

Arakanese Nationalism and the Struggle for National self- determination

(An overview of Arakanese political history up to 1988)

By: Khaing Aung Win

Introduction

Arakan had been an independent kingdom before it was invaded by the Burmans in 1784. The invasion of the Burmans into Arakan in 1784 led the Burmans into conflict with the British in British-India. The Arakanese people took refuge in Chittagong Hill Tracts of British-India and repulsed the Burman invaders to restore their home land. The resistance wars launched by the Arakanese people were misjudged by the Burmans as to be the encouragement of the British. This gave rise to conflict between the British and the Burmans.

After the first Anglo-Burman war in 1826, Arakan was ceded to the British by the Burmans. Instead of ceding Arakan to Arakanese people, the British colonized it and incorporated it into British-India. The British's rule in Arakan in the 19th century faced numerous pro-independence revolts staged by the Arakanese people. The imposition of the British's control in Arakan took long time, some areas not being pacified until the early 20th century. In 1852, a second Anglo-Burman war resulted the Burmans to surrender to the British and the remainder of the Burmans territories were incorporated into British-India.

Up to the earliest 20th century, the national liberation movement of Arakan was carried out in isolation having no relation with the neighbouring nationalist movements. The Burman's nationalism was faded away under the oppressive British colonial rule. In 1917, the emergence of Saradaw U Ottama, an Arakanese Buddhist monk, woke up the Burman's nationalism.

Being aware of impossibility for freedom for the Burmans without co-operation of non-Burman ethnic nationalities in British-Burma, the Burman political leaders persuaded the non-Burman ethnic nationalities to be united in struggle against the British colonial rule giving a sham promise for establishment of Federal Union of all ethnic nationalities equal in every respect. The Arakanese political leaders hopefully believed the sham promise given by the Burman political leaders and co-operated with the Burmans to achieve independence of British-Burma instead of setting up definite political position to gain the right to self-determination of Arakanese people.

When Burma gained independence from the British in 1948 by the collective efforts of the Burman and non-Burman ethnic nationalities including Arakanese people, Arakanese people found themselves that they were a colony of the Burmans and were deceived by the Burmans, who transformed their nationalism into the form of military dictatorship to dominate the non-Burman ethnic nationalities: Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Rakhaing (Arakanese people) and Shan. However, the Arakanese people did not give up their struggle for the right to self-determination. They continued their struggle and they are

still struggling for their right to self-determination by various means sacrificing a lot of their lives. After forty years of Burma's independence, the Burman nationalism in the form of military dictatorship became a detriment even to the interest of the majority Burman people. In this paper, I attempt to define the Arakanese nationalism and examine the general condition of their struggle for national self-determination.

Arakanese Nationalism

The Arakanese nationalism at this present phase can be classified into two streams according to the national movements carried out by the Arakanese nationalists. One is characteristic of third-world anti-imperialist national liberation. It is originated from the political concept to regain the long lost national independence and takes the form of political struggle to establish a national state with jurisdiction over Arakan national territory based on the self-determination as defined by the United Nations Organization. There is another stream of Arakanese nationalism which is based on the principles of federalism, political equality and the right to self-determination of all different ethnic nationalities in Burma.

This stream of Arakanese nationalism claims that a condition of peace and progress for different ethnic nationalities in Burma is possible only as a result of abolition of the Burman's chauvinistic domination in the form of military dictatorship, and establishment of an authentic federal union on the basis of full freedom and political equality of non-Burman ethnic nationalities. Such a change in the basic structure of Burma's political community that those relations which breed exploitation of non-Burman ethnic nationalities by the Burmans, and human misery will come to an end. Therefore, its goal is the attainment of national freedom of Arakanese people and other ethnic nationalities, and the beginning of free society of all ethnic nationalities of Burma, where racial oppression, economic exploitation and violations of Human Rights will be terminated.

The rights of self-determination has been interpreted by both streams of Arakanese nationalism as a people's freedom to determine their political status, to pursue their economic, social and cultural developments independently. { (1) the Arakanese people must be in a position to act – they must not be compelled by external forces or the threat of punishment (2) the actions of Arakanese people must be performed in obedience to a law – they must be rational free choosers (3) the Arakanese people must themselves create or prescribe the law to which they are obedient. }

Both streams of Arakanese Nationalism claim that the people of Arakan are a people who have the rights to self-determination according to the UN charter, and take the view that there are all the features of a colony in Arakan. This is because Arakan, which was an independent kingdom till 1784, was conquered by the aliens as the Burmans in 1784, the British in 1826 and the Japanese in 1942 successively, and the Arakanese people are still subjected to extreme national oppression and political domination by the aliens Burmans. That is why both streams of Arakanese nationalism demand the decolonisation of Arakan. The Arakanese people, who carry the political heritage of the independent kingdom of Arakan, have the will to be identified them as a people having a social entity with their own identity and characteristics in their own territory.

Both streams of Arakanese nationalism assert in the matter of racial groups in Arakan that the minority rights shall be guaranteed to the racial groups that migrated in Arakan before 1826, the year on which the British occupied Arakan. However, those

Bengali Muslims, who were brought to Arakan after 1826 by the British for the purpose of employments in the expanded cultivation in Arakan, are considered as individuals, not a racial group. Their rights as citizens shall not be deprived like other citizens. The individual citizens and freely constituted groups or organizations shall enjoy full participation in every aspect of Arakanese political community. Arakanese nationalists, who centre national independence, struggle by all necessary means, violence or non-violence, against the Burman domination. But, Arakanese nationalists, who centre the right to self-determination of Arakanese people within the frame-work of a genuine federal structure, struggle by non-violence means.

The successive Burman military regimes always attempt to crush any form of Arakanese national movements through their military and police apparatus. It is illegal to establish an Arakanese political organization in Arakan.

The socio-economic conditions of Arakan are aggravated as a result of the successive Burman regime's policies to retard deliberately social and economic developments of Arakanese people. Their policies aimed at economic exploitation of natural resources and economic bases of Arakan bring about million of Arakanese people to live in a condition of absolute poverty. The mortality rate is higher in Arakan compared with in the territory where the majority Burmans inhabit due to the lack of health care and medical expenditure. Most of the industry are constructed in the territories where majority Burmans inhabit, and there are no industry for the interest of Arakanese people in Arakan.

Transportation and communication are very poor, and standard of living in Arakan lags far behind the territories where the majority Burmans inhabit. The education is neglected and Arakanese people continue to experience decline of per capital income. Accordingly, **Arakanese nationalism contains a back-ward looking elements demanding redress of past grievance and it also claims that Arakan national question must be viewed historically and economically.**

Location and Territory of Arakan

Arakan is situated between Burma on the east and Bangladesh on the west, and is separated from Burma by the Arakan mountain ranges (Arakan Roma). It is also bordered by India and Bangladesh on the north and bounded on the south-west by the bay of Bengal .The present total area of Arakan is about 18,500 sq-miles. Actual territory belonged to Arakan before it came under foreign rule in 1784 was twice the area of the present day Arakan. The southernmost territory of Arakan, from Kyauk-chwan River to cape Negres, was integrated into Bessein district of lower Burma by the British in 1853. The territories covering Tripura region, Chittagong Hill tracts and plain was integrated into British-India in 1937 by the British again. Arakan Hill Tracts (Platwa district) was integrated into Chin special division by the U Nu-led AFPFL Burman regime in 1952 in order to create discords between the peoples of Arakan and Chinland.

A Short History Background of Arakan

The origin and development of Arakanese nationalism and national movements lie in the history of Arakan. The history of Arakan can be viewed dividing into the following periods.

(a) Independent kingdom of Arakan ruled by Arakanese kings 3325 BC - 1784 AD

(b) The Burman rule	1784 AD - 1825 AD
(c) The British rule	1826 AD - 1942 AD
(d) The Japanese rule	1942 AD - 1945 AD
(e) The British rule	1945 AD - 1947 AD
(f) The Burman rule	1948 AD to Up to Date

Ethnically, Arakanese people are mixture of Indo-Aryans and Mongolians. The ancient chronologies gave 3325 BC as the date of the founding of the first Dynnyawaddy dynasty on the east of Gissapa River (also known as Kalandan River). The founder of the first Dynnyawaddy dynasty was king Marayu (ayoung hero) who was a descendant of the ancient tribe of the Shakyas in the northern India. King Marayu and his army was successful to subdue the carnivorous barbarians who forayed Dynnyawaddy occasionally. King Marayu established a beautiful city and led the kingdom to be a prosperous and peaceful society, and he died at the age of eighty. The name of his kingdom “Dynnyawaddy” means a land of plentiful rice production.

The Ananda Chandra inscriptions (686 A.D) on the Chite-thaung pillar of Mrauk-U has recorded the presences of Arakanese dynasties from the 6th century BC. According to the Ananda Chandra inscriptions and other ancient chronologies, the following six dynasties reigned in Arakan.

- (1) The first Dynnyawaddy (BC 3325 to BC 1510) founded by King Marayu,
- (2) The second Dynnyawaddy (BC 1483 to BC 581)founded by King Kanrazargree
- (3) The third Dynnyawaddy (BC 580 to AD 326)founded by King Chandrasuria
- (4) Wesali Dynasty (AD 327 to AD 818) founded by King Dvan Chandra,
- (5) Lemro Dynasty (AD 818 to AD1404) founded by King Khattathun,
- (6) Mrauk-U Dynasty (AD 1430 to AD 1784) founded by King Sawmon.

The 243 Arakanese kings ruled Arakan for a long period of 5108 years. The land which is known as Arakan by the foreign peoples is christened by her own people as “Rakhaing Pray”. According to the ancient Arakanese chronologies, the name “Rakhaing” is originated from pali word “Rakkhapura” which means the native land of “Rakkha”. The word “Rakkha”, in the course of time, evolves into “Rakhaing”. “Rakkha” in pali means safe-guarding of nation and moral precepts. In an old history record of Arakan in poetic form, the meaning of “Rakhaing” is mentioned as:

“Because they are capable of cherishing
and safe-guarding of their nation
and moral precepts,
They are deserved to be named
and to be called “Rakhaing”.

(Ashon Nagainda Mawgun, 14th Century).

In the Ananda Chandra inscriptions, the ancient name of Arakan is mentioned as “Arakhadesa” in Sanskrit. “Arakha” means safe-guarding of nation and “desa” means land. “Arakha” may be the source of foreign version “Arakan” for “Rakhaing”.

The fifty eight descendents of King Marayu ruled for (1818) years till BC 1510. The 58th King Pyaw Hla Si Thu was usurped by the three disloyal ministers in BC 1510. Under the usurpers, the insurrections were rampant throughout the kingdom. About the same time, a wave of Indo-Aryan tribe led by Kanrazagree, entered Arakan from the north. Kanrazagree eliminated all insurrections and dethroned the usurpers.

In BC 1483, Kanrazagree ascended the throne and established the second Dynnyawaddy dynasty. His 28 descendants ruled Arakan for 927 years. The second Dynnyawaddy dynasty was succeeded by the third Dynnyawaddy dynasty founded by King Chandrasuria in BC 580. King Chandrasuria was a descendant of King Kanrazagree. He was a contemporary to king Bimbisara of the kingdom of Magadha in India. During the reign of King Chandrasuria, Arakan had commercial contact with the Kingdom of Magadha in India by both land and sea routes. The Kingdom of Magadha was economically and technologically a valuable support to Arakan. Dynnyawaddy inscriptions dated 544 BC says that during the reign of King Chandrasuria, Lord Buddha visited Arakan.

It is quite possible that Arakanese people professed faith in Buddhism since then, and from that time onwards, Buddhism seems to have continued to flourish and to influence Arakanese civilization. Owing to the trade between the kingdom of Maghada and Arakan, there was much cultural contact with the kingdom of Maghada at that time.

The third Dynnyawaddy dynasty was succeeded by the wesali dynasty which was established by King Dyan Chandra in AD 327. The capital city Wesali was very beautiful and popularly known as the city of the stone Pier. Contacts were had with foreign peoples and trade was carried on through both sea and land routes. The trading ships from foreign countries harboured at the stone pier of capital city Wesali.

The kingdom of Arakan under the Chandra kings of Wesali dynasty became prosperous due to the trade relations with foreign countries. In the trade relations, gold and silver coins were used as currency. During this periods, although Arakanese court used Sanskrit alphabet and Pali language, a new style of "Rakkhawunna" script (Arakanese script) was invented and promoted for a purpose of public use and the writing of Arakanese language to be uniform, and thus fostered national unity. A lot of translation of Sanskrit literature into Arakanese language were done in this period. Among them, the translation of law of Manu, translation of Sarnakya's Niti and translation of the fables of King Kyammadike were famous and well known. In this period, books written in Arakanese language on traditional medicines, arts, warfare, metallurgy, pottery and architecture were produced in vast quantities. The most famous Arakanese literary works as "Pyinnyameda chronical" in poetic form and "Thein Kan Mein Twin Poem" were written in this period. "Pyinnyameda chronical" in poetic form was composed by Medapynnya, a Minister of King Thirichandra, in 622-658 AD and "Thein Kan Mein Twin Poem" was composed by Princess Thuwunnadevi in 650-667 AD.

The industry of Arakan, in this period, produced household utensils such as stone plates, the decorated carvings of stone and metal images, lamps, pots, golden sash, rings, bracelets, ear-plugs and textiles. Dams and embankments were built and irrigation systems were used in order to distribute water for agricultural lands, and thus yield rich harvests. Buddhism thrived, and pagodas, stupas, monasteries and shrines were built throughout the kingdom. Buddha images were cast, and land grants were made to the religious institutions. The Buddhist synod of 638 AD was convened by attending 1,000 Buddhist monks from the Island of Lanka (Ceylon) and 1,000 Arakanese Buddhist monks. It lasted for 3 years, and the Pitakas, the three repositories of Buddhist scripture, were written on the 5,000 copper plates. Arakan was a prosperous and powerful nation in this period, and was the highest level of the world standard of that period.

The Wesali dynasty was followed, in AD 818, by a new dynasty, the Lemro (four cities) which ruled Arakan nearly 600 years, until 1404 AD. Sixty kings ruled from four cities of Pyinsa, Parein, Nereinsara Taungoo and Launggrat successively. During the rules of king Kawlia and King Datha Raza, the fifth and sixth kings of the Parein city of Lemro dynasty, Arakan grew

into a more powerful nation. The Lemro period was one of the most glorious periods in the history of Arakan. One of the outstanding kings of Lemro period was King Mun Htee, who was on the throne from 1238 AD to 1389 AD or a little over 96 years. Under him, military operations were greatly expanded the territories of Kingdom of Arakan; to the west into Bengal, to the east the west bank of Irrawaddy river, and to the north Kammapura and Tripura. King Mun Htee and his great army paid a visit to Buddha Gaya of India, and repaired the temples there and setup a stone pillar on which he mentioned his arrival and merit. The Kingdom of Arakan flourished during King Mon Htee's rule. He is still famous in the world history as a king who was an example to his people by being obedient to the laws which were made by himself. During the Lemro Period, there lived a Buddhist monk named "Rakhaing Thu Mrat", who wrote "Lakathara Pyo" (the essence of human conduct), which is still considered as the outstanding literature of Arakan and Burma.

After Lemro dynasty, there came Mrauk-U dynasty founded by King Saw Mon in 1430 AD. Mrauk-U dynasty ruled Arakan for more than 350 years. During the time of Mrauk-U dynasty, Arakan saw the development of Arakanese literature and culture in all sphere of national life for which it is called "the golden age of Arakan history". The Kingdom of Arakan became more unified and powerful under the reign of Mun Khari (1434-1458 AD). In 1454, King Mun Khari met King Narapati of Ava of the Burmans (1443-1469 AD) and the watershed of Arakan mountain ranges (Arakan Roma) was demarcated as the border line of the two kingdoms. Again in 1480 AD, by the another meeting between Arakanese King Ba Saw Pru and Burman King of Ava Thihathuria, the stable friendship of the two kingdoms was established. During the reign of King Ba Saw Pru (1458-1481 AD), the famous Arakanese literature "Rakaing Munthamee E Chin" (the classical poem addressed to a child princess extolling the glory of ancestors) was written by Minister Phadu Mun Nyo.

The greatest King Mun Ben (1531-1553 AD) created a naval fleet of 10,000 war boats that dominated the bay of Bengal and Gulf of Martaban. The kings of Arakan firmly established their authority in Bengal during Mrauk-U period. The Mrauk-U dynasty ruled from the entire coast line of Dacca and the Sundabans to Yankon and Moulmein, a coastal strip of a thousand miles in length and varying from 150 to 20 miles in depth. The Mogul and Afghan kings sent annual presents, and the kings of Island of Lanka (Ceylon) and Portugal paid their respect and sent trading ships to Arakan. It was under the government of King Mun Ben that annals were written at the court and an amendment of the Arakanese legal code was made, and a new constitution of Kingdom of Arakan (i.e. Shwemyin Dhammathat) was adopted on the advice of Ashon Mra Wa, an erudite hermit.

The ports along the Arkan coast received Arab, central Asia, Danish, Dutch and Portuguese traders in this period. A Dutch man, who visited Arakan in the 16th Century, described Arakan as one of the richest countries in Asia, and compared Mrauk-U city with Amsterdam of Dutch and London of England in size and prosperity. Growing international trade, and political and administrative skills of Arakanese kings enabled Arakan to be a prosperous and powerful country in the South East Asia. The reigns of warrior kings; Mun Phalong (1571-1593 AD), his son Mun Razagree (1593-1612 AD) and his grandson Mun Khamuang (1612-1622 AD) strengthened the wealth and power of Arakan.

The Arakanese king of Mrauk-U dynasty practised open doors' policy which attracted foreign traders to the kingdom and appointed some foreigners as servants at the court. According to the record of father Sebastiao Manrique of Portugal, not only the Muslim guards and Portuguese captains of the fleet but also there were even a troop of Japanese guards at the court around 1630 AD. With the Arakanese kings' open doors' policy, the imports of

techniques and skills in the fields of construction, ship-building , artillery and metallurgy flowed into Arakan in this period.

The Burman's , ever jealous of prosperity and cultural developments of the kingdom of Arakan, always planned to break up her national sovereignty and to loot her vast wealth. Eventually, the turbulent situation happened in Arakan during 1780s due to the power struggle among the local Dukes led to be exploited by the Burmans. In 1782 AD, Thadoe Aung, Duke of Rambree, became the king of Arakan. He was accorded the title "Mahasamada"(Great President Elect) by the Mun Ahtaingban (The Royal Assembly of Lords). He was a Republican and had the policy to form a more workable government elected by the Mun Ahtaingban (The Royal Assembly of Lords). Ngathade, Duke of Ngasaraingchaung, had the policy to maintain feudalism, and asked Bodaw U Wyne, King of the Amarapura of the Burmans, to invade Arakan. His idea was that Bodaw U Wyne would enthrone him as a king. However, the Burman King Bodaw U Wyne had no intention of enthroning Ngathade as a king of Arakan. His policy was to break up national sovereignty of kingdom of Arakan, and to loot her vast wealth and to reduce Arakan to the position of an administrative province of the Burman empire.

In 1784 AD, the expeditionary Burman invaders' forces sent by the Burman king Bodaw U Wyne invaded Arakan without declaration of war. The royal forces of kingdom of Arakan were caught unawares, and suffered a crushing defeat due to lack of unified military preparations. Arakanese King "Mahasamada"(Great President Elect) was dethroned and murdered by Burman invaders.

The Struggle for National Self-Determination

The resistant wars broke out in various parts of Arakan as soon as Arakan was invaded by the Burman invaders' forces. Arakanese forces led by Crown Prince ThaukSan Shwe, Taungmungree Kyaw Htwee, Duke Kaung Nyunt Randaing of Pinnaychaung Island, Duke Poe Lone of Rambree Island, Dhapaing Mra Raung, Dhapaing Htwan Aung, Dhapaing Hari, Dhapaing Ray San and Nga Myo Por fought against the Burman invaders in different parts of Arakan.

Resistance spread to the whole Kingdom, when the Burman invaders had made an arrangement to carry away the Great Mahamuni Buddha Image by January 1785. It continued to grow till 1824, the year on which the British declared war against the Burman invaders in Arakan. The imposition of the Burman's control on Arakan was not possible during their occupation of Arakan for 40 years. (from 1784 to 1824)

During their invasion, the Burman invaders' forces committed a crime against humanity with a genocide killing about 236,000 Arakanese civilians including 10,000 infants of cradle age. They killed the infants mercilessly with the slogan of "while cutting down the stalk of a reed, its stump should not be left out". A mass of 100,000 skilled workers, artisans, intellectuals and Buddhist monks were arrested and taken across the Arakan mountain ranges, and they all were initiated into slavery and servitude at pagodas and temples of pagan, Sagaing and Mandalay.

The Great Mahamuni Buddha Image was also carried away to Mandalay. Moreover, the Burman invaders destroyed many valuable creations of Arakan including royal palace, city gates, the clock-tower, the booming drum that was believed to have a mystical effect on the

Burman dynasties and many other edifices of splendour. The industries and business centres were also destroyed by them. The ancient chronicles and books were carried away by them with an intention of eradicating of national feeling of the Arakanese people, and many others were destroyed. The Arakanese books on literature, arts, traditional medicines, warfare, metallurgy, architecture, ship-building, which were carried away by the Burman invaders, are estimated to be about the height of two toddy palms. The Arakan genocide is the forgotten genocide of the 18th century, remembered mainly by the Arakanese people.

More than 200,000 Arakanese people fled into the British-Bengal to escape the atrocities committed by the Burman invaders. The Naff river was strewn with the dead bodies of all ages and of both sexes. Captain Hiram Cox, a British officer, took care Arakanese refugees with great sympathy. He managed to resettle about ten thousands in wasteland around Chittagong, but many other had dispersed widely among the hill and jungle of Chittagong hills tracts. The main settlement area of Arakanese refugees was named as Cox's Bazaar. About 10,000 Arakanese refugees from the southern region of Arakan escaped to delta areas of east Bengal boating across the Bengal Sea, and made their settlement there.

In 1811-1815, the situation abruptly changed; war of tremendous resistance broke out in Arakan. Lord Chin Bran known as King Bering in the contemporary British records organized Arakanese people living among the hills and jungles of Chittagong hills tracts, and built up an army with a 20,000 man strong and fought against the Burman invaders to drive them out from the soil of Arakan. Lord Chin Bran and his army succeeded in crushing one after another, and they were capable to lay siege Mrauk-U, capital city of Arakan, repeatedly. They plundered Burman's garrisons on their way to Mrauk-U and killed the Burmans whom they encountered on their way.

Military campaigns were carried out in various parts of Arakan by Lord Chin Bran's troops. By 1812, almost the whole of territories of Arakan was under the control of Lord Chin Bran's troops. However, the Burman king sent larger reinforcements by land and sea to consolidate the position. The Burman invaders slaughtered innocent civilians in revenge, and so Lord Chin Bran led his troops to retreat to Chittagong hills tracts. In order to defend the Burmese forces, he built a fort at Plun Chural, a three days journey from Panwa (Ramu), where he died of old age in 1815. The revolt, that Lord Chin Bran started, did not end with his death. He was succeeded by other leaders, who gained support from Arakanese people, and continued struggle against the Burman invaders. Outstanding among his successors were Dhabainggri Kyaw Bone, Lord Aung Kyaw Zan, Lord Lat Ronephawgri and Zonetat Myattaunghay.

Arakanese troops advanced inside Arakan and fought the Burman garrisons repeatedly giving much trouble to the Burman's shaky rule in Arakan. By 1818, the Burman governor of Rambree sent a letter to the British authorities in Calcutta. The letter stated: "One lakh of Arakanese people living in the British dominion are challenging the Burman's rule in Arakan many times with the encouragement of the British. I demand the British authorities to extradite those Arakanese people to Arakan, and failure to accede the demand will be brought to the destruction of the British dominion by the Burman forces".

The British at that time was in difficulties both inside and outside India - distressing political situation in various parts of India, troubled with Pandris, and strained relations with China, Nepal and Afghanistan. Therefore, the British first tried to avoid the direct conflict with the Burmans by sending envoys to Ava. But, it was unsuccessful. Then, when the British were fighting with Pandris, the king of Ava of the Burmans sent a letter again to Lord Hastings demanding the surrender of Chittagong, Dhaka, Cassimbazaar and Murshidabad. Soon, in 1821-1822, The Burman forces invaded Assam, and in September 1823 the Shapuri Island

near Chittagong which was belonging to the British dominion. At the same time , the Bumans were making preparation for the dispatch of a military expedition to invade the British-Bengal. All those events frustrated the British.

At the beginning of 1824, an agreement was signed between the exiled Arakanese Princes and the British authorities in Bengal to establish an alliance between the British and Arakan. By the terms of this agreement, Arakanese forces under the command of Lord Aung Kyaw Zan must fight the Burman forces on the side of the British, and Arakan must be ceded to the princes of Arakan after the Burman invader's forces were driven out of the soil of Arakan. About the sametime, the advance of the Burman forces towards the eastern frontier of the British dominion made the British inevitable to declare war on Ava of the Burmans. On 4 March 1824, therefore, Lord Amherst declared war on Ava of the Burmans. In the war, Arakanese forces fought against the Burmans on the side of the British. The Burman forces suffered a crushing defeat and by the "Yantabo Peace Treaty" at the end of the first Anglo-Burman war on 24 February 1826, Arakan was ceded to the British by the Burmans. However, after the conquest of Arakan, the British reneged on to comply with the agreement and colonized and integrated Arakan into British-India.

In 1827, therefore, Arakanese nationalists led by Lord Aung Kyaw Zan, Prince Shwe Ban and Lord Aung kyaw Rhee sought help from the French and hatched a plot to drive out the British from the soil of Arakan. A lot of Arakanese patriots joined them and built up underground resistance forces under their leadership. The resistance forces carried out guerrilla combats against the British troops and attacked the British authorities. On one occasion, the resistance forces made a raid up the police thana of Akyab and burned it up.

However, Lord Aung Kyaw Zan, Prince Shwe Ban and Lord Aung kyaw Rhee , who were masterminds of the revolt, were discovered and arrested by the British on account of a traitor. The revolt without its leaders was quelled by the superior British battalions, which were reinforced with Indian troops from British-India.

Lord Aung Kyaw Zan, Prince Shwe Ban, Lord Aung kyaw Rhee and many other leaders were put in the Dhaka jail for unlimited time. They died of hunger strike in Dhaka jail in 1834. They all are still considered by the Arakanese people as the founders' of new Arakanese nationalism. Prince Shwe Ban left a message written on the wall of Dhaka jail with his own blood to the future Arakanese generation. It was in a poetic from, and it reads:

“ Those who will come in the future,
All Arakansese people;
Do not deviate with other thoughts
Follow my path
Diligently and resolutely
We shall regain our land Arakan
Keep up with the efforts and work with determinations,
Even Nirvana is not beyond the reach of attainment
I ring the bell of the truth,
These were my words at my death”

Similarly, Lord Aung Kyaw Rhee also left a message to future Arakanese generations. It was also a poetic forms and it reads:

“If you are cheated with the face of money and betrayed,
Oh! People of future, do not tolerate,
In all international matters, use your wisdom and intelligence,
And strive with good plans.

Do not be derelict
Be loyal to your nation,
Be ready to sacrifice your life
And let your blood flows,
We shall regain our own land,
Don't want to be underdog in this world."

After the failed plot hatched by the Arakanese princes and patriots, the British rule in Arakan in the 19th century faced numerous pro-independence revolts staged by the Arakanese nationalists, and the peasant revolts broke out simultaneously in different parts of Arakan. The imposition of the British's control took long time, some area not being pacified until the early 20th century. Among the numerous revolts,

- (a) the pro-independence revolt led by Bo Chit San in the Lemro delta of northern Arakan in 1828,
- (b) the pro-independence revolt led by Bo Maung Tha Oo in southern Arakan in 1829,
- (c) the pro-independence revolt led by Kyeintali Sayadaw in southern Arakan in 1831,
- (d) The Peasant revolt led by Bo Maung Oo Pru in Akyab district in 1867,
- (e) the pro-independence revolt led by Bo Nga Mauk in Rambree Island in 1887,
- (f) the pro-independence revolt led by Sandoway Saradaw and Kyauk Sein Bo in Sandway district in 1890,
- (g) the pro-independence revolt led by Bo Maung Bun and Bo Ngataro in Akyab district in 1888.
- (h) the pro-independence revolt led by Bo Mra Htwan, Bo Shwe Hla and Bo Lar Ba in Akyab district in 1890-91.
- (i) the pro-independence revolt led by Bo Kyaw Wa in Sandoway District in 1890,
- (j) the pro-independence revolt led by Bo Chun Pho and his son Maung Phaw Aung in Akyab district in 1891-92 were enormous and popular.

The pro-independence revolts were staged with their plans to repulse the British and regain independence of Arakan. The peasant revolts stemmed from the British's evil administration that raised land taxes, capitation tax and the practice of forced-labour from the peasants. The revolts gave much trouble to the British rule in Arakan. The revolts were quelled by the British hardly and at the great cost.

In 1852, after hostile acts of the Burmans to the British traders, a second Anglo-Burman war led to the annexation of the Irrawaddy Delta of the Burman's territory into the British dominion. Finally, in 1885, the Burman king Thibaw, with the French encouragement, confiscated the Bombay-Burma company's properties, thus bringing down on his country a force of 10,000 British and Indian troops, who deported the king and occupied the remainder of the Burman's territories.

After the end of the third Anglo-Burman war in 1886, the entire territories of Burman became a province of British-India empire. It was misfortune of the Burmans in the 19th century to be ruled by a dynasty bent upon conquest. **The territory of Arakan, which was not the integral part of Burma, was annexed to the territory of Burma by the British in order that the British could establish convenient administration in their dominion.**

Arakan national movement, from 1900 to 1940, was characterized by the multiplicity of its organizations and the diversity of its methods. The Rakkhapura League established in 1918, All Arakan League established in 1930 engendered an appreciation of Arakan's lost heritage

and a sense of national identity among the Arakanese people. The national sentiment in favour of independence remained active among the Arakanese people.

The Burmans' nationalism was faded away under the oppressive British colonial rule. The Burmans' nationalism was awakened and motivated by Saradaw U Ottama, an Arakanese Buddhist monk. There was nothing to indicate the existence of an genuine Burman nationalist sentiment until emergence of Saradaw U Ottama in 1917.

After the first world war (1914-1918), the British colonial masters faced a political crisis to control their colonies. Due to the impact of the First World War, the people of British's colonies suffered economic hardship, and grew their indignation with the British. Saradaw U Ottama , during this period, travelled from one place to another, and preached the Burmans and non- Burmans in British-Burma sermon about being vigilant to the cause of freedom. He stimulated them to have valour to fight for freedom. Thus, he became their leaders who was indivisible from them.

In April 1918, Sir Montague Chelmsford , the new Governor of British-India, produced the Montague Chelmsford report in British-India to compensate a severe blow to British power and influence by the first world war. In order to deceive the peoples in British-Burma, sir Reginald Cradock , lieutenant Governor of British-India, produced the Cradock scheme for Burma in December 1918 before the administrative system of diarchy had been introduced in India.

Saradaw U Ottama undauntedly challenged the Cradock scheme by yielding "Get out Cradock from Burma". At that time , the Burmans were afraid of even a police man of British administration . He incited the Burmans and non-Burmans to oppose the British rule without fear. The British's arrest of Saradaw U Ottama and the sentence of the British's court to him for three years imprisonment with hard labour due to his challenge against the British in 1922 woke up the Burmans from their silent fear of the British colonial masters. This event spread as the forest fire and turned the entire people of British-Burma against British rule.

Saradaw U Ottama dominated the course of Burma's politics more than two decades from 1917 to 1939. His political speeches, political writings and political activities created many political organisations and movements against the British's rule in Burma. Under the political leadership of Saradaw U Ottama, the first Rangoon University student's boycott in 1920 came to be launched and the national colleges and schools emerged in Burma; the Cradock scheme was withdrawn ; the visit of prince of Whale to Burma in 1924 was boycotted; When the white committee led by Sir A.S White came to Burma to investigate for administrative system of diarchy, it was boycotted; When Simon commission, a body named to study Burma's political conditions, arrived in Rangoon on 29 January 1929, it was not welcomed and boycotted; the second Rangoon University student's boycott came to be launched in 1936; a series of hunger strikes, public demonstrations, marches of protest, strikes and boycott followed; the administrative system of diarchy disappeared in 1937. He was the first national leader not only to secure the support of the Burma's intelligentsia and the middle class, but also to stir and attract the loyalty of the untold masses in the countless villages of Burma.

Saradaw U Ottama, who initiated non-violent tactics in Burma, was designated as Mahatma Gandhi of Burma. His policy was to liberate the Asian people from the yoke of European colonial masters through non-violent means. The British authorities jailed him for four times in order to eradicate all uprisings in British-Burma and his fighting spirit. Nevertheless , he never gave up his struggle against the British colonial rule till his death on 9th September

1939. That is why Aung San Suu Kyi, in her famous book “ the freedom from fear, ”wrote: “the first exciter of fighting will and fighting capability for independence of Burma was Saradaw U Ottama”.

In this phase, two main strategies were developed by the Arakanese elite groups. One was to collaborate in the British administration in order to upgrade educational, and economic conditions of the Arakanese people through self-government and democratic means, and at the same time, to wear the British administration down by erosion from within .Another was to co-operate with the Burman national movement if the Burman movement aimed at not only freedom of the Burmans alone but also freedom of Arakanese people as well.

As a consequence, the Arakanese intellectuals, who centred the former strategy entered the British administration securing major civil services positions. Such intellectuals as Sir Paw Tun , deputy chairman of the executive council of Governor Sir Dorman Smith, Sir Tun Aung Kyaw, the famous supreme court judge, ICS U Kyaw Mun and U May Aung were Arakanese nationalists who took major civil services positions in the British administration. The Arakanese nationalists, who centred the latter strategy, co-operated in the Burmans’ national movements emerged under the political leadership of Saradaw U Ottama. Such Arakanese nationalists as Dr. Shwe Zan Aung, U Sein Hla Aung and U Sein Tun Aung became the famous leaders of the General Council of Burmese Association (GCBA) (1920), which was the forerunner of the political parties in Burma. U Ba U, an Arakanese student leader, led the first Rangoon university students’ boycott movement in 1920. Ko Kyaw Yin, Ko Nyo Tun and Ko Ba Zan took part in the front line of the second Rangoon university boycott movement led by Ko Nu and Ko Aung San in 1930.

In this phase, the Arakanese people and the Burmans were the same oppressed peoples under the British colonial rule, and had the same sentiment against the British domination over Asian peoples. A satisfactory promise for independence of Arakan after throwing off of the British was also made by the Burman leaders who were languishing under the British rule. Arakanese people and their leaders hoped that after attaining freedom of British-Burma, Arakan which had been an independent kingdom would regain her independence. Arakanese nationalists, therefore, fought on the political front by means of deputations and petitions, and sometimes strikes to influence the British’s policies in British-Burma. In December 1931, a round table conference for Burma’s political affairs was convened in London. Daw Mra Sein, an Arakanese woman politician, presented the case for Burma’s separation from India in the British commons as a representative of Burma’s delegation to the round table conference in London.

The following year, a general election was held in Burma in which the majority people voted to separate Burma from British-India .In 1937, Burma was detached from British-India and given some self-government which made it more autonomous and gave more room to motivate Arakanese nationalism as well as the Burman nationalism. In 1939, Arakan National Congress (ANC) was formed by uniting various groups- democrats, socialists, communists and other well defined groups of the Arakan independence movements. Alongside the growing in strength and developments in organization of ANC was the emergence of the major poor peasants’ movements and solidarity among the Arakanese people.

In 1942, the Japanese invaded British-Burma. In the invasion of British-Burma, the Japanese forces had been joined by a small force known as the Burma Independence Army (BIA) led by General Aung San. The British retreated to India creating many social disorders in Arakan. The Japanese fascists were at first welcomed by the Burmans as liberators because they established a government led by Dr. Ba Maw and proclaimed Burma’s independence on 1st

August 1943. However, the Burmans soon discovered that the independence the Japanese fascists existed only on paper. Everywhere in Burma were guilty of atrocities committed by the arrogant Japanese fascists.

The allied forces in India carried out their first offensive against the Japanese fascists in Burma in November 1942 but were repulsed with heavy losses. For the allied forces in India, the battle for British-Burma was one of the hardest-fought of entire war (i.e. the second world war). By 1942, Arakan National Congress (ANC) under the leadership of Saradaw U Seinda, Saradaw U Pyinnyathiha and U Tha Zan Hla grew in strength and became a powerful organization of Arakan. By 1944, ANC was invited to attend the Anti-fascist Conference in Rangoon. Saradaw U Seinda and U Nyo Tun attended the Anti-fascist Conference in Rangoon and signed on the Treaty of Burma Revolutionary Front (TBRF), representing the Arakanese people. As a consequence, the Anti-fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) was formed as a coalition of various political organizations in British-Burma.

All the Burman and non-Burman nationalistic, socialist and communist parties joined AFPFL including ANC, and elected General Aung San as chairman of AFPFL. They agreed on a program of collective struggle against the Japanese fascists, struggle for independence of British-Burma and a political program based on the principle of a Federal Union of Burma. ANC joined AFPFL as a member organization because AFPFL's policy stood for the freedom, equality and the right to self-determination of all ethnic nationalities in the territory of British-Burma, and the Burman AFPFL leaders also promised an independent state of Arakan after attaining freedom of British-Burma.

With an aim to liberate Arakanese people from the yoke of colonists, ANC built up Arakanese Defence Army (ADA) with a 3,000 man strong in the rural areas of Arakan in 1944. Commander Kra Hla Aung became the chief commander of ADA. When AFPFL leaders sought support from the British in India, the leaders of ANC provided much help to them. The British in India promised support. ADA under the leadership of ANC waged the anti-Japanese fascists war in the middle of 1944. ADA was supported with arms and ammunition by the British in India. In December 1944, the Japanese fascists were totally wiped out from the soil of Arakan by ADA, and ANC made a plan to set up Arakanese government and run the business of government in Arakan.

However, the British forces invaded Arakan and occupied Akyab, the capital city of Arakan, on 1st January 1945. Thus, Arakan came under the British rule again. Commander Kra Hla Aung and the Arakanese volunteers of ADA under the leadership of ANC were the first resistance fighters against the Japanese invasion in British-Burma. They fought against the Japanese fascists prior to the Burmans' anti-Japanese resistance which commenced on 27th March 1945. After the British's reoccupation of Arakan in 1945, two different strategies were surfaced among the leaders of ANC. One was to continue co-operation with AFPFL until full freedom of Arakan was achieved. Another was to revolt against the British for the independence of Arakan. At last, ANC split into two factions. The Arakanese nationalists, who favoured the latter strategy, realized that Arakan should be granted independence separately according to the provisions of Atlantic Charter.

As soon as Arakan came under the British rule again, the British promulgated that all arms and ammunitions in the hand of ADA's volunteers should be made over to the British. For this act, the British gave reason that those arms and ammunitions would be supplied to the AFPFL's troops under the command of General Aung San in order to begin anti-Japanese war in proper Burma. The faction of ANC, which had the strategy to cooperate with AFPFL, made over their arms and ammunitions to the British. But, the another faction

of ANC ,which had the strategy to revolt against the British for independence of Arakan if the British failed to comply with the Atlantic Charter ,did not make over their arms and ammunitions to the British. Instead ,they prepared for revolt.

So, a warrant was out for the arrest of Saradaw U Seinda ,his guerrilla leaders and followers .They all went underground .However , the hundred of guerrilla leaders and their followers were arrested and charged with the criminal offences .They were inhumanly tortured, and sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour by the British Courts .Some were condemned to death by hanging four or five times. The villages in the rural areas, which gave support to the guerrilla leaders, were set fire by the British troops. Feeling in Arakan rose to a danger pitch , Saradaw U Seinda become canonized as a great national hero .

During 1945, Arakan become more and more tense.irate mobs periodicallyparaded in the streets of Akyab and other towns as Kyaukprou, Sandoway, Kyauktaw and Minbra . There wasanti-British sentiment prevailing .The Arakanese guerrillas , who took part in the anti-Japanese war in 1944, became intolerable , and they manifested their readiness to sacrifice their lives in the struggle against the British .

On 10 March 1945, the British fourteenth army conquered Mandalay ,the second capital city of proper Burma .On 27 March 1945, AFPFL forces under the command of General Aung San declared war against the Japanese fascists and began guerrilla combats against the Japanese forces in proper Burma .The British forces conquered Rangoon, the capital city proper Burma, on 2ndMay 1945 , and thus proper Burma also came under the British rule again.

In July 1945, a national election had been held in Great Britain, and Winston Churchill, the conservative leader ,had been displaced as prime minister by Clement Atlee . The coming to power of the labour party was a good augury for the cause of Burma's independence .

By 1946, the Mraybon Conference was held under the auspices of Saradaw U Seinda in Mraybon town of Arakan. At theconference , the unity of all the Arakanese left wings was successfully built. At the beginning of 1947, the People's Liberation Party (PLP) led by Saradaw U Seinda was formed, and began the armed struggle against the governments in Rangoon for independence of Arakan. The PLP was capable to control a number of villages in Akyab district and kyaukprou district , and acted as local government . The struggle of PLP against the governments in Rangooncontinued till 1958.

In January 1947, the British labour government signed an agreement with General Aung San , chairman of AFPFL, agreeing both independence of Burma and incorporation of the territories owned by the non-Burman ethnic nationalities in British-Burma . But, the terms of the agreement contained a proviso which stated, “ the free consent of the non-Burma ethnic nationalities shall be required for the incorporation of their territories into Burma .”

AFPFL's leaders including General Aung San, thus, sought political support from all non-Burman ethnic nationalities – Chain, Kachin ,Karen , Kayah, Mon ,Rakhaing (Arakanese) and Shan to achieve the independence of Burma speedily and without any hindrance. When AFPFL's leaders sought political support from non-Burman ethnic nationalities , they promised a new Federal Union of all ethnic nationalities equal in every respect .General Aung San and AFPFL's leaders promised Arakanese political leaders that after independence of British-Burma , Arakan might join Union of Burma or might establish a sovereign independent state according to the free will of Arakanese people .

The faction of ANC led by U Pyinnyathiha, U Nyo Tun and U Aung Zan Wai accepted the promise made by General Aung San and AFPFL's leaders and made their decision to cooperate with AFPFL for the speedy attainment of independence of British-Burma. Accordingly, U Aung Zan Wai accepted the proposal of the British governor of Burma to join the interim government of Ministerial Burma as a cabinet minister together with General Aung San, chairman of AFPFL, in order to hasten the process of independence of British-Burma.

Eventually, an agreement between AFPFL's chairman General Aung San, who was also a representative of interim government of Ministerial Burma, and the leaders of non-Burman ethnic nationalities reached at the Panglong Conference on 12th February 1947.

This agreement is still known as "the Panglong Agreement". The Panglong Agreement recognized equality, voluntary association and self-determination of non-Burman and Burman ethnic nationalities in the federal structure as a Nation made up of nations, and provided the basic principles for the establishment of future Federal Union. The leaders of non-Burman ethnic nationalities also agreed in the Panglong Agreement to co-operate with the interim government of Ministerial Burma to hasten the process of achieving independence of Burma from the British.

On 19 July 1947, General Aung San was murdered, together with most of the cabinet minister of interim government of Ministerial Burma, and U Nu took the leading role of the Burman politics in the place of General Aung San. U Nu-led AFPFL, however, deviated from the fundamental principles for authentic Federal Union laid down by General Aung San and the leader of the non-Burman ethnic nationalities at the Panglong Conference, and adopted a constitution which was favourable to the hegemony of the Burmans over non-Burman ethnic nationalities.

According to the 1947 constitution adopted by the U Nu-led AFPFL, the non-Burman ethnic nationalities were deprived of their right to self-determination. The Union of Burma formed by the U Nu-led AFPFL was, in essence, unitary and colonial in structure. Therefore, when Burma attained independence on 4 January 1948, the Burmans completely monopolized over economic, social, educational, administrative and military affairs, and run the whole machinery of government of the so-called Union of Burma, reducing the non-Burman ethnic nationalities to colonies. For non-Burman ethnic nationalities, independence of Burma in 1948 meant super session of the Burman domination in the place of the British's domination. Accordingly, the non-Burman ethnic nationalities took up arms and civil war, that has been going on for almost sixty years, began soon after Burma had gained independence from the British. Under the sham Union of Burma, the Arakanese people, who carry the heritage of an independent Kingdom, were not even given an autonomous state, but reduced to a mere administrative formality.

Consequently, the Arakanese people intensified the struggle for autonomous state through democratic and non-violent means. All Arakan National United League (AANUL) under the leadership of U Maung Kyaw Zan won landslide victory in Arakan in the elections held during the parliamentary period of AFPFL's governments (1948-1962). AANUL, which was popularly known as "Ra-Ta-Nya", struggled hard in the parliament joining hands with other non-Burman ethnic nationalities parties to modify 1947 constitution to an authentic federal constitution and to give Arakan a political status of autonomous state in the authentic federal structure. AANUL's struggle and influence among the Arakanese people grew tremendously. Under the leadership of AANUL, Arakanese people from all walks of life took to the streets widely and periodically demanding for autonomous state.

As a result, in 1961, the then ruling Pa-Hta-Sa (the Union Party) government led by U Nu promised for the autonomous states of Arakan and Mon. During this phase from 1948 to 1962, the federal movements formed by uniting all non-Burman ethnic nationalities became increasingly enormous and popular. In this movements, the role played by the Shan nationalists was great. The unity and solidarity among the non-Burman ethnic nationalities became greater than had been achieved before. In the Parliament debates, the MPs of non-Burman ethnic nationalities demanded to amend the sham Union constitution to be genuine so that non-Burman ethnic nationalities could enjoy their right to self-determination as the promise made to them before independence of Burma by General Aung San and the Burman AFPFL leaders.

Moreover, on 25 February 1962, the leaders of non-Burman ethnic nationalities attended the historic "Taung Gyi Conference" in southern Shan State and signed on the draft genuine federation popularly known as "the Shan's principles", and unitedly demanded it to the then ruling Union Party government led by U Nu. The features of genuine Federal Union of Burma in the draft genuine federation could be summed up as follows:

- (1) Eight federating states should be constituted to establish genuine Federal Union of Burma. They are: (a) Arakan state (b) Burmar state (c) Chin state (d) Kachin state (e) Karen state (f) Karyar state (g) Mon state (h) Shan state.
- (2) The federating states should be sovereign and equal in every respect with the exception of some powers empowered to the federal legislature.
- (3) Every federating state should have its own constitution, legislature and government.
- (4) The federal legislature should be bi-cameral legislature in which there are a national Assembly composed of equal numbers of representative from the federating states and the people's Assembly composed of representatives elected from among the entire people of the Federal Union according to the defined constituencies. Both Assemblies should have equal power.
- (5) The president and the government of the Federal Union should be elected from among the representatives of two Assemblies in a Joint session. The government of the federal Union should be responsible to the parliament.
- (6) The federal legislature should be empowered the following power:
 - (a) Foreign affairs (b) Defence (c) Finance (d) Judiciary (e) Currency and coinage
 - (f) Post and telecommunication (g) Railway and Airway (h) Taxation on seaports.
- (7) The federating states should be fully autonomous and free from interference of centre and other federating states.
- (8) Fair and just financial allotment should be made among the federating states, and natural resources and economic bases of a federating state should be owned by itself.

However, before U Nu's government could do nothing regarding these demands of the non-Burman ethnic nationalities, highly chauvinistic Burman senior military officers led by General Ne Win took over the state power by staging a military coup on 2 March 1962. General Ne Win justified his act of military coup by alleging that the Union of Burma was being torn apart by the non-Burman ethnic nationalities. The background to the military coup was nothing but a planned effort of highly chauvinistic Burmans not only to secure Burman domination over non-Burman ethnic nationalities but also to thwart peaceful struggle of non-Burma ethnic nationalities for their right to self-determination in the federal structure.

The coup leaders dissolved the democratically elected government and parliament, and arrested and jailed the president of Union, the cabinet members and the leaders of non-Burman ethnic nationalities who were attending the Taunggyi Conference. They revoked

political freedom and all democratic rights, and abolished the 1947 constitutions. They formed themselves the Revolutionary Council (RC) under the leadership of General Ne Win, and assumed all powers and military dictatorship was put into practice. The Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP) was formed under the tight control of the Revolutionary Council on July 4, 1962. The Burmese way to socialism was the BSPP's policy. All economic activities, including retail trade, were nationalized. The private properties and ownerships were confiscated. The government's strategies were directed to the monopoly of political power by the Burman military; the removal of affairs of non-Burman ethnic nationalities from politics to the safe containment of the Burman military's administration; the fragmentation of non-Burman ethnic nationalities into various racial groups. The Burmese way to socialism plunged Burma into the conditions of technologically backward, with low living standards, and an underdeveloped, and chaotic education infrastructure.

Soon after the military coup led by General Ne Win in 1963, Arakan National Liberation Organization (ANLO) was formed under the leadership of U San Phaw Oo and U Maung Sein Nyunt. A new movement was carried out by ANLO which between 1962 and 1969 revolted against the Burman central regime. The political background to insurrection of ANLO was attributable to failure of the Burman central regime to recognize the political status of Arakan i.e. the right to self-determination of Arakanese people. The ANLO's political ideology was socialism and its organizational activities and guerrilla warfare were carried out mostly in the rural areas of Arakan. But, it had its clandestine intellectual groups in the urban areas.

About the same times, a faction led by U Kyaw Zan Rhee and Bo Maung Han broke away from the communist Party of Burma (Red Flag) and established the communist Party of Arakan (CPA) and set up its political stand on the Arakanese national line. The CPA espoused Marxism-Leninism and demanded independence of Arakan. It recruited its members both from the rural and urban areas of Arakan. Some Arakanese intellectuals gave support to the CPA, but it was largely a peasant party. The socio-economic and political background to insurrection of CPA included indignation of majority Arakanese peasants arising from failure of the successive Burman regimes to decolonise Arakan, and indigence of Arakanese peasants brought about by enormous exploitation of peasant's production, natural resources and economic bases of Arakan by the chauvinistic Burman regimes.

In 1963, the then ruling Revolutionary Council led by General Ne Win declared a country-wide cease fire and invited all armed organizations waging war against it to the so-called peace-talks. U Kyaw Zan Rhee and U Thein Pe of CPA attended the so-called peace-talks, and demanded to withdraw Burman troops from Arakan and to recognize the right to self-determination of Arakanese people so that Arakanese people could establish an independent Republic of Arakan peacefully and exercise their right to self-determination without interference of alien. The demand of CPA was not acceded by the Burman Revolutionary Council, and guerrilla activities were launched widely in Arakan by the CPA again.

In 1964, a new armed organization, Arakan National United Organization (ANUO) came into existence. Commander Kra Hla Aung was at the head of the ANUO, which committed to the armed struggle as the vehicle for independence of Arakan. However, the guerrilla activities were carried out by the ANUO mostly in areas so far distant from the main centres of population that they had little impact on the majority of the people.

In 1967, there was a great scarcity of rice in Arakan due to the economic exploitation of Burman Revolutionary Council led by General Ne Win. The production of rice everywhere

in Arakan was confiscated at gun point by the Burman troops in order to make profit for the Burman military, neglecting the Arakanese people who were suffering famine. Thousands of Arakanese civilians in rural and urban died of starvation at the beginning of 1967. On 13th August 1967, a march of tens of thousands of Arakanese people took place in Sittwe, capital city of Arakan, demanding distribution of enough rice for public consumption. But the demand of the Arakanese people was neglected. The Burman troops, instead, opened fire into the mob: over 400 were killed and thousands were wounded. The August killing in Arakan in 1967 resulted increasingly growing in anti-Burman sentiment and fighting spirit among the young Arakanese people, which instigated the armed insurrection for independence in the 1970s. There was a specific grudge against the Burmans, and anti-Burman sentiment was prevailing.

By 1967, Arakan Independence Front (AIF) led by Peter Ba Cho was formed to struggle for independence of Arakan. By 1969, Arakan National Liberation Party (ANLP) was established by the unification of ANLO and AIF in order to intensify struggle against the Burman central regime. U Maung Sein Nyunt was elected as the chairman of ANLP. The guerrilla combats were launched in the northern region of Arakan by ANLP, giving much trouble to the Burman central regime.

In the early 1970s, Arakanese nationalists had many links with both Karen and Kachin struggles for national self-determination. Many Arakanese young people participated in military combats against the Burman troops in Karenland and Kachinland. Both Karen National Union (KNU) and Kachin Independence organization (KIO) had aims to help in building up of new Arakanese armed forces in their lands, and many plans were made to send Arakanese armed forces to Arakan in order to open a new military front in the struggle against the Burman domination in Arakan.

On 3rd March 1970, Arakan Independence Organization (AIO) was formed under the leadership of Htwaan Shwe Maung and San Kyaw Htwaan in Kachinland. AIO created a new Arakanese nationalism by blending classic nationalist concepts with a new vision of armed struggle for independence of Arakan. In this plan, Arakan Independence Army (AIA) became the armed wing of AIO. The officers and volunteers of AIA were trained by KIO in Kachinland.

The first expedition of AIA under the command of Lt-Col Htwaan Shwe Maung explored the long march from Kachinland to Arakan on 5th November 1971 along the Indo-Burma borders. This military expedition led by Lt-Col Htwaan Shwe Maung reached Arakan on 27th February 1972 successfully. AIA staged many guerrilla combats against the Burman troops in Kyauk-taw, Mrauk-U, Mimbra and Palatwa townships in Arakan. AIA received a lot of support from Arakanese people in rural and urban area. AIO was capable to create a network of resistance cells which were spread to every village and every town in Arakan.

However, the second military expedition of AIA under the command of Major San Kyaw Htwaan suffered a crushing defeat in face with the outnumbered and outgunned Burman troops in Chinland in mid 1977. Major San Kyaw Htwaan died in action. The fall of Major San Kyaw Htwaan was a great loss to the struggle of Arakanese people for their right to self-determination because he was a person who possessed martial prowess and mental faculty. His political essay titled "what should we do?" (Nga Roe Zar lote Ket Phoe Le') still arouses the Arakanese national sentiment in favour of independence among the Arakanese people. He is still remembered by the Arakanese people as a national hero.

In 1973, Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) and its military wing Arakan Liberation Army (ALA) under the leadership of Khaing Moe Lunn was formed in Karenland. ALP insisted that the sole solution to Arakan national question is the armed struggle against the Burman central regime. ALP recruited its members from overseas Arakanese people in Burma and Thailand. But it had its network of resistance cells in the rural and urban areas of Arakan. The officers and volunteers of ALA were trained by KNU in Karenland. They had to participate in the military combats launched by the KNU against the Burman troops in Karenland so that they could have a practical military experiences.

In 1974, a new constitution was adopted by the Burman military regime led by General Ne Win, but without consent of non-Burman ethnic nationalities. A lot of political leaders of non-Burman ethnic nationalities were arrested and put in the jails for long term in order to implement the new constitution of 1974 without the voice of non-Burman ethnic nationalities. Under the constitution of 1974, Arakan was recognized as a state of the so-called socialist Republic of Union of Burma. But, in essence, the statehood of Arakan was merely nominal within the sham Union of Burma. The domesticated Arakan State Council's authority under the tight control of the Burman military was introduced. The elections were a farce, as the only political party allowed was BSPP, which was dominated by the Burman military. There was no possibility of Arakanese people to exercise their right to self-determination.

In 1976, the military expedition of ALA, under the command of Col. Khing Moe Lunn marched from Karenland to Arakan, traversing Kareland, Karenniland, Kachinland and Chinland. It was a long march of nearly 2000 miles. The military expedition of ALA was only a force with a 300 man strong. Throughout the long march, it fought several combats with the Burman troops. In Chinland alone, it fought 100 combats with the Burman troops. However, when it encountered the Burman force with a 10,000 man strong in Chinland in June 1977, it suffered a crushing defeat. Col. Khing Moe Lunn killed himself preferring death in dignity to surrender. The remnants of ALP's leaders and its troops spent their times, preparing their new plans and participating in the combats launched by KNU against the Burman troops in Karenland. Col. Khing Moe Lunn is still considered as a national hero by the Arakanese people. During 1970s, as the BSPP Burman military regime mounted its strategy of annihilation in rural areas of Arakan, every underground armed group of Arakan had to retreat to bordering countries such as India and Bangladesh; ANLP in 1975, CPA and CPB (red flag) in 1978, AIO in 1979 CPA and CPB (white flag) in 1980. In October 1979, the Vanguard of Arakan Revolution (VAR) – a coalition of two parties including AIO and ANPL – was created at Raju camp in Bangladesh.

The Burman central regime deployed many battalions in Arakan unprecedentedly, and implemented the strategy of the four cuts operation under martial law in order to keep Arakanese people in rural areas aloof from the Arakanese armed revolution. With heavy military offensives, the Burman troops committed gross human rights violations as numerous arrests, torture, killings, raping of women, lootings, the destruction and forced relocation of villages against the Arakanese people in rural areas. The gross human rights violations in Arakan during 1970s led to the killing of 2000 civilians, destructions and forced relocations of 1500 villages, and detention of 10,000 civilians in military concentration camps.

On May 1986, a clandestine troop of CPA led by **Major Maung Saw Yin**, which had remained underground, gained public support and captured Minbra Town and proclaimed independence of Arakan there. The next day, the people from all walks of life of Minbra town and nearby townships (about ten thousands people) flocked to the football field of Minbra town, where they manifested their support to proclamation of independence of Arakan.

by CPA. Being incapable to control Minbya town for long time, after two days, the troop of CPA retreated to the jungle area of the Arakan mountain ranges. After CPA's capture of Minbya town, the martial law was imposed, and wide-scale arrests, jailing, torture and killings of innocent civilians, looting of properties and money and restriction of free movements of Arakanese civilians were conducted in Arakan by the Burman regime.

In 1988, a tremendous country-wide democracy uprising broke out in Burma. Millions of citizens took to the streets and demanded not only ousting of the government of military dictatorship but also replacing a democratic government in its place. The socio-economic and political background to the democracy uprising in 1988 was stemmed from economic hardship of the entire people of Burma and the loss of their human rights due to the economic mismanagement, corrupt, repressive and isolationist system of the Burman military regime led by General Ne Win, which turned the country into the poorest in the world. In July 1988, General Ne Win resigned following the deaths of thousands of demonstrators who were killed in the streets by the military.

The series of replaced leaders were appointed, but the people responded by intensifying their activities and demands sacrificing their lives. On 18th September 1988, the SLORC military junta led by General Saw Maung, the successors of General Ne Win, seized the state power after a brutal military crackdown, killing tens of thousands of innocent people. During democracy uprising, a great number of Arakanese people were killed in the streets of Arakanese.

The background to the military coup on 18 September 1988 was to consolidate the state power in the hands of Chauvinistic Burman military senior officers. Following the violent suppression of the pro-democracy uprising, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, students and Buddhist monks fled to the neighbouring countries such as Thailand, India and Bangladesh to avoid arrest, torture and extra judicial killings of the military junta.

The progressive Burman democrats, students and intellectuals joined hands with armed organizations of non-Burman ethnic nationalities in the border areas to struggle against the military Junta for democracy, human rights and the right to self-determination of Burman and non-Burman peoples. A new chapter began for the new generation of Arakan to intensify struggle for the right to self-determination of Arakanese people.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the kingdom of Arakan was invaded by the Burman invaders in 1784 because Arakan national unity was sabotaged by the regional rivalries. The resistance wars staged by the Arakanese princes and patriots did not triumph due to lack of the same master plan and unified command. Under the rule of British (from 1826 to 1900), Arakanese political leaders were unable to establish a strong national unity to repulse the British. Instead, they fought against the British separately in different parts of Arakan.

During the pre-independence Burma, again, Arakanese political leaders were incapable of setting definite political position of Arakanese people through their own initiatives. They,

instead, believed hopefully a sham promise given by the Burman political leaders .During this period, Arakanese political leaders did not foresee the fact that the Burman's main concern have always been themselves and with political and cultural superiority of the Burmans over all small nations such as Chin, Kachin, Karen ,Shan, Kayah, Mon and Arakan .

They also did not foresee the fact that the Burmans are feather-brained to know the need for adopting a positive attitude towards the small nations.

From independence of Burma in 1948 to 1988 , intensification of the process of the armed-struggle for self-determination of Arakanese people under one master plan was not attainable .This must be attributed in the main to lack of skilled leadership and in the last analysis to lack of political insights and political culture among the armed- groups concerned.

Arakanese nationalistic armed groups which commenced guerrilla's combats against the Burman central regime during 1960s and 1970s had their differences. Those undesirable differences that led to major clashes paralysed Arakanese armed movements and entailed the declension of organizational activities among the people. The armed groups competed with one another for power and influence; a crushing defeat suffered by one with the Burman central regime was seen by his rivals as an opportunity for weakening it.

Moreover, the communist armed movement agitated by the communist party of Burma from 1946 to 1980 weakened the Arakanese national armed- movement to some extent. The communists got more support from some rural areas in Arakan than nationalists. Along with its growing in organizational strength in some rural areas in Arakan, the communist policy towards Arakanese national armed- movement in the areas controlled by it was to break up and eliminate as far as possible .The main reason of some rural peasant's support to the communist movement was ascribable to their indomitable spirit arising from various forms of suppression inflicted to them by the Burman central regime .The communists were more capable to exploit this indomitable spirit of some rural peasants in Arakan than Arakanese nationalists .The communists knew how to impress upon simple-minded rural peasants.

However, Arakan was not yet industrialized and had no true proletariats, and the support of rural peasants to the communists laid its root in the national sentiments of the rural peasants. The majority Arakanese people have national sentiment in favour of their long lost right to self-determination .Therefore, Arakanese nationalism is nothing, but Arakanese people's national sentiment in favour of their right to self-determination; the sense of permanent duty to struggle against any regime which deprives their right to self-determination.

This national sentiment is manifested in their relentless and continual struggle for their right to self-determination by various means since the fall of Mrauk-U dynasty in 1784. The countless number of Arakanese people has shed their blood enormously for their right to self-determination since the fall of Mrauk-U dynasty. The various forms of struggles against the Burman central regimes, which claim their right to self-determination, have proven that Arakan had never been a part of Burman till 1784 and the guerrilla outfits have further testified that Arakan is still colonized by the union of Burma. From 1988 onwards, the Arakanese nationalism seems stronger than ever .History of Arakan demonstrates the fact that persistence and hardworking of Arakanese people with a clear vision and grim determination, had accomplished and can surely accomplish in the future as well.

K

4.06.2005

References .

1. The statements released by ALP and NUPA
2. The election campaign Declaration issued by Arakan League for Democracy (ALD), 1990 , p-2
3. The Statement of the third congress issued by Arakan League for Democracy (Exile) 13th April 2001, Newdelihi, India
4. U Aung Tha Oo , Rakhing Razawan Yaing kyany hmu Thamaing (Cultural history of Arakan)
5. Tun Shwe khaing , the Ancient Cities of Arakan, 1985, p-180 to 205
6. Dr. Aye Kyaw , the Burma we love: A position paper of the Arakanese perspective presented at Oslo Burma seminar on January 15 -17 , 2004
7. Dynnyawaddi inscription recording the visit of Lord Buddha to Arakan , Northern Brahmin, 544B6
8. U San Tha Aung , wesali (<http://www.rakhapura.com>)
9. Shwe Zan , A glimpse of old Rakhine , Arakan Post , monthly journal published in Dhaka , Bangladesh,2004, p-17
10. G.E .Harvey ,History of Burma ,London 1967, p-3
11. Candamalalankara, the Rakhing Razawan thite vol I&II
12. Shwe Lu Maung alias shahnawaz Khan, PhD (wales,UK), Sovereign Rakhapura and 31st December : Reflection of some thoughts (<http://www.shwelumaung.org>)
13. Shwe Lu Maung alias shahnawaz Khan, PhD (wales ,UK) The Arakanese students and youth movements, a political analysis , Arakan Post ,second issue, January 2004.
14. Dr .Abdul Mabud Khan ,The liberation struggle in Arakan (from 1948 to 1982), CLIO, vol 3 June 1985,Jahangirmagar University, Dhaka ,Bangladesh.
15. Dr.Jacqcue P. Leiden ,Arakan during the Mrauk-U period : The political success of a Buddhist Border state .
16. Tha Thwan Aung , The Rakhing Maha Razawan daw gri ,1927.
17. Dr .Forchhammer , Arakan, 1881.
18. Maurice collies ,The land of Great Images ,1942
19. M.S collies and San Shwe Bu , Arakan's place in the civilization of the bay : a study of coinage and foreign relation, JBRS Vol V , part (2) 1925.
20. S.T Aung , Datum of the national movements of Arakan including the armed struggle since the fall of Mrauk-U ,1992 (<http://www.rakhapura.com>)
21. Dr. Saw Mra Aung ,Mrauk-U Era AD 1430-1784 in Ancient Rakhine Prae (Arakan Nation) 1994
22. Ashon Wathawa , The Arakanese Dictionary 1996, Rangoon.
23. Ran Rahul, Politics of central Asia ,1973.
24. Po Hla Aung , A new History of Arakan,1980
25. Brain Crozier , South east Asia in turmoil, penguin Books Ltd,1965.
26. A.W.Palmer . A dictionary of modern History (1789-1945) ,Penguin Books Ltd 1964.
27. Aung San Suu Kyi , Freedom from Fear , penguin Books Ltd .1991
28. Bonbauk Tha Kyaw :On The Road to Revolution(Taw Hlan Ray kharee wai)
29. Maung Boon, The First Burmese War .(Translated by San Shwe Bu) JBRS vol *3,part 3,1923.
30. Ba Shwe , the Arakanese resistance movements against the British (<http://www.rakhapura.com>)
31. U Aung Zan wai , Memoires of Maung Kan Htu.
32. Dr . Aye Chan, The Muslim enclave in Arakan state of Burma (2004).
33. U Tun Myint (Taungyi), Dan Tu Thaw Shan pyi

34. Mra Htwan Aung , U Ottama and Diarchy.(From koloni khite shwepray Rakahaing), Ashon Ottama Journal .vol 1 ,March 2001 , published by RPLC.
35. Chao Tzang Yawzhwe , The Burma Military : Holding the country Together? (Independent Burma at forty years: Six Assessments , Cornell university , New york,1989