

## **DOCUMENTS**

The *SBBR* will be publishing primary documents in each issue, drawn from old newspapers, archives, and other collections. Although the documents included in this issue are pre-twentieth century, we would encourage the contribution by readers of these and other kinds of twentieth-century primary sources, including unpublished personal accounts. The documents will be numbered consecutively across issues, so that a consistent number referencing system will be available.

M. W. C.

This issue: ***Documents on Western Burmese Economic History***

### **Document Number 1**

## **Extract of a Letter dated Nagore, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1761**

**William Turner<sup>1</sup>**

In your last you mentioned the Intention you have of going to ARRACAN, I heartily wish you success, and have here inclosed a *List* of what things will do, and the quantity ; it is a very troublesome Place, but the Gains are very great ; but the the sum of money is so small that you invest, that at most you ca invest in five or six months, will be six or eight thousand Rupees, unless there has not been a Ship there this two or three years, in which case you will be able to invest as much more ; the *Port Charges* will be 12 or 14 hundred Rupees, what I mean is the *Customs, or Duties* on *Import* and *Export*; if there is a great call for Wax, in *Calcutta*, I would advise you to carry as much ready money as you can, for then you'll get away from there the sooner, and will not be troubled to sell your goods at retail ; for there is not a Man there, that can take 500 Rupees of things at once, without trust, and that you must never do, not even the Great men ; for by trusting them I have been detained two or three Months for my Money ; you may venture to trust the King, as you can cut off so much of his Dutys ; don't let your Invoice of these things exceed 4000 Rupees, let the rest be in ready cash ; as your *Rupees* that you carry there, will be all *new coined* by the King, it will be best to carry *Arcot Rupees*, as they weigh the same as *Sicca*, at least the difference is only 2 [Per] Cent by this you will save 7 or 8 [Per] Cent on 6 or 7 thousand Rupees ; this is all that, I can think at present, will be of any service.

[List of Items to Bring to Arakan]

Cowreys, 400 Rs. (Maldivia, if you can get them.)

Iron, 40 Maund.

Steel, 25 Maund.

Hartall, 3 Maund (China.)

Sindure, 1 Maund.

Singerrys, 1 Maund.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was published in A. Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, 2 vols. (London: for the East India Company by William Ballintine, 1808): I, 117-228. I have thus far been unable to locate the unpublished version of this document.

China Cups, 1000 (in the Moors taste.)  
 [China] Dishes, 200 [in the Moors taste]  
 Musk, one Sear.  
 Opium, 5 Sear or 10 Sear.  
 Isinglass, 5 Sear (large pieces, such as you put in Windows.)  
 Painted Cullemcurrys, 40 Pieces (from the Coast).  
 Raw Silk, 1 Maund.  
 Muga Silk, 4 Maund.  
 Hing, 1 Maund.  
 Corral, 1000 Rs. Worth (large and good) the long sort will do.  
 Lead, 5 or 6 Maunds.  
 If Salt is cheap in Calcutta, take in 2 or 3 hundred Maunds by way of Ballast.

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## Document Number 2

# Memorandum of Arracan Trade, circa 1770s

## Anonymous<sup>2</sup>

The Articles of Trade at Arracan are Elephants teeth, wax, timber, coarse Durians, Beetle, Rice, Gold ["Cotton" is penned here under different hand], and Silver, some Valuable stores. Elephants teeth which are large and fine are 25 Rupees per Bengal Maund. Wax is the same price. Timber is Very Cheap, the Rajah gave me leave to cut as much as I chose, a large quantity might be had for some small presents to the Raja. The Dureans are cheap but are not fine or is there any great quantity of them ["about 2 Rs. Per Maund" is penned in the margin here under different hand]. Of Berth [?] may be had any quantity as the Country abounds with it, the Price is two tuns of Cowries per maund.

Rice is from two to three Bengal bags for a Rupee according to the goodness. Gold and Silver has [sic] been Scarce of late Years among owing to their Civil Wars which has hindered the people of the back countries from coming down, provisions may be Salted there very cheap. A large fat Bullock is to be bought there for three Rupees. There is [sic] the remains of three Factories which they say belonged to the English, Portuguese, and Dutch but they were obliged to quit them on Account of the impositions of the frequent Succession of Rajahs who all greatly opposed them but they now see the advantage of having Europeans among them and it is the desire of the Raja to have a trade established in his country which has been long stop'd. They not having had a ship there these ten years. The River of Arracan is a fine River having a good depth of water and the Tides not near so rapid as in Bengal River [.] [T]here is a great plenty of very fine Timber and labour so extremely cheap that Ships of any burthen may be built there both Cheape and better than at Pegu.

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<sup>2</sup> This document was found in the Hastings Papers, British Library, London Add. Mss. 29210, ff. 334-336. There is no date provided, by the location of the ms and the context of events listed in the account suggest that it is circa 1770s. -- M.W.C.

## **Document Number 3**

### **Editor's Note:**

The following account is an original found in the Hastings Papers. This account was published in altered form in *Asiatick Miscellany* 1 (1785): 316-326, in which form it was reprinted in *Asiatic Annual Register* (1799): 157-163, in both cases under the title of "An Account of Aracan (1777)." Although Major R. E. Roberts is mentioned as having communicated the piece to the publishers, no author is provided in the original archival copy. Although this document was recently published,<sup>3</sup> it was the altered published version and no attempt was apparently made to secure the original document in its original form. This we have attempted to do here.

M. W. C.

## **History of the Mugs, 1777**

### **Anonymous<sup>4</sup>**

In February last the people of Arracan, commonly called mugs, carried off from the most Southern parts of Bengal, about eighteen hundred men, women and children: they arrived at Aracan, (according to the Persian orthography Rekheng) after a voyage of ten days. Upon their arrival there, they were conducted to the rajah, or sovereign, who chose from among them, for his slaves, all the handicraftsmen, and most useful persons; amounting to about one fourth of the whole number: the rest he returned to the captors; who conducted them by ropes about their necks, to a market; and there sold them for twenty, to seventy rupee, each; according to their strength abilities &ca. The purchasers assigned them the cultivation of their lands, and other laborious employments; giving each person for his monthly support, only fifteen seers of rice.

When these people arrived at Rekheng; a man named Duppung Gereee, was the rajah, and one Kuddul Poree his kutwal. The rajah wanted to put the kutwal to death; but the latter getting information of his design; made his escape to a village, and prevailed on the inhabitants, to assist him in deposing the rajah. When the rebels made their intentions suspected, by assembling in arms, the rajah ordered his son-in-law, to go, with a small army, and put the kutwal to death: A battle was fought between the two armies, and the rajah's son-in-law defeated, and killed. After this battle, the kutwal proceeded, with his partizans, to the rajah's fort; at his approach all the rajah's adherents, not excepting his relations, fled, and left him alone, to the revenge of the kutwal: rhe rajah hid himself, but was soon discovered, and put to death. After Duppung Gereee's death, Kuddul Poree proclaimed himself rajah, sent for all the former rajah's relations, and servants; and such of them, as did not make him handsome presents were put to death.

Four days after this revolution, the tranquility of the country not yet being restored, twenty five men, and two women, native, of Bengal (all of whom, were of the number of those carried to Rekheng in February last; except one man, named Buddul Khawn, of Backergunge, who was carried thither about thirteen years ago.) took the opportunity, to seize on a boat, and to make their escape in it. They proceeded in the boat, for one day; and then quitted it, to travel by land. When they quitted the boat, they landed in a woody and unhabited part of Rekheng; and continued their rout, on the banks of small rivers, to

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Leider, "An Account of Arakan," *Aseanie* 3 (1999): 125-149.

<sup>4</sup> This document was found in the Hastings Papers, British Library, London Add. Mss. 29210, ff. 51-68.

avoid wild beasts, and impenetrable woods. They were seven days travelling from Rekheng\* to Islamabad, and arrived here the fifteenth instant.

The produce of Rekheng, with respect to vegetables; is nearly the same as Bengal; except that no part of it produces the mulberry tree: with respect to animals, it neither produces sheep, horses, or jackals; but great plenty of geese, fowls, ducks, goats, kine, bufallows, elephants, deer, hogs, dogs, & bees. As to its manufactures; they make wood oil, and several kinds of coarse cloths. Their trade, consists in exporting the said manufactures, elephants teeth, and wax, and in importing fine cloths, and a few other articles, from Bengal.

The Rekheng merchants that come to Bengal, never plunder or carry away people from thence; but carry on their trade peaceably as merchants should. The rajah of Rekheng readily grants the merchants permission to trade to Bengal; but he will not permit any of his subjects, to leave his country, to plunder, and make slaves; until he has received from them, a considerable sum of money. When these plunderers return to Rekheng; every thing they have made prize of, is carried to the rajah; of the goods, it is his allowed privilege, to take half; and of the prisoners one fourth; but he generally exacts almost the lion's share: for which reason, the mugs endeavour to secret all the silver and gold, that they collect in these expeditions: and to that end, when they make a rich prize, they put all the prisoners to death.

There is but one fort in Rekheng; the rajah resides in it; it consists of three squares, one within the other; each square surrounded with walls, made of brick and stone. The two inner walls, are about fourteen feet high, the outer wall about twelve feet; the thickness of each of the walls, is about eight feet: they are at this time, greatly decayed, and may be easily demolished. The fort, has no ditch to it; or any outwork, to prevent the approach of an enemy; and is said to have been built, merely to secure the rajah from the insurrections of the natives. It is said to be situated from the northern boundary of Rekheng, seven days journey; from the southern, three days; from the eastern boundary, one day; and the same distance from the western boundary, or the sea. A river, runs from the sea very near the fort; where it is about twenty feet broad: large boats can go to the fort. The banks of the river are cultivated. There are about one thousand pieces of cannon, lying between two of the fort walls: only five or six of them, are mounted on carriages; and even those carriages; are too much decayed, to be serviceable. There are a very few, small brass cannon; all the others, are thought to be so much decayed by time, by being constantly exposed to the weather, that they cannot be used. Under different bamboo, and straw sheds, in the fort, are kept a great many cannon balls, of different sizes; a large quantity of gunpowder, in earthen pots; and several match-locks. The rajah has also seven europe muskets, which are always carried in his train: but, as well as the match-locks are unserviceable. He has six small horses (tattoos) which, it is said, he got from Chittagong.

From all the accounts, that I have been able to obtain of Rekheng; it appears that the natives of that country, are a dastardly race of people; and have only courage, to attack defenceless bengal merchants and boatmen: that they depend more on the timidity of the persons they attack, and the strength of their oars; than on the goodness of their arms, or personal prowess.

One Tahes Mahmud, a native of Bengal, was formerly the Rekheng rajah's derrawan, and afterwards became his dewan: having gained some riches, in that post; the rajah was determined to deprive him of them; and for that purpose to put him to death. The dewan got notice of this design, and fled to Chittagong, with about two thousand of his countrymen, and arrived here near two years ago. The rajah, has frequently demanded

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\* [original note] That is to say, from the northern boundary of Rekheng.

him, of this government, and has sent several threatening, and very insolent letters, because, his demand was not complied with. But, the persons who are lately returned from Rekheng, say, that a report, frequently becomes current there, that Tahes Mahmud, is on his way thither; with an armed force, belonging to the English: and, that at such times, the people residing about the fort; and even the rajah's relations, and attendants, fly to the hills, and woods, leaving him alone, till they discover the falsity of the report. Tahes Mahmud is now a Sherrickdar of this province.

Almost three fourths, of the inhabitants of Rekheng; are said, to be natives of Bengal; or descendants of such: who constantly pray, that the English, may send a force to deliver them from their slavery, and restore them to their country; in that case, they have agreed among themselves, to assist their deliverers to the utmost of their power.

The hills that join Rekheng, to the eastward; are inhabited by a people called Kheng; which is also the name of the country. These people, have a rooted enmity, to the native inhabitants of Rekheng; and miss no opportunity of carrying them off to their own country, for slaves; but they never assault or injure the bengal inhabitants. It is said, that the Kheng never make open war, with the mugs; but only assault them by surprise. The dress of the kheng, consists only of a piece of coarse cloth, about the breadth of a hand, which they wear round the middle; they use no turbans, or ever shave the head; but tie all the hair together, on the fore part, or crown of the head; they spot their faces with black paint, and they resemble the natives of Bengal, in their features, shapes, and statures.

The Rekheng rajah, governs his country in the most despotic manner: he is absolute over the lives, and properties, of his subjects. In his administration; his only guides, are his own reason, and passions. He is the sole judge of all causes, criminal, and civil. The parties are brought before him; he hears what they have to say, and immediately gives judgement. Criminals are punished by flogging, dismembering, beheading, and impaling: if flogging is the sentence, it is executed immediately before him; but if either of the other punishments, the criminal is conducted to a building, at a little distance, where the sentence is immediately executed.

When the rajah goes abroad, he is carried on a kind of litter, (made with two bamboos, fastened together by rattans, on which the rajah sits) by four men; and is attended by men armed with long bills, and with spears; (the only arms used by the mugs) and the six europe muskets, before mentioned.

When the rajah administers justice; he sits only on a mat, on a place elevated above the heads of the people. An eunuch attends on him, to repeat the orders he gives. The eunuch stands with his hands on his knees; so that his body is bent forward; a position expressive of respect, and attention; which he is not suffered to vary, during his continuance, in the rajah's preference: all other persons except the father, and father-in-law, of the rajah. while in his presence, kneel, bend their bodies forward, turn one side of the head to him, and hold both hands to the ear of that side: this, I think, at once signifies; that they salute him; are attentive to any order he may be pleased to give; and ready to execute it.

The sovereignty of Rekheng, is neither hereditary nor elective; but is possessed, by whoever is able, and willing to take it: the people, readily submitting to the conqueror.

The natives of Rekheng are much given, to excess in drinking, and almost every man, distills the arrack he uses. They never use tom-toms, but at funerals.

There are very few inhabitants on the sea coast. Fresh water is both good and plenty; as is also rice; as much of that grain may be bought for two puns of cowries; as

twenty men may make a meal on. A rekheng rupee is equal to twelve annas dussmassa; or in Rekheng, to three kahawon, or forty eight puns of cowries; so that if we allow twelve chattaks of rice, for each man's meal, twenty men will eat fifteen seers; the price of which, being two puns of cowries, one rekheng rupee's worth of rice, will be nine of our maunds, equal to twelve maunds for a dussmassa rupee.

The rajah has a mint in his fort, and coins silver rupees. His house, which is in the fort, is built with bamboos and straw, and has only upper apartments, at a considerable height from the ground. Very few persons, beside the rajah's family, live in the fort. The land round the fort, is level and cultivated, with a few houses, here and there; and the country to it, from the sea, is mostly cultivated; all of it clear of jungle; and the fort is of easy access, even to artillery on that side.

About two years ago, above two thousand persons, men, women, and children, (near a fourth of whom had at different times, left this province, to avoid the oppressions of the zemindars; the rest had been carried to Rekheng by the natives of that country and there sold for slaves) escaped from Rekheng, and came to a place called Rawmoo, in the most southern part of this province; from thence they sent four deputies to the chief, to inform him of their arrival, and to request him, to assign them lands, for their maintenance. The chief, readily promised to comply with the request, and told them to look out for such uncultivated lands as they might chuse to reside on. They pitched upon lands near Rawmoo, Kurwan, and Chukurreah; which were granted them, on condition, that they should pay no rent, till the expiration of three years; and that they should then pay, the customary rent. A short time after (two or three months) such of the men, as had not been able to bring their wives, and children, away with them; to the number of about eight hundred, returned to Rekheng, and have not since been heard of; but are supposed to have arrived safe. The settling of them so near Rekheng, both by sea and land, as the places abovementioned, was certainly very impolitic; as was fully proved by the loss of so many useful subjects; for their return to this province again, cannot be expected; the government of Rekheng will certainly take warning, from its former remissness, and use proper means, to prevent a second escape. The loss of these people, would have been effectually prevented, had they been settled inland, in the northern parts of the province; from whence it would not have been so easy, for them to go to Rekheng; nor would the rajah of that country, have had it so much in his power, to send his agents among them, to entice them away; which is strongly suspected, to have been partly the cause of their return.

We are traditionally informed; that the people of Rekheng have from time immemorial, plundered the southern parts of Bengal; and carried the inhabitants into slavery; that they have been so hostile, as to descend on the coast of Chittagong, proceed into that country; plunder, and burn, the villages, destroy what they could not carry away, and make slaves of the inhabitants. The vestiges of a fortification that once surrounded, the town of Islamabad, still remains; and it is well known, that this fortification, was not only intended as a place of refuge to the inhabitants of the country; but also, to secure the inhabitants of the town, from being pillaged by these invaders; to such lengths did they then proceed.

Before this province, was ceded to the company; the government, was at an immense expence, to maintain a marine and land force, to repel the mugs; but the great extent of the Chittagong coast, made it impossible, to prevent their landing on some part of it, and carrying off considerable booties. It is surprising, that the government did not perceive, that the only effectual way, to put a stop to these invasions, would have been to attack the invaders in their own country, which is both near, and of easy access. For some time, after the cession of this province to the company; it was found necessary, to keep a considerable force for its protection; but the government being, at that time, rather less

supine, than formerly; was not contented, with barely repulsing the invaders; which was the case before, except, in a very few instances; but followed them to sea, and soon made them desist from their invasions. Since that time, till very lately, an interval of thirteen or fourteen years; they have not been pretty quiet; but, as it is not said, that we gave them any very remarkable defeat, and it is certain, that we never invaded their country; I cannot attribute their peaceable behaviour, for so long a time, solely to their fear of the english force; but suppose, it must have been partly owing, to an invasion of their country, by another nation; to a dearth and epidemic disease; or to a change in their government: but to whatever cause it was owing, it is certain, as I said before, that they did not attack this province for considerable time.

It is said that the great extent of country, now called the Sunderbunds; was formerly populous, and well cultivated; and that its present condition, is solely owing to the mugs; many of its inhabitants, having been carried into slavery, and that the remainder fled from it to avoid a like fate.

To attempt to prove the dishonour, and loss to our government, by tamely suffering such depredations, would be superfluous: both are too evident, even to need being pointed at. All that I shall say on this head, at present is; that I am fully convinced that these violences may be easily prevented; a great number of very useful subjects, restored to freedom, and their country; and perhaps, many other advantages, that cannot now be perceived, may accrue to the company, at a trivial, or even no expence; by a well conducted attack on Rekheng. A nest of pirates, enemies to mankind, and to the peace and commerce of Bengal; will be thereby destroyed. I think, I may venture to predict; that the longer, they continue unattacked, the more powerful, and courageous, they will become, till at last it will be found necessary, for the immediate preservation of all the southern parts of Bengal; to enter into an expensive, and perhaps, a bloody war with them. It must be a very considerable armed force, acting only on the defensive, to defend even the coast of Chittagong from invasion; but how can the security of this whole province, protect the inhabitants of the islands, and other southern parts of Bengal?

When Mahabut Jung, was Subahdar of Bengal, Sadarcut Mohamud Khan, was naib subah, of all the southern parts, as far west, as Ingellee. He planned an expedition against Rekheng which being approved by his superior, he raised an army of twelve thousand men, consisting of one hundred horsemen, five hundred bildars (pioneers), two thousand five hundred coolies, and the remaining number of infantry of different denominations: his artillery consisted of ten pieces of cannon. With this army, he marched towards Rekheng; the bildars, and a certain number of coolies, preceding in one day's march, in order to clear the road. The ammunition and provisions, were conveyed as far as Rawmoo, in four hundred boats, and there landed, to be carried with the army: The boats then proceeded to the river Nawf, to assist the army in passing it. The army arrived at that river after nineteen days marching; and where on the point of passing it, when an order came from Mahabut Jung, for the army to return, with all possible haste. Thus ended an expedition, that cost the government, upwards of eighty thousand rupees! The order was obtained, by the influence of Sadahcut Mahmud Khan's enemies, at the durbar: who made the nawaub believe that the naib-subah, intended to make himself independent by the conquest of Rekheng; and that he would so strengthen himself, by that conquest, as to be able to support himself in the independent sovereignty, of both that country, and Chittagong. The road from Islamabad to Rawmoo, which the army was eleven days marching, was very bad; but from thence to the river Nawf marched on the sea beach, which was all the way so level, that a one horse chaise might have gone on it.

The Nawf is the limit of Chittigong, and divides it from Rekheng; it is so broad, that in the clearest weather, nothing on the opposite side, can be seen: but only the mouth of it

is here meant, as it is not known that any one ever went up it. It is thought to communicate with Pegu; but this is merely a conjecture of the natives of this province.

After the return of the army, some natives of Bengal, who had made their escape from Rekheng, related, that when it was known there, that the nawaub's army was on its march, to that country, the rajah, and most of the inhabitants, fled to the hills and woods; but that a small garrison was left in the fort, who were also soon struck with a panick, quarrelled amongst themselves, and at last deserted the fort.

Some time before Sadahcut Mahmud Khan, went on the expedition against Rekheng; he received advice, that two fleets of mug boats, were seen going to the south of the islands; that one of them, consisting of fifty or sixty boats, appeared to be going to Luckipore, by the way of Duckun Shahbazpore; and that the other fleet, of eighty or an hundred boats, was going towards the Sunderbunds. Soon after, fresh intelligence was brought, that the last mentioned fleet, was laying in Begum Gunge Nullah, in the Sunderbunds: on which the naib-subah went there with seventy or eighty armed boats, and arrived at the entrance of the nullah, when it was low water, and the mug boats stranded: he attacked them, took fifty boats, killed many men, and took two thousand two hundred prisoners; who were sent to Moorshudabad, and employed in the buildings at Mootejeel. What became of the other fleet of mug boats is not certainly known; but it is thought they got intelligence, of the defeat of their countrymen, and returned as fast as possible, to Rekheng. It was in consequence of the appearance of these fleets, that the expedition against Rekheng, was planned.

Since writing the above, the persons who were lately sent to Rekheng with a letter are returned. They report, that on their arrival, Kuddul Poree the rajah ordered them to be confined till he returned from subduing a rebellion, raised by one of his zemindars; and he, at the same time promised to give them an answer to their letter. Soon after, the rajah was killed by the zemindar, who usurped the government, and ordered them to be put to death as spies, but that by paying twenty five rupees, they were permitted to escape. They further say, that the people of Rekheng, were in expectation of an english force coming against him, and that the native inhabitants were in great fear. When these messengers in going to Rekheng, arrived at the Nawf, they travelled for some time along its banks, towards the east, and very soon came to a part of it, that is not broader than the Chittigong river near the town, over which they crossed with ease.

Islamabad June 1777

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**Document Number 4****Memorandum Regarding the Trade of Arracan and the Port of Akyab in the East Indies, Lat. 20° S'N Long 92° 56 ¼ E. (1849)<sup>5</sup>****W. F. Nuthall<sup>6</sup>**

The Extensive shipments of Rice which have been made from this province, during the last few years, to all parts of Europe, to America, China and the Straits, and the good quality adjudged to the grain, has given an importance to the Port of Akyab which must render any information regarding its Commerce both interesting and valuable to the Mercantile community, and it is with a hope of thus benefiting the public, and averting the loss and inconvenience which Parties have sustained from want of information, that an old Resident has been induced to publish and circulate the following notes, collected from the most authentic sources:

The Rice loading Season commences after breaking up of the Rains, of S. W. Monsoon, i.e. in all November:--at this time, grain of the last year's crop can be procured; the Natives being then able to unhusk the Paddy, and prepare it for shipment, a process which cannot be accomplished during the Rains; as it is necessary first to dry it well in the Sun. Clean Rice is never kept ready, beyond what may be required for local consumption, as it does not keep well in the damp Climate of Arracan.—Vessels have occasionally arrived before the above period, without having sent previous Orders, and thereby incurred great loss and delay.

The Harvest usually commences during the latter end of November, with the Laroong and Longphroo Rice, which is nearly all cut and exported by the end of December, or early part of January; the Latooree next ripens; and the Harvest terminates in all February with reaping the Nacrensee, which forms the most bulky part of the crop, and is partly held for exportation during and after the S. W. monsoon, and before the next crop becomes available.

Ships coming for cargo Rice of the season, should not arrive before the end of November, and for cleaned Rice, not before the end of December or the beginning of January, when the harvest having been partially made, labour can be employed in collecting, husking, and cleaning the grain for shipment.

Should it be an object to make two or more visits to the Port during the season, especially for cleaned Rice (a cargo which requires time to prepare and is not obtainable without previous orders), Funds should be deposited with an Agent to enable him to store, or bag it before the Vessel's arrival and by this means dispatch could be ensured in 8 or 10 days, whereas the usual number of laying days are from 25 to 30, and even 50 for Vessels chartered in Europe.—The mode of purchasing, being upon advances, Funds

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<sup>5</sup>This memorandum originally appeared in the *Straits Times and Singapore Journal of Commerce* 5.456 (4 December 1849): pp. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup>Lieutenant W. F. Nuthall was at this time the Commander of the Aracan Battalion at Akyab.

should, if possible, invariably accompany the order at least a month before the ship's arrival.

The best months for loading are February, March and April.

The Season terminates about the middle of May, after which *no large Vessel* should remain in Harbour, as the S. W. Monsoon then prevails strong, and they would be exposed to some risk and difficulty, in crossing the Bar, where the average depth is 4 ½ to 5 fathoms at high water, and at that period a heavy sea runs.

Vessels of from 3 to 400 Tons can be loaded during the S. W. Monsoon, that is, between May and October, and proceed to Sea with perfect safety; but in such cases the cargo must be stored in Godowns before the Rains set in.

Vessels of more than 500 Tons, or drawing more water than specified below, should not be sent to this Port.

Vessels of any draft under 21 feet, find no difficulty in sailing in and out during the N. E. Monsoon.

Akyab is the only Port of grain export in Arracan: it has a fine Harbour, with good and safe anchorage in 3 ½ to 5 ½ fathoms of water: The entrance to the Harbour is rather intricate for strangers, but having once entered, a Pilot is no longer required, all the dangers being above water, and there being plenty of room to keep clear of them.

The Akyab district is intersected with Rivers and Salt water Creeks, or natural Canals, with water sufficient to admit a vessel of 3 to 400 Tons, proceeding 20 to 25 miles beyond Akyab to load, and in charter parties of Vessels for the Straits, which are loaded in bulk, it is usually stipulated that the Vessel proceeds to any place within 25 miles from Akyab. It is customary for Vessels of this draft and tonnage to go as near to the loading place as they can with safety.

Generally between 1 and 200 Vessels are loading at the same time, but most of them are small craft from the Coromandel Coast, where Paddy is taken and cleaned, for the Mauritius & Bourbon Markets.

The process of cleaning grain in Arracan is very imperfect and unsatisfactory, as it breaks and injures it without cleaning it thoroughly.

The quantity of grain exported during the last 11 years is estimated at nearly 62,000 Tons annually, but of this 50,000 Tons have been exported during the season it was reaped, and the remaining 12,000 Tons early in the following Season; this residue is available for shipment in November and December, with the provisions above as to Orders and Funds, but it is not recommended for the Europe Market.

Three distinct kinds of Rice are grown in Arracan—Nacrensee, a large bold, barley grain, rather opaque:--Laroong or Longphroo, similar to ditto, but smaller and a shade more transparent:---Latooree, a long thin, fine grain, more transparent than either of the above: On the whole they are larger, softer and more mucilaginous than those of Bengal, and consequently more subject to Weevil, yet they are much better adapted for manufacturing purposes, and have been found to keep perfectly well during a Voyage to Europe either in the partially cleaned or in the uncleaned or cargo state.

The supply of Nacrensee and Laroong is abundant, but that of Latooree is scanty; increased demand, however, is leading to its more extended cultivation, and it is expected

that in the course of a few years the present large grain will give place to a finer and more saleable article.

The following quotations may be taken as the average of past Seasons, there being the least possible difference between the prices of three kinds of Rice:---

Cleaned	Rice	per 100 Baskets	35 Co's Rs.
Cargo	do.	"	25 "
"	Paddy	"	10 "

Should the demand be great, these rates may fluctuate as high as 40 Cy's Rs. for cleaned, and 30 Co's Rs. for uncleaned or cargo Rice, but when it is moderate they sometimes fall much lower than the above quotations.

Cargoes must be engaged at the market price of the day upon which the agreement may be made, or order received; it being necessary on the part of the Agent to contract with the Brokers on the same terms.

Bags are procurable here only to a small extent, but no more than may be required for the Cargo should be brought, as the demand is limited, and on one or two occasions they have been sold at a sacrifice.

The Port Charges are 2 ½ annas per Ton, and charges for Agency 5 per cent exclusive of Packing and Shipping charges, which are 1 anna per Bag, and ½ anna for Godown rent when the Rice is packed on shore. A gratuity or fee is usually presented to the Port Master should his services be required to Pilot the Vessel to sea.

Ships in stone ballast are upon application to the Authorities, sometimes discharged them, if the stones are fit for public purposes:---but those in sand and mud, must be discharged subject to the orders of the Harbour Master, and if landed, the Boat hire is 20 Rs. per 100 Tons:--Coal ballast will fetch 8 to 10 Rs. per ton for Government Stores, according to demand.

Bamboos and Mats for dunnage are cheap and abundant, and planks may generally be had for this purpose.

The only EXPORTS' produce of the Province besides Grain, are: Sandoway Tobacco, Bees' Wax, Honey, Raw Cotton, Hides, Horns, Goor, Earth and Wood Oils, Shark's Fins, Fish Maws, Chillies, Ginger, Cows, Bullocks, and Ponies; some of these can be obtained in moderate quantities, but the supply of the rest is trifling, and is secured by the Natives for coasting Trade,—The Export next in importance to Grain is Salt.

N. B. Fish, Meat, Bread, Vegetables, and other ordinary articles of consumption are generally to be bought in the Market, but every other description of Store should be be [sic] fully provided elsewhere, as they are not usually to be had here.

The following average Grain Export of the District of Akyab for the last 11 years shews the profitable Nature of the Trade.

Average number of Vessels 225—Ditto of Tonnage 62, 435, Average quantity of Pdy, Maunds 11, 47, 538—Value do Co.'s Rs. 4,73523

[Average] quantity of Rice [maund] 5, 71, 573—  
value of do. " 4, 25, 419

Total quality of Grain, maunds 16, 19, 111 Total Value of Grain Co's Rs. 8, 98, 942

THE IMPORTS are unimportant, there being no Market for any quantity of one article, a miscellaneous cargo of a small quantity of the undermentioned Goods would probably find ready sale. Piece Goods, Book Muslins, Jaconets, Damask, plain, white and figured; Long Cloth, Cotton Velvet, Gingham, Chintzes, Woollens coarse red and blue; Turkey red Twill, Twist or Yarn of various colours, coarse Glass and Crockery Ware, Brown Sugar, Sugar Candy, Sago, Cheroots, Coconut and Mustard Oil, Ghee, Soap, Muskets, Iron, Nails, Pit Saws, Umbrellas, Beetle Nut, and Bengal Rum.

N. B. All printed Piece Goods should be of the brightest colours. This being a free Port, all articles, excepting Opium, which is the Government Monopoly; are exempt from duty.

#### Monies

The currency of Arracan is Company's rupees: Sovereigns and Bank of Bengal Notes are not easily exchanged, nor are Bills negotiable to any considerable amount:--Dollars can always be exchanged at 220 Rs. per 100 drs. And Doubloons at 14 Co.'s Rs. per Tolah weight.

To convert Dollars into rupees multiply by 11 and divide by 5.

N.B. Specie is always required to be laid down for the purchase of Cargoes, and the monthly Steamer to and from Calcutta and Moulmain, and the regular Trading schooners afford opportunity for obtaining it from those places.

#### Weights.

A basket of rice, Arracan Weight,  
Is 12 seers 85 tolachs each or lbs 28, 228

A basket of Paddy ditto, is about 9 Seers.

A Tolah is equivalent in weight to a company's Piece.

80 ditto lbs. 2.057 or 27 maunds or 85 baskets of Rice to 1 Ton

Nearly 1 seer

82-1-1 lbs or 40 seers to 1 maund

133 ¼ lbs to 1 picul

45 piculs to 1 coyan or 228 ¼ baskets of Rice, Penang Weight

40 ditto to 1 do. Or 203 do. Do. Singapore weight.

160 viss to 365 lbs.

1 do. To 35-5 lbs or 140 Tollahs, or 100 Tickals of 252 Grains each.

25 Maunds or 85 baskets of Pice [sic] to 1 ton.

To convert Tons into baskets multiply the former by 427 and divide by 5:--or to convert baskets into Tons multiply the former by 5 and divide by 427.

To convert into Maunds, multiply the former by 109 and divide[d] by 4:--and the reverse, as above, to convert Maunds into Tons.

To convert Indian weight into Avoirdupois, multiply the weight in Seers by 72. And divide by 35, and the result will be weight in lbs. Avoirdupois; or multiply the weight in Maunds by 36. And divide by 49, and the result will be the weight in cwt. Avoirdupois.

Akyab, (signed) W. F. Nuthall, Lieutenant, in Command Arracan Battalion.