

Arakan bottled up in Pride and Prejudices

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In Burma, majority of its people follow Buddhism as their faith. Buddhism is known as a religion of peace. The Buddhist samsara discourse in its subtle meaning is normally understood to work as an aid to pacify anger and promote peace. This is however is not the case in the north western corner of Burma's Arakan province. Contrary to Buddhist precepts, in Arakan, Buddhism is used to promote antagonism and violence against its Rohingya citizens. In this type of use, the xenophobic Moghs have elevated their religion to the status of a political ideology. It has lately promoted the political conceptualization of Buddhism to fight its perceived enemy, the Rohingyas. In this endeavor they are using Buddhism to justify their political agenda of exclusivity and ethnic cleansing, similar to the former Yugoslavian Serb's use of religious discourse to commit genocide against Muslims.

To achieve such goals at home and abroad the xenophobic Mogh elites trying to prove that the Buddhist Moghs are the aboriginals of Arakan. Unfortunately, to prove their aboriginal status in the name of research such tendentious reporting concluded that Rohingyas are the "foreigners" in Arakan. Research on such claims show that history has been neglected to promote fiction and political agenda. Surprisingly though, the present research findings from cross checking of historic documents and contemporary sources found that the "Kulas", who were the the ancestors of the Rohingya were the aboriginals of Arakan and the Moghs were only the late-comers.

To begin, Arakan was ruled by an Indian dynasty called the Chandras until 957 A.D. Chandras were people of the Negroide variety also found in costal areas not far from the Red sea near Africa, to southern part of Arabia, southern Iran, southern India, Andaman Islands, southern Burma, Malayan islands, and all the way up to Papua New Guinea. In Ramayana, India's ancient literature, it identifies such racially dark skinned people with Negroide features to have lived in the southern part of India. They were called as "demons" and "Rakkhasas," the later term means cannibals. In the Indian epic story, Ramayana, it identifies Ravana of Sri Lanka as the demon king with demonic behavior of kidnapping the saintly Sita. In the story, Rama, the husband of Sita had a fight with Ravana, which as expected in the epic led to the demon king's defeat and death. It appears that the so-called "demons" were the Dravadians dark skinned Negroides aboriginals from the South, but not necessarily were the demons or the Rakkhas. The point is, these racially different native people with flat nose, thick lips, curly hair and dark skin for their racial features were degraded to the status of subhuman. The name "demon" or "Rakkhasas" were simply pejorative terms used to put them down to their helpless status. It appears that these people had the same fate as the natives of Australia had when they encountered the white European settlers. It is documented that early European settlers in Australia used the natives to even feed their dogs.

Before the Mongolode invasion of Arakan, (from 957 A.D.,) the Chandra Hindu kingdom was called as the land of the "Rakkhas"; "Rakkhapuray" i.e. the land of the aboriginals of Arakan. Historical sources also documents that from the middle of the 8th century a small minority of Muslim population was beginning to emerge in Arakan. There was a similar trend of settlement taking place in the rest of Bengal and particularly in Chittagong of Bengal. Like in Bengal, in Arakan this was a result of Arab and Chandra intermixture and mingling. It is important to note that historically from the beginning of 7th century Arabs were doing trade in the Indian Ocean. These Arabs were mostly the Yamanis and the Gulf residents from the Southern cost of Arabia and Persia. Starting from this time, until the European dominance of the Indian ocean, "Arabs monopolized trade between the East and the West." There have even been records of Arab shipwrecks in Ramree islands of Arakan. Such shipwrecks were recorded at about the time when Arakani Chandra king Mahat-Sendaya ascended the throne in 788 A.D. It says:

"In his reign several ships were wrecked on Ramree island and the crews, said to have been Mohammadans, were sent to Arakan proper and settled in villages."

Raham-bri in Arabic means "the land of Allah's blessing." It is still in practice with an Arakani corruption as Rambree. It is said that ships facing storm from southern part of Indian coasts, sailing for the East due to wind direction were almost certainly washed to the shores of Arakan. Some must be lucky to be rescued. Collins says that during the medieval period, "Arabs made the Indian ocean an Arab lake" with their continued contact with the East.

The Arab presence in Arakan continued up to the seventeenth century. This is evident also from the fact that Arabs developed a port city in Arakan known as Akyab, the present capital of Arakan. The Arabic version Ak-Ab means "place of a river meeting the sea." There is also the river Teknaf, which means the turn of a river. It is similar to the name Punjab (meeting point of five rivers) in India. The Moghs in their ethnic cleansing process have recently changed the name Akyab into a Buddhist name Sittwe. Usually, the Arabs didn't bring their women and

probably took local Negroid Rakkhas females as their wives much like the mixing of lower class Hindus and Muslims of Bengal of the contemporary time resulting into the Bengali people in Chittagong and other parts of Bengal. The descendents of the mixed marriages between the local Indians and the Arabs no doubt formed the original nucleus of the Rohingyas of Arakan. "The Rohingyas still today carry the Arab dress and customs." Rohingyas are some bronzing colored and unlike the Moghs not yellowish. Rohingyas must have their relatively darker skin color much like the Bengalis from their mixture with the Negroid Hindus.

It is not known how big was the Muslim population of Arakan at the time of the Chandra rule but during this time in Chittagong, there was the existence of a sultan, perhaps an independent Muslim feudal lord in the southern part of Chittagong. It appears that if there was not a mass migration of the mongoloid population from Burma into Arakan to defeat the Chandras, (instead of today's Rohingya and Mogh population in Arakan) it is almost certain that Arakan was going to be turned into a Muslim inhabited region much like it is in Chittagong of present Bangladesh.

After their conquest of Arakan the Moghs began to call the subjugated people of the newly conquered Arakan comprised of Hindus and Muslims as the "Kulas" meaning the dark skinned aboriginals. Even today Moghs call the Rohingyas as the "Kulas".

After the fall of the Hindu Chandras, chaos continued for a while. As in India, where due to the Aryan invasion from the north, the racially dark skinned Dravidian (Negroite) population moved to the south, so in the same way but in Arakan Mongolian invasion from the south led Rohingyas to migrate toward the north to what is known today as Northern Arakan. One thing became certain in Arakan that from 957 A. D. invasions Arakan was destined for a permanent change; the dark skinned aboriginal Hindu Chandras and Muslims began to escape toward north and the Moghs remained largely in the South, who were joined by the continued invaders from Burma. Thus began the history of Arakan with two people; the Moghs and the Rohingyas of Arakan. Due to the continued Mongoloid invasion from the south that even continues today, Rohingyas a non-Bengali people of Arakani descent continued to be pushed northward to settle in southern Chittagong.

It is interesting to note that even when the Moghs replaced an Indian dynasty in Arakan, Buddhism, an Indian religion continued to remain a source of influence in Arakani religious life. It is this racially Mongoloid but Buddhist new rulers of Arakan began to be called by the Indian Buddhist rulers as the Moghs. It originated from the ancient Buddhist word Maghadh. It seems that the Buddhist missionaries from Indian Maghadh state claimed the land of Arakan for the Buddhists, implying that they were the "Moghs" being "superior" superior in spirituality among the demons of Arakans, which also implies that the Moghs were the Buddhist master race (rulers) among the dark skinned "Kulas" residents of Arakan. The Arakani prince Echhin or Yaingrong (cradle song) of Fadu Min Nyo during the reign of Ba Saw hu (1459-1482) A.D. talks about Arakan as being Rakhaing, a land of the below (Rakkhas). It seems to praise the Buddhist rulers who freed Arakan from Rakkhas rule.

It is an irony that in order to erase the negative medieval connotation of Mogh being the "notorious pirates", "lawless people" contemporary Mogh elites wanted to change their name from being Moghs to being the Rakkines. In doing this they claim that they are the direct descendents of the "Rakkhasas". To them from the word Rakkhas, came Rakka tunga, to Rakkhanpura to the present Buddhist Rakkine people. However, the self righteous intellectual's claims don't sound consistent with facts at all because there is no historical connection between the Moghs and the Rakkhasas. History or myth, there is no doubt that the motive behind this absurd claim is based on self propagating myth to prove their aboriginal status over the "Kulas". To justify such claims political Mogh intellectuals also justify that in Buddhism there is the existence of "Rakkhas" "biloos". The point is, In Arakani Buddhism, biloos are there neither as gods or nor as superhuman but as demons to be feared and desired to be destroyed. Therefore, such explanation doesn't justify the aboriginal claim of the Moghs either. Historically speaking, the word Mogh not Rakkine has derived from Indian Buddhist origin.

What is at issue here is that Moghs are the Tibeto-Burman Mongoloid people and the Rakkhasas or the "Kulas" were the Hindu-Muslim Chandras, the aboriginals of Arakan. The point is, if the Mongoloid Moghs defeated the Chandras, and subjugated them as the "Kulas" "sudras" "Dasas" "the untouchables" as they would be called in India they couldn't be at the same time the descendents of the Indo-somatic dark skinned people and the Mogh's racial difference is apparent. The "Kulas" on the other hand located mostly in the north of racially Indo-Semantics are more likely to be the Rohingyas of the Hindu-Muslim Chandras. Therefore, it seems that such Mogh claims are based on self serving biases that can only create myths and non amphibious blobs

Moghs also claim that the name Rohingya is a newly coined term began to be used from the middle of 1940's. The truth of the matter is that the word Rohingya has been in use in Chittagong from time immemorial. Bengalis of Chittagong called the Indo-Semantic origin refugees from Arakan who settled in Chittagong as the Rohingyas. It seems that the term Rohingya not the term Mogh originally derived from Rakkhasa, (Rakking), Rakkhanpura, "Rosang" (Alawal calls it) Ro-khing-tha (Arthur Phayre calls it) "gya" (meaning a resident in Bengali) similar to Chatgya (Chittagonian) "gya" to the word Rokking "gya", which comes to Rohingya. It seems that "Rakking", "Rosang" etc are Arakani words and "gya" is Bengali. (13)

It might sound unusual but to a careful researcher the name Arakan is also close to the Muslim name Al Rokon, the Portuguese called it "Rakan" and in English "Arakan" closer to the Muslim term. In the Ananda Chandra's Chandra inscription, it calls Arakan as "Arakandesa," sounds more like a Chandra Hindu-Muslim coined term, Bangladesha. The Moghs also recently changed the name Arakan into the Rakine State. It seems that the Mogh elites know the Muslim history of Arakan well enough that to keep their ethnocentric ownership claims of Arakan they felt the urgency in changing the name.

After cross checking the dates and names in recorded history, it is now easy to draw some intriguing conclusions that if the Rohingyas not yellowish but with dark skin are still called by the Moghs as the "Kulas," Rohingyas got to be the aboriginals of Arakan not the Moghs. That the name Rohingya came from original Rakkhas, Rakkhanpura, Chandras, and there seem to be no connection between the term Moghs with Rakkhas. However, to deny the Rohingyas' aboriginal status, the Mogh-and the Burmese nationalist military intellectuals claim that the Rakkines are the aboriginals of Arakan, Rohingyas are "foreigners." In this they are ready to accept the term "Muslims of Arakan migrated from Chittagong" but not the name "Rohingyas of Arakan." That historical evidence shows the Rohingyas ancestors were Arabs and the Chandras, the former had reached to the shores of Arakan during the Chandra rule before the Mongoloid Moghs invasion in 957 A. D. That the Rohingyas popularly called by the Moghs as the "kulas" were comprised of both Hindu and Muslims of Arakan until the British rule when the xenophobic British began to classify the Burmese population into Muslims, Buddhist and Hindus and subsequently the name Rohingya became synonymous with Muslim "Kulas" of Arakan.

Historical facts demonstrate the Rohingya ancestors were the aboriginals of Arakan. However, it is also true that Mogh has been living in Arakan for centuries. What is true and can not be denied is that like the two sides of a single coin, in this frontier land of Mongoloid and Indo Semites, both Moghs and the Rohingyas are the citizens of their ancestral land Arakan. It is true; Arakan history shows that the Moghs and Rohingyas lived in peace for centuries. Why has it now become so difficult? It seems that Rohingyas are the victims of Burmese military's extremist nationalism based on race and religion, and the rise of Buddhist fundamentalist during 1940-47 in Arakan which also led to the contemporary age of Mogh mythologies against established history of the Rohingyas and the Moghs. It seems that the contemporary Mogh intellectuals in their claims are confusing between, belief and knowledge, fact and opinion. Today, the political Buddhist fundamentalists in Arakan, bottled up in pride and prejudices, calls the Rohingyas also as "Bangali influx viruses." The so-called intellectuals like Dr. Aye Chan have written xenophobic books on the topic. They with Burmese military help follow Burma's racial exclusivist policy (enacted in the 1982 constitution) which deprives the Rohingya Muslims of their right to citizenship in Arakan and deny the share of their participation in the political arena of Arakan. Burmese government is doing everything to force Rohingyas leave Arakan. Dr David Law in his article "Humanity gone amok" in the Burma Digest, recently wrote "the Rohingya are being forced into large-scale internment camps where they are being prevented from marrying legally, their young people beaten up, kidnapped, violated, and otherwise terrorized into submitting to a slow, agonizing death by starvation." Today, Burmese propaganda made Rohingyas strangers in the land of their birth. Given this, if Burma's democracy leaders fail to respond with alacrity to extremism, the situation might lead to an unfortunate genocide in this land shared for centuries by its Mogh, Rohingya and other citizens. If that happens in the "lawless" Arakan, the Burmese Military will be the bystanders.

(The author, Dr. Abid Bahar wrote his M. A. thesis, "Dynamics of Ethnic Relations in Burmese Society: A case Study of Inter Ethnic Relations between the Burmese and the Rohingyas" in 1981 from Canada).