

TWO BRITISH OFFICERS WHO LIVED IN BURMA / ARAKAN MOST OF THEIR LIVES WROTE WITH INSIGHT AND PERSPECTIVE 100 YEARS AGO

by Rick Heizman, May 21, 2018, San Francisco

R. B. Smart - is a British officer who served most of his life in Arakan as a Deputy Commissioner Settlement Officer. One hundred years ago he wrote these these comments in the:

BURMA GAZETTEER
AKYAB DISTRICT
VOLUME A
COMPILED BY MR. R. B. SMART
(DY Commissioner), Settlement Officer, Akyab
printed in 1917
[Akyab is an old name for Sittwe]

“That the Arakanese are gradually being pushed out of Arakan before the steady waves of Chittagonian immigration from the west is only too well known. The influx from Chittagong is still continuing gradually driving all the natives of Arakan further east.”

The Burma Gazetteer by R.B. Smart

[Almost all the Bengali Muslims in Arakan were streaming in to Arakan from neighboring Chittagong, hence they were most often referred to as ‘Chittagonians’ or ‘Chittagonian Muslims’. There was zero usage of the term ‘Rohingya’ then. They spoke the Chittagonian dialect of Bengali language, which is just a regional dialect, and is widely understood by any Bengali speakers, just as there are other dialects in other areas. And, still, the Bengali language spoken by the Bengali Muslims (Rohingya for the mislead) is Chittagonian dialect of Bengali language.]

“It is not surprising , therefore, to find that the Arakanese are slowly but surely being ousted by the Chittagonians in every walk of life.”

The Burma Gazetteer by R.B. Smart

“Maungdaw township has been overrun by Chittagonian immigrants. Buthidaung is not far behind and new arrivals will be found in almost every part of the district.”

The Burma Gazetteer by R.B. Smart

C.E. Lucas Phillips, a Brigadier General in the British Fourteenth Army, who fought on the Arakan front during the Second World War, clarifies the nature of the Chittagonian Bengali Muslims:

“Arakan is a province of Burma that has a character all its own. The two main strains of the population, mutually hostile, divided by race, language and religion, were of Muslim and Buddhist persuasions respectively.

The Buddhists, to whom the term ‘Arakanese’ was in these parts especially applied, belonged to a tribe or strain known as Maughs or Mughs.

The Muslims had their origin in the district of Chittagong, in the Bengal province of British India, and all Muslims, whether natives of Arakan for generations or recent immigrants, were known as Chittagonians, or in the British forces, as ‘CFs’. .,.

A bewildering babel of languages was spoken by these people. The Arakanese spoke a dialect of Burmese, but the Chittagonians stuck to the Bengali of their homeland, but, if educated, spoke Urdu as well.”

C.E. Lucas Phillips, Brigadier General in the British 14th Army

"I have been told the harrowing tales of cruelty and suffering inflicted on the Arakanese (Buddhist) villages in the Rathaydaung area. Most of the villages on the west bank of the Mayu river have been burnt and destroyed by the (Bengali-Muslim) V Force. The enemy (Japanese) never came near to these villages. Hundreds of villagers are said to be hiding in the hills. It will be the Arakanese who will be ousted from their ancestral land and if they cannot win over (the Muslims) in time, then there can be no hope of their salvation.”

C.E. Lucas Phillips, Brigadier General in the British 14th Army, India Office Records R/ 8/9GS. 4243

by Rick Heizman, May 22, 2018, San Francisco

facebookcom/rick.heizman youtube channel = burma friend @rick135b7 scribd.com/rheizman