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U Uttama Bikkhu
(1879-1939)
The Awakening Father
of Burmese Politics
and co-adjutor of
Mahatma Gandhi

Chapter-7. The Myanmarse Fear

Islamic prophecy says, “Golden age of Islam will arise from Arakan and Afghanistan.” How true will this prophecy be? I may not live long enough to know the answer, but I do know what is going on in Arakan today.

The Myanmarse fear of the Muslims and their religion, Islam, originated in the misfortune of the Rakhaing people. Their national kingdom Rakkhapura lost her western territory to the Mogul Empire in 1666 and finally independence to the

Myanmar colonialist in 1784. It came under the British rule in 1826 and lasted till 1948. Inside that vast British Empire which ruled half the world, Rakkhapura was just a piece of broken arrow, very insignificant and useless. She had already lost her original name and by then was known as Arakan, her Persian name. Most historians believe that Arakan is the English name for the Rakhaingpray. As a matter of fact it is the Persian name. Rakkhapura entered into the world map as Arakan in the days of King Mun Saw Mwan in 1430, as I described in the preceding chapters. He was multilingual with good proficiency in Bengali, Hindi, and Persian, on the top of his mother tongue Rakhaing. Among his advisors were a good number of highly educated Muslims and his royal international language was Persian. Being influenced by the Muslim Mogul Empire, the Persian language was adopted by the Rakhaing as well as the Bama kings of those days. It was the fashion of the time. Because of this, Rakkhapura was known as Arakan.

Deeply lost in the world of colonialism, the Arakanese did not know if they should fight for sovereign independence or stay inside India or Burma. In fear of the Muslims and the Hindus they opted to join hands with the Buddhist Bama (Myanmar) on the basis of common religion. *It was a religious decision.* The Bama (Myanmar) is seen as a lesser threat by the Arakanese. Only a small faction, for example U Seinda party, opted for sovereign independence to no avail. U Uttama Bikkhu was the only one who favored remaining part of India. Subsequently a vast majority of the Arakanese youths and intellectuals joined Anti-Fascist and People Freedom League (AFPFL) at its birth in 1943, signaling their acceptance of the Burman leadership.

The Rakhaing people’s post-WWII decision to take independence together with Myanmar people was a religious decision based upon their fear of the Muslims and Hindus who were their populous western neighbors. Bikkhu U Uttama who favored to stay inside India was driven out of his native town SaiteTwey (Akyab). U Uttama awakened the people of British Burma when he commanded, “Craddock, go home”, in 1920, at a time when the Burmese humbly addressed to a Britisher as “Great Master” (*Thakin-gyi*). Sir Reginald Henry Craddock was the Lieutenant Governor of Burma from 1918-1922. For his brave words that woke up Burma, U Uttama was honored as *the Awakening Father* of Burmese politics by her people including General Aung San, U Nu, and General Ne Win. He was also a coadjutor of Mahatma Gandhi. Under the 1935 Government Act of Burma, the British Masters planned to separate Burma from India. Burma was an administrative unit of the British India since 1885. At that time, U Uttama advocated the Burmese to stay inside India opposing the separation. This greatly angered the Rakhaing Buddhists who charged him as a pro-Kala (pro-Indians). A Buddhist monk survives on the charity of the Buddhist lay-people. The people of Saite Twey boycotted U Uttama and did

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Chapter 7 contains 3 tables, 13 illustrations, 1 chart, 1 figure, and 4 maps, incorporated under the following subheadings.

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- ◆ Myanmarese Fear-1, The Ghost of Islamic Empire
- ◆ Myanmarese Fear-2, Will Nalanda's fate visit Myanmar Buddhist institutions?
- ◆ Myanmarese Fear-3, The Ruins of Paharpur
- ◆ Myanmarese Fear-4, The Ruins of Mainamati
- ◆ Myanmarese Fear-5, Will Shwedagon Pagoda face the fate of Paharpur and Mainamati?
- ◆ Myanmarese Fear-6, Will Maha Mrat Muni Rakhaing Buddha face the fate of Afghanistan Bumiyan Buddha?
- ◆ Myanmarese Fear-7, The fear of re-defining freedom
- ◆ Myanmarese Fear-8, The fear of being cornered
- ◆ Myanmarese Reaction in Response to Their Fear