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- 13 See: Andrew Selth, *The Anti-Fascist Resistance in Burma, 1942 - 1945: The Racial Dimension*. Occasional Paper 14, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, James Cook University of North Queensland, (1983), p. 11 f.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p 2.

## The "Rohingyas", Who Are They? The Origin of the Name "Rohingya"

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### 1. Introduction

In the year 1991 the name "Rohingyas" often appeared in newspapers. According to "Free Press" journalists and the "free-wheeling" so-called journalists and self proclaimed "Burma Specialists", the "Rohingyas" are the descendants of Arabic Seafarers and the real natives of Arakan (the Rakhine State of Burma) and they are now expelled by the present military government of Burma known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) because the "Rohingyas" are Muslims and the Buddhist dominated nation (Burma) discriminates against Muslims.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime the "Rohingyas", in their desire to establish themselves, not only by inventing fabricated and fanciful histories such as that the Kingdom of Mrauk U in Arakan was established by them and all kings in that dynasty were Muslims but they also attack all people who do not support their movement and dishonest claims.<sup>2</sup> The undersigned, as a born Arakanese (Rakhine), is therefore obligated to write the true story of the so-called "Rohingyas" and wrote a paper with the title "On the evolution of Muslim problems in Rakhine state". In that paper I pointed out that most of the statements of the so-called "Rohingyas" and their supporting "journalists" are wrong.

The name "Rohingya" is neither a Burmese nor a Bengali word. Whenever I asked a Burmese or an Arakanese (Rakhine) I got the answer "*We don't know, it is not our word. Ask the Kalas<sup>3</sup>, may be it is their word.*" Whenever I asked an Indian or a Bengali they answered me back that they had never heard of that word and it might be either a Burmese or an Arakanese word. So I have tried to trace it in all literature and encyclopaedias but all in vain. Even a well known author and scholar, Maurice Collis<sup>4</sup>, who wrote many articles and books about Arakan, never mentioned the word "Rohingya". Also none of the British Colonial Officers' contributions about Burma and India mentioned that word "Rohingya".

In 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 compiled by R.B. Smart. Since these were written for administrative purposes, needless to say they were objective.

## 2. From "Mujahids" to "Rohingyas"

I have consulted with scholars and historians including Muslims but nobody knows the meaning nor the origin of the word "Rohingya". The only thing they could tell me was that there were a lot of rebels in Burma in 1949. One of the rebel groups was a fanatic Muslim group lead by Mir Cassim. They named themselves "Mujahids". Most of the "soldiers" in this "Mujahid Army" and their families were former illegal immigrants living in the Arakan Division of the Union of Burma who wanted to turn northern Arakan into a separate Muslim State of "Arakanistan" and planned to join East Pakistan.

Some members of the "Jumiyatu Olamai" religious association went to Karachi on a delegation to discuss the incorporation of the Butheedaung, Maungdaw and also Rathedaung townships into Pakistan.<sup>5</sup>

U Nu's government offered a reward of 20,000 Kyats to those who could bring Cassim dead or alive. But this reward did not succeed. Anyway it was only an illusion of an uneducated man like Cassim to turn traditionally Buddhist land like Arakan into a Muslim state.<sup>6</sup> As a result those "Mujahids" were totally crushed by the Burma Armed Forces in the 1950's. Cassim fled to East Pakistan and in the year 1966 he was shot dead by an unknown person in Cox's Bazar<sup>7</sup>, the border town. These surrendered "Mujahid" rebels named themselves "Rohingyas".

During his campaign for the 1960 elections U Nu promised to grant statehood to Arakanese (Rakhines) 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 asked for the same status as the Arakanese (Rakhines). When their demands were turned down on the grounds that they were not an indigenous race, some educated Bengali Muslims began to

fabricate the historical facts to prove that they were indigenous Arakanese Muslims.<sup>8</sup> Some stories presented by their instant historians are ridiculous. For example they say that their Arab ancestors became settled in Arakan after a shipwreck near the Ramree Island (ရမ်းမြို့ကျွန်း) off the Arakan coast in the eighth century.<sup>9</sup>

Maurice Collis, however, wrote in his paper "Arakan's Place in the Civilization of the Bay" that "Bengal was absorbed into this Polity [i.e., Islam] in A.D. 1203. 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>10</sup>

## 3. The Different Versions of the Origin of "Rohingya"

There are some stories about the origin of "Rohingya", which I cannot accept because those stories are like tales, but some writers used those stories in their publications. I consider those stories as fabricated and fanciful histories and their explanation of the word "Rohingya" as forced Burmanisation.

Here I will tell the readers the different versions of the origin of the word "Rohingya" and properly analyse whether that version meets historical facts.

*The first version* stated that the name "Rohingya" was derived from the Burmese word ရွာတောင်တကျား (Arakanese pronunciation *Rwahaung ga kyar*) meaning Tiger from the old village. According to that statement the "Rohingyas" were good warriors in their native land and settled in Arakan after the shipwreck and served as mercenaries and that's why they were called "Tigers from the old village."<sup>11</sup> The story teller has a remarkable fantasy but I have to consider his version as baseless and forced Burmanisation because of the four following points:

1. The Muslim mercenaries, who served in the Kingdom of Mrauk U are called "Kamans" meaning Archers<sup>12</sup> and their descendants still live peacefully in Arakan (the Rakhine State of the Union of Myanmar) with Buddhist Burmese and Arakanese.
2. There is a very famous proverb in the Burmese language as well as in Arakanese dialect "သေချင်တဲ့ကျား တောပြောင်းတယ်" (*they gyin de kyar taw pyaun de*) which can be roughly translated into "the tiger who is sick of life goes to the strange forest." Normally tigers know their own forest very well so they can hunt there properly and easily

protect themselves from enemies but if they start living in a new forest which is strange to them they cannot hunt well and protect themselves properly and finally they will be killed by their enemies. So when we consider the case of the "Rohingyas" and using the Burmese term "tiger from the old village" (which means coming to a new village) and in the light of the proverb mentioned above it would mean that they are seeking their own death. How funny!!

3. Burmese generally use the word "ဟောင်း" (*Haung*) meaning used or old, but in the Arakanese (Rakhine) dialect the word "ဆိုး" (*Hsoe*) is often substituted for "ဟောင်း" (*Haung*). For example the old/used/second hand clothes in Burmese is "အထည်ဟောင်း" or "အဟောင်းထည်" (*Ahaunghte*) but in Arakanese dialect it is called "အဆိုးထည်" (*Ahsoehte*).
4. In all Arakanese and Burmese chronicles as well as in history books written by foreigners there was no such word as "ရွာဟောင်းကကျား" (*Rwahaung ga kyar*) mercenaries. So this version contradicts history and linguistics.

The true story of "ရွာဟောင်းကကျား" is as follows:

After the Second World War most of the Arakanese (Rakhinese) left their villages near Arakan-East Pakistan border because of the immigration wave of the new Bengali settlers. Those villages were called ရွာဟောင်း (Rwahaung in Arakanese pronunciation), meaning old village, by the Burmese authorities. In Chittagong dialect of the Bengali language the word "payaja" means villager. Since these new Bengali settlers understood neither Burmese nor Arakanese whenever they were asked in their dialect "Kum payaja", which can be roughly translated as "which villager are you?", they answered back either "Rwahaung payaja" (I am a Rwahaung villager.) or "Rwahaung gaja" (I came from Rwahaung.) in the Chittagong dialect of the Bengali language.

Therefore, they were given a nick name ရွာဟောင်း ကျား ကုလား (Rwahaung gaja kala) which can be roughly translated as "the so-called Rwahaung gaja Kalas". Later this word deviated in colloquial to the nearest Burmese word ရွာဟောင်းက ကျားကုလား "Rwahaung ga Kyar Kalas" meaning "the Kalas called tigers from old village", used especially by children as a joke.

This colloquial pronunciation was misused by the educated Bengali Muslims in the 1950's to create the fabricated and fanciful history of ရွာဟောင်းကကျား (Rwahaung ga Kyar) mercenaries by changing

the time to 12 centuries ahead. An educated Bengali Muslim with Burmese name Ba Tha played the role of a "Historian" as well as a "Time Machine" in this version.<sup>13</sup>

The second version is also very similar to the first version. It states that the word "Rohingya" is the corrupted derivation of the Burmese word "ရိုးဝန်းညှာ" (Arakanese pronunciation *Ro wan hnya*) meaning the whole race who was favoured and received mercy (from the king). This version also has a fabricated story. According to that "tale" after the shipwreck the Arab seafarers served as Muslim mercenaries in the court of Arakan and they were favored by the king of Arakan because they were honest, (but the king's name was not mentioned in that "story"). So the king gave them the name "ရိုးဝန်းညှာ" (*Ro wan hnya*) the short form of "ရိုးသားပြီး မိမိအသိုက်အဝန်းနှင့် နေတတ်၍ ညှာတာတတ်သူများ" (*Ro thar pri mimi athaik a wan hnint ne tat rwe hnyar tar tatthu myar*) which can be roughly translated into "the people who are honest, kind and live in their own society".<sup>14</sup> There is no historical evidence for this "Arabian Nights" tale, so I have to consider this story as a created one and nonsense.

The third version stated that there was once a Muslim prince called Mohammed Rahin who had to take refuge in Arakan during the Mrauk U dynasty. Mohammed Rahin and his followers were defeated by his father, the Mogul emperor in a "Palace Revolution". The Arakanese king granted them asylum and their descendants were called "ရာဟင်ကျ" (Rahingya) meaning descendants of Rahin. Therefore the term "Rohingya" is the corrupted word from "Rahingya".<sup>15</sup>

Let us analyse this statement whether it matches history. According to history, Prince Shah Shuja, the younger brother of Mogul Emperor Aurang Zebe, after he lost his attempt to get the Mogul throne, came as a refugee to Arakan in the year 1660 A.D. The Arakanese king, Sanda Thudhamma, welcomed him, his family and their followers, granted them political asylum at the beginning, but later King Sanda Thudhamma wanted to take one of the daughters of Shah Shuja as his wife.<sup>16</sup> Of course like every king of Arakan King Sanda Thudhamma was Buddhist and he had other queens. Shah Shuja felt insulted, refused the royal orders and answered rudely that his daughter should better die than marry an infidel.<sup>17</sup> King Sanda Thudhamma became very angry and ordered all of the Mogul refugees to be killed. This was the main cause of the war between Arakan and

the Moguls which broke out in 1666 A.D. As a result Chittagong district was annexed by the Moguls and never again belonged to Arakan any more. It was the beginning of the fall of the Mrauk U Dynasty.

So the third version of the "Rohingya story" contradicts history in the following:

1. The name of the Mogul Prince was Sha Shuja and NOT Rahin.
2. The "Palace Revolution" was against his brother and NOT against his father.
3. All of the Moguls were killed by King Sanda Thudhamma and that's why they could not have left any descendants.
4. Even if they could have left some descendants they should be Moguls with fair colouring and speak another language than a Bengali Chittagong dialect. Unfortunately however the one who called themselves "Rohingyas" and proclaimed themselves to be the descendants of the Moguls have a dark complexion like Bengalis and they can speak only one language which is a Bengali Chittagong dialect.

The fourth version stated that there was a Sultanate called Roang which was feudatory to the Kingdom of Mrauk U. The Sultan sent his son Shah Ali and one thousand followers to the court of Mrauk U to study the Arakanese language, literature and culture. After finishing their studies they settled in Arakan. Their descendants were called "ရိုအိမ်ကျ" (Roang ane gya) meaning the descendants of Roang.<sup>18</sup> This version has some historical basis although it deviates in some facts from history. The legendary prince Shah Ali really existed. Arakanese chronicles and literature like "ဧညဝတီအရေးတော်ပုံ" (Dhanyawaddy Ayaydawpon)<sup>19</sup> and "မဟာပညာကျော်လျှောက်ထုံး" (Maha Pyinyagyaw Hlyaukhton)<sup>20</sup> supported that there was a Muslim Sultanate called "ရိုမသိပြည်" (Roang Muslim Land) and the Sultan had such high respect for the Arakanese king, Min Phalaung, and minister, Maha Pyinyagyaw, that he had to send his son Shah Ali and one thousand followers to the court of Arakan to study the Mranmar (Myanmar in Burmese pronunciation) language, literature and culture, but these sources never stated that they settled in Arakan. So they can not have left any descendants in Arakan. Assuming they had settled in Arakan Prince Shah Ali and his followers, who had studied at the court of Mrauk U the Arakanese (Burmese) language, literature and culture, there is no doubt that their descendants staying more than three centuries in Arakan must have spoken at least the Arakanese dialect of

the Burmese language fluently and known Arakanese or Burmese culture and traditions.

There are some Muslims in the Shwebo district in Upper Burma known as "Burmese Muslims." These Muslims are the descendants of the Indian mercenaries serving under Burmese kings as cannoners and cavalries. Now they are assimilated into the Burmese society. Most of these Muslims know the Burmese language, literature and Buddhist traditions much better than some Burmese Buddhists. There are also some Roman Catholics known as "ဘရင်ဂျီ" (Bayinji) in Shwebo district. They are the descendants of Portuguese captured in the town of Syriam (Tanyin) near Rangoon (Yangon) at the beginning of the 17th century. Only in names, religion and complexion do they differ from the natives, yet they know the Burmese language and traditions very well.

Now let us consider the case of the "Rohingyas" who claim to be the descendants of the "Burmanized" prince, Shah Ali, and his followers. If we ask them questions like "Do you speak Arakanese or Burmese?" The Answer is "No." "Do you know Arakanese/ Burmese traditions or culture?" "No sir", will be the answer. If one asks again "Why, how come?" The answer will be "Because we are the Rohingyas sir, we know only our language." Which language is theirs? Of course the Bengali language Chittagong dialect!! So how can they be the descendants of the prince they have mentioned.

The fifth version stated that in the seventh century A.D., after the shipwreck near Ramree Island "ရမ်းငြိကျွန်း" some Arab seafarers were brought to the court of Mrauk U by the Arakanese coastal guards. His majesty, the Arakanese king, whose name was not mentioned in this story, asked them "You poor men, where do you come from? ... Whose subject are you?" The seamen, who did not understand the Arakanese dialect of the Burmese language, thought that the king ordered them to be killed, and shouted in their language "Ronja" meaning "Mercy please". The king thought that the seamen answered him and said "Oh, they are the people from Ronja. Let them stay in my kingdom as my subjects." Since that time they and their descendants were called "Ronja People". The word "Rohingya is therefore a derivation of "Ronja - /Ro-n-ja/ - Rohinja - Rohingya".<sup>21</sup> Let us analyse this version whether it matches history:

1. In the 7th century A.D., the kingdom of Mrauk U was not yet established and Arakan was ruled by the kings of Dhanyawaddy Dynasty (ဧညဝတီခေတ်).

2. There is no historical evidence of Muslim settlement in Dhanyawaddy Dynasty and the old city site can be seen near the small town Kyauktaw. There is not a single piece of evidence of Arabic culture or Islamic faith there. The only non-Buddhist evidence found there are the Hindu deities.
  3. This story was never heard before 1960.
- So, I have to consider this story as a created one.

Although all of the stories about the origin of the name "Rohingya" came up with negative result, I did not give up my research and kept on tracing. During the "Burma Seminar" sponsored by the "Burma Project, Berlin" in April 1993 I got a chance to discuss with different people, such as Burmese nationalists, oppositions, government sympathizers, ethnic minorities and Muslims. Nobody could give me a better answer than the stories mentioned above. Only veteran journalist *Kyemon U Thaung*<sup>22</sup> gave me the hint to the solution. According to U Thaung in the 1950's he was a reporter at the famous "Bamakhit" (Burmese Era) newspaper and he remembered that the name "Rohingya" was created by the "Red Flag" Communists for the "Mujahid" rebels. At that time the "Mujahids" and the "Red Flag" Communists were "Allied Forces" fighting against U Nu's government and the "Mujahids" wanted to get a new name which had some connection with history so that they could claim Burmese citizenship and the "Red Flag" Communists invented the name "Rohingyas". But U Thaung admitted he did not know the meaning at that time and until now. He believes that nobody knows the meaning and the origin.

U Thaung requested me personally to trace out the meaning which will be useful for future history and he also admitted that although he belongs to the opposition in exile he cannot support the "Rohingya Movement" because most of the "Rohingyas" are real illegal immigrants and supporting their movement will be the biggest danger for the nation, religion and race of the entire Burmese people.

Since U Thaung gave me the hint I got an idea. It is very possible that the name "Rohingya" was invented by the "Red Flag" Communists because they were experts in creating new names and nicknames. They gave a nickname to U Nu's government "မသာတစံခ အရင်းမြတ် ငနအစိုးရ" (*Mathar takhu ayinpyude Nga Nu asoya*) meaning "the Nga<sup>23</sup> Nu's government who profited by the funeral (of General Aung San and assassinated Leaders)". As far as I know the late "Red Flag" leader Thakhin Soe<sup>24</sup> read a lot of books and created new names.

Some of them came out as nonsense. For example once he translated "Dialectical Materialism" in Burmese as "အနုပဋိလောမရုပ်ဝါဒ" (Anupati loma rupa wada) which looks like a derived Pali word but when one carefully traces through the Pali language and grammar it is found to be a wrong translation.

Finally I got a hypothesis for the root of the name "Rohingyas". Thakhin Soe and the "Red Flag" leader in Arakan, Kyaw Zan Hrwee<sup>25</sup> (ကျော်စံစိုး) who was Arakanese (Rakhine) might have come across the term ရံပြည် (Roang Pree) and most possibly created the Hybrid English word "Roangians" meaning the people of Roang. Naturally the "Mujahids" who wanted to get a new name, which had some connections with the history of Arakan, to identify themselves as the descendants of the country, which once belonged or was feudatory to Arakan, were very glad about that name and might have accepted it immediately and willingly. Since the word "Roangians" can also be pronounced "Ro-an-gians" the "Mujahids" pronounced that word with their Bengali accent "Rohingyas". The word "Rohingya" is therefore a derivation of "Roangians - /Ro-an-gians/ - /Ro-han-gians/ - Rohingyas". Since this word is only a word created in the jungle it is no wonder that any written documents cannot be found till now and may not be found also in the future.

The so-called "Rohingyas" nowadays are real illegal immigrant<sup>25</sup> and most of them are illiterates, know nothing about history but have only heard about the name "Rohingyas" and they claim themselves to be "Rohingyas". Some Muslims in Burma and Bangladesh helping them also don't know the origin and created the fabricated and fanciful stories mentioned above. The people backing the so-called "Rohingya Movement" are fanatic Muslims and some Muslim countries<sup>27</sup>, who do not know the reality but help them because of Muslim solidarity and brotherhood.

For the part of "Free Press" journalists and the "free-wheeling" so-called journalists I don't want to blame them because most of them are only writers and not scholars or historical researchers. They don't know the real history instead they know only one point; that the present government in Burma is a military dictatorship and violating a lot of human rights, which cannot be ruled out. So from the very beginning they are antagonistic towards the SLORC and whatever the SLORC does is wrong for them and in the meantime they are trapped by the "Rohingyas" with their "tragic tales", so they support the so-called

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"History of Rohingyas" without checking the facts.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to point out the main facts of this paper:

1. The name "Rohingya" is neither a historical name nor the name of an ethnic minority in Burma.
2. There was and there is no ethnic minority called "Rohingyas" in Burma.
3. "Burmese Muslims", "Arakanese Muslims" and the so-called "Rohingyas" are NOT the same. "Burmese Muslims" and "Arakanese Muslims", all together about 4% of the population of Burma, can be called the ethnic Muslims of Burma but NOT the so-called "Rohingyas".
4. The "Rohingya" problem is not a conflict between Buddhists and Muslims.
5. The word "Rohingyas" was most possibly invented by the "Red Flag" Communists to satisfy the desire of "Mujahid Rebels" in the 1950's.
6. The word "Rohingyas" is most possibly a derivation of Hybrid English word "Roangians" meaning the people of the land "Roang" (ရံဝသိပြည်).
7. At least 80% of the so-called "Rohingyas" nowadays are illegal immigrants or new settlers coming from Bangladesh because of natural catastrophes, hunger and other reasons.
8. The Rohingya issue cannot be compared with the Karen, the Kachin, the Shan and 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.
9. Although I am neither a supporter nor a sympathizer of the SLORC, I know that my articles about the "Rohingyas" favour SLORC's position unfortunately. Some people might suspect me to be but anyway if we really analyse the "Rohingyas" problem whether we like it or not we have to admit that the issue of the SLORC is correct that the so-called "Rohingyas" are real illegal immigrants.
10. Although the so-called "Rohingyas" are real illegal immigrants human rights violations committed against them by the SLORC should be condemned if their statement about military abuses were

correct.

11. In the same time the so-called "Rohingyas" should change their tactics. Instead of trying to get undeserved opportunity and inventing fabricated and fanciful histories they should be honest. They should only request for residential permit in Burma as foreigners. Only after that they should try to get Burmese citizenship step by step following legal procedures.

#### Endnotes

- 1 See Bertil Lintner, Chronology of the Events. In: du, Sonderbeilage, Heft 11, 1993; and compare also with Martin Smith, Burma's Muslim Borderland: Sold Down the River. In: CS Quarterly, 13(4), p. 28.
- 2 Rohingya Journal. (in Burmese), vol. 1, no. 1, Nov. 1992, pp. 17-29.
- 3 The word "Kala" is a Burmese or an Arakanese term used for foreigners coming from the west, particularly for the people from the Subcontinent.
- 4 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. 488; compare also with Maurice Collis, The Land of the Great Image.
- 5 Khin Gyi Pyaw, Who are the Mujahids in Arakan. In: Rakhine Tazaung Magazine, 1959-60, p. 99.
- 6 See Abdul Mabud Khan, The Liberation Struggle in Arakan (1948-1982). In: Bangladesh today, May 16 - June 15, 1984.
- 7 The real name of the border town "Cox's Bazar" was "Phalaung Zay" meaning Portuguese Market. When the town was occupied by the British they changed the name into Cox's Bazar to honour the British envoy Captain Cox.
- 8 See U Kyaw Zan Tha, Background Paper on the Rohingya Problem. Rangoon, 1991.
- 9 Maung Than Lwin, Rakhine Kala or Ro Wan Nya People. (in Burmese), In: Myawaddy Magazine, July, 1960. See and compare with Ba Tha, Rowengyas in Arakan (in English). In: Guardian Magazine, May 1960
- 10 See 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.
- 11 Proposal of the "Rohingya People" to the Constitution Commission, Rangoon, 1972.
- 12 U Wun, University Burmese Dictionary, vol. 1., p. 8., Government of the Union of Burma Press, 1952. See and compare with Ba Tha, Rowengyas in Arakan (in English). In: Guardian Magazine, May, 1960
- 13 On the 15th February 1990 *Bonpaik* Tha Kyaw, a well known veteran Arakanese politician, wrote an open letter, "The Threat of Rohingyas; the Danger for the Union of Burma", to the Chairman of the SLORC. This 'letter' had more than 150 pages and he sent a copy each to the chairmen of all big parties in Burma such as National League for Democracy and the National Unity Party. In that letter he also mentioned about the similar fabricated and fanciful stories of "Rohingyas" and the role of that educated Bengali Muslim M. A. Tahir, who was known through his pseudonym Burmese name Ba Tha.
- 14 See and compare with Maung Than Lwin, Rakhine Kala or Ro Wan Nya People. (in Burmese), In: Myawaddy Magazine, July, 1960.
- 15 Unpublished story fabricated by the educated Bengali Muslims in Arakan during anti-Arakan State movement, 1960.
- 16 U Khaing Saw Htwan, A New History of Rakhaing (Arakan). (in Burmese), pp. 68-69.

- 17 Compare with Tekkatho Nandameik, The Arakanese Queen. In: Ngwe Taryi 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 Thudamma ruled Arakan from 1652 to 1684. So Sanda Thudamma 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.
- 18 Unpublished story presented by some educated Bengali Muslims during anti-Arakan State movement, 1960.
- 19 Rakhine Saradaw, Dhanyawaddy Ayaydawpon. In: Myanmar Minmya Ayaydawpon, Nantha press, Rangoon, 1967, p. 75.
- 20 U Zaw Win (Publisher), Maha Pyinyagyaw Hlyaukton. Hanthawaddy press, Rangoon, 1964, p. 51.
- 21 Proposal of the "Rohingya People" to the Constitution Commission, Rangoon, 1972. See and compare with Ba Tha, Rowengyas in Arakan. In: Guardian Magazine, May, 1960. Also see and compare with *Bonpauk* Tha Kyaw, The Threat of 'Rohingyas'; the Danger for the Union of Burma. (in Burmese). Open letter to the Chairman of the SLORC. Sittwe, Feb. 15th, 1990.
- 22 U Thauung is a famous journalist and author well known under his pseudonym name Aung Bala. He was owner, publisher and chief editor of the then most modern newspaper in Burmese language, "The Kyemon (Mirror) Daily" until the newspaper was nationalized. He was arrested and detained for 4 years without any trial and released in 1967. Now he lives in Florida, U.S.A. as an exiled opposition.
- 23 Nga is a term used by rulers preceding the name of male subjects or subordinates in the olden days, but nowadays it is put in front of Burmese and Arakanese male names if one wants to dishonour that person.
- 24 Thakhin Soe was the chairman of the "Red Flag" Communists Party (Followers of Trotsky). He was the political leader of the Burmese resistance against the Japanese in 1945, the military leader was Gen. Aung San. Thakhin Soe wrote and translated many books. He went underground after Burmese Independence, was captured in 1970. He was sentenced to death but later released by general amnesty in 1980. He died of old age in 1989.
- 25 Kyaw Zan Hrvee (ကျော်စံစိုက်), born Rakhine (Arakanese), leader of the "Red Flag" Communists in Arakan, captured in 1966.
- 26 U Kyaw Min Shwe, Rakhines and Rohingyas. In: Asiaweek, February 5, 1992.
- 27 Bertil Lintner. Chronology of the Events. In: du, Sonderbeilage, Heft 11, 1993.  
According to that report Prince Khaled Sultan Abdul Aziz, commander of the Saudi contingent in 1991 Gulf War, visited Dakha, Bangladesh, in Mid-April 1992 and recommended a Desert Storm-like action against Burma - "just what [the UN] did to liberate Kuwait."

## The Development of Kayah National Identity

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Kayah people are heterogeneous, but they often will give this definition of themselves:

*"We like to sit on a bamboo floor,  
we like to sleep in a hut high on the hill,  
we like to eat Kayah food,  
we like to tell stories and tales of the Karenni past, but  
we would prefer to sit in a large house on a rich flat land,  
and eat Kayah food listening to good memories of the past."*

The purpose of this paper is to show how the question of nationality evolved in the Kayah State both before and after the independence of Myanmar. It has developed from an earlier study of the creation of a new Kayah script: though this script had its roots in tradition, to some Kayah people it was a step forward into modernity, a way to protect their identity, to become acknowledged as a nation, and to maintain an existence surrounded by greater powers.

It is important to introduce precise definitions of the terms used, as quite a number of Myanmar specialists are puzzled by the many different names given to the Northern Karen. In this paper *Karenni* will be used for the larger State as provided for by the 1947 constitution of the Union of Myanmar<sup>2</sup>, for her citizens, or the inhabitants of this cultural area. *Kayah* will refer to the Kayah-li ethnic group and the citizens of the State, while *Kayah State* will be used only for the State in the Union of Myanmar.<sup>3</sup> Kayah State, 11,731 sq. km., is the smallest state of the Union, with a population estimated at 168,429 in the 1983 census. The Constitution Amendment Act, 1951<sup>4</sup> changed the State's name from the traditional Karenni, coming from *Kayin*, Karen, and *ni*, red in Burmese, to Kayah, the name of the most important single ethnic group in the State.<sup>5</sup>