

Extract from 1881 Census of British Burma -- Paragraph 44

44. *Deemeanour of the people.*— From the report on the census of 1872 it appears that beyond being possessed by a vague feeling that the census might be the herald of some new form of taxation, the public were not alarmed, nor was there time, it is stated, for any alarming rumours to get afloat. The same remarks can scarcely be made in reference to the present census. Though the Burmese are accustomed to an annual counting, they have never before witnessed a long and elaborate course of preparation proving an evident determination on the part of every Government officer with whom they might chance to come in contact that not a single man, woman, or child should escape the enumeration. The prolonged preparation, and the fact that the final counting was to be done by night, of course gave opportunity for absurd rumours to arise and spread among a credulous and superstitious people, and, while generally the ideas related only to an additional tax, in some parts of the country, and these not the wildest or least civilised, there evidently was a fear that personal injury would be done to the inhabitants. Of course the officers conducting the operations had over and over again explained the objects of the census in the manner they considered most likely to satisfy the classes they had to deal with. In the Arakan Hill Tracts suspicions which had been rife died away after explanations given by the European officers, and in the Salween district, also the abode of semi-wild tribes, the people appeared to be quite indifferent to the census operations. In the towns of Rangoon, Bassein, and Toungoo there was merely a vague feeling of suspicion. In the Thonegwa district, as has been noted, an enumerator made an entry of the householders' livestock and so created the temporary belief that fowls were to be taxed. In Moulmein, too, the ideas were harmless enough: a noted criminal had escaped and the census was a stratagem to catch the offender: the Russians were advancing, and the object of the enumeration was therefore to ascertain the numbers we could oppose to their approach. In Prome, on the other hand, both in part of the district and in the towns of Prome and Shwaydoun, answers to the enumerators were not seldom given from behind closed doors, and it would seem that there really was an idea abroad that heads were to be cut off to furnish offerings to the English *Nats*, or media of enquiry into the secrets of the future. Behind their doors persons occasionally remained on the defensive, and in some cases in Shwaydoun families left their houses to go and sleep with friends for mutual protection. In Prome a party of encamped Shans were actually in alarm, apparently that violence would be offered them. In the Koonponekaw circle of the Amherst district 89 Karen families leaving their houses fled across the frontier into Siamese territory, scared away by the numbering of their houses, a step which the European officer who was conducting the operations found was essential to a correct enumeration. Some bungling of an Extra Assistant Commissioner seems to have been a primary cause of the exodus. An incomplete preliminary enumeration had been made before their departure, but as these Karens have not returned they have been omitted from the returns. Their numbers were 262 males and 224 females, or altogether 486 souls, living, as has been said, in 89 houses. The Karens of the Amherst district it is said, could not, or would not,

believe that Government had no ulterior object affecting them. Some of the Taluings thought that a draft of the population was required to replace the soldiers killed in our wars. In the Thatone township of the same district the subdivisional officer received reports to the effect that the Tounghthoos of Thatone and Kyaikkaw and the Karens of Danoo intended to resist the census by force. Their alarm was easily dispelled by the personal explanations of the Extra Assistant Commissioner. Again, in the neighbouring country of Beclin and Kyiketo in the Shwaygyin district, a rumour spread that Government was going to cut off 400 heads. In Akyab town, though there was a general idea that the census foreshadowed fresh taxation, no obstruction was encountered. It was thought possible that the mill coolies might give trouble, and a body of police were kept at hand, but all passed off quietly. With the exceptions that have been mentioned, though almost everywhere vaguely suspicious, the people were nowhere obstructive or even alarmed. The idea that the English make use of human heads for inquiring into the future is not uncommon among the Burmese. It is freely believed that at the Christmas meeting of the Free-masons in Rangoon a human head procured by the stealthy decapitation of some solitary wayfarer is placed on a table and, being sprinkled with some potent medicine, gives oracular responses to questions regarding the future success or otherwise of the English arms. All required information was however readily furnished by the people, and there was no attempt at concealment.

Extract from 1881 Census for Burma. 151 Superintendents, 2,167 Supervisors and 16,974 enumerators.

OFFICIAL.								
1.	Gazetted officers of Government	...	...	...	...	126	10	5
2.	Thooogyees and Sawkehs	...	...	...	...	...	728	85
3.	Yazawoot Goungs	...	...	...	...	...	885	117
4.	Village headmen	...	...	...	...	...	228	9,007
5.	Judicial and Revenue clerks...	...	...	...	...	5	225	505
6.	Peons	...	...	...	...	...	...	18
7.	Municipal clerks and servants	...	...	...	...	8	15	22
8.	Police officers	...	...	...	...	6	82	79
9.	Do. constables...	...	...	...	...	...	10	62
10.	Education Department	...	...	...	...	4	85	46
11.	Forest ditto	...	...	...	...	4	10	87
12.	Public Works ditto	...	...	...	...	...	8	18
13.	Postal and Telegraph Departments	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
14.	Railway Department	...	...	...	...	1	5	40
15.	Military ditto	...	...	...	...	2	11	46
16.	Jail ditto	...	...	...	...	...	1	8
17.	Port and Customs Departments	...	...	...	...	...	...	104
Total						151	1,754	10,195
NON-OFFICIAL.								
1.	Thooogyees and Kyaydangyees' relations and writers	...	...	...	...	...	17	258
2.	Pleaders	...	...	...	...	...	8	81
3.	Petition-writers and volunteer writers	...	...	...	...	...	12	179
4.	Teachers and schoolboys	...	...	...	...	...	22	187
5.	Merchants, traders, brokers, and brokers' clerks	...	...	...	...	...	167	2,116
6.	Fishermen and fishery lessees	...	...	...	...	...	1	815
7.	Cultivators, landowners, and grantees	...	...	...	...	...	158	8,292
8.	Carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, and paper-makers	...	...	...	...	...	8	110
9.	Goldsmiths	...	...	...	...	...	5	81
10.	Weavers	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
11.	Tattooer, ear-borer, and headman of pagoda slaves	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
12.	Contractors, cooly goungs, coolies, bazaar-sellers, toddy-climber, and others	...	...	...	...	...	17	198
13.	Silkworm-breeders	...	...	...	...	...	...	15
14.	Preachers	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
15.	Country doctors	...	...	...	...	...	8	82
Total						...	418	6,779