

OFFICE NOTE.

SECRET.

To
Dy.C.C.A.O.(BURMA)

Subject:- M U G H S.

In reply to your Office Note No.Misc/43-2524 dated
24 Aug.

Copy of a short note on the various races which inhabit the ARAKAN, which has been included in Combined H.Q. D.I.S. No.349, is attached. This is based on the Government of BURMA'S views on the names to be used in describing the different communities, and it is hoped that misnomers and consequent confusion will be avoided in the future.

Sd/-
for Brigadier,
General Staff, Eastern Army.

No.44640/80/GS(I)(a)
29 August 1943.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE ARAKAN.

A brief note on the various races which inhabit the ARAKAN is appended. Care should be taken to employ the correct description for the different communities. Particular attention is drawn to the note on the term "MUGH", which is NOT to be used.

(a) THE ARAKANESE. These people are of the same stock as the BURMESE, and they settled in ARAKAN many centuries ago. The ARAKAN YOMAHs restricted communication between ARAKAN and the rest of BURMA, so in course of time the ARAKANESE came to be regarded as a separate race. The ARAKANESE form the bulk of the population of ARAKAN and are of the BUDDHIST faith. They outnumber the BURMANS in this area by about seven to one. A peculiarity of the ARAKANESE is that their names (excluding the honorific prefix "U" or "MAUNG" usually have three syllables, e.g. AUNG THA GYAW, SAW HLA PRU, but this is not an invariable rule. BURMESE names, on the other hand, have only one or at most two syllables, e.g. HLA, BA TIN. When, therefore, an inhabitant of the ARAKAN has a three-syllable name, excluding the prefix "U" or "MAUNG", it may be taken for granted that he is ARAKANESE. The ARAKANESE are to be found in all parts of ARAKAN.

(b) THE ARAKANESE MUSLIMS. These people are the long-domiciled MOHAMMEDAN community in ARAKAN. This community was born of inter-marriage between the ARAKANESE and CHITTAGONIANS, and adopted the MOHAMMEDAN faith. They speak ARAKANESE and have largely adopted ARAKANESE customs. They call themselves by ARAKANESE name e.g. PO KHINE, BA TIN, but, since they are MUSLIMS, they invariably have a MAHOMMEDAN name as well. Thus an ARAKANESE MUSLIM named U BA THEIN may also be known as NUR MOHAMMED.

(c) HILL TRIBES. The principal tribes are called the KUMIS and the MROS. They are very simple and primitive and their dress is rudimentary. They speak their own dialects and their principal occupations are fishing and the shifting cultivation of paddy on hill tops. There are also several other smaller hill tribes.

(d) THE CHITTAGONIANS. In addition to the indigenous races, there are many domiciled INDIANS, chiefly CHITTAGONIANS, in ARAKAN. They are new-comers to the area, who still speak CHITTAGONIAN and retain CHITTAGONIAN customs. Most of them are MAHOMMEDANS, but some are HINDUS and others BUDDHISTS. Even in pre-evacuation days, the bulk of the inhabitants of the MAYU PENINSULA was CHITTAGONIAN. Indeed, West of the MAYU RANGE, it is estimated that at least 75% of the population belonged to this race. East of the MAYU Range, this percentage dropped to 55% in the KALAPANZIN Valley and to a little more than 20% in the MAYU Valley.

(e) THE "MUGHS". Finally, it is necessary to comment on the term "MUGHS". This term is not the name of any particular race. When the BURMESE invaded ARAKAN in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, many ARAKANESE fled to the CHITTAGONIAN District and Hill Tracts, which were in BRITISH territory. Their descendants became known as the JUMIA MUGHS, the ROANG or RAKHAING MUGHS and the RAJBANSI or BARUA MUGHS. It is not known definitely why these people were called "MUGHS" but it appears that since this term was originally applied by the CHITTAGONIANS to ARAKANESE settlers in INDIA, in course of time the ARAKANESE in ARAKAN were also called "MUGHS" by the CHITTAGONIANS. On the other hand, only CHITTAGONIAN BUDDHISTS were known to Civil officers of BURMA as "MUGHS", and to 99% of Civil Officers the term "MUGH" suggested merely a cook as this community provided the best cooks in BURMA. Since the term is usually applied in a derogatory sense, its use is to be avoided and the correct name of the race should be employed as occasion arises.