

# The Thuggee

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## Synopsis

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In the reign of that sultan [about 1290], some Thugs were taken in Delhi, and a man belonging to that fraternity was the means of about a thousand being captured. But not one of these did the sultan have killed. He gave orders for them to be put into boats and to be conveyed into the lower country, to the neighbourhood of Lakhnauti, where they were to be set free. The Thugs would thus have to dwell about Lakhnauti and would not trouble the neighbourhood of Delhi any more. (Sir H.M. Elliot, *History of India*)

To most people, the typical "thug" in this day and age lurks on a shadowy street corner, toting ready-to-sell packets of "product", and is more often than not, packing a glinting, unlicensed pistol under his shirt. One might even describe the bully that relentlessly terrorizes peers they deem weaker as such, or perhaps a young hoodlum that ventures out in the dead of the night, tagging their initials or the insignia of their "crew" on public property, and pursuing other kinds of petty mischief. Thugs, a term used interchangeably with "gangsters" at times, are hardcore outlaws of the street, and like most criminals, tend to find strength in numbers. Thugs who have claimed hold on a certain territory are known to harass unfortunate passersby, usually walking down dimly-lit alleys unaccompanied. The most organized syndicates target vulnerable small, family-owned businesses, some so formidably powerful they hold even local authorities hostage under their thumbs.

As it turns out, the Thuggee, the group that influenced this now controversial word, is far more fascinating than one might have imagined. *The Thuggee: The History of the Thugs, the World's First Organized Gang of Professional Assassins* explores both the etiological myth and origin story of this prolific cult of murderous bandits, and takes an in-depth look into its practices and their ultimate demise. You will learn about the thugs like never before.

## Reader's comments

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