

= Burmese Indians =

Burmese Indians (Burmese : မြန်မာလူမျိုး ; MLCTS : ku. la : lu myui :) are a group of people of Indian origin who live in Burma . While Indians have lived in Burma for many centuries , most of the ancestors of the current Burmese Indian community emigrated to Burma from the start of British rule in the mid 19th century to the separation of British Burma from British India in 1937 . During British times , ethnic Indians formed the backbone of the government and economy serving as soldiers , civil servants , merchants and moneylenders . A series of anti Indian riots beginning in 1930 and mass emigration during the Japanese occupation of Burma followed by the forced expulsion of 1962 left ethnic Indians with a much reduced role in Burma .

Ethnic Indians today account for approximately 2 % (about 950 ,000) of the population of Burma and are concentrated largely in the two major cities (Yangon and Mandalay) and old colonial towns (Pyin U Lwin and Kalaw) . They are largely barred from the civil service and military and are disenfranchised by being labeled as ' foreigners ' and ' non citizens ' of Burma . Amongst the well known Burmese Indians is S. N. Goenka , a leading practitioner and teacher of vipassana meditation and Helen , a well known Bollywood film actress who is also of Anglo Burmese descent .

= = History = =

The term " Burmese Indian " refers to a broad range of ethnic groups from India , most notably from present day South Asian countries such as Bangladesh , India and also Pakistan . Indians have a long history in Burma with over 2000 years of active engagement in politics , religion , culture , arts and cuisine . Within Burma , they are often referred to as ka la or ka laar (a term generally used for dark skinned foreigners from India , Africa and the west) , a term that is considered derogatory or Kala Lumyo . Its root is believed to be ku la meaning either " to cross over (the Bay of Bengal) " or " person " depending on the way it is pronounced . An alternative explanation is that the word is derived from ? Ku lar ? , meaning the people who adhere to a caste system .

The majority of Indians arrived in Burma whilst it was part of British India . Starting with the annexation of Tenasserim and Western Burma after the First Anglo Burmese War , a steady stream of Indians moved to Burma as civil servants , engineers , river pilots , soldiers , indentured labourers and traders . Following the annexation of Upper Burma in 1885 , numerous infrastructure projects started by the British colonial government and increases in rice cultivation in the delta region caused an unprecedented economical boom in Burma that drew many Indians , particularly from southern India , to the Irrawaddy Delta region .

= = = Anti Indian sentiments = = =

After the First World War , anti Indian sentiments began to rise for a number of reasons . The number of ethnic Indians was growing rapidly (almost half of Yangon 's population was Indian by the Second World War) . Indians played a prominent role in the British administration and became the target of Burmese nationalists . Racial animosity toward Indians because of their skin color and appearance also played a role . Meanwhile , the price of rice plummeted during the economic depression of the 1930s and the Chettiar from South India , who were prominent moneylenders in the rice belt , began to foreclose on land held by native Burmese .

In May 1930 , a British firm of stevedores at the port of Rangoon employed Burmese workers in an attempt to break a strike organized by its Indian workers . When , on May 26 , the strike ended and the Indians returned to work , clashes developed between the returning Indian workers and the Burmese workers who had replaced them . The clashes soon escalated into large scale anti Hindu and anti Muslim riots in the city . Over two hundred Indians were killed and their bodies flung into the river . Authorities ordered the police to fire upon any assembly of five or more who refused to lay down their arms , under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code . Within two

days the riot spread throughout the country to locations such as Maymyo .

== The Second World War and after ==

At the start of World War II , almost half of Rangoon 's (Yangon) population was Indian , and about 16 % of the population of Burma was ethnically Indian . As a consequence of the Japanese invasion of 1942 , half a million members of the Indian community fled Burma overland into Assam , largely on foot . The refugees suffered terribly and thousands died . Some of the Indian community remained in Burma during the war , others returned after the war , although many never did . After Independence , Burmese law treated a large percentage of the Indian community as " resident aliens " . Though many had long ties to Burma or were born there , they were not considered citizens under the 1982 Burma citizenship law which restricted citizenship for groups immigrating before 1823 .

After he seized power through a military coup in 1962 , General Ne Win ordered a large @-@ scale expulsion of Indians . Although many Indians had been living in Burma for generations and had integrated into Burmese society , they became a target for discrimination and oppression by the junta . This , along with a wholesale nationalization of private ventures in 1964 , led to the emigration of over 300 @, @ 000 ethnic Indians from Burma . Indian @-@ owned businesses were nationalized and their owners were given 175 kyat for their trip to India . This caused a significant deterioration in Indian @-@ Burmese relations and the Indian government arranged ferries and aircraft to lift Burmese of Indian ethnicity out of Burma .

== Culture ==

India has been particularly influential in Burmese culture as the cradle of Buddhism , and ancient Hindu traditions can still be seen in Brahmans presiding over important ceremonies such as weddings and ear @-@ piercings but most notably in Thingyan , the Burmese New Year festival . The Burmese poetry tradition of niti (notably the Dhammaniti) also has Indian origins . Traditions of kingship including coronation ceremonies and formal royal titles as well as those of lawmaking were also Hindu in origin . Many Burmese dishes and breads came as a result of Indian influence , prominently reflected in the Burmese version of Indian biryani .

Burmese Indians came from various groups from different parts of India , including Tamils , Telugus , Hindi speakers , Bengali , Gujarati , Oriya , and Punjabis . Today they form approximately 2 % (about 950 @, @ 000) of the population , according to the CIA World Factbook 2006 , although exact figures do not exist due to uncertainties over census results and methods in Myanmar . Disaffected young Indians often flee the cities and join ethnic resistance movements . The All Burma Muslim Union whose members consist largely of Muslims of Indian origin is routinely labeled by the government as " Muslim terrorist insurgents " . In actuality it operates alongside the Karen National Union and , despite a swelling of its ranks following anti @-@ Muslim riots in the eighties , remains a very minor force .

== Religion ==

Burmese Indians practise Hinduism , Islam , Sikhism , Buddhism and Christianity . Burmese Muslims , some of them of mixed blood born of Burmese mothers and some of them with full Burmese blood , call themselves Bama Musalin (????????? ?) ; the majority are Sunni with small numbers of Twelvers . The Burmese call them Zaydabayi .

The constitution grants limited rights to freedom of religion ; however , some articles in the constitution , as well as other laws and policies , restrict those rights . In practice the government enforced those restrictions . " Muslims continue to experience the most severe forms of legal , economic , religious , educational , and social restrictions and discrimination " . The military dictatorship rejects or ignores their requests when they want to build mosques in the country or to go abroad for religious ceremonies . Although there is freedom of religion in Burma , Muslims decided

not to hold Eid al @-@ Adha in 2012 due to Rakhine @-@ Rohingya strikes in Rakhine State .

= = Language = =

Burmese Indians are from an array of ethnic backgrounds . There are Tamils from Tamil Nadu , Telugus from Andhra Pradesh and Marwaris from the Marwar region of India 's Rajasthan state as well as Bengalis hailing from the Indian state of West Bengal as well as the present @-@ day independent nation of Bangladesh . Prior to the expulsion of Indians , there were also Urdu @-@ speaking Pashtuns from North India , Malayalis from Kerala , Odias , Punjabis from the state of Punjab who are mostly Sikhs and two groups of Gujaratis , both Gujarati @-@ speaking Parsis and Gujaratis proper who are mostly Hindus or Muslims by faith hailing from the state of Gujarat . All can and were able to communicate in Burmese due to years of assimilation and lack of education in languages other than English . Other languages used by Burmese Indians include Tamil , Telugu and small pockets of Malayalam speakers .

= = Economic role = =

Historically , Burmese Indians have made their livelihoods as merchants , traders and shopkeepers as well as manual labourers such as coolies , dockers , municipal workers , rickshaw men , pony cart drivers , malis and durwans . They were also heavily represented in certain professions such as civil servants , university lecturers , pharmacists , opticians , lawyers and doctors . They dominated several types of businesses such as auto parts and electrical goods , ironmongery and hardware , printing and bookbinding , books and stationery , paper and printing ink , tailoring and dry @-@ cleaning , English tuition , and money lending . They traded in textiles , gold and jewellery , where the market was traditionally dominated by Burmese women . The Chettiars of Burma functioned as moneylenders and have been thought crucial in the growth in agricultural output of Burma during the colonial era . Today , many Indians live in central Rangoon on both sides of the Su Lei Paya Road and are largely involved in businesses , including restaurants , jewellery shops and money exchanges .

= = Notable Burmese Indians and Others = =

Karim Ghani was born in Sodugudi , Ilayangudi , a politician in South @-@ East Asia of Indian origin . Before the Second World War Karim Ghani was a parliamentary secretary in Burma under Dr. Ba Maw .

Ba Than Haq - Professor of Geology and Minister of Mines . Of mixed Afghan and Danu descent .

Bahadur Shah II or Bahadur Shah Zafar , the last Mughal Emperor was exiled to Rangoon after the Indian Rebellion of 1857 . He , along with his wife Zeenat Mahal and granddaughter Raunaq Zamani Begum , is buried at the Mazar (mausoleum) at No. 6 Theatre Road in Yangon .

T. S. S. Rajan - Indian freedom @-@ fighter and Minister of Health in Madras Presidency from 1937 to 1940 .

S. N. Goenka - eminent Vipassana Buddhist meditation teacher (born 1924)

Parshuram Verma (Freedom Fighter in Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose army in Myanmar , social worker and leader of repatriated Indian Burmese in Bihar & UP . He pioneered the repatriation of Indian Burmese in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh who were migrated from these areas to Myanmar at the time of British era and started migrating into India at the time of unrest during General Nevin regime in 1969 . He dedicated his most of life to address their problems and find the solutions with the help of various Indian Government Ministries and Authorities .

H. N. Goshal aka Thakin Ba Tin - Communist leader and founding member from the 1940s to the 1960s killed in an internal purge in 1967 . He was an ethnic Bengali .

Helen of Bollywood . Born Helen Jairag Richardson Khan in Rangoon on July 14 , 1938 , she fled to India during World War II and became famous for playing the vamp in Indian cinema .

Dr. Maung Di - Department chair and dean of Rangoon Arts and Science University (now Yangon

University) , Deputy Education Minister . Son of the Dean of Islamic Religious College in Kanbalu .

U Razak (20 January 1898 ? 19 July 1947 ; Arabic : Abdul Razak) was a Burmese politician who was a respected educationalist . He is a Tamil Muslim (Choliyah) . While his brothers and sisters chose to be Buddhists , he maintained the Muslim name Razak , in honor of his father . Although nominally Muslim , Razak was a secularist who deeply loved Burma and encouraged unity in diversity . Razak initiated calls for unity between Burmese Muslims and Buddhists . He was a Muslim , but maintained ties to Buddhism , educating himself on Pali , the sacred script of Theravada Buddhism , and helped found the Mandalay College (modern Mandalay University) . Razak fathered three children . He was a minister at Aung San 's pre @-@ independence interim government and was assassinated , along with Aung San and other members , on 19 July 1947 . July 19 is celebrated in Myanmar today as Martyrs ' Day . U Razak was Minister of Education and National Planning , and was chairman of the Burma Muslim Congress .

Dr. B.S. Joshi - (4 / 3 / 1912 @-@ 15 / 10 / 2009) Surgeon Par Excellence @-@ Civil Surgeon Burma Medical Services . Graduated Medical College Rangoon with Honours receiving the Bishop Bigandit Medal (1936) . There has been only 1 recipient up to date . Married Dr. Ratna Sundari Misra D / o Dr. Matabadal Misra and she was one of the only female doctors in Burma . Together they had hospitals sanctioned and constructed throughout the districts of Burma . Both Dr. B.S. Joshi and his wife were committed doctors and dedicated to the people of Burma . Besides his duties as a surgeon general to the Union of Burma he was also District Health Officer , Municipal Health Officer of every district with extensive experience in Public Health Work . In the beginning of his career , he was a teacher of clinical surgery in Rangoon General Hospital . Then Assistant Surgeon Thayetmyo / Officer in charge of Hospitals in Nyanglebin , Mandalay and Moulmein and later Chief Medical Officer Sagain and finally Rangoon as surgeon of Rangoon Hospital . Later surgeon general in Lashio , Tavoy . Mergui , Myaumgmya , Moulmein and was also in charge of 13 hospitals in the Northern Shan States with headquarters at Lashio . Dr. B.S. Joshi was a loyal friend to both General Ne Win and U Nu , a leading Nationalist and political figure of the Union of Burma .

S. Mukerjee aka Pyu Win - Communist trade union leader killed in the 1950s

Dr. Nath aka Tun Maung - Communist leader and founding member killed in the 1960s

Captain Ohn Kyaw Myint - Martyred after failed attempt of coup d'état

Saya Rajan aka Aung Naing - Communist trade union leader captured in the 1950s

M. A. Rashid - Government Minister in the 1950s

Thakin Tha Khin (Shan Indian) - Government Minister in the 1950s

U Balwant Singh -A Jat Sikh from Burma sent to the United States by Burmese Govt (U NU) to work at the United Nations during the term of U Thant (Sec General of UN whose father was Indian also) .

Dr Ram Bax Singh - A Jat Sikh Served as the Port Health director for Port of Rangoon till early 1960 .

Dr Santosh Sureen (Shwe Mann) - Municipal Health Minister during the 1960s

Chaudhry Charan Das - Originally hailing from Gujranwala (now in Pakistan) , Chaudhary Charan Das moved to Burma in the early 1900s to establish a soap factory in Mandalay (Burma) under the banner S. Sagar & Co . Decades later during Japanese invasion the family then returned and settled in Rawalpindi . During India @-@ Pakistan partition in 1947 , the family eventually settled in Kapurthala (India) where Chaudhary Charan Das 's eldest son Dr. Shanti Sagar Verma soon established himself as a very prominent and successful doctor and where he opened one of the first private multi @-@ speciality hospitals in the city .

B.N. Verma- One of the famous high school English teachers in Myanmar .

U Myo Nyunt (Myo Nyunt Mathematics) - A Mathematics tuition teacher who have taught over 50 @, @ 000 students .

Bhanumati Devi - Oriya film and theater actress who was born in Burma .

U. A. Khader - U. A. Khader (1935-) is a noted Malayalee novelist and literary personality . He has written about fifty works in Malayalam , which include novels , novellas , short @-@ stories , travelogues and non @-@ fiction .

Alan Basil de Lastic - (1929 ? 2000) was the fourth Archbishop of Delhi . He was born in Maymyo

of mixed Burmese , Irish and French ancestry .

Daw Tint Tint @ Usha wife of former President of India , K. R. Narayanan . Usha Narayanan (1923 ? 2008) worked on several social welfare programs for women and children in India and had completed her Masters in Social Work from Delhi School of Social Work . She also translated and published several Burmese short stories ; a collection of translated stories by Thein Pe Myint , titled Sweet and Sour , appeared in 1998 . She is the only woman of foreign origin to have become the First Lady .