A Short History of Rohingya and Kamas of Burma

M.A Tahir Ba Tha (translated by A.F.K Jilani, edited by Mohd. Ashraf Alam)

Editor and Publisher's note

"**A SHORT HISTORY OF ROHINGYAS AND KAMANS OF BURMA"** is an English translation and edited version of **"ROHINGYAS AND KAMANS"** of Mr. M. A. Tahir Ba Tha. The Rohingyas and Kamans of M. A. Tahir Ba Tha is a landmark in the history of Rohingya people. History is dynamic; not static; it is a process of change and movement in time.

The book was first printed and published in Burmese in 1963 and it was the only printed history book of Rohingyas by a Rohingya in Burmese. The Board of Directors of the Institute of Arakan Studies, Bangladesh consider it an honour to publish the book in English in the name of **"A SHORT HISTORY OF ROHINGYAS AND KAMANS OF BURMA"** and present it to the readers and researchers of Rohingya and Arakan, both at home and abroad. Retaining the original contents of the book we have endeavoured to convey a sense of history as a continuing process. We have taken pains to incorporate the results of the most recent research and some maps of political events and changes in political geography.

It may be mentioned here that till today we have not found a full, comprehensive history of Rohingyas and Kamans either in Burmese or in English so far. So, the Directors of the Institute requested to Mr. A.F.K Jilani to translate Mr. M.A. Tahir Ba Tha's ***"The Rohingyas and Kamans"*** into English. He had done it without hesitation and delay. The Board of Directors of the Institute of Arakan Studies, Bangladesh express their sincere thanks and gratitude to Mr. A. F. K. Jilani and their valued members and partons who have helped them generously, by providing much needed funds to publish this book. The Institute has decided to publish more on Rohingya and Arakan gradually and to restore them for future Generation.

This book is primarily a discussion on the history of Rohingyas and Kamans. The motive in this presentation and translation is the circulation of Rohingyas' views on their history to the people of Burma and Bangladesh particularly and the world at large.

We shall consider our efforts rewarded if the readers find this modest attempts of mine to be of some use in knowing the Rohingya people who are still far behind the time.

Mohamed Ashraf Alam

Chittagong.

31/08/1998.

FOREWORD

The history of Rohingyas and Kamans, by M. A. Tahir Ba Tha, deals the advent of Rohingyas in Arakan since 7th century A.D. He has explored an enormously wide field in digging up many materials from various sources.

According to history, Islam reached Arakan before 788 A.D. and it attracted the local people to come to the fold of Islam en masse all over Burma. Since then Islam had played an important part towards the advancement of civilization in Arakan. From 1430 to 1784 A.D. Arakan was a Sultanate. Muslims and Buddhists lived side by side for centuries with amity and concord as one family and ruled the country together.

The position of the Muslims of Arakan was glorious during the time of Mrauk-U Empire but their position was down trodden during the 40 years of Burmese occupation. During British rule too, they had been discriminated and blindfolded by the British so much so that none of the Muslims could hold a single high position in the government. As they were the conqueror of the Muslim Moghul Empire, the British politically kept the Muslims of subcontinent and that of Arakan uneducated, unhealthy and undeveloped.

The British played divide and rule in Arakan, with the result that many of the Arakanese Buddhist brethern bear hatred against the Muslim Rohingyas and threat them as “Kalas” (foreigners). This hatred should no longer be bred in the Union of Burma as it had been brought up in the nursery of British imperilism. Unfortunately, the same policy is now adopted by the ruling military junta of Burma.

The Rohingyas of Arakan have been together as an indigenous race in a group from time immemorial. Still, their sister community, the Rakhine Maghs, intentionally branded Rohingyas as the illegal immigrants from a neighbouring country. Their false allegations reputed by M. A. Tahir Ba Tha by writing articles in the Daily Mirror, Kaba-Alin and the Guardian Magazines of Rangoon in 1960s. When he was transferred to Myitkyina city of Kachin State, as a Bank manager, he was requested to write a book on the History of Rohingyas by the Executive Committee members of the United Rohingya National League (U.R.N.L), Myitkyina. At their request this book “History of Rohingyas and Kamans” was written in Burmese by M. A. Tahir Ba Tha and duly published by the United Rohingya National League of Myitkyina, Burma.

Moreover, with the collection of M. A. Tahir Ba Tha’s articles from the Guardian Magazines and the Kaba Alin Magazines. “A Short History of Rohingyas” was compiled and published by the United Rohingyas National League of Rangoon in 1960.

M. A. Tahir Ba Tha is a native of Rohingyadaung village of Buthidaung Township. He is now residing in Ran-goon with his family passing his retired life. He wrote- another book entitled

“FAITHFUL ROHINGYAS” but unable to publish. His articles and booklet on Rohingyas played important source of documents for the historical background of Rohingya nation.

The Institute of Arakan Studies, Bangladesh, requested me to translate the History of Rohingyas and Kamans, by M. A. Tahir Ba Tha. On their request, I have translated it with my poor knowledge of Rohingya history and English literature. If this translation could contribute for the history of our people, then I will be satisfied with my work. I expect the blessing of Almighty Allah.

A. F. K. Jilani

20/2/1998

Author’s Preface

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

“Verily never Will Allah change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.” (The Holy Quran, Sura 13:11)

As I am neither a perfect historian nor a man of literature, my presentations of the historical references and the placing of the sentences, phrases, idioms, words may be in crude positions. If so, my earnest request to the esteemed readers is to read it in correct and smooth way. As per above Quranic verse I tried my best to dig up many materials from various sources. I write this booklet at the request of the United Rohingya Nationlal League of Myitkyina, Burma with the object of enriching the knowledge of the history of Rohingyas and Kamans to all citizens of the Union of Burma.

M. A. Tahir Ba Tha

31/12/1963

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The Union of Burma with an area of about 2, 61,610 sq. miles was born on 4 January 1948. It is a multi-national, multi-cultural and multi- religious country collectively owned by various peoples and ethnic races. About 60% of the country’s populations are non-Burmans mostly in-habiting in the states/provinces. They are Shan, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Pa-o, Palaung, Padaung, Naga. Lahu, Akha, Wa, Rohingya (Arakanese Muslim), Rakhine (Arakanese Buddhist) and many other indigenous races.

Arakan is the north-western province of the Union of Burma. It is a narrow mountainous strip of land with 360 miles coastal belt from the Bay of Bengal. It is bounded by Bay of Bengal on the west, Chin Hills on the north-east. It borders 176 miles with the People’s Republic of Bangladesh,

48 miles of which is covered by river Naf and is a natural physiographic unit clearly divided from the rest of Burma by the mountain range of Arakan Yoma running north to south.

Arakan covers an area of about 20,000 sq.miles. The Arakan Hill tracts district (5235 sq.miles) bordering India and southern most part from Kyauk Chaung river to Cape Negaris were partitioned from Arakan mainland without the native people's concern. Arakan is now reduced to 14,200 sq. miles.

Arakan is blessed with geographical diver-sities. In all, there are seven rivers in Arakan. They are the Naf, the Mayu, the Kaladan, the Lemro, the Ann, the Taungup and the Sandoway.The four major navigable rivers are the Naf, Mayu, Kaladan and Lemro and all they are situated in the Northern Arakan. All these four rivers are tidal and easily navigable all the year round. Akyab is situated on the seacoast at the mouth of the Kaladan River and it is the Capital of Arakan since 1826 AD.

Arakan is inhabited by two major ethnic races, the Rohingyas and the Rakhines (Maghs). The Rohingyas are Muslims and the Maghs are Buddhists. At present, the Rohingyas and the Maghs stand at almost in equal proportion with about two lacs tribal people [Saks, Dinets (Chakmas) and Mros (Kamis)]. The Rohingyas are mostly concentrated in the riparian plains of Naf, Mayu and Kaladan. Arakan is the only Muslim majority province among the 14 provinces of Burma. Out of the 7 million Muslim population of Burma half of them are in Arakan.

Under different periods of history Arakan had been an independent sovereign monarchy ruled by Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. After Bengal became Muslim in 1203 A.D., Islamic influence grew in Arakan to the extent of establishing Muslim vassal state begining in 1430 A.D. Muslim's rule and influence in Arakan lasted for more than 350 years until it was invaded and occupied by Burmans in 1784 A.D. Then the British occupied Arakan in 1824 A.D. annexing it to former British India. When Burma was seperated from British India in 1937, Arakan was made a part of British Burma against the wishes of its people and thus finally Arakan became a province of independent Burma in 1948.

Rohingya is not the people who suddenly appeared in Arakan. According to the historical evidences, they were descendants of the Arabs who arrived 1200-years back.

Rohingyas and Kamans are the two people of Arakan who profess Islam. In the following chapters we will study and discuss the coming of Arab Muslims, the Tibeto-Burmans, the Pathan Muslims from Bengal and the Moghul Muslims from India to Arakan. Then we will trace the ethnic identity of ethnic Rohingyas and Kamans.

Chapter II

COMING OF THE ARAB MUSLIMS TO ABAKAN

The Arab Muslims first came into contact the Indian Subcontinent and South-East Asia through trade and commerce. From the times long past, spices, cotton fabrics, precious stones, minerals and other commodities from South and South-East Asia were of great demand in the oriental and European countries. The Arabs as a seafaring nation almost monopolized this trade between the South and South-East Asia on the one hand the oriental, north African and European countries on the other. The Arab merchants carried goods to the ports of Mascot and that of Siraf on the two sides of the Persian Gulf, Basra, Yemen, Jeddah, Quizum (Suez), for exchage with the goods of the merchants of the Middle Eastern, Central Asian. North African and European countries. For about eight centuries they monopolized the trade between the East and the West. The Arabs were born traders, and after the introduction of Islam they became a great maritime people. Their profound knowledge in navigation, in the science of latitude and longitude, in astronomical phenomena and in the geography of the countries they visited made them unrivalled in mercantile activities in the Indian Ocean for centuries together.

The Arabs used to write about the places they had visited which indicate their arrivals at East and the West of the world.

The land Jazirat-al-Rahmi or Rahma mentioned by Arab geographers of 9th and 10th centuries may have been referred to the kingdom of Raham (God blessed land) corrupted later to Rohang / Roshang / Roang. Ibn Khordadzbeh(844-48 A.D.),a Persian traveller from Basara (in Ferrand) said that Jazirat-al-Rahmi came after Sarandip (Cyelon) and contained peculiar unicorn animals and little naked people. Arab geographers, Persian travellers and marchants such as Sulymen (851 A.D.) Yaqubi (880 A.D.), Ibn al Fakih (902 A.D.), Masudi (943 A.D.), HudulAl-Alam (982 A.D.) and Marvazi (1120 A.D.) also referred Delta region of Burma and Arakan as Rahama. They and many other travellers used route over Arakan yoma to travel to Burma and then to China.

But Ibn Batuta wrote the name of Arakans as Arkan, derived from the Arabic word Al-Rukun. The authors of the Ain-i-Akbar, Baharistan-i- Ghaibi and Siyar-ul-Mutakherin wrote it as Arkhang, which appears also with a slight change in Alamgirnama and Fathya-i-ibria is close to the name Arakan. In the medieval Bengali literary works and Rennell's map the name of Arakan is written Roshang. To the Portuguese and other European travellers mentioned it Arracan, Arracoo, Orrakan, Arrakan and Van Linscoten writes it Arakan which is nearest to the modern name. The British government turned Arakan from Arkan. As a matter of fact the name was given by the Muslim Arabs. The meaning is land of peace.

The celebrated 17th century Arakan court poet Sayed Shah Alawal who composed the famous ballad on the lamentations of Ameena, the youngest daughter of the ill-fated Moghul prince Shah Shuja after his death, amply mentioned about the kingdom of Rohang and Rohingyas. The poet similarly referred to Rohang and Rohingyas in his two other popular ballads: Saiful Mulk Badiuzzamal and Sikander Nama. Also Arakan court poets Qazi Daulat in his book Lorchandrani O Satimaina 1622-30 A. D, and Mardan in his book Nasib Nama 1631-38 A.D, Arakan was mentioned as Roshango country. From all the above facts and evidences it has become crystal clear that the indigenous name of Arakan was Rohang, a term used first by Arabs.

Also, Arab Muslim traders had good contacts with Arakan, Burma, Indochina, Indonesia, Malay etc. with their trade and they propagated the religion of Islam in those countries. The arrival of Mohammad Hanif son of Hazarat Ali to Arakan is also narrated in a book written in 16th century by Shah Barid Khan named Hanifa O Kaiyapuri.

"In 680 A.D. after the war of "Karbala". Mohammad Hanif with his army arrived at Arabshah para, near Maungdaw in the Northern Arakan, while Kayapuri, the queen of cannibals ruled this hilly deep forest attacking and looting the people of Arakan. Mohammad Hanif attacked the cannibals and captured the queen. She was converted to Islam and married to him. Her followers embraced Islam enmasse. Mohammed Hanif and queen Kayapuri lived in Mayu range. The peaks where they lived were still known as Hanifa Tonki and Kayapuri Tonki. The wild cannibals were tamed and became civilized. Arakan was no more in danger of them and peace and tranquility prevailed. The followers of Mohamed Hanif and Kayapuri were mixed up and lived peacefully. The descedents of these mixed people are no doubt formed the original nucleus of the Rohingyas in Arakan."

The regular contact of Arab Muslims with Arakan came through trade and commerce during 8th century A.D. and since Islam started spreading in the region. After advent of Islam in Arabia, the Muslims followed the footprints of their fore-fathers in trade and commerce. These Arab Muslim merchants made regular contact with Arakan. In those days the Arabs were very much active in sea-trade, they even monopolised the trade and commerce in the East.

After the death of Prophet Mohammd (S.M), in 712 A. D. there was a dispute between the Arab king and king Dehir of Sind of west India on a Arab trade ship which arrived at the port of Gipal. The Arab General Mohammad Ibn Kasim conquered the Sind with an army of six thousand. Since that time a large number of Muslims began to arrive in India.

Mr. Harvey wrote in the *History of Burma* that the Muslim built up mosques and Bader Mokans in India, Arakan, Burma, Malayu, Indonesia and China. Arakan became prosperous with the trade of Arab Muslim traders. From 7th century to 16th century the Arab Muslims were very powerful and they were master of trade from Persian Gulf to Indonesia.

Country of Raham or-Arakan hed been an independent for many centuries due to its geographical location with occasional short breaks. It was ruled by various legendry Indian dynasties and made their capital at Dinnawadi (Dhanyavati), Vesali, Pinsa, Prin, Krit, Launggyet and Maruk-U along the river Lemro. According to M. S. Collis, *"in 788 AD, a dynasty, knowns as Chandras, founded the city of Vesali in North-Arakan. This city became a noted trade port to which as many as a thousand ships came annually……. their territory extended as far north as Chittagong…Vesali was an easterly Hindu kingdom of Bengal…."*

In 8th century while Arakan was ruled by Maha Chandras of Wessali Kyauklayga dynasty and Burma was ruled by Pagan Pikthonmin – many Arab traders arrived at Ramawadi, Wessali, Thaton, Muttama, Syriam and other ports. These were written by the Arabs in their diaries after

800 A.D. In their diaries they recorded that they found precious stones, spices, peafowls tails, rhinoceroses' horns, etc. in Arakan and Burma.

According to the British Burma Gazetteers and Burma Gazetteers (Akyab District) published in 1879 and 1957, *"about 788 A.D. Mhataing Sandya ascended the throne, founded a new city (Vesali) on the site of old Ramawadi and died after a reign of twenty two years. In his reign several ships were wrecked on Ramree island and the crews, said to have been Mohamedans, were sent to Arakan Proper and settled in villages. They were Moor Arab Muslims."*

Those Arab crews sought sympathy of the people of the island, uttering the Arabic word "Rahma". So they were called Rahma people. The Rohingyas of Arakan are also the descendants of these Arab people. Those Arab crews and traders were sheltered at Ramree, the king ordered to bring them to Arakan proper as Ramree was small and danger of over population. The king was very sympathetic towards them. They settled in Arakan and some turned from traders to farmers.

In course of their trading activities in this part of the world the Arabs colonised in and around Arakan first and afterward begin to penetrate interior part of Burma. They paved the way for the influx of Muslims Saints, Sufis, Faqirs and Sages in Arakan and East Bengal. Those Sages used to visit the remote conners of the provinces only to preach their true religion Islam among the infidels and to dedicate their lives to the service of humanity and the oppressed and suppressed people of the land. The superior moral character and high missionary zeal of those followers attracted large number of people towards Islam who embraced it enmasse.

The Arabs presence in Arakan continued upto the 17th Century A.D.,when European traders sailed to the Eastern Seas. The Arabs developed a port city in Arakan known as Akyab. The Arabic version Ak-Ab means *'Place of a river meeting the sea.'* The Arabs also extended their trade from the Red Sea to China.

There is no doubt that the following river Kaladan, Lemro, Mayu or Kalapansi and Naf are Arabic. The Arabs also name the Island as Rambree Island and Chowdoba Island.

The Arab Muslim married the indigenous women and Islam spread among the local people.Their children were engaged in the service of the kings of Arakan. Afterward they migrated to the fertile valleys of Lemro, Kaladan, Mayu and Naf. They also migrated to other places which we called today Akyab, Kyaukpyu, Kyauknimaw and Sandoway townships.

Chapter III

COMING OF THE TIBETO-BURMAN TO ARAKAN

Before 10th century, Arakan was inhabited by Hindus. At that time Arakan was the gate of Hindu India to contact with the countries of the east. Morris Collis writes in his book *"Burma under the iron heels of British"* that the Hindu ruled Arakan from first century to 10th century. Hindu civilization and literature spread all over Arakan d'-"ring this long thousand years. After the

vanishing of the Hindu civilization there still remain the names, Danyawadi, Ramawadi, Maygawadi and Dwarawadi, the four-Wadis given by Hindus. Temples built by Hindus, coins melted by Hindus and the stone inscriptions written by Hindus were still to be found in Arakan.

According to A.P. Phayre and G, E, Harvey, *History of Burma* state that: *"The capital of Arakan was successively Thaveiktaung, Dinnyawadi, 25 kings (146-746 AD) and Vesali, 12 kings (788-994)-AD) dawn to eleventh century. First Pyinsa (Sandawut), 15 kings (1018-1103 AD), Parin, 8 kings (1103-1167 AD), Krit, 4 kings (1167-1180 AD), Second Pyinsa, 16 kings (1180-1237 AD), Launggyet, 17 kings (1237-1433 AD)and Mrauk-U, 48 kings (1433-1785 AD)."*

Shiri Gupta hill is 20 miles north of Mrohaumg. Mahamatmuni Image (the Great Image of Lord Buddha) is on that hill. This place is older than Vesali. The place was established by Hindus. Mahamatmuni image was built by the king Sandathuriya (146-198 A. D.).There were Hindu gods around the image of Mahamatmuni. These images of gods indicated that Arakan was a Hindu land until 10th century. Those Hindus might be Bengalees.

The image of Mahamatmuni was ruined when Arakan was attacked by Mongolians or Tibeto-Burmans in the year 957 A.D. Morris Collis also wrote that the image was renovated while Arakan was feudatory to Pagan's kings of Burma. The ruins of the city of Vesali can still be found at the place five miles north of Morhaung City.

The city of Vesali was founded in 788 A.D. by king Mahataing Sandya. This was the beginning of the Chandra dynasty. They were Hindus but professed Buddhism. Vesali was a prosperous sea port of Arakan. Over one thousand foreign ships used to visit the port annually. Most of them were Arab ships. Before the arrival of Islam, the people of Vesali professed Hinduism and Buddhism. Later, they abandoned Hinduism and professed Buddhism and Islam.

Inside the palace compound of Vesali there were many stone plates inscribed in Nagris. The Vesali kings also melted coins with cows, Nandis and shred of flower and Nagris letters. The coins of Vesali was melted with Bhraman civilization.

Vesali was razed in 957 A.D. with the invasion of Tibeto-Burmans. The Tibeto- Burmans killed Sula Candra, the last king of Vesali dynasty, and Amia Thu of their tribe was throned. Within a few years the Hindu of Bengal was able to throne their Pala Dynasty. But the Hindus of Vesali was unable to restore their dynasty because of the invasion and migration of Tibeto-Burmans were so great that their population overshadowed the Vesali Hindus.

Morris Collis wrote that since 957 A.D. Tibeto-Burmans cut Arakan away from India and mixing in sufficient number with the inhabitants of the Vesali, created that Indo-Mongoloid stock now known as Rakhine. The Rakhine Maghs descended from the mixture of Tibeto-Burmans (Mongolians) and Vesali Hindus (Ayrians). Nowadays, many Rakhine Maghs claimed to be more Ayrian than Mongolian. But the date 957A.D. may be said to mark the appearance of Rakhine Maghs and their history.

The last Tibeto-Burman king of Vesali Ngapinngaton in 994 A.D. shifted the capital from Vesali to Sanbawet on the delta region of Lamro river, some 15-miles southeast of Vesali city, for easier communication with Burma. For centuries numerous dynasties ruled the country, each with its own city but always in the same locality. Many kings ruled the country, but no coins were melted by them. These kings had good contact with the Pagan dynasty of Burmese kings. Later they had been feudatory to Pagan kings. Burmese civilization came to Arakan through the Bu-Rwak-Manyo mountain pass. Pegan, the city state of Burman herself had modified their religion from the Mahayanist to the Hinayanist form of Buddhism and modification was transmitted to Arakan during the 11th and 12th centuries. Rakhine Maghs resemble more to Burmans less to Hindus. Their religion became less Mahayanist and more Hinayanist.

The Arakanese Buddhists called themselves Rakhine and their country Rakhinepyi. Accoring to Sir A. P. Phayre's History of Burma, the word is a corruption of the Pali Rakkhasa (Skt. Rakshasa) meaning "ogre" (Burmese bilu) or guardian of the mansion of Indra on Mount Meru. Before 12th century, there was no Burmese literature in Arakan, but Sangada (Sanskrit) literature was found with Nagaris letters. Burmese literature arrived in Arakan during 12th century. In regard to Rakhine Maghs language. Sir Arthur Phayer wrote that, Rakhine Maghs are the descendants of Tobeto-Burman. There is no difference between Rakhine Maghs and Burmans except a little in their languages.

The Rakhine Maghs of today are basically Burmese, though with an unmistakable Indian admixture. Although mainly Buddhist, they have been influenced by long centuries of contact with Muslims Bengal. Phonetically Rakhines have 42 syllables; that is eight syllables less than Burmese. Their is language is Burmese with some dialectical difference and an older form of pronuciation, especially noticeable in their retention of the "r" sound, which the Burmese have changed to y'. The Bengali refer to them by the name Magh, a word adopted by 17th century European writers and written "Mugg". Rakhine Maghs are generally short-temper, vociferous and undiplomatic. They consider their homeland as the father or fatherland. They looked upon the Wednesday as sacred for they belive that their country was founded on that day. In ancient times Rakhine's national dress was to that of Bengal, more or less. As to marriage the Rakhines favour 'cross-cousin mirrage'. That is marriage between the children of a woman and those of her brother or vice versa.

Hence the Buddhist of Arakan known as Rakhine Maghs are mixed blooded race descended from Aryan

of Magadah of Bihar, India, Mongolian, and Tibeto-Burman.

Chapter IV

COMING OF THE PATHAN MUSLIMS TO ARAKAN

In addition to Arab Muslims, many Muslims from India also arrived and settled in every nook and cranny of Arakan. They were Gauri Pathans from Gaur, the capital of the Sultan of Bengal.

Previously, the Indian Muslims had only contact with Arab Muslims and had no relation with Rakhine Magh people of Arakan because they were non-Muslims and they thought that they (the Maghs) were wild hilly people.

At that time the Bengal Sultanate was ruled by the Pathan Muslims with their capital at Gaur. When Narameikhia took refuge at the court of Gaur the relation between Arakan and Bengal started.

The circumstances which made Arakan turn from the East and look west to the Moslem States were political. When Longgeret dynasty's last king Thingathu died, Narameikhia, the son of his elder brother Razathu, ascended the throne of Longgeret. Saw Pu Nyo, the sister of Anandathein (the governor of Dallah) was the most beautiful woman of Arakan at that time. Narameikhia had developed weakness for her. Being unable to control his lust for her, he took her as his queen after forced divorce from her husband which made annoyed Annandathein. He took it as an insult to the courtiers and entire people and to himself. So, he sought assistance from Ava king Min Khong-I of central Burma who succeeded the Pagan dynasty.

King Min Khong considering the previous infiltration of Arakanese king Hla Ra Giri to Yaw,Saw, Long Shay, the request of Annada Thien and his own lust for expansion of his country, sent his 13 year old son Min Ye Kyaw Swa, as the head of 30,000 soldiers, to Arakan. Min Ye Kyaw Swa conquered Arakan in 1404 A.D. and the deposed king Narameikhia fled to Bengal and took refuge at the court of king Ahmed Shah at Gaur. That kingdom had been independent of the sultanate of Delhi for eighty six years ago.It was one of the many sovereign states of the world-wide Moslem polity. His younger brother Naranu fled to Hantha Wadi and took refuge at the court of Mon (Talaing) king Razadirize.

When the victory of Min Ye Kyaw Swa was conveyed to King Min Khong, the king gave his daughter, Shwe Pyi Chan Tha, in marriage with Ahnawratha Saw, the governor of Kalay, and sent him to Arakan and called back his son. But his tyrannic rule was unbearable to the people of Arakan. Naranu requested help from Mon king Razadirize. King Razadirize sent Mon and Muslim army – both land and naval forces to Arakan. They conquered Arakan. Anawratha Saw and Shwe Pyi Chan Tha were taken to Hanthawidi where the former was put down to death and the latter was made queen. Naranu ascended the throne of Longgeret.

When bad news was heard by the king Min Khong, he sent again Min Ye Kyaw Swa to Arakan. Min Ye Kyaw Swa conquered Arakan again. Naranu fled to the upper reaches of Kassapa Nadi (Kaladan River). In this way Arakan became the battle field of Burmese and Mon. Lastly, Mon won the battle.Thus Arakan fell under the subjugation of Mon.

While Narameikhia was serving at the army of Sultan Ahmed Shah, the Indian king of Delhi (according to Rakhine Razawin, the king of Janpur, Sultan Ebrahim) invaded the Sultanate of Bengal. Narameikhia fought the battle with full of valour and skill. The king was very pleased and called him son and Naramekhia called the king father, which was written by Sayadaw U Nyana in

his Danyawadi Razawintheik (the Modern History of Arakan). Hence, Rakhine Maghs and Muslims became brothers and sisters. Fraternity began between Maghs and Muslims.

After the victory of the battle, king Ahmed Shah handed over the throne of Gaur to his son Nazir Shah in the year 1426 A.D (According to Bengal History it was not Nazir Shah but Sultan Jalaluddin Mohammed Shah). Then Narameikhia pleaded help from the king to take back his lost throne of Longgeret. The king agreed to do so when Narameikhia agreed to abide the following conditions;

1. To return the twelve towns of Bengal.
2. Muslim title must be used by the king of Arakan.
3. The court emblem must be inscribed with Kalima Tayuba in Persian.
4. The coins, medallions must be inscribed with Kalima Tayaba in Parsian and to mint them in Bengal.
5. To use the Persian as court language of Arakan.
6. To pay taxes and presents annually.

Since that time onward Rakhine Maghs had to learn the Islamic history and the meaning of the triumph of Islam and how it arrived, that the chief Moslem protagonists were Mongolians. For hundred years, Arakan was a vassal state of the Muslim Bengal and paying tribute to Bengal.

As Narameikhia agreed to the six conditions, in 1429, Sultan Nazir Shah sent Gen. Wali Khan as the head of 20,000 Pathan forces with Narameikhia to restore the throne of Arakan to Narameikhia. The Pathan army crossed Arakan through Golangi pass and another army crossed through Wall Khan (later Alt Khan) pass. They conquered Arakan from the control of Mon and Narameikhia ascended the throne.

Soon Wali Khan and Narameikhia had a dispute over the No. 5 condition of introduction of Persian as the court language of Arakan. Gen. Wali Khan arrested Narameikhia and locked up at Balouthaung fettering him. Sir Arthur Phayer wrote that Gen. Wali Khan arrested Narameikhia with the collaboration of a Magh Chief who was his enemy (may be Ananda Thein). Gen. Wali Khan ruled the country for one year. He introduced Persian in his court and appointed Qazis. From the upper Kissapa Nadi (Kalandan River) Naranu came down and rescued Narameikhia.

He went straight to Sultan Nazir Shah and narrated all the happenings. The king become furious and sent his right and left ministers such as Dampasu, Razamani, Setta Khan with an army larger than that of Gen. Wali Khan, now headed by Gen. Sandi Khan. They throned Narameikhia at Lounggeret and sent back Gen. Wali Khan to the Bengal.

Narameikhia thought that the city of Lannggyet was a cursed city from where he was ousted and which city also saw the rise and fall of many kings, Harvey writes: *"The turmoil of foreign inroads showed that Launggyet was ill-fated and the omen indicated Mrohaung as a lucky site, so he decided to move there; though the astrologers said that if he moved the capital he would die within a year, he insisted, saying that the move would benefit the people and his own death would matter little. In 1433 he founded Mrohaung and in the next year he died. A populous sea-port,*

built on hillocks amid the rice-plain, and intersected by canals which served as streets, Mrohaung remained the capital for the next four centuries."

Narameikhia shifted his capital to a new site known as Mrauk-U or Patthri Quilla in 1433. As the Pathan soldiers of Gen. Sandi Khan was faithful to him, king Narameikhia deployed them to all important and strategic places and all bordering areas to defend the state. These Pathan soldiers were unable to return to their motherland. They served in Arakan with the posts-ranked from ministers to soldiers and built many monuments. Among them the most prominent mosque is the Sandi Khan mosque which was built in the year 1433 at Kawalong, in Mrohaung City.

Though the religion of Islam and the culture of Muslim began with the arrival of Arabs in Arakan, but it came to prominence with the arrival of Gauri Pathans. In U Kyi's *"The Essential History of Burma"*, he wrote that *"Rakhine Maghs became Muslims after embracing Islam in 15th century. For hundred years, from 1430 to 1530 A. D. Arakan was under the suzerainty of Muslim Bengal."*

Eleven kings successively ruled Arakan for hundred years 1430 to 1530 A.D… The relation with Bengal remained extremely cordial. The Arakanese paid tribute to Muslim Bengal and learnt Islamic history and politics.

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

1. Naramekhla (Solaiman Shah) 1430 1434 A.D.
2. Meng Khari (a) Naranu(Ali Khan) 1434-1459
3. Ba Saw Pru (Kalima Shah) 1459-1482
4. Dawlya (Mathu Shah) 1482-1492
5. 'Ba Saw Nyo (Mohammed Shah) 1492-1493
6. Ran Aung(Noori Shah) 1493-1494
7. Salimgathu (Sheik Abdullh Shah) 1494-1501
8. Meng Raza(Ilias Snah-I) 1501-1513
9. Kasabadi (Ilias Shah-II) 1513-1515
10. Meng Saw Oo (Jalal Shah) 1515-
11. Thatasa (Ali Shah) 1515-1521
12. Min KhaungRaza (El-Shah Azad) 1521-1531
13. Min Bin(a)Min Pa Gri(Zabuk Shah) 1531-1553
14. Min Dikha (Daud Khan) 1553-1555
15. Min Phalaung (Sikender Shah) 1571-1591
16. Min Razagri (Salim Shah) 1593-1612
17. Min Khamaung (Hussain Shah) 1612-1622
18. ThiriThudama(SalimShah-II) 1622-1637

In 1531 Minbin (Zabuk Shah) ascended the throne. With him the Rakhine Maghs graduated in their Islamic studies and the Arakanese Empire was founded.

In the year 1556 Bengal was invaded and conquered by the General of Emperor Akbar and many Pathans and Mughals of Bengal took refuge in Arakan. T.N. Sarkar wrote that the Pathan and

Mughal of Arakan had supported Shah Shuja. The twelve towns of Bengal were ruled by the Arakanese kings till king Narameikhla. These twelve towns of Bengal were returned by Narameikhla to the Sultan of Bengal and were under the control of Sultanate of Bengal for hundred years. Chittagong was under the control of Arakan for more than two hundred years, that is, from 1459 A.D to 1666 A.D. In those days the people of Arakan and Bengal had very cordial relations.

From the days of the restoration of king Mmsawmun (1430 A.D.), there was an influx of Muslim officials, including ministers and courtiers, physicians (hakims or tabibs), qazis, soldiers both of the cavalry and infantry, merchants, traders, labourers and workers who were soon absorbed in the general population. In addition there was a transient population of sailors of becalmed Arab, Persian and Indian Muslims vessels who spent considerable periods of the year in the seaports of Aakan waiting for favourable winds.

In 17th century the Maghs and Portugese pirates brought Bengalee prisoners, both Muslim and Hindus, and sold at the ports of India and Arakan.

The Arakan pirates both Magh and Portugese (Feringhi) used constantly to come by water route and plunder Bengal. According to D.G.E. Hall,every year a devasting raids, often as far as Dacca and Murshidabad, were a carried out and vast numbers of captives carried of to Maruk-U, where the king, after selecting all the artisans for his own service, sold the rest to foreign traders at a few Ruppes a head.

According to *Puthi literature*, *"the inscription of the Muslim Kalima on Arakanese coins and the adoption of many Muslim customs and terms were other significant tributes to the influence of Islam. Mosques including the famous Sandikhan mosque began to dot the country-side and Islamic customs, manners and practices came to be established since this time. For about two hundred years the Muslim domination seemed to have been completed."*

In Arakan most of the ministers, and officers of land and naval forces were Muslims since Narameikhla's rule in Arakan. The famous poet of Arakan Shah Alawal wrote that, Margan Thakur, Sulaiman, Sayed Musa, Nobaraj Mujalis were Muslim Prime Ministers of Arakan and Lashkar Wazir Ashraf Khan was War Minister of King Thiri Thudhamma-raza (1612-22 A.D.) according to M.K. Rahman's *Tarik-i-Islam Arakan and Burma*.

In 1666, the Subader of Bengal, Shahista Khan sent his son Gen. Omid Khan and conquered Chittagong and Ramu. Then many Maghs migrated to Mrohaung and many Muslims settled at the northern side of Arakan. Some say the population of north Arakan was thin due to migration of Maghs to south.

Chapter V

COMING OF THE MOGHUL MUSLIMS TO ARAKAN

In the middle of the 17th century, there was a political upheaval in Moghul Empire in India. The Moghul Emperor Shah Jahan (1627-1658 A.D.) had four sons and two daughters. The four sons are Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad.

Shah Shuja was the second son of Moghul Emperor Shah Jahan of India and (the famous queen of love) queen Mantaz Mahal. In 1639 A.D. Shah Shuja became the governor of Bengal. He was a clever and brave soldier. But he indulged to enjoyment than administration. But his younger brother Aurangzeb, the governor of Dakina (southern) state was very industrious, intelligent and a good administrator.

In 1657 A. D., the Emperor Shah Jahan fell ill seriously. Rivalry began among his sons for the succession of throne. Finally, Aurangzeb controlled the throne after dethroning his father.

His youngest brother Murad was put into jail and Aurangzeb had declared himself to be the Emperor of Hindustan. Shah Shuja, the Governor of Bengal denounced Aurangzeb's claim and advanced with his forces to dethrone Aurangzeb. On the way, Mir Jumla, the general of Aurangzeb fought with Shah Shuja and he was defeated at Kajawa, at the north of Allahabad on 5 January 1658 A.D…

Then Aurangzeb put his elder brother Dara Shikandar to jail, to whom he promised to reappoint him as the governor of Punjab and was crowned on 21st July as Emperor of India. In 1660 A.D. Mir Jumla conquered Bengal and defeated Shah Shuja at Dhaka. According to '*Alamgirnamah*', Shah Shuja had three sons Zain-al-din, Buland Akter, Zain-al-Abedin and three daughters Gulrukh Banu, Raushan Ara Begum or Mah Khanan and Amena Banu. His wife is Piaree or Piara Banu. On Sunday, 6th May 1660, Shah Shuja fled with his treasures and family with an army of 3000 archers to Mrauk-U (Mrohaung).They arrived at Chittagong on 3rd June 1660 A.D. From thence they had arrived at the capital Mrauk-U on 26th August 1660 A.D. On the way he stayed at Maungdaw. The village, where he stayed a few days at Maungdaw, is still known as Shujapara.

The intention of Shah Shuja was to go to Holy Makkah, where he wanted to pass his rest of life. Sanda Thudama (1651-1684 A.D.), the king of Arakan, granted him asylum and give a house at the foot of Babu hill (Mintha Taung) on the right bank of Wathee creek (near the Palace) with full facilities. The king also promised to provide a ship for travelling to Holy Makkah. But he wanted to break the promise for his lust for his daughter and teasures. The king had never seen such huge treasure brought by Shah Shuja. Time passed in many months. But the king kept silent about his promised-ship. He sent messengers for the ship. Sanda Thudama refused it and complained about Shuja's failure to come and ask him about the ship.

Shah Shuja was afraid of being seized if he visited the king. He sent his son. Sultan Banque with various rich brocades and rare pieces of gold smith's work, set with precious stones of great values. But the king wanted to seize all his treasure and find out a lame excuse. So, Sanda Thudama asked the hand of Shuja's daughter Ameena, though he knew very well that Sultan Shuja would never consent, he, being a pagan and she a Muslim princess of the imperial Moghul family members which were strong believers in the tenets of the Muslim faith. As Shah Shuja

refused the suit, the king ordered him to leave the country within three days. Aurangazeb, a brother from the same mother womb became his deadly enemy and he had no ship to proceed for Makkah. To die was cast. To live, Shah Shuja had to dare.

According to Arakanese Chronicles of that period tells that Shah Shuja was only too happy to give his daughter to the king of Arakan in gratitude for the asylum granted, however, when he saw that had lost the Moghul throne, he decided to conquer Arakan and make himself king with the help of his own soldiers, the Muslim soldiers under king's army and the local Muslim population, but the plot was uncovered; he fled to the hill, was captured and executed. The historian Sir Arthur Phayre thinks that the Arakanese Chronicles conceal their king's ugly behavior, and emphasise the prince's abortive experiment to capture the palace by neglecting to mention the preceding provocation of not providing the promise ships, the king's request to have one of Shah Shuja daughter's in marriage and his wish to molest the prince's riches. Phayre quotes no source of his opinion, which is apparently only his personal point of view, but a decidedly acceptable one.

In the support of Sir A. P. Phayre's opinion Niccolao Manucci, a Venetian gunner, in service with Prince Dara was in India between the years 1656-1712 A.D. This work *'Storia do mogor or Mogul India*' (1653-1708 A.D.) corroborates, and especially in perfuse detail the slaughter of the Mughal Prince Shah Shuja and his family. He says:

He confided this design to some of his people by whom it was approved. But they were not able to carry out the project with the called-for secrecy, and though the delay they made there was time for the King of Arakan to hear of the plot. He planned the assassination of Shah Shuja and all his adherents, and to this intent called to him his four principal captains, each of whom had three thousand armed men …….. To these he issued orders that one morning of daybreak they should all with one accord shout "Long live the King of Arakan! Death to Shah Shuja and all traitors!" Under cover of these, they were to kill everyone. The captains carried out the order of their king, killing everybody they encountered. Upon this news reaching the unfortunate prince Shah Shuja, he tried to save his life by getting on his elephant, hoping that he might thereby impose some respect for his person.

But it was grievous to see the fury with which the Maghs came on, throwing everything into disorder, with blows and shouts and cries, some saying "Death to the Prince Shah Shuja!" others,"Death to his son. Prince Bang!" "Slay those traitorous Moguls who fled here from Bengal!" Prince Bang was taken prisoner, while Shah Shuja with a few men fled to the jungle. He made liberal use of the bags of jewels and pearls, which he scattered among these savages, attempting by the use of these valuables to mitigate the rage of the soldiers and gain a free passage for his flight. But the Maghs paid no heed to his proffered wealth; they pursued the poor prince like famishing wolves, cutting his body into pieces, stripping it bare, and plundering all his valuables……..

So, on 7th February 1661 A.D. Shah Shuja fled to the forest with some of his followers. The Magh chased them like faminishing wild wolves. Ultimately the Magh caught Sultan Shah Shuja and

chopped him into pieces and plundering all his valuables. The family of Shah Shuja was arrested by the Magh Raja.

According to D.G.E Hall, on 25th July 1663 A.D., the Royal Palace had been fired by 10 or 12 desperate "Mogolders" and burnt to the ground. In the general confusion Manaw-thiri, the Governor of Mrauk-U, was burnt to death and the king and his family bearly escaped with their lives. Shah Shuja's three sons were suspected of having been the cause of it and the king gave orders for the total extermination of Shuja's family. Sultan Banque and his brother were decapitated with blunt axes, and the ill fated families were closely confined in their apartments. Piara Banu, Shah Shuja's wife, when approached by king Sanda Thudhamma in his seraglio, is supposed to have killed with a dagger while her two elder daughters took poison and died. The youngest, Amena Banu, was forcibly taken as wife by the king but languished in captivity and left to die of hunger. It has been confirmed by most accounts that Amena Banu, at the time other assassination was pregnant; her killing was probably the crowning inequity of king Sanda thudhamama among all his other misdeeds.

Many Moors and Bengali Muslims had been plundered and massacred by the order of the king.

Shah Alaol, the great poet and writer who flourished in Arakan Court, also confirmed in his writings Saiful Muluk Baduzzaman and Sikandar Nama referring to the wholesale killings and imprisonments of the Muslims of Mrauk-U. In the reign of terror which followed the abortive rising, Aloal himself, an innocent citizen of Mrauk-U, was incarcerated in prison for a period of 50-days on the basis of the reports of tell-tales and was only released by strong intercession on his behalf.

The fate of Shah Shuja was heard by the Emperor Aurangazeb. Sanda Thudama knew that the Mughal would retaliate it. In advance the Magh Raja ordered the Portugese at Dainga and Sandip to advance to Dhaka. On the way they destroyed 40 ships of the Subeder (governor) of Bengal. So, Emperor Aurangazeb ordered to break the nest of the pirates of Magh and Portugese.

Shayista Khan, the governor of Bengal captured Sandip in 1665 with the cooperation of Dutch. Sanda Thudama had doubt about the loyalty of the Portugese. The Portugese in turn doubt about their safety. So, they fled to the side of Shayista Khan with 42 war ships.

In February 1666, Shayista Khan's son General Buzuruk Omed Khan captured Chittagong with the help of 288-war ships. After the captured of Chittagong the Mughals conquered Ramu within 36 hours. Two thousand Maghs were sold as slaves. The fleeing Magh soldiers were chased by the local Muslims.

Some historians view that Gen. Omed Khan captured whole of Arakan for a very short period. They did not keep control of Arakan because the aim of the Mughul Emperor was only to control Bengal and to break the nest of the pirates. They could easily control Arakan because the Portugese and the Dutch were on their side.

If Shah Shuja planned to seize the throne of Arakan was true and the secrecy of the Shah Shuja was not known to Magh Raja, Shah Shuja could easily captured the throne of Arakan and the course of Arakanese history might have been changed.

After the loss of Chittagong and Ramu, out of fear, the Rakhine Maghs of North Arakan fled to the South. Many Muslims migrated to North Arakan.

G. E. Harvey wrote in his book the History of Burma that at that time though there were no robbery but the atmosphere of robbery existed. Alter the massacre of Shah Shuja, his remaining followers in 1661 A.D. were retained as Archers of the Guard, praetorians who drew Rs. 4 a month, equivalent to many times that amount of modern currency, at the request of Muslim Prime Minister Margan.

Some of the followers of Shah Shuja escaped the persecution of Maghs and crossed to Burma. The king of Ava settled them in Ramethin, Shwebo, Maydu, Meiktila, Their descendants can be found today at these places. Detail was written by U-Mya (I) in his Short History of Burmese Muslims.

Chapter VI

THE EMERGENCE OF ETHNIC ROHINGYAS

The term Rohingya is derived from the word Rohai or Roshangee, a terminology pervered to Rohingya. Rohai and Roshangee are terms denoting the Muslim people inhabiting in the old Arakan (Rohan/Roshang/ Roang). It is probably the corruption of Arabic term Raham (blessing) or Raham Borri meaning the land of God's blessings.

The word Rahma to Rahmi-Rahmia-Rahingya to Rohingya, which denotes honest, dutiful, pitiful or kind hearted to others.

But there is another historical defination of Rohingya. That is Rohingya which derived from the Magh language "Rwa-haung-gya-kyia". The Magh used to call the Pathan army of General Wali Khan and General Sandi Khan, who came to restore the throne to Narameikhia, as "Rwa-haung-gya-kyia"- which was changed time to time – as Rwahingyia – Rohingya-which denotes as brave as tiger. As the Pathans army defeated the

Mon-Talaing army, the Rakhine Maghs used to call the Pathan as brave as tiger. They mixed with the Arab descendants for centuries and become Rohingyas.

"Arakan, infect, a continuation of the Chittagong plain was neither purely a Burmese nor an Indian territory till the 18th century of the Christian era. Chiefly for its location, it was not only remained independent for the most part of history, but endeavoured to expand its territory in the surrounding tracts whenever opportunity came and Chittagong was the first to be the victim of the territorial ambition of the Arakanese monarchs.

…… Shut off from Burma by a hill range, it is located far away from the Indian capitals. The relation between Chittagong and Arakan is influenced by geographical, ethnological, cultural and historical considerations, from about 1580 A.D. nearly a century, Chittagong was under almost uninterrupted Arakanese rule which is undoubtedly an important period marked by momentous events.

"There were Moors, Moghuls and Pathans also in Arakan…. Thus, the Muslim population of Arakan consisted roughly of four categories, namely, the Bangalee, other Indian, Afro-Asian and native. Among these four categories of Muslims the Bengali Muslims formed the largest part of the total Muslim population of Arakan."

The Arabs and Pathans army are founded the original nucleus of the Rohingyas in Arakan, who arrived from Arab and Bengal Sultanate during the time of Arakanese kings.

The Arabs were the first to lay the foundation of Muslim society in Arakan in the later part of the 7th century A.D. and the waves of immigration from Bengal were very significant, for with these immigrants came the Muslim nobels, statemen, traders, teachers, poets, and soldiers.

There had been large-scale conversion of the Hindus, Buddhists and animists to Islam who also constitute part and parcel of the Rohingya. In 15th century the number of converts to Islam soared, specially as the Muslims has established standard of credibility and stature in the community, initially through inter-mirrages.

These various migrations led to the admixture of blood and culture to form one common racial and linguistic classification to be known as Rohingya a term derived from "Rohang", the ancient name of Arakan.

The Rohingya people developed a culture which was relatively advanced for that period. Schools, Madarasas were established, epics, ballads and riddles were advanced, music and dances were performed. This culture spread out all over Arakan. The Rohingya economy was also relatively developed. They developed agriculture, trade and commerce and extended their trade relation with neighbouring countries. Today the majority of the Rohingya people rely on agriculture as their base of subsistence; even Rohingya fishermen engage in agriculture during the non-fishing period.

Among the Muslim population of Chittagong two distinct ethnic characters are found; one is known as Chatgaiya and the other Rohai. Although professing the same religion they have different cultural habits. In fact the Rohais of Chittagong today are those Muslim people who fled Arakan (Rohang) as a result of Bunnan atrocities after the country was occupied in 1784 A.D. As many as 50% of the total population of Chittagong district are Rohais who trace their ancestoral origin to Arakan. The Rohingyas trace their origin to Arabs, Moors, Turks, Persians, Moghuls, Patthans and Bangalees.

Since Rohingyas are mixture many kinds of people, their check-bone is not so prominent and eyes are not so narrow like Rakhine Maghs and Burman. Generally they are broad shouldered, thin-bearded, a bit taller in stature than the Rakhine Maghs and Burmans but darker in complexion. They are some bronze coloured and not yellowish.

THE ROHINGYAS ARE A NATION

"From 1430 to 1531, for more than one hundred years, Arakan was ruled by the Muslims." "Their Muslim Kingdom was independent in the 14th and 15th centuries. It was later absorbed by Burma" in 1784 A.D. The people of Arakan, the Rohingyas and Rakhines, had already organized their own statehood patterned after the Sultanate system of government current in those days. Thus in the context of Arakan the Rohingyas are not a minority but part of an integral whole. Today Rohingya nation exists because it is rooted in the direct personal feelings and the material interests of the large section of the Rohingya people whether in the homeland or in the places of refuge:

Aside from the compulsion of geography the Rohingya national identity is unique into Itself in terms of language and culture. The Rohingyas speak a common language and have common cultural trials. Almost all the Rohingyas are Muslims though there are a few Rohingya language speaking Hindus and Baruas. The Rohingyas are proud of their distinctive culture and language. They can not be classified cultural sub-group.

ROHINGYA HOMELAND

The Rohingyas inhabit a contiguous area and therefore have a separate territory which is the most crucial element in a national identity. The Rohingya populations in North Arakan are united by ancient heritage, a rich culture and distinct language. They have lived for many centuries within well defined geographical boundaries which demarcate their "Traditional Homeland". The group identity of the Rohingya people has grown over the past several centuries, hand in hand with the growth of their homeland in North Arakan, where they worked together, spoke to each other, founded their families, educated their children and also sought refuge, from time to time, from physical attacks elsewhere in Arakan and Burma.

The Rohingyas were once in absolute majority in the whole of Arakan. But they have been exterminated in a systematic and planned way and their homeland has now shrunk progressively in insignificance or to semi-preservations — a process still evidenced. Planned increase in the Buddhist population systematically exterpate the Rohingya people and destroy the crucial geo-graphical link between areas in the whole of Arakan. It threatens the Rohingya's claim to a contiguous homeland of the whole of North Arakan. The face of Rohingya homeland has been changed as the Rohingyas are helpless to check their demographic erosion. Despite systematic extermination of Rohingya population by means of genocidal actions and continued persecution, the Rohingyas still predominate in the area between the river Naf which demarcates the border between Burma and Bangladesh and river Kaladan, the longest river in Arakan. But the Rohingyas still claim that all those areas which have been inhabited by Muslims or atleast within

their sphere of influnce before the pogram of 1942 are also included in their ***Traditional Homeland.***

Arakan has always been a country with two nations within one geographic entity. Two different peoples, from the very ancient period, have been inhabiting Arakan. During the course of their settlements Arakan is divided into two parts : Muslim North and Buddhist South. That is the Rohingya homeland of North Arakan and Rakhine homeland of South Arakan.

Though Rohingyas live everywhere in Arakan and they are once majority in Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Rathidaung, Akyab, Kyauktaw, Mrohaung and Minbya. Now, they are majority only in former Mayu Dist. and Akyab Island.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

All Rohingyas profess Islam. They are strict followers of Islamic traditions. In every village there is atleast one mosque and one grave-yard.

Rohingya Muslims celebrate religious festivals with great joy and enthussasm. Great rejoicings marked the two Eids, Eidul-Fitr, and Eidul-Azha (Qurbani Eid). Eids prayers were generally offered at Eidgahs or Mosques (where there is no Eidgah) and the days were spent in feeding, feasting and visiting the houses of the neighbours and relations. They also visit graveyard for ziyarat who left them earlier. Zakat is paid by all solvent Rohingya people ordinarily during the month of Ramadan. Qurbani is offered by all according to their financial means. Shab-i-Maraj, Shab-i-Barat and Shab-i-Qadar were observed with prayer, devotion, alms-giving and feeding of the poor. Romadan is greeted by all Rohingyas with much religious fervour. The birth day of Hazart Mohammed (s.m.) was celebrated every year on 12th of Rabiul-Awal as known Uman-Nabi.

Though the Rohingyas lived together with Rakhine Maghs, they lived with their own culture.They never eat together. Inter-marriage also not so common. They live in separate villages.

Every compact village or a part of it formed a social unit with the mosque as its centre and a uniting force for the convenience and regulation of social life of the inhabitants of the area. The eldest, pious, and influential man in the society was recogonised as the head of village society (Samaj) who decide all disputes among them with the help of village elders.

DWELLING-HOUSES

In Arakan, Rohingya people live in somewhat densely packed villages and the majority of their houses are built of wooden pole, bamboo, thatched with palm-leaves (Dani) and stand on stilts as a protection against the floods that rise and surge under the monsoon rains.

At townships headquarters and at most villages of any size or importance a few brick houses are to be found in Arakan. In the large villages have a fair number of wooden houses with thatch (dani) or corrugated iron roofs.

OCCUPATION AND TRADE

The soil of Arakan is very fertile and the climate is ideal for rice cultivation. Arakan is dependent entirely on agriculture; all other occupations are subsidiary to, or exist for the maintenance of, the agricultural population. Of total Rohingya population 80% are occupied in agriculture or pasturing. The next order of numbers are those engaged in trade in food-stuffs. The third in respect of numbers are shop-keepers and followed by persons engaged in transport by water and by road, wood workers, fisherman, manufacturers of tobacco and salts.

MARRIAGE

Endogamy is a factor resulting in the practice of segmentation. In other words, endogamy reinforces ties of common descent. The Rohingyas practise endogamy.

In early days, a Rohingya would not be eligible for marriage until three voyages of trade by water or three trips of trade on land. Otherwise, he would be looked down by the society and would call him impotent with contempt.

The Rohingya would never marry with other non-Muslim without conversion to Islam. If one many without conversion to Islam, the Rohingya society would boycott them until and unless he or she embraees Islam. So, the Rohingya parents control their children and arrange marriage between the parents. If they eloped, after having love affairs, the Rohingya society used to condemn them.

Betrothal is arranged by the Rohingya parents. The bride and the groom are not allowed to meet before marriage. Family lines are thoroughly checked before the engagement. Engagement breaks if there arise dissension amoung the parents or guardians. Mohar is fixed by the parents or guardians of the bride and the groom and it is most essential according Islamic law. It must be given by the groom for the bride. Both the bride and groom must declare their willingness by pronouncing the words “Khawbul Ahsi” (we do agree) in front of at lest two witness and the molvi Shaheeb (Alim) who perform the mirrage. Divorce rate among the Rohingyas is less then other races of Burma. The wedding ceremonies are held in receptions as far as possible. The receiption diner is usually held by the family of the bride-groom. In special case called “Salami”, the reciption dinner is hold at bride home. During the wedding month the relatives of the newly wedded couple use to invite them and are served with at least one meal in consecutive days by each and every household of their relatives which shows their affections for the couple. In almost all Rohingya’s marriage ceremonies ‘Howlla’ (Group singing) songs sing and folk-dancing of girls and women are common.

FOODS

Rice is the staple food grain of Arakan. The diet of the Rohingya is simple rice, fish, vegetables and chillis; meat was taken on occasions. The majority Rohingyas eat dry fishes with fresh vegetables or potatoes or also without any of them. On all festive occasion cows, water-buffolos and goats were slaughtered for sales and distribution.

Rakhine Maghs like pork very much. Rohingyas never touch or eat pork. Pork is forbidden by Islam. They eat mutton, beef, chicken after making Halal according to Islamic teaching. Rohingyas honoured their special guests slaughtering a goat or more with their means and the poor with a chiken.

DRESS

The Rakhine Maghs males wear Gaung-Boung and Rohingyas males wear caps. The Rakhine Maghs wear Burmese jackets and Rohingyas wear coats. In olden days Rohingya used to wear Turbans of white clothes of 10 yards long and 1/2 yard breath. But British and Indian culture changed the dress of the Rohingya.

The male Rohingya wears a shirt with long sleeves called Bazu covering the upper part of the body while the lower part is covered a sheet of cloth stitched from side to side called longgi. Vest or gonji is wear as inner garment by the Rohingya male.

The adult female Rohingya wears long sleeved garment known as Suli to cover the upper part of the body while the lower part is covered with a Tami. Inner garment called Boduli long sleeve barazier wear every gril and woman of Rohingya. They wear a petticoat of cloth called Assar. This is without tie or fastening, but is broutht round the waist, with the edges well twisted in and kept on by the graceful curve of the hips. Young woman fastened a silk Belt called Rayshamer-Dowali and old women fastened a pice of red cloth 2.5 yards long and six inches wide stitched from side to side called Jali to hold their Tami on their waists.

She also wears a scarf known-as Romal which cover the head and shoulders. Whenever she is out-door she wears a Burkha, traditional veil covering the whole body.

RITES AND RITUALS

Some Rohingya males keep hair fallen on shoulders. They are mostly Molvis. The Rohingyas, on their brith, they keep the Islamic names in Arabic. Some prefer Burmese names or Rakhine Magh names at schools mostly where the teachers are Rakhine Maghs as they can not pronounce Muslim name correctly. Some keep both names such as, Saleh Tun Sein, Ahmed Maung Maung and so on. It is also not good. Muslim should take pride as the kings of Arakan used Muslim titles.

On the death of a Rohingya Muslim all the members of the society arranged his / her funeral as a social duty and hurried him/her in the graveyard with a prayer (janaza) according to Islamic Law.

Rohingyas are good natured people. They are honest. They are not oppressors. They can not tolerate the oppressors. They defend their people even not caring their lives. They are brave and intelligent people.

During the Second World War, the Rohingya fought for the Independence of Burma with courage. Though the Japanese easily conquered the Southern part of Arakan within a few days, the Japanese were unable to control the North-Arakan due to the defence strategy. Even the Japanese had to retreat failing to advance-through the defence operation of Rohingyas. The courage and bravery of Rohingyas should be recorded in Myanmar Razawin. As Rohingyas are always neglected people, their bravery was never recorded. Rohingyas respect laws and are peace loving people.

SPORTS AND GAMES

Rohingyas have may indigenous sports and games which are usually held during summer and winter. Some also in rainny season. They are Boli-Khela (wrestling), Ghari-Khela (Boat racing), Mohal Khela, Gila-Khela Du Du Khela, Qunda Khela (weight lilting of round stone), Dan Khela, Ulu Khela, Ciyar Khela, Luk-palani Khela, Phoni Khela, Mal-pat Khela, Bak-goru Khela, Bosgya-buri Khela, Morish Khela, Bat Khela, Kalatur Khela, Saws-sa-rani Khela, Dope-marani Khela, diving and swimming, Paddy transplanting competition.

SONGS AND MUSICS

The Rohingyas are fond of music (both vocal and instrumental) and dance. Rohingyas have their own folk songs, dances and musics. Howla songs sing by women in almost all Rohingya's marriage ceremonies and also women dance their flok dences in the same ceremonies. Young women mostly used mouth orgen (Baza) while dancing.Bitayali Geet, Jari Geet and Gazir Geet are very music is very sweet and meladious. Those who had came across the Rohingya National Programme from the Burma Broadcasting Service (BBS), they may recall the art of the Rohingya music.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

There is separate Rohingya language, literature and civilization. It developed through Islamic civilization. Rohingya language is a mixture of Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Bangali and Rakhine Maghs, because they are the people of border and as same as the people of other border of Burma.

In the year 1429 A.D. General Wall Khan introduced Persian as state language of Arakan and also introduced Qazi courts in Arakan. Rohingya language is not recent make up. Muslim writers and poets used to write in this language since the early days in Arabic and Persian alphabets. One of the book is still in the possession of the author (Tahir Ba Tha). In addition to this, the coins of Arakan were melted in Arabic and Persian and also there are numerous Kyauksa (stone inscriptions) carved in Arabic.

The Rohingya literature is considerly rich in ballads, love songs, Floktales, Baramasa, legends,mystic songs, proverbs, bewsans, riddles, lullabies (Auli) and so on.

There are many Rohingya poets and writers who flourished in the court of Arakan kings. The Arakanese kings had come under the influence of Bengal Sultans. Most of the their courtiers were Bengali speaking people from Bengal and neighbouring Chittagong region and they encouraged the cultivation of Bengali language. The poets and writers who wrote in Bengali and a good number of their poems and works have been discovered.

Some of the Rohingya poets and writers who flourished in Araka court are: Abdu Minyo or Ahmedu Minyo, Shah Barid Khan, Daulat Kazi, Mardan and. Shah Alawal.

Quraishi Magan, Abdul Karim Khandkar, poet Abdul Karim are also well known writers and poets of Arakan.

The British government also used Persian as the official language ofArakan till 1836 A.D.In addition to Rohingyas many Rakhine Maghs also learned Persians. For example- Seikky Thado Pe and U Aung Gyi. Later on Persian was replaced by English and Urdu.

Thus written languages of Rohingya, Persian and Bengali almost disappeared from Arakan during the later part of British rule. The British subtitued English, Urdu and Burmese in place of Rohingya, Persian and Bengali. The Rohingya used Urdu till 1945 British re-entry. Urdu language is rich in poetry and literature.

The kinds of birds can be differentiated with their feathers. So it is time for Rohingyas to establish their ancestral dress, literature and culture. Rohingyas are rich with fine-arts, music and architecture. Rohingya architecture resemble the Arab Saracenic style which is witnessed by the mosques of Arakan. Sandi Khan mosque was built with hard rocks and easier design which stood as the oldest Rohingya’s archeological monument.

So, it must be preserved by the Rohingyas.Rohingyas should take pride for those Muslims who had built this mosque.

ROHINGYAS AND THE UNION CITIZENSHIP ACT OF 1948

In the precedng chapters, we have given the Rohingya’s millenia old establishment in Arakan, with a history of more than 3 centuries of Muslim influence and rule. No Citizenship Law by any standard, can legally term Rohingya as non-nationals; however, it is the false interpretation of the Law by politically motivated elements that the Rohingyas are termed as non-nationals or inferior citizens.

In March 1947 Mr. Sultan Ahmed and Mr. Abdul Gaffar returned on the votes of Rohingya Muslims as members of the Constituent Assembly and these members are still continuing in office, representing the Akyab District North Constituency, and took the oath of allegiance to the

Union of Burma on the 4th January 1948 as members of the new Parliament of the Union of Burma.

In Chapter II, Section 10 and 11 of the 1947 Constitution of Union of Burma stated that:

- 10- There shall be but one citizenship throughout the Union; that is say, there shall be no citizenship of the unit as distrinct from the citizenship of the Union.
- 11-(i) Every person, both of whose parents be- long or belonged to any of the indigenous races of Burma;

(ii) Every person born in any of the territories includd within the Union, atleast one of whose grand-parents belonged to any of the indigenous races of Burma;

(iii) Every person both in any of the territories included with the Union of parents both of whom are, if they had been alive at the commencement of this constitution would have been, citizens of the Union;

(iv) Every person who was born in any of the territories which at the time of his birth was included within His Britannic Majesty's dominions and who has resided in any of the territories included within the Union for a period of not less than 8 years in the ten years immediately preceding the 1st January 1942 and who intends to reside permanently therein and who signifies his election of Citizenship of the Union in a manner and within the time pescribed by law, shall be Citizen of the Union."

'Indigenous race' is a term applied to a people distnct culture and civilisation who had been residing within the territory of Union before 1823, the year of British occupation of Arakan.

When Section 11 of the Constitution of the Union of Burma was being farmed a doubt as to whether the Rohingya Muslims of North Arakan fell under the Section 11, Sub-Clauses (i), (ii) and (iii), arose and in effect an objection was put in to have the doubt cleared in respect of the term "Indigenous" as used in the Constitution, but it was withdrawn on the understanding and assurance of the President of the Constituent Assembly, at present His Excellency the President of the Union of Burma, who, when approached for clarification with this question, said *"Muslims of Arakan certainly belong to one of the indigenous races of Burma which you represent. In fact, there is no pure indigenous race in Burma, and that if you do not belong to indigenous races of Burma, we also can not be taken as indigenous races of Burma."* Being satisfied with his kind explanation, the objection put in was withdrawn by the Rohingyas' M.Ps.

In 1948, however, a new Citizenship act (The Union Citizenship Act of 1948) was promulgated which restricted Section 11 (iv) of Constitution to any person *"from ancestors who for two generation at least all made any of the terriories included within the Union of Burma their permanent home and whose parents and himself were born in any such territories."* As a measure to prevent the continued immigration of the Indians into Burma, all residents in Burma were required to apply for registration within one year of the law and were

givn indenty cards. Many Rohingyas registered and were given cards which enabled them to vote during the democratic period between 1948 to 1962.

According to Mr.M.A. Gaffar, Member of Parliment (M.P.) from Akyab West Constituency and Parliamentary Secretary from 1947 to 1962, Press Conference held on 21st. April 1960 in Rangoon are:

“Though Rohingyas resemble a little with the people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), their literature, names and tittles, dresses, languages, customs and cultures are as difference as the sky and the earth. Therefore to regard Rohingyas as Chittagonians is a grevious hurt to Rohingyas and a matter of tragedy and a great blow to Rohingya and far from actual history.”

“Although Rohingya’s culture, tradition, history and civilization are not inferior to that of other indigenous races of Burma, Rohingyas are always victims of persecutions, specially, the immigration used to arrest them. In June 1959, 76 Rohingyas were rounded and arrested in Akyab and Mayu districts by the immigration and were sent to Rangoon by steamer for ultimate dispatch to Gawdu-thoung in Pyapon District.”

“On November 4, 1959, the Supreme Court of Burma had passed orders directing the release of Hasan Ali and Mahar Alt, who were arrested about the same time and on the same ground. It was pointed out them that the two cases would have served as test cases to the immigration. This was not done and the court had to order to release of 76 detainees who had subsequently applied for writ of habeas corpus. Section 4(2) of the Union Citizenship Act. also pointed out that those persons whose ancestors had made Burma for two generation as their home and who and whose parents were born in Burma were also citizens of the Union. It had been observed by the court that in Union of Burma there were races who could not speak the Burmese language and who nevertheless were citizens of the Union of Burma.”

“According to Section 3 (1) of the Act, the people who lived in group in a part of Burma since 1823 (Bur-mese Era 1185) are also indigenous people of Burma in addition to Karen, Kaya, Chin, Myanmar, Mon, Rakhine (Magh) and Shan.”

“Due to the 1942 Massacre of Muslims of Arakan, the Rohingyas of Kyauktaw, Mrohaung, Minbya, Pauktaw, Phoonagyon and Maybon had fled to Mayu Dist. and the population of Mayu Dist. increased, which is better known to the Magh people, but the Maghs intentionally alleged them as the illegal immigrants from Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The precious unity of the two sister people of Arakan was ruined due to the fault of Maghs. Rohingyas tried several times for the unity of the people of Arakan, as it is time for the development of Arakan. But the Maghs have not changed their hostile attitude towards, Rohingyas.”

“Some leaders from Arakan have been engaged in malicious propaganda against the Rohingya people. Some after the Second World War, when the British reoccupied Burma, they began to conspire against the Rohingyas with the slogan that the Rohingyas are Pakinstani minded and consented to join Arakan with Pakistan. This slogan is utterly false and is but a device to tarish

the image of the Rohingyas with a view to exterminating them. These communal and narrow minded Maghs leaders engineered a communal riot in 1942 resulting in the total destruction of the age old Rohingya settlements from 6 of the 9 townships of Akyab District. The Rohingya population of Myebon in Kyauckpyu District was completely annihilated. Many Rohingyas had taken shelter in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships. A number of them had taken refuge in the then East Bengal."

"These uprooted Rohingyas, execpting those from the townships of Maungdaw and Buthidaung, have not been repatriated and rehabilitated yet, in their original places. There is no security for their lives. More than half of their landed properties were taken away by the Rakhine Maghs who are not ready to return the prop-erties to the original Rohingya owners. It had become an attraction for the Rakhines of other areas to leave for those 7 townships to grasp the chance of the seizing Rohingyas' lands. Accordingly, the Rakhines from Maungdaw and Buthidaung had sold out their lands to the Rohingyas at high prices and scrambled to get possession of the Rohingyas lands."

"Now let us ask those Rakhine Magh leaders who are shouting that the Pakistanis are infiltrating into the country. Where are those Rohingyas from 7 townships of 244 Villages have gone? Were all these people killed in 1942 riot? The answer is certainly not. How long the Rakhines will illegally hold the lands of the Rohingyas? How long will they show this drama? The alledged illegal immigration of Pakistanis is utter false.

It is nothing but a conspiracy to perpetuate their illegal possession of Rohingyas' lands and to oppose their repatriation and rehabilitation in their homeland."

"In 1949-50 more than 30,000 Rohingyas, that included women and children, were inhumanly driven across the border to East Pakistan. Conspiratory plans after plans have been hatched out to finish of the Roningyas with the slogan of illegal immigration. This was carried out with an ulterior motive to disturb Rohingyas and to oppose their rehablitation."

"The Government is indifferent to the plights of the Rohingvas. They do not get any legal redress. Even the Government officials publicly threaten :

"Why don't you Kalas (aliens) understand the policy of the Government? Why don't you leave the country despite continued persecution?"

"What a unfortunate is this! They are not Pakistanis and so they are not accepted by the Pakistan Government. But by all legal standards they are Burmese citizens entitled to all rights and protections guar-anteed by the constitution of Burma. Inspite of this they are unwanted by their own Government. If so, where shall they go arid who will give them asylum? It is very unfortunate that instead of getting any remedies the culprits and the violators of law are encouraged and rewarded.

Through out their Parliamentary tenure Ra-Ta-Nya (Rakhine Maghs' Party) members acted in an unfriendly manner against the Rohingyas. They branded Rohingyas as "Kalas" or Chittgoniany and did not recognise Rohingyas as their equals.

After winning 1960 General Election Govt. of Prime Mininster U Nu declared to set up a special ***"Mayu Frontier Admisnistration" (MFA)*** in the provinces of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and western portion of Rathedaung under direct control of Central Govt. It would be administered by Army officers. However the new arrangement earned the agreement of the Rohingya leaders. The actual implementation of the administration took place with effect from March 31, 1961. The Govt. recognised Rohingya as an indigenous

race of Burma. A special police force known as *"Mayu ye"* was rised with recruits from local Rohingya Mus-

lims and the law and order situation strated to improve. Since Govt. of Burma resolved and recognized Rohingyas as one of the indiginous races of Burma, 1st batch of 290 Rohingya armed Mujahadeen surrendered on July 4, 1961 at Maungdaw and another 2nd batch of more than 200 armed Mujahadden surrendered on November 15, 1961.

Chapter VIII

THE EMERGENCE OF ETHNIC KAMANS

Besides Arabs and Pathans there were also Kaman archers, the followers of Moghul Prince Shah Shuja. The descendants of Shah Shuja's Kaman archers are still survive in Arakan among the Rohingyas with their special name *"Ethnic Kamans"* in Arakan. Kaman is a Persian word means a bow. They speak Rakhine Magh language but retaing their Mohammedan faith and Afghan features.

The Kamans, units of Muslim Archer servicing the king of Arakan, got the upper hand and continually reinforced by new forces from Upper India. From 1690 to 1710 AD. (for 20-years) the political rule of Arakan was completely in their hands. They were the king makers of Arakan. They used to roam to over the country carrying fire and sword, wherever they went. If a Kaman was angry in a Magh village, out of fear, all Magh villagers used to run away.

So, there is a proverb among the Maghs. That is "In water the shark (is most dangerous) and on land the Kaman is": In 1710 AD. Maha Danbado defeated the Kaman and ascended the throne with the title of SandaWizaya(1710-1731). He deported the Kaman archers to Thayagon, Thinganet, Thakeybin, Rambree and Sandaway and the cavalry forces of Muslim Pathans were deported to the Northern border areas of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung and Kyauktaw and Minbya.

The Kaman women are very industrious. They ran business from vegetable to cloth in Akyab, Rambree and Sandaway. But Kaman males are lazy. Their culture, dress, tradition, every thing is

like Maghs except their religion, Islam. Inter-marriage between Kaman and Rohingya is common. Their children become Kamans if they are grown among Kamans, and they become Rohingya if they are grown among Rohingyas. Such people are commonly found in Akyab District. If a Kaman is asked why they are called Kaman they would proudly reply that their ancestors were archers of Mughal and Rakhine kings.

Though Kamans are educated Muslims, their spirit of Islam is weak. Moreover, they are influenced by Buddhist culture as they live mixing with the Buddhist people. Therefore, the Kamans of Laydaung, Sanne and Kyauktaw professed Buddhism according to M. K. Rahman's Tarik-i-Islam Arakan and Burma (Urdu version), which make (the author) very sorry. It was indeed the weakness of Rohingyas and Kamans. To control and hinder from such occurence is the duty of Rohingyas and Kamans. Negligence to it would lead to the. disapperance of their people.

Chapter XI

CONCLUSION

The Rohingyas are an ethno-racial group developed from different stocks of people. They trace their ancestry to Arabs, Moors, Turks, Moghuls, Bengalees and some Indo-Mongoloid people. The first group to leave its mark upon the culture and civilization of Arakan were the Arabs who carried out trade and propagation of Islam while settling down permanently in the coastal areas. The descendants of the mixed marriges between the local people and Arabs founded the original nucleus of the Rohingyas in Arakan. The Muslim settlements in Arakan dated back to 7th century A.D. The Buddhists of Arakan, the other major ethnic community, known as Maghs or Rakhine are a mix-blooded race descended from Indo-Aryans of Maghada, Mongolians and Tibeto-Burmans.

Until 1942, all those in Arakan – the Rakhine Buddhists and the Rohingya Muslims lived in full harmony and amity. But in early 1942, an ultra – conservative section of the Rokhine Buddhist undertook a sort of campaign to keep the Arakanese Rohingya Muslims under subjections, massacred about 1,00,000 Rohingya Muslims and causing as many as 80,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee from Arakan and to take shelter in the then East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Since 1948, up to 1992, there have been no less than 19 major "operations" or eviction campaigns against the Rohingyas carried out the Government of Burma. The largest and probably the best documented "operation" was the so-called King Dragon operation of 1978. Between 24 April and 25 July 1978 more than 250.000 Rohingyas fled into Bangladesh as refugees. The 1991-92 campaign known as Pay Saya, which was launched on 18 July 1991,the refugee figure is little over (2,68.887) "that of 1978 and the causes of the influx are not much different.

There was a presence of Rohingyas in practically every place of Arakan. Due to massacre of about 100,000 Rohingya Muslims in 1942 and continued persecution against them some areas in South Arakan have been turned into non-Muslim territory. At present the largest concentration of the Rohingyas is in North Arakan, particularly the territory between the East Bank region of the river Kaladan, the longest river in Arakan, and the river Naf which demarcates the boundary

between Bangladesh and Burma, where they still constitute 70 to 80 percent population of the region. There are also Muslim pockets in South Arakan such as Chaduba, Kyauk Pyu, Kyauk-ni-maw and Sandoway.

The Rohingyas are, by all legal standards, nationals as well as an indigenous ethnic group of the Union of Burma. They had been recognized as such by the previous elected governments with members in parliament and cabinet having a programm as an indigenous people in the official Burma Broadcasting Service (BSS) and participation in official "Union Day" celebration of Burma's racial groups in the Burmese capital every year.

The former Prime Ministers of Burma, U Nu and U Ba Swe stated, *"the Rohingyas are people of Arakan. who profess the Islamic faith. The Rohingyas are equal in every way with other minority races like the Shan, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon and Rakhine, They have lived in Burma for ages, according to historical facts. There is historical evidence that they have lived faithfully and harmoniously with other races of the Union".*

To reject all previous records and refusal to accept the Rohingyas as Burmese nationals is blatant lies. But, their history, civilization and the elected government's statements unambiguously and unequivocally make it evident that:

(a) The arrival and settlements of the Rohingyas in Arakan have predated the arrival and settlements of many other people and races inhabiting Arakan and Burma.

(b) The Rohingyas are nationals of Arakan and constitute one of the many indigenous races of Burma like the Shan, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni etc. now inhabiting Arakan and other parts of Burma.

(c) By history, by tradition, by culture and civilization, the Rohingyas are as much citizens of Burma as anyone else in the country.

The conclusion is drawn with prayer to the Almighty Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, to perpetuate Rohingya and Kaman. Ameen!

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