whole of Southeast Asian Coasts except the Burmese Coastal Lines are populated with Muslim majority. Malaysia,

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<sup>71</sup> Burma has a territory almost 10 times larger than that of Bangladesh but had a population of only 42 million in 1992, while Bangladesh had a population of 140 million.

Brunei, and Indonesia are Muslim countries. The Island of Mindanao of the Catholic dominated country, the Philippines, has many Muslims. Even the Kra Peninsula of the Buddhist country, Thailand, has Muslim majority. So, they wanted to use the following methods:<sup>72</sup>

**(1) Change the religion of the natives through marriage to a Muslim:**

In the late 1970's until 1980's there were lots of slogans and campaigns made by fanatic Muslims groups in Burma that Muslim men to marry Buddhist women, especially either influential women or the daughters of "Big Shots" with special rewards offered to those who could do so. The Muslim youth called Hlwan Moe, a pop singer, who courted and married the daughter of U Maung Maung Kha, the then Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, was rewarded with a lot of money, however, named as "Wedding Present" by some Muslims. Almost everybody in Burma knew that story.

**(2) Transfer of people from overpopulated Muslim countries such as Bangladesh to under-populated non-Muslim countries such as Burma, so that Muslims will be everywhere.**

Irrawaddy Delta Coast and Tenessarim Coast of Burma can be reached only by sea route from Bangladesh and it would be difficult. Thus, the transfer of people from Bangladesh to under-populated Arakan by land route, just to cross the uncontrolled border, so that it would become a Muslim majority state, and later to declare the area as a separate state of Arakanistan or Arakandesh. If the declaration and separation can not be done easily, the religious war "Jihad" should be declared if necessary, financial and military aid from all Muslim countries should be requested.

**It can not be ruled out that some Muslim countries can easily be persuaded. Here I like to cite Bertil Lintner, Chronology of The Events, in du, Sonderbeilage, Heft 11, 1993, where it was written: "Prince Khaled Sultan Abdul Aziz, commander of the Saudi contingent in the 1991 Gulf War, visited Dhaka, Bangladesh, in Mid-April 1992 and recommended a Desert Storm-like action against Burma; "just what [the UN] did to liberate Kuwait".**

**7.6. New settlers:**

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<sup>72</sup> See and compare:, Maung Tha Hla, The Rakhaing, pp. 65-80

It is also very clear that many "Rohingyas" are new settlers coming from overpopulated Bangladesh and not the descendents of the Mujahid Rebels because both "Rohingyas" problems, 1978 and 1991, came about a few months after a cyclone hit Bangladesh. The monsoon season in South and Southeast Asia brings catastrophes to these regions every year. Storms, cyclones and floods are yearly events which bring about loss of crops and lives and heavy human migrations, particularly in certain areas. Even India, the world's largest democracy, whose people are of the same historical and racial background as those people from Bangladesh, raised barbed wires along their borders with Bangladesh to prevent illegal immigration towards their side.

As mentioned before, the border between Bangladesh and Burma is not a border between two countries instead it is the border between two regions as well as the border between Indo-Aryan and Mongoloid stocks who are totally different either in language and culture or in race and religion. Even British colonial officers admitted later that it was the biggest mistake of the British to put Burma, which is traditionally very far from India racially, culturally and socially as part of the British-Indian Empire.

**The followings are some documents:**

(1) The Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill. 1919, III. Clause 41: where it was written that "after hearing evidence the Committee have not advised that Burma should be included within the scheme. They do not doubt but that the Burmese have deserved and should receive a Constitution analogous to that provided in this Bill for their Indian fellow-subjects. **But Burma is only by accident part of the responsibility of the Governor General of India. The Burmese are as distinct from the Indians in race and language as they are from the British**".

**Please note that,** here the British used the term 'the **Burmese**', which according to their definition, represents the all peoples of Burma including Arakanese. They did not use the term 'the **Burman**', which according to their definition, represents only the majority ethnic group, the *Bamas*.

(2) The Report of the Indian Statutory Commission vol. II London, 1930, vol. II § 224: In 1927, The Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as the "Simon Commission", was appointed under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon. This Commission gave its opinion that "we hold that the first step towards the attainment of full responsible government in Burma is the separation of Burma from the rest of British India....We would add that **Burma's political connection with India is wholly arbitrary and unnatural. It was established by the British rulers of India by force of arms and being maintained for the sake of administrative convenience. It is not an association of two peoples having natural affinity tending towards union ... there is nothing common between the two peoples.**

(3) The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Cambridge, 1932, p. 761: where it was written that "it is not improbable that Burma would be better administered and would enjoy improved opportunities for progress, if it were detached from India".

Here I would also like to cite Captain Symes who was sent by the Viceroy of India on Embassy to the court of Bodawphaya in 1795: " **The general disposition or temperament of the Burmans is strikingly in contrast with that of the natives of India from whom they are separated only by a narrow range of mountains. The physical difference between these nations is also very great. The Burmans are a lively, inquisitive, active, grace, hot-tempered and impatient. The unworthy passion of jealousy, which makes most nations of the East hide their women within the walls of a harem and surround them with guards, seems to have no place in the minds of this extraordinary and more liberal people. Burmese wives and daughters are not concealed from the sight of men, and are allowed to mix as freely with the latter as in Europe. ----- Women in the Burman country are not only good housewives, but also manage the more important commercial affairs of their husbands and attend to their outdoor business matters. They are extremely industrious and are said to be good mothers and faithful wives.**"

So, the one who do not look like natives of Burma and especially who can not speak either Burmese or one of the the indigenous minority language of that area, instead speaking only Bengali Chittagong Dialect and also do not no the culture of the country where they are in, will be accused, no doubt, as illegal immigrants or new settlers from Bangladesh!!

#### **6.4.6. Bangladeshi illegal immigrants in Southeast Asia:**

The latest news revealed that even in Thailand and Islamic country, Malaysia, the other two Southeast Asian countries, whenever they checked the strangers looked different from their natives in features and complexions are found to be Bangladeshis, although these two countries do not have borders with Bangladesh. Some times these settlers claimed to be "Burmese Muslims" or "Rohingyas", however, since these people could not speak a single word Burmese and they don't look like Burmese who have very similar features and complexion like Thais and Malays, these illegal settlers were arrested and deported back to Bangladesh.

After these events, Malaysia, a Muslim dominant country, changed its position by not condemning Burma about the problems in Burma-Bangladesh border, instead Premier Dr.

Mahatir Mohammed became strong supporter for Burma joining ASEAN. The other ASEAN countries like Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines support Burma's desire to join ASEAN so that the problems of Burma can be solved in an "Asian way".

Burma was unanimously accepted as a member of ASEAN in July 1997 in spite of the heavy pressure from Western Nations especially from the American and British governments.

### **7.7. The policy of "make hay while the sun shines":**

The truth is: All sides, the 'Rohingyas', the fanatic Muslims backing the "Rohingyas" and the Burmese Military Junta, wanted "to make hay while the sun shines".

#### **7.7.1. Golden opportunity for the 'Rohingyas'**

The 'Rohingyas' and the fanatic Muslims backing the "Rohingyas" wanted to take "Lion's Share" while the Burmese Military Government had a very bad image in the international and internal media. They wanted to use this chance as the golden opportunity and wanted to turn a traditionally Buddhist land like Arakan, filled with temples and pagodas from centuries to the present day, into a Muslim country. Some Muslim countries too, although they do not know the real history of Arakan, wanted to help the "Rohingyas" because of Muslim solidarity and brotherhood. As mentioned before, according to Bertil Lintner, Prince Khaled Sultan Abdul Aziz, commander of the Saudi contingent in the 1991 Gulf War, visited Dhaka, Bangladesh, in Mid-April 1992 and recommended a Desert Storm-like action against Burma; "just what [the UN] did to liberate Kuwait".

#### **7.7.2. The Burmese Junta**

The Burmese Military Junta too, wanted 'to make while the sun shines'. They wanted to coat 'some make-up' on their bad image. They showed the dishonest claims of the "Rohingyas" as a danger for national unity and danger for the Buddhist religion, with the hope they could gain back internal support from the Buddhists majority. However, only to a very tiny extent they won in internal politics because the whole populace had lost the trust on the various military governments since 1962.

Internationally the Junta has achieved some success. India, which also has problems with Muslims and illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, became friendlier to them.

Here, I like to point out one specific example: Until 1991, the Burmese Language Programme of the All India Radio (AIR) attacked the SLORC daily. In the late 1991, they stopped attacking the SLORC and its policy; instead they replaced the head of Burmese section, an Indian born in Burma well known through his pen-name Maw Thiri, with somebody else. After that, they dismissed the announcer Daw Than Than Nu, the eldest daughter of the former Prime Minister U Nu, although U Nu was still under house arrest in Burma at that time.

### **7.7.3. The reactions of the Rakhaings**

The Rakhaings/Rakhines (Arakanese) and Mros already noticed that the wave of "Rohingyas" immigration will turn them into minorities in their native land similar to the current situation of the Buddhist Rakhaings/Rakhines, Chakmas, Marmas, and so forth, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.<sup>73</sup>

The Arakanese noticed that danger and consider wisely due to this situation that they have no other choice but to become friendly with the Burmese as in the proverb: "The devil we knew can be easier to deal than an unknown devil. At least the Burmese share the same language, culture and religion with the Rakhaings". These kinds of forced immigration waves of the Bengali Muslims naming themselves 'Rohingyas' had endangered the Rakhaings to become minorities in their own native land, and a danger that the Rakhaing race to be abolished as well as the Buddhist religion. It was the main reason why the Rakhaings have to be friendly with Burmese.

#### **Here I like to cite the reactions of some Arakanese:**

1. *Bonpauk* Tha Kyaw "When I was young, Sultan Mahmud's parents and my parents were neighbours. He was older than me. We had many Bengali immigrants as neighbours. Sultan Mahmud's parents were rich and well respected by all Muslims in that area. They usually taught their children and all Muslims there to know the gratitude of Arakan State of Burma and its people because they, ie. Bengalis could come to work and settle in this Buddhist country and some of them became rich. Hence, this country and its people became their benefactors and they should not betray their benefactors, as the way they were taught in Koran. They taught all Muslims there to learn the native language and culture, to behave like the natives, so that they would be assimilated with the natives except in the religion. Nowadays, these so-called 'Rohingyas' are claiming that their ancestors were the founder our country Arakan and want to turn this country into an Islamic State by all means. With the help of some rich Muslim

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<sup>73</sup> Golan Mustafa & Abdur Rahman Khan, "Patuakhaki's Rakhaings: Exiles in their own Kingdom" in Bangladesh Today, May 16-June 15, 1984.

Nations they make propaganda to the whole world. Some people became confused. Many Westerners were trapped with their tragic tales and their fabricated stories. Now some Westerners echoed 'the claims of the Rohingyas' already. Alas, what kind of destiny we have to face! These Bengalis are now aiming to rob our mother land from us! I am really shocked. I am an old man now and everybody knew that I am a leftist and not a racist. Generally, I have nothing against Bengali immigrants, however, now their greediness became too far. I wish Sultan Mahmud were still alive and I could have shown him what is happening here, so that he could have talked to these people in Bengali, though most of the so-called Rohingyas nowadays are not the descendants of his followers who lived here". Just for the information, I like to tell all readers that Arakan was found by the Arakanese and all Arakanese kings were Buddhist. We Arakanese are Mongoloids and Buddhists like Burmese. We eat pork, *Ngapi* (fish paste) and none of us wants to keep beard and moustache like Kalas.<sup>74</sup>

(2) U Maung Tha Hla: "No single book can adequately cover all aspects of a people. The little book is not all conclusive but a modest attempt to provide images and facts about Rakhaing to the general public. They have egregiously been misled by inveracity of the vicious publicity propagated by compulsive Muslim fomenters, a cabal of political manipulators, who vigorously mobilized the popular support in advancing the demand for legitimacy of the racial identity of illegal immigrants Bengali Muslims, and also by mendacious newspaper reports, which read like mere hearsay, along with awry historical write-ups. The dilettantes were either incapable of telling facts from fictions or wilfully defied professional ethics. The author is duly inspired to adduce the realm of fact, distinctive from fancy" -----

"There has been no comprehensive work in English on Rakhaing written from the Rakhaing national point of view, although attempts were made by some dedicated Rakhaing scholars tracing the ancient history and the rich culture, which only constitute singular parts of what is badly in need of an integrated whole"

"The worse still is the later front, Islamization, which has posed a more potential danger, with the increasing influx of illegal Muslims infiltrated from across the border on the west, thus escalating the demographic threat and the manifestation of Islam. The Rakhaings get the jitters as they ponder how they are being increasingly shoved out and overwhelmed with the inflated mass of Muslim immigrants. The extension of Islamic power, a global phenomenon, so cynical as it was inspired, has gathered momentum in the internationally concocted efforts aimed at creating a Muslim state carved out of the Rakhaing land with the object of annexing it, having absorbed the entire region, to the Muslim nation next door, which was renamed Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan; and such it will lead to not only elimination of the Rakhaing race but eradication of the Buddhist culture as well. Buddhism recognizes the

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<sup>74</sup> Bonpauk Tha Kyaw, "The Rohingyas, the Danger for the Union of Burma (in Burmese)", p. 2, Sittwe, 1992.



individual freedom to profess the religion of one's choice, which Islam holds against Buddhism and other non-Islamic faiths."<sup>75</sup>

(3) U Kyaw Zan Tha: "The fact that there has never been a "Rohingya" race in Burma is quite evident. There is no such name as "Rohingya" in the Census of India, 1921 (Burma) compiled by G. G. Grantham, I.C.S., Superintendent of Census Operations Burma, or in the Burma Gazetteer, Akyab District (1924) compiled by R. B. Smart. Since these were written for administrative purposes, needless to say they were objective.

"The "Rohingyas" claimed that the Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) language is very similar to their language, which is not true. In fact, the Arakanese language is very close to the Burmese language used during the Pagan dynasty".<sup>76</sup>

(4) U Kyaw Min Shwe, "If Burma has to accept the "Rohingyas" who are really illegal immigrants speaking a Bengali Chittagong dialect, it will eventually be forced to accept the millions of Chittagong Bengalis as "Rohingyas" and it will be a big danger for the whole nation".<sup>77</sup>

(5) Many Rakhaings fear that the destiny similar to Palestinians and Kurds will befall to the Rakhaings (Arakanese) because:

- (a) The Rakhaings do not have their own nation any more since 1784. The majority of Rakhaings live in the Rakhine State of Burma (Arakan). Some of them are in Chittagong District in Bangladesh and some live in Tripura (India), who are named Maghs by the Bengalis and Indians.
- (b) Almost all Islamic states backed the 'Rohingya Movement' because of Pan Islamism and helped them by all possible means.
- (c) The powers like USA, EU, Canada, and Australia forced the Burmese Junta to accept the "Repatriation of Rohingyas" because they never trust this Junta from the very beginning. The Burmese Military Government had and has very bad reputation in both internal and international media. Hence, even if this Junta states the correct fact, it would be considered as a lie.
- (d) Even China forced the Burmese Junta to accept the "Repatriation of Rohingyas" because the Chinese do not want to lose their face towards their Muslim Customers and do not want to lose their market. Many Muslim countries are big trade partners of China, who especially bought arms from China regularly.

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<sup>75</sup> Maung Tha Hla, *The Rakhaing*, New York, 2004, pp. 10-12.

<sup>76</sup> Kyaw Zan Tha, "The Background Paper on the Rohingya Problem", Rangoon, 1991.

<sup>77</sup> Kyaw Min Shwe, "Rakhaings and Rohingyas" in *Asiaweek*, February 5, 1992.

- (e) Burmese usually want to play 'the Role of the Big Brother' and sniffing their nose everywhere in the places of the minorities. Without knowing the background they interfere too much in minorities' affairs. U Nu and AFPFL government granted Burmese citizenship to many Bengalis just to win the election as well as to punish the Rakhaings who supported the oppositions. Later, the various Military Juntas did not want to invite UN authorities during the liberation war in East Pakistan and also in post-war era, unfortunately, however, made aborted Nga Min (King Dragon) Operations which 'invited' hundred of thousands of Bengalis into Arakan.
- (f) Some fanatic Burmese opposition groups supported the "Rohingya Movement" without knowing the history and facts properly because they hate the Military Junta. So, they are following the saying: "The enemy of my foe is my friend".
- (g) Some Journalists from the Western Nations unwittingly support "the claims of the Rohingyas" without knowing the facts and history properly. This is the most dangerous point. Now, Rakhaings, the real sons and daughters of Arakan have to make a campaign to prove and struggle for the right of their mother land.
- (h) These Journalists unwittingly use the terms 'Arakanese Buddhists' or the 'Maghs' for the Rakhaings and 'Arakanese Muslims' for the 'Rohingyas', which is very dangerous.
- (i) "Burmese Muslims", "Arakanese Muslims" (ie. Kamans and Myaydus), 'the Arakan Muslims' (the early Bengali settlers during the British Colonial era) and the so-called "Rohingyas" are **NOT** the same. "Burmese Muslims", "Arakanese Muslims", and the Arakan Muslims, all together about 4% of the population of Burma, are already assimilated into the native societies, however, the so-called "Rohingyas" were and are **NEVER** assimilated into the native societies because the 'Rohingyas' were and are the latest settlers coming from the overpopulated former East Pakistan, later Bangladesh for various reasons. That why they neither speak Arakanese nor Burmese.
- (j) The 'Rohingya Problem' is not a basic conflict between the Buddhists majorities and the Muslim minorities, as the way some authors claimed. Also the Rohingya issue cannot be compared with the Karen, the Kachin, the Shan and the other ethnic problems in Burma basically because the "Rohingyas" do not fall under the same category of ethnic minorities. Most of them are illegal immigrants from over-populated Bangladesh.
- (k) If it is going on like now, Arakan will eventually forced to accept millions of Chittagonian Bengalis as 'Rohingyas' after each and every natural catastrophe in Bangladesh and it will be the end of Arakanese race, Buddhist religion, the Rakhaing language and culture.
- (l) The situation of the 'Rohingyas' can neither be compared to Israel nor to Palestinians. Both Jews and Palestinian Arabs are the historical ethnic group of that area. Judaism came into being much earlier than Islam. The histories of King Solomon, David etc. etc., were supported by the Bible. The 'Rohingya History' is a fabricated one. It can not prove the historical existence of 'Rohingyas' in the region. There was no ethnic group called 'Rohingyas' in Arakan, India, Bengal and Burma. The name 'Rohingya' is an invented name only in the 1950's.
- (m) As mentioned earlier, the Arakanese noticed that danger and consider wisely due to this situation that they have no other choice but to become friendly with the Burmese as in the proverb: "The devil we knew can be easier to deal than an unknown devil. At least the Burmese share the same language, culture and religion with the

Rakhaings". These kinds of forced immigration waves of the Bengali Muslims naming themselves 'Rohingyas' had endangered the Rakhaings to become minorities in their own native land, and a danger that the Rakhaing race to be abolished as well as the Buddhist religion. It was the main reason why the Rakhaings have to be friendly with Burmese, whether they like it or not.

### 7.7.5 “No Commentary Policy” of the NLD and the NCGUB

Many Buddhists in Burma too, felt that most of the "Rohingyas" are real illegal Bengali Muslim immigrants, and the forced immigration of "Rohingyas" will be a big danger to their nation, race, and religion for the whole nation in the future. Even members of the opposition to the Military Junta both inside Burma as well as in exile do not know which side to take. Apart from very few fanatic oppositions groups, the majority cannot agree with the saying "The enemy of my enemy is my friend". The National League for Democracy (NLD) Party as well as their leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi never gave their position about the "Rohingyas", so does the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma headed by Dr. Sein Win living in Washington D.C.<sup>78</sup>

Till now in 2007, the National League for Democracy (NLD), the party of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Dr. Sein Win, the “Prime minister” of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) do not make any official issue about the ‘Rohingyas’.

### 7.7.6. Other side effects

Generally many opposition members just keep quiet and give no comments and some became confused. Some opposition members surrendered to the junta.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> The present author and Dr. Sein Win were classmates since primary school. We went to St. John's Diocesan Boys' High School in Rangoon, passed the matriculation examination in 1961 and graduated together from the University of Rangoon. Again, in the late 60's, we were together in Germany for further studies. So, we are good friends and could discuss many problems, including this problem openly. Dr. Sein Win personally shares the same view with the present author, however, he admitted, as the prime minister of the NCGUB; it is not too easy for him like the present author to make any statements or comments because he feared that his statement or comment might be misused by the Burmese Military Government wittingly.

On the other hand, *Kyemon* U Thaung, famous through his pen-name Aung Bala, a well known opposition in exile living in Florida, U. S. A., told the present author in 1993 that though he belonged to the oppositions he could not support the "Rohingya Movement" because most of the "Rohingyas" were real illegal immigrants and supporting their movement would be the biggest danger for the nation, the religion and all indigenous ethnic groups of Burma.

<sup>79</sup> U Khaing Saw Htun (U Khaing Saw Htuan), a well known underground Arakanese leader surrendered to the SLORC in 1994. He went underground in 1988.

Some people like the present author, who is neither a supporter nor a sympathizer of the Burmese Military Government and who does not have any antagonism towards these 'Rohingya' people, unfortunately, however cannot keep quiet the dishonest claims of the "Rohingyas" because they wanted to Islamize Arakan. Hence, I have to write the real history of Arakan and its people by pointing out the true story and the etymology of the "Rohingyas".

#### **7.7.7. Some profits taken by the Burmese Military Junta**

Two Giants in Asia, not only China but also India became friends of the Burmese junta. It cannot be ruled out that India has some political and economical interests in Burma because of the geopolitics. Indians too, want some "Tiger's Share" while the Chinese are having the 'Lion's Share' in Burma. India had signed many military and trade treaties with the Burmese Junta. Because of these interests, India does not support the oppositions of the Burmese Military Junta anymore. Some times India is backing this Junta in the UN and in the Regional Conferences.

"After 1988, India with missionary zeal cut off all contact with the junta in Burma and gave the Nehru Award to Aung Sang Suu Kyi," explains Brahma Chellaney, a professor of strategic studies at the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi who was the keynote speaker at a January 16 seminar in Washington, DC sponsored by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. "By the time India reversed that policy, it realised that it had lost Burma to China. China had built reconnaissance facilities on the Coco Islands. So, this shift from a moral, value-based foreign policy to real politic on Burma came after India burned its hands and feet and didn't have much to show for it."<sup>80</sup>

Premier Dr. Mahatir Mohammed became strong supporter for Burma joining ASEAN. The other ASEAN countries like Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines support Burma's desire to join ASEAN so that the problems of Burma can be solved in an "Asian way". Burma was unanimously accepted as a member of ASEAN in July 1997 in spite of the heavy pressure from Western Nations especially from the American and British governments.

#### **7.7.8. Mistakes committed by "Rohingyas":**

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<sup>80</sup> Eying Burma, in Irrawaddy Online News, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2008

In the meantime the "Rohingyas" committed mistakes, not only by inventing fabricated and fanciful histories, but also by attacking all people who do not support their movement based on their dishonest claims. In their desire to establish themselves, they attacked not only the Burmese Military Junta but also the Arakanese (Rakhaings/Rakhines) at first. After that, they attack the Burmese. Later all Buddhists in Burma (Shans, Mons, Palaungs, Paos, Karens etc,) were also denounced by them for not supporting their dishonest claims. Then, they went too far by attacking Christians in Burma and finally even the Burmese Muslims and the "Indigenous Muslims of Arakan", the "Kamans" and the "Myay Dus", including their Mullahs.<sup>81</sup>

### **8. 'Rohingyas' for Burmese Citizenship:**

Some liberal foreign journalist, Burma Scholars, politicians and writers argued that the "Rohingyas", even if most of them were the descendants of the illegal immigrants, and many were war refugees of East Pakistan Independence War in 1970, since they have lived inside Burmese territory for more than ten years and therefore, they deserve to have the right of naturalized citizens of Burma.

To that suggestion, the present author personally as well as many Arakanese (Rakhaings) will have no objection as long as the 'Rohingyas' want to live peacefully side by side with the Buddhists Rakhaings who are the natives of Arakan and as long as they do not make dishonest claims and want to turn the traditional Buddhist land into a Muslim state. However, it will not be easy under this present government. The present Military Junta is well known as hard liners, very xenophobic and too ethno-centric. It may be easier to do under a democratically elected government through "give and take" policy.

In any case, one should not forget the fact that every sovereign nation has their own immigration and naturalization laws which the others should respect. We should not forget the fact that Burma is not an immigrant land. In spite of that, in the past, in 1950's U Nu was so generous and had granted about 500000 (fifty thousand) illegal immigrants of East Pakistan to Burmese citizenship and the rest were tolerated to stay in Burma without any identity or as foreigners.

Even "the most democratic country on the earth", the United States of America" do not grant citizenship automatically to many offspring of the Mexicans who were born inside the U.S.A.,

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<sup>81</sup> Rohingya Journal, (in Burmese), Vol.1, No.1, Nov.1992, pp. 17-29.

because their parents came illegally to the U.S.A., and lived there as illegal immigrants. They usually live in California, Arizona and Texas, and every body knows that these territories historically belonged to Mexico.

The similar problem is also for the People of the Subcontinent, Sri Lanka and the West Indies who reside in The United Kingdom, "the Mother of Democracy", although these people belong to the "British Common Wealth". Many of them demonstrated in the U.K. with the slogan "We are here because you were there!"

So do many Turks in Germany. Some of them came to Germany as 'Guest Workers' invited by the then West-German Government in the 1950's. Some of them live there more than 40 years and their children were born in Germany, however, these children won't be granted German citizenship automatically, unless or otherwise they apply for that and go through some legal procedures.

Here, the present author likes to point out a very similar situation. There are two Muslim-dominated districts in Berlin, namely Kreuzberg and Neukoelln Districts. I would like to ask a question! Assuming, the Turks had asked for the rights of 'Indigenous Muslims of Germany', their Autonomous Region and issued fabricated histories such as they had established the above mentioned two districts because Muslims lived in Berlin since the time of German Emperors since Ottoman Empire and The Second German Empire were Military Allies etc. etc. How would German populace react?

### **8.1. Latest developments on "Rohingya" problem:**

#### **8.1. 1. Liberal groups of "Rohingyas", their approaches and responses:**

Some liberal groups of "Rohingyas" have changed their tactics. They admitted that the term "Rohingya" was not a historical name instead it is an invented name in the 1950's. However, they wished that the new or the invented name "Rohingya" should be accepted because the name of an ethnic group can be changed if that group wishes. They argued that the ethnic group used to be called "Talaings" by the Burmese in the Burmese chronicles are now called Mons due to their request, and also an ethnic group called "Shan-Tayok" (Tai-Chinese) are now renamed as "Ko-kant". Therefore, Chittagonian Bengali Muslims could be accepted as "Rohingyas", a new indigenous ethnic group in Burma.

They tried to make emergency courses for these 'Rohingyas' to learn written and spoken Burmese which is the official and communication language of the Union of Burma, so that their people can communicate with the other Burmese citizens and assimilate with other peoples of Burma, because till now almost all 'Rohingyas' can speak only their mother tongue which is the Bengali Chittagong Dialect. Apart from that, many of them are illiterates.

Not only the Military Government, but also many people of Burma, especially the Buddhists, particularly the Rakhaings, on the other hand, counter-argued that the "Rohingyas" do not fall in the same category as the Mons and the Ko-kants because they were not an indigenous ethnic group of Burma like the Mons and the Ko-kants. Mon is the historical ethnic group of Burma. They came to Burma even earlier than the Burmese, had the civilization and established Mon Kingdoms in the place where it is called Lower Burma nowadays. The names Mon and Talaing were used parallel since the Pagan Dynasty. Hence, if they do not like to be called Talaings but only Mon, it is their wish and it must be accepted. Ko-kants People are named due to the region where they live. However, 'Rohingya' is neither the name of the region of their origin nor the historical name.

Apart from that, traditionally, the indigenous ethnic groups and the languages of Burma are divided into three main groups, namely Mon-Khmers, Tibeto-Burmese and Sino-Tai. The Mons belongs to the Mon-Khmer group and the Ko-kants belong to Sino-Tai group. To which aforementioned group does the "Rohingyas" belong? Bengalis, neither the race nor the language, are considered to be the indigenous ethnic group and the indigenous language of Burma.

Apart from that, the indigenous ethnic groups of Burma are defined to be the ethnic groups who were already living in Burma before 1824 (i.e. before the First Anglo-Burmese War) because after this war some parts of Burma became British Colony and the British authorities imported foreigners to Burma. Those people were new settlers and therefore their descendants are considered to be citizens but not as an indigenous ethnic group. This is very similar to the "Bhummi Putra" (literally, "Son of the Motherland", here it means indigenous ethnic group) Law in Malaysia.

Hence, according to them, as the most, the name "Rohingya" could be accepted as an ethnic group now living in Burma like Chinese, Indian, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, but neither as an historical ethnic group nor can be recognized as an indigenous ethnic group of Burma.

Hence, the solution of the 'Rohingya' problem may be easy to say, however, difficult to manage.

## 9. Conclusion:

There is a Burmese saying: အများညီ ဤကိုကျွဲ ဖတ်ကြ, 'Amyar Nyi I Ko Kywe Hu Phat' which can be literally translated as "If majority agrees the script ဤ (meaning "this") will be misinterpreted and read (as the similar script) ကျွဲ (meaning "buffalo"). Generally, this proverb can be interpreted to mean: "Wrong or misleading information which are often quoted and subsequently spread by many persons can lead to a situation whereby it eventually acquires the status of being true and correct". This proverb came true in the case of the "Rohingyas". Although the "Rohingya history" is baseless, many writers supported their point of view. Even in the Dictionary of the Modern Politics of South-East Asia, by Michael Leifer, London 1995, the definition of "Rohingya" written there is the same point of view as the "claims of Rohingyas", which I have mentioned and proven to be wrong in this book.

What should I do? Do I have to exclaim? "Alas, what kind of destiny do we Rakhaings, the real sons and daughters of Arakan, have to face in the future because a lie repeated over and over again became indistinguishable from the truth".

In fact, this kind of misinformation of some of the international press forced me to write this article in the first place. As a born Arakanese (Rakhaing/Rakhine) I am obliged to point out this kind of misleading information to be wrong. As mentioned earlier, this article is the revised and extended version with more details on the Arakanese History and the Analysis Part of the original paper read at the International Conference on "the Tradition and Modernity in Myanmar", Berlin, Germany 1993. In the mean time, some Rakhaings either inside Burma or abroad as well as some Westerners like Jaques Leider of Luxembourg wrote some books and articles about Arakan and this problem in nut shell, more or less similar to my point of view. Their articles encouraged me and provided me some more information to write this version and point out more details about the 'Rohingya Problem'.

In any case, I have to be very careful to present this article in a very neutral way so that the paper does not read either as an attack on "Rohingyas" or as a polemical piece aimed at "Rohingyas", nor be seen as a racial writing. The biggest worry for me is: This article won't be misinterpreted as the indirect support of the position of the very brutal Burmese Military Junta.



Here, I would also like to suggest sincerely to the "Rohingyas" to change their tactics. Instead of attacking all people who do not support their dishonest claims they should attack the Burmese Military Junta only. In the mean time they should learn to speak, read and write Burmese, especially the Rakhaing Dialect, and make friends with other ethnic groups of Burma, particularly with the Rakhaings who are the natives and majority of that state. Instead of demanding for the rights of an indigenous ethnic minority of Arakan by inventing fabricated and fanciful histories and trying to turn the traditional Buddhist land of Arakan into a Muslim state, they should be honest and just request to be granted the right to permanent residential status and then the right to become naturalized citizens of Burma step by step to which the Arakanese people (Rakhaings) will have no objection.

I have presented this essay in the spirit of ဓမ္မာနာ (cetana) "good will or good intention" for the sake of some people who want to know the real history of Arakan and her people.

**At the end, I would like to emphasize again that human rights violations, military abuses and brutal crimes committed against the "Rohingyas" by the various Burmese Military Juntas must be strongly condemned, whoever the "Rohingyas" are.**

Appendix I.

<b>Table of the list of the kings from Mrauk U Dynasty (based on the table of Maurice Collis and U San Shwe Bu)</b>			
<b>King's name</b>	<b>Date of accession</b>	<b>Muslim Title</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Min Saw Mun	1430	unknown	Feudatory to Bengal
Min Khari	1434	Ali Khan	do
Ba Saw Pru	1459	unknown	do
Dan Uga	1482	unknown	do
Ba Saw Nyo	1492	unknown	do
Ran Aung	1494	unknown	do
Sa-leng-ga-thu	1494	unknown	do
Min Raza	1501	unknown	do
Gaza Padi	1523	unknown	do
Min Saw O	1525	unknown	do
Tha Zada	1525	unknown	do
Min Bin alais Min Bargri	1531	Zabauk Shah	no longer feudatory to Bengal, Arakanese Empire
Dekkha	1553	unknown	
Saw Hla	1555	unknown	

Min Sekkya	1564	unknown	
Min Pha Laung	1571	Secundah Shah	
Razagri	1593	Selim Shah	
Min Khamaung	1 612	Hussein Shah	
Thri Thudhamma	1622	unknown	
Min Sani	1638	none	Reigned 20 days
Narapatigri	1638	none	Period of usurpers
Thado Mintra	1645	none	
Sanda Thudhamma	1652	none	Empire declined
Thri Thuriya	1684	none	
Wara Dhamma	1685	none	
Muni Thudhamma	1692	none	
Sanda Thuriya	1694	none	
Nawrata Saw	1696	none	
Mayupiya	1696	none	
Sanda Wimala	1700	none	
Sanda Thuriya	1706	none	
Sanda Wizaya	1710	none	
Sanda Thuriya	1731	none	
Naradipadi	1734	none	
Nara Pawara Raza	1735	none	
Sanda Wizala	1737	none	Reigned 8 months
Katya	1737	none	Reigned 3 days
Madarit	1737	none	
Nara Abaya	1742	none	
Thiri Thu	1761	none	Reigned 3 months
Sanda Parama	1761	none	
Maha Raza	1764	none	
Sanda Thumana	1773	none	
Sanda Wimala	1777		Reigned 40 days
Thaditha Dammarit	1777		
Maha Thamada	1782-84		Fall of Mrauk -U, Burmese Conquest.

## Appendix II.

U Po Hla Aung, on the other hand, in his **A New History of Rakhaing** (Arakan) (ရန်ပိုင်နိုင်ငံသမိုင်းသစ်) p. 28., only Min Saw Mun (Man Saw Muan) was the real feudatory to Bengal. The other 11 kings were no longer feudatory to Bengal because Min Saw Mun's (Man Saw Muan's) younger brother and throne successor Min Khayi (Man Khari) (1434-1459) entered into a Friendship and Border Treaty with the Burmese king, King Narapatigyi (Narapatigri) of Ava and declared himself as well as his country to be freed from Bengal".

When his son ၵၢၦၵၢ Ba Saw Phyu (Ba Saw Phru) succeeded the throne of Mrauk U after the death of Min Khayi (Man Khari), he defeated Babeh Shah, the Emir of Chittagong and re-occupied the 12 towns. U Po Hla Aung admitted, however, that these 12 towns were re-annexed by the Sultanate of Bengal after the death of King Ba Saw Phyu (Ba Saw Phru) in A.D. 1481, and there was influence from Bengal again for about 50 years until Min Bargyi (Man Bargri) reoccupied the Chittagong District in A.D. 1532.

The fact that Min Khari signed a Friendship and Border Treaty with King Narapatigyi of Ava was supported by Burmese and Arakanese chronicles. If he were still feudatory to Bengal, he might not be able to sign such an important treaty on his own.

So the statement of Maurice Collis is very doubtful that 12 kings of the Mrauk-u Dynasty were feudatory to Bengal.

U Po Hla Aung could point out some facts and Muslim titles of some kings which Maurice Collis failed to do, but the dates are slightly different from Maurice Collis.

King's name	Ruling years	Muslim title	Remarks
Man Saw Muan	1430-34	Suleman Shah	Feudatory to Bengal
Man Khari	1434-59	Ali Khan	Friendship with Ava
Ba Saw Phru	1459-81	Kaliman Shah	Re-occupied Chittagong
Dan Uggā <i>alias</i> Daluya	1481-91	Moguh Shah	attempted to Re-occupy Tripura but failed
Man Raza	1501-13	Kali Shah	
Man Saw Oh	1515-15	Zala Shah	
Tha Zada	1515-21	Ali Shah	
Thiri Thudhamma	1622- 38	Selim Shah the second	

### Appendix III:

According to Lt. Col. Ba Shan's "Coming of Islam to Burma to 1700 A.D.", some of the Arakanese Buddhist Kings with Muslim titles are as follows:

Naramekhla (Solaiman Shah) 1430 1434 A.D.  
 Meng Khari (a) Naranu (Ali Khan) 1434-1459

Ba Saw Pru (Kalima Shah) 1459-1482  
Dawlya (Mathu Shah) 1482-1492  
'Ba Saw Nyo (Mohammed Shah) 1492-1493  
Ran Aung(Noori Shah) 1493-1494  
Salimgathu (Sheik Abdullh Shah) 1494-1501  
Meng Raza(Ilias Snah-I) 1501-1513  
Kasabadi (Ilias Shah-II) 1513-1515  
Meng Saw Oo (Jalal Shah) 1515-  
Thatasa (Ali Shah) 1515-1521  
Min KhaungRaza (El-Shah Azad) 1521-1531  
Min Bin(a)Min Pa Gri(Zabuk Shah) 1531-1553  
Min Dikha (Daud Khan) 1553-1555  
Min Phalaung (Sikender Shah) 1571-1591  
Min Razagri (Salim Shah) 1593-1612

