

THE MON NATIONAL QUESTION
AND
CREATION OF A MON STATE

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A Statement issued by NAI BA LWIN, President of The Mon Freedom League,
Burma.

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ASPIRATIONS OF A FORGOTTEN RACE

The Burmese, Shan, Kachin, Chin, Karen and Kayah members of the indigenous races of the Union of Burma have had or has recently been granted regional autonomy by or under the Constitution. The Arakanese and Mon members however, who unlike the others are bereft of the common rights are working hard in order to induce the Government to accede to their requests by publishing their aspirations in the public press recently.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In probably about 600 B.C., the Mon-Khmer sub-family migrated from Mongolia in a southerly direction. By about 300 B.C. they have already founded the Kingdom of Haripunjaya in the north with Lamphun as capital and the Kingdom of Dvaravati with Lopburi as capital in the south in the valley of the Menam River within the area of the present day Thailand. An octagonal pillar bearing ancient Mon inscriptions, discovered at Lopburi, can now be seen at the Vajiranana Library in Bangkok. In the area of the present day Tenasserim Division, they founded another Suvannabhumi Kingdom with modern day Thaton as capital. The Khmers who were the founders of the Cambodian Kingdom are still the leaders of the Indo-China peninsular.

The Mons in Burma proper colonised Lower Burma and established the Kingdom of Hamsavati. In 1757 A.D. the last Mon King Binya Dala lost his kingdom to the Burmese. Since then the Mons have been dominated by other powers for well nigh 194 years.

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Mon Language, Literature and Culture can claim to be almost 3000 years old and it is not surprising that the Mons should have no desire to see their precious heritage decay and lost. The present Government of Burma is making an attempt to have the Tripitakas translated into Burmese, but the Tripitakas in Mon has been in existence for hundreds

of years. Historians have recorded that the Burmese obtained their alphabets from the Mons during the reign of Anawrata.

In this country, although we find that the inhabitants had migrated from the north, culture and fine arts found and are finding their way northwards from the south.

RESISTANCE TO RACE ASSIMILATION

History has shown us time and again that races with a strong cultural and territorial background have always successfully resisted any attempt at assimilation by other races; and it is worthy of serious consideration.

The Turkish assimilators, by devious and devilish means endeavoured to assimilate the Balkan races for hundreds of years, but failed miserably: the tsarist-Russian Russifiers and Prussian Germanizers tried over 120 years to absorb the Poles but it was in vain. The Czechs too came under the same treatment for 300 years and have successfully resisted being engulfed. Thus history has proved that any attempt at a solution of racial problem by force or assimilation always resulted in defeat.

The Mons, who had a strong and unshakable historical background at present has no autonomous rights of any sort. The various Mon political organizations have been working very hard to obtain their rights by democratic means. It is regrettable to record that the indifference of those in power has misled many Mons to take up unlawful means.

With honest intent and sincere heart, I would earnestly urge those in power to make a serious attempt to solve this problem through the Regional Autonomy Enquiry Commission at an early date.

KAREN MON RELATION

Old Burmese and Mon writings declare that the civilised man is made up of 101 races; of which 60 were Foreigners, 30 Shans, 7 Burmese and 4 Mons. The 4 Mon clans were Mon Daung, Mon De, Mon Nya and Mon Du. The last - Mon Du - is really the present day Karens. The Pali word "Du" read with a Mon tone sounded the word for a "Frog" and Mon Du was the name given to those who use the Frog Drums.

The Mons and Karens lived in peace in Hamsavati for many centuries. The Karens too like the Burmese obtained their alphabets from the Mons and such Karen writings are still in use in some of the Karen Areas.

So we see that it is not possible to leave the Karens out when considering the Mon problem, nor it is wise to take up the Karen problem

and overlook the Mons. The Government has so far found a solution to the Karen problem, but has not even given out any hint on the Mon question.

In deference to the various Mons who have served this country throughout her history, in the field of literature, culture and mutual security, it is to be sincerely hoped that an amicable solution-satisfactory to both the Mons and Burmese will be found.

PRACTICES IN PROGRESSIVE NATIONS

In the truly democratic Swiss Commonwealth, in addition to affording full autonomy to the German, Italian and French members of the country; in 1937, without considering the numerical strength of a community, the 44,000 strong Romansch race in the Canton of Granbuenden was granted full autonomy and Romansch was made the fourth official language of the country.

American Ambassador, Joseph E. Davies in his 'Mission to Moscow' says:

"Every unit in the Soviet Union uses its own language in its schools and law courts, with Russian the second and also compulsory language. Of the 180-odd national units, several had no written language of their own till the Soviet orientalists created them. Central Asia has served as a great school for young Russian administrators. Even here, literacy, starting practically from scratch with the revolution, has been brought up to 70.6 per cent."

Any Government in power in this country should follow the practices of true Statesmen and be able to give satisfaction to all the indigenous races within this country.

Let us work till peace is attained:

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Dated December, 1951 A.D.

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Copies of this leaflet are forwarded to :- (1) The President, (2) The Hon'ble Ministers of Government of the Union of Burma, (3) The Local Newspapers, (4) The Chairman and Members of the Regional Autonomy Enquiry Commission & (5) The Foreign Embassies.

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